PROTECTION OF AUTHOR’S COPYRIGHT

This copy has been supplied by the Library of the University of Otago on the understanding that the following conditions will be observed:

1. To comply with s56 of the Copyright Act 1994 [NZ], this thesis copy must only be used for the purposes of research or private study.

2. The author's permission must be obtained before any material in the thesis is reproduced, unless such reproduction falls within the fair dealing guidelines of the Copyright Act 1994. Due acknowledgement must be made to the author in any citation.

3. No further copies may be made without the permission of the Librarian of the University of Otago.
FEASTS AND FASTS

Holidays, religion and ethnicity in
nineteenth-century Otago

Alison Jane Clarke

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in History
at the University of Otago, Dunedin
New Zealand

2003
This thesis examines the history of public holidays and celebrations in the colony of Otago, New Zealand, during the nineteenth century. It takes an ethnographic approach, using personal accounts, images, material objects and contemporary newspapers to explore these events from the colonists’ point of view.

The study is organised into six sections, each examining a different type of occasion, selected on the basis of their significance to the colonists. The events studied include Presbyterian communion seasons, Christmas and Easter, New Year, harvest celebrations, Otago Anniversary Day, and celebrations and commemorations of the monarchy. Each occasion is explored with a view to the two major themes of the thesis, ethnicity and religion.

This study concludes that, contrary to the assumption of many historians, religion did not decline in importance during the nineteenth century; there is no clear evidence of ‘secularisation.’ Religion pervaded colonial life, and remained an important factor in all public events. Whether they were regular churchgoers or not, the great majority of colonists held certain religious beliefs, for example, that God controlled the natural world. All of the holidays examined in this thesis included some form of religious service, and investigating these provides a valuable insight into religious practice in the colony during this period.

Another major finding of this thesis is that Pakeha culture contained much variety. Rather than importing a pre-existing monolithic British culture, colonists brought with them a range of distinctly varied regional cultures, which persisted in the colonial context. Holiday practices were one of the most visible elements of this variety, clearly displaying the different ethnicities of the colonists. Holidays could be used to assert a particular ethnic identity, and on occasion they became sites of cultural contest. Commemorations of the British monarchy were the only holidays to effectively overcome the various ethnic and sectarian divisions of nineteenth-century Otago, uniting all residents, including Maori and Chinese, in remarkable displays of community cohesion.

The new physical and social environment of the Otago colony presented challenges to some traditional holiday practices. Yet while the colonists altered some traditions to fit their new environment, others remained remarkably similar to those in
their source cultures. The colonists remained deeply attached to their accustomed holiday practices, which, as part of the colonising process, helped them feel more at home in their new environment.

In their holidays and celebrations, the Otago colonists revealed the things they valued most: their Christian religion, their impor...
Acknowledgements

I take full responsibility for the contents of this thesis, but many people have assisted in its production and I am pleased to have this opportunity to acknowledge them. Above all, I am grateful to John Stenhouse and Alex Trapeznik for their wise supervision. I am particularly grateful to John for his wonderful enthusiasm, expertise and encouragement over the past few years. The University of Otago’s history department has provided a congenial working environment, and I thank the staff and my fellow postgraduate students for their support and good company.

Many archivists, librarians and museum volunteers have helped me in my research. One of the most enjoyable parts of my study was the visits to various Otago small town museums, and I thank the staff of those institutions for their invaluable help. A special word of thanks must go here to Joy and Gerry Dix of the South Otago Museum and Kay Dundass of the Maniototo Early Settlers’ Museum, who went out of their way to assist me. In Dunedin, I have spent countless hours at three institutions, where I have found the staff invariably welcoming and helpful: my very great thanks to Aaron Braden at the Otago Settlers Museum, Yvonne Milkie and Donald Cochrane at the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand archives; and Stuart Strachan and all the wonderful staff at the Hocken Library (now, I am happy to report, my colleagues).

For assistance of various kinds, including sharing of references, book loans, and helpful comments on my work, I thank the following generous historians: James Beattie, Seán Brosnahan, Patrick Coleman, Bill Keane and Rory Sweetman. James deserves a special thank-you for bravely reading and commenting on a draft of the entire thesis. I have had the privilege of belonging to a multidisciplinary reading group, and I am grateful to the group members for their helpful comments on my writing and the opportunity to practice my editing skills on their work. For many critical, and convivial, evenings my thanks to David Clark, Meredith Gibb, Richard Lummis, Lachy Paterson, Bobbi Schijf and Tiri Thomas.

Last, but certainly not least, I am hugely grateful to my family and friends for their support and encouragement, and for tolerating my eccentric obsession over the past few years.

Ali Clarke
Dunedin
March 2003
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of tables</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of illustrations</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One – Presbyterian Communion Seasons</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two – Christmas and Easter</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three – New Year</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four – Harvest Celebrations</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five – Otago Anniversary Day</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six – Royal Celebrations and Commemorations</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix One – Population Statistics</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix Two – Biographical Notes</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix Three – Orange Order Members</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Visiting fast day preachers at Waikouaiti 1885-1899</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Country of birth of Otago and Southland residents 1848-1864</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Country of birth of Otago and Southland residents 1867-1881</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Country of birth of Otago and Southland residents 1886-1901</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Maori and non-Maori population of Otago and Southland 1858-1878</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Maori and non-Maori population of Otago and Southland 1881-1901</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Religious allegiance of Otago and Southland residents 1848-1864</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Religious allegiance of Otago and Southland residents 1867-1881</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Religious allegiance of Otago and Southland residents 1886-1901</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Church attendance in Otago and Southland 1874-1901</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Population of Otago towns and villages 1857-1861</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Population of Otago towns and villages 1871-1881</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Population of Otago towns and villages 1886-1901</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Members of Loyal Orange Lodge No 19, Oamaru, 1882-1900</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Members of Loyal Orange Lodge No 21, Dunedin, 1897-1899</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Map of Otago</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Map of Dunedin</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Birthplace of Otago residents compared with rest of New Zealand</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Maori population</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Religious allegiance of Otago residents compared with rest of New Zealand</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Disjunction certificates</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Communion tokens</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>East Taieri Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>“Dressing” for communion</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Communion vessels</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Non-alcoholic wine and individual cups</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rev. D. M. Stuart</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>G. M. Thomson</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Fast day recreation</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rev. John Christie</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>George Hepburn</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>“The Christmas Pudding”</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Christmas in summer</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Church Christmas decorations</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Church Easter decorations</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>New Year in Dunedin</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Caledonian games</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Picnics</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Pipers marching</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Highland dress</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Grain yields in Otago</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Grain yields in Clutha County</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Grain yields in Waitaki County</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Harvesters</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Harvesting machinery</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Threshing</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Henry Driver</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Church harvest decorations (1)</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Church harvest decorations (2)</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Church harvest decorations (3)</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Church harvest decorations (4)</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>“The National Fast”</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Horse racing</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Souvenir medals from the Otago Settlement Jubilee</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>The Governor</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (1)</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>The crowd in Dunedin on Jubilee day</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Ancient Order of Druids (1)</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Ancient Order of Druids (2)</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Friendly society display</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Oddfellows</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (2)</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (3)</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Lady Ranfurly</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (4)</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (5)</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (6)</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Prince of Wales’s birthday</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Royal marriage procession in Christchurch</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Royal oak</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Dunedin decorated for the royal marriage (1)</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Dunedin decorated for the royal marriage (2)</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Duke of Edinburgh</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Decorations for the Duke of Edinburgh (1)</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Decorations for the Duke of Edinburgh (2)</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Royal feast at Arrowtown</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Oamaru</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Diamond Jubilee souvenir</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Queenstown</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Victoria Grove</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Diamond Jubilee medals</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Chinese royalists</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Birthplace of Otago and Southland residents</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Scottish, English and Irish born residents as percentage of all foreign born residents</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Maori and non-Maori population of Otago and Southland</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Maori population of east Otago</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Religious denomination of Otago and Southland residents</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOD</td>
<td>Ancient Order of Druids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOF</td>
<td>Ancient Order of Foresters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATL</td>
<td>Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJC</td>
<td>Dunedin Jockey Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNZB</td>
<td><em>Dictionary of New Zealand Biography</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HACBS</td>
<td>Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>Hocken Library, Dunedin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOI</td>
<td>Loyal Orange Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOL</td>
<td>Loyal Orange Lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHR</td>
<td>Member of the House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUIOOF</td>
<td>Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>North Otago Museum, Oamaru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZT</td>
<td><em>New Zealand Tablet</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBI</td>
<td>Otago Benevolent Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODT</td>
<td><em>Otago Daily Times</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSM</td>
<td>Otago Settlers Museum, Dunedin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAFS</td>
<td>Protestant Alliance Friendly Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCANZ archives</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand archives, Dunedin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPAS</td>
<td>Patients’ and Prisoners’ Aid Society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1 – Sketch map of Otago, showing places mentioned in text

Figure 2 – Sketch map of greater Dunedin and Taieri, showing places mentioned in text

Introduction

Several years ago, while immersed in archival sources from nineteenth-century Otago for another project, I became intrigued by references to the holidays kept by the Otago colonists. Some, such as the Prince of Wales’s birthday and Presbyterian fast days, were unfamiliar and have long ceased to exist, yet clearly mattered enormously to many colonists. Others, such as Christmas, New Year and Easter, seemed more familiar but were not kept in a manner now often considered ‘traditional.’ Moreover, some of these supposedly traditional holidays were sites of considerable cultural contest in nineteenth-century Otago. Holidays, it was evident, could provide a valuable window into the colonial world. This thesis, arising from that initial curiosity, takes an ethnographic approach in exploring the world of Otago’s nineteenth-century colonists through their experience of selected holidays and celebrations.

While telling the story of Otago’s holidays is fascinating in itself, this thesis has a deeper purpose. Few twentieth-century historians of New Zealand paid much attention to the particular cultures that nineteenth-century colonists from Britain brought with them, or to how these interacted once they arrived in the colony. This thesis argues that Pakeha colonial culture was complex and varied, and that migrants from different regions of Britain and Ireland imported distinctly different cultural traditions rather than a monolithic ‘British’ culture. Holidays were particularly visible examples of this cultural variety, and exploring them allows us to more fully appreciate the complexities of nineteenth-century Pakeha culture. In their holidays and festivals, different groups of colonists displayed their ethnicity and encountered differing, and sometimes competing, cultural traditions. This thesis draws attention to colonial ethnicity and the persistence of differing traditions, while examining the ways in which the colonists altered some of their traditions to accommodate the new social, cultural and physical environment of the Otago colony.

Ethnicity and religion were closely linked. Indeed, the second major contention of this thesis is that the religious beliefs and practices of the people pervaded colonial life. The Otago colonists seldom differentiated between the sacred and the secular, and their religion had an impact on both everyday and special events. This thesis, therefore, cannot be classified as ‘religious history’ or ‘secular history’:
the two interpenetrate. Each of the holidays explored here had a visible religious element. Alongside the festive church services of the colonists, I also examine the impact of religion on public holiday activities and private holiday musings. Studies of nineteenth-century New Zealand religious practice are rare, and this thesis, in revealing some of the ways in which the Otago colonists practised their religion, outside as well as within church walls, provides important new insights into the piety of both regular and occasional churchgoers.

The word 'holiday' is a term derived from 'holy day' in the sixteenth century, but the terms remained interchangeable until recently. It is common to find the spelling holyday in nineteenth-century sources, from The Times (London) to Francis Pillans's diary (Inch Clutha). The derivation of the word reveals the origin of the occasions themselves as religious events.¹ Throughout this work, holiday refers to what we now, in New Zealand at least, call a 'public holiday.' Otago's nineteenth-century colonists seldom used the term public holiday, as for them the simpler term holiday sufficed. The primary meaning of holiday is now that of an extended vacation or trip, but to interpret the term this way when considering nineteenth-century sources is, in most cases, anachronistic. For the majority of nineteenth-century full-time workers, paid annual vacations were unknown. This gave added significance to holidays. Most employees worked six days a week with, in some cases, a 'half-holiday' on Saturday afternoons. As custom restricted Sunday activities, at least for the respectable, holidays provided the only opportunity for a complete day of recreation.

Until the passing of legislation in the late nineteenth century, people kept holidays according to long-standing practice and common consent, and those days could vary considerably between regions, and between individuals.² In early colonial


² Christmas Day and Good Friday were common law holidays in England and Wales, but not in Scotland. The development of holiday legislation in both Britain and New Zealand is complex and there are few relevant studies. A brief but useful summary of the New Zealand situation (which does not include all of the early legislation) is the booklet, Workers' Holidays in New Zealand: A Brief History (Wellington: Trade Union History Project, 1997) For Britain, see Alice Russell, Bank Holidays: A Victorian Invention and Modern Institution (London: Minerva, 2000). New Zealand's Bank Holidays Act (1873), closely modelled on the 1871 British Act, was designed to allow bank workers, required to process transactions on any day except Sunday, Christmas and Good Friday, to keep the same customary holidays as the rest of the public. Bank holidays became de facto public holidays, and the name still has this broader use in Britain. England, Scotland, Ireland and New Zealand all had different schedules of holidays according to standing practice in their regions. In New Zealand, the Banks and Bankers Act (1880) extended the schedule quite remarkably, although the
Otago, local businesses had considerable control over holidays, and if enough of them closed for a special day, this became a 'general holiday.' The Provincial Superintendent had the power to create holidays by closing Provincial Government offices, and the Governor could also declare holidays, either nationally or regionally. In practice, holidays were far from fixed in the nineteenth century, varying from place to place, and year to year. This flexibility allowed individuals and groups to express their distinctive preferences and priorities, making holidays an excellent topic for investigating a society's cultural and religious identities.

Holidays and ethnicity

The topic of holidays could be explored in a multitude of ways, but I have chosen to focus on two central issues: ethnicity and religion. Sociologists and anthropologists have long recognised the fundamental significance of a group's concept of time in determining their distinctive mentalité and in defining the boundaries of a social group: “temporal arrangements are closely interlinked with group formation. A temporal order that is commonly shared by a group of people and is unique to them functions both as a unifier and a separator.”

While Otago’s British and Irish colonists shared the temporal order of the Christian week, holidays and festivals proved divisive. Migrants from different regions within Britain kept a different range of holidays, a situation further complicated by religious differences regarding the recognition of festivals. Migrants experienced new and unfamiliar holidays, and watched others desecrate, or ignore, their own special occasions. Culture contact extended beyond the Maori-British encounter; indeed, for the many Otago colonists who had little to do with Maori, culture contact primarily involved an encounter with unfamiliar regional cultures from Britain.

Public did not join bankers in keeping all these holidays. Labour legislation, which tended to guarantee to those workers in a weaker bargaining position the rights already obtained by others, sometimes also covered holidays. The Employment of Females Act (1873) entitled female factory workers to particular holidays, and the Factories Act (1894) extended the privilege to males under eighteen. Following the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act (1894), a large variety of workers' awards included guaranteed holidays. The Labour Day Act (1899) created New Zealand's first statutory general holiday, legitimising an already popular practice. It should be noted that for many people these were not paid holidays. Furthermore, many people were not covered by holiday legislation, so customary practice remained important.

In exploring such cultural differences within nineteenth-century Otago and drawing attention to colonial ethnicity, this thesis builds on the work of those historians who have, in recent years, challenged the once prevalent view that Pakeha culture developed out of an overarching British culture brought here by nineteenth-century migrants. Historians of the Irish in New Zealand have been particularly visible in questioning this myth of a monolithic Britishness. Among the first was Donald Akenson, who argues that the development of a national cultural identity by “white New Zealanders” was a long and complex process which “can only be chronicled by replacing conceptual dualism [Maori and Pakeha] with a genuine pluralism.” Akenson emphasises the cultural plurality of the so-called British in Britain, who were likely to identify primarily as English, Scots, Welsh or Irish, rather than Britons. He suggests that colonists from several distinct and vigorous cultures went through a process of melding to establish a new British culture which did not exist in their homelands. From there it was a small step to identifying as New Zealanders. During the nineteenth century, claims Akenson, the biggest step in developing a unique cultural identity, ceasing to be identified with a sectional identity in the old world, took place. This thesis, while applauding Akenson’s attention to Pakeha cultural pluralism, suggests that some cultural differences imported from Britain persisted for longer than he has claimed.

In New Zealand’s most recent general histories, James Belich takes note of Akenson’s challenge. In his discussion of the making of Pakeha society, Belich notes that “an intriguing feature of mid-nineteenth-century Britain is the sense in which it did not exist,” with Welsh, Scots, English and Irish all having distinct societies. Was New Zealand a melting pot where the various ethnic groups of the British Isles developed a primarily British identity which had eluded much of Britain itself? Belich describes Britishness as “a cloak you put on when you went out”; a cultural

---

identity stronger in the colonies than at home.\(^5\) In his more recent volume, *Paradise Reforged*, Belich further explores the complexities of Pakeha ethnicity, noting that around the turn of the nineteenth-century ethnic difference within New Zealand was minimised, reduced, concealed and denied. While wary of "exaggerat[ing] the persistence of ethnic difference," Belich notes the problematic nature of the concept of British ethnicity, and argues that "the notion of New Zealand's Englishness needs pruning." The English may have been the largest contributors to Pakeha culture, but no group avoided at least partial adoption of new cultural elements. "New Zealandness" included significant contributions from the Scots and Irish who, in some cases, maintained "ethno-cultural persistence" or a distinct identity within Pakeha society.\(^6\)

The problematic nature of the concept 'Britain' is not, of course, confined to the former colonies. English historian Linda Colley's influential examination of the formation of British identity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries argues that Britain did exist as a nation; one centred on Protestantism, monarchy, empire and war; a nation "superimposed, if only for a while, onto much older alignments and loyalties."\(^7\) However, those "older alignments and loyalties" have proved persistent. In recent years, inspired by the devolution of political power within Britain, scholars have increasingly explored the history and identity of the various cultures within the British nation; post-colonial theory has invaded Britain itself.\(^8\)

Holiday practices differed widely through the regions of Britain and migrants to Otago brought with them those differences. Holidays, therefore, take us to the cutting edge of the diversity and complexity of Pakeha culture, with contests over these events revealing the efforts of different groups to assert authority or express


\(^8\) For a valuable discussion of these issues, see Murray Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999). While historians of the Irish, Scots and Welsh (the colonised peoples of the British Isles) have long retained awareness of issues of cultural identity, the English (the colonisers) have paid them less attention. Important because of its novelty is journalist Jeremy Paxman's *The English: A Portrait of a People* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), a popular but still wide-ranging and insightful study of English cultural identity. A recent history of
their identity in the colonial setting. Indeed, the study of holiday practices is one of the best ways to examine cultural difference, as few other customs were so publicly visible yet distinctly varied. Journalists, diarists and letter writers frequently commented on both their own holiday activities and the unfamiliar practices of other colonists; as special events beyond the everyday these occasions drew particular attention. New Zealand historians exploring ethnic diversity within nineteenth-century Pakeha society have generally studied the colonial experiences of a particular ethnic group, most commonly the Irish. This thesis takes a different approach. By exploring in detail one type of cultural practice—the holiday—across an entire region, it allows a more complex analysis of colonial culture, while also highlighting the debates, compromises and adaptations made by colonists in response to their exposure to unfamiliar practices. The study of holidays reveals both division and community within the region.

Of course, northern hemisphere migrants were not the only residents of colonial Otago, and alongside the colonists lived the colonised, the indigenous Maori population, most of them Kai Tahu.9 The archival sources I have used for this thesis are overwhelmingly Pakeha, and Maori therefore appear mainly through Pakeha eyes. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the Kai Tahu population declined significantly as a result of newly introduced diseases, marriages and partnerships with Pakeha, and the devastating raids of Te Rauparaha’s northern war parties, the latter alone reducing numbers by about a quarter. By the 1840s, the Maori of eastern Otago numbered some 500.10 Within a year of the commencement of the official Otago colony Pakeha outnumbered Maori, and within ten years, even before gold drew a large influx of migrants, Kai Tahu had been numerically overwhelmed.11 This meant

---


11 See Appendix One for population statistics. The Kai Tahu iwi flourishes today, but during the late nineteenth century, many colonists perceived Maori as a ‘dying race’: see Raeburn Lange, May the People Live: A History of Maori Health Development 1900-1920 (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999), 53-63.
that many Otago colonists had little contact with Maori, and the sources I have used inevitably centre their focus on Pakeha. Nevertheless, Maori feature as important players in some of the events I explore.

Into the ethnic mix of early colonial Otago came, commencing in 1866, a new and markedly different group of migrants, the Chinese. By the mid-1870s, the Chinese—mostly men from the Canton villages who came in search of gold—represented over 4 percent of Otago’s non-Maori population. Like Maori, they appear in this thesis largely through the eyes of Pakeha. Even with this limited perspective, however, the Chinese appear as significant players in Otago’s nineteenth-century royal holidays. While retaining their traditional holidays, the Chinese migrants adopted and used colonial holidays to aid their integration into the community. New Zealand histories tend to focus on the prejudice experienced by Chinese. Such prejudice undeniably existed, but concentrating on it masks a feature displayed in this thesis, the significant agency exerted by Otago’s Chinese residents.12

Some definition of the concept ‘ethnicity’ is appropriate here. Ethnicity, like the related term ‘culture,’ is a contentious concept which has generated enormous debate over both its definition and its analytical utility.13 I use here the framework developed by Siân Jones, who usefully defines ‘culture’ as “the organized and patterned ways of life of particular peoples.”14 Jones’s definition of ethnicity attempts to overcome the problems of ‘instrumental’ and ‘primordial’ theories. Instrumental theories privilege economic and political interests but neglect cultural dimensions, and primordial theories attribute ethnic identity to the givens of birth, the ‘primordial attachments’ of language, territory, culture and so on, but neglect the economic and

---


13 As Raymond Williams comments, “Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language.” See Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society, rev. and enl. ed. (London: Fontana, 1988), 87. Amongst the enormous literature on ethnicity, I have found two discussions of the debates particularly helpful: see Siân Jones, The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing identities in the past and present (London: Routledge, 1997); and Marcus Banks, Ethnicity: anthropological constructions (London: Routledge, 1996). My thanks to Tim Thomas for his suggestions on this subject.

14 Jones, Archaeology of Ethnicity, 45.
political dimensions. Jones, instead, sees ethnicity as both a process and a relationship:

Ethnic groups are culturally ascribed identity groups, which are based on the expression of a real or assumed shared culture and common descent (usually through the objectification of cultural, linguistic, religious, historical and/or physical characteristics). As a process ethnicity involves a consciousness of difference, which, to varying degrees, entails the reproduction and transformation of basic classificatory distinctions between groups of people who perceive themselves to be in some respect culturally distinct.\(^{15}\)

Migration, of course, has a marked impact on ethnicity. Where there are significant cultural differences between groups of people in a new and socially heterogeneous setting, those groups become newly conscious of their distinctiveness. It is, after all, in contrast to others that ethnicity is defined. A group’s patterned way of life may be little noted or questioned – carried out almost unconsciously – until contrasted with the culture of another group: culture is ordinary or normal to its practitioners. When the indigenous people of New Zealand first encountered Europeans they began to define themselves as ‘Maori,’ meaning ‘ordinary,’ in contrast to the extraordinary strangers.\(^{16}\) Within Britain, the English had little consciousness of their ethnicity; from their position of hegemony they were simply normal. Likewise, in Otago, English colonists, while noting the presence of other ethnicities, were far less inclined than the Scots, Irish, Welsh or Chinese to make self-conscious ethnic displays.

If the experience of migration into a new society increases awareness of cultural difference, it can also reduce cultural difference, with prolonged and close contact between ethnic groups potentially leading to acculturation, assimilation, and reduced cultural diversity. Some migrants could not, for simple practical reasons, continue all of their familiar patterned ways of life, as when religious allegiances did not survive the realities of colonial society. For example, William Kempthorne, recalling his childhood in a devout West Otago home, noted that his Cornish father “was a Weslyan [sic] himself and Mother was Church of England; but for many years in Heriot neither of these sects had much of a following as the settlers were principally Scotch and consequently Presbyterian. Most of our family were baptised

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 84.

as Presbyterian.” Individuals could cross ethnic boundaries, and culture was not entirely homogeneous within defined ethnicities. The merging or assimilation of ethnicities should not, however, be overstated. Late-twentieth century political events reveal the ongoing significance of ethnic difference even in complex industrialised societies, and extensive interconnection between ethnic groups has failed to destroy cultural variety.18

Ethnicity is only one element of a person’s identity and other features such as gender and class have significant roles in the formation (or lack of cohesion) of communities and cultures. In choosing to concentrate on ethnicity and religion, I do not wish to deny the importance of other identities, but simply to focus this work more clearly. Where class and gender are evidently major factors in shaping holidays I have paid them more attention.

Holidays and religion

Ethnicity is one major theme of this thesis; religion is another. The two, of course, interweave to a considerable extent, with religion often constituting a major factor in ethnic identity. Examining holidays provides a useful, but previously little noticed, window into the religious world of the Otago colonists. Practice is critical to religion. Anthropologist Don Handelman argues that “there was not and is not anything that can be called ‘religion’ without its practice, and this practice is often called ‘ritual’. If religion is not practiced, it dies. One can argue that, to a considerable extent, ‘ritual’ actively constitutes ... what is understood as ‘religion’. ”19 Likewise, religious historian Ian Breward notes that in both “primal religions” and “European folk Christianity” the “[p]ractice of rituals was far more important than the articulation of belief.”20 The festivals explored here involved complex rituals, rich in symbolism, and studying them can help us enter into the religious world of the

17 William Oke Kemplotone, Kemplotone Family History, p. 90, Biog Box 32, OSM.
20 Ian Breward, *A History of the Churches in Australasia* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), viii. See also Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 182-187. Religious belief systems, suggests Bell, are seldom coherent, but “relatively unstable and unsystematic for most people.” Rituals and symbols are ambiguous and allow a variety of personal interpretations rather than inculcating a particular form of belief. A religion, Hinduism for example, is for its adherents “not a coherent belief system but, first and foremost, a collection of practices.”
colonists. While practice is not completely divorced from theology, I suggest that studying theological texts and treatises cannot give such valuable insights as practice does into the piety of ‘ordinary’ people.

Few historians, however, have paid significant attention to religious practice in nineteenth-century New Zealand. A notable exception is Hugh Jackson, whose valuable 1987 monograph, Churches and People in Australia and New Zealand, explores various aspects of colonial religious practice, ranging from revivalist meetings to family worship, and thus illuminates several important aspects of colonial life.21 Apart from a few rare general syntheses, religious historians have tended to confine themselves within denominational boundaries or to missionary encounters, seldom taking a comparative approach or noting what might be termed Pakeha ‘folk’ or ‘popular’ religion – the “beliefs, motivations, experiences, rituals and practices of ordinary people.”22 Even the two outstanding general religious histories are, as their titles suggest, heavily focused on institutions.23

Meanwhile, religious historians have long, and with good reason, lamented the secular bias of New Zealand historiography.24 Some discussions in general New Zealand histories, notably those by Jeanine Graham and Raewyn Dalziel, give a brief indication of some of the complexities of colonial religious practice.25 Most generalist historians, however, attempt to ‘measure’ the influence of religion in colonial life by

---


23 Breward, History of the Churches; and Allan Davidson, Christianity in Aotearoa: A History of Church and Society in New Zealand (Wellington: Education For Ministry, 1991).


citing the census churchgoing statistics, which suggest that the majority of New Zealanders were not 'usual' church attenders. Influential historians who have taken this approach include Keith Sinclair, Erik Olssen and James Belich. Olssen suggests that the low levels of church attendance revealed by the census spurred the Protestant moral campaigns of the late nineteenth century. Sinclair uses church attendance statistics to suggest New Zealanders were not a religious people, and that in New Zealand "nationalism fulfilled some of the roles of religion." Belich is more wary, noting that church attendance is not the only indicator of religiosity: "That much adherence was not intense does not make it unimportant," he suggests, later commenting that there may have been "a decline in Protestant churchgoing without a decline in a broader religiousness."26

Despite their popularity with historians, the New Zealand church attendance statistics have serious drawbacks as a means of assessing colonial religiosity. First, interpreting them is no simple matter. It is unclear, for example, what instructions were given to those responsible for making the returns: how they should define the 'usual' in measuring usual church attenders; whether or not they should count children; and how many times they should count those people who attended church more than once on census Sunday.27 Secondly, counting people does not help us understand their experience: what did they actually do when they attended church, and what meaning did this activity have for them? These questions are clearly crucial. Thirdly, religion did not confine itself to churches and 'usual' Sunday worship. Religion, as this thesis argues, pervaded colonial life, and we most look both inside

26 Erik Olssen, "Towards a New Society," in Oxford History of New Zealand, 2d ed., ed. Rice, 268; Keith Sinclair, A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity (Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 185; Belich, Making Peoples, 439; and Paradise Reforged, 163-165. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that for some historians, ideology sways statistical interpretation. Thus, while 'secular' historian Sinclair claims that "a significantly smaller" proportion of New Zealanders than Britons attended church, 'religious' historian Ian Breward claims that the colonial Protestant churches "had levels of attendance not too different from many parts of Britain" (Breward, History of the Churches, 67).

27 On the use of the church attendance statistics, see Hugh Jackson, "Churchgoing in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand," New Zealand Journal of History 17 (1983): 43-59; and Jackson, Churches and People, 115-117. The decision of the interpreter as to whether or not children were counted makes a considerable impact on these statistics. Jackson calculates that, based on the supposition that children were not counted, between 39 and 48 percent of Pakeha aged fifteen years and over were 'usual' church attenders in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. If children were counted, the proportion of the population usually attending church drops to between 25 and 30 percent. Historians have generally preferred to use these lower figures. See Appendix One, Table 10, for census church attendance statistics from nineteenth-century Otago.
and outside the churches, on both regular Sundays and special festivals, into both public spaces and private thoughts, to fully appreciate its influence. Church attendance statistics, in New Zealand and elsewhere, originate from a nineteenth-century discourse of ‘secularisation’: a contemporary concern that the churches were losing their hold over the population, especially the working classes. However, this discourse, which arose in late-eighteenth century Britain in response to social, intellectual and political change, does not account adequately for popular experience of religion. Many historians – particularly, I suggest, those in New Zealand – accept without question the paradigm of nineteenth-century secularisation. Some scholars in Britain, however, have interrogated this paradigm and found it wanting in several respects, notably its failure to account for the pervasiveness of Christianity at all levels of society. Callum Brown points out that the statistics generally used to measure religiosity are based on professional and elite definitions of the traits which make a person religious; frequent church attendance or official church membership, for example.28 Some British scholars have moved beyond statistical analysis, instead using a variety of other techniques, from oral history to interpretation of popular written discourse, to examine nineteenth-century religiosity. Detailed local studies have proved particularly revealing. These scholars have detected a phenomenon variously labeled as ‘diffusive Christianity’, ‘pervasive Christianity’, and ‘popular’ or ‘folk’ religion or Christianity. Although many Britons, particularly the working classes, did not attend church frequently, religious practice often played a significant role in their lives. The churches fulfilled an important place in the life-cycle rituals of birth, marriage and death; an enormous number of people sent their children to Sunday school; and many attended festival services such as the harvest thanksgiving. The church hierarchy may have seen such people as irreligious, but they themselves most adamantly did not. Observance of Sunday as a day of rest, hymn

singing and a sense of morality with roots in the Christian message also pervaded nineteenth-century society.29

The holidays examined in this thesis were in many ways religious events, and examining them allows a fresh look at colonial religious practice; one which explores church life yet moves beyond denominational boundaries, and one which allows insights into a religiosity which extended beyond regular Sunday churchgoing. Several of the holiday religious events explored here were very popular, attracting people who were not frequent churchgoers. With the possible exception of life-cycle rituals, which are not considered here, these were the occasions when the colonists were most likely to encounter organised religion, making them particularly important in the study of popular religiosity. Here we find those who attended church once or twice a year beside those who attended once or twice a week. Here, also, we capture some of the broader influences of colonial religion, from displays of Christian symbolism in public Jubilee parades to the pious New Year resolutions of diarists.

This thesis sheds new light on colonial religion. Some findings may appear surprising; for example, the emotive and sometimes mystical piety of Presbyterian communion, and the growth in the explicitly religious meaning of Christmas and Easter towards the end of the nineteenth century. These findings do not fit some commonly held stereotypes, for example, that Protestantism, especially Presbyterianism, was essentially intellectual rather than experiential. It is only by examining the practice of religion from the practitioners’ perspective that we can appreciate more fully its meaning in their world.

The historiography of holidays

In their holidays – the occasions they choose to celebrate and commemorate – people reveal their priorities. These priorities may not align with those of the historian, and this helps explain why the number of studies of nineteenth-century holidays in New Zealand’s historiography is small and the generalist interpretations

inadequate. The residents of nineteenth-century Otago recognised and celebrated on these occasions their commitment to the Christian religion, to Queen and Empire, to their immediate locality, to their imported ethnicities and to the fruits of their labour. Nineteenth-century holidays simply do not fit into the nationalist and secular framework which has for so long dominated New Zealand historiography.\footnote{While there has been a recent growth in cultural history (evidenced, for example, by the April 2002 edition of the \textit{New Zealand Journal of History}, devoted to articles on cultural colonisation), Jock Phillips perceptively comments that New Zealand cultural history is as much bound up in the nationalist framework as its forerunners: “cultural nationalism” may be an obstacle to “accurate cultural history.” See “Of Verandahs and Fish and Chips and Footie on Saturday Afternoon: Reflections on 100 Years of New Zealand Historiography,” in \textit{The Shaping of History: Essays from The New Zealand Journal of History}, ed. Judith Binney (Wellington: Bridget Williams, 2001), 336. The comment comes in a 2001 afterword on a paper first published in 1990.}

Edinburgh’s 1869 tour to New Zealand. Belinda Leckie’s study of the 1898 Otago Settlement Jubilee shows less skill: although it provides a detailed account of the event, I do not, as discussed below, agree with i’s analysis.

In addition to these studies of specific holidays, two of New Zealand’s most influential historians have taken a more general look at nineteenth-century holidays. In both cases, however, their teleological perspectives limit their findings and they dismiss these events as insignificant. In his monograph on the development of New Zealand national identity, Keith Sinclair devotes a chapter to “holy days.” Sinclair, an avowed nationalist, dismisses the holidays of the nineteenth century because none was a “truly national day.” Although Sinclair notes that “the settlers” celebrated the Queen’s birthday, and admits that “some people” considered Empire Day (celebrated on Queen Victoria’s birthday after her death) more important than Dominion Day (a 1907 innovation), and that Anzac Day had some of its provenance in Empire Day, he fails to acknowledge the strength of popular imperialism in both nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Anniversary Days he dismisses as regional events, and Christmas and New Year as irrelevant to his story. To Sinclair, no holiday truly mattered until Anzac Day, a “genuine national day,” was born. Sinclair also furthers the “widely accepted” view that New Zealanders were “relatively inhibited and puritanical,” not given to joyful public expression. Had he paid closer attention to some of the events explored in this thesis, particularly Queen Victoria’s Jubilees, he might not have made this claim.

Miles Fairburn has also analysed nineteenth-century holidays as failures. For Fairburn their failure lay in their supposed inability to bond communities, thus supporting his controversial thesis that colonial New Zealand was an atomised society. In the major statement of his theory, The Ideal Society and its Enemies, Fairburn claims that communal festivals “were too diffuse, fleeting, and infrequent to be effective instruments of social interaction.” He uses the occasion which this thesis suggests was the least consistently recognised of Otago’s major nineteenth-century


36 Sinclair, A Destiny Apart, 177-187.
holidays – Anniversary Day, in his case at Wellington – to argue that communal festivals waned in popularity over the century.\footnote{Miles Fairburn, \textit{The Ideal Society and its Enemies: The Foundation of Modern New Zealand Society 1850-1900} (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1989), 161-162.} In his study of itinerant labourer James Cox, Fairburn again considers the significance of holidays. Here he is forced to pay more attention, as Cox’s diary notes numerous communal festivals, although Cox himself fails to become involved in many of these occasions, probably, as Fairburn suggests, because of “the manifold … disadvantages of poverty.” Despite the evidence he cites from various community festivals, Fairburn claims that “though many of the Old World’s \textit{holidays} were transplanted to New Zealand, this was generally not true of the attendant custom of celebrating them with some kind of public ritual.” Ritual, by Fairburn’s reasoning, is a term confined to drunken, riotous and carnivalesque plebian behaviour, a very narrow definition.\footnote{Miles Fairburn, \textit{Nearly out of Heart and Hope: The Puzzle of a Colonial Labourer’s Diary} (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995), 202-207.} Otago’s nineteenth-century holidays undoubtedly included extensive ritualised behaviour. Moreover, even Fairburn’s apparently restricted concept of ritual came to New Zealand, although admittedly, perhaps, not to quite the dramatic degree which he requires: Isabella Mitchell’s study of one extremely popular and pervasive holiday activity – the picnic – reveals the common carnivalesque inversion of usual gender and age roles on these occasions.\footnote{Isabella Mitchell, “Picnics in New Zealand during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: an interpretive study” (MA thesis, Massey University, 1995). More extreme carnivalesque behaviour was also on the wane in Britain during the nineteenth century, as Fairburn correctly notes.}

Sinclair’s and Fairburn’s approaches to and interpretations of nineteenth-century holidays betray their preconceived ideas regarding colonial society. These historians each had a case to prove, and believed that they found in the holidays they examined evidence to support their respective arguments. Sinclair was determined to find in holidays evidence of the growth of national identity and Fairburn a lack of community cohesion. Both found what they were looking for, although they cite only scanty evidence: Fairburn apparently bases his claims about holidays on two sources, Cox’s diary and an undergraduate student’s essay on the history of the Wellington regatta. Neither Sinclair nor Fairburn seem aware of the complexities which ethnic and religious differences within Pakeha society brought to holidays. This is unsurprising, as a lack of attention to religion and ethnicity is characteristic of their
work. Secular blinkers, and, in the case of Sinclair, nationalist blinkers also, mean that these two influential historians have failed to see the significance of nineteenth-century holidays and the rich evidence they provide of a society more complex than their interpretations suggest.

This thesis is confined to the nineteenth century, but several New Zealand studies of twentieth-century holidays are worth noting for their methodologies as much as their findings. Anzac Day commemorates an event commonly acclaimed in New Zealand discourse, both popular and academic, as the birth or baptism of the nation. Unsurprisingly, therefore, it has attracted considerable attention from historians. Maureen Sharpe’s detailed examination of the origins and evolution of Anzac Day and its rituals reveals both tensions and commonalities as the New Zealand community struggled to deal with the consequences of war.40 Scott Worthy’s recent study moves beyond Sharpe’s nationalist focus to emphasise the imperial and religious aspects of early Anzac Days.41 Stephen Clarke’s skilled study of Anzac Day after World War Two, besides exploring historical changes, uses anthropological theories of ritual to discern the meaning of the day for New Zealanders.42 Jock Phillips’s essay on New Zealand’s 1945 victory celebrations is a particularly accomplished example of the value of the fine-grained analysis of public events with an ethnographers’s eye for ‘meaning’ in gaining probing insights into historical societies.43

In summary, the historiography of holidays in New Zealand consists of several studies, some of them excellent, and others distinctly flawed, such as the overviews by two of New Zealand’s most prominent historians. With the three undergraduate dissertations noted above an exception, none of the holidays examined in this thesis – the days which mattered most to the residents of nineteenth-century Otago – have received more than brief passing mention from historians.

---

Beyond New Zealand, the historical study of holidays is expanding. Some publications are more antiquarian than analytical, and there is evidently a large market for works which take a folklore approach to holidays, seeking out ‘pagan survivals’ rather than critically examining historical change. But there are also numerous fine social and cultural histories of holidays and it is appropriate here to mention a few works which I have found particularly inspiring in undertaking this thesis.

Australians, like New Zealanders, commemorate Anzac Day as a major national holiday, and in Australia also this day has attracted considerable historical attention. When Ken Inglis began to explore the Anzac phenomenon, his research led him to an earlier period as he asked which other holidays Australians had kept, and why these had failed to become ‘national days.’ His monograph on the nineteenth-century Australian colonists includes, as a result, a large section on holidays. Unlike New Zealand historian Keith Sinclair, who looked back from Anzac Day at nineteenth-century holidays only to discount them as failures, Inglis found these occasions worthy of exploration in their own right, and providers of useful insights into colonial society and culture. Inglis’s work on holidays provides no simple conclusions, but does provide a fascinating insight into life in the Australian colonies. The monarch’s birthday was one of the most important and formally celebrated occasions of the year, revealing the colonists’ loyalty to the British Empire. For the Irish, St Patrick’s Day, which was widely celebrated, displayed their powerful attachment to their homeland. This day, like the Orange celebration on 12 July, could also be a flashpoint for sectarian violence, often between Protestant and Catholic Irish. Enthusiastic keeping of the Sabbath revealed a commitment to Christian civilisation, while Christmas and New Year celebrations brought memories of old England and Scotland respectively. Besides these imported holidays, the Australians created new holidays including, notably, Eight Hours Day, Melbourne Cup Day, and various state Anniversary Days. These days revealed the colonists’ commitment to

---

leisure, and to a better society for the working classes. Anniversary days also provided an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the new society, but the celebrants did not always agree on what these were, or how they should be commemorated. 45

Inglis’s study, published in 1974, confirms the value of this thesis’s topic, but it is in the hands of more recent historians, influenced by a cultural turn in the discipline, where holidays have received their most inspiring treatment. Two works by American historian of religion Leigh Eric Schmidt are notable for both their topic and methodology. In Holy Fairs Schmidt examines the festive Presbyterian communions of early modern Scotland and America, forerunners of the communion seasons explored in this thesis. These communions were an intriguing mix of fervent Calvinistic evangelical religion and popular conviviality, which the ‘moderate’ clergy, who resisted the evangelical revival and favoured a more elite and rationalistic culture, viewed with disapproval. Imported to America, the festive communions became “a notably ethnic tradition” which persisted into the nineteenth century. The festival was ideally suited to the scattered agrarian culture of the early colonies. Adaptation did occur in the new environment, where other religious traditions were encountered, and out of the revivalism of the Presbyterian communion festivals would eventually come the American camp meeting, an important contributor to American religious and political culture. Schmidt’s study is a skillful combination of a more traditional historical exploration of change over time and an ethnographic examination of ritual. This combination proves fruitful in bringing these long forgotten occasions back to life and discerning their significance for individuals and communities. 46

Schmidt demonstrates similar skill in Consumer Rites, which explores the connections and tensions between religion, consumerism and festivity in the development of American holidays. Christmas, Easter, Mother’s Day and Valentine’s Day are the focus of his attention, but Schmidt ranges over a huge variety of occasions and sources to develop his themes. He also pays considerable attention to the long and illustrious tradition of complaint about the commercialisation of


holidays. Although the holidays are a powerful symbol of American consumer culture, Schmidt resists a simplistic secularisation thesis in explaining their development, arguing, instead, that they are an interesting blend of the sacred and the secular. He also contends that the developing association between consumer culture and holidays during the nineteenth century was part of a shift in gender focus: from male-dominated carnivalesque ritual to female-dominated domestic ritual.47

Christmas, that immensely popular holiday, has attracted a large number of historical and anthropological studies. Many are accomplished but one work stands out: American historian Stephen Nissenbaum’s Pulitzer Prize finalist, *The Battle for Christmas*, which studies Christmas in America from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Nissenbaum argues that studying Christmas illuminates broader historical questions, as changes in this festival reveal changes in the culture as a whole. He also claims that the festival itself was an active instrument of change. He explores a variety of topics, including the Puritan war on the misrule associated with Christmas, the domestication and commercialisation of the festival, the invention of Santa Claus, Christmas charity, and Christmas carnival under slavery. Nissenbaum’s analysis provides new insights into the culture of the time, from child-rearing practices to attitudes towards the poor.48

This thesis does not pretend to come close to the brilliance of Schmidt and Nissenbaum’s studies. It does, however, take a leaf from their book by using a fine-grained analysis of holidays, with an eye to both ethnography and change over time, to illuminate its major themes of religious practice and ethnic identity in nineteenth-century Otago.

**Methods and sources**

This thesis attempts to recreate the experiences of the Otago colonists, to see things ‘from the native’s point of view.’49 It incorporates a wide range of sources to

---


make the picture as detailed as possible, and it is appropriate here to note the strengths and weaknesses of those sources. Contemporary newspapers are an important source. They reported all major public events, and holidays, being out of the ordinary, frequently received significant description and comment in the press. The *Otago Witness*, which commenced as a fortnightly publication in 1851 and soon became a weekly, is a crucial source for this work. Its owners began publishing the *Otago Daily Times* (ODT) in 1861, but the *Witness* remained a popular paper, printing a digest of the week's main news as reported in the ODT besides its own features. It included, significantly for this project, numerous reports from its own correspondents in small rural settlements. These gossipy reports commonly included news of social happenings, holiday activities and religious occasions. Reading through the *Otago Witness* from 1851 to 1899 rewarded me with a strong foundation of evidence on which to build this thesis. I also consulted other newspapers and periodicals for reports of specific occasions, ranging from the *Witness*’s competitors (the *Otago Colonist* and *Daily Telegraph*) to papers from other towns (for example, the *Bruce Herald* and *Mt Ida Chronicle*) to papers with sectional interests (for example, the radical *Otago Workman* and the Roman Catholic *New Zealand Tablet*). While the perspective of a paper like the *Otago Workman* is clear, all newspapers and periodicals have their own bias. Most of their writers and editors were white middle class males, often with clear political agendas, and many of them later became politicians themselves. Moreover, newspapers did not simply report on holidays, but played an active part in criticising or supporting them. A striking example of this is the role of the *Otago News* in initiating and promoting Otago’s first anniversary sports in opposition to the special commemoration planned by the Presbyterian Church. Reports could also cast a rosy glow over social events as part of their boosterism of the region. Newspapers are, therefore, a useful source, but they must be supplemented by other perspectives.

58 (1986): 218-234. For a critique of this approach, see Miles Fairburn, *Social History: Problems, Strategies and Methods* (New York: St Martin’s, 1999), 233-234.


51 See pp. 222-228 below for further discussion of this occasion.
Personal papers are another crucial source for this thesis, with diaries being particularly valuable. Diary accounts of holidays were written close to the event, were not usually designed to cater for a particular audience other than the writer, and sometimes recorded the diarist’s emotional response. The latter is particularly, although not exclusively, the case for women’s diaries, and these accounts, therefore, help counter the male bias of newspaper reports. Letters and reminiscences present additional challenges as sources because they are shaped with a particular audience in mind. Letters, for example, often put a positive spin on colonial experience, either to avoid upsetting family and friends at home or to encourage them to join the migrant. This was not always the case, however, and the disenchanted could present a distinctly gloomy view of colonial life, as when John Walker, about to depart Otago for Melbourne, pointed out all of the peculiarities of Dunedin’s 1863 royal marriage celebrations in a letter home (incidentally providing a useful alternative perspective to the highly positive press reports of the occasion). Reminiscences are written many years after an event and form, as Fiona Hamilton points out, their own genre. The conventions of this genre require memoirists to order their memories into particular explanatory frameworks centred on the foundation of ‘civilization’ and community. They are the special realm of the ‘pioneer.’ As Porter and Macdonald note, diaries, letters and other personal accounts “are not simply mirrors or containers of experience, but instruments through which those experiences and events have been given meaning. There is no ‘literal translation’ or conveyance of historical events.” This may be a disadvantage for anyone using a diary to discern an unbiased ‘factual’ account of an event, but it is a positive advantage for the historian in search of the meaning of an event for its participants.

One difficulty in the use of personal accounts as sources is their fragmentary nature. Although there are considerable collections of such accounts available, some groups of colonists are not represented in them. Literacy is the most obvious barrier to the production of personal accounts. There are a few accounts compiled by

---


interviewers, but oral histories from the period are extremely rare. It is a mistake, however, to assume that producing a diary or letter required anything more than the most basic education. Jack Fowler, whose letters to his mother are frequently cited in this thesis, wrote with colour and verve but also with atrocious spelling and poor grammar. Many of my other 'informants' also betray in their writing a limited education. Class did not have to be a barrier to diary or letter writing. Certainly, professionals are over-represented in surviving personal papers, but I have also used accounts from miners and labourers. Women are fairly well represented as writers, and there are accounts from a good mixture of age groups, ranging from adolescents to the elderly. The biggest gaps relate to religion and ethnicity. As noted above, Maori and Chinese appear in this thesis through the eyes of others rather than their own accounts. Another regrettable absence is that of Irish Catholic personal accounts. This absence is not simple chance, but reflects rather the priorities of organisations preserving historical documents. For example, Catholics only rarely gave personal papers to the Otago Settlers Museum, which privileged the records of Otago's Scottish Presbyterian founders. Compounding this, the Catholic diocese of Dunedin appears to have had little interest in such documents, or granting access to them by historians. Consequently, I have depended heavily on the *New Zealand Tablet* (NZT), which at least has the advantage of being produced in Dunedin and having an assertively Irish Catholic perspective.\(^{55}\) The biographical notes in Appendix Two are intended to provide a sense of the perspective of people whose personal accounts are used in this thesis.

Newspapers and personal papers are the central sources for recovering the holiday experiences of Otago's nineteenth-century colonists, but these are supplemented with a wide range of other written sources to create a fuller picture. Church records, government records and local histories all add to the story. And, while this is a qualitative study, the government statistics on population, birthplace and religion included in Appendix One suggest the quantitative framework for this project. Numbers and words cannot, however, fully convey the colonists' experiences of holidays. Holidays provided unusually vivid sensory experiences. The colonists heard the accompanist's fiddle and the skirl of bagpipes; they looked at the fireworks

---

\(^{55}\) On the *New Zealand Tablet* and its perspective, see Kevin Molloy, "Victorians, Historians and Irish History: A Reading of the *New Zealand Tablet*, 1873-1903," in *Irish in New Zealand*, ed. Patterson, 153-170.
and the profusion of church decorations; they tasted the communion wine and
Christmas pudding; they smelled the roasting whole ox and the bonfires; they used
their bodies to dance and march and their voices to sing and cheer. Ironically, to
recover such sensory experiences, this thesis depends heavily on written accounts, and
conveys them again using words. But it also pays significant attention to images and
material objects. Although images have their own problems of perspective, and must
be read and interpreted as carefully as written sources, they “allow us to ‘imagine’ the
past more vividly.”56 They also allow us to enter the world of the illiterate. Historians
are increasingly using images and material items, but in doing so this thesis goes
against the grain of most religious history.57 Colleen McDannell suggests that scholars
have tended to ignore the material dimension of religion because religion is
commonly defined using a simple bipolar division between the sacred and the
profane. The material dimension does not fit readily into classical sociological and
Protestant theological concepts of that which is considered sacred. This defies the
reality of most people’s experience of religion. As she suggests, if “we look at what
Christians do rather than at what they think, we cannot help but notice the continual
scrambling of the sacred and the profane.”58 Material items played a significant role in
the religious festivals described here: wine and bread, tokens and vessels at
communion; grains, vegetables and fruit at harvest thanksgivings; and floral
decorations and nativity scenes at Christmas. Taking such items as seriously as
sermons and prayers provides a fresh and more comprehensive understanding of
colonial religious practice.

Collecting information and constructing it into a narrative is one task of the
ethnographer; interpretation is another. I have organised the material into six chapters,
each dealing with a specific festive occasion. I have selected the holidays for detailed

---

56 Peter Burke, Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence (Ithaca, New York:

57 My recent article, “‘Days of Heaven on Earth’: Presbyterian Communion Seasons in
Nineteenth-Century Otago,” Journal of Religious History 26 (2002): 274-297, is the first in that
journal’s 42-year history to include images. The images are of material objects.

58 Colleen McDannell, Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America (New
Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 4. The material dimension also, suggests McDannell, defies the
“secularization model” of Western scholars. In its very topic, this thesis questions the religious / secular
or sacred / profane bipolar divisions, by examining events which fit into both categories. Frank M.
Turner also notes the inadequacies of historical accounts of nineteenth-century Britain which assume a
bipolar division between the religious and the secular: see Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in
examination on the basis of their significance to the colonists themselves: these are the occasions which mattered the most to the largest proportion of the population for the longest period of time. Others could have been included, but this would have limited the depth of the study. Each chapter stands alone as a case study of colonial holiday practice, but certain themes pervade the discussion and the conclusion attempts to draw these together. My approach is to try and describe these events from the colonists’ perspective, using their own words where possible. The colonists were not a homogeneous group, so the different practices and perspectives of different ethnic and religious interests are highlighted, as are the changing boundaries and tensions between them, and the challenge the new environment presented to customary practices.

Chapter One explores one of the colony’s long-forgotten general holidays, the Presbyterian communion season, an important ritual of Otago’s majority culture and one which provides intriguing insights into Presbyterian religious experience. The communion season displayed remarkable continuity with cultural practice in Scotland, while the holidays explored in Chapter Two – Christmas and Easter – were foreign to most Scottish colonists. These holidays, highly valued by English and Irish colonists, required adaptation to fit into the changed seasons of the southern hemisphere and the hostile environment of a Presbyterian colony. Christmas and Easter also provide a window into Anglican and Catholic religious practice, and to the gradual acceptance by some Presbyterians of such ‘ritualist’ holidays. Chapter Three examines New Year, Otago’s most widely-observed regular holiday and for many an explicit expression of Scottish ethnicity. Harvest celebrations are the subject of Chapter Four. ‘Harvest homes’ – social gatherings of feasting and dancing – reveal the contrasts between rural society in the colony and in Britain, while the popular church harvest thanksgivings demonstrate the pervasiveness of the belief that God ruled the natural world. Chapter Five explores Otago’s own holiday, Anniversary Day, which became a site of contest revealing the strength of sectarianism in the colony. Finally, Chapter Six considers celebrations and commemorations of the monarchy, which, in contrast to the other holidays studied, displayed a remarkable ability to involve colonists of all religions and ethnicities.

59 Notable omissions are St Patrick’s Day, Arbor Day, Labour Day, Chinese festivals and the various agricultural show days.
The occasions described here are complex rituals, and interpreting them is no simple matter. The ethnographer, comments anthropologist Clifford Geertz, is faced with “a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render.” As my research has turned up a multitude of multivocal symbols, many can only be analysed in a perfunctory manner. Moreover, this is a history thesis, not a cultural studies or anthropology one, and must also pay significant attention to change occurring over time. I have, therefore, more thoroughly considered only a select few rituals and symbols (notably processions and decorations), chosen because they appeared to me particularly interesting and revealing about colonial culture.

Ritual is yet another term which has aroused considerable academic debate. Some scholars object to the concept as one constructed through Western scholarly theory rather than expressing reality. Some prefer the term ‘public event’ and others the dramatic metaphor of ‘cultural performance’. Further debate centres on the function or effect of ritual. Victor Turner suggests that “exposure to those objectified dreams and fantasies which are thrown up by celebratory enthusiasm may be necessary for social health ... a celebratory performance rejoices in the key values and virtues of the society that produces it, and in a history whose high points of success and conquest (or even noble failure) exemplify qualities of moral and aesthetic excellence.” Ritual can thus represent a community to itself, and representation, suggests Handelman, is the primary way in which scholars interpret ritual (and, for that matter, symbols). But rituals and symbols can do much more than represent a community, as valuable as that function may be; there is a dialectic between ritual and community, and while a community can change a ritual, ritual can itself change a community. As noted above, Nissenbaum argues that the rituals of Christmas both reflected American culture, and actively changed that culture. Handelman suggests we

63 Handelman, Models and Mirrors, xiii.
can sort rituals (or public events, as he prefers to call them) into three categories: events that create change in the lived-in world; events that hold up a mirror to selectively reflect a version of a social order; and events that expose hidden conflicts and controversies in a social world. In attempting to analyse the rituals and symbols of Otago’s nineteenth-century holidays, I have borne in mind the dialectic between community and ritual, and the differing functions that ritual might have.

One of the most intriguing aspects of colonial holidays is their transplantation from a very different world. As Peter Gibbons notes, “Settler societies are composed initially of very unsettled people, migrants who have, by the very processes of migration, left behind much of what gives the world meaning for human beings … The new world they enter is profoundly and disturbingly alien, and the colonists set out to make this world normal, from their perspective, through the destruction of what they encounter … and the substitution of congenial European practices, forms, and phenomena.” Amongst the congenial forms brought by the colonists in their cultural baggage were their concepts of time: the Christian seven-day week, with its familiar pattern of work and rest, deeply embedded in Western culture yet unfamiliar to Maori and Chinese; and the annual calendar with its special days of commemoration and celebration. Holiday rituals carried the old world into the new world, reducing its strangeness and filling it with familiar patterns. One task of this thesis is to describe the transplantation of holidays, noting their significance in colonisation, while also exploring the adaptations required to fit them into the new physical and social environment. Some colonial holiday practices displayed remarkable continuity with ‘home,’ others adapted significantly in response to distinctly local conditions; none were wholly colonial inventions.

---

64 Ibid., especially 22-62.
67 To use Gibbons’s concept, these were powerful agents of ‘cultural colonisation.’ The framework of cultural colonisation is useful for understanding some of the phenomena encountered in this thesis, for example, the adoption of indigenous New Zealand flora in holiday decorations. As Gibbons suggests, such phenomena were not simply natural developments as a sense of national identity grew, but part of an ongoing colonising process. Chris Hilliard suggests that “the heuristic framework of cultural colonisation cannot cogently analyse … cultural events and practices” which are “not narrative.” See “Colonial Culture and the Province of Cultural History,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 36 (2002), 85. I disagree. Decorations, it seems to me, can be as usefully interpreted within this
Surprisingly few historians have explored the adaptation of cultural practices in the colonial setting with an eye for comparison; comparison, that is, with developments in the source cultures. New Zealand historians have been prone to confining their vision to the national setting, although such a failing is not peculiar to New Zealand; James Horn, for example, notes the tendency of colonial American social history to attribute all cultural change to American exceptionalism. The colonists' encounter with the indigenous, both human and environmental, undoubtedly played a significant role in the development of Pakeha culture. However, attributing cultural change only to local conditions can lead to an exaggerated environmental determinism and fail to note wider influences, particularly the ongoing interchange with Britain. In exploring the changes to holiday practices in Otago over the fifty-year period of this thesis, I have been conscious of the changes occurring in Britain over the same period. In paying considerable attention to the British background, this study reveals that some changes in holiday practice were peculiar to the colonial setting, displaying the tentative beginnings of a distinctive culture, but other changes which might at first appear distinctive become, on comparative analysis, responses to more international trends.

Otago

The decision to base this thesis in Otago is not a matter of parochialism, although I happily admit to having lived in the region for some years and finding its study convenient and congenial. A concentration on one region deliberately moves framework as written texts. The weaknesses of the framework for the purposes of this thesis are not about its inability to deal with the non-narrative, but its assumption of a homogeneous colonising culture, one of the myths which this thesis questions.


69 Jock Phillips, in his call for the study of New Zealand's cultural history, notes the tendency of New Zealand historians to see "the new environment as the determinative factor in our evolution." See "Verandahs and Fish and Chips," 334.

70 While on the subject of biases, I note here that I come from a strongly Presbyterian background, although I am no longer involved in any organised religion. While long resident in New Zealand, my family also has a strong Scottish identity.
this work outside the national framework. On a more practical level, it would not be possible to give the detailed picture of the wide range of holidays attempted here across a larger geographic region in a timely fashion. Indeed, some might suggest that Otago is too large a district for this study, and that I cannot do justice to the variety of the region or to local peculiarities. However, a study confined to a smaller locality would be dependent on a small number of sources, probably unrepresentative. In choosing a whole region, this study overcomes some of the difficulties of fragmented sources, and also balances urban and rural experiences.

Otago was not typical of nineteenth-century New Zealand, in as much as any region could be considered typical. As Jeanine Graham notes, “each community developed a distinctive identity” as a result of the differing physical environments and variety in “the background, the aspirations, the financial and personal resources of the pioneers.” But Otago was more distinctive than most. Apart from its small (in both size and population) provincial neighbour Southland, which closely resembled Otago, it was the least average of all New Zealand regions with respect to the national and religious background of the colonists. This reflects its beginnings as a Scottish Free Church colony, and the later impact of major goldrushes. Figure 3 charts data from the 1871 census, around the middle of the study period, displaying the birthplaces of the Otago colonists alongside those for the rest of New Zealand. The most obvious differences are the large number of Scots and low number of English in Otago; indeed, their positions are essentially reversed in Otago as compared with the rest of the country. Furthermore, Otago was even more Scottish in its earlier years, meaning that many of the New Zealand born in the 1871 census would have been offspring of Scottish parents.

---

Erik Olssen comments on the difficulties of doing justice to the complexities of Otago’s “sub-regions” in “Where to From Here,” 76.

Graham, “Pioneers,” 52.

On the general history of Otago, see A. H. McIntosh, The History of Otago: The Origins and Growth of a Wakefield Class Settlement (Dunedin: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1949); and Erik Olssen, A History of Otago (Dunedin: McIndoe, 1984). The former concentrates on politics, while the latter is an excellent social history. On the early period of the colony, see also Tom Brooking, And Captain of Their Souls: An interpretative essay on the life and times of Captain William Cargill (Dunedin: Otago Heritage, 1984). There are numerous histories of the province’s smaller localities, including the fifteen district volumes in the Otago Centennial Historical Publications series, published from 1947 to 1958. Also of note is Erik Olssen’s detailed portrait of a Dunedin working class suburb, Building the New World.

Just over half of Otago’s non-Maori residents were Scottish born in 1858. See Appendix One for details of changes in the Otago population over the study period.
Figure 3 – Birthplace of non-Maori Otago residents in 1871, compared with non-Maori residents in the rest of New Zealand

Source – calculated using Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1871, Table 11.
all of New Zealand’s Chinese lived in Otago – and the Irish, who were under-represented in the province. Otago also had less New Zealand born residents than elsewhere, reflecting its greater appeal to recent migrants. Figure 4 illustrates the position of southern Maori in the colonial period, discussed above. While specific Otago numbers are unclear, Maori were a considerably lower proportion of the population in the South Island than elsewhere. Figure 5 demonstrates the effect Otago’s ethnic mix had on its religious make up: Presbyterianism reigned supreme, with the English denominations, Anglicanism and Methodism, well outnumbered. The rest of Christian New Zealand could reassure itself that almost all the country’s ‘pagans’ and ‘heathens’ lived in Otago; their number corresponded almost exactly with the Chinese born.

This unusual mix of colonists makes Otago an ideal location for this study. Of particular note is the relatively low number of English colonists in Otago in contrast to other New Zealand colonies and the country as a whole. If, as Belich suggests, “the notion of New Zealand’s Englishness needs pruning,” an exploration of cultural practices in Otago, where the English were a minority group, is a good place to start.75

Figure 4 – Maori as a percentage of the total population in Otago and Southland, compared with the North Island

Figure 5 – Religious allegiance of non-Maori Otago residents in 1871, compared with non-Maori residents in the rest of New Zealand

Source – calculated using Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1871, Table 15.
Chapter One – Presbyterian Communion Seasons*

Thomas Adam laboured six days a week on his farm near Waihola in the young colony of Otago. On Sundays he rested. Adam was never short of work, although its nature varied through the year according to the demands of the land and the seasons. Most years, 25 December found him working alongside his family, carting manure from their dung heap to spread on the fields. Occasionally they took New Year’s day as a holiday, sailing on the nearby lake. Easter is undetectable in Thomas Adam’s diary; like most Scots, he did not recognise this ‘Papist’ festival. But twice a year, without fail, in autumn and spring, Thomas Adam did take a holiday for the most festive event in his world: the Presbyterian communion season.¹

Thomas Adam was no eccentric. The communion season held enormous importance for Otago’s nineteenth-century Presbyterians, yet these occasions are largely lost from historical memory, and scholars have paid them remarkably little attention.² The communion season is an appropriate holiday with which to commence this thesis, as it provides a valuable window into the religious and cultural world of the members of Otago’s largest religious denomination. The communion season was a major spiritual event, but also an important social occasion. Its rituals defined the inclusion and exclusion of individuals from membership of the dominant group, determining the boundaries of acceptable belief and behaviour. These occasions, and their associated holidays, helped structure the year, and provided visible evidence that this was a Presbyterian colony. Here is a striking case study of the important role religion played in the colonisation process. Migrants from Scotland continued, in an

---

¹ Thomas Adam diaries, 1878-1886, M-107, OSM. James Herries Beattie recorded extracts from Adam’s 1867-1871 diaries, MS-0582/F/1, HL.

unfamiliar land, the familiar rituals that bound them together as a community and authenticated their role as civilised and godly men and women. A handful of scholars have studied the importation of the Presbyterian communion season into the North American colonies, where it featured as a focus of evangelical revival. In the United States the large outdoor communions eventually transformed into a new institution, the camp meeting. In Canada, with its large Scottish population, the traditional season persisted much longer, particularly in Gaelic communities. This study, in a different location and later time period, reveals the continued importance of the communion season as an ethnic and religious force in new colonies.

Historians of religion underestimate the study of communion as a means of understanding Protestant culture. This may be due to the huge influence of Max Weber, who characterised Calvinism as a doctrine that, in eliminating magic from the world, devalued the sacraments as means to salvation. Nineteenth-century Presbyterianism is often seen as an intellectualised belief system; ascetic rather than mystic. Here I challenge such interpretations. During their much anticipated communion seasons Presbyterians expected to experience the divine, and we cannot fully understand Presbyterian piety without taking the mystical and affective dimensions of these occasions into account.

The Presbyterian communion season was, however, no static phenomenon: woven into this narrative of the season is the associated story of its change over time, which mirrored changes occurring in the world beyond the Presbyterian Church. Again, these changes in ritual over time have received little attention. This may well be due to simple anachronism: Christians tend to focus, not surprisingly, on the remarkable continuity of a ritual that has survived, central to their faith, for two thousand years. Differences between Catholicism and Protestantism over the nature of

---


Christ’s presence in the sacrament may be well known, but today’s Presbyterians have little awareness of the extent to which their communion practices differ from those of their forebears. In entering the world of the nineteenth-century communion season, we encounter a surprisingly alien culture.

Presbyterian church membership

In 1869, the Mataura district held its first Presbyterian communion. “There was a very large meeting at the school-house, Mokareta,” reported the Otago Witness, “and the services were interesting and solemn. A number were admitted to the fellowship of the Church for the first time; and although only about 30 partook of the Sacrament, there were about 100 present, a considerable number of whom came 10 and 15 miles for the occasion.” One notable feature of this communion was the large number of onlookers, with just a third of the congregation actually taking the sacrament. Only church members, whose names were recorded on the communicants’ roll, could participate fully in communion, and for nineteenth-century Presbyterians church membership was a serious matter. Even the most devout churchgoers and Christian believers could lack assurance – confidence in their salvation and their position as one of the “elect” – and many remained Presbyterian “adherents” rather than taking the step to full communicant membership.

Adherents accounted for more than half of adult churchgoers in some Otago parishes.7 Church authorities waged a constant battle against the unwillingness of these Presbyterians to become communicant members. Many developed scruples, amounting almost to a superstitious dread, over Paul’s warning in scripture about the unworthy taking of communion: “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.”8 John Christie, minister at Waikouaiti, revealed

---

6 Otago Witness, 11 December 1869, p. 11.

7 “Adherents,” as defined by the Synod (the Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland’s ruling body), were non-communicants aged sixteen years and over who regularly attended services. Adherents could vote on congregational matters, such as the introduction of instrumental music into church worship, which prompted votes in most Presbyterian parishes in the late nineteenth century. Twenty-seven of the Otago congregations who voted on this matter recorded the votes of adherents and communicant members separately, and of the 4379 voters, 35.8 percent were adherents. In seven congregations, more than half the voters were adherents. In the absence of a reason why adherents and members should have different voting rates (both groups were largely in favour of instrumental music), this indicates the extent of full membership.

8 1 Cor. 11: 29. Unless otherwise stated, all biblical quotations in this thesis are from the Authorised (‘King James’) Version, the English translation most widely used by nineteenth-century Protestants.
his exasperation with the “great many” who scrupled to take communion, warning that “to abstain from the Lord’s table is a sin ... We may be wrong in coming, but we must be wrong in staying away ....”

For one group of Otago residents, migrants from the Scottish Highlands, refusal to take communion was almost a cultural tradition. Very few Presbyterians in the Highlands were communicant members: vast hordes attended communion, but often as few as 10 percent took the sacrament. Colonial Otago was largely a Lowland Scottish settlement. However, anecdotal evidence, such as the demand for Gaelic preaching, suggests that Highlanders formed a substantial minority of Presbyterian churchgoers, and their presence helps account for the large number of non-communicant Presbyterians in Otago.

Those joining the church were known as “young communicants.” While many new members were indeed youthful, often in their teens, married couples also appear fairly frequently in the lists of new members, suggesting a significant number were beyond adolescence. For young people brought up in pious homes, joining the church was recognition of maturity, but it was not a step to be taken lightly. Agnes MacGregor of Oamaru, although a most devout young woman, felt considerable hesitation about her readiness to join the church: “Nellie and I are to be communicants next Lord’s day. I hope we are fit. I don’t quite know about it, for [I] at least am not living the sort of life I ought to be. But it is God’s command, and must be obeyed, and we must not trust in our own righteousness.” A few did treat the matter less seriously. In 1892 George Hall, minister at Wahola, informed the church session of his concern that some young people who had recently applied “were taking this step largely to please their parents or from a feeling that it was respectable to be church

---

9 John Christie, Sermon, March 1886, John Christie papers, DA 12/1, PCANZ archives.
11 The skills of Otago’s Gaelic-speaking Presbyterian ministers were in demand at locations far and wide. Some parishes (notably Chalmers Church Dunedin) held regular Gaelic services. However, I have found no evidence of one distinctive Highland communion practice in Otago – the Friday “Question Meeting,” where “the Men,” charismatic Gaelic lay leaders, expounded various spiritual questions. Highlanders were generally scattered through the colony and a minority in most parishes: presumably they did not have sufficient influence to introduce a custom unfamiliar to the majority.
12 Agnes MacGregor diary, 15 March 1883, Misc-MS-1291, HL.
members.” The session advised Hall to ask “pointed questions” of each candidate, and to accept only those “showing a change of heart;” evidence of conversion was essential.13 Not all Presbyterians, however, were evangelicals, many counting themselves Christians from early childhood. For most church sessions Christian knowledge was the most important qualification for communicant membership, and to ensure that knowledge was adequate, many applicants attended a preparation class run by the local minister. At Knox Church Dunedin, D. M. Stuart liked “to see young communicants, singly or in pairs, and at least four times, partly to make their acquaintance, and go over the doctrines bound up in the Communion, and show the life in which they should eventuate.”14 This involved considerable work in a large parish, but Stuart made it a priority, evidently finding the effort worthwhile. “I have been busy for a month receiving young communicants,” he wrote to his son in 1889, “for I still keep up my old way of receiving them individually or in twos. The young number 21.”15 This was a significant rite of passage for young Presbyterians, and, as George Hall’s concerns suggest, a time of considerable pride to devout families. G. M. Thomson felt deeply moved when his seventeen-year-old son Malcolm joined the church at a Knox preparatory service, an occasion which evoked memories of his late wife. “There was a large congregation and a delightful & refreshing service, Mr Hewitson addressing the young communicants with great impressiveness. I felt an intense and painful interest in the service thinking how glad Emma would have been had she been with us on the occasion of Malcolm joining the church.”16

Presbyterians transferring their membership from elsewhere did so by presenting a “disjunction” certificate, which stated they were a member “in good standing” at their previous parish (see Figure 6). As Hugh Jackson has noted, for the less devout, landfall in the colonies proved “a testing time”: exposure to new friends and a new environment, and the distance of family religious tradition made it all too easy to fall out of the habit of churchgoing, let alone committing to membership.17

13 Waihola Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 14 October 1892, BM 4/4, PCANZ archives.
15 D. M. Stuart to William Stuart, 10 September 1889, D. M. Stuart papers, letters, Box II, OSM.
16 George Malcolm Thomson diary, 12 September 1895, AG-839, HL.
Figure 6 – Disjunction certificates

Two disjunction certificates which were presented to Andersons Bay Presbyterian Church, Dunedin.

Top – certificate in the hand of Rev. John Allan of Waihola, testifying to the membership and character of Mrs John Wilson, 1869.

Bottom – certificate of Mr and Mrs Robert Brunton, from Anderston United Presbyterian Church, Glasgow, 1871.

Source – PCANZ archives, Andersons Bay Presbyterian Church records, BA 1/7, 19/2/14.
The Green Island Presbyterian Church session regretted “that many who having been in connection with the church in the Home country, when arriving here – upon the plea that they are not settled! delay attaching themselves to the church and neglect her ordinances.” While the incidence of slippage is difficult to assess, the active work of Otago’s pioneer Presbyterian ministers certainly discouraged such backsliding. Even the gold diggers could not escape the attentions of the Presbyterian clergy, who shortly after the first rush at Gabriel’s Gully arranged a roster to ensure weekly services were held on the diggings.  

In most parishes, attending communion at least once every two years was sufficient to maintain membership. Non-attenders could expect a warning letter from the session or a visit from the minister or local elder. Presumably this stirred some to attend the coming communion, while others who had drifted away now ended their formal association with the church. The church also expected members to conform to certain standards of behaviour. While the Presbyterians of nineteenth-century Otago were not subjected to the severe and public discipline that was a feature of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scotland, disciplinary cases were by no means unusual. The numbers did, however, vary hugely from parish to parish; the residents of Otepopo and Tokomairiro either sinned more than Presbyterians of other districts, or elected more conservative church elders. Disciplinary cases in Otago invariably involved highly visible misdemeanours, the most common being public drunkenness, and “fornication” resulting in the birth of a child. The disciplinary case of a Kaikorai man, cited for drunkenness in 1876, is typical. Appearing before the session, he admitted the charge, and “expressed regret for his conduct.” The session “seriously and kindly admonished” him, and advised him to “exhibit signs of repentance, & reformation.” Being “judged to be penitent,” this miscreant “was not suspended from privileges.” A repeat offence might be dealt with more severely, involving a period of suspension from communion. For example, the Hampden session suspended three men found “guilty of the sin of habitual drunkenness” from the privilege of receiving

---

18 Green Island Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 3 April 1876, BC 2/6, PCANZ archives.
20 Kaikorai Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 3 April 1876, BC 3/6, PCANZ archives.
communion in 1871.\textsuperscript{21} Fornicators usually presented themselves voluntarily to the session for discipline, and it is clear that many were motivated by the wish to have their child baptised, as well as wanting to remain communicant members themselves. Most were married couples, whose baby had arrived soon after the wedding, providing blatant evidence of "antenuptial fornication." Other sins prompting discipline ranged from habitually selling goods on the Sabbath, to showing "general contempt" towards the fast day, to fighting.\textsuperscript{22} Sessions barred from communion any church member with a disciplinary case not yet resolved. Some church members voluntarily abstained from communion because they knew their behaviour fell below the accepted standard. Mr Duncan, for example, could not attend an 1885 communion at Waikouaiti "on account of financial troubles."\textsuperscript{23} Presbyterians frowned on bankruptcy or any business matters not entirely 'above board.' Duncan does not appear in any disciplinary case at Waikouaiti, but he no doubt knew that the church session and members would prefer not to see a man with unresolved financial troubles taking communion.

Disciplinary cases dealt with by sessions decreased rapidly as the century progressed. In 1895 the Synod's committee on the State of Religion reported that not a single case of discipline occurred in Otago that year. This was, however, "not because no cases have arisen calling for the exercise of discipline," but the result of "a growing tendency to deal in private with cases that used formerly to be dealt within open session." The report declared that "Kindly yet faithful dealing in private is more likely to lead to repentance," also noting that discipline could not be effective "when there is little temptation to evade its salutary effects by the prospect of a ready welcome awaiting the offender in other denominations."\textsuperscript{24} If discipline became increasingly private, Presbyterians remained well aware of the standards of behaviour expected by their leaders. Communicants were required to be moderate in their drinking habits, to abstain from sex outside marriage, to be upright in business

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Hampden Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 18 September 1871, 654/25c, NOM.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Otepopo Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 25 October 1868, 662/26b, NOM; East Taieri Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 27 April 1855, BC 1/4, PCANZ archives; and Tokomairiro Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 5 May 1861, BM 4/2, PCANZ archives. The Otepopo Session Minute Book includes many instances of discipline, especially for antenuptial fornication.
\item \textsuperscript{23} John Christie diary, 25 October 1885, AG-102, OSM.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Proceedings of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland October-November 1895 (Dunedin: Otago Daily Times, 1895), 42.
\end{itemize}
dealings, to keep the Sabbath, and to be at least outwardly pious. Those who fell outside these standards were, if they expressed sufficient repentance, allowed to partake of communion; otherwise they were excluded. The rituals surrounding admission to the sacrament thus reinforced the boundaries of acceptable moral behaviour for Presbyterians.

Preparing for communion

"God sparing us we intend to celebrate next Lord’s day the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper," John Christie told his Waikouaiti congregation. "It will therefore be appropriate that we this day turn our thoughts to that ordinance and refresh our minds with some views of its nature and use." Ministers usually preached about communion on the Sunday before the season began, and Agnes MacGregor reveals the anticipation that the coming occasion brought: "The communion is soon coming on again. I do hope we shall all get good from it." The season proper began with the "fast day," usually on the Thursday prior to communion Sunday. "Sacramental fast days" had no warrant in scripture or the "subordinate documents" of the Presbyterian Church, but formed a long-standing Scottish tradition, dating from the seventeenth century. On a typical early Dunedin fast day, business was "entirely suspended." The "quietness of the town" displayed "all the appearance of a Sabbath day, with our well-dressed townspeople repairing to their respective well-filled Churches under the heat of a bright midsummer’s sun." Although many used the term "fast day," there is no evidence that Presbyterians literally fasted on such days. Many ministers referred to them more accurately as days "of humiliation and prayer." D. M. Stuart always found "an extraordinarily good dinner at the manse" when he was "invited to fill one of his brethren’s pulpits" on a fast day. Devout Presbyterians spent these days, on which they did not work, attending church services and meditating on their spiritual state; the great work of self-examination required in preparing for communion.

25 John Christie, Sermon, October 1885.
26 Agnes MacGregor diary, 24 June 1883.
27 Burnet, Holy Communion, 130-132.
29 Ibid., 26 January 1878, p. 7.
Ministers rarely preached at their own parish’s fast day. Instead, one or more of the “brethren” generally came to assist with the considerable demands of the communion season. Over thirty consecutive communions at Waikouaiti, twenty-one different ministers gave the fast day sermons; only twice could John Christie not organise a guest preacher (see Table 1). Congregations must have attended these services with greater anticipation than they did a usual Sunday, and in isolated communities with little organised leisure this in itself was an entertainment. Peter Matheson notes that “few of the early ministers ... seem to have been outstanding preachers.”30 Still, a few were remembered for their powerful and colourful pulpit style. Jane Fell recalled that James Clarke of Palmerston “would give great shouts—no chance for 40 winks with him.”31

The typical fast day sermon focused on Christian salvation, exhorting both “saved” and “unsaved” to renounce their sinful ways and turn to God. The combination of a visiting preacher, an expectant congregation, and a mood of self-examination, made this a great evangelistic opportunity. Often church sessions extended this mission opportunity by holding a week of evening “evangelistic” services before communion. In 1873, the Wakatipu congregation enthusiastically received two visiting preachers, John Ryley of Otepopo and Alexander Todd of Oamaru, at their communion. The visitors addressed eight meetings, to the delight of the local session, who reported that “great interest” and “a refreshing influence” attended their meetings, that “souls were blessed and the cause of religion advanced.”32 Whether by two fast day sermons, or a whole week of services, Presbyterians in nineteenth-century Otago were undoubtedly challenged to review the state of their immortal souls every time the communion season came around. Some came to depend on the regular challenge of the season to maintain their spiritual fervour. Agnes MacGregor wrote in her diary of the “wretched routine” and “formality” into which her spiritual life had sunk. Her hopes for rejuvenation centred on the approaching communion: “I do hope to be stirred up then!”33

30 Peter Matheson, “1840-1870 The Settler Church,” in Presbyterians in Aotearoa 1840-1990, ed. Dennis McEldowney (Wellington: Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), 34.
32 Queenstown Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 6 May 1873, BR 1/2, PCANZ archives.
33 Agnes MacGregor diary, 6 June 1886.
### Table 1 – Visiting fast day preachers at Waikouaiti, 1885-1899

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Preacher</th>
<th>Home parish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 April 1885</td>
<td>William Banneman</td>
<td>Retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 October 1885</td>
<td>Alexander Finlayson</td>
<td>Blueskin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 April 1886</td>
<td>Hugh Kelly</td>
<td>Ravensbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 October 1886</td>
<td>James McKerrow</td>
<td>Mosgiel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 April 1887</td>
<td>James Gibb</td>
<td>First Church, Dunedin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 September 1887</td>
<td>David Borrie</td>
<td>North East Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 April 1888</td>
<td>Robert Sutherland</td>
<td>Kaikorai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 October 1888</td>
<td>A. Bruce Todd</td>
<td>Strath Taieri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 April 1889</td>
<td>John Torrance</td>
<td>Hospital &amp; Gaol Chaplain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 October 1889</td>
<td>Andrew Cameron</td>
<td>Andersons Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 May 1890</td>
<td>William Nichol</td>
<td>Hampden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 October 1890</td>
<td>William Campbell</td>
<td>South Dunedin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 April 1891</td>
<td>George Hunter</td>
<td>Cromwell?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 October 1891</td>
<td>Daniel Dutton</td>
<td>Caversham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 April 1892</td>
<td>Alexander Finlayson</td>
<td>Bluesham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 September 1892</td>
<td>John Christie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 March 1893</td>
<td>James MacGregor</td>
<td>Columba, Oamaru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 October 1893</td>
<td>John Waters</td>
<td>Church Extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 April 1894</td>
<td>Alexander Finlayson</td>
<td>Blueskin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 October 1894</td>
<td>John Waters</td>
<td>Church Extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 April 1895</td>
<td>Isaac Jolly</td>
<td>South Dunedin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 October 1895</td>
<td>James Clark</td>
<td>Retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 April 1896</td>
<td>William Campbell</td>
<td>Retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 October 1896</td>
<td>William Ash</td>
<td>Ravensbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 April 1897</td>
<td>Hugh Kelly</td>
<td>Waitame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 October 1897</td>
<td>Robert Sutherland</td>
<td>Kaikorai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 April 1898</td>
<td>John Christie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 October 1898</td>
<td>W. Panton Brown</td>
<td>Macraes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 May 1899</td>
<td>John Waters</td>
<td>Church Extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 October 1899</td>
<td>Isaac McIntyre</td>
<td>North Dunedin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The diaries of John Christie, Presbyterian minister at Waikouaiti, reveal the considerable trouble he exerted to have a visiting preacher, preferably a new one, at his parish’s sacramental fast day. The visiting preacher was a feature of fast days throughout the province.

At the end of the fast day service, intending communicants came forward to receive a communion token, required for entry to the Lord’s table on the coming Sabbath. Tokens were small metal objects, usually inscribed with the name of the church on one side and on the other a biblical text, most commonly the command of Jesus “This do in remembrance of me” (see Figure 7). The simple design of the tokens befit a church resistant to visual imagery, yet they retained a tangible aesthetic appeal. The physical elements of the communion were all the more significant because their very physicality distanced them from the everyday features of Presbyterian worship, so firmly centred on “the word.” Communion tokens symbolised the holder’s membership of an elect group, those worthy to partake in the communion. Accepting such a token was a public act displaying both the confidence of the session in the recipient, and the recipient’s own sense of self-worth. Besides their symbolic value, sessions found tokens useful because they allowed them to record the number of people who had taken communion. They compared numbers with previous communions to “measure” church growth; Otago Presbyterians were highly susceptible to the Victorian fondness for statistics. Tokens, however, did not provide the names of the communicants, making it difficult for elders to keep the roll accurately, especially in large congregations. From the 1870s onwards, parishes began to introduce “communion cards” to overcome this difficulty. These cards recorded the name of the communicant, as well as the parish and date. Some churches issued them, like tokens, at the fast day services, but in many parishes the elders delivered them to church members’ homes. This demonstrated, and undoubtedly also contributed to, a new attitude towards communion by some Presbyterians. Attending a fast day service where the preaching centred on self-examination, sin and repentance, then physically coming forward as one worthy enough to apply for a token, was a very different thing from receiving a hand-delivered card, inviting the member to attend the coming

34 The PCANZ archives have a good collection of tokens. See also R. M. Greig, Harry Robinson and W. W. Woodside, Communions tokens: The Australian, New Zealand and miscellaneous series (Melbourne: Hawthorne, 1964).
Figure 7 – Communion tokens
Otago communion tokens (both sides shown) with typical text and design. Top – Tapanui Presbyterian Church (31 x 21mm). Bottom – East Taieri Presbyterian Church (29 x 21mm).

Source – PCANZ archives token collection, 2001/0115.
communion. Not all Otago parishes approved of the cards, and some continued to use tokens in the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{35}

\textbf{Communion as a social event}

All the gatherings of the communion season presented an opportunity for socialising. John Christie enjoyed the company of the many and various brethren who came to the Waikouaiti fast day, often spending the interval between the two services walking with his colleague to the nearby beach or some site of geological interest.\textsuperscript{36}

On the Friday following an 1879 Waihola fast day, “five ministers, three elders [and] three deacons” took an “excursion to the mouth of the river” in Thomas Adam’s boat.\textsuperscript{37} Presumably all these ministers came to assist at or partake of the Waihola communion. For all ministers, but particularly those in country districts, the communion season offered a precious opportunity for fellowship and support from other clergy. And social occasions were not confined to the clergy: James Urie, minister at Pomahaka, regularly treated “the office-bearers and some others” to “a sumptuous repast provided in first-rate style at one of the hotels” at the close of the communion service.\textsuperscript{38}

Communion Sunday, the high point of the season, drew the largest congregations of the year. Those who lived at a distance made a special effort to attend. Edmund Smith, who lived alone on his property at Kuri Bush in the 1850s, rode twenty-five kilometres to East Taieri on the twice-yearly “Communion Sabbath,” and there he could not just partake of the sacrament, but also meet friends and acquaintances he seldom saw, discover the latest news and greet newcomers to the district.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{35} Many congregations went through a transition period where they used both tokens and cards. Minute books confirm that at least eight Otago parishes – Balclutha, Tokomairiro, Green Island, Palmerston, Blueskin, Lawrence, Otago Peninsula and Chalmers Dunedin – were still using tokens alone by 1900. Nineteen parishes were using either cards alone, or both cards and tokens. For the other sixteen Otago parishes I have studied, I was unable to determine when the change was made. At Balclutha tokens were not replaced by cards until the 1920s: see Balclutha Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 6 December 1923, BK 3/2, PCANZ archives.

\textsuperscript{36} John Christie diaries. See, for example, entries for 29 September 1887, 15 October 1891 and 11 October 1894.

\textsuperscript{37} Thomas Adam diary, 31 October 1879.

\textsuperscript{38} C. S. Ross, \textit{The Story of the Otago Church and Settlement}, (Dunedin: Wilkie Caffin, 1887), 170.

In the earlier years of the colony, the usual place of worship, often a schoolroom, was sometimes too small to accommodate the congregation during the communion season. In 1868, the Portobello communion was held “in a clearing in the broadleaf trees.” Many early Otago communions took place in conveniently located large buildings, for example an Oamaru store in 1862, and a barn at Blueskin in 1863. The East Taieri congregation held their first communion, in 1854, in the usual small church/schoolroom, but some “were obliged to remain at the open windows outside the church for want of room within.” This was a real community event, with “parties present who must have travelled 10, 12, or more miles that morning … and so universal was the turn-out – mothers with young infants in their arms &c., &c., - that there must have been few houses over the wide expanse of plain that day that were not emptied of their inhabitants.” (see Figure 8)

While the pragmatic use of the handiest sizeable building or the great outdoors for communion might seem a peculiarly pioneering or colonial practice, such locations had strong historical resonance for Scottish Presbyterians. The Covenanters, and early Free Church Presbyterians, often held communions outdoors or in temporary locations, and stories of such occasions were among the most enduring images of these Presbyterian “heroes.” Large outdoor communions, poet Robert Burns’s notorious “holy fairs,” also flourished in the south-west of Scotland and Ulster during the eighteenth century, later moving north to the Highlands along with evangelical revival. But if pioneering communions in temporary locations had some romantic historical associations, these arrangements lost their appeal as the new colony matured. Colonists enthusiastically embraced their mission to ‘civilise’ the

---

40 Otago Peninsula Presbyterian Church, Seventieth Anniversary Celebrations 1868-1938, Souvenir Programme, 13.

41 St Paul’s Presbyterian Church, Oamaru, Session Minute Book, 10 November 1863, 2619/27b, NOM; and William Johnstone diary, 10 April 1863, MS-0993/1, HL.

42 Otago Witness, 7 October 1854.

Figure 8 – East Taieri Presbyterian Church
This early church building proved too small to accommodate all those who attended communion in 1854, many listening at the windows.

Source – PCANZ archives photo collection, P-S13-4.
‘wilderness,’ and one measure of a respectable new society was church building. Later in the century, parishes in the midst of building programmes often delayed communion services, as when the Waikouaiti Presbyterians postponed their usual communion, “on account of the inconvenience of dispensing the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in the Mechanics Hall,” their temporary place of worship while they built a new church.44

No matter the location of the services, for the Otago colonists the communion season served as a reminder of home. Jane McCosh Smith’s shipboard diary reveals her particular longing for her family in Aberdeenshire at the time of their communion: “Been thinking of you all at home. This is your communion Sunday ... I wish I could have been with [Papa] on this day, I little thought last communion, that I would be so far from home before the next.”45 George Hepburn of Dunedin often wrote of the communions he attended to his family in Scotland, noting one year that the “winter sacrament” was held on the same date as the Kirkcaldy “midsummer” communion. Hepburn undoubtedly thought of his distant family on these occasions.46 English colonists might particularly feel the loss of a loved one at Christmas. For Presbyterians, however, communion was the festival occasion that reminded them most of those who had died: it was only natural that deceased members of the community should be missed at this important community event. Thoughts of eternity always seemed close at the communion season, which formally recalled the death of Christ, and caused men and women to ponder the state of their immortal souls. As John Christie reminded his Waikouaiti parishioners, “We may not all again sit down at another communion table. We are not all here that sat down at the last ... We may sit down with them in the Kingdom of heaven if we live and die resting on the atoning blood, which we here thus met to celebrate.”47

The communion season was thus a pivotal time for the social life of Presbyterians, communicants and adherents alike; a time to enjoy a reunion of the community, to remember the distant and the departed, and to welcome new members to the ranks of the ‘elected.’

44 Waikouaiti Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 10 April 1878, BI 3/1, PCANZ archives.
45 Jane McCosh Smith diary, 9 April 1870, DC 10/7, PCANZ archives.
46 George Hepburn to Thomas Martin, 28 June 1856, George Hepburn correspondence, William Downie Stewart Papers, MS-0985, Series 24, Box 62, File 1, HL.
The communion service

Above all, of course, the communion season was a spiritual event, and the pinnacle of all this extensive ritual was the sacrament itself. The communion service included all the usual aspects of Presbyterian worship: the singing of metrical psalms (supplemented by hymns in later years), long extempore prayer, and a sermon. The communion Sabbath sermon, known as the “action sermon” (“the action” being an old name for the communion itself), frequently focused on the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. Favoured texts referred to the redemptive power of Jesus’ blood, or Isaiah’s prophecies of the suffering and redemptive action of the messiah. Otago Presbyterians appreciated such preaching, Sarah Smith noting in her diary one communion Sunday, “a very wet day but I went, and was glad I did, for we had an excellent sermon from Mr Davidson.”

After the action sermon, and before the communion, the minister “fenced” the communion table to keep out the unworthy. This warned intending communicants to examine themselves a final time, and ensure nothing prevented their coming forward. John Christie addressed the Waikouaiti communicants, in traditional Presbyterian fencing style, “Let us pause as it were to think on what we are about to do, lest we put forth our unclean hands rashly to touch the holy things of God.” He then read and expounded the biblical passages which outlined the “ten commandments” and the “works of the flesh.” Not all of those who had come forward for tokens at the fast day partook of the communion; perhaps some hesitated following this final exhortation against communicating unworthily. A changing attitude to the sacrament, whereby Presbyterians were invited to communion rather than being harangued to prove themselves fit to attend, led to the decline of “fencing.”

---

47 John Christie, Sacrament address, April 1888.
48 See, for example, James MacGregor’s action sermon texts, recorded in the Columba Presbyterian Church, Oamaru, Session Minute Book, 2453/26c, NOM.
49 Sarah Smith diary, 15 June 1890, Misc-MS-1255, HL.
50 John Christie, addresses for October Sacrament 1887. See also “Fencing,” undated address attributed to Michael Watt, DA 5/2, PCANZ archives.
51 Andrew Stobo, minister at Invercargill, kept close track of the tokens for which he was responsible. His diary entry on an 1862 communion recorded that “Up to this date, 72 tokens are returned from the tables, 3 not from the tables, and 7 were not given out, making 82 in all in my possession,” later adding notes of further tokens returned. Tokens returned “not from the tables” suggest that not all those given a token actually took communion. Andrew Stobo diary, 6 April 1862, DA 4/8, PCANZ archives.
insufficient evidence to determine when fencing fell out of favour in Otago. Conservative John Christie still used the traditional form, if somewhat abbreviated, in 1887, and he was unlikely to have been the only one. For Christie, the communion was no open invitation; it required the partakers to meet "qualifications." 52

Early Otago Presbyterians maintained the traditional practice of coming forward to sit around a long communion table, as though at a meal. 53 This reflected the sixteenth-century reformers’ desire to emulate as closely as possible the biblical description of the "last supper." It also avoided any suggestion of worship of the communion elements, which they feared the use of an altar promoted. As the colony grew, practice changed in line with developments already occurring in Scotland. There some city churches served communicants in their pews because their congregations no longer willingly tolerated the long services accompanying the numerous sittings of communion required for a large congregation. 54 By the 1880s it had become common practice in Otago to serve communion to members sitting in specially allocated pews, with the communion elements displayed on a smaller table at the front of the church. White linen partially covered the communicants’ pews. This linen served to represent the white cloths once used to cover the large communion tables, and reminded communicants that they attended a very special banquet.

Churches used linen of fine quality to “dress” the pews, and took great care with its maintenance (see Figure 9). 55

52 On fencing the tables in Scotland, see Burnet, Holy Communion, 39-41, 262-263; and Schmidt, Holy Fairs, 109-113. The decline of traditional fencing in Scotland began in the 1860s, with some ministers modifying, shortening, or simply discontinuing the practice. It persisted much longer amongst conservatives. On resistance to the decline of fencing, see Douglas M. Murray, “Continuity and Change in the Liturgical Revival in Scotland: John Macleod and the Duns Case, 1875-1876," in Continuity and Change in Christian Worship, ed. R. N. Swanson (Woodbridge: Ecclesiastical History Society / Boydell, 1999), 396-407.

53 See, for example, Thomas Burns to Muir Macredie, 28 January 1849, published in N. Z Presbyterian, 1 September 1886, p. 47; and Thomas Burns diary, 14 January 1849; 15 July 1849; 20 January 1850; and 9 February 1851; C 017, OSM. At early Otago communions, Burns served two and sometimes three separate sittings at the table.

54 Burnet, Holy Communion, 268-271.

55 In some parishes the task of caring for, and even supplying, communion linen fell to the minister’s wife, as when the Tokomairiro deacons requested Mrs Todd, the wife of their new minister, “to provide whatever Communion Linen might be deemed deficient.” Tokomairiro Presbyterian Church Deacons’ Court Minute Book, 31 January 1860, quoted in Keith W. Robertson, “A Remnant People: Nineteenth Century Presbyterians on the Tokomairiro” (MLit thesis, University of Otago, 1999), 60. Elsewhere the task of maintaining the linen was contracted out. Mrs Crawford charged the Port Chalmers Presbyterian Church £1 “for washing and dressing communion cloths for six months ending December 1882,” a period which covered two communions. Port Chalmers Presbyterian Church Deacons’ Court Receipts 1883-1884, 97/79/31 AE 18/4, PCANZ archives.
Figure 9 – ‘Dressing’ for communion

By the late-nineteenth century, most parishes had abandoned the practice of sitting around a long table for communion. This photograph shows Caversham Presbyterian Church “dressed” for the sacrament with fine linen cloths (date unknown, possibly early twentieth century).

Source – PCANZ archives photo collection, P-L6-19.
Before partaking of the elements, communicants listened to a final address from the presiding minister: the “table address.” This concentrated their thoughts on Christ. Thomas Burns’s address to the First Church Dunedin communicants in 1864 encouraged an almost rapturous mood at the sacrament. Burns assured communicants of the saviour’s presence with them here and now: “Is it possible, can it be that I, a poor trembling communicant, am indeed the beloved of the High and Holy King of Heaven? Does the eternal Jehovah call me His beloved? Does He invite and press me now to feed upon His own body and blood? Yes ... that Royal redeemer ... at this moment bends down to you, and bids you feed by faith upon His own body and blood, till your souls are fully satisfied with that Divine food.”\(^5^6\) Communicants expected to “meet” Christ at the communion table; here they sought a special blessing from God.

After reading the bible passage describing the “institution” of the Lord’s Supper, the minister broke the bread and raised the cup of wine, and, assisted by the church elders, passed them on to the communicants. The communion vessels – plates, goblets and jugs – were most often silver-plated, although the first East Taieri communion vessels were made of pewter, and Chalmers parish had a crystal communion service.\(^5^7\) Two features of nineteenth-century Presbyterian communion ware stand out: its high value, reflecting the cost of the precious materials from which it was made; and the simplicity of its design. Presbyterians valued the sacrament highly, and it was only fitting to serve the precious elements in precious vessels. The elements were not, however, to be worshipped for themselves. The vessels therefore resembled in style the plates and cups that might be used for an everyday meal, serving as a reminder that this was a meal of bread and wine rather than the body and blood of Christ. Presbyterians, traditionally iconoclastic, continued to spurn complex engraving or embroidery for communion items, even in this age of highly ornamented Victoriana (see Figure 10).

Scottish Presbyterians did not merely taste the communion bread and wine, but ate and drank in good measure, and early Otago Presbyterians also seem to have taken more than a sip and a nibble.\(^5^8\) During the mid-1860s, the Port Chalmers

---

\(^{56}\) “The last sacrament in the old church. December, 1864. Table Addresses by the Rev. Dr. Burns,” in Religious Commemoration of the Seventieth Anniversary of Otago, ed. Alex. Whyte (Dunedin: Otago Early Settlers’ Association, 1918), 31-34.

\(^{57}\) Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Dunedin, Session Minute Book, 6 July 1889, BA 4/4, PCANZ archives.

\(^{58}\) Burnet, Holy Communion, 194-195; and Schmidt, Holy Fairs, 196-197.
Figure 10 – Communion vessels

Communion ware from East Taieri Presbyterian Church, typical of the solid and simple design of Otago communion vessels. This set, dated 1854, is pewter, but silver-plated vessels were more common.

Presbyterian Church regularly purchased three bottles of port and two loaves of bread for communion, suggesting communicants partook generously of the elements. They spent over the average price for their port: quality was important.59

In the last two decades of the century, with many Presbyterians involved in the temperance movement, the use of alcohol for the sacrament became a matter of dispute. “I always feel a painful incongruity in using as a symbol of the blood of our Redeemer an element from which I have pledged myself to abstain at other times as a dangerous beverage,” wrote prominent layman William McCaw.60 Many Otago Presbyterians shared his sentiments. The Dunedin Women’s Christian Temperance Union, led by their “superintendent of unfermented wine” Helen Nicol, campaigned vigorously against alcohol at communion. They argued that it endangered those who had overcome an alcohol addiction, and Christians must remove this stumbling block and practice self-denial for the sake of the weakest amongst them.61 Although some church sessions readily adopted “unfermented wine” for communion, others adamantly refused to submit to this new ideology, and a few compromised by changing from the traditional port to unfortified “light Colonial wine” or “New Zealand wine.”62 If some Presbyterians abhorred alcohol, others found the taste of “unfermented” wine objectionable. In 1896 the Palmerston parish trialed unfermented wine, but clearly many communicants disliked the taste, as the following year they agreed to use “light Colonial wine” instead.63 In 1902, after receiving complaints about the taste of “Welsh’s Non-alcoholic Wine for Communion Use,” the St Andrew’s Dunedin session switched to “Welsh’s Non-alcoholic Invalid Port Wine,”

59 Port Chalmers Presbyterian Church Cash Book 1857-1883, BG 4/1, PCANZ archives; Port Chalmers Presbyterian Church Deacons’ Court Receipts 1865-1869, 97/79/27 AE 18/4, PCANZ archives. While the number of communicants is not clearly recorded, earlier and later figures suggest it would have been more than twenty, and well under a hundred.

60 N. Z. Presbyterian, 1 December 1891, p. 119.

61 For example, see Nicol’s letter to the editor of the Outlook, 8 December 1900, p. 27. The Women’s Christian Temperance Union sent a pamphlet on “the use of Unfermented Wine for Sacramental purposes” to all Anglican and Presbyterian clergy in New Zealand. See White Ribbon, May 1895, p. 6. For the organisation’s petitioning of church sessions, see also First Church Dunedin Session Minute Book, 8 July 1889, PCANZ archives; and North Dunedin Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 30 August 1895, BA 5/1, PCANZ archives.

62 By 1900, at least ten Otago parishes had switched from fermented to unfermented wine for communion. Many other parishes, however, continued to use the traditional port, and debates over the matter would continue well into the twentieth century.

63 Palmerston Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 24 August 1896 and 31 March 1897, BZ 1/1, PCANZ archives.
which was found to have a superior flavour. Taste, as well as alcohol content, determined the choice of suitable wine for the sacrament, and Presbyterians believed a rich red wine best symbolised the blood of the saviour.

In the late nineteenth century microbiological knowledge expanded rapidly, with bacteria identified as the cause of an ever-increasing range of dreaded diseases. Sharing a common cup with many different people, and eating bread already handled by fellow communicants, clearly contradicted the new doctrine of cleanliness, and many Presbyterians became uncomfortable with the risks they perceived in the communion. In 1891 the session of Knox Church Dunedin started cutting the communion bread into small cubes before the sacrament, and others soon followed. The late 1890s saw discussion of a new American fashion, the individual communion cup, and in 1900 these were introduced at St Andrew’s, Dunedin, and First Church, Invercargill. Many shared the views of Christchurch Presbyterian R. W. Black, to whom the common cup was “opposed to delicacy, cleanliness and health.” Some Presbyterians, however, disapproved of the innovation and the Synod received a protest. Objectors regretted most of all the loss of the sense of community implied in the sharing of communion vessels. Isaac Jolly, minister at South Dunedin, claimed “the handing of the cup to one another” was “a significant act.” Many Presbyterians felt the sacrament drew communicants closer to one another. When Rev. John Ryley of Otepopo dispensed communion to the troubled Oamaru congregation in 1868, he wrote to a colleague of the large attendance, and his hope that “it may be blessed for bringing them together and healing any division that may have existed.” The individual cup made communion a more individual act. Other took exception to the

---

64 St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Dunedin, Session Minute Book, 13 October 1902, BB 2/11, PCANZ archives.
65 Knox Presbyterian Church, Dunedin, Session Minute Book, 3 February 1891, archives of Knox Church Dunedin.
66 Outlook, 10 June 1899, p. 5; 24 June 1899, p. 5; and 14 April 1900, p. 12; and St Andrew’s Session, 18 March 1900.
67 Outlook, 15 December 1900, p. 28.
68 Ibid., 17 February 1900, p. 27.
69 John Ryley to D. M. Stuart, 9 December 1868, D. M. Stuart papers, letters, Box I, A/11, OSM. The trouble probably resulted from the ministry of Charles Connor, who “did not seem to have the gift of getting on with people” and had been “constrained to resign.” See John Collie, The Story of the Otago Free Church Settlement 1848 to 1948: A Century’s Growth by a Southern Sea (Dunedin: Presbyterian Bookroom, [1948]), 78-79.
70 Ian Breward comments on the individual cup as symbolic of increasing individualisation of religion: see “1871-1901 Clamant Needs, Determined Battlers,” in Presbyterians in Aotearoa, ed.
marketing methods of the “Yankee” company that targeted ministers with publicity pamphlets on their individual cups; the American “Sanitary Communion Outfit Company” had a Dunedin agent by 1900 (see Figure 11).\textsuperscript{71} Objections to the individual communion cup, however, had little effect. Once Synod approved the innovation, most Otago congregations voted overwhelmingly in favour of the “cuppies,” and by 1910 the majority of Otago parishes had abolished the common cup. The individual communion cup not only signified the privileging of the individual over the community, but displayed, like the campaign over fermented wine, a new attitude to the communion elements. The once “holy” sacramental elements, attributed in the early modern period with healing, and sometimes even magical properties, had in this age of science become potential bearers of illness. As Rev. Daniel Dutton of Caversham Presbyterian Church declared, “it was preposterous to suppose there was not an element of danger in the common use of one cup.” Unless “there was Divine interposition to prevent the action of a natural law there must be real danger.”\textsuperscript{72}

If some Otago Presbyterians worried about contracting tuberculosis or breaking their temperance pledge at communion, for most this remained an impressive and emotional occasion. Communicants undoubtedly expected to be drawn close to Christ at the communion table. As First Church Dunedin’s Rev. George Sutherland explained, the “grand purpose of the Supper” was to bring the individual believer “into close communion with his glorified Head and Master, who is spiritually present … When, through the Spirit’s influence, the Master’s presence is felt, the soul is borne upward as on eagles’ wings.”\textsuperscript{73} Alexander Begg noted of an 1859 sacrament at First Church that “a large number attended and many seemed to be very much impressed.”\textsuperscript{74} First Church minister Thomas Burns also noted Otago’s early

\textsuperscript{71} Outlook, 17 February 1900, p. 4; 14 April 1900, p. 12; and 1 December 1900, pp. 5-6.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 17 February 1900, pp. 27-28. On popular beliefs regarding the “magical” properties of communion elements, which occasionally persisted in eighteenth-century Scotland, see Schmidt, Holy Fairs, 152-153.

\textsuperscript{73} George Sutherland, The Lord’s Supper; or, the Nature, Benefits and Obligations of the Commemorative Rite of the Christian Church (Dunedin: Wise, 1870), 49.

\textsuperscript{74} Alexander Campbell Begg diary, 17 December 1859, AG-497-01, HL.
Figure 11 – Non-alcoholic wine and individual cups
Advertisements for non-alcoholic communion wine and individual communion cups became increasingly common in the Presbyterian periodical, the *Outlook*, late in the nineteenth century.

communions as impressive occasions, regularly describing them as “very solemn.” He found the sacrament a “great comfort.” Christina Evans found communion a most happy experience. In 1896 even the weather seemed fitted to the occasion. “A lovely day, quite in keeping with the ordinance,” she noted in her diary on this “feast-day,” a day for “renewing of vows and fresh consecration to God’s service.” When visiting Dunedin in 1898 she “attended Knox Church and partook of the Lord’s Supper, a vast congregation, a soul refreshing service.”

Although few recorded their individual spiritual experiences, a handful of remarkable diaries fortunately remain. William Downie Stewart’s papers include the 1820s diaries of Mrs Stewart, a young Edinburgh woman. Like all good Presbyterians, she examined her spiritual state closely as each communion approached, and then analysed her experience after the completion of the sacrament. “This has been a sweet, an interesting, and a solemn day to me. I was permitted … to hold sweet communion with the Saviour at his holy table, I do not recollect of ever feeling so happy when at the table as I did today,” she wrote after one communion. At times the sacrament did not meet her high expectations, as on the occasion when “my heart remained hard and unsubdued.” However all was not in vain, and “it was [after] I had left his house that he met with me and spake comfortably unto my soul.” Most often, though, she “met” the Lord at his table, and felt: “greatly refreshed in waiting on him.” This woman’s spirituality clearly moved beyond the intellectual and her experiences of the communion season in particular were warm, vivid, and mystical in nature.

D. M. Stuart’s diaries record two communions he attended while a young student in Scotland and England, prior to his arrival in Dunedin as minister of Knox Church (see Figure 12). At an 1842 Perthshire communion his attention wandered. He took communion but afterwards hoped “that I have not eaten and drunk spiritual damnation,” prayerfully regretting that “I have not this day had spiritual communion

75 Thomas Burns diary, 14 January 1849, 15 July 1849, 20 January 1850, 18 August 1850, 9 February 1851 and 15 June 1851.

76 Christina Evans diary, 13 September 1896 and 20 March 1898, DA 3/2, PCANZ archives.

77 Mrs Stewart diary, 9 March 1823 and 12 January 1823, William Downie Stewart papers, MS-0985, Series 5, Box 139, File 9, HL. While probably a relation of William Downie Stewart (a prominent Dunedin lawyer and politician), it is unclear exactly who the diarist is. Although she may not have come to Otago, Mrs Stewart’s diaries are valuable because they provide insight into the spiritual life of a devout woman belonging to the generation of Scottish Presbyterians providing the senior ranks of the Otago colonists.
Donald McNaughton Stuart was born in Highland Perthshire in 1819. He trained for the Presbyterian ministry in Scotland and England, his studies interrupted by the Disruption. He arrived in Otago in 1860, serving until his death in 1894 as minister of Knox Church, Dunedin. He also played an important role promoting education and church extension in the province. Stuart was one of Dunedin’s best-loved citizens and when he died thousands joined his funeral procession.

Source – PCANZ archives, P-515-17.
with thee” and that “my soul has not experienced a refreshing.” 78 Five years later, in England, he recorded another disappointing sacrament, again troubled by a “restless, wandering” mind. Although he “sat down at his Table and eat [sic] and drank the precious symbols,” he “was not ravished with the love which I was commemorating; my language was not ‘stay me with flagons – comfort me with love.’” 79 Like Mrs Stewart’s, D. M. Stuart’s piety was no cold cerebral phenomenon. While here disappointed, he fully expected, at the Lord’s table, to be “ravished” with love. Many years later, the elderly Stuart wrote of a Knox Church communion that it was “a season of much feeling and spiritual elevation … souls got not only close to Jesus but to one another.” 80 Evidently the warmth of Stuart’s piety persisted into old age, as did an emotional experience of communion. The sacrament assumed central importance in Stuart’s ministry and personal life, and he invariably reported various details in letters to his family. He did remain, at times, disappointed. In 1889 he wrote to his son that “communion always entails much work for five weeks. At this communion (16 June) I am sorry to say that the result of my labors was not satisfactory.” 81 Although he did not specify the nature of this failure, it apparently related to the spiritual power of the event rather than the numbers attending.

One of Stuart’s Knox Church elders, teacher and naturalist G. M. Thomson (see Figure 13), also related his spiritual experiences in his diary, which became his confidante in a period of emotional turmoil following the death of his wife. In September 1895, at the Knox Church communion, the “whole service was to me impressive and refreshing, torn as I was in mind with conflict and passion. I had spent a night of unrest and of trial, and though supported through it, felt worn and harassed in spirit throughout the day.” 82 On the morning of his next communion, Thomson awoke feeling “restless and harassed,” but the sacrament lifted his spirits. “The service humbled me, and yet refreshed me,” he recorded. He felt a great bond of community with his fellow communicants, but also a sense of responsibility: “What a power for good Knox Ch[urch] ought to be in this community – 750 people

78 D. M. Stuart diary, 3 July 1842, William Downie Stewart papers, MS-0985, Series 46, Box 164, File 6, HL.
79 Ibid., 4 April 1847.
80 D. M. Stuart to C. S. Ross, 11 January 1894, quoted in Ross, Life and Times of D. M. Stuart, 225.
81 D. M. Stuart to William Stuart, 27 June 1889, D. M. Stuart papers, letters, Box II, OSM.
82 G. M. Thomson diary, 15 September 1895.
George Malcolm Thomson was born in India in 1848, the son of Scottish parents. The family migrated to Otago in 1868 and several years later Thomson began a long career as science teacher at Otago Boys' High School. He involved himself in many community projects and founded technical education in Dunedin. In old age he served for many years as a politician, but is best remembered today for his important work as a naturalist. Thomson's strong Christian faith helped him cope with various personal difficulties, from an injury which eventually resulted in a leg amputation to the early deaths of two wives and some of his children. This stern photograph, dated 1914, of the Legislative Councillor belies the warm and caring personality revealed in his diaries.

Source – Alexander Turnbull Library, S. P. Andrew Collection, G-14945-1/1.
confessing their faith in Christ! How such faith, if sincerely carried into every day life, must leaven the people for good.” The experience prompted a new sense of commitment and his prayer that night was “that I might rest more and more on Thee, and learn to wait patiently, believing that thou wilt guide my future, as thou hast my past.”83 But, like the other diarists, Thomson did not always find in communion the mystical and positive experience he expected; like them, he attributed this to his own inadequacies. “I have been restless and fretful in Spirit for some time past and did not benefit as I should have done,” he recorded after one communion. “God grant that I may only find pleasure in doing his will and in living in closer fellowship with him.”84 Nevertheless, his most frequent experience of communion was that of ‘refreshment,’ a term that recurs through these Presbyterian diaries.

We cannot know how typical these diarists were of Otago Presbyterians. They may have been exceptional. However, one thing is clear: Otago Presbyterians valued the communion and all its rituals very highly. This was the peak spiritual occasion of the calendar, approached with great anticipation. Here, encouraged by the colourful addresses of their preachers, Presbyterians came closest to mysticism. As one nineteenth-century Scottish divine explained, “The day of Communion was ... like one of the days of heaven on earth.”85

On the evening of the communion Sunday most parishes held a further service. Here it was fairly common to have a visiting preacher, often one of the guests who had assisted in the other services of the communion season. Many parishes also held the following Monday as a “day of thanksgiving”; thanksgiving, that is, for the blessings of the communion season.86 The Monday thanksgiving brought the Presbyterian communion season to a close. The much-anticipated occasion complete, the participants, invigorated by both social and spiritual aspects, returned to the routine of everyday life until the season rolled around again.

83 Ibid., 15 December 1895.
84 Ibid., 20 September 1896.
86 References to thanksgiving days are frustratingly elusive and fleeting, making it difficult to know their full form and extent. There is no recorded discussion of their abolition, although references become rarer towards the end of the century. However, the Dunedin parishes of Mornington and St Andrew’s still held thanksgiving services in 1900.
Timing and frequency

The communion season consumed a good deal of time, so rural districts fitted it around seasonal work patterns. April and October were the most popular months, falling after the harvest and before shearing. In town parishes, seasonal activities were less of a consideration, and June and December soon became the regular communion seasons for Dunedin and suburbs. Neighbouring parishes typically co-ordinated their communion dates so the whole district could keep the fast day holiday together.

Although Calvin advocated weekly communion, and the 1645 Directory of Public Worship, one of the ruling documents of the Presbyterian Church, recommended that communion should be frequently celebrated, Presbyterians usually held communion only once or twice a year. Despite generations of pressure by liturgical reformers, not until the nineteenth century did significant numbers of parishes begin to hold communion more than twice a year. Even in the twentieth century, particularly in remote or rural districts, popular custom triumphed over scholarly arguments, and communion remained a rare and special event.\(^87\)

In 1895 the Clutha Presbytery heard a paper by local minister Alexander Dalrymple, “How often should the Sacrament of the Supper be dispensed?” In the discussion that followed, the majority of the Presbytery said they opposed “very frequent” (weekly) communion, which could only profit “an intensely spiritual man.” For most communicants, “it would be so formal as to be hurtful.” The Presbytery did agree, however, that half-yearly communion, then practised in all their congregations, “was far too seldom.” Quarterly communion seemed “a fair compromise.”\(^88\)

While the theological opinions of liturgical reformers no doubt played their part in increasing communion frequency in Otago, more pragmatic considerations also had a role. At St Paul’s Oamaru, the session introduced quarterly communion, “convinced that this arrangement will afford many, who otherwise would be debarrled the precious privilege, an opportunity of commemorating Christ’s death.”\(^89\) Perhaps they had in mind servants, for whose sake the Dunedin parish of Andersons Bay would later introduce evening communions.\(^90\) On Sunday mornings, servants were

---


\(^88\) *Christian Outlook*, 29 June 1895, p. 254.

\(^89\) *Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter*, 22 February 1868, p. 2.

\(^90\) Andersons Bay Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 12 April and 14 August 1888, BA 1/7, PCANZ archives.
expected to stay at home, minding the dinner and the babies. A generous employer might, if communion was frequent enough, allow a servant to attend: Sarah Smith recorded, “I did not go to Church today as Bridget [the servant] was very anxious to go to the communion.” Frequency undoubtedly increased opportunity for servants and mothers of young children.

The change to quarterly communion in Otago was neither simple nor quick. First introduced in 1862, at Knox Church, Dunedin, it took another five years before a second parish, St Andrew’s Dunedin, joined in the innovation. Commonly, sessions made resolutions to hold communion more often, but failed to do so. By 1900, twenty-one of the forty-four parishes whose records I have examined held communion quarterly. Two had six communions per year; two compromised by holding three celebrations; and the remaining nineteen parishes kept to the old half-yearly tradition.

One thing is evident: the elder who told the Clutha Presbytery that “country congregations ... had ever great difficulty in getting out of accustomed grooves,” was correct, as there is a clear rural/urban split between those parishes holding communion twice a year and those with the sacrament quarterly.

The fate of sacramental fast days was closely associated with the frequency issue. While the entire communion season had an important place in Presbyterian culture, the fast days also assumed importance for the wider community as general holidays. The citizens of Dunedin had come to expect their twice-yearly fast day holiday, and enjoyed the opportunity for a little rest and recreation. While early reports of such days focused on church services, by the 1860s newspapers regularly noted the holiday weather and the activities of excursionists. On one fine 1863 fast day: “Equestrians were passing gaily in and out of town for several hours, along all the principal lines of road; and, in fact, the population not connected with the Presbyterian Church, set themselves resolutely but decently to the thorough

---

91 Sarah Smith diary, 10 March 1889.
92 Knox Presbyterian Church Dunedin Communion Rolls, 1860-1862, archives of Knox Church Dunedin; and St Andrew’s Session, 26 June 1867. The St Andrew’s Session had made an earlier resolution to hold communion quarterly (5 September 1864), but did not actually do so until 1867.
93 For example, the Inch Clutha Session twice resolved to increase the frequency of communion, but in practice continued to hold it only twice a year throughout the nineteenth century. See Inch Clutha Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 25 November 1868 and 14 March 1884, BL 2/1, PCANZ archives.
94 Christian Outlook, 29 June 1895, p. 254.
enjoyment of the holiday.”95 An 1866 cartoon suggests that drinking was a popular fast day activity for some Otago residents (see Figure 14).

Such holidays were very familiar to colonists from Scotland, where the *Witness* regularly reported a mixture of secular and religious activities on Edinburgh’s April and October sacramental fast days. Working Scots had few such opportunities for recreation, with New Year and the Queen’s birthday as the only general business holidays.96 Immigrants from elsewhere, however, found the fast days decidedly peculiar. New migrant Isabella Grant tried to relate her first Otago holiday to her English experience: “Today is a fast day so nearly all the shops are shut and the people stand about & talk at the corners of the streets, just like an English country town.”97 The newspapers carried warnings of the holiday for unsuspecting newcomers, but visitors from out of town could be inconvenienced.98 Still, few complained, and there is little evidence to suggest local businesses resented the holiday. Otago’s Provincial Government actively supported sacramental fast days, suspending all business and closing its offices on those days, and declaring a public holiday. General government operations, such as the custom house, remained open. When the abolition of provincial government was followed by the abolition of fast days in Dunedin, the *Otago Witness* saw therein a direct link, declaring the demise of fast days to be “among the many calamities of Centralism.”99

Presbyterians did not remain unaffected by the recreational activities occurring around them on their sacramental fast days. C. S. Ross recalled that churches “became more thinly attended; some members, most adherents, and especially the young, came to regard it as a day of recreation rather than as one of religious solemnity.”100 Newspapers of the 1870s generally reported “fair” attendance at the Dunedin fast day services, although occasionally they were “very well attended.”

95 *Otago Witness*, 19 December 1863, p. 5.


97 Isabella Grant diary, 15 December 1870, Misc-MS-0303, HL. My thanks to Alan Edwards for this reference.

98 See, for example, *Otago Witness*, 10 December 1864, p. 14; and *Otago News*, 17 August 1850, p. 2.


100 Ross, *Story of the Otago Church*, 226.
Figure 14 – Fast day recreation
Some Otago residents evidently enjoyed a drink or two on fast day holidays.

Source – Otago Punch, 15 December 1866, p. 128.
It is, however, too simplistic to attribute the decline of fast day religious observance to the increasingly diverse nature of Otago’s population, to secularisation, or to loss of government support. Certainly the halcyon pre-goldrush days of the 1850s, when Presbyterians made up two-thirds of the province’s population (Maori not included), did not persist; and there had never been sacramental fast days in some parts of the province, such as the goldfields. But despite regular Presbyterian complaints about the “mixed” nature of the population, census figures reveal the church’s ongoing strength. From 1861 until the turn of the century, the proportion of Presbyterians in Otago remained remarkably similar, ranging between 42 and 50 percent; they always remained numerically larger than their denominational competition, and in some districts remained more than 60 percent of the population.\textsuperscript{101} The actions of the Presbyterian churches themselves, particularly the increase in communion frequency, proved significant in the decline of fast days. By the 1870s, when Presbyterian leaders first became concerned about the poor observance of fast days, the parishes of Dunedin and suburbs had all introduced quarterly communion. The concept of the twice-yearly fast day was, however, so firmly entrenched in Presbyterian, Scottish, and now Otago culture, that no parish attempted to have fast days four times a year. Such a practice had no precedent, and the business community was unlikely to approve of two additional holidays in a society where workers already had more leisure time than their British counterparts. Dunedin Presbyterians therefore became accustomed to holding half their communions without a fast day. Although evening preparatory services continued, the change was significant. Communion services now fitted around the regular working week, rather than being the focus of the community’s attention on a weekday holiday; they were becoming a couple of services rather than a season. Some people undoubtedly began to question the necessity for the extra preparation expected of them on only two of the four quarterly communions.

In 1877, D. M. Stuart of Knox Church initiated discussion on the abolition of fast days in the church courts. After the Synod ruled that the matter was up to

\textsuperscript{101} In the goldfields parishes of Queenstown and Lawrence, for example, preparatory services for the communion season took place only in the evening. On the strength of religious denominations in Otago, see Appendix One. While census figures undoubtedly included many “nominal” Presbyterians, they are a useful guide to the religious allegiance of Otago residents. Hugh Jackson’s analysis of the 1874-1896 censuses shows that 44 to 52 percent of New Zealand adults who claimed to be Presbyterian were 'usual' church attenders. See Hugh Jackson, “Churchgoing in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand,” New Zealand Journal of History 17 (1983): 43-59.
individual church sessions, church leaders in Dunedin decided that “in present circumstances it is inexpedient to continue the observance of Fast Days,” and Dunedin sessions duly discontinued them in 1878.\textsuperscript{102} Rev. James Copland, editor of the \textit{Evangelist}, approved of this as a pragmatic move. Nevertheless, he showed a little regret at the passing of the fast days, “dear from old associations” and part of the heritage “of our fathers.” Earlier that year he had published an article on a large outdoor Scottish communion for the benefit of “our young folks,” who “can only know of these great sacramental occasions, with their protracted meetings and their commanding oratory, by description.”\textsuperscript{103} Copland knew that the increase in frequency, and the decline of fast days, signalled the end of the historic communion season.

It was different in the country, where even at the turn of the century it was most unusual to hold quarterly communion. Prompted by poor attendance at the preparatory services, several rural parishes did discontinue fast days in the late 1880s and 1890s, although at least six Otago parishes continued them into the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{104} Those parishes that retained their fast days received some unexpected assistance from the \textit{Shop and Shop Assistants Act (1894)}, which allowed local authorities to appoint a regular weekday half-holiday for shops and offices in their district. Church sessions changed their fast day to coincide with the new local half-holiday, so taking a holiday for communion no longer required special support from local businesses.\textsuperscript{105} Of course, many rural Presbyterians worked on farms rather than in shops and offices, and could be flexible in the matter of holidays, especially as communion was deliberately timed to fit farmers’ seasonal work patterns. The infrequent and prolonged communion season suited the rhythms of country life, and there it persisted: rural Presbyterians continued in the “accustomed grooves” of their tried and tested traditions rather than listening to the rhetoric of liturgical reformers.

Whether in town or country, Presbyterian communions continued to serve both social and spiritual functions. The concentration on material elements, so seldom

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{102} \textit{Proceedings of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland, January 1878} (Dunedin: Coulls & Culling, 1878), 19. See also \textit{Otago Witness}, 19 January 1878, p. 9; 26 October 1878, p. 14; and 9 November 1878, p. 15.
\item \textsuperscript{103} \textit{Evangelist}, 2 December 1878, p. 4; and 1 February 1878, p. 14.
\item \textsuperscript{104} East Taieri Session, 12 April 1886; and Otepopo Session, 9 April 1888. Fast days persisted into the twentieth century at Tokomairiro, Waikouaiti, Blueskin and Palmerston.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Tokomairiro Session, 23 April 1895; Waikouaiti Session, 17 September 1895; and Palmerston Session, 9 October 1895.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
encountered in Presbyterian church services, and visiting preachers, made the meetings of the communion season an attraction to communicants and onlookers alike. On these occasions, local Presbyterians gathered in their greatest strength for the one festive event in their religious calendar, and enjoyed both spiritual and social fellowship. The rituals of the season reinforced the important role of church elders as leaders of their community, as they revised their role of church members, admitted young communicants and occasionally disciplined miscreants, dispensed tokens and cards, and distributed the communion elements. Here, Presbyterians displayed the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

Conclusion

The story of Otago’s nineteenth-century communion seasons is, then, one of both continuity and change. In many parishes, the communions of the 1890s differed greatly from those of the 1850s. Communion occurred more often, fast days had disappeared, communicants partook of the elements at their pews instead of around a table, and the more inviting cards replaced tokens. The greatest change induced by the decline of fast days was a reduced focus on self-examination. James Copland’s confidence that the fast day would be replaced by two evening services was largely misplaced: few parishes had more than one preparatory communion service, and this could not possibly replace a whole day of preaching and prayerful contemplation of one’s spiritual state. Once the need to attend a preparatory service to obtain a token had gone, generally late in the century, it was possible to attend communion without any formal preparation, although it is unclear how many communicants did so. The increased frequency of communion, and the shortening of the season, inevitably made the once much anticipated festive occasion a more routine affair. If, however, Presbyterians treated communion with a little less respect than in former days, it remained a solemn festival, and we should not let these changes distract us from the experience of the sacrament itself: those Presbyterians who actually sat at the table of the Lord expected, and often achieved, a joyful meeting with their God. Nineteenth-century Presbyterianism here moved beyond sober and intellectual asceticism into the realms of the emotional and experiential.

Changes in the communion season reflected the changing world view of Otago’s Presbyterians. Although not all approved of such changes, many willingly adapted their traditions to accommodate modern ideology, as the introduction of
unfermented communion wine and individual communion cups clearly illustrates. A more fundamental shift was, however, shown by other modifications. Rigorous church discipline and self-examination, communion tokens, and the fencing of the communion table all represented and reinforced traditional Calvinist theology, where salvation was only available to God’s predestined elect. The decline of all these practices, generally late in the nineteenth century, indicates a softening of Calvinism in favour of a more evangelical and inclusive theology, whereby humans had more freewill in salvation. Now God’s grace, rather than God’s severity, received emphasis. Presbyterians were invited to communion, rather than having to prove their fitness for admission. In Otago, as elsewhere, many controversies and disputes over conformity with traditional Presbyterian doctrine, as espoused in the Westminster Confession, enlivened the Presbyterian Church. The 1888 publication *The Reign of Grace*, which explored the possibility of universal salvation, by Rev. William Salmond, formerly Professor of Theology and now Professor of Philosophy at Otago, created a particularly fierce outcry. Conservatives spoke loudly against any perceived downgrade of Calvinism, yet while their rhetoric was unyielding, communion practices continued gradually and subtly to change, reflecting new attitudes.

The Presbyterian communion season proved a remarkably successful import to colonial Otago, and we cannot attribute the changes that did eventuate to the local environment; they were responses, rather, to international shifts in Protestant thought. The decline in fast days, communion tokens, fencing, and sitting at the table, the increase in communion frequency and the debates over alcohol, came no sooner to Otago than they did to the Scottish Lowlands. There, also, the late nineteenth century was a period of theological turmoil, with much debate in all branches of Presbyterianism over the status of the Westminster Confession. A greater openness to liberal interpretations of Calvinism and to modern biblical criticism naturally led to a questioning of those practices that emphasised communion was only for the elect. Also influential in Scotland during this period were the various liturgical societies: the Church Service Society (Church of Scotland); Devotional Service Association (United Presbyterian Church); and Public Worship Association (Free Church). Amongst other reforms, such societies advocated, with considerable success, more frequent

---

In Scotland, as in Otago, changes came much more slowly to rural districts, particularly to the Highlands, where the Free Church remained a bastion of traditional practice right through the twentieth century. The communion season has introduced us to the religious and cultural world of Otago’s Presbyterian colonists. It is remarkable among the occasions explored in this thesis for its continuity with the old world: other holidays required significant adaptation to fit the new physical environment, or the particular ethnic and religious mix of the colony. The similarities between changing communion practices in Otago and Scotland are striking: the only change that did appear in Otago before Scotland was the individual cup, reflecting New Zealand’s greater exposure to American ideas and marketing strategies. Continuing immigration of lay people and ministers from Scotland ensured the Scottish influence remained strong. Presbyterianism in Otago was an immigrant faith: local Maori Christians were generally Anglican or Methodist, a reflection of the early mission work of those denominations. Presbyterians, numerically dominant and recognised as the founders of the colony, felt little need to adjust their religious practice to the new colonial environment. Leigh Schmidt describes the communion season as a “notably ethnic tradition” in colonial North America. This was clearly also the case in Otago, where it served to distinguish Scottish and Irish Presbyterians from their fellow colonists. Here, so far from ‘home,’ Scottish and Ulster colonists and their descendants remembered the traditions of their forebears and continued the distinctive communion practices and holidays which helped distinguish Otago as a peculiarly Presbyterian colony.

---


110 Schmidt, Holy Fairs, 208.
Chapter Two – Christmas and Easter

On 25 December 1892 the Presbyterian parishioners of Waikouaiti attended a church service conducted by their minister of nearly thirty years, Rev. John Christie (see Figure 15). He opened his sermon that morning with a disclaimer: he was preaching, not because it was Christmas Day, but because it happened to be a Sunday. Christie did not approve of the religious observance of Christmas. As he explained, the date of Christ’s birth was uncertain, with 25 December seeming an unlikely contender. The early apostolic church had left no record of a Christmas festival, and, crucially, “[t]here are no instructions in the Bible to keep such a day.” Christmas was thus “a human invention” without “scriptural authority.” That Anglicans and Catholics kept the festival was a further argument against it, in Christie’s opinion. He noted that Christmas received little attention in Scotland, for good historical reasons. Following attempts to “force them into Popery and Prelacy,” the Scots had endeavoured “to discountenance what has been connected with these forms of religion,” including the festival of Christmas. Christie then proceeded to preach a message on the flight of time, appropriate for the new year season, taking as his text: “Redeeming the time; because the days are evil.”1 In 1888 and 1889 Christie had noted a further objection to Christmas. The festival was grafted onto the old pagan festival of Yule, and there was no religious merit in observing a festival of “heathen” origin.2

John Christie was a conservative, but he was by no means alone in his disapproval of Christmas. Not until 1932 did New Zealand’s Presbyterian Church

---


2 John Christie diary, 26 December 1888 and 29 April 1889, AG-102, OSM.
Christie was a conservative Presbyterian, opposed to the religious celebration of Christmas and Easter. He is cited often in this thesis by virtue of his large diary and sermon collections, held at the Otago Settlers Museum and PCANZ archives respectively. Born about 1830 into a humble Lowland Scottish farming family, Christie trained as a United Presbyterian minister in Glasgow. He migrated to Otago in 1862 and served as minister at Waikouaiti Presbyterian Church from 1863 until his retirement in 1901.

offically approve the religious observance of Christmas, although this simply sanctioned what had probably by then become a fairly common practice. Yet Christie was no Scrooge. His objection to Christmas, and Easter (of which more below), arose not from any intrinsic mean spirit or lack of charity, but from his serious and sincere religious convictions. Brought up in the Covenanting heartland of Lowland Scotland, and trained as a United Presbyterian (the denomination descended from the earlier secessions from the Church of Scotland), his roots were deeply established in a puritan and sectarian tradition. Christie was probably never converted to the religious observance of the festivals he saw as ‘Papist’. And yet, even the family of a man like Christie developed holiday traditions in the new colonial environment. On 25 December, John and Rachel Christie sat down with their nine children, gathered from near and far, to a special Christmas dinner, “signalized by new potatoes and peas.”

This chapter introduces the previously unexplored topic of Christmas and Easter in nineteenth-century Otago. These holidays, central to Anglican and Catholic practice yet unfamiliar to Presbyterians and some English non-conformists, give a vivid illustration of religious differences within the colony. Religious difference was closely associated with ethnic difference, further contributing to the potential for sectarianism carried by differing Christmas and Easter practices. Although the transplantation of the Presbyterian communion season into the Scottish colony of Otago proved unproblematic, this ethnic and religious environment proved hostile towards non-Presbyterian religious holidays. Devout Catholics and Anglicans saw their holy days desecrated to a degree they had not expected in a Christian community, while devout Presbyterians and English colonists from non-conformist backgrounds took equal offence at official recognition of Papist holy days.

Christmas and Easter are religious holidays, so it is no surprise to find that religion was central to their format. What may surprise the many historians who assume that society was becoming increasingly secular in the period covered by this

---

3 Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1932 (Dunedin, Otago Daily Times & Witness, 1932), 12 and 154; and Outlook, 14 March 1932, p. 17.
4 John Christie diary, 25 December 1885.
5 I have unearthed no New Zealand studies of Easter. On Christmas, the only work of note is Shirley Maddock and Michael Easther, A Christmas Garland: A New Zealand Christmas Album 1642-1900 In Twelve Parts (Auckland: Collins, 1980). As noted in the Introduction, this is essentially a nostalgic review of Christmas which lacks historical analysis and, irritatingly, fails to reference both written and pictorial matter. It would be difficult for any general New Zealand study of Christmas or Easter to give adequate attention to Otago, where the predominance of Scots and Presbyterians created an environment unusually inhospitable to these holidays.
study is the clear evidence that Christmas and Easter became more overtly religious festivals in twentieth-century Otago than they had been in the nineteenth. Many mid­nineteenth century Otago residents, pious or not, did not experience Christmas and Easter as explicitly religious occasions. By the late nineteenth century, however, Protestant resistance to Christmas and Easter was starting to founder. Changing Christmas and Easter practices reveal the increasing appeal of more complex ritual for many Christians towards the end of the nineteenth century. They also demonstrate the willingness of some colonists to accommodate the practices of other denominations in creating a more tolerant and inclusive Christian culture.

Alongside the unwelcoming religious and cultural environment, English and Irish colonists had to adapt their familiar Christmas and Easter practices to fit the new physical environment of the colony. Holidays and festivals are rituals that can carry the old world into the new, reducing its strangeness and filling it with familiar patterns: holidays are powerful agents of colonisation. But the reversal of seasons in the new hemisphere removed many of the mos: beloved props of the holidays. Otago residents gradually added new rituals to create altered colonial festivals; reminders of the many compromises their new world required. During the nineteenth century, the English Christmas transformed from a community festival to one centred on the family. For the English in Otago, this process was accelerated: living in a community where most people had no experience of the ‘traditional’ English communal festival, they had little option but to focus their Christmas ritual on the family. Scottish migrants, when unable to avoid Christmas completely, reinforced this trend by developing a tradition of family gatherings for the holiday. The story of Christmas and Easter in Otago is, then, one of adaptation, compromise and, on occasion, dispute. It also leads us to the religious experience of the province’s Catholics and Anglicans.

Christmas in early Otago

Thomas Kennard, born at Waikouaiti in 1841, recalled that before 1848, “any white men who were in Otago regarded Christmas as the principal festival or holiday of the year.” Pakeha living at Otago’s shore whaling stations were generally Australian or English, though whalers of all nationalities visited on occasion. They lived a rough and ready life, and their Christmas celebrations were probably fairly

---

boisterous. Indeed, Christmas in England at this time was not the respectable domestic festival often imagined as a ‘traditional’ Christmas. It was, as it had been for centuries, a community occasion of loud revelry and inversion rituals. Meanwhile, Wesleyan missionary James Watkin, based at Waikouaiti, introduced local Maori to the Christian festival of Christmas, holding special services for the occasion. On Boxing Day 1842 he gave a special feast for the ‘natives.’ Thomas Ferens, who joined the mission as a lay worker in 1848, was most impressed by the attentiveness, and generous donations, of Maori at the Christmas service that year.

1848 brought an influx of new settlers as the official colony of Otago commenced. Most were Scottish Presbyterians, not accustomed to keeping Christmas: their major holiday was New Year. A significant minority, however, were English, and therefore veteran keepers of Christmas. The Scottish colonists continued in their accustomed way, working as usual on Christmas Day, unless, of course, it was a Sunday. Farmers with Scottish origins continued to ignore Christmas right through the century, as revealed in numerous diaries.

7 On Otago’s pre-1848 Pakeha residents, see Erik Olssen, A History of Otago (Dunedin: McIndoe, 1984), 6-19; and Peter Entwisle, Behold the Moon: The European Occupation of the Dunedin District 1770-1848 (Dunedin: Port Daniel, 1998).


9 James Watkin diary, 28 December 1840, 27 December 1841, 26 December 1842, and 26 December 1843, MS-0440/004, HL.

10 Thomas Ferens diary, 25 December 1848, C-039, OSM.

11 See, for example, the diaries of Thomas Adam, 1878-1885, M-107, OSM; William Falconer, 1878-1891, Misc-MS-1530, HL; and William Muir, 1873-1898, SA-008, OSM. Kennard suggested that Scots in Otago fell into the way of observing Christmas early, but I have found no evidence to support this (see Beattie, Story of T. B. Kennard, 72).

12 “Recollections of William Smaill from 1858 to 1862-3 around Mayfield Farm.” p. 25, C-098, OSM.
past generation Christmas Day was always overshadowed by New Year’s Day. We were long in getting to know Santa Claus.”

James Douglas, who spent his late-nineteenth century childhood on a farm near Arrowtown, recalled that his family was “very Scotch, and Christmas wasn’t such a festival with the Scotch people as it is today.”

English farmers, meanwhile, kept Christmas diligently. The Dewe family of Tokomairiro, devout Anglicans, abstained from work and attended Christmas church services. Frederick and Fanny Mieville celebrated with a special dinner on their farm at Glenham, entertaining a handful of employees and friends, Maori and Pakeha, at the feast. Christmas was, for young Annie Mosley of Inch Clutha, “always the time of Joy,” with special decorations, dinner and carols. For Englishman Charles Hayward, however, Christmas was a disappointment. “I never did enjoy a Christmas since I left home,” he complained to his diary in 1865, his third year at the Catlins. “[I]f one wants to have the full enjoyment of Christmas day, there is only one place I believe in the whole world, and that place I need scarcely say is England.” The failure of Christmas for Hayward probably resulted in large part from his ‘mixed’ marriage: his wife Agnes Lees was Scottish born. A week later he recorded his participation in the strange Scottish New Year custom of first footing.

Colonists in more closely settled areas faced differences over Christmas sooner than their rural counterparts. On Christmas Day 1848 the peaceful village of Dunedin was disturbed with what Rev. Thomas Burns described as a “disgraceful drinking riot.” Tom Watson of the Commercial Hotel invited “all and sundry” to a free Christmas dinner and a “great gathering” of locals, supplemented by thirty visiting American whalers, took up his invitation. Drink flowed freely after the meal and all enjoyed themselves until a runaway sailor mischievously selected as his...
musical contribution to the party “The Battle of the Shannon and Chesapeake,” a ballad celebrating the victory of a Royal Navy frigate over a United States frigate at Boston in 1813. This proved “a most unlucky selection for such a mixed company” and fighting soon broke out, quickly degenerating into a free for all. However, by the time Justice of the Peace David Garrick read the Riot Act and swore in special constables, the fighting had ended and no harm seems to have come to the township from this Christmas revelry. The only other evidence of Christmas celebrations in Dunedin that year comes from butcher Peter Crow’s killing of a 1000 lb. bullock “in anticipation of the roast beef and plum-pudding time of Christmas.”

While New Year was a holiday from the start, Christmas received no special attention from the majority of Dunedin residents during the early 1850s, and was not worthy of even a mention in the press: business proceeded as usual. By the late 1850s, however, Christmas had become an accepted business holiday in Dunedin. Sadly, the reasons for this development remain a matter of speculation. Several factors probably contributed. The Anglican Church was developing its strength in the district, with a resident clergyman arriving in 1852. Rev. John Fenton no doubt encouraged his parishioners to keep this important holy day. Operations such as the courts and customhouse, controlled by central, as opposed to provincial, government (and in Otago often controlled by Governor Grey’s English appointees), ran according to English precedent, where Christmas Day was a common law holiday. The new marriage act of 1854 required the registrar’s office to be open every day “except Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday, and the Queen’s birthday” in good English fashion. Scottish colonists were thus increasingly exposed to English practice. As the population, including its English component, increased, local businesses may have seen in the promotion of Christmas the opportunity to turn a profit. During the late 1850s an increasing number of advertisements for Christmas food and gifts appeared.

---

20 Lachlan Langlands, “The First Christmas in Dunedin,” BR File 20/17, OSM. Langlands had been present on the occasion. My thanks to Sean Brosnan for this reference. See also Otago News, 27 December 1848, p. 2.

21 Otago News, 27 December 1848, p. 3.


in the local press. Robert Miller appealed to all sectors of the community with his notice of treats “for Christmas and the New Year. Salmon from the Tweed, Herrings, from Lochfine, Roast Veal, from Smithfield Market, Fat Hens and Eggs, from North-east Valley.”24 This linking of Christmas and New Year is suggestive. The English adopted the Scottish New Year holiday, and the Scots returned the favour by adopting Christmas: the two became closely associated as ‘the holiday season.’

Whatever the mechanism of its establishment, by 1860 Christmas was a holiday in Dunedin. How were the Scottish colonists to keep this unaccustomed holiday? One thing they certainly did not do, if Presbyterian, was to treat it as a religious occasion. That would have been a concession to ritualist or Catholic practice. Instead family gatherings and outdoor recreation became the order of the day. George Hepburn (see Figure 16), a Dunedin merchant and Presbyterian elder, wrote to his family in Fifeshire of the strange new custom. In 1858 he noted that “last Saturday being Christmas was held as an holy day. Shops all shut, - so we had a family party at Waikari [sic]... in all 17 sat at dinner, all very happy not forgetting absent friends.” Nine years later he wrote to his sister, “On Christmas day last, as is our usual we had all our friends at our house thirty five in number ... the day being fine they all seemed to enjoy themselves, - Ch[ristmas] is held a complete holiday here, except the English church morning service.”25 The Hepburn extended family always gathered again at New Year for a more familiar holiday. Other colonists took part in organised excursions, such as the harbour cruises offered on Christmas Day 1856.26

Otago’s goldrushes, commencing in 1861, greatly increased the province’s population and further entrenched Christmas as a local holiday, new Christmas customs enlivening the expanding town of Dunedin. Businesses, especially hotels, began decorating the exteriors of their premises with evergreens, a practice the Otago

24 Otago Witness, 25 December 1858, p. 4.

25 George Hepburn to Thomas Martin, 29 December 1858; and George Hepburn to “My Dear Sister,” 20 January 1868; George Hepburn correspondence, William Downie Stewart papers, MS-0985, Series 24, Box 62, files 1 and 2, HL.

26 Otago Witness, 3 January 1857, p. 4.
Figure 16 – George Hepburn

Born in 1803 in Fifeshire, Scotland, George Hepburn migrated to Otago with his family in 1850. They farmed at Halfway Bush and Hepburn also worked in partnership with his brother-in-law as a merchant. A devout Presbyterian, he helped found Knox Church, Dunedin, and served as an elder there for many years. He was also a politician, serving terms in the Otago Provincial Council and the House of Representatives. Despite his rather stern appearance in this photograph, Hepburn’s diaries and letters reveal him to have been a warm-hearted family man.

Witness noted as an import from Victoria. Many miners ‘washed up’ and took a holiday at Christmas and New Year, the successful travelling to Dunedin for rest and recreation. James Strachan and his mates, having made £100 each on the Tuapeka goldfields, spent the 1861 holidays in Dunedin where they enjoyed the entertainments provided by entrepreneur Shadrach Jones and spent large. Jones arranged two successful holiday events: ‘Old English’ Christmas sports, and Caledonian New Year sports. About 500 people attended the Christmas sports, which were held on Boxing Day. As an Englishman, Jones was perhaps reluctant to desecrate the holy day of Christmas with recreation, although it is more likely he wished to increase his profits by selling alcohol, not permitted on Christmas Day. Boxing Day gradually increased in status as a holiday, although it was not so widely kept as Christmas Day. It was a popular day for picnics and sports events, particularly with groups who recognised Christmas as a religious festival. For example, the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society (HACBS) regularly held Boxing Day fetes in Dunedin from the 1870s.

On the goldfields themselves, residents indulged in Christmas revelry where possible. Frederick Barrell, a general hand at the Albert Town store and hotel, described the celebrations in this “quiet little township”: “If a person pictures to himself ten or a dozen men, three parts drunk, singing, shouting, swearing and quarrelling in a public house, he will have a pretty good idea of what Christmas and New Year was like at Albert Town.” For many miners, like their predecessors the whalers, Christmas was not yet a domestic festival. Food and fuel shortages made for a depressing Christmas for some goldminers. William Fail and his mates, working a claim on the Manuherikia River in 1862, on Christmas morning “went into the township in hopes of getting a piece of plum pudding if possible as we had to live principally on damper and bacon ... Seeing the picture of a pudding outside a large

---

27 Ibid., 27 December 1862, p. 5.
28 "James Strachan’s Experiences: My first twelve years on my own - Commencing from 20th April, 1856 - nearly 61 years ago," MS-0563, HL.
29 Otago Witness, 28 December 1861, p. 5. For the New Year sports, see 4 January 1862, p. 5. See pp. 138-142 below for more detailed discussion of colonial ‘sports.’
30 See New Zealand Tablet (NZT) for annual reports of this fete. It apparently commenced as a picnic for the students of St Joseph’s Catholic School, Dunedin, but by 1875 had become an HACBS event (NZT, 3 January 1874, p. 7; and 31 December 1875, p. 13).
31 John Cotton, ed., The Diary of Frederick Barrell (Kenmore, Queensland: the author, 1985), 26 (entry for 10 January 1875).
tent we went in and had a mutton chop, two small potatoes and a piece of bread and cheese as they said that the pudding was all gone (but I firmly believe they never had any).”

William Smith and his party spent that Christmas even more miserably at a small rush near the Remarkables. They “tried to celebrate the occasion by making a plum pudding, but we could not get it to boil. The only fuel we could get hold of was grass roots, the smoke from which nearly blinded us.”

**Icons of Christmas**

Christmas pudding assumed iconic significance for English colonists, featuring as the most recurrent image of Christmas in diaries, letters, reminiscences, newspaper reports, poems and stories (see Figure 17). When Frederick Mieville wrote his reminiscences, prompted by his wife’s diary, he regretted that the journal did not record what they had eaten at a Christmas dinner more than fifty years ago: he remembered, however, “a pudding, which was a very good one,” enjoyed equally by their Maori guests.

Jack Fowler, who worked at a Dunedin boot shop, each Christmas received from his mother in London a box of gifts, invariably including a pudding. “I had the Pudding cooked for Christmas,” he wrote to her in 1886, “and the only fault anyone says is that there is not enough of it for every one wanted a taste and few could say they have tasted its equal.” These puddings must have been impressive in size, as he reported of the following year’s version that “there were at least 60 persons besides myself that had some of it.”

Christmas pudding was a “democratic dish,” requiring minimal fuel and ingredients to create a delicious treat. But the main significance of Christmas pudding in the colony lay in the continuity it provided as one of the few traditional

---

22 W. G. Fall, “From Melbourne to the Goldfields,” in “Early Otago Pioneer Reminiscences recorded by the Port Chalmers Old Identities Association,” ed. I. N. Church, typescript, PCML 212, Port Chalmers Museum.

33 William Smith, “Reminiscences of a long and active life by an old colonist,” C-101, OSM.

34 Frederick Mieville, reminiscences, p. 78.

35 Alexander John Fowler to Martha Fowler, 1 January 1886 and 26 January 1887, Fowler letters, OSM.

Figure 17 – “The Christmas Pudding”
Dunedin artist Robert Haweridge’s engraving of a Maori family cooking their Christmas pudding in a thermal pool graced the cover of the very popular *Otago Daily Times & Witness Christmas Annual* of 1898. The image conveys both the iconic nature of the Christmas pudding, and the sense of the exotic felt by colonists at Christmas in their adopted country.

trappings of the English Christmas readily obtained.\textsuperscript{37} Snow, Yule logs, holly and ivy were but distant dreams for Otago colonists, who found difficulty adjusting to Christmas in summer. The reversal of seasons highlighted the strangeness and newness of life in the colony, traditional customs requiring alteration to suit the new environment. Some delighted in the possibilities of outdoor recreation at Christmas, some deeply regretted the loss of midwinter festivities; all commented in cards and letters home on the peculiarity of a summer Christmas, which also featured as a regular refrain of Christmas editorials in the local press (see Figure 18). As Thomas Ferens wrote to his sister in 1850, “No one has any idea what strange changes come over an individual in a New Country. Oh how altered every subject is looked upon out here, there being a reverse of seasons, which materially changes your old ideas & habits on that point – then comes Christmas in Summer.”\textsuperscript{38} Newcomers gradually adjusted, with Christmas acquiring new associations. Old Christmas appeared, in the words of an \textit{Otago Witness} editorial, “his hair bound with garlands of summer flowers, his robes of verdure loosely flowing in the summer’s breeze, bearing in his hands and dropping in his path the choice fruits, the cherry and strawberry, the currant and gooseberry.”\textsuperscript{39} Strawberries and cream joined plum pudding as a favoured Christmas dessert, and while Jack Fowler received Christmas puddings from his English mother, he returned the favour by sending her a frozen lamb.\textsuperscript{40} The first home-grown vegetables of the season became a feature of the Christmas feast. Francis Pillans of Inch Clutha celebrated Christmas 1850 with the first harvest from his new garden. Jack Fowler reported in 1891 that his potatoes and peas were “looking well”; he expected “to have some by Xmas of our own growing.”\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37} On Christmas pudding, and other festive fare, in the Australian colonies, see Stapleton and McDonald, \textit{Christmas in the Colonies}, 28-36 and 97-107. In the 1920s and 1930s, Christmas pudding was promoted as a symbol of imperial unity: see Connelly, \textit{Christmas}, 125-131.

\textsuperscript{38} Thomas Ferens to [M. A. Wood?], March 1850, Box 1, Thomas Ferens papers, AG-99, OSM.

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Otago Witness}, 25 December 1858, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{40} Alexander John Fowler to Martha Fowler, 5 October 1884.

\textsuperscript{41} Francis Pillans diary, 25 December 1850, Misc-MS-1545, HL; and Alexander John Fowler to Martha Fowler, 11 November 1891.
Figure 18 – Christmas in summer

Produced by Saunders, McBeath & Co. in 1882, this Christmas card features three sketches by Dunedin artist Nathaniel Leves, photographed by Burton Brothers. The scene on the left portrays Purakanui and that on the right Mount Earnslaw. In the centre is “an exact representation” of the comet of 2 October 1882. The surrounding foliage highlights the association of Christmas with the southern summer, as does the verse on the reverse:

Summer scenes and flowers, are ours at Christmas time,
Not wint’ry frost and snow – as yours in Northern Clime –
But still our hearts commingle, and kindly thoughts arise,
Recalling distant lov’d ones who dwell ‘neath other skies;
And so I send this little gift across the ocean wide,
Wishing “A Glad New Year,” and “A Merry Christmas-tide.”

Source – Otago Settlers Museum, Leves file, Biog Box 34.
Christmas and religion

Christmas was not an explicitly religious occasion for the majority of Otago colonists. Although I have emphasised the differences between Scots and English, this is of course a simplistic division. Not all Scots were Presbyterians, neither were all English Anglicans, and the Irish and other ethnic groups came in a variety of religious persuasions. The denominations that celebrated Christmas as a religious festival, Catholics and Anglicans, combined to make up well under half of Otago’s Pakeha population (measured by census adherence). Migrants from English non-conformist backgrounds, like Scottish Presbyterians, had scruples about Christmas keeping. Wesleyans, who remained closer to the Anglican tradition than other breakaway groups, retained some respect for Christmas. As noted above, the Wesleyan mission at Waikouaiti observed Christmas with special services, and, from the 1870s, Dunedin’s Trinity Wesleyan Church joined the reports of Christmas services in the press, formerly confined to Catholic and Anglican celebrations. Baptists and Congregationalists resisted the religious observance of Christmas. Jack Fowler, mentioned above, was a committed Baptist and regular church attender who celebrated Christmas. He recognised Christmas, however, with parties, gifts, cards and special festive food, not church activities. Concerns about the pagan, non-scriptural and ritualist elements of the Christmas festival, demonstrated, as noted above, by John Christie, were not confined to Presbyterians.

Anglicans and Catholics, meanwhile, kept Christmas as an important church festival. Anglican ‘adherents’ had the lowest church attendance rates of all major denominations in New Zealand, but Christmas services attracted large congregations in some parishes. In 1881 at St Peter’s in Caversham, for example, the average attendance at Sunday morning and evening service combined was 146, but there were 220 attendances on Christmas Day. Anglican vestry books reveal huge variation in

---

42 At their lowest point, in 1858, the two groups accounted for 28 percent of non-Maori residents; their highest point was 1864 when, combined, they reached 43 percent. See Appendix One.

43 Fowler letters. For Dunedin Baptist practices, see also Hanover Street Baptist Church, Dunedin, Church Members’ Meeting Minutes 1890-1908, 96-116-05/02, HL. Other special services, such as New Year’s Eve watch night services, combined district communions and harvest thanksgivings are recorded in these minutes, but there is no evidence at all of Easter or Christmas services.


45 St Peter’s Anglican Church, Caversham, Service Record Book, 1877-1884, AG-040/A-7, 1, HL.
Christmas attendance over both place and time, although it is generally the case that Christmas attracted larger than usual congregations to Anglican services. Christmas was a favoured time for taking communion in some Anglican churches, such as St John the Evangelist in Roslyn, Dunedin, where 90 people took the sacrament on Christmas Day 1883, the highest number for that year. St John’s was, however, not typical, with an incumbent of marked high church views; Rev. Algernon Kerkham would later resign after a dispute over his ritualist practices. While Kerkham presumably promoted Christmas communion, others did not. As discussed below, Anglicans were reluctant partakers of communion. More usual was the experience of St Peter’s, Caversham, where of those 220 people attending on Christmas Day 1881, only 25 took the sacrament, less than on most of the regular monthly communions.

Catholics attended church more diligently than did their Anglican brethren. Unfortunately, most of my evidence about Catholic Christmas practice consists of reports in the New Zealand Tablet, which generally confined themselves to the services at St Joseph’s Church (later the Cathedral) in Dunedin. The several masses held there on Christmas Days attracted large congregations, considerable numbers taking communion. In 1876 there were “upwards of 400” communicants, and by the early 1890s, around 1000 Catholics took the sacrament at St Joseph’s Christmas services.

Christmas decorations

The Feast of the Nativity appealed to Christians on many different levels. The incarnation is one of the great mysteries of the Christian religion, its commemoration vying with Easter as the most important date in the religious calendar. Christmas was

---

46 In addition to the Caversham records, I have examined the following: All Saints Anglican Church, Tapanui, Register of Services 1878-1891, AG-221/04, HL; Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Port Chalmers, Service Register 1887-1904, MS-1084/11, HL; St John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Roslyn, Vestry Book, 1880-1900, 84-088/1-1, HL; St Mark’s Anglican Church, Balcutha, Services Register, 1876-1882, AG-519/22, HL; St Paul’s Anglican Cathedral, Dunedin, Preacher’s Book, 1887-1893, AG-147/F1; Vestry Book, 1895-1901, AG-147/F3, HL; and St Peter’s Anglican Church, Queenstown, Service register, 1881-1891, AG-166/5-1, HL.

47 St John the Evangelist, Roslyn, Vestry Book, 1880-1900.

48 Evans, Southern See, 203.

49 Jackson, “Churchgoing.”

50 NZT, 29 December 1876, p. 12; 1 January 1892, p. 18; 30 December 1892, p. 15; and 29 December 1893, p. 17. In 1891, Christmas coincided with the end of a successful Redemptorist mission. The figure for 1892 included the other Dunedin Catholic churches (St Patrick’s, South Dunedin and Sacred Heart, North East Valley).
a deeply significant spiritual occasion. On a more superficial level, the special features of Christmas services appealed to the senses. Church decorations and Christmas music undoubtedly drew many occasional churchgoers to attend. Seasonal church decoration reached elaborate heights in the late Victorian period, and Otago’s Catholic and Anglican churches participated fully in the fashion (see Figure 19). On Christmas Day, 1872, St Barnabas Anglican Church at Blueskin was “beautifully decorated with ferns and flowers, and appropriate texts.” In 1880, St Matthew’s Anglican Church, Dunedin, was “tastefully decorated with flowers, evergreens, ferns, &c., as also the altar, lectern, pulpit, and font.” In Catholic churches congregations could also enjoy nativity scenes, which provided “a touching representation of the great event at Bethlehem.” At St Joseph’s Cathedral in 1886, the crib “was beautifully arranged, and formed the object of devotion to large numbers of the congregation throughout the day and the succeeding week.” The extent church decorations could reach is well illustrated by the Tablet’s description of the cathedral in 1894:

The high altar and sanctuary had been beautifully adorned by the Dominican nuns for the feast. A garland of roses and foliage was carried from the front of the altar, against each side wall, to the wall behind, where it hung in graceful festoons underneath scrolls placed on the pillars and below the great window, and bearing in ornamental letters the device Gloria in excelsis Deo; qui propter nos homines descendit de coelis [Glory to God in the highest; who came down from heaven for us men]. A profusion of flowers and tapers disposed with refined taste decorated the altar. Within the door opening from the north tower into the corresponding aisle the crib had been erected.

Over the centuries, the church has had an ambivalent attitude towards festive decorations. Early church leaders banned floral decorations in order to distance their new religion from the ‘idolatry’ of pagan worship with its statues and garlands. Although flowers were not used as offerings, they did eventually enter churches as decorations, their aesthetic value serving to glorify God. This represented “a compromise with the popular ... there is an underlying tendency to elaborate rituals, to introduce material elements like flowers even into the worship of the ‘invisible

---

52 Ibid., 1 January 1881, p. 22.
53 NZT, 28 December 1888, p. 18.
54 Ibid., 31 December 1886, p. 16.
55 Ibid., 4 January 1895, p. 18.
Figure 19 – Church Christmas decorations
I have not located any illustrations of Christmas church decorations in Otago, but A. J. Fischer's 1883 engraving, "An Australian Country Church on a Christmas Morning," resembles descriptions of such decorations in Otago.

Puritans and iconoclasts objected to the distraction that they believed decorations presented to worship, as well as the extravagant luxury involved. During the nineteenth century, although conservatives and low church Christians remained resistant, festive church decorations became increasingly popular. This reflected both a growing acceptance of ritual by some Christians, and contemporary tastes in interior design. Complex Christian symbolism came to surround plants initially associated with particular festivals simply because they were seasonal and readily available.57

Ronald Hutton notes “certain perpetual patterns” which the rhythms of the year impose on calendar customs, including a yearning for light and greenery in midwinter and for symbols of rebirth at spring.58 In the southern hemisphere, colonists could not use the foliage traditionally associated with particular festivals because of the change of seasons. Furthermore, in the early years of colonisation, traditional European plants were seldom available in sufficient quantity to use in decorations. Native plants, therefore, became popular for decorating churches, homes and businesses. Jack Fowler described the Christmas decorations at Simon Bros bootmakers in Dunedin: “We had a grand show outside our place in George St had four large fur [sic] trees tied to the varanda [sic] posts and a large picture stuck on top of the varanda with fern leaves round and cabbage pine blossom bloom and evergreens all over the place!”.59 Ferns are ubiquitous in descriptions of nineteenth-century decorations in Otago, reflecting both their ready availability and huge popularity in this period of the “fern craze.”60 Summer flowers also added an

---

57 Goody, *Culture of Flowers*, 123, 154-155, 190, 198, 204 and 302-303; Hutton, *Stations of the Sun*, 34-37; and Peter F. Anson, *Fashions in Church Furnishings 1840-1940*, 2d ed. (London: Studio Vista, 1965), 63 and 198-206. The popular Christmas carol “The Holly and the Ivy” demonstrates, for example, how the features of the holly plant became associated with the birth and ministry of Christ: “The holly bears a blossom, as white as the lily flower, and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ, to be our sweet Saviour; The holly bears a berry, as red as any blood, and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ, to do poor sinners good; The holly bears a prickle, as sharp as any thorn, and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ on Christmas Day in the morn; The holly bears a bark, as bitter as any gall, and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ for to redeem us all.” See Hugh Keyte and Andrew Parrott, eds., *The New Oxford Book of Carols* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 436-437. Elaborate schemes, first developed in the medieval period, associated particular plants with particular festivals or virtues of Christ. Specialist publications, such as *The Art of Garnishing Churches*, advised on appropriate decorations.
59 Alexander John Fowler to Martha Fowler, 3 January 1884.
unfamiliar note to Christmas decorations. The Mosley family of Inch Clutha “made arches of ‘seven sisters’ roses over the doors and filled the sitting room fireplace with white Xmas lillies, roses and ferns.”

What meaning did decorations of flowers, ferns and evergreens hold for Otago’s Christmas churchgoers? Leigh Schmidt, who has explored church decoration in the United States, suggests festive decorations were primarily devotional, aiming to glorify God and edify Christians; they also suggested a sentimental and domestic piety. Less worthily, festive displays created competition between churches, and fostered modishness. Another important consideration is the prestige church decorations gave to their creators, generally women, who otherwise played distinctly subordinate roles in the churches. In Otago, other possible meanings can be added to the list. The use of native plants, particularly ferns, suggests a growing identification of the colonists with the land of their adoption. Yet the colonists remained primarily English, Scottish and Irish in their cultural identity. Ferns would eventually become a symbol of New Zealand national identity, but in the earlier years of settlement they represented cultural colonisation rather than nationalism, as the colonists adopted these readily available, aesthetically pleasing and fashionable plants into their European worldview. Festive church decorations mingled the native and exotic, the wild and cultivated, and brought the natural outdoors into the manufactured church interior. In overcoming such polarities, they expressed and celebrated, above all, God’s dominion over all of creation.


61 Maclean, “Thoughts of early Otago.”
65 For further discussion of church decoration, see pp. 200-207 below.
**Christmas music**

Music also added to the appeal of Christmas services, which featured choral masses and incidental music sung by gifted soloists. In a typical example, High Mass at St Joseph’s on Christmas morning 1873 featured selections from masses by Haydn, Gounod and Mozart, the Hallelujah Chorus, and the hugely popular “Adeste Fideles” (“O, come all ye faithful”). In 1876, St Matthew’s Anglican Church, Dunedin, commenced what quickly became a very popular practice: a Christmas Eve carol service, featuring a combined choir from various Anglican churches. Bishop Nevill addressed the large congregation on “the importance and advantages of Carol singing at Christmastide,” referring to “its time-honoured observance in the old country.”

Such festive services attracted churchgoers from outside the Anglican and Catholic communities. The *Palmerston & Waikouaiti Times* commented one year on the unusually large congregations at local Anglican churches on Christmas Day, “some being attracted to the services from mere curiosity, while others go there with a more commendable object.” In 1888, G. M. Thomson attended the Christmas service at St John’s Anglican Church, Roslyn, not the behaviour expected of a devout Presbyterian elder. Music may have formed part of the appeal of the service for Thomson: he was a music-lover who sang with the Dunedin Choral Society.

Christmas hymns and carols achieved unprecedented popularity in the late nineteenth century. Even the English Presbyterian Church’s *Church Praise*, the hymnbook most widely used in Otago’s Presbyterian churches, included fifteen Christmas hymns. Carol singing was not confined to churches, but also entered public spaces such as Dunedin’s Octagon. On Christmas Eve 1886 a large crowd gathered there to hear the Naval and Garrison Bands, whose repertoire included “Christians awake, salute the happy morn.” Meanwhile, at Port Chalmers, “Christmas

---

66 NZT, 3 January 1874, p. 7.
67 *Otago Witness*, 30 December 1876, p. 15. For subsequent years, see *Otago Witness*, 29 December 1877, p. 15; and 28 December 1878, p. 10.
69 George Malcolm Thomson diary, 25 December 1888, AG-839, HL.
71 *Church Praise* (London: Nisbet, 1882), hymns 29-42, 461 and 463. This hymn collection was authorised by the English Presbyterian Church. The 1898 *Church Hymnary*, authorised by the Church of Scotland, Free Church of Scotland, United Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Church in Ireland, included a similar number of Christmas hymns.
was heralded in by Mr Brunton’s choir singing a number of carols in very excellent style.\textsuperscript{72} The occasional reports of wandering carollers suggest the nostalgia this custom induced for England. On Christmas morning 1882, Palmerston residents awoke to “Christmas Carols sung in front of their houses. The surprise proved both pleasing and welcome, and no doubt recalled a most cherished scene and incidents of Home land.”\textsuperscript{73} In 1893 the \textit{Otago Witness} reported a “distinct advance” towards “the adoption of the old English custom of carol singing” in Dunedin, where many “were aroused from their slumbers on Christmas morning by vocal or instrumental strains of the joyous but sober carol melodies that must have carried their minds back to childhood and to the motherland, where Christmas ‘waits’ are as essential as holly, mistletoe, and snow to Christmastide.”\textsuperscript{74} English ethnic organisations were rare in Otago, so it is intriguing that carolling formed a public activity for the Yorkshire Club. On Christmas Eve 1877 they met at a Dunedin hotel and “ushered in Christmas Day after the way of the people of their native country. They afterwards sallied forth and treated their fellow citizens to a number of carols and glees.”\textsuperscript{75} Christmas carols clearly carried both ethnic and religious associations. Some Christian musicians seized the Christmas carol as an evangelistic opportunity. On Christmas Eve 1897 two travelling groups enlivened the streets of Dunedin with carols: the Salvation Army Band, and the Hanover Street Baptist Church Band.\textsuperscript{76}

\textbf{Changing Protestant attitudes to Christmas}

By the late nineteenth century, a growing number of Presbyterians, Baptists and Congregationalists recognised Christmas as a religious occasion, in private if not in public. Presbyterian Christina Evans, who spent Christmas Day 1896 on an outing, visiting friends and at choir practice, recorded in her diary, “Thanks to God for the unspeakable gift of His only Son, my Saviour, May I love & serve Him more day by day.”\textsuperscript{77} In 1891 the \textit{N. Z. Presbyterian}, edited by popular Knox Church minister D. M.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Otago Witness}, 2 January 1886, p. 12.
  \item \textit{Palmerston & Waikouaiti Times}, 29 December 1882, p. 2.
  \item \textit{Otago Witness}, 28 December 1893, p. 21.
  \item Ibid., 29 December 1877, p. 15. For further discussion of ethnic organisations, see pp. 150-154 below.
  \item Ibid., 30 December 1897, p. 20.
  \item Christina Evans diary, 25 December 1896, DA3/2, 3/38, PCANZ archives.
\end{itemize}
Stuart, suggested “that the time has come when the observance of Christmas might form part of Presbyterian worship. The Presbyterians of these colonies ... are compelled to observe this day as a holiday. Now, is there not something incongruous, or worse than incongruous, in observing as a mere holiday the day on which all other Christians commemorate such a momentous event as the birth of Christ – the central fact in the history of the universe?” Stuart clearly felt uncomfortable with the lack of Presbyterian recognition for the religious aspects of Christmas and the impression this gave that Presbyterians lacked respect for the pivotal Christian event of the nativity. His evangelical and emotional piety, noted in Chapter One, presumably gave the commemoration of the nativity a strong personal appeal to Stuart, as it did to Christina Evans. More liberal and tolerant than many of his brethren, Stuart also may have regretted the offence Presbyterian disregard for Christmas might give to other Christians. In his own home, Christmas was celebrated with gifts and gatherings of family and friends. In 1888 his three grandsons, then living with Stuart, “were proud that they found their stockings quite packed this morning.” But religion remained an important part of their day; the boys each received a bible as a gift from their grandfather, and singing hymns, particularly Christmas hymns, was a favoured activity.

In 1888, under its previous editor, the *N. Z. Presbyterian* had opposed the recognition of Christmas and Easter: Stuart’s was only one side of the debate. The staunch elders of First Church Dunedin refused their minister’s 1891 request to hold a Christmas service, and their organist’s request to play carols in the church on Christmas evening. Such differences of opinion would continue well into the twentieth century: meanwhile, some congregations began to make special recognition of Christmas. I have found no evidence of Presbyterian Christmas Day services (except when Christmas fell on a Sunday), but a few parishes held Christmas Eve services. Concern over members attending such occasions at the denominational opposition may have contributed to the innovation. The East Taieri Presbyterian Church held a “service of praise” on Christmas Eve 1885, minister William Will

---

78 *N. Z. Presbyterian*, 1 January 1898, p. 121.
79 D. M. Stuart to William Stuart, 25 December 1888, D. M. Stuart papers, letters, Box II, C/16, OSM.
80 *N. Z. Presbyterian*, 1 November 1888, p. 86.
81 First Church Dunedin Session Minute Book, 7 December 1891, PCANZ archives.
commenting that “the service might be an innovation, but if all had experienced the same pleasure that he had, they would go away fully satisfied.”\textsuperscript{82} In 1892, Port Chalmers residents had a choice of three Christmas Eve carol services, at the Anglican, Presbyterian and Congregational churches.\textsuperscript{83} From the 1890s, midnight masses at the Catholic cathedral added another dimension to Christmas Eve.\textsuperscript{84}

For Presbyterians, the growing recognition of the Christian year formed part of what almost amounted to a revolution in worship practices. By the 1890s, ‘human’ hymns had joined the familiar psalm singing of most Otago parishes, and the once dreaded organ had also entered most churches.\textsuperscript{85} As conservative Calvinism gave way to a more emotive evangelicalism, Christmas gained a new appeal. The \textit{Tablet}, noting the move toward Christmas observance by Presbyterians and other Protestants, suggested “we may in time hope to see many of our separated brethren so far ‘undo the work of the Reformation’ as to adopt in part or in whole the Catholic conception of the spiritual significance of this great festival.”\textsuperscript{86} Such interpretations confirmed the worst fears of some conservative Protestants (John Christie, for example) that worship reforms were opening the door to ‘Papist’ practice.

Despite the increasing religious observance of Christmas by denominations once fiercely opposed to it, in 1900 carols represented, for many, their only contact with the story of the nativity. Christmas was primarily an occasion for social gatherings, feasting, gifts and outdoor recreation, while many rural residents of Scottish origin continued, where possible, to ignore Christmas.

\section*{Easter}

The story of Easter in nineteenth-century Otago mirrors that of Christmas in many ways, except that the matter of Easter observance created more sectarian tension.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{82} \textit{Otago Witness}, 2 January 1886, p. 13.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 29 December 1892, p. 26.
\item \textsuperscript{84} These were first approved by Dunedin’s Catholic Bishop in 1894, although one earlier midnight mass was recorded in 1865. NZT, 21 December 1894, p. 22; and \textit{Otago Witness}, 30 December 1865, p. 11.
\item \textsuperscript{86} NZT, 21 December 1899 p. 18. On the adoption of Christmas as a religious festival by non-Anglican Protestants in the United States, see Schmidt, \textit{Consumer Rites}, 176-182. The change came there some decades earlier than in Otago.
\end{itemize}
and debate. As with Christmas, Presbyterians and other non-Anglican Protestants did not observe Easter, and it was not a holiday in modern Scotland.87 Methodists again form an exception, but varied amongst themselves in their attitude to Easter. At Waikouaiti, in 1844, Wesleyan missionary James Watkin observed Good Friday “as at home, by abstinence from labour and food, and by religious services as at home.”88 A few years later fellow Methodist Thomas Ferens was surprised to discover Maori at Waikouaiti keeping Good Friday as a holiday, noting “we all agreed, not to go and work, as the Maories would not!” While Easter Sunday mattered to the devout Ferens – “I arose with a calm and delightful frame of mind, the thoughts of Christ and his resurrection cheered my heart greatly,” he recorded in 1848 – he clearly held less respect for Good Friday. In later years, on his sheep station, Good Friday became a regular working day.89

The place that Easter held in early colonial Otago is well illustrated by its first mention in the press, which did not occur until 1853, when the Otago Witness reported that “owing to an inadvertency” the day named for the Anniversary Fair, a stock auction, the following week “happens to fall on Good Friday.”90 The fair was postponed for a week, and the Witness soon began printing a weekly almanac that noted significant dates. The majority of the colonists had no idea when Easter, a moveable feast, fell, and it remains undetectable in the diaries of rural Presbyterians throughout the nineteenth century. Upper class Anglican Charlotte Godley, who with her husband Canterbury founder John Godley visited Dunedin in 1850, was shocked to discover that even the Cargills, leaders of the Otago settlement, did not commemorate Easter. “I should think them a very nice family,” she wrote to her mother, “but it seems strange to be with people who do not even know when Easter


88 James Watkin diary, 6 April 1844, MS-0440/04, HL.

89 Thomas Ferens diary, 21 and 23 April 1848. Easter is undetectable in Ferens’s diary for 1869.

90 Otago Witness, 19 March 1853, p. 2.
Sunday is; though Mrs Cargill calls herself Episcopalian, all the others are Free Kirk.  

**A recreational holiday**

By the mid-1860s, many Dunedin residents recognised Good Friday as a holiday. The details and timing of this change of practice remain obscure, but the reasons were probably similar to those I have proposed as being behind the adoption of Christmas: the growing strength of the Anglican and Catholic churches in the district, the growing number of English colonists, and, perhaps most significantly, the growth of government operations that ran according to English holidays. By 1862, Dunedin had Good Friday harbour excursions.\(^92\) Easter Monday was soon being reported as a holiday on the goldfields, and quickly became a popular day for sports and outdoor recreation, as it had been in England for centuries.\(^93\) People began referring to the Easter holidays, rather than Good Friday alone, although Easter Monday was never so widely kept as Good Friday. An 1873 press report highlights its primarily recreational focus: “The observance of Easter Monday as a holiday was almost a total failure, a large number of people attending to their avocations as usual. No doubt if the day had been fine many would have turned to pleasure instead of to business, but the wretched weather put outdoor enjoyment out of the question.”\(^94\) These two holidays did not give everyone an extended break, as most worked on the intervening Saturday. In 1891, Jack Fowler grumbled that his boss had refused to close on Easter Saturday, which would have allowed those with more distant family and friends an extended holiday to visit them. Fowler, the union representative, suggested they stay open on Otago Anniversary Day instead, but was unable to convince his employer, instead receiving “a rough half hour for my trouble.”\(^95\)

As with Christmas, Scots faced an unfamiliar holiday, and again they used it for family reunions and recreation. Dunedin merchant James Kilgour wrote to his

---


\(^92\) ODT, 17 April 1862, p. 4.

\(^93\) *Otago Witness*, 11 April 1863, p. 8.

\(^94\) Ibid., 19 April 1873, p. 15.

\(^95\) Alexander John Fowler to Martha Fowler, 23 March 1891. The proximity of Anniversary Day (23 March) to Easter continues to cause differences of opinion over holiday dates today: see pp. 230-231 below for further discussion.
brother in 1867, “Yesterday was good Friday which is kept here by all the Folks we had Jessie Alexander & her Husband Mr Hannah & Helen Alexander up at Roslyn.” Rev. John Christie of Waikouaiti did his very best to avoid recognising Easter, but the holidays invariably turned it into a Christie family reunion. Dunedin teacher and naturalist G. M. Thomson had a holiday from school, and usually spent Good Friday working in his garden and study, sometimes travelling with his family to visit relatives on the Taieri.

Presbyterians and non-churchgoers were not the only Otago residents to enjoy Good Friday recreation. Jack Fowler displays the attitude of a good Baptist to Easter observance. For several years he belonged to the Volunteers, spending Easter at encampments and military manoeuvres (this was a regular Easter event, held in varied locations around the South Island, often attracting large numbers of spectators). In 1888 he and his future wife Jeannie enjoyed a Good Friday excursion on the Otago Central Railway. By 1890 his recreations had become more domestic, and he wrote to his mother “Last Good Friday & Easter Monday I dug up the ground sufficient to plant 75 strawberry plants and some 150 cabbages.” Anglicans, also, did not all treat Easter with the respect traditionally afforded this sacred holiday. William Nichol, a Scottish Presbyterian divinity student, noted the Good Friday behaviour of his Anglican fellow passengers aboard a ship from London to Otago in 1874:

Good Friday, according to Episcopalian & Roman Catholic observance. The emigrants remembered it well enough, but, as it appeared to me, did not observe it as the intention was. To a large extent they abstained from ordinary work, & gave up the whole day to amusements, such as they could raise. They recognise Good Friday, but do not keep it as it should be kept by them ...They should have had conscientious scruples strong enough to exclude amusements from the exercises of the day, & should have spent their time in a way more consistent with their creed.

96 James Kilgour to his brother (unidentified), 30 April 1867, Biog Box 33, OSM.
97 John Christie diaries, 1886-1898.
99 Alexander John Fowler to Bob Fowler, 22 April 1884; to Martha Fowler, 23 April 1885 and 22 April 1886. Easter military reviews were reported regularly in the local press, for example, see Otago Witness, 7 April 1877, p. 17; and 15 April 1882, p. 21.
100 Alexander John Fowler to Martha Fowler, 18 April 1888.
101 Ibid., 16 April 1890.
102 William Nichol diary, 3 April 1874, “Journal of a Voyage from London to New Zealand,” transcript, DA4/1, 3/73, PCANZ archives. Nichol’s criticism is somewhat ironic, as he contributed to the failure of the Anglicans to observe Easter in a ‘proper’ fashion. As there was no other minister on board, he conducted the Sunday services, but took no service on Good Friday.
Surrounded by non-Anglican Protestants in their new country, such migrants continued to be presented with many options for their Easter entertainment. In the same year, 1874, several speakers at Dunedin's Church of England Diocesan Synod expressed concern over the lack of respect for Lent in Otago. Archdeacon Edward Edwards found it “very painful ... to see so little regard paid to the holy season of Lent in Dunedin. Unfortunately, during that season a great many parties were given, and the annual races were then held. He did think it was the duty of the members to set their faces against unnecessary festivities during that season.”

Presumably the Otago elite, many of them Anglican, found it difficult to avoid such frivalities at the height of the social season.

Religious observance of Easter

For many Otago Anglicans and Catholics, however, Easter remained an important spiritual occasion, the high point of the Christian year. Good Friday, a major fast day, invited sober contemplation of the death of Christ, while Easter Sunday celebrated his resurrection. During the earlier years of the colony, the devout faced considerable difficulties in recognising Easter as they wished. On Good Friday 1862, Oamaru Anglican George Sumpter recorded in his diary that his wife had attended church. His employer, however, did not recognise the holiday, so Sumpter spent Good Friday “digging potatoes, would have liked to have gone [to church] with Susie but not being my own master must live in hopes.”

Priests were few and far between in early Otago, and most Anglicans and Catholics therefore had no opportunity to take communion, as was customary, at Easter. The province’s first resident Catholic priest, Father Delphin Moreau, settled in Dunedin in 1861, and prior to that mass was offered but rarely, by visiting missionaries, to Otago’s few Catholics. On an earlier visit in 1859, Moreau celebrated what was probably

103 Otago Witness, 10 October 1874, p. 10.

104 On the Easter liturgy, see Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster: Dacre, 1945), 36, 228-240, 348-357 and 440-442; Hutton, Stations of the Sun, 182-197; and Louis Bouyer, The Paschal Mystery: Meditations on the Last Three Days of Holy Week, trans. Mary Benoit (London: Allen & Unwin, 1951). While the latter is a contemplative rather than an historical work, it provides some useful insights into Catholic experience of Holy Week.

105 George Sumpter diary, 18 April 1862, C106, OSM.

106 On Catholicism in early Otago, see John Broadbent, “Catholicism,” in The Farthest Jerusalem: Four Lectures on the Origins of Christianity in Otago (Dunedin: Faculty of Theology / Hocken Library, 1993), 19-29; Lillian Keys, Philip Viard, Bishop of Wellington ([Christchurch]:
Otago’s first Easter mass. Twelve people, eight of them Catholic, attended this event at the Taieri farm of Neil McGregor. By the 1870s, with the Dunedin diocese well established and more clergy available, Catholic sacramental opportunities had increased. In 1873, Fathers William Coleman and John McKay left Dunedin immediately after Easter to spend two months hearing confessions, saying masses and preaching on the goldfields in what was by then an annual mission.

Early Easter services were generally simple. In the early 1860s Anglican Catherine Dewe of Tokomairiro attended church on Easter Sunday, and sometimes Good Friday as well. Her diary reports of these services differed in only one respect from those of regular Sundays: on Easter Sunday the congregation sang Easter hymns instead of their usual Psalms. Her father, a lay reader, probably conducted the service. Communion had to wait until an ordained priest visited. In 1861 there was a flurry of activity on the weekend after Easter, when the Bishop’s visit created an opportunity for communion, baptism, confirmation and Catherine Dewe’s marriage. By the late nineteenth century, services had become more complex, reflecting both the greater population and the gradual acceptance of more advanced ritual by some Anglicans. As Bosco Peters notes, most early Anglican colonists were low church in theology; “They were usually conservative and pragmatic, focusing on getting established in a new land. After the first generation, however, the prospering colony began to look for Victorian luxuries in church as well as home.” By the early twentieth century, the Dunedin diocese was developing a persistent tradition of Anglo-Catholicism. At Easter 1895, St Paul’s Cathedral received, among other gifts and monetary donations, a gold chalice and paten, silk burse and veil, litany desk and altar hanging. Young Anglican woman Gertrude Dyer, of Dunedin, experienced

---


108 Jessie McKay to Jane Lamb, 16 April 1873, Lamb papers, Biog Box 62.3, OSM. These two women were Father John McKay’s sisters.

109 Catherine Squires diary, 6 and 8 April 1860, 30 March 1861, 6 and 7 April 1861, M-61 and M-62, OSM. Catherine’s father, John Dewe, was later an ordained Anglican priest.


112 *Otago Witness*, 18 April 1895, p. 18.
markedly different Easter worship in 1899 than Catherine Dewe had forty years earlier. On the evening of Palm Sunday she enjoyed the "very good" singing of the "Crucifixion" at the crowded Cathedral, and on the afternoon of Good Friday she attended the Three Hours' Service. On Easter morning she stayed home to mind the dinner while the rest of her family attended church, but in the evening attended St Paul's, which was "tastefully decorated, the altar being draped in white and gold as well as the pulpit. Mrs Manson sang 'I know that My Redeemer liveth' during the offertory." Gertrude Dyer's diary does not record whether she took communion at Easter, but she had ample opportunity to do so if she wished.

Although the Anglican Church required its members to take communion at Easter, many did not. Peter Lineham notes that sacramental observance, both Anglican and Methodist, was low in New Zealand, and that this is typical of a lay-dominated church. Lineham is surely correct, but it is significant that recent studies show low participation in communion was also the norm in many English parishes during the nineteenth century, so many colonists were simply continuing their previous pattern of piety. By the late seventeenth century, few Anglicans took communion, not necessarily from a lack of respect for the sacrament, but due to the high standards set by clergy, who, "in their efforts to encourage their flocks to prepare more carefully for receiving the sacrament, ended up by discouraging them from receiving it at all."

In nineteenth-century England, many lay people saw communion as a rite for the dying, delaying participation in the sacrament due to "a fear of its power, and more particularly a fear of incurring eternal damnation through

113 Gertrude Dyer diary, 26 and 31 March 1899, and 2 April 1899, MS-0117, HL.
114 St Paul's held communion services at 6, 7, 8 and 11 am on Easter Sunday, as well as every morning of Holy Week: St Paul's Cathedral, Vestry Book, 1895-1901.
115 The Book of Common Prayer states that "every Parishioner shall communicate at the least three times in the year, of which Easter to be one."
unworthy reception.” Anglicans had as many scruples about the unworthy taking of communion as their Presbyterian brethren.

From the evidence of those vestry books that enumerate both church attenders and communicants, Otago Anglicans were reluctant partakers of the sacrament at all times, including Easter. At St Peter's Caversham on Easter Sunday 1884, 430 people attended the services but only 30 took communion. At Easter 1882, St Mark's Balclutha had 127 church attenders but only 15 communicants; and at St Peter's Queenstown, 128 people attended the 1890 Easter services, with only 14 communicants. At Holy Trinity, Port Chalmers, even Bishop Nevill's presence did not induce significant participation in communion: on Easter Sunday 1891 he conducted a service for 300 people, only 28 taking the sacrament. George Sumpter of Oamaru, a most devout man, displays the serious approach to communion that may have been typical of Otago Anglicans. He first took communion in 1862, aged 26 years, recording in his diary, "Stayed to the communion for the first time. A most solemn service. God grant that through Christ I may not have partaken it unworthily sinful though I be & may I be more & more anxious to do my duty." Although many Anglicans failed to take communion, they did attend Easter services in large numbers, and there were generally more communicants than at any other time, with the occasional exception of Christmas. As at Christmas, decorations and music added greatly to the appeal of Easter services (see Figure 20). The press report on Dunedin's Easter services in 1880 is typical: "The interior of All Saints' Church looked very pretty on Sunday, the floral decorations and appropriate devices being arranged in exceedingly good taste. The church was well filled both morning and evening ... Considerable credit is due to the choirmaster (Mr W. J. Morrish) for getting up and producing two of the best choral services we have heard for some time. At St Paul's Church anthems were sung by the choir, and the building was exceedingly well decorated, the ornamentation on the altar, font, and pulpit being 

---

119 Knight, Nineteenth-Century Church, 53-54.
120 St Peter's, Caversham, Service Record Book 1877-1884. In this and the next two examples there were two services, with some individuals probably attending more than once. It is unclear whether the number of communicants was additional to, or a subset of, the number of church attenders.
121 St Mark's, Balclutha, Services Register 1876-1882; St Peters, Queenstown, Service register 1881-1891; Holy Trinity, Port Chalmers, Service Register 1887-1904.
122 George Sumpter diary, 5 October 1862.
Figure 20 – Church Easter decorations
St Peter’s Anglican Church, Caversham, decorated for Easter with a profusion of flowers, date unknown. The altar cloths bear the traditional Easter texts, “Christ is risen indeed,” “Alleluia,” and “Christ the first fruits.”

Source – Hocken Library, Negative E6858/25 (ex AG-040).
especially good.” In the southern hemisphere setting, late summer flowers necessarily replaced the traditional spring blooms of northern Easter decorations.

Catholics, like Anglicans, were expected by their church to take communion at Easter. While numerical evidence is slim, it appears that many did so. In Oamaru, nearly 200 people took communion on Easter morning 1884, the priest trusting that “all who had not already fulfilled their Easter obligations” would do so over the next fortnight. The Tablet’s colourful report of the service captured the fervour of the occasion: “A bright sunny day; a large body of worshippers; better still, a crowd of communicants; the Church singing aloud her ‘Alleluias’ in pure gladness of heart; the dear Lord present on our altar, and in the very embrace of so many of His creatures; - what more could be to make a joyous Easter?” For Jessie McKay, newly arrived from Banffshire in northeast Scotland, Dunedin provided a style of Catholic worship far surpassing anything she had experienced in Scotland. “[W]e have just got over the easter time,” she wrote to her sister Jane in 1873, “and the offices and ceremonies of Holy Week were quite new to us altogether there was the office of the tenebrae three night and the holy thursday there was high Mass and the blessing of the Oils a beautifull [sic] ceremony then on good Friday there was the Mass of the presanctified on Saturday there was the blessing of the Paschal candle there was six priests all the week the services were all sung and there was two or three of the priests sing [sic] magnificently.”

By the late nineteenth century, Dunedin’s St Joseph’s Cathedral displayed the full flowering of Easter ritual. Special devotions took place every day during Lent, and on Palm Sunday came the blessing of the palms. The evening office of Tenebrae, with its sorrowful chants and the dramatic extinguishing of candles, commenced on Holy Wednesday and was repeated on Thursday and Friday. Holy Thursday commemorated the Last Supper with special rites. During mass, the priest consecrated an extra host, which was laid aside in a special container, the sepulchre,

123 Otago Witness, 3 April 1880, p. 7.
124 NZT, 18 April 1884, pp. 17-18.
125 Jessie McKay to Jane Lamb, 16 April 1873.
126 These ceremonies generally received detailed annual coverage in the NZT. The references cited below are simply the most detailed or vivid examples.
127 NZT, 11 April 1884, p. 15; and 16 April 1885, p. 16.
128 Ibid., 16 March 1894, p. 6.
to be released again on Good Friday. The faithful came to adore this host, and
devotional associations kept watch over it. Typically, in 1888, “watch was maintained
before the sepulchre during the day by the members of the Confraternity of Our Lady
of Perpetual Succour and the Sodality of the Children of Mary, and during the entire
night by the members of the Confraternity of the Holy Family. Hymns were sung and
prayers repeated at intervals, and the sound of the men’s voices in the depths of the
night was particularly impressive and solemn.”129 Thursday also saw the stripping or
disguising of all ornament from the church, in preparation for the solemnity of Good
Friday. One place alone remained decorated: the altar of repose, a side altar where the
sacred host and sepulchre lay. The Tablet described the vivid effect in 1897, when
“the altar of repose was beautifully decorated with a profusion of flowers and candles,
affording a striking contrast to the high altar which was stripped of its ornaments and
covered with the draperies of mourning.”130 The solemn services of Good Friday
attracted large congregations. In some years they had the opportunity to venerate a
relic of the true cross, obtained by Bishop Moran in Rome.131 Easter Sunday
contrasted as a day of joyous celebration of the resurrection. Several masses were
given, and the large congregations included many communicants. The choir sang fine
music, and the church was again decorated in all its glory. On Easter morning 1894,
the

church had put on its holiday gear. The statues and pictures were once more
uncovered. The shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour had been hung with festoons
of flowers, and adorned also with tapers and bouquets. A crimson scroll with the
legend, in ornamental silver letters, “Sursum Dominus Vere,” [the Lord is risen
indeed] had been fixed above the high altar, beneath the western window, and on the
clustered pillars of either side were similar scrolls of a smaller size with the word
“Alleluia” on each. The temporary wings and the back of the altar bore a profusion of
flowers and wax candles.132

Catholics in late-nineteenth century Ireland were renowned for their piety.133

New Zealand’s Catholic Church had a strong Irish identity, and Ireland’s nineteenth-
century ‘devotional revolution’ came to this country via migrant priests and laity, and

129 Ibid., 6 April 1888, pp. 17-18.
130 Ibid., 23 April 1897, p. 18.
131 Ibid., 14 April 1882, p. 15; and 19 April 1895, p. 18.
132 Ibid., 30 March 1894, p. 4.
133 S. J. Connolly, Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland 1780-1845 (Dublin: Gill &
Macmillan, 1982); Desmond J. Keenan, The Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: A
Sociological Study (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1983); and Emmet Larkin, “The Devotional Revolution
revivalist missions such as those of the Redemptorists. While New Zealand Catholics attended church less diligently than their Irish brethren, a significant proportion practised their religion with great piety. Catholic Easter ritual in Otago both reflected and fostered this late-nineteenth century devotional fervour.

Non-Anglican Protestants and Easter

As at Christmas, the festive Easter services attracted churchgoers from beyond the Anglican and Catholic communities. In 1891, Presbyterian elder G. M. Thomson and his son Stuart attended All Saints’ Anglican Church on Easter Sunday. The crowded congregation at the 1894 Easter Mass at St Joseph’s Catholic Cathedral included “a large number of non-Catholics.” This would have upset a considerable number of conservative Protestants, particularly Presbyterians, some of whom remained strongly resistant to the celebration of Easter. Rev. John Christie, for example, was as opposed to the commemoration of Easter as he was to Christmas, as demonstrated in a local dispute. The neighbouring Presbyterian parishes of Waikouaiti and Palmerston normally co-ordinated their communions. In 1889, the Palmerston session proposed Easter Sunday for the autumn communion, with the preparatory fast day held on Good Friday. John Christie recorded the staunch refusal of the Waikouaiti session to comply: “The session would not have the Fast day on Good Friday. It would seem to be a keeping of Good Friday when it was not.” When the Palmerston session insisted on keeping to their plan, the Waikouaiti elders “unanimously agreed to not have the Fast on Friday upon any consideration, as inconvenient and unsuitable.” The Waikouaiti session’s attitude towards Easter displays the ongoing Presbyterian resistance to ‘Catholic’ practice.

135 Jackson, Churches & People, 119-124.
136 G. M. Thomson diary, 29 March 1891.
137 NZT, 30 March 1894, p. 6.
138 John Christie diary, 17, 18, 29 and 31 March 1889. Presbyterian churches in Otago occasionally held communion at Easter, but this generally seems to have been simple coincidence: for example, a parish that regularly held its communion on the second Sunday of April inevitably sometimes had an Easter sacrament. It was the timing of the sacramental fast day that presented problems — Good Friday, already a holiday, seemed a convenient date for many, but conservatives were reluctant to approve this apparent recognition of a ‘Papist’ occasion. Three years later, in 1892, the Palmerston/Waikouaiti communion was again held at Easter, and this time the Waikouaiti session co-operated with Palmerston in holding their sacramental fast day on Good Friday (John Christie diary, 15
In 1899, the Presbyterian periodical the *Outlook*, while asserting that “the Crucifixion is without question the greatest event that has ever occurred on this earth,” declared firmly against the keeping of Good Friday as a holy day. “We go on the footing that it is exceedingly dangerous to invent religious rites or observe holy days other than those which the divine word has prescribed … In order that we may avoid all impious scandal it is well to remember: not only on Good Friday but on all the days that the Son of God died for our sins on the cursed tree.”\(^{139}\) Opinion was, however, slowly shifting. In the same year, Presbyterians at Clyde, though not meeting on Good Friday, held a special Easter Sunday service. Rev. John Lothian preached “an able sermon … from the text ‘If a man die, shall he live again?’ Suitable hymns and anthems were sung by the congregation and choir.”\(^{140}\) Meanwhile, at nearby St Bathans, Rev. James Gellie took a more traditional Presbyterian approach to Easter, disregarding it and celebrating a harvest thanksgiving on that date.\(^{141}\)

It took many years to overcome conservative Presbyterian opposition to Easter. In 1912, Alexander Kinmont, minister at East Taieri, noting “a growing feeling among the members of our Church in favour of the religious observance of Good Friday,” proposed to the Dunedin Presbytery that the time had come for Good Friday services in Presbyterian churches. The conservatives, led by two venerable long-time Otago ministers, Alexander Finlayson of Blueskin and Robert Sutherland of Kaikorai, outvoted Kinmont’s suggestion.\(^{142}\) Finally, in 1931, the national church, prompted by a suggestion from the Auckland Presbytery, officially approved, and indeed recommended, the observance of Good Friday by Presbyterian churches.\(^{143}\)

Some non-Anglican Protestants adopted Easter observance earlier than the Presbyterians. Methodists, as noted above, took a middle path, exemplified in the *New
Zealand Wesleyan’s 1874 declaration that “Methodists do not object to the religious observance of Good Friday; but they condemn not their fellow-Christians who choose to make it a season of recreation.” However, some Methodists did not approve the more ritualistic aspects of Easter observance. A North Island Wesleyan who attended an Anglican service when his own church had nothing on offer “regretted to see unlighted candles on the altar table, with a floral crucifix behind.” Some other evangelical Christians favoured the recognition of Easter. At Port Chalmers on Good Friday 1876, the Plymouth Brethren held an evening service with a large congregation, a special train being put on to accommodate visitors from Dunedin. “The singing of Mr Brunton’s choir proved a great attraction.” During the 1880s Dunedin’s Young Men’s Christian Association held Good Friday meetings. In 1886, large numbers of people attended services there morning, afternoon and evening, conducted by clergy from various denominations, including Methodist, Baptist, Congregationalist and Presbyterian. Mr Brunton’s choir again proved an attraction. It is unclear whether these meetings served to commemorate Good Friday, or had a more straightforward evangelistic purpose. In either case, they reveal the desire of some evangelical Christians to use Good Friday for religious rather than recreational purposes.

Easter and sectarianism

Ethnic and religious differences over Christmas observance pointed to cultural diversity within the community, but created little tension. Christmas was, after all, an occasion of rejoicing, treated as such by both non-churchgoers and devout Catholics and Anglicans. In contrast, differences over Easter observance could, and did, cause offence. The problem centred on Good Friday, for some a most serious fast day for

144 New Zealand Wesleyan, 1 August 1874, p. 154.
145 “Methodist,” letter to the editor, New Zealand Wesleyan, 2 June 1879, p. 130.
146 Otago Witness, 22 April 1876, p. 19. Robert Brunton, a Port Chalmers storekeeper, conducted the ‘Bond’ choir.
147 Otago Witness, 30 April 1886, p. 8. I have examined the records of several Otago Baptist and Congregational churches (Hanover Street Baptist Church, Dunedin, Church Members’ Meeting Minutes 1890-1908, 96-116-05/02, HL; Moray Place Congregational Church, Dunedin, Annual Reports, 1876-1900, ARC-040, AG-36/30; Church Meeting Minutes, 1893-1917, ARC-040, AG-36/3; Deacons’ Meeting Minutes 1884-1911, ARC-040, AG-36/8, HL; and Port Chalmers Congregational Church, Church Meeting Minutes 1872-1900, AG-141/1 and AG-141/2, HL). These give no record of special Easter services or Good Friday observance during the nineteenth century, suggesting they may not have taken place, but as such records did not record every service no definite conclusion can be drawn from this silence.
mourning the sufferings of Christ. Pious Anglicans and Catholics did not look kindly on those who ignored Good Friday, or even worse, took it as an opportunity for recreation. Irish and English migrants were unaccustomed to the frivolity they discovered on Good Friday in Otago. “The holiday is less strictly observed here than it is at home,” the ODT warned them in 1864, following with a list of the amusements on offer.\textsuperscript{148} Some Otago residents displayed sensitivity to Catholic and Anglican sensibilities, as when the Anniversary Fair “inadvertently” planned for Good Friday was, as noted above, shifted to the following week, or when Dr Michael Watt’s inaugural lecture in connection with the 1896 opening of the Presbyterian Theological Hall was shifted from the previously announced date, “as that is Good Friday.”\textsuperscript{149} Others cared less about any offence they might cause, and some may have deliberately aimed to upset the pious. In 1885, ‘Civis’ of the ODT remarked that

The observing of days and months and times and years – except for the racing purposes and the like – will soon be a thing of the past in Otago. On Good Friday the Blueskin Presbyterians commemorated their Redeemer’s crucifixion by a picnic, and the Dunedin Lyceumites – not to be beaten in liberalism by the orthodox – celebrated the same event by a “concert, farce, and ball.” The theatres, it is true, had the good taste to close their doors, following the English custom; but, after the example set by the Lyceum, we may expect next Good Friday to have all places of amusement in full blast.\textsuperscript{150}

Although the motives of the Blueskin Presbyterians are unclear – they may have aimed to desecrate a Catholic holy day, or they may have simply seized the opportunity offered by the holiday for recreational purposes – the “Lyceumites,” the Dunedin Freethought Association, probably had desecration in mind. Freethinkers, New Zealand’s most significant nineteenth-century secularists, “considered it their duty to denounce religious bigotry, and to weaken the hold of the church on society.”\textsuperscript{151} In Britain they fought against the established church. With no such battle in New Zealand, they disputed other forms of religious intrusion on society. The

\textsuperscript{148} ODT, 25 March 1864, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{149} Otago Witness, 19 March 1853, p. 2; and 2 April 1896, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{150} ODT, 11 April 1885, supplement, p. 2. ‘Civis’ wrote a weekly column providing considered and witty commentary on the events of the day, which has proved a useful source for this thesis. In 1885, the column was probably written by reporter Edward Fricker, who later edited the Australasian. He was succeeded in the late 1880s by lawyer and MHR Frederick Fitchett, who was assisted and later replaced as Civis by his legal partner James Thornton. At some stage Fitchett’s brother Alfred Robertson Fitchett, the Anglican Dean of Dunedin, took over the column, which he wrote until his death in 1929. My thanks to Tony Fitchett and George Griffiths for this information.

Dunedin Freethought Association ardently campaigned against sabbatarianism. The Good Friday holiday presented similar issues of legal and cultural enforcement of Christian custom, and thus invited the challenge of freethinkers.\(^{152}\)

It is clear that devout Anglicans and Catholics did take offence at the disregard their fellow colonists paid to such a sacred day as Good Friday. At the 1875 Dunedin Diocesan Synod, Archdeacon Edwards proposed that the Anglicans make overtures “to the authorities of the Presbyterian Church with a view to the better observance of the fast days of the two Churches.” The idea had originated from “a leading lay member of the Presbyterian Church.” Edwards “thought it would be a great point gained if Presbyterians regarded Good Friday as a Fast Day,” even if it required that “they must meet each other half way.” After some debate, the proposal was lost, but only on the casting vote of the President. While Anglican clergy would have dearly loved to see Presbyterians show more respect for Good Friday, they had reservations about showing similar respect for Presbyterian sacramental fast days.\(^{153}\)

In an 1882 letter to the ODT, Anglican Bishop Samuel Nevillexplained to the Otago public the Anglican view of Good Friday. Although each Friday was a day to remember Christ’s death, “particularly is that Friday held to be a sacred day which is regarded as the anniversary of that event.” In order to commemorate their Lord’s sufferings, many Christians “specially devote themselves” during Holy Week “to reading, meditation, and prayer; and it can hardly fail to grate harshly upon the feelings of such that, at the hour which commemorates the quiet of the tomb, an entertainment should be given – however true it may be that, considered in itself, that entertainment may be not only harmless but admirable and deserving of support.”\(^{154}\)

Nevill’s letter was prompted by “an advertisement of a grand concert to be given by the Invercargill Band on the evening of Good Friday.” ‘Secularist’ of Dunedin responded to Nevill’s letter with a typical freethought response, bemoaning the growth of ritualism, and enquiring, “If the State is to enforce the observance of one Church-appointed day, why not the observance of all? It has then come to this, that Presbyterians and Nonconformists are to invoke the aid of the secular


\(^{153}\) Otago Witness, 2 October 1875, p. 9.

\(^{154}\) ODT, 6 April 1882, p. 3.
Government to enforce cessation of work on Church fasts, festivals, and commemoration days. Where is our boasted voluntaryism?\footnote{155}

Nevill’s concern over a Good Friday concert is unsurprising, and it was also topical: in the same week a deputation of Protestant clergy and laymen had requested the government to “take steps to prevent concerts, lectures, or other entertainments being given for gain on the Sabbath.”\footnote{156} The ‘Sunday question’ – the matter of how Sundays should be spent – was an issue of intense debate in nineteenth-century Otago (as, indeed, it was in many places). Anglicans tended to be less rigorous Sunday observers than other Protestants, and resentment consequently arose.\footnote{157} The two separate but related issues of the keeping of the Sabbath and the observance of Easter combined to intensify sectarian tensions. The tension is epitomised by an event occurring beyond Otago, in neighbouring Canterbury, in 1874. The Board of Governors of Canterbury College decided, by a large majority, to open the Canterbury Museum to the public on Sundays. Presbyterian clergy then attempted to have the museum also opened on Good Friday and Christmas Day, but met firm resistance. The Anglican Bishop of Christchurch, Henry Harper, supported the Sunday opening but led the campaign against it opening on the “peculiarly sacred” Good Friday. The \textit{New Zealand Wesleyan} strongly criticised Harper’s action, noting that he “claims for Good Friday a religious sanctity beyond that of the weekly day of rest, a claim which the majority of Christians would resent and resist as a Popish superstition.” Presbyterians, the \textit{Wesleyan} noted, would be particularly irritated.\footnote{158}

In Otago, Bishop Nevill represented a minority interest, not having the authority that his colleague Harper did in Canterbury, and Good Friday entertainments continued apace. In 1882, the postal authorities were the only residents keeping Good Friday in the rural settlement of Kuri Bush; in 1894 a “select and convivial few” enjoyed a Good Friday dance at the schoolhouse.\footnote{159} It is difficult to know whether Nevill would have been more offended by those who worked on the holiday, or those who danced.

\footnote{155}{Ibid., 8 April 1882, p. 3.}
\footnote{156}{Ibid., 3 April 1882, pp. 2-3}
\footnote{157}{Clarke, “A Godly Rhythm.”}
\footnote{158}{\textit{New Zealand Wesleyan}, 1 August 1874, pp. 133-134.}
\footnote{159}{\textit{Otago Witness}, 23 April 1881, p. 13; and 12 April 1894, p. 22.}
Catholics also complained about those who desecrated the holy day of Good Friday. In 1887 the Tablet, always outspoken on the deficiencies of government-run schools, raged against a Good Friday ‘entertainment’ to be held by a Southland school. Good Friday, stated the paper, “is observed as one of penitential solemnity not only by Catholics, but by members of the Church of England, and all except those who openly scoff at Christianity, should disapprove of its being made an occasion of festivity.” That such festivities were indulged in by “the extreme atheistical mob of continental Europe … with the express intention of outraging Christianity, makes it still more flagrant that like doings should distinguish our Government system of education, and brands this with the common mark of atheism and profanity.” The occasion would be a “public insult to the memory of their Redeemer, and yet we conclude, they are for the most part the children of people who call themselves Christians.”

Excursions, picnics, concerts and dances remained popular Good Friday events throughout the century. The available evidence does not allow us to determine whether organisers and participants deliberately aimed to offend the devout, but it is clear that, at the very least, they paid little attention to Catholic and Anglican sensibilities. It is not surprising to discover Presbyterian Good Friday picnics, but some other officially arranged Good Friday events are more unexpected. On Good Friday 1892, for example, a large number of locals and visitors attended a picnic to celebrate the opening of a tramway between the Waitati sawmill and railway station. At Middlemarch, in 1899, the Dunedin Citizens’ Band and the local Caledonian Society organised Good Friday bicycle sports, to be followed by a “grand concert and ball” in the evening. The local newspaper correspondent found this “a disgrace to the district … Do they really think that there is no slight to all Christian principle involved in such revelry? Have they lost all sense of respect for the sacredness of that day of all days in the year? … No words can express my regret that I should ever have to write on such a movement in connection with our quiet district.” The anonymous correspondent represented, however, a minority view.

---

160 NZT, 8 April 1887, p. 16.
161 Otago Witness, 21 April 1892, p. 19.
162 Ibid., 23 March 1899, p. 34.
Another Middlemarch resident distanced himself from such opinion by requesting that the *Witness* publish confirmation that he was not the local correspondent.\textsuperscript{163}

**Conclusion**

This exploration of Christmas and Easter has introduced us to the religious practice of Otago’s nineteenth-century Anglicans and Catholics. Increasingly elaborate festive music and decorations made these very special occasions for churchgoers. Ritualism remained controversial, and provoked heated debate at times. Nevertheless, almost all Otago churches had more extensive ritual in the late nineteenth century than twenty or thirty years earlier. While this ranged hugely in extent, from the flamboyant ceremonies of Easter at St Joseph’s Catholic Cathedral, to the singing of Christmas carols at Port Chalmers Congregational Church, it was general enough that even some Presbyterians began to contemplate the merits of Christmas and Easter keeping. The participation of Otago Anglicans in festive communions, or, more accurately, their lack of participation, demonstrates that nineteenth-century Anglicans had as many scruples over receiving communion as their Presbyterian counterparts. In both denominations this resulted not from a disregard of the sacrament, but from respect for its power. By contrast, Catholics expressed their high regard for the sacrament by participating in large numbers. In their different ways, all three groups demonstrated the importance of communion to Otago’s nineteenth-century Christians.

Christmas and Easter highlighted the sectarian and ethnic differences within colonial Otago society. Catholic and Anglican church leaders expressed dismay at the desecration of their holy days by colonists. But many of those who ignored Christmas and Easter did so for cultural rather than religious reasons: for Scots, these holidays were outside their usual experience. As Scots in urban areas encountered these unfamiliar holidays, introduced by English and Irish colonists and central government practice, they used them, not as religious occasions, but for recreation and family gatherings, much as non-Presbyterians used sacramental fast days.

Conservative non-Anglican Protestants remained deeply opposed to adopting Christmas and Easter as new religious holidays throughout the period. Late in the century, however, some Presbyterians and colonists from English non-conformist

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 30 March 1899, p. 34.
backgrounds became more willing to recognise the religious significance of Christmas and Easter, displaying an increasingly tolerant attitude towards practices once dismissed as Papist. Such changes were not peculiar to Otago or to colonial settings, although exposure to other cultures and religions probably accelerated their uptake in culturally diverse communities like Otago. In Scotland, also, liberal Presbyterians began to push for the religious recognition of Christmas and Easter late in the nineteenth century.164 Like the changes in the Presbyterian communion season explored in Chapter One, increasing Presbyterian recognition of the Christian year resulted from international shifts in Protestant thought.

For those colonists accustomed to a northern hemisphere Christmas and Easter, the new physical environment of Otago presented additional challenges to traditional practice. Although these were religious holidays, they also had strong seasonal associations. A summer Christmas and autumn Easter increased the colonists’ consciousness of the strangeness of their new home. They retained familiar holiday practices – Christmas carols, Easter music and Christmas pudding, for example – where possible. But they also faced the inevitable and adopted new holiday customs such as new potatoes and summer fruit for Christmas dinner and late summer flowers for Easter church decorations. The physical environment lent a distinctly colonial flavour to the Christmas and Easter celebrations of nineteenth-century Otago, while the ethnic and religious diversity of the colonists contributed to the strangely unfamiliar nature of these occasions.

---

Chapter Three – New Year

“The Otagans have now, it may be said, fixedly set apart New Year’s Day as their high holiday,” declared the *Otago Witness* in 1864.¹ New Year was undoubtedly nineteenth-century Otago’s most widely observed regular holiday, recognised with a variety of community activities: from midnight revels in the streets to ‘watch night’ church services; from Caledonian games to family and community gatherings (see Figure 21). Like the Presbyterian communion season, the New Year holiday was a Scottish import which proved a great success in a colony dominated by Scots. Unlike the communion season, however, New Year custom required some alteration to fit into the new physical environment of Otago. Celebrating New Year in summer presented Scottish colonists with similar challenges to those experienced by English colonists celebrating Christmas in summer. But while Christmas developed a distinctly colonial flavour in Otago, the changes to New Year made it, ironically, more explicitly Scottish, for this midsummer holiday became the prime occasion for the Caledonian games. In this chapter I argue that the New Year holiday, and in particular the Caledonian games so widespread and popular on this occasion, were an explicit assertion of Scottish ethnicity. The overt display of Scottishness contrasted with the lack of such demonstrations by English colonists, suggesting the differing values each placed on ethnic display.

Most Otago colonists, Scottish or not, happily adopted the New Year holiday, but some objected to the louder elements of the occasion. This reflected changing interpretations of respectability in late-nineteenth century Otago rather than sectarian differences. New Year is not generally considered a religious holiday, yet many colonists included religious elements in their New Year celebrations. The contemplative and prayerful New Year activities of some Otago residents add to the portrayal of popular piety explored throughout this thesis, while demonstrating, in support of one of the main arguments of this thesis, the extent to which religion pervaded colonial life.

Figure 21 – New Year in Dunedin
Popular New Year activities in Dunedin included (from top left) picnics at the beach, New Year’s eve shopping, steamboat excursions, seeing in the New Year with band music, the Caledonian Games, and listening to the pipes.

The British background

Many ancient and pre-modern societies marked the passage of the solar year with special ritual. In the tropics, where the change of seasons was less extreme, the practice was less common, but New Year festivities pervaded European societies to a remarkable degree. New Year was a time to start anew, and to perform rites which would abolish misfortune and ensure success in the coming year; it was a time to watch anxiously for omens. Different societies positioned their New Year at different seasons. Romans marked it on 1 January, soon after the winter solstice when they saw the sun’s strength begin to return, with the festival of the Kalendae. For Maori, New Year festivities came at the end of autumn, marked in the north by the rising of Matariki (the Pleiades) in the eastern sky, and in the south by the reappearance of Puanga (Rigel in Orion) as the morning star. The Chinese celebrated their New Year with great ceremony in the spring, on the first new moon after the sun entered Aquarius.

Evidence about calendar customs in the British Isles prior to the medieval period is ambiguous. In the early medieval period the Irish celebrated their major festival, and possibly their New Year, at the opening of winter on 1 November (Samhain). Ronald Hutton, the most thorough and critical scholar of this matter, suggests that, despite the claims of folklorists, there is little to suggest that Samhain was ever a major pan-Celtic festival. There is, however, a variety of evidence suggesting major pre-Christian midwinter New Year celebrations, arising from the Welsh, Anglo-Saxon and Viking traditions which contributed to the complex cultural mix of medieval Britain. Elements of this older New Year tradition – especially divination customs that forecast the events of the coming year – persisted, although overshadowed by the official midwinter festivals of Christianity, which had been superimposed on the Roman Kalendae. The Christian church commemorated the feasts of the Nativity on 25 December, Circumcision on 1 January, and Epiphany on 6

---


6 Hutton, *Stations of the Sun*, 360-370.
January. Medieval Britons thus celebrated midwinter with extensive festivities—"the
twelve days of Christmas"—which encompassed both Christmas and New Year. New
Year's Day, 1 January, was but one of the more important dates of this festive period.7

The Reformation changed this pattern, particularly in Lowland Scotland,
where Protestant reformers effectively abolished Christmas. Festivities once centred
on Christmas, or extending over the whole festive period, shifted to the New Year and
its eve (locally known as Hogmanay). Although church leaders disapproved of some
of the revelry of New Year, they generally ignored the popular festivities of the
season, concentrating their reforming zeal on the more explicitly religious occasion of
Christmas. New Year, therefore, became Scotland's greatest holiday.8 In England,
meanwhile, Puritan attempts to abolish Christmases met with only temporary and partial
success. But if Christmas continued as a significant occasion, the more extended
festivities which once made up the twelve days of Christmas gradually disappeared
until only Christmas Day remained. In 1912, Clement Miles wrote that "New Year in
England can hardly be called a popular festival; there is no public holiday and the
occasion is more associated with penitential Watch Night services and good
resolutions than with rejoicing."9 The most extensive pruning of the English holidays
occurred in the early nineteenth century under the influence of industrial employers
and the government: most nineteenth-century English migrants to Otago, particularly
those from the south, had no experience of New Year as a festive occasion.10 The
chief midwinter celebrations of Scotland and England were thus markedly different,
as vividly evoked in Ronald Hutton's description of the re-emergence of New Year as

7 Ibid., 4-24.
8 On the abolition of Christmas, see Hutton, Stations of the Sun, 25-33; F. Marian McNeill,
The Silver Bough, Volume Three: A Calendar of Scottish National Festivals, Hallowe'en to Yule
(Glasgow: Maclellan, 1961), 58-61; and Alexander Wright, The Presbyterian Church: Its Worship,
Functions, and Ministerial Orders (Edinburgh: Oliphant, 1895), 36-37. On the importance of New
Year in Scotland, see McNeill, Silver Bough, 61 and 99; Clement A. Miles, Christmas Customs and
Traditions: Their History and Significance (New York: Dover, 1976), 326-327; and Hutton, Stations of
the Sun, 42-53.
9 Miles, Christmas Customs, 322.
10 Hutton, Stations of the Sun, 112. Although the holiday disappeared, New Year practices
such as 'first footing' did continue in many parts of England, most notably in the north: see Hutton,
Sations of the Sun, 50-51. English migrants to New Zealand, however, came disproportionately
from the southern counties: see James Belich, Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders From
Unfortunately, there are no studies of English migration to Otago, and we cannot assume Otago was
similar to New Zealand as a whole: it is possible that migrants from northern England were particularly
drawn to Otago, as were their Scottish neighbours.
an English holiday in the mid-twentieth century, when it came as a Scottish import: “Into the frequently cloying atmosphere of the Victorian Christmas, Hogmanay blew like a raw northern wind, smelling of alcohol. Its ‘natural’ community was that of friendship, not family, and its deity was not Father Christmas but the more menacing one of Father Time.” Otago’s nineteenth-century Irish migrants, like the English, viewed New Year as a particularly Scottish celebration: New Year had never been an important event in Ireland and, as in England, it was generally confined to migrants from Scotland, becoming a more widespread festive occasion only in the twentieth century. The importance of New Year in Otago, therefore, reflected the importance of Scots in the colony.

Midnight revelry

Nineteenth-century Otago welcomed the New Year with loud noise. In the main settlements, crowds gathered in the streets as midnight approached and whatever means were at hand – guns, fireworks, bells and bands – announced the magic hour. A few examples convey the spirit of these occasions. In 1850, Rev. Thomas Burns recorded that there had been a “good deal of noise in ushering in the New Year: firing the Cannon & guns & ringing the church Bell.” At New Year 1886, in Dunedin’s Octagon,

A large crowd, of course, assembled ... and when the chimes sounded the Garrison Band (in mufti) stationed on the Town Hall steps struck up “Auld Lang Syne,” and followed it by a regular popular concert programme ... At the same time rockets were to be seen ascending momentarily from various quarters, limelights were burnt at the Fire Brigade Station, a number of salute guns were fired, bells were rung, and rockets fired from the vessels lying at the Rattray street and cross wharves.

Where cannons and bells were not available, New Year revellers made do. At the gold mining centre of Clyde, “some of the lively spirits” of that place ushered in 1869: “A band of rough music was improvised, and what with its discordant sounds,

11 Hutton, Stations of the Sun, 122. On the English adoption of New Year, initially influenced by Scottish migrants to the south, see also Miles, Christmas Customs, 327.


13 Thomas Burns diary, 1 January 1850, C-017, OSM.

14 Otago Witness, 9 January 1886, p. 9.
together with the beating bestowed upon the sides and roofs of galvanised iron residences, the din was such that had the Hauhaus made a sudden descent upon the town, the confusion would not have been greater.15 Liberal amounts of alcohol lubricated such celebrations, as had been the case long before the gold miners arrived. In 1850, Burns reported New Year drunkenness “on the part of some few of our people.” Although no teetotaller, Burns had high expectations of his congregation’s behaviour, and no doubt felt relief that the New Year revelry occasioned “no rioting or fighting I have heard of.”16 In 1873, the Otago Witness reported that Dunedin’s New Year festivities were particularly “jovial,” with “all classes” indulging heavily in alcohol, “some of the ‘nobs’” being “quite as ‘happy’ as the Messrs Brogden’s navvies, who gave ample public evidence that they were not teetotallers.”17

A handful of reports describe New Year behaviour which is suggestive of the once common British festive custom of the wealthy providing treats for the poorer classes in response to ritualised ‘begging.’18 At New Year 1864, an impromptu band of forty to fifty people, “led by a big drum … a flute and accordion, together with several bells, tin dishes and other noisy contrivances,” formed in the streets of Dunstan. They serenaded “the government and aristocracy of the Dunstan” – the Warden, for whom they sang “God Save the Queen”, and George Brodie, local Parliamentarian – who rewarded them with liberal donations of alcohol, before they repaired to serenade the local hotel proprietors.19 Some thirty years later, a similar happening received a very different response. In 1897 a correspondent from Hampden complained that “on New Year’s Eve a band of larrikins, half drunk, paraded the township, visiting the houses of the visitors (at least those who had no men in the house), battering at the doors, trying the windows, and demanding whisky.”20 Goldfields residents evidently tolerated such behaviour more readily than those in a rural village like Hampden, and in 1899 hotelkeepers at Arrowtown still observed “the

---

15 Ibid., 16 January 1869, p. 7. The “Hauhau” was a new Maori religious movement whose members, believing themselves invincible to bullets, were notorious for ferocity in battle.
16 Thomas Burns diary, 1 January 1850.
17 Otago Witness, 11 January 1873, p. 13; see also p. 16. “Messrs Brogden’s navvies” were labourers who had migrated to Otago as part of Brogden and Sons’ contract to build railways.
18 Hutton, Stations of the Sun, 54-69. These practices varied considerably between different regions of Britain. Perhaps best-known were carollers and wassailers who visited wealthy homes and received gifts in return for their songs or blessings.
19 Otago Witness, 9 January 1864, p. 6.
20 Ibid., 7 January 1897, p. 17.
time-honoured custom of keeping free house, dispensing champagne, wines, whisky
and all other liquors 'free, gratis, for nothing,' at 12 o'clock, as the old year
departs.” Beyond the goldfields, however, there developed an increasing intolerance
of riotous New Year behaviour which, from the late 1870s, the press labelled as
“larrikinism.” This shift reflected changing middle class visions of respectability. By
the late nineteenth century, moral crusaders became increasingly concerned about
wild colonial children, promoted the cult of domesticity and, above all, battled the
‘demon’ drink.22 The economic depression of the 1880s and 1890s may also have
accelerated middle class fears of social unrest. The drunken public revelry once
accepted as a natural part of the New Year festivities now encountered staunch
criticism. It must be said that such criticism might have been, in part, a response to an
actual increase in irritating and sometimes dangerous New Year activities: the
increasing destructiveness of New Year behaviour was possibly more than a matter of
changing interpretations. Revellers commonly damaged gates and doorknobs, and
some knocked sheds over. At Waitahuna, many householders, having “padlocked all
their portable property,” saw in the New Year of 1899 by “patroll[ing] their premises
until 3 o’clock, or thereabouts ... keeping a vigilant eye (not always with success) on
the mischievous youths who were about in no small numbers. In one or two instances,
however, serious mischief was done by the removal of gates, thereby letting cattle into
gardens.”23 The police suffered considerable harassment from New Year revellers,
particularly in Dunedin, and sometimes explosions were more powerful than those of
the pervasive firecrackers. In 1897 “some person exploded some dynamite in the
Octagon, wrecking some of the windows in the Oban Hotel.”24

Watch night services

At Oamaru, in “a wonderful contrast to the saturnalia and larrikins’ jubilee
which prevailed in the streets” as people welcomed in New Year 1875, the Wesleyans

21 Ibid., 5 January 1899, p.25.

22 Erik Olssen, A History of Otago (Dunedin: McIndoe, 1984), 92-95. On colonial childhood,
see James Belich, Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the Year

23 Otago Witness, 12 January 1899, p. 26. For other examples of property damage, see 11
January 1879, p. 6; 7 January 1882, pp 13 and 23; and 12 January 1884, p. 13.

24 Ibid., 7 January 1897, p. 16. For reports of police harassment, see 6 January 1877, p. 14; 11
January 1879, p. 6; and 6 January 1883, p. 13.
marked the occasion “in their usual manner – namely, by the holding of a ‘watch
night’ service.” Commencing at eleven o’clock, they sang and prayed together, and
“for a few minutes before and after the beginning of the new year the congregation
devoted itself to silent prayer.” This striking contrast between noisy revelry and
silent prayer was evident at numerous nineteenth-century Otago New Year
celebrations, although the press seldom commented on its significance. Watch nights
were a minority activity, but are of interest as a further example of religious practice
in nineteenth-century Otago.

The watch night service was an English tradition, the eighteenth-century
invention of early Methodists, possibly influenced by Moravians, and approved by
their founder John Wesley. Although initially these night-time worship vigils took
place on a variety of occasions, they eventually became centred on the New Year,
which was also the occasion of another Methodist tradition, the ‘covenant’ service,
where believers renewed their commitment to Christ. New Year watch night
services became increasingly prevalent in nineteenth-century England, spreading to
Baptist, Congregationalist and Anglican churches. In the latter, however, they met
some resistance from clergy who disapproved of the adoption of a service which,
although popular, fell outside the traditional liturgical calendar. By the late nineteenth
century the watch night performed an important part in the popular piety of the
English urban working classes. Although many were not regular Sunday church
attenders, this group participated in the rites of Christian baptism and marriage, and
came in large numbers to the hugely popular harvest festivals and New Year watch
nights. This popularity had much to do with concepts of ‘luck’: to see in the New
Year at church was to receive God’s blessing for the coming year.

25 Ibid., 9 January 1875, p. 15.
26 Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England From Watts and Wesley to Martineau,
1690-1900 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1996), Part 1, 191-192 and 197-200; and Part 2, 260-
264; and Leigh Eric Schmidt, Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays
27 S. J. D. Green, Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and Experience in Industrial
Yorkshire 1870-1920 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 339-340; John Wolffe, God and
Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945 (London: Routledge,
1994), 75 and 84-85; John Kent, “Feelings and Festivals: An interpretation of some working-class
and the Rites of Passage,” in European Religion in the Age of Great Cities 1830-1930, ed. Hugh
McLeod (London: Routledge, 1993), 216-236; S. C. Williams, Religious Belief and Popular Culture in
Southwark c.1880-1939 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 92-95; and Jeffrey Cox, The English
Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth, 1870-1930 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 102-
In Otago, some churches continued the English watch night tradition. For Methodist lay preacher Thomas Ferens, New Year was a “solemn time – serious remembrance of the past – and a solemn view of the future!” On 31 December 1848, at the Waikouaiti mission, he “awoke with many sad reflective thoughts of past, present, and future things.” Together with a servant and missionaries Charles and Eliza Creed, Ferens “Watched the close of the old year, and the New Year in by prayer ... Thank God for so many mercies, and of Health and of many friends.” Later, as a North Otago runholder, he held watch night services at his station for family and staff. Otago’s Methodist churches were, unsurprisingly, prominent in newspaper reports of New Year services, and in rural districts might have been the only denomination to greet the New Year in this way. The Witness’s 1892 report of New Year activities in Tapanui, for example, noted only one watch night service in this small settlement, held in the Wesleyan Church. That “many preferr[ed] to herald in the new year in this manner” suggests that this Tapanui congregation might have included people outside the usual Methodist flock.

Dunedin’s Baptists also participated in the watch night tradition. In 1866, just three years after the foundation of their congregation, they held their first New Year’s watch night, a practice continued annually throughout the rest of the century. At Dunedin’s Congregational Church, New Year watch nights became a regular event. Congregationalists at Port Chalmers took a different approach: rather than a watch night, they held special services, perhaps modelled on the Methodist covenant services, at seven o’clock each New Year’s morning. This parish also collected a

103. Robinson notes the importance of the watch night service in parts of Ulster at the turn of the century, although unfortunately he does not state which denominations participated. There is also a suggestion of popular adoption of the watch night, as in urban England: in Ards Peninsula, County Down, “midnight church services were attended by local bands, and after the New Year had been ‘seen in’ at church, the bandsmen enjoyed themselves by making as much noise as possible.” See Robinson, “Harvest, Halloween, and Hogmanay,” 16 and 19.

28 Thomas Ferens diary, 31 December 1869, Thomas Ferens papers, AG-99, Box 2, OSM (earlier diary at C-039, OSM).
29 Ibid., 31 December 1848.
30 Ibid., 31 December 1868 and 31 December 1869.
31 Otago Witness, 7 January 1892, p. 21.
32 Hanover Street Baptist Church, Dunedin, Church Members’ Meeting Minutes, 27 December 1866, 96-116-15/01, HL. There are regular references to the watch night services in these minutes in following years. On at least two occasions (1867 and 1874) there were also special services on the morning of New Year’s Day. The Baptist watch nights sometimes received a brief mention in the press: see, for example, Otago Witness, 10 January 1874, p. 1; 6 January 1877, p. 15; and 4 January 1879, p. 16.
special ‘thank offering’ on the first Sunday of the New Year and, to emphasise further their commitment to renewing their faith for the coming year, maintained a special ‘week of prayer’ early each January. Some (certainly not all) Otago Anglican churches held watch nights during the nineteenth century. Such services were reported at All Saints and St Matthew’s, both in Dunedin, by the 1870s, and at St Peter’s Caversham, St John’s Milton and St Mark’s Balclutha by the 1880s. St Paul’s Anglican Cathedral, Dunedin, was probably later in establishing the practice, but attracted good congregations for watch nights in the 1890s. The Salvation Army added to Dunedin’s New Year diversity in the 1890s, holding at least one watch night, and in 1896 Army members heralded the New Year by singing hymns outside various city establishments.

The few available descriptions of Otago watch night services indicate a most serious tone. For the devout, New Year was a time to remember the swift passage of life on earth and to contemplate a future in heaven: it was, above all, a time to acknowledge human helplessness and reaffirm one’s faith in Christ for the year to come. At Stotfield Station, North Otago, Methodist Thomas Ferens took as his text for the 1870 watch night two verses from Psalm 89: “Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?” Those watching in the New Year of 1877 at All Saints Anglican Church, Dunedin, commenced their service by singing “Days and moments quickly flying,” a hymn which contemplated the closeness of death and judgement, the urgent call for salvation, and the need to

---
33 While the Dunedin Congregationalists did not make a regular record of special services, in 1893 their minutes refer to “the usual watch night service”: Morny Place Congregational Church, Dunedin, Deacons’ Meeting Minutes, 28 December 1893, ARC-040, AG-036/8, HL. See also Otago Witness, 5 January 1893, p. 16. There are several references to the special New Year proceedings in the Port Chalmers records: see, for example, Port Chalmers Congregational Church, Church Meeting Minutes, 30 December 1885, 7 December 1887 and 27 November 1889, AG-141/1 and 141/2, HL. In 1896, the Port Chalmers deacons suggested a watch night be held, but the church meeting rejected the proposal: see minutes for 2 December 1896.

34 Otago Witness, 10 January 1874, p. 1; 4 January 1879, p. 16; 8 January 1881, p. 14; and 7 January 1882, p. 9; and St Mark’s Anglican Church, Balclutha, Services Register, 1881, AG-519/22, HL.

35 St Paul’s Anglican Cathedral, Dunedin, Vestry Book, 1895, AG-147/F3, HL; and Otago Witness, 7 January 1897, p. 17. The absence of St Paul’s from 1870s and 1880s press reports of watch night services, which mentioned other Anglican parishes, suggests that such services were not held there then.

36 Otago Witness, 5 January 1893, p. 16; and 9 January 1896, p. 22.

37 Thomas Ferens diary, 31 December 1869; citing Psalm 89: 47-48.
remain faithful to achieve victory over death. Rev. Robert Stanford then preached on the text: “And now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is ever in Thee.” Several moments were allowed for silent prayer.\textsuperscript{38} Watch nighters at St Paul’s Anglican Cathedral, Dunedin, in 1897 began their service with the popular and highly appropriate hymn: “O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come.” This particularly time conscious hymn includes the lines: “A thousand ages in Thy sight are like an evening gone; short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun. Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away.” Canon Christopher Robinson preached from the text: “Ye have not passed this way heretofore,” and as the nearby Town Hall clock struck midnight, “a solemn Te Deum was sung.”\textsuperscript{39} For those who watched in the New Year with religious observances, it was clearly a serious rather than a festive occasion. The only hint of festivity comes in reports of decorations: these may have lingered on from the Christmas celebrations of the previous week, although All Saints Dunedin was especially decorated with moss—symbolic, perhaps, of decay—at New Year 1874.\textsuperscript{40}

The press occasionally reported “good” or “numerous” congregations at watch nights. This was not, however, always the case, and in 1881 Rev. Joseph Upton Davis noted the “very small” attendance at Dunedin’s Baptist watch night.\textsuperscript{41} More specific evidence for watch night attendance comes from St Mark’s Anglican Church, Balclutha, where 50 people watched in New Year 1881, and 63 the following year. This differed little from a regular Sunday evening service, which generally attracted 20 to 60 people, and was considerably smaller than the congregations for Christmas, Easter and Harvest Thanksgiving.\textsuperscript{42} Most impressive is the report of “close on 300

\textsuperscript{38} Otago Witness, 6 January 1877, p. 15. The text is cited as given in the paper, and is from Psalm 39, verse 7 (not verse 8, as they claim). Rather than the Authorised Version, they, and perhaps Stanford, used the version of the Psalms included in the \textit{Book of Common Prayer}. The hymn is number 289 in \textit{Hymns Ancient and Modern} (Standard edition), and also appears in the first edition of the Presbyterian hymn book, \textit{Church Praise}. It was dropped from subsequent editions of both books, although a modified version appears in the revised edition of the Scottish \textit{Church Hymnary} (1927).

\textsuperscript{39} Otago Witness, 7 January 1897, p. 17. The text is from Joshua 3: 4 (not chapter 2, as the \textit{Witness} noted). The hymn is 165 in \textit{Hymns Ancient and Modern} (Standard edition).

\textsuperscript{40} Otago Witness, 10 January 1874, p. 1. In 1881, St Matthew’s and All Saints Anglican Churches in Dunedin were “prettily decorated with evergreens” at the watch night services: see ibid., 8 January 1881, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{41} Hanover Street Baptist, Meeting Minutes, 27 January 1881.

\textsuperscript{42} St Mark’s Balclutha, Services Register, 1881-1882.
persons” attending the All Saints Dunedin watch night in 1888. Bearing in mind that many Otago churches did not hold watch nights, and no Presbyterian or Catholic parishes did so, it is clear that this was a minority activity. There is no evidence to suggest Otago’s irregular churchgoers made a special point of attending watch nights, as did the English urban working class. Perhaps, in a Scots-dominated community, other New Year activities simply appealed more.

Leigh Schmidt suggests that in nineteenth-century America, watch nights represented “countercultural resistance,” forming part of the “complicated cultural battleground” of New Year’s Eve. Devout evangelicals “visibly renounced the entrenched festivities of popular culture” in their very different recognition of New Year. Watch nights may have been less common in Otago, but here also they displayed the discomfort of some colonists over popular New Year festivities. Respectability mattered hugely to many Otago residents. While they tolerated a certain amount of New Year revelry, if this became overly rowdy it was, particularly later in the century, greeted with strong criticism from the press, authorities such as the police, and probably from the ‘silent majority’ also. As discussed below, many Otago colonists celebrated New Year with neither drunken revelry nor watch nights. Instead, they kept quieter celebrations which tended toward the respectable end of the possible spectrum of behaviour.

The strongest evidence for the pervasiveness of the ideals of respectability and religion in nineteenth-century Otago’s New Year celebrations comes not from watch nights, however, but from the remarkable muffling of revelry when New Year fell on a Sunday. If 1 January was a Sunday, the New Year holiday was taken on Monday 2 January instead. More striking is the effect a Sunday New Year had on midnight revelry, particularly later in the century. Otago was, by modern standards, a remarkably sabbatarian society, and most of those who had gathered in public to welcome the New Year rushed home before or soon after midnight to avoid desecrating the Sabbath. In Dunedin, New Year 1888 “was ushered in with unusual quietness, there being but a moderate indulgence in the practice of those customs which prevail at the birth of a new year. This was no doubt due to the fact that the

43 Otago Witness, 6 January 1888, p. 11.
44 Schmidt, Consumer Rites, 119-120.
45 On Sunday observance in Otago, see Alison Clarke, “A Godly Rhythm: Keeping the Sabbath in Otago 1870-1890” (PG Dip Arts diss., University of Otago, 1999).
year’s natal day fell on a Sunday.’ Likewise, in 1899, “naturally, there was a disposition to make the demonstrations as brief as possible after the stroke of 12 o’clock ... welcoming the New Year in was ... not made so much of as on former occasions, the fact of the first day of 1899 being Sunday no doubt having something to do with it.” Meanwhile, at Palmerston, the Witness correspondent had “never known [New Year] to be ushered in so quietly, the absence of rowdyism and larrkinism being very conspicuous,” and possibly attributable to “New Year this time falling on a Sunday.” Even Otago’s greatest annual holiday could not over-rule the sanctity of Sunday.

**First footing and annual reviews**

Many Otago colonists – particularly the Scots – spent New Year’s Eve neither in public revelry nor at watch nights, but with gatherings of family and friends at home. G. M. Thomson frequently spent New Year’s Eve visiting family and friends, or entertaining them at home; when only he and his nephew saw in New Year 1896 at home it caused him to comment, “so the New Year went out very quietly for us.” Catherine and Robert Fulton entertained an influx of visitors at their West Taieri farm, as Catherine’s diary for the eve of New Year 1869 reveals:

> Mr W Rutherford, with Alick & Co, came to tea. Alick & Co stayed all night. Arthur & Kenny Smith rode out in the evening. Frankie, Carry & Herbert went with me to the prayer meeting ... Mr Gillies gave an impressive address on the closing of the year. Frank & Lily Jeffreys came out by coach. Arthur & Kenny stayed out of doors with their cannon &c till 2 or 3 in the morning.

Carpenter William Smith spent his first colonial New Year socialising with his South Otago neighbours, fellow Lowland Scots. “Went up to Mr Smail’s house in the evening and had our tea,” he recorded in his diary. “After tea the party retired into the barn where dancing was continued till the dawn of day 1864.”

---

46 Otago Witness, 6 January 1888, p. 11.


48 Ibid., 12 January 1899, p. 30.

49 George Malcolm Thomson diary, 31 December 1895, AG-839, HL.

50 Catherine Fulton diary, 31 December 1868, AG-613, HL. The prayer meeting referred to was the regular Thursday evening prayer meeting of the local Presbyterian Church. Although Presbyterians did not hold watch nights, when New Year’s Eve coincided with a regularly scheduled prayer meeting such meetings often focused on the New Year season. For another example, see G. M. Thomson diary, 31 December 1896.

51 William Turnbull Smith diary, 31 December 1863, MS-578-A, HL.
Some Otago residents indulged in the Scottish custom of ‘first footing.’ This is well described by English-born Charles Hayward who, as noted in Chapter Two, despaired of ever achieving the “full enjoyment” of Christmas in a colony where his wife and neighbours were Scots. Hayward first footed his Catlins neighbours in 1866:

Robt & I were out early this morning, to take the round of the Flat to wish them all a happy New Year, this though not practised in England, is the regular custom in Scotland, and is called the first footing. The person calling must manage to be at the house or houses at which he intends to call as early as possible to prevent being forestalled by anyone else, and he is also supposed to take with him a bottle of spirits and a piece of cake, and to help every one in the house to the same, and any one refusing to take of the offering it is considered an insult, and of course is never done without such an intention.  

Descriptions of such activities are rare. The Witness commented on the quietness of Dunedin’s streets in the early hours of 1861, such that “it appeared to us as if the system of ‘first-fitting,’ pursued in our native land, had been entirely abandoned in Dunedin.” The papers carried a few later reports of first footers: they featured at Kelso in 1882, Port Chalmers in 1888 and Lake County in 1899. The rarity of these reports might have arisen from the largely private nature of first footing rather than its absence, as is suggested by “Table Talk,” the Witness’s column of society news and gossip:

On New Year’s Eve there were the usual family gatherings, which are annual events in many of the old-established households of Dunedin. The night was fine, though very chilly, and although many amused themselves in the usual manner by ‘doing the town’ during the evening, by midnight the greater number had retired to the warmth and shelter of their own homes or to “first-foot” the homes of some of their acquaintances.

The privatisation, and probable decline, of first footing might have stemmed from the guarded attitude of those who wished to avoid offending their church leaders. In 1893 the N. Z. Presbyterian commented, with approval, that the practice was “more humoured in the breach than in the observance” and now “almost unknown in the Colonies … Our great New Year is kept in a manner more becoming Christians than it was in the days of our fathers.” First footing “led to much evil, and recalled some of the worst features of the pagan festivals,” whose great fault was that

---

52 Charles Hayward diary, 1 January 1866, AB-023, OSM. ‘Robt’ may have been Hayward’s brother-in-law, Robert Lees.

53 Otago Witness, 5 January 1861, p. 4.

54 Ibid., 7 January 1882, p. 13; 6 January 1888, p. 11; and 5 January 1899, p. 25.

55 Ibid., 7 January 1897, p. 43.
they were “born in superstition.” The church’s disapproval is hardly surprising, as first footing was a custom bound up with ‘pagan’ concepts of ‘luck’: tradition held that the type of the first foot, or first person to cross the threshold in the new year, determined the luck of the household for the rest of the year.

If Presbyterian ministers disapproved of first footing, they certainly did not condemn in total the New Year celebrations, approving a certain degree of revelry. That revelry ought, however, to be joined by contemplation. As Rev. John Christie wrote: “The New Year is a time of mirth and perhaps it should be so, but we should join trembling with our mirth. We stand on the brink of eternity. It is a time for serious thought ... How brief is life! We do not know that another year shall be granted us to live ... Let us devote ourselves anew to [God], and consecrate our lives to his glory.” Although Presbyterians seldom attended watch nights, numerous diaries reveal that the devout made New Year a season for reviewing their spiritual progress. As 1863 drew to a close, Taieri farm labourer William Muir recalled that “I was exactly at the line [crossing the Equator] when I commenced this year and now in the providence of God I have nearly seen its close. Now I may say that the Lord has conducted me through many seen and many more unseen dangers ... Thou hast been my help. Leave me not nor forsake me.” The following day he recorded his commitment for the year to come:

With this New Year may I begin
To live to thee and die to sin
To enter on the narrow way
Which leads to ever lasting day.

The 1898 New Year thoughts of teacher G. M. Thomson reveal a similar spirit of thankfulness and commitment. Having finally overcome the profound depression which followed the death of his wife, he recorded: “I have great cause to be thankful this night for God’s great goodness to me this year. We have all — as a family — been sustained in health and strength and in the enjoyment of innumerable gifts; and for myself the feeling of bitterness and of loneliness which in the past two or three years

56 N. Z. Presbyterian, 2 January 1893, p. 130.
57 McNeill, Silver Bough, 104-108; Hutton, Stations of the Sun, 50-52; and Miles, Christmas Customs, 323-326.
58 John Christie diary, undated note (probably New Year 1878), AG-I021-1, OSM.
59 William Muir diary, 31 December 1863, SA-008, OSM.
60 Ibid., 1 January 1864. Muir often wrote religious verses or hymns into his diary.
has been so strong, has hardly touched me now.” His prayer for the new year was “that I may learn to forget my own petty trials in ministering to the peace & comfort of those around me; and that I may strive to devote the gifts which God has given me to helping on my fellow men.”

The New Year thoughts of Walter Riddell, also a devout Presbyterian, reveal a more explicit concern with material progress than do those of Muir or Thomson. Although he would later achieve financial success, in the 1860s Riddell struggled to support his family as a farmer and builder on the Otago Peninsula. At New Year 1866 he recorded: “I am entering another year with £83 debt on my head, with plenty of hard work before me and if God grant me my health I will be a clear man in another year. I have increased in the year that has passed, a house, an acre of land cleared 15 hens, 2 cows and a son.” In his survey of the year 1868, Riddell revealed mixed fortunes: “I have been rather unlucky in my worldly affairs, I have run my head into debt for nothing, lost a cow and got hard up for money matters. Altogether, however, the obligation on the other hand has not been small. I have one child more, and have been blessed with good health and soundness of mind.” In 1871, Riddell made his most despondent summary: “Another New Year has arrived and I am still in existence, lonely and single handed to battle with the toil of getting bread for my family. Things are a great deal lower this year than ever they were, still hard up for money. We have 8 cows this year and can’t keep going.” If, however, Riddell concentrated more than most diarists on his material progress, he did not lack concern for spiritual matters. His material gains he saw as a blessing from God, as his prayer for New Year 1869 makes clear: “Lord create in me a thankful heart & a loving heart unto Thee for all thy goodness and mercy towards me and mine and keep thy hand around us through the year we have begun. Grant they spirit to abide with us. Teach us thy way O Lord.” In his study of the wealthy in Otago and Canterbury, many of whom came from humble backgrounds, Jim McAloon notes the existence of “a powerful ideology, that equated advancement with individual merit.” He suggests that “the wealthy may have been a little more religious than the rest of the population.”

61 G. M. Thomson diary, 31 December 1897.
62 Walter Riddell diary, 1 January 1866, C-090, OSM.
63 Ibid., 3 January 1869.
64 Ibid., 7 January 1871.
65 Ibid., 3 January 1869.
although the majority were not “committed” to religion. Nevertheless, their belief that advancement resulted from individual merit is further evidence of the significance of Christian ideals in colonial society: such ideology had its roots in Protestant concepts of providence, whereby God blessed the spiritually worthy.

In keeping with the propensity of individuals to review their progress at New Year, the local press invariably assessed the year which had passed and the progress of the colony. “The advent of a new year,” began the Otago Witness’s 1857 New Year editorial, “is a marked time in human life, and a period in the history of a young and rising colony, which call for grave reflections, and afford a point from which we are enabled to reflect upon past events, and to speculate upon our future prospects.”

Likewise, “This is a season for balancing accounts and taking stock of our progress”, the paper declared in 1869. “We fall into the old custom, and devote the present article to the consideration of how things stand with us as a community at the beginning of this New Year, and how our present position compares with that of this time last year.” The press thus reflected an important facet of nineteenth-century Otago’s New Year: for Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans, and English newspaper editors alike, this was the season for stocktaking.

Schmidt argues that “more-secular” New Year’s resolutions for self-improvement, so widespread today, first became popular at the turn of the twentieth century, born of the older Christian practice of “pious resolution.” Certainly I have found no evidence in Otago of these ‘more-secular’ resolutions, while there are plenty of ‘pious’ ones. After a critical New Year analysis of his spiritual state, devout evangelical William Falconer, an Owaka farmer, made his vows for the coming year. In 1885 he recorded: “My determination is by God’s help to serve Him more faithfully than I have done in the past,” and in 1896, “God has showed me the necessity of being fully surrendered to Him to do His will So that He may bless me. I give up all to Him & receive of Him the blessing thro grace.”

---

67 See pp. **[44-53 of Chapter 4] below for further discussion of providence.
68 Otago Witness, 3 January 1857, p. 3.
69 Ibid., 2 January 1869, p. 13.
70 Schmidt, Consumer Rites, 118.
71 William Falconer diary, 1 January 1885 and 1 January 1896, Misc-MS-1530, HL. See also his entry for 31 December 1891.
Christina Evans, New Year was the occasion for “renewed vows” and a “fresh consecration to God’s service.” Otago residents who recorded their New Year plans thus gave primacy to their spiritual state, with a few, notably Riddell, also looking to material progress. However, they viewed material progress as part of God’s blessing, and it is clear that providence remained an important factor in the world view of most Otago diarists: theirs was a world deeply imbued with spiritual significance.

**New Year’s Day**

Although unfamiliar to English colonists, New Year’s Day was undoubtedly Otago’s best kept annual holiday, indicating the extent of Scottish influence in the colony. In Dunedin, anyone trying to carry on as usual had little success. “On New Year’s Day, no one supposes that anything like ordinary business is to be attended to in Dunedin,” reported the *Witness* in 1865, noting that “those who made the attempt found the holiday spirit too strong for them. By noon, every warehouse and almost every shop was closed for the day.” Even domestic servants regularly received a holiday on New Year’s Day, a reflection of the importance of the occasion. This curtailed somewhat the activities of Dunedin’s elite. As the *Witness*’s society columnist noted in 1896: “As usual on [New Year’s Day], there were some family gatherings and small picnics were also indulged in; but as it is a day which is generally given to the servants of the house for their holiday, most people entertain as little as possible at that time.”

Walter Riddell was most unusual among Otago residents, particularly the Scots, for his reluctance to indulge in the recreational aspects of the season: “Spent New Year’s day at Mathiesons, dancing and making a fool of ourselves, wasted a good day and felt tired next day when I had to turn out to work.” On New Year’s Day 1870 he attended the local Sabbath School picnic and “had a jolly day of fun.” However, he “might have spent the day better . . . I believe it will be the last one I will have anything to do with.” This man had a most serious work ethic, but, despite his reluctance, he continued to keep the holiday. Many farmers found midsummer

---

72 Christina Evans diary, 1 January and 31 December 1897, DA 3/2, PCANZ archives.
73 Otago Witness, 6 January 1865, p. 2.
75 Walter Riddell diary, 4 January 1868.
76 Ibid., 1 January 1870.
holidays, including New Year, most inconvenient, with shearing commonly in progress on sheep stations. “They do not have a holiday on New Year’s day here as it is usually the busy season,” wrote Archibald Wither while visiting his brother John, a sheep farmer near Queenstown. The work of the shearsers did not, however, prevent Archibald and friends from riding over to visit their neighbours. Some years earlier the shearsers had got the better of John Wither over the New Year holiday. “We finished shearing on the 7 of this month I had a little trouble with the shearsers,” he wrote to his mother in Scotland. “I found fault with 2 on new years day and although they could have made over one pound a day they left and it was two days before I could fill their places as the Races came off on the two days after the new year.” Some station owners allowed their employees more leeway at Christmas and New Year – accepting, perhaps, the inevitable – giving them leave to attend events in the nearest settlement, or sometimes organising Christmas or New Year sports themselves. Benjamin Jeffery, a gardener at the isolated Shag Valley Station, wrote to his parents in England that “it seems very quere [sic] to have our Christmas in the Summer time but we make that a time for sports out dores [sic] the sheep shearing is on to at that time so there are plenty of people about.” Shearer John McArthur recalled that “At Christmas time a list usually went round to collect donations for Sports. The Squatter usually heading the list ... I have seen better sports held on these Stations and bigger prize money on Boxing Day than could be seen in some of the big Centres. At the wind up of the day, we usually had a concert and dance.”

For farmers and others whose workload varied with the seasons, midsummer was, indeed, an inconvenient time for holidays. “In most places in Otago we have enforced holidays in winter, and the present system brings terrible disorganisation and loss of time,” noted a Maniototo reporter, suggesting that “‘plum duff’ and other good cheer” would cause less indigestion when consumed in winter, and that “we are antipodean in all things but we need not be in the matter cf holidays.” Otago’s holidays were certainly concentrated in summer. After Easter, there was only one

---

77 Archibald Wither to Andrew Wither, 6 January 1896, Misc-MS-1238, HL.
78 John Wither to Margaret Wither, 14 January 1880.
79 Benjamin Jeffery to William and Harriett Jeffery, 12 August 1875, Biog Box 31, OSM.
80 John Bonar McArthur reminiscences, Biog Box 70-14, OSM. On ‘sports,’ see pp.** [22-23 of this chapter] below.
81 Otago Witness, 9 January 1886, p. 12.
general holiday – the Queen’s birthday on 24 May – before the ‘holiday season’ commenced again with the Prince of Wales’s birthday in November. The holidays remained, however, firmly fixed on their traditional dates: the colonists were too firmly attached to their favourite holidays to consider shifting them to a more appropriate season. Moreover, midsummer proved a good holiday time for colonists beyond the farming community. In Scotland, the short days and winter weather curtailed opportunities for excursions and outdoor activities on the most popular annual holiday, New Year. The reversal of seasons gave the colonists “an advantage over the old country, for though the old associations with King Frost, the mistletoe bough, the long nights, and the cheerful fire, are thus partially destroyed, the summer days, instead of the dreary winter ones, afford an excellent opportunity for engaging in every description of out-door recreation.” 82 From the early years of the colony, Otago residents gladly seized the opportunity to enjoy themselves outdoors at New Year, a practice much approved of by the Otago Witness: “Out-door sports are certainly a much more preferable method of welcoming in the New Year than are some of the practices in the old country. The weather may there be pleaded as an excuse, but we trust that our colonists will take advantage of the change of season on this side of the globe, to enjoy themselves in future – as they have done on the late occasion – in a more rational way.” 83 The generally ‘rational’ and respectable activities of Otago residents presented a contrast to Scotland, where drinking was perhaps the most popular New Year sport. 84

Family and community gatherings

Almost every Scottish family in Otago held a reunion at New Year. Robert Nicol, an Oamaru flour miller, travelled to Balclutha for a reunion with his siblings: “the Nicol family met on New Years day and we spent a very pleasant and profitable time.” 85 For the Jaffray family of Saddle Hill, “renowned for their hospitality at all

82 Ibid., 6 January 1872, p. 1.
83 Ibid., 7 January 1853, p. 2.
84 See, for example, a New Year report from Edinburgh: “As usual again, alas, throughout the day, the streets were thronged with reeling, ranting drunkards – many of them mere boys” (Otago Witness, 26 March 1864, p. 1). An Otago Witness article “New-Year’s Drinking” described the perils of alcohol at Christmas and New Year (1 January 1853, p. 4). See also W. W. Knox, Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 94.
85 Robert Nicol to George Nicol, 28 January 1878, MS-Papers-4083, ATL.
times,” the “New Year’s Day dinners were really full-scale family gatherings.”86 Many combined a family gathering with an excursion or picnic, sometimes followed by a dance. In 1861, Dunedin merchant George Hepburn

spent a very happy New Years day, all our family being together, the young folks with some acquaintances forming a party of 13 set off for a ride to the Taieri Plain. I accompanied them for 12 miles, where Geo & I called upon an old friend & had lunch & returned - the party went on to the river about 5 miles further after resting & enjoying themselves a while they all returned in safety to Tea. Then had a dance in the barn & parted good friends.87

In 1879 the now elderly Hepburn visited his son William’s family for New Year’s dinner, then walked to visit friends, where he met more relatives, “all playing Cricket on the Lawn.” In the evening he returned to William’s home, “the young folks set off a great many fire works, then had supper & our ‘Tody’ of course, specially on New Years night!”88 G. M. Thomson often spent New Year’s Day visiting his wife’s family, the Allans, at their Taieri farm. In 1889 “There was a gathering of the family ... We were in all 24 adults and 9 youngsters. The day was intensely hot, but we played tennis &c, vigorously.”89 Tennis was not the only vigorous activity. In 1888, after some tennis, “all went along to Greytown hall, where a great dance was held, which passed off with great success. We only got home about 4am.”90

Gatherings frequently expanded beyond families, sometimes involving almost an entire community. In 1860 fifty New Year excursionists enjoyed an outing which included a steamer trip, lunch, cricket and various games, the party consisting “principally of the old settlers in the district of Port Chalmers, who have for many years been in the habit of spending the day together at this season of reunion.”91 The Christie family usually picnicked at Waikouaiti Beach on New Year’s Day, meeting there many other residents of the district. In 1893 John Christie noted “a large gathering of settlers from the surrounding country. They had picnic and games at the base of Matanaka cliff.” Four years later the Christie picnic party met “a great many

---

87 George Hepburn to Thomas Martin, 4 January 1861, William Downie Stewart papers, George Hepburn Correspondence, MS-985, Series 24, Bx 62, File 2, HL.
88 George Hepburn to his sister Janet (full name not known), 1 January 1879. “Tody” (usually spelled toddy) is an alcoholic drink, often a hot punch of sweetened and spiced spirits.
89 G. M. Thomson diary, 1 January 1889.
90 Ibid., 2 January 1888. New Year’s Day was kept on 2 January in that year, as 1 January fell on a Sunday.
91 Otago Colonist, 6 January 1860, p. 5.
people at the shore. They had come in vehicles, from Merton and surrounding country."92 English migrant Jack Fowler of Dunedin participated in a variety of New Year’s Day activities during the 1880s, including a Baptist Sunday school picnic, harbour excursion, Volunteers’ concert and ball, and various other outings. There was no shortage of amusements available. In 1887 he and his future wife Jeannie Broome enjoyed a New Year’s “picnic of two” at “the Waterfalls.” After their marriage, the Fowlers sometimes spent New Year with the Broomes for whom, as Scots, this was the season of family gatherings. But Jack Fowler’s most consistent New Year outing was to the event which helped distinguish this as a particularly Scottish holiday – the Caledonian games.93

Sports

The Otago colony’s first ‘sports’ took place on its first Anniversary Day, 23 March 1849, at Dunedin and Port Chalmers, and included horse racing, sailing, rowing, athletics and “rural sports.”94 Nineteenth-century Otago colonists used the term ‘sports’ for a local gathering, invariably on a holiday, for a series of competitive events. The games indulged in varied from serious athletic contests (especially running and jumping) to novelty events (sack races, climbing greasy poles, and the like), generally both on the same occasion. Such sports were sometimes combined with horse racing, sailing or cycling events. Many sports also had cultural events such as competitions in dancing or music performance. The organisation of sports was occasionally impromptu, with a few locals getting together to raise prize money and plan the events. More commonly, though, a national or friendly society or an individual (typically a hotelkeeper, entrepreneur, or large employer, such as a sheep station manager) sponsored and ran sports.95 If no other suitable ground was available, events took place in the street, as with the Christmas sports of the Arrowtown goldminers, recalled by David Mackie: “they’d have the street all decorated up. And they’d have the horses and the men, all the sports was in the main street. They used to

92 John Christie diary, 2 January 1893 and 1 January 1897.
93 Alexander John Fowler to Martha Fowler, 3 January 1884; 2 January 1885; 29 January 1886; 26 January 1887; 26 January 1888; and 21 January 1891, Fowler letters, OSM.
94 Otago News, 21 March 1849, Supplement; and Otago Journal, November 1849, p. 86. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of Anniversary Day, including this first sports meeting.
95 This description is based on my overall impressions from local newspaper reports of such events, which occurred on occasions too numerous to cite individually here.
gallop up and down there ... there’d be high jump, hop step and jump, wrasslin’, and what do you call that ... tilting in the ring. Oh there was all sorts of sports. Quoits. Tossing the caber.”  

Sports often accompanied picnics, and sometimes a dance followed in the evening.

Anniversary Day quickly became Dunedin’s premier horse racing occasion, with New Year initially much less significant in the sporting calendar. The Dunedin Cricket Club played matches on New Year’s Day in 1849, 1850 and 1855, but the only evidence of communal New Year sports during the 1850s is from Port Chalmers where, in 1857, “dancing commenced on the green sward in front of the Custom House [about noon], in which old as well as young engaged with great spirit. To this succeeded games of all descriptions – sack and barrow races, blind-man’s-buff, foot races, &c., &c. We have seldom seen a happier party than that assembled on this occasion.”

Otago experienced an explosion in leisure opportunities in the 1860s. The influx of migrants during the goldrushes provided an “expanding consumer base” to support commercialised leisure projects, ranging from excursions to sports meetings. Amongst the migrants who arrived in Otago in the wake of the goldrushes was Shadrach Jones, entrepreneur extraordinaire, the man responsible for the province’s first ‘national’ sports. Jones, an English doctor, came to Otago from Victoria, where he had been an auctioneer and local politician. In Dunedin, Jones ran two very successful hotels and the Vauxhall Gardens, established two theatres, and even organised an English cricket tour of New Zealand. On Boxing Day 1861 he ran, to

---

97 Otago Colonist, 16 January 1857, p. 3. For the cricket matches, see Otago News, 10 January 1849, p. 3; 5 January 1850, p. 2; and 6 January 1855, p. 3.
99 I use the term ‘national’ here to refer to events labelled or associated with a particular northern hemisphere nation, such as ‘English’, ‘Caledonian’ or ‘Hibernian’. Caledonia and Hibernia were the Roman names for Scotland and Ireland. On the significance of the term ‘Caledonia’, see p. **[33-34 of this chapter] below.
much acclaim, ‘Old English’ sports. Six days later, on New Year’s Day 1862, Jones held ‘Caledonian’ sports, again with much success. About 500 people attended on each occasion: presumably many people attended both. Several events were common to both occasions: both included foot races, the standing and running high leap, dipping for oranges and, surprisingly in the English case, the Highland fling and sword dance. The Old English sports also featured one distinctly English event, the hornpipe, which opened the occasion. Other events peculiar to the English sports were two novelty events, sack races and climbing a greasy pole, and some unspecified dances. The Caledonian sports featured several other events: a hurdle race, ‘hitch and kick,’ the hop step and jump, Cumberland wrestling, putting the heavy stone and a quoiting match. While such events were not peculiar to Scotland, they were more popular there than in most of England. Indeed, all that was missing from the Caledonian sports to make them typical of Highland games at that time was a piping competition. Another distinctive feature of Jones’s Caledonian sports was “a Gaelic inscription, which, we are informed, meant ‘Happiness to all,’ ... displayed above the entrance.”

Jones probably intended the two national labels as devices to increase patronage by their appeal to nostalgia and national pride. The inclusion of distinctly Scottish dances at the Old English games may have been an attempt to appeal to the Scottish population: no businessman wishing to attract a large clientele could ignore Otago’s Scots. James Strachan, a young goldminer who came to Dunedin over Christmas and New Year to take a break and spend some of his good earnings from the Tuapeka field, was most impressed with Shadrach Jones’s business abilities. What appealed to him most, amongst the entertainments on offer, was the Caledonian games:

101 Otago Witness, 28 December 1861, p. 5; and 4 January 1862, p. 5. On Highland games, see Grant Jarvie, Highland Games: The Making of the Myth (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991); and Grant Jarvie, “Highland Games,” in Sport, Scotland and the Scots, ed. Grant Jarvie and John Burnett (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), 128-142. Quoits is a game where iron rings are thrown to encircle an iron peg. An old game, it became very popular in nineteenth-century Scotland, only to decline hugely in the early twentieth century. See Neil Tranter, “Quoiting,” in Sport, Scotland and the Scots, ed. Jarvie and Burnett, 193-210. “Hitch and kick” is, according to J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, eds, Oxford English Dictionary, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 7: 266, “a form of high-kicking or long-jumping.” I have been unable to find any helpful descriptions of this event: it may have been a particular style of long jump. One account notes that “in the 1920s the top [long] jumpers began to cycle their legs while jumping, a technique known as the hitch-kick, which helped them achieve a better leg shoot on landing and hence longer distances.” See David Levinson and Karen Christensen, eds., Encyclopedia of World Sport From Ancient Times to the Present (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1996), 3: 1052. “Putting the heavy stone” is now better known as the shot-put.
Then to get up Caledonian Sports at the shortest notice [Jones] cut off one side of the stable [of the Provincial Hotel] and turned it into a Sports ring. He could not manage 100 yds but he had it run in two 50’s there and back. We had a man in kilts who ran second in the 100 with them on, and one the high jump in his trunks. Then we had the Hammers and Stone, Long Jump, and what I have very seldom seen out here – Hitch and Kick. Altogether we had a great day’s sport.102

Strachan made no mention of the Old English sports in his reminiscences: for a Scot who had been several years absent from his Fifeshire home the Caledonian events appealed the most. The Old English Boxing Day sports continued, under Jones’s management, for a further three years. By Christmas 1865, Jones had probably left Otago and the Boxing Day games evolved into a ‘Volunteer Gala,’ with the English label dropped.103 I have found it used on just one more occasion in nineteenth-century Otago, at Tokomairiro in 1865.104 Boxing Day sports did not cease or become less profitable, as they continued to be held throughout the province, often run by hotels. Apparently, the organisers believed that associating such games with English ethnicity did not add to their appeal.

In contrast, sports with Scottish or Irish labels continued throughout the century, usually with great success. Their adoption by ethnic associations ensured this success, but English colonists had no such organisation to sponsor English sports. St Patrick’s Day sports and horse racing featured regularly on Otago’s goldfields, with their relatively large Irish population. These events were not always specifically promoted as national events, although the colonists probably implicitly perceived them as such. At Lawrence, the St Patrick’s Day sports eventually came under the sponsorship of the HACBS, giving them a strong ethnic link.105 In Dunedin, the local HACBS, formed in 1873, selected Boxing Day as their sports day, and from that year

---

102 "James Strachan’s Experiences: My first twelve years on my own – Commencing from 20th April, 1856 – nearly 61 years ago,” MS-0563, HL.

103 Otago Witness, 1 January 1864, p. 3; 31 December 1864, p. 7; and 30 December 1865, p. 9. See also the advertisement for “The Fourth Annual Old English Boxing Day Sports,” Otago Witness, 24 December 1864, p. 12.

104 Ibid., 12 January 1866, p. 15; and Bruce Herald, 27 December 1866, p. 2 (the sports are not given the English label in the latter account).

105 In 1873, Lawrence’s St Patrick’s Day sports were “under the management of a committee of gentlemen,” with the horse racing events managed by the Tuapeka Jockey Club. Funds raised went to the local Catholic school. By 1882, the sports were held “under the auspices of the Hibernian Society,” the latter being a common abbreviated term for the HACBS. See Tuapeka Times, 13 March 1873, p. 4; 20 March 1873, p. 5; and 15 March 1882, p. 6. See also W. R. Mayhew, Tuapeka – The Land and its People: A Social History of the Borough of Lawrence and its Surrounding Districts (Dunedin: Otago Centennial Historical Publications, 1949), 200 and 216-217. On the HACBS, see Rory Sweetman, Faith and Fraternity: A History of the Hibernian Society in New Zealand 1869-2000 (Dunedin: Hibernian Society, 2002).
the Hibernian fete became a most successful annual event.\textsuperscript{106} It is noteworthy that Hibernian sports had little to distinguish them from Old English sports, or the athletic events of Caledonian sports. Hibernian sports included running and leaping events, putting the stone and quoits. The only explicitly Irish element in the Lawrence sports was that putting the stone was done "Irish style." Indeed, the "Celestial handicap," a 100 yard race open only to Chinese, formed the most distinctive feature of the Lawrence sports.\textsuperscript{107} The Dunedin Hibernian games added a cultural element with the Irish jig, and in 1887 "an additional source of attraction to the public generally, and Irishmen in particular" was on offer: a hurling match.\textsuperscript{108} As part of the Gaelic revival, late-nineteenth century nationalists resurrected hurling, an ancient Irish game, to become "a symbol of freedom, a 'weapon' to drive out the British." Its inclusion at the Hibernian sports gave them a distinct Irish nationalist edge.\textsuperscript{109}

**The Caledonian games**

There can be no doubt, however, that Otago's most widespread, long-lasting, and best-attended annual events were the New Year Caledonian games (see Figure 22). Just a few months after Shadrach Jones ran Otago's first Caledonian games in 1862, the Caledonian Society of Otago was formed, and from 1863 this organisation administered Dunedin's Caledonian games.\textsuperscript{110} At their peak, in 1881, Dunedin's Caledonian games attracted 14,000 spectators on the first day of the two-day competition, and invariably, from 1863 to 1900, the attendance ran to the thousands.\textsuperscript{111} As the *Witness* commented in 1867, "in the whole course of the year, there is no popular assemblage which is more numerous or more readily attended

\textsuperscript{106} NZT, 3 May 1873, p. 6. The sports and picnic were usually reported in both the *Tablet* and *Otago Witness*: for an early example, see *Otago Witness*, 2 January 1875, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{107} Tuapeka Times, 13 March 1873, p. 4; 20 March 1873, p. 5; and 15 March 1882, p. 6. There was a sizeable Chinese population in the Lawrence district.

\textsuperscript{108} NZT, 17 December 1875, supplement, p. 2; and 23 December 1887, p. 18.


\textsuperscript{110} *Otago Witness*, 16 August 1862, p. 5. The archives of the Caledonian Society of Otago are held at the Hocken Library, but the earliest records are missing. In later years, the Society sometimes held additional Caledonian games on Easter Monday or Boxing Day.

\textsuperscript{111} The *Otago Witness* and ODT reports always gave attendance numbers. For a summary, see Shiobhan O'Donnell, "Dancing at the Auld Cale: A History of Highland Dancing in Dunedin between 1863 and 1900" (BA Hons diss., University of Otago, 1998), 26-27.
Figure 22 – Caledonian games

*Punch* depicts “Mr New Chum” competing without success in a variety of events at Dunedin’s Caledonian games: the foot-race, sword dance, sword fight, sack race, climbing a greasy pole and tilting at the ring.

than the [Caledonian] Society’s gatherings." Many country people made a special trip to Dunedin to attend the Caledonian games, but numerous rural districts and smaller towns also held their own Caledonian games. The following list of nineteenth-century games locations is probably incomplete, but illustrates the widespread occurrence of such events: Oamaru, Palmerston, Waikouaiti, Otago Peninsula, Mosgiel, Outram, Strath Taieri, Hyde, Naseby, Switzers, Clyde, Alexandra, Tokomairiro, Inch Clutha, Balclutha, Kaitangata, Warepa and Kaihiku, Clinton, Kelso, Port Molyneux and Owaka. Seventeen of these twenty-one events took place at New Year, and all were labelled Caledonian. The Peninsula games took place on Christmas Day, perhaps to avoid competition with the nearby Dunedin event, while in South Otago something of a circuit developed, where competitors and spectators could attend the Owaka or Kaitangata games on Christmas Day, the Clutha games on Boxing Day, and the Clinton or Port Molyneux games on New Year’s Day.113

Caledonian events in country districts could attract large crowds: at Palmerston (with a borough population of about 800) 1200 people attended the 1882 Caledonian games.114 Rural games were not always associated with an official Caledonian Society, and in earlier years hotel proprietors commonly ran them. Sometimes they evolved gradually from district picnics (see Figure 23), as the Warepa and Kaihiku games exemplify. John Wilson described the way in which organised sports emerged from the local picnic at Warepa in South Otago:

Long before [1864] the people of Wharepa [sic] had instituted picnics at which sports were held. The Wharepa Bush, an ideal spot, was usually the rendezvous of the people. There was a natural circle in the dense bush, with a flooring of grass, and here all and sundry laid out their viands on snowy white cloths. Every one contributed to the general provision, and the biggest pots that could be requisitioned in the district were slung on poles to boil the water for the tea. At first the sports were started for the children and juniors, but soon events for adults were added... The fiddles were kept going, and dancing was kept up steadily on the green turf. Everyone knew everyone, and there was a homely, hearty feeling. When the picnics attracted

---

112 Otago Witness, 5 January 1867, p. 9.

113 This list is compiled from reports in the Otago Witness. On the South Otago games and "competitive circuit," see also Jennifer Coleman, "Transmigration of the Piob Mhor: The Scottish Highland Piping Tradition in the South Island of New Zealand, with Particular Reference to Southland, Otago and South Canterbury, to 1940" (PhD thesis, University of Otago, 1996), 195-198. For evidence of pipers competing in several different games in the same region, see the lists in Coleman’s appendices.

Figure 23 – Picnics

Nineteenth-century picnics could be relatively informal affairs, as with the unidentified group photographed at top. However larger picnics could evolve into more formal events, as with the group photographed at bottom, playing organised games in the grounds of James Adam’s large property, “Bon Accord,” on the Tokomairiro. The men on the left play bowls, while others participate in dancing or party games. Note the formal costumes – people treated picnics as celebrations, and dressed in their best clothes.

Source – Hocken Library, c/neg E4854/13A and c/neg sheet 156/5/e.
strangers from all quarters, and it is said on several occasions several hundreds were present, they gradually developed into proper sports meetings.\textsuperscript{115}

The increasing population of the district presumably contributed to the growth of this occasion, as did the ability to travel greater distances for leisure as roads improved and the railway arrived. James Marchbanks, who spent his boyhood summers with friends farming at Kaihiku, described the same occasions, which the press reported by the 1880s as the “Warepa and Kaihiku Annual Caledonian Gathering.”\textsuperscript{116}

Marchbanks’s connection with Kaihiku came via Scotland: his parents had migrated from the Scottish Borders a few years prior to Marchbanks’s 1862 birth, and there were a number of “Border people” in the district, “always pleased to see their own countrymen.” The great event of the summer was New Year, when “there was a lot of picnicking and Highland games, with pipers, dancing, putting the stone, tossing the caber, wrestling and running. This was kept up till evening, when they gathered at one another’s farms, singing Scottish songs, danced and enjoyed themselves perhaps much more thoroughly than the young people do now.”\textsuperscript{117}

The Caledonian games were self-consciously ethnic occasions, with a much stronger cultural element than Hibernian or Old English games. Dancing, piping, and an emphasis on strength events (tossing the caber, throwing the hammer and putting the stone) identified these as peculiarly Scottish occasions. Certainly they included the running, leaping and novelty events general to all such occasions, but it was the skirl of the pipes and the sight of the kilt which gave these days their special flavour. In 1868 the Caledonian Society of Otago, when designing a games programme, decided to omit the blind wheelbarrow race and replace it with the Seann Triubhas, a Highland dance: the organisers’ priorities clearly lay with the cultural events.\textsuperscript{118}

Many spectators, however, had different priorities, preferring athletics to cultural events. Not all enjoyed the bagpipes: the ODT report of Dunedin’s 1880 games noted that “besides the Highland pipers, who promenaded the ground in all the pride of checkered tartan and bare knees, the Headquarters Band … was present to


\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Otago Witness}, 7 January 1882, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{117} James Marchbanks, reminiscences, MS-550, HL.

\textsuperscript{118} Caledonian Society of Otago Directors’ Minute Book, 21 February 1868 and 6 March 1868, MS-1045-1, HL. These plans were for a special Caledonian gathering to be held during the Duke of Edinburgh’s visit to Otago, which was delayed until the following year after his shooting in New South Wales (see pp. 23-27 of Chapter 6) below.)
charm those who had a liking for more civilised music than that of the bagpipe.” In 1886, the same paper reported the foot races as the principal events, having become “year to year of greater relative importance.” The lesser popularity of the cultural events perhaps reflected the diversity of the audience which, in 1874, included “representatives of all the races and classes that compose our heterogeneous community. Of course North Britons were in a majority, but English and Irish were by no means scarce, and Germans, Scandinavians, French, Chinese, and Maoris, were all represented in the crowd that thronged the green and grand stand.” Such diversity could also affect the content of the cultural events: Shiobhan O’Donnell notes that the Irish Jig and Sailor’s Hornpipe eventually distinguished Highland dancing in New Zealand from its Scottish counterpart. At some rural Caledonian events, however, the audience would have been less diverse, as James Marchbanks’s description of the Kaihiku and Warepa occasions suggests. O’Donnell argues that “the fostering of Highland culture reflects the presence of non-Scots in Otago rather than their absence … [Scots] now felt the need to exert their presence more strongly in the province, to let people know that they were still a force to be reckoned with.” As O’Donnell notes, however, the threat to Scottish hegemony was more imagined than real. While Scots dropped as a proportion of the Otago population following the first goldrush, they remained the largest single group of colonists. A recent study by Terry Hearn reveals that Scots were also significantly over-represented amongst those most transient of migrants, the

---


120 Otago Witness, 10 January 1874, p. 6.


122 Even by the standards of Otago, Clutha County was particularly Scottish, and there was presumably therefore a greater sympathy for the Scottish cultural events. At the 1878 census, of Clutha County residents born beyond New Zealand, 56 percent were Scottish-born. This compares with 37 percent for all Otago, and 20 percent for all New Zealand. Of the Clutha residents born in New Zealand (43 percent of non-Maori), many would have been children of Scottish migrants.


124 In 1858, the Scottish born made up 65 percent of Otago’s foreign-born population. In December 1861, soon after the first rush, that proportion had dropped to 41 percent, but remained the largest national group. For the rest of the century, the Scottish-born proportion was remarkably consistent, varying between 38 and 43 percent. The early dominance of Scots also suggests that a large proportion of the New Zealand born (22 percent of non-Maori Otago residents in 1858) would have been children of Scottish parents. See Appendix One.
goldminers: even the ‘new iniquity’ had a strong Scottish element.\footnote{Terry Hearn, “The Irish on the Otago Goldfields, 1861-71,” in A Distant Shore: Irish Migration & New Zealand Settlement, ed. Lyndon Fraser (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2000), 75-85. Hearn’s analysis of a sample from the lists of passengers from Victoria to Otago, 1861-1864, finds that of those born in the United Kingdom (the great majority of all passengers), 19 percent were Scots, who at that time made up just 10 percent of the UK population. Even more strikingly, Hearn shows that from 1860-1863, 44 percent of people migrating directly from the UK to New Zealand were Scottish.} The establishment of Caledonian games and societies, then, was probably a response to two rather contradictory factors, besides the natural wish to foster a sense of community and simply liking Caledonian events. Scots might have felt their hegemony threatened, and therefore wished to explicitly exert their cultural identity to avoid domination by, in particular, the English. At the same time, however, the actual number of Scots in Otago was growing ever larger, providing increasing patronage for events of Scottish interest.

In 1883, the \textit{Illustrated New Zealand News} published an engraving of pipers marching to Dunedin’s Caledonian games (see Figure 24). The accompanying text demonstrated a rather patronising attitude towards the “barbarity” of the bagpipe, mixed with admiration for the colourful eccentricity of the occasion, perhaps representative of the ambivalent feelings of many non-Scots towards Highland culture:

\begin{quote}
A Caledonian gathering in Dunedin is always heralded by a meeting of the principal pipers in the town, who at an early hour set out for the rendezvous, playing a favorite strathspey or reel that makes the eye of the Scotch onlooker glisten and his heart beat, though it may sound rather barbarous to the Saxon stranger. No sooner is the skirl of the pipes heard than the square becomes thronged as if by magic, and, followed by a crowd increasing in size at every moment, the stately pipers, “war in each port and fire in each eye,” march on with no thought but a perfect rendering of the air they are playing.\footnote{Illustrated New Zealand News, 3 September 1883, p. 6.}
\end{quote}

The paper also noted that the “Scotch element is ever present in Dunedin, and Campbells, M’Leods, Stuarts, M’Donalds, and the rest of the clans are thick as blackberries on the sign-boards in every street.” This conflation of Scottish and Highland identities raises an important issue: how was Scottishness displayed in nineteenth-century Otago?
Figure 24 - Pipers marching
Pipers marching along Princes Street, Dunedin, en route to the Caledonian Games
attract a crowd of onlookers.

Source - Illustrated New Zealand News, 3 September 1883, p. 8.
Nineteenth-century Scotland included two major ethnic groups: Highland Scots and Lowland Scots. In a flurry of stereotypes, James Belich notes that, when considering Scottish influence in New Zealand, we should look not for "reinvented and romantic Highland Scottishness ... but for mild New Zealand Lowland Scottishness: archetypally egalitarian, competent, undemonstrative and somewhat dour." There can be no doubt that the majority of Scots in Otago, and New Zealand as a whole, came from the Lowlands. Rosalind McLean's detailed study of nineteenth-century Scottish migration to New Zealand shows that "the movement was widespread and in unexpectedly close accordance with the Scottish population distribution." About 90 percent of Scots lived in the Lowlands, and a similar proportion of migrants to New Zealand came from Lowland counties. The Illustrated New Zealand News's assumption that pipers, clans, and Highland names best represented Otago's Scots did not, therefore, reflect the reality of Scottish migration.

During the early years of the Otago colony, the colonists seem to have felt little need to publicly or explicitly display their Scottish cultural identity, and they certainly did not do so with national societies or Highland symbols: a community dominated by Scots took its Scottishness for granted. The keeping of certain Scottish holidays – Presbyterian sacramental fast days and New Year – reflected numerical dominance rather than a need to express identity. Burns' Night celebrations were an exception as explicitly ethnic occasions celebrated prior to the goldrush. The colonists recognised the poet's birthday (25 January) from 1855 with convivial public dinners, although Dunedin's Burns Club was not founded until 1869. It is noteworthy that

127 On the definition of ethnicity, see p. [7 of Introduction] above. The Highland / Lowland division is, of course, highly simplistic: on this point, see Murray G. H. Pittock, Celtic Identity and the British Image (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 58-60. At the risk of oversimplifying even further, in this thesis I use the terms Scottish cultural identity and Scottish ethnicity to encompass all Scots when a more general sense is required.

128 Belich, Paradise Reforged, p.221.

129 Rosalind R. McLean, "Scottish Emigrants to New Zealand, 1840-1880: Motives, Means and Background" (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1990), especially 118 and 121-122. The quotation is from 151. It is important to note that the proportion of Otago colonists who identified as Highlanders was higher than the number statistical studies of migration suggest: many had lived beyond the Highlands before migrating to Otago, and in studies such as McLean's are not categorised as Highlanders. Cultural identity did not always match geographical location. Nevertheless, Highlanders were certainly a minority among the Scots migrants to Otago.

130 For reports of early Burns' Night celebrations, see Otago Witness, 10 February 1855, pp. 2-3; 9 February 1856, p. 3; and 7 February 1857, p. 5. For the inauguration of the Dunedin Burns Club, see Otago Witness, 30 January 1869, p. 6. Prior to this, the occasions seem to have been organised by
these early ethnic occasions displayed Lowland rather than Highland identity: although Robert Burns played a significant role in the formation of myths surrounding the Highlands, he was first and foremost a Lowland Scot and a master of the Broad Scots tongue. The *Otago Witness* reporter enjoyed Dunedin’s 1855 Burns supper, but felt unable to report with any accuracy the remarks of the chairman, Paisley-born poet John Barr, “which were delivered with so much enthusiasm, and with so much broad Scotch as to be beyond us altogether.”

The adoption of the term ‘Caledonian’ – Caledonia being the Roman name for Scotland – indicates the significance of Lowland Scots in Otago. James Marchbanks’s description of the Warepa and Kaihiku Caledonian games, noted above, as “Highland games” is most unusual: such events were almost invariably referred to in Otago as Caledonian, in contrast to the usual Highland games or gatherings of Scotland. Caledonia was a name of great pride, a reminder that the Scots had remained invincible against the might of the Roman Empire. Although it referred, in a strict historical sense, only to the Highlands, by the nineteenth century this common poetic name carried a convenient ambiguity, allowing it to be used to describe Scotland as a whole. All Otago Scots could identify themselves as Caledonian, so this usage by societies and sports organisers gave them the broadest possible appeal, while carrying powerful associations of history and romance. A distinctly Highland society, the Dunedin-based Gaelic Society of New Zealand, founded in 1881, had a smaller constituency and lower public profile than the Caledonian Society, particularly as it confined membership to Gaelic speakers. The contrast between the two groups is highlighted by a glance at the Caledonian Society of Otago’s membership list for 1884-1885, their inclusiveness indicated by the prominent Otago Chinese name of Sew Hoy. In Victoria, as in Otago, numerous Scottish societies arose in the wake of hotel proprietors, informal groups, or, after its formation in 1862, the Caledonian Society. By the 1870s, Burns’ anniversary suppers were reported in Dunedin, Port Chalmers, Mosgiel, Oamaru, Tokomairiro and Tapanui.

---

131 *Otago Witness*, 10 February 1855, p. 3.


134 “Twenty-Third Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the Caledonian Society of Otago,” 26 October 1885, inserted in Caledonian Society of Otago, Directors’ Minute Book 1885-1898, MS-1045-7, HL. While no first name or initial is given for the member Sew Hoy, it seems most likely to have
the goldrushes, but names such as the Geelong Commun Na Fienne (founded 1856) and the Maryborough Highland Society (1857) provide variation from the Caledonian label so prevalent in Otago. In Otago, it appears that those naming ethnic societies consciously maintained their appeal to Scots of all backgrounds, perhaps because of their awareness that a group dominated by Lowlanders had founded the colony.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the Otago Scots used Highland cultural emblems — tartan, pipes and dance — to project a sense of ethnicity. These emblems did not, however, represent an accurate indication of the background of the colonists: in Otago, as elsewhere, they displayed the trend for all Scots to adopt such cultural markers. During the late eighteenth century, a seismic shift in intellectual and cultural fashion completely altered public attitudes to Scottish Highlanders and their environment. Previously viewed as ugly and barren country, inhabited by a barbaric and pagan people, the Highlands became a beautiful, spectacular and romantic landscape, the home of noble warriors. The 'myth' of the Highlands had been born. In the nineteenth century royal patronage gave an added boost to the increasingly pervasive fashion for Highland tours, Highland societies, Highland dress, and Highland games. Highland culture came to be seen as a living remnant of a once national way of life, and Lowlanders, and the Scottish nation as a whole, adopted Highland emblems to maximise their distinctiveness from the neighbouring English culture which threatened to assimilate them. It is, then, no surprise to find Otago’s Scottish colonists demonstrating their Scottishness with Highland dress and music: they were displaying the fashion of the day (see Figure 25). Moreover, the Scots abroad were at even greater risk of cultural assimilation than Lowland Scots at home. As Eric Richards notes, “emigré Scots communities ... typically maintained a pronounced Highland element, as if to emphasise a distinctiveness”; national societies


Highland dress and Highland dance persisted as a means of displaying ethnicity beyond the first generation of migrants and into the twentieth century. Jack and Elsie Clarke, born at Lawrence, Otago, demonstrate their Scottish identity in this 1916 photograph. Their parents had both migrated from Scotland as young children, one from the Lowlands and one from the Highlands.

Source – from the author’s personal collection.
attempted “to resist the homogenisation of the Scots into a society which was being dominated by what were identified as specifically English forms.”

**Asserting ethnic identity**

National saints’ days provide further evidence of the desire of Scottish and Irish colonists, and also the Welsh, to assert their ethnic identity. By the late 1860s, Dunedin and some other Otago towns celebrated St Andrew’s Day (30 November) as a popular holiday. Scottish lodges held annual meetings, church services and dinners; and the many picnics included that of the Ayrshire Association, and a large Green Island community picnic (Green Island being a district more densely populated than most with Scottish colonists). Excursions abounded, and by the early 1870s the Dunedin Jockey Club had established St Andrew’s Day as the date of its popular spring meeting. St Patrick’s Day (17 March) was the holiday of the year for Otago’s Irish colonists, with Hibernian meetings, dinners, dances and sports in all towns where sufficient Irish could be gathered. Hotels encouraged the revelry and, as on St Andrew’s Day, many banks and businesses closed and residents enjoyed a variety of excursions. The Welsh formed only a tiny proportion of Otago’s population, but a significant cluster lived at the gold diggings settlement of Cambrians (also known as Welshmans), in the Maniototo. Cambrians residents celebrated St David’s Day (1 March) with a holiday, sports, picnic and dance. In contrast to the national days of Scotland, Ireland and Wales, England’s St George’s Day (23 April), despite being a statutory holiday for New Zealand banks from 1880, never achieved even mild popularity in Otago. National saints’ days thus followed a similar pattern to

---


138 There is a wealth of evidence in newspaper reports. See, for example, *Otago Witness*, 8 December 1866, p. 11; 5 December 1874, p. 5; 9 December 1882, p. 12; 5 December 1889, p. 33; and 8 December 1898, p. 54.

139 Again, newspaper reports provide a wealth of evidence. See, for example, *Otago Witness*, 21 March 1868, p. 11; 23 March 1872, p. 14; 24 March 1883, p. 12; 23 March 1893, p. 20; and 24 March 1898, p. 27.

140 *Otago Witness*, 22 March 1894, p. 22 and 10 March 1898, p. 34. Censuses show that the Welsh were consistently less than 1 percent of foreign-born residents in nineteenth-century Otago, a significant under-representation of Welsh when compared to their position in the United Kingdom.
national sports, with no significant support for the display of specifically English ethnicity.

Yet the English were an important group of Otago residents, accounting for around a quarter of the foreign-born throughout the nineteenth century, and significantly outnumbering the Irish. James Jupp suggests that, in Australia, popular culture showed many English influences, but that these came “through commercial rather than genuine ‘folk’ culture, where the Scottish and, particularly, Irish influences are more apparent.” This he attributes to the early urbanisation of English society and culture. While there may be some merit in this argument, it fails to account for the Otago situation. Lowland Scotland, home of so many Otago migrants, was not far behind England in urbanisation and industrialisation. Their failure to explicitly assert ethnic identity through ‘folk’ culture suggests, rather, that the English may have simply assumed their own cultural superiority, fostered by their experience of political domination within Britain. Moreover, the English had little experience of the explicitly national societies founded so readily by the Scots and Irish due to concerns over potential cultural domination by the English. The Yorkshire Club noted in Chapter Two was a rare exception. Otago was the New Zealand province where the English were most outnumbered and most likely to feel their own culture under threat, yet even in Otago they apparently saw no need to assert their national identity. Instead, they tolerated, in paternal fashion, the entertaining eccentricity of markers of Scottishness like the bagpipe, confident of their own superiority as descendants of the great British Empire’s leading nation. Englishness was, to them, normal; ethnic display belonged to other cultures.

Caledonian games were nineteenth-century Otago’s most explicit assertion of Scottish cultural identity. In Scotland such games took place not on a holiday, but on some convenient date in summer. In Otago, their position as the major organised event on the colony’s – and Scotland’s – premier holiday, New Year, gave increased


142 For a popular but nonetheless wide-ranging and insightful discussion of English cultural identity, see Jeremy Paxman, The English: A Portrait of a People (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1999). Noting the paucity of English national symbols in comparison with those of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, Paxman suggests this may demonstrate “a certain self-confidence” (11). Even in the mid-twentieth century, “the English didn’t need to concern themselves with the symbols of their own identity: when you’re top dog in the world’s leading empire, you don’t need to” (12).
emphasis to the Scottishness of both games and holiday. The development of these events soon after the goldrushes began reflected the greater number of Scots in the colony, and also the fear of some Scots that their hegemony within the colony was at risk. The games attracted spectators from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, and while many found more appeal in the sporting events, dancing and piping distinguished Otago’s premier sports occasions, and, by association, the colony itself, as Scottish. Highland symbols, as in Scotland and other colonies, helped indicate a culture distinctive from that of England, but the use of the term Caledonian conveniently allowed all Scots, including the numerically dominant Lowlanders, to own these occasions. Andrew Blaikie claims that we “shall never know; nor can we answer definitively the question of whether Scottish identity was strengthened or weakened by the experience of emigration.”\(^{143}\) New Year in Otago provides one intriguing instance of the strengthening of Scottish identity in a colonial setting.

**Conclusion**

New Year’s Day was primarily a Scottish holiday, and in Otago its presence as an important festival demonstrated the colony’s Scottishness. As with Christmas, however, the change in seasons prompted the colonists to make alterations to northern hemisphere customs. Although a summer New Year was inconvenient for farmers, it created new opportunities for picnics and outdoor recreation, and the holding of Caledonian games on this summer holiday made it, in some respects, more overtly Scottish than New Year in Scotland. The colonists also brought with them Scottish New Year customs which included family reunions, first footing, and public gatherings to greet the New Year with noise and revelry. It is notable that, from the 1860s until the turn of the century, the New Year holiday showed little significant change, an indication of its popularity and the success of its format with the great majority of Otago residents.

New Year’s Eve celebrations were not, however, without their critics in Otago. First footing appears to have been a minority activity, possibly decreasing in popularity over the century as disapproval of superstition and heavy drinking became more vocal. Likewise, although drunken public celebrations never died out, they became less respectable as polite society labelled these activities “larrikinism” in

response to changing standards of acceptable behaviour. The strongest critique of New Year revelry came in the form of a competing activity: the watch night service. It is significant that this came to Otago as an English tradition, thriving in the most English denominations, where devout colonists unaccustomed to New Year festivities could mark the occasion in their own most sober fashion. Presbyterians, contrary to their reputation for puritanism, proved more accommodating to popular New Year custom. Certainly, the Presbyterian Church disapproved of some aspects of the celebrations – notably first footing – but over the centuries it had apparently developed a tolerance of popular New Year activities. George Hepburn and G. M. Thomson, both elders at Knox Church, Dunedin, celebrated New Year with gusto; Thomson danced until four in the morning, while Hepburn enjoyed his New Year toddy.

Nevertheless, New Year practice in nineteenth-century Otago demonstrates the pervasiveness of religion in colonial society: this was no simple ‘secular’ holiday. Watch nights may have been a minority activity, but numerous diaries reveal that many Otago colonists, in addition to the watch nighters, saw New Year as a time to measure their progress, to thank God for blessings received and to pray for further blessings in the coming year. New Year was certainly a time to party, but it was also time for spiritual stocktaking.
Chapter Four – Harvest Celebrations

In 1854, Dunedin merchant and farmer George Hepburn expressed his relief at a successful harvest in a letter to relatives in Scotland: “all our crops have been excellent this year, and now I am glad to say are all safely housed in the barnyard.” Soon afterwards, Hepburn joined his family and neighbours in an evening of feasting, drinking, “great good humour and dancing” to celebrate their harvest.¹ Agricultural societies in a wide variety of locations and periods have celebrated with gusto the safe gathering in of the harvest. In many of Otago’s rural communities and churches, celebrations of the harvest became highlights of the year, and eventually urban churches also embraced these festivals. After setting the scene with the work of the harvest and its significance to Otago, in this chapter I examine in detail the province’s two important harvest celebrations: the ‘harvest home,’ a communal celebration of feasting and dancing which followed the bringing ‘home’ of the harvest, and the harvest thanksgiving church service. These remarkably popular nineteenth-century events have received surprisingly little attention from New Zealand historians. Even the exceptions are cursory: John Martin devotes a paragraph to the harvest home on a large estate in his study of rural labourers; and Peter Lineham includes three sentences on church harvest thanksgivings in his study of Protestant piety.² Yet, as this chapter demonstrates, these occasions provide important insights into colonial society and religion.

English historians have explored harvest customs as manifestations of the rural labouring community’s claim to customary rights, and changes to such customs as indications of the changing nature of rural society and economics.³ Meanwhile, folklorists have explored harvest customs for evidence of pagan survivals.⁴ But many

¹ William Downie Stewart, ed., The Journal of George Hepburn (Dunedin: Coulls Somerville Wilkie & Reed, 1934), 125; and George Hepburn to unidentified, September 1854, William Downie Stewart papers, George Hepburn Correspondence, MS-985, Series 24, Box 62, File 1, HL.


⁴ The most influential proponent of the harvest custom as animist survival was James Frazer, in his hugely popular The Golden Bough (first published: 1890-1915). For an analysis of folklorists and
British harvest customs did not survive the migration to Otago, partly because of their regional nature, partly because they were declining rapidly during the colonising period in Britain itself, and partly because of the different structure of colonial land ownership. One custom which did flourish in Otago – the harvest home – underwent revolutionary changes which demonstrate the less hierarchical nature of colonial rural society, and colonial resentment of paternalism. Otago’s harvest homes illustrate the adaptation of an old world custom to fit the different new world environment.

By examining church harvest thanksgivings in Otago, this chapter adds to the picture of colonial religious practice explored throughout this thesis. Religious historians have demonstrated the importance of church harvest thanksgivings as part of the ‘diffusive’ Christianity which pervaded nineteenth-century English society. These services assumed equal significance in Otago. Harvest thanksgiving services are excellent places to look to understand Protestant piety in Otago. These occasions, unlike other festivals such as Christmas and Easter, were common to all Protestant denominations and invariably attracted large congregations. This, therefore, was the most common Protestant experience of institutional religion, and many colonists who did not fit the census category of ‘usual’ church attenders went to their local church on a regular annual basis for the harvest thanksgiving.

Harvest thanksgivings reveal much about Protestant attitudes to the natural world. In this chapter I also briefly explore colonial attitudes to natural and human disasters as revealed in special fast and thanksgiving days, one of the origins of the modern harvest thanksgiving. During the second half of the nineteenth century, fast days, which attributed disasters to God’s active intervention in the world, became increasingly controversial, as an 1868 example from Otago reveals. Religion played a significant role in colonial life, and also had the ability to generate a great deal of debate.

**Otago’s grain harvest**

Although wool and gold dominated Otago’s export earnings, grain was essential to the internal economy. Moreover, wheat became a significant export

---


income earner during periods of low wool prices before the frozen meat industry had begun. Except in the high country, where pastoralism dominated, Otago farms, both small and large, generally raised both crops and livestock. Besides its own value, growing corn (that is, wheat and oats) provided a useful intermediary step between ‘unimproved’ land and the sowing of pasture. ‘Bonanza’ corn crops could be grown for several years until the fertility of the land was sapped.⁶

Otago’s most important grain crop was oats, mostly destined to feed horses, thus filling an essential role as the fuel of colonial transport and farming. Southern farmers favoured oats over wheat as it was less susceptible to rain and cold. By 1899, the province had 102,908 acres sown in oats, producing a quarter of New Zealand’s total crop. The area sown in wheat varied considerably from year to year in response to price fluctuations, peaking in the first half of the 1880s, and then again in the late 1890s. In 1899, Otago farmers had 83,098 acres sown in wheat, more than half of it in North Otago’s Waitaki county.⁷

Harvest proved an anxious time for rural communities because many factors could reduce crop yields, which fluctuated greatly from year to year (see Figures 26-28). Ripening corn required sun and warmth, but adequate rainfall also mattered and drought, to which North Otago was particularly vulnerable, had a major impact on production.⁸ Untimely winds could also have a devastating effect, stripping the grain

---

⁶ The most useful discussion of nineteenth-century agricultural practice and the New Zealand rural economy is Martin, Forgotten Worker. The main drawback of this work is that it concentrates on large runs and estates, these being the main employers of rural wage earners. However, it provides a useful corrective to those histories which focus on the large landowners, ignoring their employees: see, for example, W. H. Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm: A History of the Kakanui and Waireka Valleys, North Otago (Dunedin: Otago Centennial Historical Publications, 1948). The many volumes produced by Otago Centennial Historical Publications all include useful discussions of farming in Otago’s various districts. See also [Peter Cross, ed.] New Zealand Agriculture: A story of the past 150 years (Auckland: NZ Rural Press / Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), and Gordon McLauchlan, The Farming of New Zealand (Auckland: Australia & New Zealand Book Co, 1981). On wheat growing, see Malcolm McKinnon, ed., New Zealand Historical Atlas: Ko Papatuanuku e Takoto Nei (Auckland: David Bateman / Department of Internal Affairs, 1997), plate 46; F. W. Hilgendorf, Wheat in New Zealand (Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, [1939]); and D. B. Copland, Wheat Production in New Zealand (Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, [1920]).

⁷ Agricultural statistics have been taken from the New Zealand Gazette. These were collected and published annually. I have excluded Southland counties from the provincial totals.

⁸ K. C. McDonald, History of North Otago (Oamaru: North Otago Centennial Committee, 1940), 153-155.
Figure 26 – Grain yields in the province of Otago, 1869-1899

Source – Calculated from the agricultural statistics published annually in the *New Zealand Gazette*. 
Figure 27 - Grain yields in Clutha County, South Otago, 1869-1899

Source – Calculated from the agricultural statistics published annually in the *New Zealand Gazette*. Figures for individual counties are not available for 1896 and 1897 (but for Otago as a whole, see Figure 26).
Figure 28 - Grain yields in Waitaki County, North Otago, 1869-1899

Source – Calculated from the agricultural statistics published annually in the New Zealand Gazette. Figures for individual counties are not available for 1896 and 1897 (but for Otago as a whole, see Figure 26). The wheat yields published for Waitaki County in 1890 are so improbable that I have omitted them.
from corn almost ready to harvest.\textsuperscript{9} Besides the weather, the state of the land was vital. The common practice of intensively cropping the same area for year after year without improving or resting the soil caused a general reduction in crop yields, until the adoption of more scientific farming methods such as crop rotation and fertilisers eventually reversed the decline late in the century.\textsuperscript{10} The community naturally celebrated good corn yields, which represented triumph over the difficulties of weather and land, and ensured adequate food and cash income for people and stock for the coming year.

In addition to celebrating good yields, rural communities celebrated their relief at the end of the year’s most intensive period of labour. Harvesting grain, carried out manually in the early years of the colony, expended much time and energy. Harvest stretched the permanent rural workforce to its maximum and required additional workers (see Figure 29). Large estates employed many temporary workers as harvesters: six North Otago estates alone required 2,000 extra hands for the 1873 harvest.\textsuperscript{11} Local labourers and the self-employed often took on harvesting work to earn some extra cash. Around Tuapeka, Chinese labourers, possibly gold miners, “proved most useful hand-tying behind the reaper.”\textsuperscript{12} Labour problems accelerated the uptake of mechanisation. Reaping machines first arrived in the late 1850s, and in 1865 the \textit{Otago Witness} reported that the “sickle and the scythe are fast giving way to the reaping machine, and as a general rule the latter is now in use throughout the

\textsuperscript{9} For example, see W. Quin, “Tapanui,” \textit{New Zealand Country Journal} 11, no. 4 (July 1887), 325: “Just before harvest a heavy nor-wester ... set in, and ‘shook’, in many paddocks, nearly the whole of the grain.” Quin’s regular reports from Tapanui in the \textit{Country Journal} give a good sense of the annual variability of harvests according to local weather conditions.


\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Otago Witness}, 20 December 1873, cited in Martin, \textit{Forgotten Worker}, 13. Some large landowners contracted out harvesting work rather than employing individual workers. The supply of, and demand for, harvesters varied greatly from year to year according to the size of the harvest and levels of unemployment. In some years harvesters were in short supply and their wages high, but in other periods potential harvesters flocked to grain growing districts and employers reaped the advantage of cheap labour. See Martin, \textit{Forgotten Worker}, 21-31.

\textsuperscript{12} Mayhew, \textit{Tuapeka}, 133.
Figure 29 - Harvesters
Harvesting required a great input of labour. John McRoberts (standing by team of horses on left) is photographed with the men who have helped bring in his harvest at Tuapeka West.

Province” (see Figure 30). But reaping machines did not yet significantly reduce the labour of the harvest: the most common machine, the ‘back delivery,’ required two people to operate, while binding remained a manual task until combined reaper-binders became common in the 1880s, reducing labour requirements greatly (although stooking remained a manual task). Threshing, a particularly laborious manual job once carried out during quiet winter periods in the farmer’s barn, also became mechanised during the second half of the nineteenth century (see Figure 31).

Smaller farmers relied heavily on their families and neighbours for help with the harvest. In March 1880, the *Palmerston & Waikouaiti Times* reported that most country schools in the district had closed for the harvest, “some for a month and some for six weeks, in order that the farmers might have the assistance of their children at home.” School committees had the flexibility to grant holidays at the times most convenient, and many of Otago’s country schools took shorter holidays at Christmas to allow a long break at harvest time. Robert Hall of Tuapeka West recalled that the “boys could help in the harvest field bringing the sheaves, stooking and crowing for the stacker. The girls could help their mother with the cooking and bringing out the lunch’s [sic] etc.” This may have been hard work for youngsters, but Hall also noted it as a time of fun and excitement: “the children all regretted the finish of the harvest.”

Neighbours commonly worked together at harvesting time as they did with other

---

13 *Otago Witness*, 18 March 1865, p. 3.

14 Harvesting involved cutting (‘reaping’), gathering into sheaves, binding those sheaves and gathering them into ‘stooks’. Farmers left these stooks for some time to dry out, then gathered them into large weatherproof stacks which they left to mature for a few weeks before the final major task of threshing. For a detailed description of harvesting and the impact of mechanisation, see Martin, *Forgotten Worker*, 114-136. On the mechanisation of harvesting on the Taieri, see M. S. Shaw and E. D. Farrant, *The Taieri Plain: Tales of Years that are Gone* (Dunedin: Otago Centennial Historical Publications, 1949), 218-224.

15 *Palmerston & Waikouaiti Times*, 12 March 1880, p. 2.

16 For example, see the reports of harvest holidays at Woodside, Kuri Bush and Tuapeka West schools in *Otago Witness*, 11 February 1882, p. 13; 18 February 1882, p. 13; and 4 March 1882, p. 13.

17 Robert Charles Hall, “History of Tuapeka West,” typescript at Tuapeka Goldfields Museum, Lawrence. Note the gendered division of labour. In Britain, women often worked in the harvest field, but this seems to have been rarer in New Zealand, perhaps because fewer women were available for such work. See Martin, *Forgotten Worker*, 116. While preparing meals for a large group of hungry harvesters was in itself a major task, I have found no mention of women working in the fields during harvests in Otago, and they scarcely ever appear in New Zealand photographs of harvesters. In contrast, women played a major role in the agricultural labour force, especially during harvest, in Scotland: see T. M. Devine, “Women Workers, 1850-1914,” in *Farm Servants and Labour in Lowland Scotland 1770-1914*, ed. T. M. Devine (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1984), 98-123.
Figure 30 – Harvesting machinery
The popular ‘back delivery’ reaper in use in West Otago. Note the presence of children in the harvesting team.

Figure 31 – Threshing
John McMaster’s mill working at David Brodie’s property, Crown Terrace (near Arrowtown), 1892. Photographed by J. McEachen. While steam threshing reduced the work of the harvest, it still involved considerable manual labour.

Source – Lakes District Museum, Arrowtown, EL97/EN676.
labour intensive chores during the year. During the 1870s and early 1880s, new settlers on the Tapanui plains had “a hard struggle” to develop their land, with little income. With no ready money to employ labour, farmers worked for each other, and “at harvest time a group of settlers frequently combined with the cutter and the farmers did their own binding, stooking and leading in.” Completing the work of harvest was a major task, and certainly worthy of commemoration.

Harvest homes in Britain

Harvest customs in nineteenth-century Britain varied considerably by region, but generally included certain practices such as the election of ‘Harvest Lords,’ various superstitions about the cutting of the last sheaf, processions accompanying the decorated final load of grain home, and the making of dolls or knots from the grain of the last sheaf. Descriptions of harvests in nineteenth-century Otago, however, do not mention such practices, suggesting they did not survive the migration process, presumably because of their varied regional nature, or because they were already declining in Britain with increasing mechanisation of the harvest. But one widespread British harvest custom did come to Otago: the popular ‘harvest home,’ the feast which celebrated the end of this great agricultural task.

In addition to wages, British farmers supplied harvesters with provisions (including liberal amounts of alcohol) to keep their strength up for their tiring task.

18 On exchanges of labour in farming communities, see Rollo Arnold, “Community in Rural Victorian New Zealand,” New Zealand Journal of History 24 (1990): 3-21. For an example from Otago, see Stewart, Journal of George Hepburn, 137-138. Some rural districts displayed a high level of community co-operation, as in the custom of “starting a new settler,” whereby neighbours all turned out to give a new colonist a day’s ploughing. For examples of this practice, which was common on the Taieri, see Otago Witness, 23 May 1857, p. 5; 15 August 1857, p. 5; 21 November 1857, p. 5; and 2 October 1858, p. 6.


20 The harvest home was variously known in different regions as the kirn, churn, mell or horkey. Folklore studies of British harvest customs are numerous, but for more measured analyses, see Hutton, Stations of the Sun, 332-347; Bushaway, By Rite, 107-150; and Morgan, Harvesters and Harvesting, 151-174. On Ireland, see Kevin Danaher, The Year in Ireland: Irish Calendar Customs (Minneapolis: Mercier / Irish Books & Media, 1972), 196-199; and for Ulster, see Philip Robinson, “Harvest, Halloween, and Hogmanay: Acculturation in Some Calendar Customs of the Ulster Scots,” in Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life, ed. Jack Santino (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 5-10. Vivid descriptions of harvest homes can be found in Flora Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945), 234-236; and Elizabeth Smith, Memoirs of a Highland Lady: The Autobiography of Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus afterwards Mrs. Smith of Balibody 1797-1830, ed. Lady Strachey (London: Murray, 1898), 195-196. On Scotland, see also Michael Robson, “The Border Farm Worker,” in Farm Servants, ed. Devine, 87-88.
and ended the harvest with a feast. For the workers, this was a right rather than a privilege, a part of their employment contract. As the harvest required all available hands from the surrounding district, the harvest home involved most members of the rural community, with harvest labourers joined by the landowner and his or her family, and other invited guests. Some saw it as a levelling occasion, with rich and poor, master and servant, gathered at the same table to eat the same food. Singing and dancing followed the feast, and as drink flowed freely the revelry increased.

As views of respectability shifted, as the gap between landowner and labourer increased, and as mechanisation gradually reduced the labour requirements of the harvest, some farmers began to question the harvest home and its revelry. In some districts, harvesters began to accept extra payment in lieu of a harvest home. While harvest homes continued into the twentieth century in some places in Britain, their incidence declined sharply towards the end of the nineteenth century. Farmers, an increasingly wealthy group, became, in many cases, reluctant to socialise with their employees, and the harvest home became “anachronistic in the circumstances of a wage economy and a rigidly structured hierarchical society.”21 Meanwhile, as discussed below, a new church-centred harvest festival emerged in England.

**Early harvest homes in Otago**

A successful harvest invited great celebration in a new colony. In addition to ensuring much needed food supplies – slow and expensive to import from elsewhere – it confirmed the value of the whole colonial enterprise. The harvest displayed the success of the colonists in conquering their new environment, converting ‘waste’ land into farms. A good crop confirmed the fertility of the soil and the suitability of the climate for British agricultural methods, encouraging further migration and expansion of farming into new territory. Otago residents sent reports of successful harvests to Britain as part of their promotion of the colony. Dunedin’s first harvest home, held in

---

21 Morgan, *Harvesters and Harvesting*, 174. See also Bushaway, *By Rite*, 265-266; and G. E. Mingay, *Rural Life in Victorian England* (London: Futura, 1979), 92. While I have not found reference to this decline beyond England, it is likely also to have affected Scotland, where similar changes were altering rural society. The clearance of small tenants in the Highlands is well known, but the Scottish Lowlands also experienced major change due to agricultural ‘improvement’ in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Small farms were consolidated, small tenants became landless farm labourers, and the social and economic gap between farmer and labourer greatly increased. See Malcolm Gray, “The Social Impact of Agrarian Change in the Rural Lowlands,” in *People and Society in Scotland: Volume I, 1760-1830*, ed. T. M. Devine and Rosalind Michison (Edinburgh: John Donald / Economic & Social
March 1850, became a symbol of the community’s cooperation and the potential of agriculture in the young colony. One colonist present at the harvest home was “reminded of home by the sight of 7 stacks of corn, neatly thatched, and although of no great size, yet a foretaste, I hope, of many a good stack-yard in Otago.”

The colony’s wealthiest man and largest private employer, William Valpy, held this first harvest home. Valpy, a retired judge who had served with the East India Company, came to Otago with his family in search of better health. He quickly became a large farmer, his money and equipment making him better placed than most colonists to develop his land. Alongside Valpy’s employees, Rev. Thomas Burns, William Fox (the New Zealand Company’s principal agent), and several other landowners enjoyed “a very substantial repast of roast beef and plum pudding in the old English style,” in a large new storehouse “fitted up for the occasion.” “Plenty of porter” was on hand. Valpy appears to have been a generous and popular employer, not least because of his support for the eight hour working day. Reports of this harvest celebration convey a strong spirit of self congratulation, the Otago News noting that all were “highly delighted with a revival of the old country system of hospitality and greater intellectual enjoyment.”

Fox described the harvest home to the New Zealand Company as “a very gratifying occasion ... the best possible feeling being manifested between the employer and the employed. I was struck, as I had previously been at Otago, with the very respectable character of the working class.”

The involvement of Rev. Thomas Burns in this convivial occasion serves as a reminder that he should not be too readily labelled as a “stern, humourless puritan.” Besides his role as the colony’s religious leader, Burns played an important part in its agricultural development, having considerable farming experience in Ayrshire.

---

22 Otago Journal 6 (1850), 91. The Journal published an extract of a letter from this unnamed man, who was in charge of Valpy’s saw mill. This was the Otago Association’s official publication, used to promote the colony.


24 Otago News, 23 March 1850, p. 3.

25 Otago Journal 6 (1850), 91.

26 Otago News, 23 March 1850, p. 3.

27 Otago Journal 6 (1850), 93.

owned his own farm at Grants Braes, Dunedin, acted on behalf of several absentee landowners, and advised the colonists on farming matters. Later in 1850 Burns gave his employees a harvest home which demonstrated a “flow of liveliness and good cheer.” Recitations, songs and dances accompanied the food, drink and speeches, “everyone declaring he had not spent a happier evening since he arrived in the Colony.” In 1851, William Valpy repeated his previous year’s success with another large harvest home. “A fine instance was this,” declared Otago’s first historian, “of a kindly, genial attempt – sanctioned and made venerable by old English custom – to maintain good feeling and cordiality of sentiment among the various grades of the infant society.”

Reports of these early harvest homes convey a spirit of paternalism, with the wealthy landowner providing largesse to more humble members of the community. Before considering a distinctly new type of community harvest home which soon developed in the colonial setting, it is appropriate here to note the continuation of this more traditional practice in Otago. Large estates were the places most fitted to follow the British tradition of the harvest home. It is difficult to determine how many estates held harvest homes. John Martin suggests they occurred on “some estates,” for permanent employees only. Perhaps some estate managers preferred to escape an expensive tradition, sanctioned in the old world by long usage but easily avoided in the new colonial world. Rural workers, also, would not have had the sense of connection with landowners which generations of family association had fostered in Britain. While it is likely that some large Otago estates held no harvest homes, others, however, certainly did, and did so in some style.

---

29 Otago News, 3 August 1850, p. 2. Burns may not have been present – his attendance is not noted in this report, and he made no mention of the harvest home in his diary for 26 July, although he later recorded sending the newspaper account of it to his brother Gilbert in Scotland (Thomas Burns diary, 20 August 1850, C017, OSM).

30 James Barr, The Old Identities: Being Sketches and Reminiscences During the First Decade of the Province of Otago, N.Z. (Dunedin: Mills, Dick, 1879), 97. See also Otago Witness, 3 May 1851, pp. 2-3.
Gladbrook and Horseshoe Bush Estates

During the 1880s, newspapers carried reports of regular harvest homes at two of Otago’s large estates, Gladbrook and Horseshoe Bush. During the 1880s to Henry Driver, a wealthy Dunedin businessman and politician, “a typical risk-taking capitalist of his age” who had already survived one bankruptcy (see Figure 32). Driver received much praise from the press for initiating the “time-honoured Old Country custom” of the harvest home in New Zealand, but his own origins lay in America; born in Delaware, he had come to Otago via the Victorian goldfields. In the harvest home, Driver found an opportunity to play the old-time squire, and he evidently enjoyed this display of largesse, travelling with his family from his Dunedin home to these occasions. At the first harvest home, in 1883, Driver gave his employees “carte blanche to invite whomsoever they pleased” and in the following years issued a general invitation to all in the neighbourhood, resulting in an attendance of about 500 people. He spared no expense to make these successful occasions. The estate’s barn, large enough to create a dance floor for 100 couples, was “beautifully decorated with evergreens,” and in the adjoining wool shed, “smoking-rooms, card-rooms and ladies’-rooms were constructed.” A large marquee housed the generous supper of “every procurable delicacy.” The evenings followed the usual format of such occasions, with dancing, supper and speeches, followed by further dancing to the strains of an excellent band from Dunedin: no local amateurs for Henry Driver. Driver acknowledged “a strong feeling of satisfaction at being the cause, in a small way, of bringing together nearly the whole of his neighbours in the district,” also noting that “such meetings did more good towards cementing a cordial and lasting good feeling between the employer and employed than a thousand political harangues.” He expressed the wish that “these

31 Martin, Forgotten Worker, 166.
33 Thomson, Southern People, 138.
34 Bruce Herald, 9 March 1883, p. 3. On Driver, see Thomson, Southern People, 138.
35 Bruce Herald, 9 March 1883, p. 3; and Otago Witness, 17 May 1884, p. 13; and 18 April 1885, p. 13.
Figure 32 – Henry Driver
The wealthy American-born businessman and politician enjoyed playing the role of lord of the manor at harvest homes held at his Horseshoe Bush Estate.

Source – Alexander Turnbull Library, General Assembly Library Collection, F-160-35mm-D.
little gatherings" would be the means "of making [all of his guests] feel equal, no matter what station in life they occupied." Driver was clearly sensitive to the need to maintain good relationships with his employees, but it is also clear that his ambitions for the harvest home went beyond this. He probably intended these displays of wealth and generosity to cement his position as a leading man in the district, and maybe to further his political ambitions. Driver's paternalism is the outstanding feature in the reports of the Horseshoe Bush Estate harvest homes.

Another large estate holding regular harvest homes in the 1880s was Gladbrook, a huge Strath Taieri property owned by Murray, Roberts and Company, the local branch of a Scottish firm whose interest in the wool trade reached out to the Australasian colonies. John Roberts, who became Otago's richest man, was its leading light in the province. He and his family lived in Dunedin, with Gladbrook their country residence. Gladbrook mainly produced sheep meat and wool, but crops also played an important role: in the 1880s over a thousand acres lay in cultivation and by the early 1900s crops covered 5000 acres. Harvesting this extensive property was clearly a major task, especially as mechanisation did not come particularly early. For the numerous employees of this large station, harvest home became "the event of the year." The owners left the running of Gladbrook and the adjoining Patearoa station in the very capable hands of their manager, John Elliott. Intriguingly, however, neither Roberts nor Elliott are mentioned in the reports of Gladbrook harvest homes, suggesting they did not attend, although Elliott at least must have approved these

---


37 Driver was, at various times, a member of the Dunedin City Council and Otago Provincial Council. He was MHR for Roslyn from 1869-71 and 1878-81 and for Hokonui, where he also owned land, from 1881-84: see Thomson, Southern People, 138. This was apparently the end of his political career, although possibly not by his own choice: "Mr Driver has no show for re-election," reported the Hokonui correspondent in an 1884 report which, perhaps coincidentally, immediately preceded the report of the Horseshoe Bush Estate harvest home (Otago Witness, 17 May 1884, p. 13).


39 Gladbrook first used a reaping machine in 1875, a string binder in 1884, and a steam threshing machine around the turn of the century. See Thompson, East of the Rock and Pillar, 35-44; and Cyclopedia of New Zealand, Volume 4: Otago and Southland (Christchurch: Cyclopedia Company, 1905), 596.

40 Thompson, East of the Rock and Pillar, 43.
events. The contrast between these two quietly spoken Lowland Scots and Henry Driver, the convivial American, is striking.\(^{41}\)

Partakers at the Gladbrook harvest home toasted “the Gladbrook people” rather than its owners.\(^{42}\) In contrast to the Horseshoe Bush events, these occasions celebrated the spirit of the property and its employees rather than the paternalism of the owner. The organisers — Gladbrook’s employees — took considerable trouble over the arrangements, and invited both staff and neighbours. In 1884 the harvest home took place in Gladbrook’s large new barn, “which makes a first-class room for dancing,” with supper served in the large kitchen.\(^{43}\) Estate gardener Mr Robinson organised the elaborate decorations while John Althoff, another Gladbrook employee, created an illuminated sign with the words “Welcome to Gladbrook.” Rather than the all too familiar mutton or beef — thrice daily fare for the estate workers — Gladbrook cook Charles Bolt and his helpers prepared duck, geese, turkey and “some rare bacon.” Although drink flowed freely, the *Otago Witness* correspondent particularly commended the lack of drunkenness, evidence of “the steadiness and self-control of the Gladbrook employes [sic], who, taken as a whole, are as fine a class of men as you will meet with on any station in the Colony.” Song and dance continued until morning, the accompaniment supplied by gardener Robinson on violin and Billie Watson, a bullock driver from neighbouring Cottesbrook Estate, on concertina.\(^{44}\)

In these 1880s events, the employees of two of Otago’s largest estates, along with their neighbours, celebrated the completion of the harvest with enthusiasm and style. They consciously continued a worthy time-honoured festival of old England or

---

\(^{41}\) Roberts, while achieving much success in business and politics, was renowned as a man of few words: see Thomson, *Southern People*, 425. Elliott, also a local politician, appears to have been popular but, like Roberts, of a quiet nature, although the evidence is less clear: see Thompson, *East of the Rock and Pillar*, 41 and 43.

\(^{42}\) *Otago Witness*, 4 April 1885, p. 12. Cook Charles Bolt (Boldt in some sources) appears to have been the chief hand in making the harvest homes a success: see *Otago Witness*, 17 May 1884, p. 12. I have been unable to positively identify any of the men named as Master of Ceremonies in reports of the various harvest homes — Messrs Henry Wheeler, Clark and McDonald — they may have been either neighbours or employees of the estate.

\(^{43}\) *Otago Witness*, 4 April 1885, p. 12. In earlier years the dancing also took place in the kitchen.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 15 April 1882, pp. 12-13; and 4 April 1885, p. 12. On Billie Watson, see Thompson, *East of the Rock and Pillar*, 45 and 86.
Scotland. The Gladbrook harvest homes, however, displayed a less traditional order: while landowner Henry Driver was the focus of attention at the Horseshoe Bush affairs, the worthy landowner and manager were invisible at the Gladbrook harvest homes run by the estate workers themselves. Such employee driven harvest homes were not unique to Gladbrook; at least one further example exists. At the large Tokarahi Estate, in North Otago, an 1897 harvest home “was first mooted by the maid servants at the house.” Owner Alexander McMaster, hearing of their plan to use a nearby hall, offered the use of his large central wool shed. It remained, however, an event run by the employees rather than a display of the owner’s largesse, with the servants controlling the invitations. Even on those great estates which did hold harvest homes, therefore, the usual paternalism of the British event did not necessarily prevail.

Community harvest homes

Much of Otago’s grain crop came from considerably smaller enterprises than those of Henry Driver and John Roberts. It was a rare small or medium farmer who did not grow grain, and for these smaller landowners a close involvement in the laborious physical task of the harvest undoubtedly heightened the sense of relief and celebration at its successful end. Most small and medium farmers in Otago were owner-operators, owing no allegiance to any great man of the district, in contrast to their counterparts in Britain, generally tenants of greater landowners. With no squire to initiate harvest celebrations for them, and a sense of community fostered by their practice of working together with neighbours at the harvest, colonial farmers took the revolutionary but logical step of meeting together for district harvest homes.

First reported in the mid-1850s, these essentially democratic events quickly became widespread, continuing their popularity throughout the century in many districts. East Taieri settlers led the field with an 1854 harvest home. Arranged by several young men of the district, it took place in Andrew Todd’s large barn,

45 The Witness correspondent compared the Gladbrookevent to a traditional Scotch Kirn, while one Horseshoe Bush speech referred to “Harvest Home feasts in the Old Country.” See Otago Witness, 15 April 1882, p. 12; and Bruce Herald, 9 March 1883, p. 3.

46 Otago Witness, 15 April 1897, p. 44. McMaster had recently sold the estate to the government, prompted by financial difficulties. However, the land had evidently not yet changed hands: ballots for the 48 smaller sections created took place later in the year, and McMaster did not receive the proceeds until 1900-01 (see McDonald, History of North Otago, 168; and McAloon, No Idle Rich, 130-131).
“tastefully fitted up and decorated for the occasion,” where nearly 100 people “sat down to a sumptuous dinner,” followed by dancing until early morning. Although described by the Otago Witness as a celebration of “the ancient national custom of ‘Harvest Home’,” the arrangements for this occasion were unfamiliar; this was a “simultaneous” festival, declared the paper.47 This East Taieri event, soon imitated by the settlers of Green Island and Halfway Bush, typifies Otago harvest homes.48 Reports stressed the continuity with the British harvest home tradition and, indeed, much familiarity with Britain remained – the feasting, the drinking, the music and dancing in particular. Other features of the harvest home were, however, distinctly colonial: the decorations, which included native flora, and the committee organisation behind the occasion.

Erik Olssen has noted “our enthusiasm for forming committees and teams,” a feature “central to New Zealand society” yet neglected by academics.49 The organisation of nineteenth-century Otago’s harvest homes is one small example of this colonial propensity for committees, and it appears to have arisen naturally out of the absence of the familiar hierarchical structure of British rural society. Although class differences were certainly important in rural Otago, beyond the large runs and estates they were less extreme than in Britain, with large numbers of smaller landowners meeting on relatively equal terms. The social gap between landowner and labourer also tended to be narrower than in Britain, as small farmers often sold their labour to others to gain the income required to improve their own land.50 Furthermore, many rural labourers achieved significant upward social mobility over their lifetime, as Eleanor Cottle’s study of labourers from a South Canterbury station reveals.51

---

47 Otago Witness, 29 April 1854, p. 2.
48 Ibid., 10 June 1854, p. 3; and 29 July 1854, p. 3. On the Halfway Bush harvest home, see also George Hepburn to unidentified, September 1854.
Occasionally, one farming family organised a harvest home for its district, but group or committee organisation was far more common.\(^52\) At Kelso, West Otago, in 1893, a “meeting was held in Dunnett’s Hotel on Saturday evening, Mr C. McGregor in the chair, to arrange for holding the annual harvest home ball ... A strong working committee was appointed, and everything gives promise of the ball being a success.”\(^53\) Exactly which type of rural resident was considered appropriate for such committees is unclear. The organisers of the first East Taieri harvest home, noted above, were all farmers or farmers’ sons, but this may simply reflect the overwhelming numerical dominance of farmers in a period before closer rural settlement. Generally, the task fell to the young men of a district, as exemplified by the Maungatua harvest home. By the 1880s it had become a regular annual occasion for the residents of this West Taieri community, and as the *Otago Witness* explained, “This meeting, which is looked forward to for months, is got up by a committee of the young men in the district, who issue invitations, and take the entire management of affairs.”\(^54\) There are several references to harvest homes arranged by “the bachelors” of a district; presumably unmarried men had a vested interest in such social occasions, where they might meet a future wife.\(^55\) More unusual is the 1892 “leap year” harvest home at Waikoikoi, West Otago, organised by young women of the district: “the whole affair was admirably got up and carried through as only the young ladies of the 'Koi know how.”\(^56\) Even where the committee was all male, votes of thanks suggest women often played the major role in catering.

James Douglas, brought up on a farm at Lake Hayes where his Scottish family paid little attention to Christmas, recalled harvest home as “one of the biggest festivals in the year ... That used to be quite a gathering. That used to be held where somebody had a central barn, a good big barn.” People would “travel for miles” to attend “a celebration that the principal work of the season was finished ... when the

\(^{52}\) For an example of individual organisation, see *Otago Witness*, 16 April 1891, p. 16, reporting that J. F. Anderson of Royal Oak farm and his wife organised and hosted the first harvest home at Blackstone Hill, Maniototo. The Andersons also ran a similar event the following year: see *Otago Witness*, 14 April 1892, p. 20.

\(^{53}\) *Otago Witness*, 13 April 1893, p. 22.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 22 April 1882, p. 13.

\(^{55}\) For example, see ibid., 21 April 1892, p. 21 (Southbridge, Milton); and 12 May 1892, p. 42 (Waikera).

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 12 May 1892, p. 21; see also 19 May 1892, p. 42.
last man had finished stacking his grain, that was the signal for the harvest home.\textsuperscript{57} Convenience clearly determined the harvest home venue, barns being the most popular. At Maungatua, several different barns were used over the years, suggesting local farms took turns at hosting the event.\textsuperscript{58} As rural districts became more established other suitable locations, particularly halls, also became available. Venues for harvest homes in the 1890s included the Arrow Drillshed, the Milton Skating Rink, and the Maheno Athenaeum Hall.\textsuperscript{59}

Rural colonists demonstrated considerable enthusiasm for dancing, which at most harvest homes continued until the small hours of the morning or even daybreak. Musical items sometimes supplemented dances.\textsuperscript{60} Speeches and toasts played a minor role compared with the traditional harvest homes of Britain, or Otago’s large estates; often they receive no mention at all in newspaper reports. Newspaper correspondents were also coy about mentioning the presence of alcohol, although they occasionally gave hints. At the Pueraua 1876 harvest home, for example, “the refreshments of all kinds were abundant.”\textsuperscript{61} George Hepburn of Halfway Bush was more open in a letter to family in Scotland, reporting several bottles “of the best Islay ... also plenty wine & Brandy” at the 1854 harvest home.\textsuperscript{62} Alcohol undoubtedly featured at these occasions: as temperance sentiment grew towards the end of the nineteenth century, champions of teetotalism invariably noted when refreshments at social events were non-alcoholic, and there are no such reports from Otago harvest homes. Neither, however, are there reports of uncontrolled revelry, in contrast to concerns about harvest celebrations in Britain at this time. Indeed, Otago reports stress the moderation of these affairs, as at Green Island’s 1854 harvest home, which “went off in a most moderate and happy way, and we wish the Green Island may see many such harmless Harvest Homes.”\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{57} James Haddow Douglas, 1948 tapes, Lakes District Museum, Arrowtown.

\textsuperscript{58} At one stage these events shifted to the schoolhouse, but it proved too small. See Otago Witness, 5 April 1879, p. 4; 19 March 1881, p. 14; 22 April 1882, p. 13; 5 May 1883, p. 13; and 11 March 1887, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 25 June 1891, p. 19; 6 May 1897, p. 26; and 23 June 1898, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{60} By late in the century some harvest homes were known as concerts. For examples, see Otago Witness, 17 May 1884, p. 13; and 5 June 1890, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 6 May 1876, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{62} George Hepburn to unidentified, September 1854. “Islay” was, of course, whisky.

\textsuperscript{63} Otago Witness, 10 June 1854, p. 3.
While most Otago harvest homes had free entry – locals donating all that was required – some communities charged a fee to turn these into fundraising occasions.\textsuperscript{64} Rural schools most commonly received such charity, but other causes also benefited, as when the Puerua 1896 harvest home raised money for the Brunner relief fund.\textsuperscript{65} One attempt at fundraising, by the Tuapeka West community in 1884, backfired. It held its annual harvest home, “consisting of a soiree, concert and dance,” with proceeds to go to the Presbyterian Manse Building Fund. This raised the ire of Rev. William Bannerman, pioneer minister of the Clutha district, who asked the Clutha Presbytery to deal severely with this matter to prevent such “demoralisation” spreading to other parishes. Such an event, thundered Bannerman, linked “the frivolities of the world with the religion of Jesus.” The Presbytery agreed, refusing to receive the money raised and reprimanding the Tuapeka West committee, particularly for the presence of dancing at this event.\textsuperscript{66} Dancing, the prominent activity of harvest homes, clearly caused problems for some conservative Presbyterians. A Waikoikoi correspondent, struggling to explain the poor attendance at the local 1884 harvest home, was “inclined to think that there are some amongst us who are inclined to look on dancing as a degrading and immoral exercise.”\textsuperscript{67} As noted in Chapter Three, not all Presbyterians disapproved of dancing, and ministers and elders also attended harvest homes, although whether they danced or not is another matter. “The ministers never dance … Even elders cannot always be trusted to dance,” declared James Barr when discussing the planning for a community social event.\textsuperscript{68} Conservative disapproval of dancing may have contributed to the success of another style of harvest celebration, the church harvest thanksgiving, discussed below.

\textbf{Displaying colonisation}

One of the most interesting features of Otago’s nineteenth-century harvest homes is their decorations, commonly a complex mixture of symbols: plants both wild

\textsuperscript{64} At Evans Flat, near Lawrence, for example, “The residents supplied all the refreshments, and taxed themselves at the rate of half-a-crown each for admission. The proceeds were for the school.” See \textit{Otago Witness}, 3 June 1882, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Otago Witness}, 4 June 1896, p. 25. This fund aided those who had suffered as a result of the mine disaster at Brunner, on the West Coast.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 28 June 1884, pp. 12-13. This report, reprinted from the \textit{Clutha Leader}, includes a full transcript of Bannerman’s letter to the Presbytery.

\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Otago Witness} 2 May 1885, p. 12.
and cultivated; both native and introduced; and both pragmatic and ornamental. Most decorations featured 'evergreens,' always, of course, displayed in the best possible taste. Particularly in the earlier years of the colony such evergreens were, of necessity, native plants, especially ferns, as with the Christmas decorations discussed in Chapter Two. Many admired the grace and beauty of native flora. At Valpy’s 1851 harvest home the colonists sat below “two beautiful fern trees, palm-like, and graceful, which spread their broad foliage, over the smiling and happy company.” And yet, while the fern represented grace and beauty, eventually achieving iconic status as a national symbol, it also suggested the wildness which the colonists sought to ‘civilise’ and overcome with cultivation. A report of East Taieri’s 1854 harvest home commented on the decorations, “exhibiting the wild fern, flax, and tutu of New Zealand, superseded by the products of European cultivation.” Fruits of the harvest – especially wheat and oats – frequently mingled with native foliage. At Waiwera’s 1892 harvest home the “hall was tastefully decorated for the occasion, the stage looking very pretty with the words ‘Harvest Home’ formed of sprays of green and flowers, while in the centre was a sheaf of corn, and at each corner a cabbage tree.” Native flora was admired but, where possible, introduced European crops, the staples of life, took precedence. In some cases, the native was entirely eclipsed by the introduced. At Waikoiki in 1892 the “decorations of the barn were tasteful – branches of Pinus insignis, macrocarpa, and spruce interspersing with portions of oat and wheat sheaves,” while, suspended from the ceiling, “turnips, carrots, &c.” dangled over the dancers below. The decorators here evidently preferred pragmatic symbols of the harvest to natural beauty. It is, of course, hardly surprising that harvest

68 Barr, Old Identities, 292.
69 Ibid., 94.
71 Otago Witness, 29 April 1854, p. 2.
72 Ibid., 12 May 1892, p. 42.
74 Otago Witness 12 May 1892, p. 21.
home decorations championed colonisation in this way, as the grain harvest itself symbolised colonial enterprise, a clear indicator that the ‘wilderness’ was being successfully civilised. When Charles Darwin visited the Bay of Islands in 1835, the sight of grain crops at the Waimate mission particularly impressed him: “After passing over so many miles of an uninhabited useless country, the sudden appearance of an English farm-house, and its well-dressed fields, placed there as if by an enchanter’s wand, was exceedingly pleasant.” While the scene brought England vividly to mind, he noted that his admiration primarily rested on “the high hopes thus inspired for the future progress of this fine island.”

Historian A. H. McLintock saw the story of nineteenth-century Otago as one of battle between “the primitive environment, stark and unsympathetic” and “the pioneer society, eager to conquer and subdue.” The grain harvest provided the colonists with a visible symbol of their progress in civilising this ‘primitive’ environment.

**Harvest homes and rural society**

Otago’s nineteenth-century harvest homes provide an intriguing glimpse into rural society. Here the colonists revealed a social world very different from that of rural Britain. Apart from a few early exceptions, and the paternalistic displays of largesse by at least one large estate owner, Otago’s harvest homes were essentially democratic affairs. This does not mean that class played no role in rural Otago; undoubtedly, significant social and economic differences existed between rural residents. Nevertheless, class differences were significantly less than in Britain and, in the absence of large landowners, groups of rural residents banded together to organise and enjoy these celebrations. The most lowly of workers – transient labourers such as harvesters – had little involvement in the social events of rural communities and, as John Martin suggests, probably did not attend harvest homes. But few others did not take part, with the rural working class amongst both the participants and organisers. Leading lights at the Tuapeka West community harvest homes included labourers and

---


77 Martin, *Forgotten Worker*, 166.
a rabbiter; and, as noted above, even on the large estates, employees such as maids, cooks, and gardeners led the organisers.  

Various historians have noted that cohesion was more significant than class division in New Zealand rural society, farmers and other rural workers becoming a significant grouping of their own, with considerable political power within the country as a whole. The harvest epitomised the cohesion of Otago’s rural communities, which worked together, and then celebrated together when that work was complete. Harvest homes also displayed the strong desire of the colonists to escape the paternalism of the old world, with more humble members of society taking leading roles in an event once redolent of social hierarchy. In the brave new world of colonial Otago, small farmers and other rural workers achieved a much longed for escape from deference and dependence.

The harvest and religion

Many – possibly even most – nineteenth-century Otago residents saw in the harvest the hand of God. In the words of a popular hymn:

> We plough the fields, and scatter
> The good seed on the land,
> But it is fed and watered
> By God’s almighty hand
> ... All good gifts around us
> Are sent from heaven above;
> Then thank the Lord, oh, thank the Lord
> For all his love.

For some, God might be a distant figure, a creator who had established the laws of nature but now stood back while they continued to operate. For others, God was active in all locations and events, and a good or bad harvest was the work of

---

78 Robert Hall, “History of Tuapeka West.” On the Tuapeka West harvest homes see also Mayhew, Tuapeka, 238-239.


80 On colonial resistance to paternalism, see Fairburn, Ideal Society, 49-50, 85; and Belich, Making Peoples, 330-331.

81 Church Praise (London: Nisbet, 1882), hymn 501. See pp. 207-208 below for discussion of harvest hymns.
Providence - a blessing or reward for the faithful, a punishment for sin or a test of faith and character. In either case, the successful gathering in of a bountiful harvest created a natural urge to give thanks to God, the 'giver of all things.'

Harvest thanksgivings in Britain and Ireland

In medieval England Lammas ("loaf mass") Day, 1 August, featured as an important occasion for celebrating the first fruits of the harvest. Farmers brought their first sheaves of corn to church, where clergy consecrated bread made from the new grain. This festival probably derived from an earlier Anglo-Saxon celebration, itself possibly rooted in pre-Christian harvest ceremonies. By the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Lammas Day had lost all religious significance and the English church played little part in the community's celebration of the harvest. The Anglican liturgy or calendar found no place for a regular harvest thanksgiving, although the church hierarchy occasionally ordered special thanksgivings in years when the harvest was particularly abundant, especially if famine had previously threatened.

Regret at the absence of the church from the celebration of this most important event, and concern at the rowdiness of existing harvest home festivities, led some nineteenth-century rural English clergy to introduce a new church-centered harvest festival. This usually commenced with a special church service of thanksgiving.

---


83 This phrase (derived, perhaps, from Romans 8: 32) was in common use in the nineteenth century.


85 According to James Ludovic Lindsay Crawford, Bibliotheca Lindesiana Vol VIII: Handlist of Proclamations issued by Royal and other Constitutional Authorities 1714-1910 George I to Edward VII (Wigan: Roger & Rennick, 1913), special thanksgivings for abundant harvests were proclaimed in 1810, 1813, 1847 and 1854. In 1847, the good harvest could be interpreted as God's response to the national fast day of that year.

followed by a modified version of the more traditional harvest home, which had in some districts almost died out and in others offended the respectable, increasingly influenced by the temperance movement, with its drunkenness. The new custom quickly spread throughout rural England, adopted by Anglicans and nonconformists alike. By the late nineteenth century, harvest thanksgiving church services had also spread to urban districts, although there, as increasingly also in rural districts, the feast was omitted. In 1862 the Church of England’s Synod of Canterbury gave official sanction to the Anglican harvest thanksgiving by issuing a form of service for the occasion, prescribing appropriate Psalms, lessons, collects and prayers. Church harvest thanksgivings achieved enormous popularity in late-nineteenth century England, attracting large congregations which included working class people who rarely crossed the church door, to the dismay of some clergy who despaired at the success of the “Feast of St Pumpkin” in contrast to the traditional liturgical year.


For detailed descriptions of harvest festivals, see Bushaway, By Rite, 266-273; Morgan, Harvesters and Harvesting, 169-171; Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society, 158-159; and Ambler, “Transformation of Harvest Celebrations,” 301-304.


Cox, English Churches, 103; and Green, Religion in the Age of Decline, 336-337. Likewise, in an earlier period, the more pious of the New England Puritans derided those “who paid more attention to Thanksgiving dinner than to Thanksgiving devotions by labeling the holiday St Pompion’s [Pumpkin’s] Day”: see Diana Karter Appelbaum, Thanksgiving: An American Holiday, An American History (New York: Facts on File, 1984), 266. On the huge popularity of harvest thanksgivings in Wales, see Frances Knight, “Anglican Worship in Late Nineteenth-Century Wales: A Montgomeryshire Case Study,” in Continuity and Change in Christian Worship, ed. R. N. Swanson (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Ecclesiastical History Society / Boydell, 1999), 409-411.
In Presbyterian Scotland the puritan tradition of frequent special fasts and thanksgivings (of which more below) persisted longer than in England, and amongst these were special thanksgivings in years of abundant harvests. In mid-nineteenth century Scotland various church bodies commonly appointed harvest thanksgivings for their districts. The Established Church generally held these on Sundays, and the Free and United Presbyterian Churches on weekdays. These were not yet the annual events beginning to emerge in rural England, but responses to harvests of particular abundance. Presbytery appointments of thanksgiving days, reported in Edinburgh’s Witness, illustrate this reactive mindset well. In years of abundant harvests, like 1851, there were abundant reports of harvest thanksgivings. If the harvest was poor, as in 1853, no thanksgivings occurred. If the harvest was good, but other troubles present, the thanksgiving would be combined with humiliation, as in 1852, when the Established Church Synod of Perth appointed a combined day “for thanksgiving, humiliation, and prayer, on account of the abundant harvest, the failure of the potato and turnip crops, and the anticipation of a visitation of cholera.”

By the early twentieth century, Scottish harvest thanksgiving services could be elaborate affairs. Although discussion of the practice is difficult to find, it is probable that during the late nineteenth century the Presbyterian harvest thanksgiving became a regular annual celebration, at least in some districts. In 1882 George Sprott, a Church of Scotland theologian, advocated festive religious occasions, suggesting “We might, at least, have annually a harvest Festival in all our Parishes on a weekday, as is universal in England, and also within the bounds of one or two of our own Synods.” In Scotland, it seems likely that the popular harvest thanksgiving service evolved naturally from the special thanksgiving day, while in England it represented a new festival deliberately created out of moribund traditions – Lammas Day and the

---

91 Witness (Edinburgh), 23 October 1852, p. 3.

92 Despite extensive searching, and queries to various worship and church history scholars in Scotland, I have been unable to find information about the development of the harvest thanksgiving in Scotland, a topic apparently as yet unstudied. I am grateful to Brian Ditcham for sharing with me his mother and aunt’s memories of harvest festivals at St George’s United Free Church (St Ninians, Stirling, Scotland) in the early 1920s. Decorations were elaborate, “and it was clearly a well established tradition at that date. Harvest thanksgiving was apparently much enjoyed by the children of the congregation, who made their contributions to the church decoration in the shape of apples or other small items. These could run to such items as ‘corn dolls’, common in England but perhaps rather more surprising in a Presbyterian church. The materials used for church decoration were distributed to the poor of the congregation.” (email from Brian Ditcham, 22 July 2002.)

special thanksgiving – along with elements of the harvest home. The popularity of the harvest thanksgiving in England may, as Sprott’s comments suggest, have encouraged its more regular celebration in Scotland.

Some Roman Catholics today celebrate harvest thanksgiving, but in the nineteenth century it was a strictly Protestant festival, so for most residents of Ireland the harvest home stood alone as a celebration of harvest. Ulster Presbyterians, like their counterparts in Scotland, did, however, hold special church harvest thanksgivings. But, as with Scotland, the evolution of this celebration into a regular annual event remains obscure. Philip Robinson comments that in Ulster, church harvest thanksgivings “have long been an integral part of the customs of the season,” noting the large attendance and the elaborate decorations, including corn dollies, frowned upon by some clergy as ‘pagan.’ Presumably other Protestants in Ireland likewise followed the practices of their counterparts in England, although in the absence of any helpful studies this remains a matter of speculation.

**Presbyterian harvest thanksgivings in Otago**

Presbyterians in predominantly agricultural districts held the Otago colony’s first recorded harvest thanksgiving services. In 1865 the Clutha Presbytery, newly formed when the growing Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland divided itself into three regions, “resolved that special thanksgiving be accorded to Almighty God on the last Sabbath of March for the abundant harvest.” Presbyterian churches in the district – Tokomairiro, Waihola, Lawrence, Waitahuna, Inch Clutha, Kaitangata, Warepa and Clutha – duly held such harvest thanksgivings. Two years later, the Clutha Presbytery again recommended “thanksgiving for the recent abundant harvest,” and by the 1880s this had become a frequent resolution. North Otago was

---

96 Presbytery of Clutha Minute Book, 1 March 1865, BW 6/2, PCANZ archives.
97 Ibid., 21 June 1865.
98 Ibid., 1867-1900.
the province's most important grain growing district, and when it was granted its own presbytery in 1872, that body also began appointing harvest thanksgivings.\textsuperscript{99}

Were these Presbyterian harvest festivals regular events or, as in Scotland at this time, responses to particularly abundant harvests? Evidence on this point is inconsistent, with practice varying from place to place. Although most parishes did not hold harvest thanksgivings every year,\textsuperscript{100} a link between the success of the harvest and the occurrence of harvest thanksgivings is not always clear. Over a thirty year period the Presbytery of Clutha instructed its ministers to hold thanksgivings on all but eight years. Those missing eight years do not, however, correlate with agricultural statistics of Clutha County harvests.\textsuperscript{101} In drought-prone North Otago, where harvests were more variable than elsewhere in the province, there does appear to be a link between grain yields and harvest thanksgivings ordered by the Presbytery.\textsuperscript{102} In one North Otago parish, Duntroon in the Waitaki Valley, good evidence of thanksgiving services is available for the years 1884 to 1898. No thanksgiving services took place there in 1886, 1890, 1891, 1894 and 1897, at least two of these – 1891 and 1894 – being years with distinctly poor harvests.\textsuperscript{103}

As the century drew to a close, harvest thanksgivings had become annual, or close to annual, events in many Presbyterian parishes. Congregations saw this as an opportunity to recognise varied blessings received through the year, of which the

\textsuperscript{99} Presbytery of Oamaru Minute Books, 1872-1900, 113f, NOM. The first harvest thanksgiving reference is on 13 March 1872.

\textsuperscript{100} I base this statement on references to thanksgivings in Session Minute Books, but this is not a completely reliable source, as thanksgivings could take place without mention in these records. For example, in 1897 the \textit{Otago Witness} reported on a harvest thanksgiving held at Tokomairiro Presbyterian Church, but this is not recorded in that parish's Session Minute Book, despite an apparently diligent record of these services – they are noted in twenty of the thirty years between 1871 and 1900. See \textit{Otago Witness}, 1 April 1897, p. 22; and Tokomairiro Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 1871-1900, BM 4/2, PCANZ archives.

\textsuperscript{101} Presbytery of Clutha Minute Books, 1871-1900. Over this period, no thanksgiving resolution was made in 1874, 1876-79, 1889, 1896 and 1899. Yet oats, by far the most important crop in the district, had reasonable yields in all those years while 1872 and 1886, when thanksgivings were held, had particularly poor harvests. Agricultural statistics are calculated from the figures collected by the government and published annually in the \textit{New Zealand Gazette}; see Figure 27 for details.

\textsuperscript{102} Presbytery of Oamaru Minute Books, 1872-1883. Between 1872 and 1883, the Presbytery of Oamaru recorded special thanksgiving services in 1872, 1873, 1875, 1876, 1880 and 1883. While the first two years (also the first two years of the Presbytery's existence) had average harvests, the latter all had particularly good harvests, and it is notable that no thanksgivings were recorded in 1877, 1879 and 1882, all years when yields showed a significant fall (see Figure 28 for the agricultural statistics).

\textsuperscript{103} Duntroon Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 1884-1898, 2649/27c, NOM. Reliable figures are not available for the Waitaki County wheat crop in 1890 (in Otago, as a whole, it
grain harvest was but one. In 1886 Otago experienced one of its worst harvests, especially of oats. Amongst the poorest oats yields was that of Bruce County, yet Tokomairiro Presbyterian Church went ahead with its usual harvest thanksgiving. Preacher John Torrance reminded the large congregation of the duty of thanksgiving to God for the harvest. It was true there had been wailing and lamentations from the north to the south of the land on account of the unfavorable weather all through the season, and the scanty harvest at its close. But even at the worst, there was cause for thankfulness. There was always something to remind them of God's goodness, and lead them to trust in Him. However bad the season, and however lacking the harvest, there were a thousand reasons why they should "Thank God and take courage."¹⁰⁴

This more general compulsion to give thanks helps explain the spread of harvest thanksgivings to urban parishes, where the harvest affected congregations less directly (although during the nineteenth century many 'suburbs' remained distinctly rural). Presbyterian harvest thanksgivings soon became established and popular events in small country towns like Balclutha and Milton (Tokomairiro). In Dunedin, however, Presbyterians adopted harvest thanksgivings later than their Anglican counterparts (who are discussed below), and there is evidence of only a few nineteenth-century celebrations.¹⁰⁵ Dunedin's Presbyterian churches did celebrate harvest thanksgivings regularly in the early twentieth century. At Knox, for example, an 1880 thanksgiving was apparently a one-off celebration and regular harvest thanksgivings began in 1908, although initially these involved only the Sunday school.¹⁰⁶ As the city became increasingly industrialised, harvest thanksgivings may have fulfilled a nostalgic longing for an older rural order.

Although many Presbyterian parishes simply adapted their regular Sunday service as harvest thanksgiving, some appointed a special weekday service. At

---

¹⁰⁴ Bruce Herald, 16 April 1886, p. 3.
¹⁰⁵ The Dunedin Presbytery only appointed harvest thanksgivings for its district in two years, in contrast to the Clutha and Oamaru Presbyteries with their frequent appointments. See Presbytery of Dunedin Minute Book, 3 March 1880 and 1 April 1891, EW 5/1, PCANZ archives. This Presbytery included the agricultural parishes of the Taieri Plain. Individual Dunedin parishes may have initiated harvest thanksgivings but, if so, they did not note them in their church records with one exception: Port Chalmers Presbyterian Church had a harvest thanksgiving in 1885: see Port Chalmers Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 30 March 1885, BG 3/12, PCANZ archives. The Otago Witness, which frequently reported harvest thanksgivings, only noted two Presbyterian thanksgivings in nineteenth-century Dunedin, at Knox Church in 1880 and at St Andrew's in 1892: see 10 April 1880, p. 12; and 17 March 1892, p. 19.

¹⁰⁶ I am grateful to Lyndall Hancock, parish archivist at Knox Church, Dunedin, for this information.
Tokomairiro, for example, the 1876 harvest thanksgiving took place on a Friday morning, and in 1886 on a Thursday afternoon; and Otepopo Presbyterian Church had harvest thanksgiving on a Wednesday evening in 1875.\textsuperscript{107} Herein we see a continuation of the Scottish United Presbyterian and Free Church tradition, where the appropriate response to a special blessing was a special thanksgiving, rather than simply a special prayer on a convenient Sunday.

As noted in Chapter Two, Presbyterians occasionally demonstrated their disdain of Easter by holding their harvest thanksgiving at that time. Easter Sunday harvest thanksgivings took place in the Oamaru Presbytery in 1871, at Duntroon in 1887 and at St Bathans in 1899.\textsuperscript{108} Presbyterians at Kaihiku (in 1881) and Port Chalmers (in 1885) took advantage of the Good Friday holiday for a harvest thanksgiving, thus avoiding the need to create a new holiday while incidentally, perhaps, offending local Anglicans and Catholics.\textsuperscript{109}

Some Presbyterian parishes linked the harvest thanksgiving to their communion season. As noted in Chapter One, many rural parishes held communion in April as residents had more free time to attend the various services once the harvest had finished. This, of course, also made it the appropriate time for a harvest thanksgiving. Two South Otago churches – Balclutha and Inch Clutha – held harvest thanksgiving on the Monday following communion during the 1870s, thus combining the traditional sacramental thanksgiving day with a harvest celebration. As the Balclutha kirk session noted, this was “a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God for an abundant harvest & for all blessings.”\textsuperscript{110} In 1883 the Inch Clutha parish took a different approach, celebrating their harvest thanksgiving on the sacramental fast

\textsuperscript{107} Tokomairiro Session Minute Book, 26 March 1876; Otago Witness, 24 April 1886, p. 12; and Otepopo Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 18 March 1875, 662/26b, NOM. Of 81 references to harvest thanksgivings in Presbyterian parishes, 29 refer to a Sunday service, 25 to weekdays, and for the rest the day of the week is not stated.

\textsuperscript{108} Presbytery of Oamaru Minute Book, 13 March 1872; Duntroon Session Minute Book, 20 March 1887; and Otago Witness, 6 April 1899, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{109} Otago Witness, 23 April 1881, p. 13; and Port Chalmers Session Minute Book, 30 March 1885.

\textsuperscript{110} Balclutha Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 1 March 1875, BK 3/2, PCANZ archives. For further examples of harvest thanksgivings on the Monday after communion, see entries for 13 April 1873, 27 March 1874 and 27 April 1876. See also Inch Clutha Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 20 April 1876, 10 April 1877, 9 April 1878 and 26 April 1880, BL 2/1, PCANZ archives.
day. This rather incongruous combination of sober and reflective preparation for communion with celebration of the harvest also occurred at least twice at nearby Warepa and Kaihiku in the 1890s. This may have been a simple matter of pragmatism in an era when sacramental fast days were becoming uncommon, and having yet another extra day of worship for harvest thanksgiving was perhaps considered unacceptable. However, it also suggests that some Presbyterians took harvest thanksgiving most seriously. Theologian George Sprott noted this tendency to seriousness in Scotland, advising in 1882 that “Days of Thanksgiving are Festivals, not Fasts. This is so little understood in some parts of the country, and religion is so much associated with gloom, that you will hear people speak of a Fast day for a good harvest. Gladness and holy joy should characterise, in a far greater degree than they usually do, our ordinary Public Worship, while the services on a day of thanksgiving should be of an exceptionally bright and cheerful character.”

Unfortunately, detailed accounts of Presbyterian harvest thanksgivings are too few to allow any accurate assessment of the general mood of these occasions. Certainly, these were popular services, largely attended even if held on weekdays: “Notwithstanding the apparent inconvenience of the hour, there was an excellent attendance,” reported the Bruce Herald of a Thursday afternoon harvest thanksgiving at Tokomairiro Presbyterian Church. Worshippers crowded into churches and in only one instance, at Kaihiku in 1884, is the congregation reported as small, that being attributed to “an atmospheric disturbance commencing at the hour of service.” Guest preachers provided an extra attraction at some harvest thanksgivings.

One intriguing piece of evidence suggests that Presbyterians could be joyful at the harvest. In 1881 the N. Z. Presbyterian published a poem, “Harvest

---

111 Inch Clutha Session Minute Book, 8 April 1883.
112 Warepa/Kaihiku Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 7 April 1893 and 10 April 1899, BL 5/2, PCANZ archives.
113 Sprott, Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland, 182.
114 Bruce Herald, 16 April 1886, p. 3.
116 In 1880 Professor William Salmond of Dunedin’s Theological Hall preached at the Tokomairiro harvest thanksgiving, while Milton’s Rev. James Chisholm preached at Kaitangata: see Otago Witness, 17 April 1880, p. 11; and 1 May 1880, p. 18. The Waitahuna session invited Rev. James Fraser of Lawrence to be its harvest thanksgiving preacher in 1886, and Rev. George Hall of Waihola in 1890: see Waitahuna Presbyterian Church Session Minute Book, 19 May 1886 and 2 April 1890, BL 1/2, PCANZ archives. On the significance of guest preachers, see also p. 43 above.
Thanksgiving,” by an anonymous author from Waiareka, North Otago. A sense of gladness pervaded the poem, which began:

Once more our garners duly stored
Proclaim the goodness of the Lord!
His word of promise faileth never;
The earth its increase yieldeth ever.

After noting that the action of the sower of seed resulted in nothing without divine assistance — “Thine was the quickening power, O Lord, / Which man was powerless to afford” — the poem recognised the harvest as symbolic of God’s goodness:

The harvest, Lord, so rich and free
Bears witness evermore to Thee!
Thy loving kindness, and Thy care,
It does in simplest speech declare.

The poem ended with a call for all to thank God for this blessing:

Now with your joyous tribute come,
And taste, at length, the bliss that springs
From the deep, grateful sense of things:
Let heaven’s high praises wide be heard,
And every heart to song be stirred.117

It is clear that some Presbyterians, at least, found harvest thanksgiving an emotive and celebratory occasion.

**Anglican harvest thanksgivings**

In 1871 New Zealand’s Anglican Synod sanctioned the use of the Canterbury (England) province’s 1862 form for a harvest thanksgiving service, despite the reservations of some about “the introduction of an entirely new form of words” to the Prayer Book.118 Otago’s first recorded Anglican harvest thanksgiving took place at St Paul’s, Dunedin, in 1874, and by the late 1870s the harvest thanksgiving had become an established and popular event on the Anglican calendar throughout the province.119 As with the Presbyterian services, Anglican harvest thanksgivings attracted many churchgoers. In a typical report, the *Otago Witness* noted that “the congregations were unusually large at both morning and evening services” for the St Paul’s, Dunedin, 1881 harvest thanksgiving.120 Some parishes recorded the number of church attenders in their vestry books, and these confirm the great popularity of harvest thanksgivings.

---

117 *N. Z. Presbyterian*, 1 April 1881, p. 190.
118 *Otago Witness*, 18 February 1871, pp. 7 and 9.
119 For the 1874 St Paul’s service, see ibid., 11 April 1874, p. 19.
120 Ibid., 2 April 1881, p. 21.
They invariably attracted more people than an average Sunday, generally more than on Christmas Day and occasionally more than at Easter as well. At St Mark’s Anglican Church, Balclutha, for example, harvest thanksgiving had the largest congregation of the year in 1877 and 1882, and in 1890 only the visit of the Bishop for a confirmation service could attract more people.121

Anglicans seem to have been quicker than Presbyterians to adopt the harvest thanksgiving as a regular annual event. For example, All Saints, Dunedin, held a harvest thanksgiving every year from 1880 to 1899, with only one exception – 1894 – for which there is no obvious explanation.122 Over the same period, St Peter’s Anglican Church at nearby Caversham recorded no harvest thanksgiving in just four years. Two of these – 1886 and 1898 – coincided with particularly poor harvests, suggesting that some Anglicans did pay heed to the state of the harvest when holding a thanksgiving.123 In rural parishes, church records suggest harvest thanksgivings occurred less regularly.124 Presumably rural parishes, more closely involved in the harvest, felt less inclined than their urban counterparts to celebrate in years of poor or indifferent harvests. Urban Anglicans adopted the harvest thanksgiving earlier than urban Presbyterians, with several Dunedin parishes holding these services by the late 1870s. This may reflect the greater importance of festivals within Anglican culture: Anglican churchgoers expected, and presumably enjoyed, a level of ceremonial foreign to Presbyterians. The harvest festival simply added to the existing ceremonial, and in a hierarchically structured church its sanction by the Synod undoubtedly furthered the custom.

The Anglican ceremonial tradition created one particular difficulty for the adoption of harvest thanksgivings in Otago. In the northern hemisphere harvest came at the quietest period of the traditional church year, making it easy to fit in a new service, but in the south, harvest celebrations coincided with Easter and its

121 St Mark’s Anglican Church, Balclutha, Services Register, 1876-1882, AG-519, 22; Services Register 1882-1895, AG-519/21, HL. For other examples of large harvest thanksgiving congregations, see St Peter’s Anglican Church, Caversham, Service Record Book, 20 April 1884, AG-040/A-7, 1, HL; and St Peters Anglican Church, Queenstown, Service Register, 13 April 1890, AG-166/5-1, HL.

122 All Saints Anglican Church, Dunedin, Register of Services 1881-1889, AG 80/C, 1; 1889-1896, AG-80/C, 2; 1896-1902, AG-80/J, 2, HL. The 1880 and 1881 services are noted in Otago Witness, 10 April 1880, p. 12; and 30 April 1881, p. 23.

123 St Peter’s, Caversham, Service Record Books, 1877-1889.
accompanying calendar customs. For the orthodox, Lent was no time for festivals, although some Otago Anglican harvest thanksgivings did take place then.\textsuperscript{125} Many parishes eventually developed the tradition of holding their thanksgiving on Low Sunday, the first Sunday after Easter.\textsuperscript{126} Others held their harvest festivals on weekday evenings. This strategy appears to have been especially popular with more high church clergy, whose close attachment to the traditional church year and its customs precluded the convenient adoption of a new Sunday festival. It is no surprise to find harvest thanksgiving as a full choral service on a Wednesday evening at St John’s, Roslyn, where vicar Algernon Kerkham was renowned for his very high churchmanship.\textsuperscript{127} In 1898 Canon Thomas Dodd told his Clinton congregation, gathered for a Sunday evening harvest thanksgiving, that “he was not altogether in favour of harvest thanksgiving services being held on a Sunday, as they sometimes interfered with the regular services, but rather preferred their being held on an evening of the week specially selected for the service.”\textsuperscript{128} The preferences of clergy apparently had a significant impact on the harvest thanksgiving practices of some parishes. When Dodd arrived at St Mark’s, Balclutha, in the 1880s, harvest thanksgivings stopped for several years, later taking place only on weekday evenings.\textsuperscript{129} Dodd’s ambivalence about these services is revealed in his statement that “as it was thanksgiving time for all, not only those who had corn and other produce to gather in, he ... would much prefer the term of ‘general thanksgiving’ to ‘harvest thanksgiving.’”\textsuperscript{130} Anglican weekday harvest thanksgivings invariably took place in the evening, and there is no evidence of any feast or other celebration to accompany the church service, as occurred in some English parishes at this time.

\textsuperscript{124} For example, see St Mark’s, Balclutha, Services Registers, 1876-1895; and St Peter’s, Queenstown, Service Registers, 1881-1904.

\textsuperscript{125} Amongst several examples are the harvest thanksgivings at St Andrew’s, Maheno, in 1896 and 1897 (\textit{Otago Witness}, 26 March 1896, p. 3; and 8 April 1897, p. 23) and at St Mark’s, Balclutha, in 1876 (St Mark’s, Balclutha, Services Register, 26 March 1876).

\textsuperscript{126} For example, see All Saints, Dunedin, Register of Services, 1881-1889.


\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Otago Witness}, 19 May 1898, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{129} St Mark’s, Balclutha, Services Register, 1882-1895.
Thanksgivings in other denominations

By the late nineteenth century, all other significant Protestant denominations in Otago held harvest thanksgivings in both rural and urban parishes, most adopting the custom during the 1880s. If the experience of New Zealand Methodists is typical, the smaller Protestant denominations (including Congregationalists, Baptists and the Salvation Army) commenced harvest thanksgivings on noting their success in other churches. Around the same time, their equivalents in Britain also adopted these services, so the experience of new migrants, as well as colonial Christians in correspondence with their 'home' churches, probably also had a significant influence. In 1879 the New Zealand Wesleyan, published in Christchurch, noted "a new thing in Methodism – new, at any rate so far as we know, in the Australasian colonies – the holding of a Harvest Thanksgiving service in the Archer street church, Adelaide." While commenting that "of course some will be greatly shocked at such an innovation," the Wesleyan hoped to see such a custom spread: "The tokens of floral beauty and earthly plenty have often been used by other churches as aids to an expression of sincere thanksgiving for Heaven's bounty; and if their employment be found to assist in so becoming an act, there can be no reason why our own church should refuse them a place in God's house during a service of special thanksgiving." The following month a Nelson correspondent pointed out that the harvest thanksgiving had already crossed the Tasman. In response to an exceptionally good harvest, the Nelson Wesleyan Circuit had that year held a most successful harvest thanksgiving.

---

130 Otago Witness, 19 May 1898, p. 25.

131 The first reference to a Congregational Church thanksgiving comes from 1881, to Baptists from 1886, to Methodists from 1888, and to the Salvation Army from 1890 (Otago Witness, 16 April 1881, p. 21; Hanover Street Baptist Church, Dunedin, Church Members' Meeting Minutes, 25 March 1886, 96-116-15/01, HL; Otago Witness, 30 March 1888, p. 11; and 29 May 1890, p. 19). These dates are based on my reading of newspapers and a limited number of church records – a wider study may reveal some earlier dates.

132 On the adoption of harvest thanksgivings by nonconformists in England, which often took place in the 1870s or 1880s, see Green, Religion in the Age of Decline, 335; Ambler "Transformation of Harvest Celebrations," 303-304; and David Clark, Between Pulpit and Pew: Folk religion in a North Yorkshire fishing village (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 104.

133 New Zealand Wesleyan, 1 April 1879, p. 87. See also 1 April 1880, p. 87, when the Wesleyan reported approvingly on a harvest thanksgiving in Adelaide: “every available point in the church, from the communion table to the pinnacles of the organ, was hatched or hung with flowers or fruit. Hymns and discourses alike were suitable, and the large congregation and liberal collections – nearly £50 – sufficiently testified to the people’s approbation of the new kind of service.”

134 Ibid., 1 May 1879, p. 115.
had spread throughout Otago, attracting the large congregations common in other denominations.\textsuperscript{135} These became regular events: from 1899 comes a report of the Annual Harvest Thanksgiving Service at the Milton Wesleyan Church.\textsuperscript{136} Otago’s Congregational and Baptist harvest thanksgivings likewise attracted many churchgoers.\textsuperscript{137}

During the 1890s the Salvation Army also joined the harvest thanksgiving tradition, and in true Army style used an innovative format. Generally held over several consecutive days, these festivals included thanksgiving services, public concerts and feasts. Designed to attract many people with their bands, decorations and food, they evidently did so. Tapanui’s 1890 harvest festival included “a social tea gathering, and it by far excelled anything of the kind previously held here so far as attendance was concerned.”\textsuperscript{138} The attractions at Dunedin’s 1895 Salvation Army harvest festival included “a very realistic and pretty representation of a harvest field, which was arranged on the platform. The farmhouse and the newly-mown corn surrounding it were depicted, and in the field were the gleaners, attired in picturesque costumes, and who sang many tuneful melodies. The scene, the effect of which was heightened by a powerful limelight, was heartily applauded.”\textsuperscript{139} Some of these meetings had an evangelistic tone, with successful converts presenting personal testimonies to their large audiences. “Major Burntnell, an ex-publican, recited some of his personal experiences” at one Dunedin harvest festival, and Ensign Dixon told the interesting story of his life to a Milton meeting.\textsuperscript{140} These festivals chiefly served, however, to raise money. While, as discussed below, charity played an important part in the harvest thanksgivings of other denominations, the Salvation Army fund raising was much more explicit, and often sought for everyday church expenses or to pay off

\textsuperscript{135} For examples, see \textit{Otago Witness}, 30 March 1888, p. 11; 14 April 1892, p. 20; 5 April 1894, p. 15; 2 April 1896, p. 23; and 25 March 1897, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Bruce Herald}, 21 April 1899, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{137} For examples, see \textit{Otago Witness}, 16 April 1881, p. 21 (Lawrence Congregational Church); and 20 April 1889, p. 63 (Mosgiel Baptist Church). From 1886 there are numerous references to harvest thanksgivings in the records of Dunedin’s main Baptist Church (Hanover Street Church Members’ Meeting Minutes, 1863-1908). Congregational church records for Dunedin and Port Chalmers contain only one reference to a harvest thanksgiving, but as these churches did not make a regular record of special services, little can be concluded from this (Moray Place Congregational Church, Church Meeting Minutes, 29 March 1894, ARC-040, AG 36/3, HL).

\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Otago Witness}, 29 May 1890, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 7 March 1895, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 7 March 1895, p. 34; and \textit{Bruce Herald}, 21 April 1899, p. 5.
debts. Subscriptions, entry fees and the sale (often by auction) of donated goods all contributed towards the cause.  

Harvest thanksgivings and charity

In his study of religion in industrial Yorkshire, S. J. D. Green claims that “the real purpose of the Harvest Festival ... was to raise money.” In nineteenth-century Otago this certainly applied to the Salvation Army, but in other denominations fund raising played a secondary role in the celebrations. Congregations at a festival celebrating the bounty of the harvest presumably felt more inclined to donate money than at other times of the year, and with the larger than usual number of church attenders, this usually resulted in large offertories, sometimes the biggest of the year. Anglican harvest thanksgiving offerings commonly went towards general church funds, and when allocated to a special cause, this invariably involved church expenses of some kind. The harvest thanksgiving congregation at St Paul’s Dunedin in 1881 donated £29 towards the reduction of the debt on their church building, and those at nearby All Saints contributed to a similar cause in 1884. Choir funds received a boost from harvest offertories at St Paul’s, Dunedin, and St John’s, Roslyn, while at St Mark’s, Balclutha, the harvest contributions helped reduce the debt on the

141 For example, Dunedin’s 1895 harvest festival was “promoted to wipe off a debt in connection with the corps,” while at the 1899 Queenstown event “close upon £30 was netted, which will go towards clearing the corps of liabilities.” See Otago Witness, 7 March 1895, p. 34; and 4 May 1899, p. 28. The Army did not confine requests for donations of money and produce to their own congregation, their canvassing of the general community sometimes proving most successful, as when Milton’s farmers “responded very liberally to the Army appeals for ‘fruits of the earth’” (Bruce Herald, 21 April 1899, p. 5). But such canvassing did not meet with universal approval. A Longridge correspondent, who complained about the lack of refreshments at a Salvation Army harvest “festival” (“There was not the least sign of any feast, as the announcement would imply”), also disapproved of their fund raising methods. “A few days beforehand one of the ‘lasses,’ or sisters, canvassed the district for subscriptions, and met with fair success; then, at the door, we were again asked for 1s, ‘or more if you like.’ So for cheek and begging commend me to the members of the Salvation Army” (Otago Witness, 26 May 1898, p. 25). See Otago Witness, 7 May 1891, p. 17; 31 May 1894, p. 23; 7 May 1896, p. 30; 31 March 1898, p. 11; 4 May 1899, p. 28; 1 June 1899, pp. 29 and 30 for further reports of Salvation Army harvest festivals, including celebrations at Tapanui, Queenstown, Waitahuna and Otepopo.

142 Green, Religion in the Age of Decline, 336. See also Ambler, “Transformation of Harvest Celebrations,” 303-304.

143 For example, see All Saints, Dunedin, Register of Services, 27 April 1884 and 17 April 1887; St Mark’s, Balclutha, Services Register, 22 April 1877; and St Paul’s Anglican Church, Dunedin, Preacher’s Book, 1887-1893, AG-147/F1, HL. At St Paul’s, the harvest offertory was generally about twice the usual amount.

144 Otago Witness, 2 April 1881, p. 21; and All Saints, Dunedin, Register of Services, 27 April 1884.
in the Clutha district – Inch Clutha, Balclutha, Warepa and Kaihiku – also gave harvest offerings to the PPAS.\footnote{Inch Clutha Session Minute Book, 8 April 1883; Warepa and Kaihiku Session Minute Book, 23 March 1883, 3 April 1885, 10 April 1899 and 22 April 1900; and Otago Witness, 10 May 1884, p. 13. On the PPAS, which provided services we would now describe as social work and chaplaincy to prisoners and hospital and asylum patients, see Gordon Parry, Patients Prisoners and Progress: The first 125 years of the Patients' and Prisoners' Aid Society of Otago Incorporated ([Dunedin]: Patients' and Prisoners' Aid Society, 2002).}

Central Dunedin’s Baptists contributed their harvest thanksgiving offerings directly to the relief of the poor. The money was placed “in the hands of the Pastor” to distribute at his discretion. A decision in 1887 that the money should “assist poor persons who are neither members of the Church or congregation” suggests that in other years the recipients of this charity included the congregation’s own poor.\footnote{Hanover Street Church Members’ Meeting Minutes, 24 February 1887.} Like the Tokomairiro Presbyterians, the Dunedin Baptists made an exception to their usual practice when a special need arose, in their case, the 1897 Indian famine, a cause of special interest because of the work of Baptist missionaries there.\footnote{Ibid., 25 February 1897.} Their commitment, however, centred firmly on the poor. In 1898, when the congregation was having considerable difficulty meeting its financial obligations to the Baptist Union, a member suggested the special harvest thanksgiving offerings be directed to paying this debt, but others quickly objected, and the money went as usual to the poor.\footnote{Ibid., 24 February 1898.}

\section*{Church harvest decorations}

What could the large congregations who attended harvest thanksgiving services expect to experience? Special decorations contributed greatly to the appeal of these occasions. Photographs illustrate how profuse such decorations could be (see Figures 33-36). A display of flowers, evergreens and sheaves of corn, with all available flat surfaces covered with seasonal fruits and vegetables, particularly apples, marrows and pumpkins, made up most decorations. The use of produce from home gardens made these unusually inclusive occasions. Most Otago colonists grew their

\begin{itemize}
  \item harvest thanksgiving; in 1891 £15; and in 1897 £13 1s. See Otago Witness, 3 May 1884, p. 21; 16 April 1891, p. 15; and 1 April 1897, p. 22.
  \item Inch Clutha Session Minute Book, 8 April 1883; Warepa and Kaihiku Session Minute Book, 23 March 1883, 3 April 1885, 10 April 1899 and 22 April 1900; and Otago Witness, 10 May 1884, p. 13. On the PPAS, which provided services we would now describe as social work and chaplaincy to prisoners and hospital and asylum patients, see Gordon Parry, Patients Prisoners and Progress: The first 125 years of the Patients' and Prisoners' Aid Society of Otago Incorporated ([Dunedin]: Patients' and Prisoners' Aid Society, 2002).
  \item Hanover Street Church Members’ Meeting Minutes, 24 February 1887.
  \item Ibid., 25 February 1897.
  \item Ibid., 24 February 1898.
\end{itemize}
Figure 33 – Church harvest decorations (1)
All Saints’ Anglican Church, Tapanui, decorated for the harvest around the turn of the century.

Source – Hocken Library, Negative E6858/23 (ex AG-221-18).
Figure 34 – Church harvest decorations (2)
Owaka Presbyterian Church decorated for the harvest around the turn of the century.

Source – PCANZ archives, P-A50.1-1.
Figure 35 – Church harvest decorations (3)
First Church, Dunedin, decorated for harvest thanksgiving c. 1909-1914.

Figure 36 – Church harvest decorations (4)
Rev. Daniel Dutton surrounded by harvest decorations at Caversham Presbyterian Church c. 1911-1915.

own fruit and vegetables, and while urban congregations might have little to do with
the grain harvest, they could certainly contribute some home produce. The entire
community’s visible contribution to these festivals undoubtedly added to their
popularity. As noted in Chapter Two, church decorations also had significance
because they allowed women to play an important role in services. A description from
St Andrew’s Anglican Church, Maheno, indicates the involvement of this rural
community in harvest thanksgiving decorations: “The decorations were most
tastefully carried out by the ladies of the congregation, the floral and other designs if
anything excelling the efforts of previous years, while the offerings of fruits and
vegetables, &c., were evidences of the amount of interest and enthusiasm taken in the
church work by the members of the congregation.”155 Donations could also come
from beyond the usual congregation. At St Stephen’s Anglican Church, Hampden,
1891’s “becoming” and “profuse” harvest decorations were “the result of much labour
and beneficence on the part [of the] congregation and many kind friends.”156

Donations of produce may have been motivated by more than a simple
charitable impulse. Harvest thanksgivings gave an opportunity, equalled only by
agricultural shows, for the public display of the donor’s best farm or garden produce.
Newspaper reports turned these displays into effective boosterism of the local
congregation or district, but surely individuals, although not mentioned in the press,
also received a boost from these occasions. Presumably all those attending the
Tapanui Wesleyan harvest thanksgiving in 1892 knew who had grown the giant
pumpkin on display. The Otago Witness account of this Tapanui occasion is typical of
the mood of these reports: “There was a grand display of the productions of the soil,
including all sorts of vegetables, grapes, wheat, oats, &c, all of which were tastefully
arranged. It may be mentioned that one pumpkin on view weighed 43lb – not a bad
specimen.”157

Special church decorations probably played little part in early Presbyterian
harvest celebrations. Newspaper reports invariably note the decorations at Anglican
services, but only twice are they mentioned in accounts of Presbyterian services, at

155 Otago Witness, 8 April 1897, p. 23.
156 Ibid., 9 April 1891, p. 17.
157 Ibid., 14 April 1892, p. 20.
Dunedin’s St Andrew’s Church in 1892 and at St Bathans seven years later.\textsuperscript{158} Although these are unlikely to be isolated instances, the failure to mention decorations in other reports suggests they did not feature in all Presbyterian harvest thanksgivings, particularly in the earlier years of the colony. Unlike Catholics and Anglicans with their ornate Easter and Christmas displays, nineteenth-century Presbyterians were unaccustomed to decorating their churches for festivals. On regular Sundays, also, floral arrangements seldom appeared until late in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{159} Conservative Presbyterians preferred simple unadorned church interiors and simple unadorned worship. Floral and harvest decorations formed part of the revolution in Presbyterian worship – in which the introduction of ‘human hymns’ and instrumental music are best known – occurring in the late nineteenth century as the more puritanical tastes of early colonial Presbyterians lost sway. By the early twentieth century, Presbyterians displayed as many wheat sheaves, apples and pumpkins at harvest thanksgivings as their Anglican counterparts, with dangling carrots decorating church altars as they did harvest home barns (see Figures 34-36).

Like the harvest home decorations, described above, church harvest decorations displayed colonisation. But what of their more overtly ‘religious’ meaning? English scholar James Obelkevich claims that the predominant symbolism of church harvest thanksgivings had “little to do with Christianity ... If the script of the church service was orthodox, the props and decorations were heretical: they expressed the divine creativity not so much of God as of Nature.”\textsuperscript{160} Likewise, in his study of the English fishing village of Staithes, David Clark suggests that the chapel harvest decorations “can be seen as a celebration of the potency of nature rather than a thanksgiving to god,” evoking “nothing so much as the aura of a fertility rite or symbolic reiteration of the bountifulness of earth and sea.”\textsuperscript{161} Certainly, on first glance, these decorations have a distinctly ‘pagan’ look, but I believe this interpretation is too simplistic. Some harvest decorations incorporated explicitly

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 17 March 1892, p. 19; and 6 April 1899, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{159} I am grateful to Yvonne Wilkie and Donald Cochrane of PCANZ archives for discussions on this point, a previously unstudied topic, interesting in itself but beyond the bounds of this thesis. Photographs of nineteenth-century Presbyterian church interiors are rare, making it difficult to confirm the absence or presence of flowers – in early twentieth century photographs, foliage is more commonly present than flowers. Church flower shows and flower clubs, popular in the late nineteenth century, appear to have been confined to church halls.

\textsuperscript{160} Obelkevich, \textit{Religion and Rural Society}, 159.

\textsuperscript{161} Clark, \textit{Between Pulpit and Pew}, 105.
Christian symbols. For the 1876 thanksgiving at St Paul’s Anglican Church, Dunedin, the “communion table was beautifully decorated with sheaves of wheat and evergreens, with a floral cross.”\textsuperscript{162} Others displayed biblical texts on banners or cloths, a form of display also common at Easter and Christmas. Harvest decorations at Lawrence’s Congregational Church included “suitable quotations of Scripture,” and at Winton (in Southland), the Anglican decorations featured a “neatly worked” scroll bearing the words “Thou coverest the year with Thy goodness.”\textsuperscript{163} But even when such explicit symbols were absent, we should give harvest thanksgiving congregations credit for the ability to interpret symbols beyond the literal. Decorations did not exist in isolation, and the hymns, prayers and sermons of harvest thanksgiving services contained, as noted below, numerous references to the metaphorical suggestions of the harvest, particularly to the Christian harvest of souls. Moreover, these services accentuated the involvement of God in the natural world: to see nature was to see God’s creation, and to see the harvest was to see God’s provision to humankind. While the search for God in nature might, taken to its ultimate extent, become pantheism, churchgoers at these harvest thanksgiving services did not worship nature but received, rather, the orthodox Christian message that the God of revelation provided for the faithful.

\textbf{Harvest music}

Music also added to the attraction of Otago’s nineteenth-century harvest thanksgiving services. Hymns formed an important part of nineteenth-century culture. They provide “the most resonant evocation of religious feeling in Britain,” and, it might be added, the colonies; they were “the most powerful single medium for the transmission of Christian doctrine and the expression of religious feeling, speaking both to committed believers and to the much larger ranks of half-believers.”\textsuperscript{164} The Victorians had a hymn for every occasion, \textit{Hymns Ancient and Modern} (the most popular Anglican hymn book) even including one to be sung “when there is a

\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Otago Witness}, 1 April 1876, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 16 April 1881, p. 21; and 23 May 1889, p. 16. The text is Psalm 65: 11.

deficiency in the crops.” Alongside the ever popular “We plough the fields and scatter,” a translation of an eighteenth-century German song, sat several Victorian hymns especially written for the harvest thanksgiving by English hymn writers. Perhaps best known was country vicar Henry Alford’s 1844 composition, “Come ye thankful people, come, Raise the song of Harvest-home.” Harvest hymns invariably praised God as provider of the harvest, often stressing the deity’s active intervention in nature as sender of sun and warmth and rain. The majority also made use of the popular Christian metaphor, arising from the New Testament, whereby the grain harvest came to represent God’s harvest of souls. The angels, several harvest hymns warned, would one day sort the good corn from the weeds and the grain from the chaff. Another recurring metaphor compared the earthly food God provided in the harvest with the spiritual “bread of life” or “bread of heaven.” In summary, these hymns of harvest thanksgiving provided two main messages: that the harvest was a gift from God; and, in more evangelistic style, that it was essential to be prepared for the “heavenly harvest home.”

Harvest thanksgiving sermons and prayers
The special collects and prayers of the Anglican harvest thanksgiving service made it clear that the harvest was a gift from God, as the following example illustrates:

O Lord God of Hosts ... Who by Thy mighty power dost order all things in heaven and earth; we yield Thee hearty thanks that Thou hast safely brought us to the season of harvest, visiting the earth and blessing it, and crowning the year with Thy goodness: we praise Thee for the fruits of the ground which Thou has bestowed upon us, filling our hearts with food and gladness.167

Other prayers referred to the more symbolic suggestions of the harvest, such as the harvest of souls – “send forth more labourers into Thy harvest to gather fruit unto life

165 *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, standard ed. (London: Clowes, [1922]), number 389 – “What our Father does is well.”

166 Alford, a scholar, later became Dean of Canterbury Cathedral. Numbers 381-388 of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* are harvest thanksgiving hymns. Several of these were also included in Presbyterian hymn books: see, for example, *Church Praise*, hymns 505-508. “We plough the fields” was first published in German in 1782, with words recorded by Matthias Claudius, who had heard them sung by local farmers. An English translation by Jane Montgomery Campbell was first published in 1862. It is the only harvest hymn specifically mentioned in a report from nineteenth-century Otago (*Otago Witness*, 1 April 1876, p. 16). Other reports simply refer to “appropriate” or “special harvest” hymns (for example, see *Otago Witness*, 10 April 1880, p. 12; and *Lake Wakatip Mail*, 14 April 1893, p. 2 – my thanks to Jane Webb for the latter reference).

eternal"—and reminded the congregation "that it is not by bread alone that man doth live ... grant us evermore to feed on Him Who is the true Bread which cometh down from Heaven, Jesus Christ our Lord."

No harvest thanksgiving sermons from nineteenth-century Otago survive, but several brief newspaper reports give us some idea of the messages heard on these occasions. The Bible abounds with agricultural references, and preachers used a wide variety of texts. Sermon themes ranged from the evangelistic to more simple calls to thanksgiving: all emphasised God's role as provider.

At St Paul's Anglican Church, Dunedin, preachers at the harvest thanksgiving services in 1875, Archdeacon Edward Edwards and Rev. Robert Stanford, gave discourses containing "particular reference to the heavenly Harvest Home." At the same church the following year, preachers Rev. Charles Martin (of Caversham) and Archdeacon Edwards both referred "to the circumstance that there was a growing tendency amongst the thinkers of the present day not to recognise the God of grace as the God of nature." In contrast, "These harvest festivals ... illustrated the faith of Christians." Methodist harvest thanksgiving services also highlighted God's nearness and active provision in the harvest. In 1894, at Dunedin's Trinity Wesleyan Church, Rev. William Oliver preached from the text: "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord," enumerating, in defiance of "some of the modern trends of thought," evidence of "the nearness of the Deity" and his goodness, seen in "the mineral wealth in anticipation of human need, the profusion of natural beauty, the constitution of man, the structure of society, and the economy of redemption." At the Milton Wesleyan Church's 1899 harvest celebration, Rev. George Hounsell "dwelt upon man's indebtedness to the Creator, and pointed out how a thanksgiving

---

168 Ibid., 386-387.
169 Many Anglican church vestry books note sermon texts, as do some newspaper reports of harvest thanksgiving services. The most popular included Isaiah 9: 3; Jeremiah 5: 24; and Galatians 6: 7. The first was a prophecy of the future messiah, predicting that the people of Galilee would one day rejoice as they do at the harvest. The Jeremiah text criticised the rebellious Jews for their failure to fear the Lord "that giveth rain ... in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest." The latter text included a warning from Paul: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."
170 Otago Witness, 27 March 1875, p. 15.
171 Ibid., 1 April 1876, p. 16.
172 Ibid., 5 April 1894, p. 15. The text is Psalm 33: 5.
service was a due and proper expression of gratitude which would be acceptable in the sight of the Giver of all good things.\textsuperscript{173}

Tapanui Presbyterian minister Rev. William Scorgie also reminded his 1892 harvest thanksgiving congregation of the need for proper gratitude, which included sharing their blessings with others. “The farmer stood as the priest of Nature and steward of God,” declared Scorgie, but today’s farmers were generally “degraded.” Instead of acting as God’s stewards, they “prefer the hoarding up principle ... and forget that they received the good things to scatter amongst the people. The farmer of to-day readily realises God’s partnership while the produce of the earth is coming to maturity, but after it is turned into cash they rather prefer to dissolve the partnership and secure the whole lot for their selfish desires.”\textsuperscript{174}

The significance of harvest thanksgivings

In attending harvest thanksgiving services, the colonists asserted the importance of God’s role in the natural world, and the sermons, hymns and prayers they heard reinforced this concept. While orthodox Protestantism insisted on the primacy of revelation – the Bible – in knowing and understanding God, the popularity of harvest thanksgivings suggests that for many God’s role in nature remained highly significant. As Calvinist and puritan ideology became less influential within the churches, God became a kinder figure, and the natural world evidence of God’s grace. This was not simply a continuation of natural theology – the belief that the existence of God could be proved from study of the natural world. Natural theology retained some influence, but new developments in theology also supported the harvest thanksgiving. Although evangelicalism continued to focus on the centrality of the atonement, Horton Davies describes harvest festivals as a triumph for ‘immanentalism.’ This development in nineteenth-century theology shifted the focus from God as transcendent creator of a world where grace and nature had become separated, requiring the intervention of the crucifixion, to God as loving father, whose care for his children was ongoing, evidenced in both creation and incarnation. “God was no longer conceived as standing apart from His world and, as it were, making occasional miraculous incursions into it ... as the older theology had emphasized

\textsuperscript{173} Bruce Herald, 21 April 1899, p. 5.
God’s transcendence, so the newer theology emphasized His immanence, His in­
dwelling. General trends aside, part of the harvest thanksgiving’s success lay in its
ability to appeal to Christians with a wide variety of theological views, from the
evangelical who focused on the harvest of souls, to the Calvinist who saw the hand of
special providence in the harvest, to the high church Anglican who enjoyed the ritual
of celebrating God’s presence in nature.

Harvest thanksgivings services provide useful insights into Protestant religious
practice in nineteenth-century Otago. Their popularity gives them great significance.
Indeed, because no other festival was recognised by all denominations, more late­
nineteenth century Protestants experienced the harvest thanksgiving than any other
type of church service (with the possible exception of the thanksgivings for Queen
Victoria’s jubilees). This is where we should look to find the ‘nominal’ Christian who
rarely crossed a church door.

Here churchgoers joined to sing the popular harvest hymns and listened to
prayers and sermons which acknowledged God’s importance in the natural world.
Some may have had their consciences pricked by warnings about God’s coming
harvest of souls. At this celebration of bounty, many gave money and goods, intended
for the poor, in acknowledgement of their own blessings. And lastly, but certainly no
less significantly, the congregation could admire God’s bounty in the profuse
decorations surrounding them; decorations towards which all could contribute,
perhaps taking a secret pride that theirs was the finest produce at this ‘Feast of St
Pumpkin.’

174 Otago Witness, 21 April 1892, p. 21. Scorgie preached from the text Luke 12: 16-21, the
parable of the rich fool.

175 Davies, Worship and Theology, Part 2, 192-93 and 209-10 (quotation from 192). On
natural theology, see John Hedley Brooke, Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 192-225. In noting the ongoing significance of
natural theology in religious communities, Brooke comments that “references to design could help to
evoke a sense of awe and wonder ... Natural theology as evocation rather than proof was unlikely to be
disturbed by the philosophical critiques” (210). Likewise, Jonathan Topham argues that “many
evangelicals who considered natural theology to be either positively harmful or of limited value in the
context of religious apologetics could still enthuse about works of natural theology in a devotional
context”: see “Science, Natural Theology, and Evangelicalism in Early Nineteenth-Century Scotland:
Thomas Chalmers and the Evidence Controversy,” in Evangelicals and Science in Historical
Perspective, ed. David N. Livingstone, D. G. Hart and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University
Press, 1999), 144.
Special fast days

Harvest thanksgiving was the most prominent public recognition of God's role in the natural world of Otago's nineteenth-century colonists, but it was not the only one. Many saw God's hand in major events around them, such as wars and natural disasters, and felt it appropriate to recognise this with special services or holidays. Special thanksgivings and their counterpart, the special fast day or day of humiliation, played an important part in Protestant religiosity from the time of the Reformation until well into the nineteenth century. Such occasions loomed particularly large during periods when the Puritans dominated, pruning the calendar of other festivities and calling frequent days of humiliation and thanksgiving. 176

On special days of thanksgiving people kept a holiday and attended special church services, with sermons, prayers, music and special offertories appropriate to the event being commemorated. Fast days had a similar format, but a less celebratory mood, with the public expected to abstain from food, sex and all frivolous behaviour. 177 The diary of D. M. Stuart, later minister at Knox Church, Dunedin, captures the sombre mood of a national fast day in nineteenth-century Britain. The government had proclaimed this day, 24 March 1847, in response to famine in Ireland


177 The format for days of humiliation and thanksgiving was prescribed in the Puritan Directory of Public Worship, which survived as an important document for Scottish Presbyterians into the nineteenth century. For a detailed description of Puritan fast days, see Collinson, “Elizabethan and Jacobean Puritanism,” 50-53. See also Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, 114; and Edgar, “Discipline of the Church of Scotland,” 449. While days of humiliation and prayer continued to be commonly referred to as “fast days” into the nineteenth century, it is not clear that people still literally fasted on such days, with prayer and church attendance being the chief activities. During the debate over the 1868 Otago fast day (see pp. 217-218 below), it was explicitly stated that this was a day of “humiliation and prayer,” not of “fasting, humiliation and prayer,” although many still called it a fast day.
and the Scottish Highlands, caused by the failure of the potato crop. In appointing this
day, Stuart wrote, the government had

followed the examples of holy men as recorded in the scriptures, and acknowledged
that God is the moral governor of the nations and that our sins have provoked this
awful divine affliction ... May we have grace to acknowledge God always as the
author & disposer of all things, remembering that he is a Father, as well as a creator
& judge. This visitation is judicial – and in consequence of our sins – what is my
share in provoking the calamity? Considering my privileges, and talents, and
retirement I fear that it is very great. I dread to search the past, to enter the chambers
of memory with the lamp of God in my hand, to turn up, so to speak, every stone and
bring back a faithful, unvarnished and full report ...

The Illustrated London News’s representation of the national fast day, with its
romanticised vision of a mourning nation humbled before God, further reflects the
mood of the day (see Figure 37). Stuart’s self-examination, in search of any sins
which were his own “share in provoking the calamity,” may have been a response to a
fast day sermon. Such sermons frequently attributed calamities to God’s anger at the
sins of the nation, including the combined weight of such personal failings as
drunkenness, desecration of the Sabbath and lack of charity. Some extreme
Protestants saw the Irish famine as punishment for government emancipation of
Catholics, most recently demonstrated in the Maynooth Act, which endowed a
Catholic seminary. More liberal Christians saw in the famine God’s message that the
causes of the disaster – in their view, the irresponsibility of Irish landlords and the
foolish dependence of the Irish people upon the potato crop – had to be corrected.

Public fasts were a triumph for providentialism. They became, however,
increasingly controversial as calamities such as cholera epidemics became
increasingly susceptible to scientific explanation. Some began to question God’s role
in calamities. Why, they wondered, would God, who had established natural laws,
overrule those laws, either to cause a disaster, or to answer prayer with special
intervention? Many believed that God worked through the laws of nature rather than
over them and that catastrophes resulted from human failure to obey such laws. Of
course, a belief that divine providence caused calamities did not exclude the use of

\[178\] D. M. Stuart diary, 24 March 1847, William Downie Stewart papers, MS-985, Series 46,
Box 164, File 3, HL. At this time, Stuart was working as a teacher in England, and completing there his
studies for the Presbyterian ministry, commenced in Scotland but interrupted by the Disruption. As one
of the eleven children of a humble Highland family, Stuart understood all too well the suffering the
crop failure would bring.

\[179\] Peter Gray, “National humiliation and the Great Hunger: fast and famine in 1847,” Irish
Historical Studies 22 (2000): 193-216. See also Hugh Miller, My Schools and Schoolmasters (London:
Collins, no date), 272-273.
Figure 37 – "The National Fast"
An image by William Harvey of Britain’s national day of fasting and humiliation, held on 24 March 1847 in response to famine in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands. Three figures representing Ireland, Scotland and England bow before God, while in the foreground a woman mourns and in the background a preacher and congregation pray.

human means for dealing with them: as one historian of cholera notes, most people had a Bible and a cholera remedy on the shelf, and resorted to both in times of crisis. In Britain, the last great national fast day came in 1857, for the Indian Mutiny. After 1857, the government continued to order special prayers for special concerns, from cattle plagues to the Prince of Wales’s near fatal case of typhoid, but now government only called special national holidays for celebrations and thanksgivings, not for humiliation and prayer: God was increasingly seen as a giver rather than a judge.

**Special fasts and thanksgivings in Otago**

British migrants to New Zealand were well accustomed to special thanksgivings, and even more to special fast days; such occasions were an accepted part of the colonists’ world. When a major earthquake struck Wellington in 1848, a major upsurge in piety followed and colonists there held a public fast day. New Zealand colonists, like Britons everywhere, followed the events of the Crimean War with great interest. When news of Britain’s national fast day of April 1854, “for imploring [God’s] Blessing and Assistance on Her Majesty’s arms for the restoration of...”

---

180 R. J. Morris, *Cholera 1832: The Social Response to An Epidemic* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), 129. The changing reaction to cholera nicely illustrates changing thought about providence and fast days. In 1832, when Britain faced its first epidemic of the dreaded cholera, the people, doctors and authorities all seemed helpless before the great scourge. Few objected to the proclamation of a day of national humiliation and prayer. By the 1850s, while the exact cause of cholera remained a mystery, it was well known that improving sanitation could reduce the severity of outbreaks. When the Edinburgh Presbytery asked Lord Palmerston, the British Home Secretary, to declare a national fast day for a new cholera epidemic, he refused, suggesting the people’s time would be better spent in cleaning up their cities than in prayer. Palmerston’s letter created a furor, and many local authorities in Scotland went ahead and organised their own special days of prayer. An increasing number of Britons, though, shared Palmerston’s views. See Morris, *Cholera 1832*, 202-204; Norman Longmate, *King Cholera: The Biography of a Disease* (London: Hamilton, 1966); and Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority*, 154-156. For Palmerston’s letter and the Edinburgh Presbytery’s response, see “Lord Palmerston on a National Fast,” *Witness* (Edinburgh), 29 October 1853, p. 2; and Evelyn Ashley, *The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston: 1846-1865. With Selections from His Speeches and Correspondence*, 2d ed. (London: Bentley, 1876), 2: 13-15.


182 Government Gazette of the Province of New Munster 1, No. 20 (19 October 1848), 101; and Wellington Independent, 25 October 1848, p. 2. While the government officially proclaimed this 1848 fast day, when a major earthquake struck again in 1855, it did not not, despite public requests, declare a similar day. Special services, “with the view of returning thanks to Almighty God for his signal mercies during the late earthquake,” were instead held on a Thursday evening (see Wellington Independent, 3 March 1855, p. 3). The local Jewish congregation held a “Day of Humiliation and Thanksgiving” on the previous Thursday (see New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian, 7 March 1855, p. 2). Thanksgiving was warranted because God’s “visitation” had been “tempered” by mercy: despite extensive property damage, only one life had been lost.
of Peace to Her Majesty and her Dominions,” eventually reached New Zealand, acting Governor Robert Wynyard proclaimed a similar day for New Zealand, each province’s superintendent later setting an appropriate date. Of Otago’s fast day, Thursday 16 November 1854, may have come more than six months after the Queen’s proclamation, but was no less enthusiastic for that, being “observed with becoming solemnity.” Colonists attended church services and contributed money, as did Britons everywhere, “for the relief of the widows and orphans of those who may fall in the War.” The mood changed when news of the fall of Sebastopol, and later of the Treaty of Paris which ended the war, arrived. Colonists indulged in a few spontaneous celebrations, later enjoying officially appointed holidays. Governor Thomas Gore Browne happened to be visiting Otago when the colonists heard of victory at Sebastopol, and he declared a public holiday, celebrated with gunfire, flags, and an official levee. Seven months later another holiday celebrated the end of the war, although very wet weather meant public jubilation was rather subdued. It is notable that neither of these holidays was a “day of thanksgiving” in the traditional sense of the term – no special church services were noted in the press. Although it is highly likely that Otago ministers preached appropriate sermons around this time, they did not do so in response to an official proclamation, as did their British counterparts: an indication, perhaps, that public attitudes to officially proclaimed fast and thanksgiving days were starting to change.

Otago’s last special fast day is also its most interesting, as it was a local response to local events. In February 1868 a major storm struck coastal Otago. The whole province, already saturated from weeks of rain, experienced severe floods. The storm brought extensive damage to property and crops, loss of livestock, and several people lost their lives in dramatic circumstances. Some, including children, died when the storm wrecked three ships lying at Oamaru while others drowned in the flooded Taieri and Tokomairiro Rivers. Most chillingly, in North Otago the Waiarea River

---


184 Otago Witness, 18 November 1854, p. 2.

185 Ibid., 12 January 1856, p. 3; and 19 January 1856, p. 3; see also Barr, The Old Identities, 294.

186 Otago Witness, 16 August 1856, p. 3.
rose suddenly, sweeping nine people asleep in their beds away to their deaths. Many Otago colonists saw this devastation as a visitation of God. In response to a deputation from Dunedin clergy, representing the various Protestant denominations in Otago, provincial Superintendent James Macandrew proclaimed a day of public humiliation and prayer, when he "earnestly hoped that the whole body of the people will unite in humbling themselves under the mighty hand of God, and in supplication that He may be pleased to send such weather as may permit the fruits of the earth to be gathered in."  

The fast day proclamation sparked considerable debate. Some objected to such days on principle, believing the storm resulted simply from natural laws rather than the intervention of providence. One liberal Christian noted a "confusion between religion and meteorology," regretting that the fast day set "at unnecessary variance religion and the teaching of modern science." The ODT opposed the fast day, which it thought suggested "that the community was entitled to uninterrupted prosperity … to over lightly regard a calamity to individuals as a special visitation on the community, is to exhibit an arrogant, not a humble spirit." The floods might be of unprecedented severity but they were not, declared the paper, "a special visitation." Many thought the day would be best spent not in prayer, but in working to repair the ravages of the storm. Anglican clergyman Edward Edwards was amongst those arguing workers could ill afford the loss of a day’s labour and wages, but his suggestion that the fast day be held on a Sunday rather than a weekday fell on deaf ears. Others questioned the right of the government to direct religious practice. This old argument caused difficulties for British nonconformists when national fasts and thanksgivings were proclaimed. Macandrew, a Free Church Presbyterian, admitted that he had been reluctant to proclaim the fast day until the church-initiated request

---

187 All Otago newspapers reported these events extensively. As well as the Otago Witness and ODT, see Dunstan Times, 7 February 1868, p. 2; Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter, 7 February 1868, p. 2; and Bruce Herald, 12 February 1868, p. 3. See also McDonald, History of North Otago, 60-65.

188 Otago Provincial Government Gazette 12, No. 524 (12 February 1868), 39; and Otago Witness, 15 February 1868, p. 8.

189 "Y," letter to the editor, ODT, 12 February 1868, p. 5.

190 ODT, 19 February 1868, p. 4.

191 For example, see the report from Dunstan, Otago Witness, 29 February 1868, p. 7.

had come to him. Otago Catholics held no special services on the fast day: as Father Delphin Moreau explained to Macandrew, only the Bishop could appoint special prayers.

Supporters of the fast day more than equalled their opponents. The holiday "was very strictly observed in Oamaru; the town appeared in Sunday guise, all the places of business being closed, and service being held in all the churches, both morning and evening." Similar reports from elsewhere indicate that the day was kept in a most decorous and devout manner throughout the province. As Rev. Stuart Ross noted some twenty years later, "the cavillers were in a small and pitiful minority. The Christian tone of the community, generally, was true and well pronounced." Preachers encouraged congregations to humble themselves before God, and to accept that this chastisement was for their greater good. Some specific sins received mention: those attending First Church, Dunedin, heard from Rev. George Sutherland that "there was nothing more likely to bring punishment upon a country than a persistent breaking of the Sabbath." At the request of Dunedin’s St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church elders, Rev. Robert Scrimgeour published his fast day sermon, "The Reasonableness and Efficacy of Prayer," a riposte to those "advanced thinkers" who believed disasters resulted from the neglect of natural law and doubted the power of prayer.

Still, the doubters had an effect, and never again would the Otago authorities proclaim a public day of humiliation. Otago society was becoming increasingly pluralistic and even within individual churches a wide variety of religious and philosophical views existed. If the government condoned any form of religious practice, fierce debate was guaranteed. In order to avoid controversy the authorities

---

193 Ibid.
194 This did not mean, however, that Catholics did not recognise the hand of God in the world’s events, and they would soon keep Lent, the forty day season of fasting, humiliation and prayer "to supplicate the Lord not only to save His people from plague and scourges, but also to bless them with abundant harvests." See Delphin Moreau to James Macandrew, reprinted in ODT, 17 February 1868, p. 5.
195 Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter, 22 February 1868, p. 2.
196 Dunstan Times, 21 February 1868, p. 2; and Otago Witness, 22 February 1868, p. 13.
197 C. S. Ross, The Story of the Otago Church and Settlement (Dunedin: Wise, Caffin, 1887), 199.
began to distance themselves from involvement in religious matters. This should not be dismissed as a simple case of 'secularisation,' which suggests that religion declined in importance. Religion continued to matter hugely to many colonists, its influence pervading colonial life. The increasing avoidance of controversial religious matters in public discourse, like the separation of church and state in colonial New Zealand, indicated the variety of religious opinion rather than its absence; it was a matter of sectarianism rather than secularisation. Many British colonists were not Anglican and demanded equality of all religious denominations, hence the lack of an established church in New Zealand. Most colonists did, however, see theirs as a Christian country within a Christian empire: the formal separation of church and state was accompanied by "a religious grounding of national culture and morality," a de facto cultural establishment of a generic, diffuse Protestantism.\textsuperscript{200}

Other disasters would come and many would attribute them to divine providence. Rev. Michael Watt of Green Island Presbyterian Church chose a current event – a devastating South American earthquake – as the topic of a sermon later in 1868, proclaiming that "the awful phenomena of such a visitation ... should remind us of the majesty and power of Jehovah and of the dreadfulness of his displeasure." But religious thought was shifting and liberalising, leading Watt to warn his listeners of "a generation among us wise in their own eyes who because they can trace such a calamity as the one we are speaking of to natural causes, think thereby they can shut God out of his own world, and ignore Divine Providence altogether."\textsuperscript{201} While special public fasts died out in Otago after the 1860s, thanksgivings continued, and, moreover, local harvest thanksgivings became ever more popular, as discussed above. Thanksgivings evidently offended "advanced thinkers" less than fasts: little debate surrounded a special thanksgiving day proclaimed for the recovery of the Prince of Wales from serious illness in 1872; and thanksgivings for Queen Victoria's jubilees in

\textsuperscript{199} Robert Scrimgeour, \textit{The Reasonableness and Efficacy of Prayer} (Dunedin: Mills, Dick, 1868).


\textsuperscript{201} "The Earthquake," sermon attributed to Michael Watt, DA 5/2, 3/119, No. 20, PCANZ archives. The earthquake, today estimated at magnitude 8.5 or 9, struck near the coast of Peru on 16 August 1868 and many thousands died as a result of the quake and the major tsunami that followed.
1887 and 1897 were popular and uncontroversial. Staunch Calvinism was losing its sway amongst the Otago colonists, and more liberal Christians became less willing to see God as a severe judge, preferring to emphasise divine loving kindness. Otago remained a society dominated by Christianity, but for at least some adherents, certain tenets of that Christianity were adapting to accommodate changing ideas about the natural world and God’s place within it.

Conclusion

Most settled societies celebrate the end of the harvest and the colonists of nineteenth-century Otago were certainly no exception. Indeed, their position as colonists gave a special meaning and fervour to the festivities following a successful harvest. Good crops provided justification for their endeavour in crossing the world to start anew in an unknown country. Furthermore, many migrants of humble backgrounds became landowners in Otago, an impossibility in the hierarchical social structure of rural Britain. Both landowners and labourers found in the colony an escape from the paternalist strictures of their homelands and harvest homes became a celebration of their new independence.

The harvest drew rural communities together through both work and celebration, and harvest homes did not display the sectarian or ethnic differences seen in so many of the colony’s other festivals. While their practices may have differed a little from region to region, all British and Irish colonists were familiar with harvest celebrations and evidently had no difficulty in coordinating harvest home festivities acceptable to most of the community. Apart, probably, from some itinerant workers, these were occasions open to all in an impressive display of community bonding.

As perhaps the most critical event of the year, the harvest naturally invited thoughts of God’s role in the colonists’ world, and a desire to thank God for blessings received. The church harvest thanksgiving, imported from Britain, became hugely popular in late-nineteenth century Otago. Catholics, more closely bound than other churches to tradition, resisted the innovation, but the new festival quickly spread to all Protestant denominations and both rural and urban parishes, becoming the most widespread of all Otago’s annual Christian celebrations. As at harvest homes, music and festive decoration contributed to the occasion’s popularity. Churchgoers enjoyed

202 See Chapter 6 for discussion of these three thanksgivings.
seeing their best produce on display and singing popular harvest hymns. In gratitude for blessings received, they donated money and goods to the community’s needy. Above all, however, harvest thanksgivings were the colonists’ recognition that God played a vital role in their world. That even those who rarely crossed a church door were attracted to these services suggests the strength of this belief in God as controller of the natural world.

But if religion had the power to draw the colonists together, it also had the power to create considerable debate and division amongst them. Harvest thanksgivings may have proved uncontroversial, but days of humiliation for particular disasters provoked a great deal of dispute. Many colonists, happy to thank God for blessings received, were reluctant to perceive the Almighty as a stern and harsh judge of evil. Special fast days, so common in early-nineteenth century Britain, ceased to exist. Otago’s last special fast day, for the 1868 floods, came ten years after Britain’s last national fast, reflecting the greater Calvinist strength in this Presbyterian-dominated colony. But religious diversity was a force within denominations as well as between them and Presbyterians, like other denominations, expressed an increasingly wide variety of beliefs. In this climate of religious diversity, it became difficult for the government to involve itself in religious matters without inciting protest from one body or another. Religion was no less important to the colonists, as the increasing popularity of harvest thanksgivings demonstrates. Religious debate and religious sectarianism both contributed, however, to the increasing privatisation of religion during the late nineteenth century, as secular authorities attempted to avoid controversy and offence by leaving religious matters to the churches and individual Christians to decide.
Chapter Five – Otago Anniversary Day

The holidays examined in this thesis so far were all northern hemisphere traditions transplanted to the Otago colony and modified as necessary to fit the new social and physical environment. Anniversary Day was rather different. Although not an entirely new invention – English custom heavily influenced its format – this was the most colonial of all nineteenth-century holidays. In marking the anniversary of their local enterprise, the colonists had the opportunity to create a distinctly local holiday, one which would reflect the priorities of their new society. This may appear a simple enough matter, but the religious and ethnic mix of Otago’s colonists made it highly complex. Indeed, the first anniversary created a major dispute in the tiny colony, as the colonists failed to agree on the ‘proper’ way to mark the occasion. This chapter examines the dispute over the first Anniversary Day, and then explores the development of the holiday over the rest of the century. Anniversary Day never overcame that initial dispute. In the absence of agreement over its format the Otago colonists proved largely unable to commemorate their own province on its own anniversary. There was one notable exception: in 1898 the residents of Otago celebrated the Otago Settlement Jubilee with remarkable fervour. The second part of this chapter explores the Jubilee in some detail, paying particular attention to its central event, the procession. This study reveals that while the Jubilee created a celebratory vision of a united colony, a strong undercurrent of sectarianism pervaded Otago society at this time. The Jubilee also brought to light Otago’s Irish Protestants, a group of colonists often hidden from the historical record. In view of their usual invisibility, I take the opportunity to examine them a little further. Overall, the story of Otago Anniversary Day highlights the potential of ethnicity and religion to divide the community into competing parties.

The first anniversary

Early in 1849 the Otago News began its promotion of Otago’s first Anniversary Day, declaring that:

It has been usual in the neighbouring settlements for all classes to join in common holiday on the anniversary of the arrival of the first settlers at their port of destination; thus forming as it were a resting ground on which to pause and look back, - to rejoice over the difficulties which have been conquered, - to cheer each other on to fresh
exertions, - and to draw the bond of fellowship closer between those who are sojourners together in a far land.¹

Otago’s first anniversary, however, did little “to draw the bond of fellowship closer.” Instead, it revealed major differences within the fledgling colony, with one faction celebrating the anniversary with sports and a ball, and another with a day of church services.

Otago was founded according to the principles of the systematic coloniser Edward Gibbon Wakefield as a ‘class’ colony. Class did not, in this case, refer to social class, but meant that the colonists shared a common identity, and in the case of Otago that identity was their Scottish Free Church religion. But while Scots and Presbyterians (many of them not from the Free Church) and their descendants dominated Otago both numerically and culturally into the twentieth century, the colony was never an exclusive one. From the beginning, a significant minority of the colonists came from England, and their religious adherence was to the Anglican or English nonconformist denominations. Many of the young colony’s elite – its professionals, central government officials and wealthiest landowners – were English, and some opposed the class nature of the colony, as well as its principle of close settlement, designed to prevent large scale pastoralism. The colony’s leaders, company agent Captain William Cargill and minister Rev. Thomas Burns, remained staunch supporters of the class colony ideal, and their opponents soon acquired the label of ‘the little enemy.’²

Henry Graham, who hailed from the north of England, made use of his position as owner, editor and printer of the settlement’s first newspaper, the Otago News, to voice the little enemy’s criticism of the class colony principle and of Cargill’s leadership. Graham was the driving force behind the first anniversary ‘fete.’³


³ McLintock suggests that the little enemy’s plans for sports and a ball on the first Anniversary Day were part of Graham’s “revenge” against Cargill for withdrawing the company subscriptions to the
On 7 February, his paper proposed that “a public meeting be held to consider what amusements would be most suitable” to celebrate the anniversary. This meeting, which was “numerously and respectably attended,” took place on 16 February. It elected a Committee of Management dominated by the little enemy and commenced taking subscriptions for prizes. Meanwhile, on 11 February, Rev. Thomas Burns “[i]ntimated to a very full church that the anniversary of the first party’s arrival w[oul]d be observed as a day of religious worship.”

These alternative proposals for Anniversary Day arose as much from cultural differences as political ones. Anniversary Days may have been peculiarly colonial holidays, but they were not pure invention; they arose from the migrants’ previous experiences of celebration. Henry Graham cited the Anniversary Days of other settlements in his promotion of Otago’s anniversary fete and such examples undoubtedly furthered his cause, as no colony wanted to appear inferior to its competitors. It is noteworthy, however, that these other colonies differed from Otago in one important respect: English migrants dominated. The assumption of Graham and the little enemy that sports and balls were the natural way to commemorate an anniversary arose from a combination of their own English ethnicity and the example set by the English dominated colonies.

The origins of Otago’s Anniversary Day fete can be found in England. One of the most popular and widespread holidays on the English calendar marked a local anniversary: the parish dedication feast, which commemorated the dedication of the local church, often around the feast day of its named saint. The parish was the crucial administrative, social and religious unit of English everyday life. Most parishes had their origins in medieval times and the anniversary of the church, the central public building, proved the most appropriate occasion for celebrating a parish’s communal identity. Parish feasts often commenced with a special service on Sunday, and the celebrations which followed could last for several days. Sports, feasting and dancing

_Otago News_, a major financial blow for the paper. This, however, is unduly harsh to Graham, who had been promoting the anniversary events for several weeks before Cargill announced his withdrawal of the subscriptions. See McLintock, _History of Otago_, 278. On the dispute between Graham and Cargill, in which both appear badly, see also Brooking, _Captain Of Their Souls_, 79-84.

4 _Otago News_, 7 February 1849, p. 2; and 21 February 1849, p. 3.

5 Thomas Burns diary, 11 February 1849, C-017, OSM.

6 _Otago News_, 7 February 1849, p. 2; and 21 February 1849, p. 2. He used similar arguments in 1850: see 16 February 1850, p. 2.
predominated, and by the nineteenth century these occasions, although derived from
the church calendar, had become essentially social events, notorious for drunkenness
and fighting. In Scotland, meanwhile, parish feasts did not survive the Reformation,
being abandoned then along with all other religious festivals.\footnote{Ronald Hutton,
_The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain_ (Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 1996), 348-359; Robert W. Malcolmson, _Popular
Recreations in English Society 1700-1850_ (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1973), 16-19, 52-53 and 146-150; Bob Bushaway, _By Rite: Custom,
Ceremony and Community in England 1700-1880_ (London: Junction, 1982),
35, 47 and 249-250; and James Obelkevich, _Religion and Rural Society: South
Lindsey 1825-1875_ (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 84-85. In many parts of England,
parish feasts survived industrialisation and urbanisation. Their downfall came in
the late nineteenth century as moral reform led to changing tastes in leisure pursuits,
and commercial operators provided attractive alternatives such as excursions.}

When Otago's English migrants sought a format for the celebration of their
local community and its anniversary, they naturally looked to the occasion which
most resembled it from their prior experience, the parish feast. Sports and dancing
became, therefore, the central activities of the day. The "rural sports" which took
place "at convenient intervals" between horse and boat races included jumping in
sacks, a wheelbarrow race and climbing a greasy pole to win a quarter of mutton at
the top, as well as more conventional athletic events and the sword dance.\footnote{Otago
News, 7 March 1849, p. 2.} In announcing the programme, the _Otago News_ anticipated
an occasion of "hilarity, mirth, and cheerfulness." Its later report suggests the fete
included the traditional drunkenness of an English parish feast, with "some few ...
in a state 'to remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly,' transforming
themselves with 'joy, revel, pleasure and applause, into beasts.'" These 'few' had evidently taken advantage of the
refreshments available at the marquees erected for the occasion by the Royal Hotel
and Commercial Inn.\footnote{Ibid., 7 March 1849, pp. 2 and 3; and 4 April 1849, p. 4.}

Such activities horrified Cargill, Burns and their supporters. Burns, in his
anniversary sermon, noted the concurrent fete as evidence "that already there is a
division of sentiment amongst us." The anniversary fete, declared Burns, was "very
repulsive to our feelings and former habits." He conceded that the competing ways of
recognising the anniversary stemmed from cultural or religious difference, noting that
the sports were "the proceedings of ... parties whose previous habits and modes of
thinking have led them to look upon these spors in a very different light from that in
which we have been accustomed to regard them." The faithful must remain true to "an
uncompromising assertion of our principles,” principles enshrined in the blood of the Covenanters. “[R]esting contented with a lower standard in religion and morals than we have been accustomed to” was “a serious risk;” Otago must not be allowed to slide into “the backward courses into which all the other British colonies have fallen.”

As Hamish Fraser notes, leisure “remained a morally and socially problematic area throughout the nineteenth century, perhaps for Scots even more than for their southern neighbours. There was a deeply entrenched view that the wasting of time was sinful, and that all recreational activities had to have a moral justification.” Burns clearly believed the anniversary sports to be sinful, but not simply because he was a puritan killjoy; as noted in Chapter Four, Burns supported the conviviality and leisure of the colony’s early harvest homes. His main concern was that the fete distracted people from that which should be their first priority on such occasions, thanking God for gifts received and imploring continued divine blessing on the colony. For Scots, particularly Presbyterians, a day of thanksgiving was the appropriate way to recognise an important anniversary.

Puritan colonists in America gradually transformed their frequent special thanksgivings into a regular annual holiday, and by the late nineteenth century this had become a national commemoration. Had the Otago colony consisted solely of “a small but united body of Christian men” (and women), as Burns suggested, its Anniversary Day may very well have developed into a holiday resembling the American Thanksgiving, arising out of the Puritan and Scottish traditions. Unfortunately for Burns and his supporters, however, Otago never achieved the ideal

10 Thomas Burns, A Discourse, delivered in the Church of Otago, on Friday, the 23rd of March, 1849, being a day of public thanksgiving, humiliation and prayer, and the anniversary of the arrival of the first party of settlers (Dunedin, 1849), 11-12. The sermon was “published by request” and, ironically, printed at the Otago News office, the only printer in town. The Hewitson Library, Dunedin, holds a copy of this pamphlet.


13 Otago News, 4 April 1849, p. 4.
of an exclusive class colony. A more diverse community developed because, from the beginning, the colony could not attract sufficient Scottish Free Church migrants for its maintenance. Burns’s concerted efforts to commence a religious thanksgiving practice in 1849 met head on with the competing cultural tradition of Otago’s English colonists, who believed in celebrating anniversaries with recreation rather than worship.

How successful were the competing Anniversary Day events in attracting the colonists? No evidence exists about the number of spectators at the sports. It is clear, however, that few competed. Only three boats competed in the sailing match, four in the rowing match, and three in the Maori rowing match; the dinghy and skiff event was cancelled for lack of entries. Horse racing attracted four entries for the hurdle race, and three of the same horses ran in the hack race.¹⁴

Maori involvement boosted support for the fete. Although Pakeha soon outnumbered Maori, in 1849 Maori remained a significant minority of the Otago population. During this early period of colonisation, Maori had a closer relationship with the local English colonists than with the Scots. While Otago’s Presbyterian Church had little interest in Maori, concentrating its efforts entirely on British migrants, Wesleyans established a mission at Waikouaiti eight years before the arrival of the ‘founders’ of the Otago colony. Anglicans were also involved with local Maori, initially through the visit of Ngati Toa missionaries, and later through the tours of the energetic Bishop George Selwyn in 1844 and 1848.¹⁵ Moreover, Pakeha who had settled in Otago prior to the official colony, mostly whalers or farm workers with English or Australian origins, worked or lived with local Maori.¹⁶ The early Pakeha settlers and Maori were much more likely to identify with the little enemy than with the Free Church class colony which largely ignored them.

Meanwhile, newcomer James Elder Brown wrote home to his parents that on this first anniversary “the greater number of our settlers spent the day in the house of God. We got two most excellent sermons from Mr Burns, who is indeed a most

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Peter Matheson, “Presbyterianism”; Ken Booth, “Anglicanism”; and Donald Phillipps, “Methodism”; all in The Farthest Jerusalem.

¹⁶On the early Pakeha settlers, see Olssen, History of Otago, 12-19; and Peter Entwisle, Behold the Moon: The European Occupation of the Dunedin District 1770-1848 (Dunedin: Port Daniel, 1998). As James Belich notes, due to early intermarriage Ngai Tahu “may be more English than their local Pakeha,” who remained largely Scottish. See James Belich, Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the Year 2000 (Auckland: Penguin, 2001), 220.
excellent man.”  When Brown wrote of “the greater number of our settlers” perhaps he only included his fellow Presbyterians in the total, for the Otago News suggested that only about sixty people attended the anniversary thanksgiving services.  While this was greater than the number of dancers at the Anniversary Ball (which attracted forty to fifty people), it was hardly an overwhelming show of support for one event over the other. The majority of the colonists – about 760 people by this time – apparently attended neither. Enjoying both fete or dance and thanksgiving service was not an option, at least according to Burns, who warned his congregation not to “make a pretence” of devoting the day to God “by merely surrendering a very small portion of the day to religious employment” and then rushing “far away from all thoughts of God.” Otago’s first historian, James Barr, describes the churchgoers who joined Burns in observing the anniversary with “a day of glad remembrance and thanksgiving” as the “more thoughtful portion of the community.”

In summary, the first Anniversary Day highlighted a serious division within the early Otago community. While politics played a role, the division chiefly stemmed from cultural differences between the English and Scottish colonists. The failure of the community to celebrate together, and the challenge to Presbyterian hegemony displayed in the anniversary fete, represented a blow to the class colony ideal. Burns and Cargill had little choice but to accept that Otago was not the theocracy they so desired, although they would never cease to strive for such a society. Scots and Presbyterians continued to dominate Otago numerically, culturally and politically, but their fellow colonists did not willingly comply with all their customs, with the first Anniversary Day being one of the most outstanding examples.

1850 and onwards

Wellington’s first Anniversary Day had also caused controversy and revealed divisions within that young community. There, however, the divisions occurred along

17 Otago Journal 5 (November 1849): 73.

18 Otago News, 16 May 1849, p. 2.

19 Ibid., 4 April 1849, p. 2, gave the population of the colony at the anniversary as 760. This included those in “the country around,” who would have been beyond easy travelling distance of Dunedin. On the population at this time, see also Olssen, History of Otago, 39. On the anniversary ball, see Otago News, 4 April 1849, p. 4; and the advertisement on 7 March 1849, p.2.


21 James Barr, The Old Identities: Being Sketches and Reminiscences During the First Decade of the Province of Otago, N.Z. (Dunedin: Mills, Dick, 1879), 68.
lines of social class rather than ethnicity or religion, and in subsequent years the celebrations overcame such controversy.\textsuperscript{22} But in Otago, the occasion waxed and waned in importance for the rest of the century, never really overcoming its difficult beginning. Furthermore, it remained a distinctly Dunedin event, with little recognition in the rest of Otago. From time to time the press lamented the poor showing made by Otago in comparison with its colonial neighbours. In 1857 the \textit{Otago Witness} noted that although Anniversary Day “was partly kept as a holiday,” there was “no public demonstration or rejoicing. In this respect Otago presented a marked contrast to the rest of the settlements of New Zealand and the older colonies of Australia.”\textsuperscript{23} Although Anniversary Days elsewhere in New Zealand varied in enthusiasm more than such reports claimed, Otago’s Anniversary Day undoubtedly fared worse.\textsuperscript{24}

Rev. Thomas Burns published 250 copies of his 1849 Anniversary Day sermon; an impressive print run in this small community.\textsuperscript{25} However, by 1850, Burns had apparently decided not to attempt another Anniversary Day devoted to religion. The promise of alternative activities sponsored by the settlement’s only newspaper presumably convinced the Free Church party that a day of religious thanksgiving would be desecrated by many. This represented a tacit admission of the strength of the opposing party. While the little enemy was a minority group, colonists of more moderate views presumably felt the attractions of the anniversary fete. Many must have regretted the divisive nature of the 1849 anniversary celebrations, which had done little to further community spirit. There can be no doubt that Burns would have suffered harsh criticism had the events of 1849 been repeated. Henry Graham, promoting the “Annual Sports” to be held on Anniversary Day 1850, claimed he did not wish “to clash with any opposing party or parties, whose views may differ from ours.” He went on, however, to strongly advocate for sports on this day of “rejoicing and united happiness.” Aware that “numbers amongst us think differently,” Graham sincerely hoped “that good-will, charity, and unity, will form more prominent features

\textsuperscript{22} Patterson, \textit{Early Colonial Society}\textsuperscript{.}

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Otago Witness}, 28 March 1857, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{24} Smith, “Anniversary Days,” 3-6; and Miles Fairburn, \textit{The Ideal Society and its Enemies: The Foundation of Modern New Zealand Society 1850-1900} (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1989), 161-162; note the varying popularity of Anniversary Days in Auckland, Nelson and Wellington. Smith’s claim that Otago Anniversary Day was “celebrated with the same high level of enthusiasm from 1849 until 1858” is incorrect.

\textsuperscript{25} Thomas Burns diary, 11 April 1849.
in the ensuing Anniversary than they did at the last one.\(^{26}\) Graham himself had shown little charity and good will to Burns and Cargill in the past, and was unlikely to tolerate quietly any further opposition over the upcoming anniversary.

By failing to offer an alternative activity, yet ignoring the anniversary fete, the Free Church party could avoid charges of meanness without compromising its principles. It was not until the late 1890s that religion again formed a significant part of the Anniversary Day celebrations, and then, as discussed below, it again created dispute. The Presbyterian Church's avoidance of public Anniversary Day commemorations undoubtedly played a significant role in the indifference of many colonists to the holiday over the century. It was difficult to mark adequately the foundation of a community in which religion played a vital role without explicitly involving the church. The holiday remained, therefore, a day known primarily for recreation.

Other factors played a part in the lack of enthusiasm for Anniversary Day. Easter, which could fall close to 23 March, sometimes overshadowed the local holiday. As noted in Chapter Two, many Otago residents did not recognise Easter as a religious occasion, but local authorities and businesses nevertheless marked it with a close holiday, seized as an opportunity for recreation. If Good Friday happened to fall on 23 March, as it did in 1883 and 1894, the day was primarily viewed as an Easter holiday, with little or no recognition of the Otago anniversary.\(^{27}\)

Some employers evidently resented giving their workers several holidays – Anniversary Day, Good Friday and Easter Monday – in close succession. In 1891 the Grocers' Association decided not to recognise Anniversary Day as a holiday, prompting a complaint to the press that grocery assistants would be deprived of their rights.\(^{28}\) It is probably no coincidence that in that year Anniversary Day fell only one week prior to Good Friday. Several holidays close together, but separated by workdays, could also frustrate employees. While there is no evidence of workers wanting to give up holidays, even though for many these were unpaid, some wished they could be rearranged to fall together. Jack Fowler, union representative at Simon

\(^{26}\) Otago News, 16 February 1850, p. 2.

\(^{27}\) In 1883, the press mentioned the anniversary only briefly in passing, and not at all on Anniversary Day itself. See ODT, 24 March 1883, p. 2. For a similar brief mention of Anniversary Day 1894, see Otago Witness, 29 March 1894, p. 15.

\(^{28}\) 'Assistant No. 2,' letter to the editor, ODT, 21 March 1891, supplement, p. 2.
Brothers, a Dunedin bootmaking concern, noted that Anniversary Day 1891 would be followed by Easter the next week. “I wanted the boss to open today and give us Saturday between Good Friday and Easter Monday instead,” he recorded. This would make little difference to Fowler – “one day was as good as another to me” – but some of his workmates with friends and family out of town “could then visit them if they had the three consecutive days.” His employers refused Fowler’s request.29

In 1884 the ODT claimed that the loss of provincial government had caused the downfall of Anniversary Day. “Next Sunday is Anniversary Day, and as yet there are no signs that the Government intend to proclaim a public holiday,” complained the paper, suggesting that “fusionist policy” caused the Government to want people “to forget all about the old provinces.” Otago politicians and the Otago press strongly advocated provincial government, and it suited their purposes to blame central government indifference and the loss of local control for all Otago woes.30 The imagined neglect of a local holiday provided a convenient symbol of the government’s supposed indifference to provincial concerns. However, central government seems to have been willing enough to grant Otago Anniversary Day as a holiday to the many operations it now controlled. In 1884, after a request from Dunedin’s Mayor “to preserve at least one of the old landmarks,” the Colonial Secretary promptly declared Anniversary Day a holiday, and New Zealand Premier Robert Stout made the same proclamation the following year.32

29 Alexander John Fowler to Martha Fowler, 23 March 1891, Fowler letters, OSM. The different preferences over Anniversary Day recognition displayed by Fowler and the Simons continue to influence the holiday to this day. Legislation now entitles workers to a set number of statutory holidays, including their local Anniversary Day, but this has not improved the consistency of the holiday’s recognition. While local businesses and institutions made a special effort to celebrate Anniversary Day on 23 March in 1998, the 150th anniversary of the colony, in most years many add another day to the Easter break instead, significantly reducing the commemorative impact of the anniversary.

30 ODT, 19 March 1884, p. 2. Likewise, in 1882 the paper claimed that Anniversary Day had formerly been “kept as a close holiday, but with the abolition of the provinces the custom fell into disuse” (23 March 1882, p. 2). This was not correct: while there was no Anniversary Day holiday in 1880, in some years since the abolition of the provinces in 1876 it had been “generally well observed” or a “pretty close holiday” (Otago Witness, 30 March 1878, p. 8; and 29 March 1879, p. 16). Moreover, the holiday had been kept only haphazardly in the 1850s. There is no evidence in either newspapers or diaries that Anniversary Day was kept as a holiday in 1851, 1854, or 1855. In 1857 the day was only “partly kept as a holiday” (Otago Witness, 28 March 1857, p. 5).


32 ODT, 20 March 1884, p. 2; and 19 March 1885, p. 2.
What Anniversary Day required to maintain popularity was strong local advocacy. In its first two years, Henry Graham provided the suggestion, enthusiasm and promotion needed. It was probably no coincidence that no anniversary celebrations took place in 1851, soon after Graham’s death. For the rest of the nineteenth century, the holiday was promoted from time to time by various groups, including the Dunedin Jockey Club and commercial leisure operators. Reaction from the local press varied between ignoring the occasion and actively encouraging it. “Apathy” had “become the rule” for Anniversary Day, declared the *Otago Witness* in 1897.33 A marked decline in Anniversary Day keeping during the 1890s (with the notable exception of the 1898 Jubilee) partly stemmed from a loss of support for the holiday from Dunedin retailers, who remained open despite the closure of banks and government offices.34 During the early twentieth century the Otago Early Settlers’ Association, founded in 1898, would became chief advocate and promoter of Anniversary Day.35 Without community consensus over its format, and without consistent influential local promotion, it is unsurprising that Otago Anniversary Day proved relatively unsuccessful as a nineteenth-century holiday.

**Anniversary Day and horse racing**

Recreation was the primary focus of Anniversary Day. As on other holidays, the colonists enjoyed excursions and picnics, sometimes organised by friendly societies, Sunday schools and other voluntary organisations. The Caledonian Society occasionally held gatherings on Anniversary Day, and during the early 1860s colonists enjoyed the Horticultural Society of Otago’s annual Anniversary Day shows. But the holiday’s biggest activity was undoubtedly horse racing. Commencing with that four-horse hurdle race in 1849, the association between Anniversary Day and horse racing was a notable one.

Yet even horse racing was not consistently practised on Anniversary Day. During the 1850s the races came and went, and when held they varied in success. In 1856, an effort was made, “with more success than usual, to get up some horse races ... there was a goodly attendance on the ground” and the racing “afforded a good deal

---

33 *Otago Witness*, 11 March 1897, p. 3.
34 For example, see ODT, 24 March 1893, p. 2; and *Otago Witness*, 26 March 1896, p. 13.
of amusement.” But the *Otago Witness* criticised the standard of racing, noting that “the object of, or excuse for, horse racing is the improvement of the breed of running horses ... If racing is to form the chief of the annual sports, it should be properly attended to.” Amusement was apparently not sufficient justification for horse racing. The gold rushes provided a huge boost to Otago’s human and equine population, and the Otago Jockey Club’s races became big business. Races at the Silverstream course at West Taieri attracted large crowds, such as the 2000 who attended at the end of March 1862, just a few months after the gold rushes began. But racing had lost its close association with Anniversary Day, no longer requiring a commemorative event to justify its existence. Through the 1860s, Dunedin’s chief race meeting took place in late March or early April. In 1867 the third day of the races happened to coincide with Anniversary Day, when a large crowd attended at Silverstream, “the almost general holiday observed by the tradespeople in Dunedin contributing largely to this result.” For the rest of the 1860s, the races and Anniversary Day did not coincide.

The Dunedin Jockey Club (DJC), which replaced the Otago Jockey Club, held its first race meeting at Silverstream on 23 and 24 March 1870, deliberately timing the meeting to fall on the holiday. The new date proved a good one. “The course at Silverstream looked as gay, if not gayer, than i: has done on any previous occasion,” reported the *Otago Witness*. “The weather was beautifully fine, and the day being observed as a general holiday, a large number of spectators were present.” In 1871 the DJC opened its new Forbury Park racecourse, conveniently close to town, and attendances improved even further. For the inaugural Dunedin Cup, held on 23 March 1874, “fully 5500 or 6000 persons of all classes of the community” attended Forbury Park. The following two days of racing, which were not public holidays, attracted considerably smaller crowds. By the mid-1870s, the DJC races completely

36 *Otago Witness*, 29 March 1856, p. 3.
39 Ibid., 30 March 1867, p. 2.
40 Ibid., 5 February 1870, p. 14.
41 Ibid., 26 March 1870, p. 16.
42 On Anniversary Day 1871 a crowd of 3000 attended the Forbury races, with a further 1500 watching from the adjacent sandhills (*Otago Witness*, 1 April 1871, p. 3).
overshadowed other Anniversary Day activities. A Port Chalmers correspondent commented that “the potent attraction of the Forbury Racecourse neutralised all other considerations.” The day once known as Anniversary Day had become ‘Race Day’ or ‘Cup Day’.

The apparent success of the Anniversary Day races did not satisfy the DJC, which thought it could do better. Bad weather had plagued the event, so in 1878 it moved its summer meeting to the end of February in the hope of achieving better conditions, and there it stayed. The Dunedin Cup remained “the Dunedin sporting event of the year,” although its attendance halved between 1877 and 1878, presumably because many who might once have attended now had to work on Cup Day. By the 1880s, however, many Dunedin businesses took a holiday on Cup Day. “We have a half holiday for the races and I went out to see the Dunedin Cup run it was a good race and pritty [sic] close,” wrote Jack Fowler to his mother in 1885.

Not only businesses closed for Cup Day: Dunedin school children also received a holiday for the races. In 1886 the DJC added a new meeting to its racing calendar—the Anniversary meeting. The major summer meeting, which included the Dunedin Cup, continued to take place in February and the new Anniversary Day event was a “meeting of minor importance.” Nevertheless, for several years the Anniversary races attracted good crowds to Forbury Park, evidently because of the holiday.

44 Ibid., 1 April 1876, p. 15. Many travelled some distance to enjoy the Dunedin Cup: of the large crowd (about 8000) in 1876, “quite one half were from the country and other Provinces—Canterbury particularly being well represented” (Otago Witness, 1 April 1876, p. 7). During the 1870s and early 1880s the Dunedin Cup was New Zealand’s richest racing event. Later in the 1880s its stake was surpassed by the New Zealand Cup (held in Canterbury) and Auckland Cup. See Saunders, Historical Racing Records, 39 and 48.

45 For example, see ODT, 24 March 1876, p. 2.

46 Otago Witness, 9 March 1878, p. 5.

47 10,000 people attended the Dunedin Cup on 23 March 1877, and 5000 on 28 February 1878: see Otago Witness, 31 March 1877, p. 17; and 9 March 1878, p. 5.

48 Alexander John Fowler to Martha Fowler, 26 February 1885.


50 ODT, 23 March 1886, p. 2.

51 Ibid., 24 March 1888, p. 2. The stakes were relatively low: £265 spread over six races. See Saunders, Historical Racing Records, 46.

52 As the holiday became less widely observed during the 1890s, so the race crowds diminished. The ODT attributed the “below average” showing in 1893 to retailers’ failure to keep a holiday. See 24 March 1893, p. 2. As noted above, Anniversary Day had not been kept as a holiday on several previous occasions.
In 1899 the ODT, despairing at the province’s failure to commemorate Anniversary Day with anything other than a holiday, suggested that “the not too appropriate coincidence of the races serves to minimise the special import of the anniversary.” Many Otago residents objected to racing, presumably making their feelings about the holiday decidedly ambivalent. Ethnicity, religion and class all contributed to individual attitudes to horse racing. A love of horse racing is often attributed to national identity, particularly English identity. For example, one racing historian states that “the inherent love of horse racing showed itself in every community of Englishmen who landed in New Zealand.” Scotsman Alexander Marjoribanks, writing about New Zealand in the 1840s, found it “curious that the English cannot settle down quietly, even in a new country, without wasting their time and money on these most absurd of all absurdities – horse-racing and public dinners.” By no means all Scots believed horse racing to be absurd – only football attracted larger sporting crowds in Scotland – but racing was undoubtedly less significant there than in England and Ireland. In Dunedin, Scots, despite their large population, appear to have been less involved in racing than colonists of other ethnicities, at least if the authorities controlling the sport are a fair indication.

The aversion of many Otago Scots to racing probably originated from religion as much as ethnicity. Miriam Redwood is surely correct when she claims that “the stern disapproval of the strict Presbyterian element of the community” created an obstacle for the early development of racing in Dunedin. Presbyterian objections to horse racing centred less on the racing itself than the gambling with which it was intimately connected. At the 1849 Otago Anniversary sports, “from the well-known

53 ODT, 23 March 1899, p. 4.
54 Saunders, Historical Racing Records, 17.
57 Saunders names many of the DJC officials in Historical Racing Records, 28-29, and officials from earlier days are listed in newspaper advertisements for racing events. I have attempted to trace those without unduly common names through biographical dictionaries and standard genealogical tools such as the NZSG Index [CD-ROM] ([Auckland]: New Zealand Society of Genealogists, 2000); and FamilySearch website (http://www.familysearch.org). These men (they were invariably male) are not easy to trace, but very few of those whose origin I have identified came from Scotland.
58 Redwood, Proud Silk, 80.
swiftness of Black Bess, a number of bets were made in her favour." As the races grew in size and popularity, so did the associated gambling. Although other events, including the Caledonian games, attracted betting, horse racing was its foremost arena. As the Illustrated New Zealand Herald's portrayal of the 1881 Dunedin Cup demonstrates (see Figure 38), gambling was not confined to horse racing. Numerous 'spielers' offered various games of chance and skill to racegoers.

Other evangelical Protestants, such as English Baptist Jack Fowler, joined Presbyterians in their disapproval of gambling. Fowler only attended the Dunedin Cup once, generally spending the Cup Day holiday on other recreational activities. He did not approve of gambling, as he explained to his mother: "one of our boarders has won over £100 and is going home he has been waiting for this day. He mixes a great deal with the sporting people and has devoted a good deal of time to it. I do not go in for any of this sort of thing as I do not care about getting money that way and certainly do not care to lose it." For Fowler, money had to be earned rather than won, an attitude which pervaded evangelical Protestantism. Rev. Rutherford Waddell, minister at Dunedin's St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, explained the "anti-social" nature of gambling:

[Society] was organised on the basis of reciprocity of service. Every member of the community only had a right in the community when he contributed some useful work or thought to that community ... When he won money from a person through a bet what did he give in return? Did he give him any sort of work? He gave nothing in return ... When we take something and give nothing back – when we take a bale of cloth out of the draper's shop and give nothing back, we call it robbery, and put the man in gaol. That, in plain terms, was what was done in gambling.

Waddell was noted for his concern for the poor and downtrodden. But his opposition to gambling focused on its morals as well as its potential to impoverish people, and in this approach he was typical of the anti-gambling campaigners of the late nineteenth century.

---
59 Otago News, 4 April 1849, p. 4.  
60 Grant, On a Roll, 39. During the early 1880s, "the Dunedin Cup created more interest in heavy wagering than any other race on the calendar. Even big Australian bookmakers came across to operate." See Saunders, Historical Racing Records, 39.  
61 Grant, On a Roll, 50.  
62 Alexander John Fowler to Martha Fowler, 26 February 1885.  
63 ODT, 9 August 1898, p. 3.  
64 On Waddell, see p. [46 of this chapter] below.
Figure 38 – Horse racing
Racing and gambling on Cup Day, Dunedin, 1881.

Source – Illustrated New Zealand Herald, March 1881, supplement.
From the late 1880s, the once minor Christian campaign against gambling grew in strength, joining the other moral campaigns of the period, notably that against alcohol. Clergy had prominent positions in the campaign, Baptist minister Rev. Alfred North chairing the Dunedin Anti-Gambling League.65 The Otago press showed little support for the League, declaring that the public was becoming increasingly intolerant of “legislative fetters” on behaviour.66 But opponents dismissed the anti-gambling crusaders too lightly, for they grew in influence in the early twentieth century, to the extent that they succeeded in having off-course betting outlawed in New Zealand for forty years, and bookmakers, both on and off-course, banned.67 Women played a large part in the cause – the Women’s Christian Temperance Union was particularly outspoken – as did some politicians. Although there was no single Christian attitude to gambling, with most Catholics and many Anglicans tolerant towards it, most gambling opponents were motivated by their Christian ideology.

Religion intersected with class in the divide between racing supporters and anti-gambling campaigners. In New Zealand, as in Britain, horse racing received most of its support from people at either end of the class spectrum.68 The social elite displayed their best thoroughbreds and best gowns at the races, organised by the governing class, but equally enjoyed by working class spectators.69 But many of the middle classes, and those of the working classes for whom respectability was a priority, kept away from these events and the moral scourge of gambling which infected them. At the level of stereotypes, wealthy English Anglicans and working class Irish Catholics and English Anglicans supported horse racing while middle class Scottish Presbyterians opposed it. In a colony dominated by Scottish Presbyterians, the dominance of Anniversary Day at various periods by horse racing was, indeed, unfortunate for the ‘proper’ keeping of the holiday.

65 ODT, 9 August 1898, p. 3. Other clergy present at its formation included Baptist ministers Josiah Hinton and John Muirhead; Rev. William Saunders (Congregationalist); Rev. William Ready (Methodist); and Presbyterian ministers Rutherford Waddell, William Kyd, James Fraser, Isaac Jolly and James Niven. Waddell played a major role in the campaign, devoting whole issues of the Christian Outlook, which he edited, to the cause. Branches of the Anti-Gambling League soon followed in other New Zealand centres. See Grant, On a Roll, 77-78.

66 Otago Witness, 18 August 1898, pp. 3 and 29.

67 Grant, On a Roll, 74-93. On Presbyterian involvement in the anti-gambling campaign, see also Laurie Barber, “1901-1930: The Expanding Frontier,” in Presbyterians in Aotearoa 1840-1990, ed. Dennis McEldowney (Wellington: Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1990), 78.

68 Grant, On a Roll, 48.

69 Malcolmson, Popular Recreations, 50-51; and Grant, On a Roll, 17.
Anniversary Day and commemoration

With the notable exception of the 1898 Jubilee, discussed below, little special commemorative activity took place on Otago Anniversary Day. The Otago Provincial Council, and later the Dunedin City Council, approved the taking of a holiday on 23 March, but made little other effort at organising public recognition of the anniversary. The firing of Anniversary Day salutes in 1860 and 1861 appears to have been exceptional. Friendly societies commonly adopted the holiday as a suitable occasion for picnics, and the Volunteers as an opportunity for exercises and rifle matches. Rather than any wish to commemorate Anniversary Day, this reflected the small number of occasions when local organisations could gather for a full day’s meeting or recreation. Jack Fowler, for some time a bugler in a Volunteer company, wrote to his mother after Anniversary Day 1887 that “The Vol[u]nteers had a turnout to W[ai]hola but did not muster very strong and did not get compl[i]mented either but as the Authorities are monopolising too many of the Holidays it is not very popular.” Fowler himself had spent the holiday picnicking on Signal Hill.

1869 saw an unusual flurry of special Anniversary Day activity. “The day was inaugurated as soon as midnight of the preceding day had passed, by a band of music marching through the town, and playing a number of jubilant airs ... in the evening ... a quantity of fireworks were let off in honour of the occasion.” These unusually exuberant celebrations may have been prompted by numerical significance. On this day the colony marked its twenty-first anniversary, the traditional age of majority, and both individuals and communities have long been prone to taking special notice of such anniversaries. This is, of course, particularly the case for fiftieth and hundredth anniversaries. While Anniversary Day continued to be generally distinguished by a lack of commemorative activity after this twenty-first anniversary aberration, special notice was again taken of the occasion in 1873, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the official colony. Prompted by this milestone, a group of pioneers organised a public meeting to establish an Otago Early Settlers’ Association, whose first task would be

---

70 In the absence of suitable officials to fire Dunedin’s sole gun the duty fell to the prisoners in Dunedin Gaol. See the diary of gaoler Henry Monson, 23 March 1860 and 25 March 1861, Misc-MS-1217, HL. Monson did not record the firing of salutes on Anniversary Day in the years 1851-1859, and neither was it mentioned in the press in those years.

71 Alexander John Fowler to Martha Fowler, 24 March 1887.

72 Otago Witness, 27 March 1869, p. 9. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to inform us who the band was, or who organised the music and fireworks.
the organisation of a reunion. The subsequent Early Settlers’ Picnic, held on Anniversary Day, attracted “a large number of the Old Identities” along with other members of the public. This event had the potential to become an annual occasion, but such was not to be. The full details of the Early Settlers’ Association’s progress are not known, but it was plagued by factionalism and did not survive long.

On 23 March 1899 G. M. Thomson recorded in his diary: “Anniversary day, and a holiday. There was no public celebration of the day as there ought to have been.” But Thomson, like most diarists, more commonly noted the anniversary of his own arrival in the colony than the provincial commemoration. Even Otago’s press did not consistently acknowledge the commemorative nature of the holiday. Through the 1850s and 1860s, the Otago Witness marked about half the Anniversary Days with editorials discussing the progress of the colony since its inception. Anniversary Day, like New Year’s Day, seemed an appropriate time for stocktaking. However, by the 1870s, special Anniversary Day editorials in the local press had died out, except for a brief recurrence in the ODT in the mid-1880s. Even this most simple of commemorative activities did not flourish in Otago, and without the influential support of the press there was little hope for more complex commemoration.

As John Gillis comments, there is nothing automatic about commemorative activity, and in new nations in Europe and North America “national commemorations were fiercely contested from the very beginning.” Public commemorative activity, he suggests, “is by definition social and political, for it involves the coordination of individual and group memories, whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation.” A lack of consensus clearly plagued Otago Anniversary Day from its very foundation. The first year’s dispute led to the withdrawal of the church party

73 Ibid., 1 March 1873, p. 5.
74 Ibid., 29 March 1873, p. 4.
75 Major disagreement occurred over the definition of an ‘early settler.’ Eventually, the organisation decided to include all who had arrived prior to the 1861 gold rush, but the “lack of unanimity, which was apparently characteristic of the early immigrants,” prevented its success. See Wendy-Anne Curtis, “A Germ of Perpetuity: The Otago Early Settlers’ Association 1898-1930” (BA Hons diss., University of Otago, 1987), 5-6; and Brosnahan, To Fame Undying, 7.
76 George Malcolm Thomson diary, 23 March 1899, AG-839, HL.
77 For example, see his diary entry for 22 March 1889.
from subsequent commemorations, the provincial and local governments failed to mark the occasion in any significant way apart from the taking of a holiday, and the first Otago Early Settlers’ Association failed to establish the holiday as a commemorative occasion for the pioneers. To become something more than a race day or recreational holiday, and to coordinate individual and group memories to create an accepted history of the province, Anniversary Day needed a champion, but none was forthcoming.

The Otago Settlement Jubilee

In 1898 Otago celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the first class colony settlers, and for once the province made a concerted effort to commemorate Anniversary Day. The huge success of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1897 encouraged the colonists to mount a special effort for the provincial Jubilee. The Diamond Jubilee had set a convenient precedent for the holding of successful celebrations, and the Jubilee Demonstration Committee, appointed by the Dunedin City Council, decided on a programme modelled on its predecessor, with church services, illuminations and fireworks and, as the highlight, a great procession. The organisers added two other major events: a conversazione for ‘old identities’ – the ubiquitous term for Otago’s early settlers – and a Jubilee Industrial Exhibition.

The Otago Jubilee celebrations enjoyed remarkable success, especially when compared with the usual failure to commemorate Anniversary Day, and the press trumpeted this success. On 23 March the ODT declared that “Otago celebrates her
Jubilee today under fair and happy auspices. There has been no discordant note during the preparations, and there is every reason for expecting that the celebration itself will be marked by harmony and general gladness.”\textsuperscript{82} Seán Brosnahan suggests that the Otago Jubilee demonstrated a high degree of harmony, and that there was “a very deliberate attempt by all involved to maintain a general feeling of goodwill and rein in the various little discontents that did emerge.”\textsuperscript{83} Belinda Leckie, likewise, suggests that participants in the Jubilee “concentrated on enjoying themselves,” overlooking differences of opinion; “divisive elements” were downplayed with the press determined that “nothing would go wrong.”\textsuperscript{84} But one does not need to search hard to detect a strong undercurrent of sectarianism, displayed in some of the Jubilee events despite the best efforts of the organising committee, and demonstrating something more than “little discontents.” While it cannot be denied that the Otago Jubilee was an enjoyable experience for most participants and by most measures remarkably successful, the sectarian undercurrents are worth exploring further, for they reveal much about religious and ethnic identity in Otago at this time. Here also is further evidence for the argument presented throughout this thesis: that religion pervaded colonial life.

**The Otago Jubilee and religion**

Three souvenir medals available to those celebrating the Jubilee demonstrate various elements of the occasion (see Figure 39). One conveniently commemorated the Otago Jubilee and the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee on one medal, with the Otago celebration marked by an image of the ‘first’ ship, the *John Wickliffe*. Here is clear evidence of the linking of the two Jubilees, the local occasion modelling itself on the large or small, marked the Diamond Jubilee with parades, bonfires and memorials, few places beyond Dunedin made special arrangements for the Otago Jubilee.

\textsuperscript{82} ODT, 23 March 1898, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{83} Brosnahan, *To Fame Undying*, 7.

\textsuperscript{84} Leckie, “Otago Settlement Jubilee,” especially 17 and 71. Leckie’s detailed study of the Jubilee notes some of the tensions created by the events of the week, but like the *Otago Witness* and ODT downplays them. Moreover, she fails to mention the most significant sectarian issue arising from the Jubilee – the deep offence caused to Catholics by the Governor’s supportive acceptance of a Loyal Orange Institution address – presumably because the newspapers on which her study is based omitted, undoubtedly with intent, to record this (see pp. 250-252 below for further discussion).
Figure 39 – Souvenir medals from the Otago Settlement Jubilee.

Top – Otago Jubilee medal (original 25mm diameter)
Centre – medal commemorating the Otago Jubilee and Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee (original 30mm diameter)
Bottom – Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland Jubilee medal (original 25mm diameter)

previous year’s empire wide event. Another medal also portrayed the John Wickliffe, in this case sailing into Dunedin Harbour, watched by a Maori clutching a taiaha (a long wooden weapon). This was a rare recognition of Otago’s first inhabitants, for while Maori participated in the Jubilee procession, it was the old identities who were widely hailed as the region’s pioneers. In addition to these generic Jubilee medals, Otago residents could also obtain a medal specifically celebrating the Presbyterian Church’s Jubilee, which coincided with that of the province. On this a portrait of Rev. Thomas Burns, the first minister, was backed by a burning bush, the Presbyterian emblem. Manufactured in London, the medal demonstrates the considerable effort the Presbyterian Church exerted in celebrating this as its own Jubilee.

Since the unfortunate tension over the 1849 anniversary arrangements, the Presbyterian Church had been practically invisible in Otago’s Anniversary Day commemorations. Most individual Presbyterian parishes recognised, like parishes of other denominations, the anniversary of their foundation with an annual service, commonly conducted by a visiting preacher, sometimes supplemented by a special social gathering. These celebrations generally took place on the Sunday closest to the anniversary of the first opening of the church building, but First Church, Dunedin, conducted its anniversary services on the Sunday closest to 23 March. The wider community apparently saw these services as just another parish anniversary and they seldom received any attention from the press. The parish’s clergy and congregation, however, were highly conscious of their role as founding Presbyterian body of the province. Some other Presbyterians regretted the lack of general recognition of the church’s anniversary. In 1891 the Clutha Presbytery recommended that all ministers in the district encourage their congregations to recognise the Otago Anniversary and acknowledge God’s hand in “the progress and prosperity that has run on almost unbroken since the arrival of the first settlers 43 years ago.” This, enthused the N. Z. Presbyterian, was “timely counsel,” noting that Anniversary Day had “all but fizzled out.” It now hoped that ministers would conform to the Presbytery’s suggestion and

---

85 The North Otago Museum, Oamaru, has an identical medal in its collection (NOM 97/1185). I am immensely grateful to the NOM staff and Aaron Braden of the OSM for locating these tiny and seldom requested items in their collections.

86 In 1897 the Otago Witness, perhaps with the following year’s Jubilee in mind, took more notice than usual of First Church’s anniversary service, to the remarkable extent that it published in full Rev. James Gibb’s sermon: see 25 March 1897, pp. 2 and 17.

87 ODT, 19 March 1891, p. 2.
“hold up the aims of the pilgrims to admiration” – in particular, their “indomitable perseverance” in advancing settlement and taking church and school to every district. For these Presbyterians, colonial progress and religion went hand in hand, the planting of churches throughout the region rightfully accompanying the “conversion of the waste places into a very Eden.” The anniversary, and eventually the Jubilee, of province and church could not be separated.

The Otago Jubilee Demonstration Committee knew that involving religion in the official celebrations would invite controversy. However, religion could not be ignored, particularly as the church had played a vital role in establishing the Otago colony. In an attempt to avoid trouble, the committee distanced itself from religious celebrations, instead setting aside the morning of 23 March for religion and leaving its organisation to the churches. The Presbyterian Church consented to this arrangement, but could hardly have been expected to be satisfied with one morning’s recognition of the religious significance of the Jubilee, and arranged its own extensive celebrations. The annual synod – the meeting of the Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland’s ruling body – took place in Jubilee week, ensuring the attendance of all the region’s Presbyterian clergy and a large number of its elders in Dunedin for the occasion. Beside its usual church services and business meetings, the Synod included various social events. Rev. John Christie of Waikouaiti recorded a busy week of engagements during his visit to Dunedin for the Jubilee Synod. In addition to the Synod business meetings, he watched the procession, visited the exhibition and attended a garden party at the home of prominent businessman Robert Glendining, held especially for the Synod. On Friday, he went to the First Church conversazione, to which the Synod was invited. There he met a most distinguished guest, the Governor, proudly writing in his diary: “Spoke to His Excellency Lord Ranfurly.”

Alongside these fleeting celebrations the Synod had arranged a more permanent memorial of the Jubilee, commissioning Rev. James Chisholm of Tokomairiro to

88 N.Z. Presbyterian, 1 April 1891, p. 184.
90 The Synod was by now an impressive body, comprising seventy-three ministers and seventy-four elders. In honour of the Jubilee, distinguished ministers from Scotland, the Australian colonies and other parts of New Zealand attended. See John Collie, The Story of the Otago Free Church Settlement 1848 to 1948: A Century’s Growth by a Southern Sea (Christchurch & Dunedin: Presbyterian Bookroom, [1948]), 124-125.
91 John Christie diary, 23-25 March 1898, AG 102, OSM.
write a Jubilee history of the church. A typical celebratory history, it elaborated the church's progress. Lavishly illustrated and written in an entertaining and colourful style, *Fifty Years Syne* also proved very popular.92

The most notable religious element of the Jubilee celebrations was, of course, the special commemorative church services. On Sunday 20 March the services in most Dunedin churches made special mention of the Jubilee. At First Church, "both morning and evening vast congregations assembled ... and the proceedings were most impressive, being characterised by vigour and devotion."93 On Jubilee Day, Wednesday 23 March, the Jubilee committee had, as noted above, set aside the period before eleven in the morning for religious observance. The Dunedin Ministers' Association arranged two "united thanksgiving" services, one at Knox Presbyterian Church and the other at Trinity Wesleyan Church. These services, both crowded, demonstrated an unusual degree of denominational cooperation, with ministers from Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Primitive Methodist, Congregational and Baptist churches all making contributions. The main address at the Trinity service came from Presbyterian Rev. Isaac Jolly, who made a pleasing reference to Charles Creed, the Wesleyan missionary stationed at Waikouaiti before the 'first' settlers arrived. But interdenominational cooperation could only stretch so far. In recounting the first meeting between Creed and Burns he commented that "One is glad that neither was a mere High Churchman; ready to disgrace the occasion with schismatic sectarianism." And in praising the religion of the early colonists Jolly expressed relief that it was "free from degrading superstition. We have only to look at Mexico and Chili [sic] and Peru to see to what an extent fair lands may suffer from the priestcraft and degrading superstitions of Rome."94 Anglicans and Catholics were notably absent from these united services, and evidently from the Dunedin Ministers' Association which had organised them. Although the Jubilee committee had refrained from arranging religious commemorations, the Knox Church service acquired *de facto* official recognition through the attendance of the Governor and the Mayor.95


93 *Otago Witness*, 24 March 1898, p. 34.

94 Ibid., 31 March 1898, pp. 21-22.

95 Some months earlier the NZT had expressed concern that a Presbyterian Jubilee service might be "regarded as in some sense official." Catholics were "prepared to join heartily with their fellow-citizens in making the celebration a success, but anything like an official recognition of
Not all churchgoers attended these united services. The official Presbyterian Jubilee service at First Church, graced by numerous distinguished members of the Synod, attracted a large congregation. Here, as at several other Jubilee services, all joined to sing “O God of Bethel, by whose hand Thy people still are fed, who through this weary pilgrimage hast all our fathers led,” the hymn sung by the departing Philip Laing migrants fifty years earlier. Thus, “the last vocal sounds that reached the shores of Scotland from the pioneer pilgrim band voiced the words that thrilled the vast assembly at the Jubilee thanksgiving.” The singing, commented the Otago Witness, “was intensely devotional.”96 Elsewhere, also, Jubilee services included stirring music. A “bright and attractive service” at the Jewish Synagogue and choral services at St Matthew’s Anglican Church and St Paul’s Anglican Cathedral all included Handel’s “Hallelujah” chorus.

Summaries of the day’s addresses appeared in the press and the publication of Anglican Bishop Samuel Nevill’s anniversary message to his St Paul’s congregation outraged some Otago residents. While vaunting the supposed current ability of Christians to work together, Nevill’s message did little to foster such unity. He reminded his congregation of the problems the Presbyterian establishment had created for Otago’s early Anglicans, calling to mind “the difficulties, even hindrances, placed — alas! that he should say it, placed designedly — in the way of their co-religionists.” More provoking to non-Anglicans, however, were his remarks acclaiming Anglicanism as the true descendant of the primitive church: “Here, in the oldest ecclesiastical building in Dunedin still used for divine worship, which may therefore claim to be the mother church of the city, they met as a separate communion — a communion which may never surrender her distinctive character, however much she may regret the numberless divisions which paralyse the strength of Christianity itself, because hers is an authority of primitive purity combined with unbroken descent.” Furthermore, Presbyterianism had arisen “from evils in the church, from political turmoil and arrogance and pride, from wrath and rashness on this side and that.”97

96 Otago Witness, 31 March 1898, p. 20.
97 Ibid., p. 22.
Nevill’s staunch assertion of his own denomination’s primacy presumably arose from the frustration of his position, unique to New Zealand, as the leading Anglican cleric in a region dominated by Presbyterians. Nevill was not alone in making provocative comments in his Jubilee address, for, as noted above, Rev. Isaac Jolly had been highly critical of Catholics and High Church Anglicans in his sermon. But Catholics and Anglicans, apparently accustomed to such Presbyterian anti-ritualist dogma, allowed Jolly’s critique to pass without public comment. Evangelical Protestants, however, would not let Nevill’s remarks slip by unnoticed. An exchange of letters to the ODT ensued, some highly critical of the address and others rallying to Nevill’s support. Rev. J. Meiklejohn, a deputy from the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, responded to Nevill’s sermon in his address to the Jubilee Presbyterian Synod on Thursday evening. He “regretted that the peace and harmony of Jubilee time should have had a note of discord uttered by a dignitary of another church.” To the applause of his audience, Meiklejohn disputed Nevill’s claim that episcopalianism represented the “primitive and divinely-constituted order.” Episcopalian government was not, argued Meiklejohn, to be found in the New Testament and, moreover, Presbyterian principles were undoubtedly the very best.

Meanwhile, another sectarian dispute was brewing, prompted by a rather surprising source: the Governor (see Figure 40). Lord Ranfurly had been appointed Governor of New Zealand in 1897 and made his first visit to Otago in honour of the Jubilee. He came from a noble Anglo-Irish family with large landholdings in County Tyrone, Ulster. The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand (1966) claims that Ranfurly was “universally admired by the people.” He certainly achieved popularity with many on his 1898 visit to Otago, the ODT noting that his “easy and unconventional manner has made him troops of friends.” But Ranfurly also managed to offend local Catholics and possibly High Church Anglicans as well.

---

98 ODT, 28 March 1898, p. 3; 29 March 1898, p. 2; 2 April 1898, p. 6; 7 April 1898, p. 3; and 9 April 1898, p. 6. Amongst the correspondents in this heated exchange of views were Rev. Isaac Jolly and Bishop Nevill himself.

99 Otago Witness, 31 March 1898, p. 25.

100 A. H. McLintock, ed., An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand (Wellington: Government Printer, 1966), 3: 44. McLintock also hints at a degree of arrogance: “He had a strong sense of the dignity of his position as the Queen’s representative.”

101 ODT, 28 March 1898, p. 4.
Sir Uchter John Mark Knox, the Fifth Earl of Ranfurly, served as Governor of New Zealand from 1897 until 1904. Photographed by Henry Winkelmann, date and location unknown.

Source – Auckland City Libraries, 1-W803.
The trouble began immediately on Ranfurly’s arrival in Dunedin on Monday 21 March. At his official welcome the Governor received two loyal addresses: one from the Mayor and Council, and the other from the Orangemen of Dunedin. Ranfurly’s reply to the latter address was undoubtedly sympathetic:

> It is with much pleasure that I receive your address of welcome … With the life-long knowledge I possess of your institution, gained by years of residence among its members, I am confident that her Majesty the Queen owns no more law-abiding or industrious citizens than the Orangemen of Ulster, and I am glad to know that here on these distant shores, as well as over the vast continents of America and Australasia, you have carried your old traditions, and, remembering the darkness of the past, are upholding the principles of civil and religious liberty which have made our country what she is, and which, I trust, you may ever enjoy. 102

The ODT and Otago Witness published the address and reply without comment, but the Tablet did not hesitate to criticise the Queen’s representative for this “eulogism of the Orange Society,” which “took his hearers by surprise. He quite unnecessarily imparted thus early into the Jubilee celebrations a highly regrettable and jarring note of sectarianism.” 103 Soon afterwards a heated correspondence in Dunedin’s Evening Star began. ‘Catholic Citizen’ regretted that Ranfurly had “gone out of his way to identify himself with the principles and practices of that now very generally discredited society,” the Orange Order, suggesting that “there can be no ground whatever for introducing the bitter memories and sectarian animosity with which it is indelibly associated into this young colony.” 104 Several replies asserted the loyalty of the order, its right to address the Governor, and the Governor’s right action in replying to such a loyal address. “There is no ground whatever for saying that the Orange Society is an insignificant body,” claimed ‘A Protestant Woman.’ “Its numbers are large and its influence has been felt more than once, and will be felt again on occasion. The Orangemen are quite pleased with the stand taken by the Governor, and rejoice to think that one in his high position has the courage of his opinions, and will uphold the Crown, Constitution, and Protestant Bible.” 105

---

102 Otago Witness, 24 March 1898, p. 44.
103 NZT, 25 March 1898, p. 15. See also the more detailed criticism of Ranfurly’s actions on p. 3.
104 Evening Star (Dunedin), 25 March 1898, supplement, p. 1.
105 Evening Star, 26 March 1898, supplement, p. 2. For further letters, all in support of the Orange Order, see 28 March 1898, p. 2; 2 April 1898, supplement, p. 4; and 6 April 1898, p. 2. The editor then called a halt to letters on the matter. See pp. 242-286 below for further discussion of the Orange Order in Otago.
Ranfurly’s wide popularity evidently arose from his genius for friendship: wherever he went he expressed a warm interest in the activities and priorities of those he met. This approach generally ensured approval, but occasionally his warm endorsement of one group offended others. This had been the case with his reply to the Orange Order’s address, and later in the week he compounded the offence to Catholics in his reply to an address from the Presbyterian Synod. “Although personally a member of the Church of England, and attached as I am to her services and teachings, I highly disapprove of any innovations that would tend to the re-establishment of errors repudiated by England at the Reformation,” said Ranfurly. He declared his sympathy “with the work of any branch of the Protestant Church whose object is the propagation of the pure Gospel, derived from the Bible alone, and undisturbed by doctrines which can neither be corroborated by Scripture nor countenanced by common sense.”

This address undoubtedly pleased its immediate audience, but again put the Tablet into a spin. “Lord Ranfurly Again,” read the headline in the Catholic paper, which decried this “straight-out tilt at Rome.” Surely, “we are entitled to require that he refrain from taking sides in embittered party feuds and that the Catholic body – like every other section of the community – be protected against the offensive epithets from such an unusual and unexpected source as the lips of vice-royalty.” The Tablet also drew attention to Ranfurly’s “thinly-veiled sneer at the High Church party among the Anglican body.” Ranfurly’s personal preference for Protestantism of a non-ritualist stamp was clear in his public statements. Ironically, when Anglican Bishop Nevill expressed the wish that the Governor might “extend his unifying influence to ecclesiastical matters,” Ranfurly “laughingly replied that he preferred not to meddle with fire.” He had certainly stirred up sectarian embers during his southern visit.

The ‘secular’ press attempted to keep the fire in check. It diligently reported various sermons and addresses and letters but declined to make editorial comment, and the Evening Star drew an early halt to letters to the editor supporting the Orange Order. The most significant comments on the sectarian trouble came from Civis, the

106 NZT, 1 April 1898, p. 1.
107 Ibid., 1 April 1898, p.1.
108 Otago Witness, 31 March 1898, p. 9. Nevill’s comment was in response to Ranfurly’s speech to Dunedin’s Anglican representatives, wherein the Governor suggested charitable and philanthropic societies should, wherever possible, amalgamate.
Otago Witness columnist. “A heresy hunt, a Ritualist row, a contest of anathemas between prelate and presbyter – for these things this is not the time,” suggested Civis, also commenting that “It doesn’t strike me as a very serious trouble.” He insightfully attributed much of the debate to the reporting of all the Jubilee sermons in the press. None of the supposedly offensive remarks should cause astonishment: “It is the regular thing; similar samples might be picked up any Sunday if you went to the right places for them.” Publication, however, meant “these ear-torturing dissonances are all audible at once.”

Civis also administered a mild rebuke to the Governor. Dunedin usually had the good sense to avoid Irish “party demonstrations,” suggested Civis. “If a Governor desired to live in peace with all men he would not help to revive sectarian feelings.”

Elsewhere, Ranfurly’s comments came in for harsher criticism. Rev. Henry Cleary, the Tablet’s new editor, had a well established reputation as defender of Catholicism and critic of the Orange Order. His staunch criticism of Ranfurly in the Tablet publicised the matter throughout New Zealand and further afield. Criticism of Ranfurly’s actions appeared in Melbourne newspapers, and Irish Nationalist politician John Dillon raised the matter in the British House of Commons. Auckland Catholic Michael Sheahan had written to Dillon of “the greatest indignation and contempt” prevailing “from one end of the colony to the other” over the affair.

The incidents and debates surrounding the religious commemoration of the Otago Jubilee suggest two important facets of late-nineteenth century Otago society. First, there was a strong undercurrent of sectarianism, never far from the surface of colonial life. Secondly, many residents did not wish to see such sectarianism publicly displayed, many paying lip-service at least to a desire for Christian unity and tolerance. The Otago public was apparently quite accustomed to hearing messages supporting their own version of Christianity and denouncing others from the pulpit, and the presence of an assertively Irish Catholic paper in Dunedin kept sectarian debate alive, despite the attempts of the ‘secular’ press to resist being drawn into it. Public tolerance of extreme bigotry did, however, have limits, despite the pervasive

109 Otago Witness, 31 March 1898, p. 3. Although the dates when various writers held the position of Civis are unclear, it is likely that A. R. Fitchett, Dunedin’s Anglican Dean, was Civis at this time (see the note on p. 111 above).

110 ODT, 2 April 1898, p. 2.

111 Rory Sweetman, “New Zealand Catholicism, War, Politics and the Irish Issue 1912-1922” (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1990), 71-72. The quotations are from Sheahan to Dillon, 9 July 1898, as cited by Sweetman.
nature of its milder form. Many regretted to see the introduction of Irish party disputes to the colony, and in contrast to other parts of New Zealand, Irish parading traditions did not gain any foothold in nineteenth-century Otago.\footnote{On Irish parading traditions in New Zealand, see Patrick Coleman, "Transplanted Irish Institutions: Orangism and Hibernianism in New Zealand 1877-1910" (MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1993), 63-78.} Two powerful opposing impulses thus directed the behaviour of Otago residents: they indulged in sectarian debate, but at the same time resented overly extreme public dispute and outright violence.

The Jubilee Procession

The procession was the highlight of the Jubilee; the “greatest spectacular display ever seen in the streets of this city or in the colony.”\footnote{Otago Witness, 31 March 1898, p. 22.} A close look at the procession allows us to determine the way in which Otago viewed itself at this time: in a procession, a community displays itself to itself in “a collective act of identification and celebration.”\footnote{Simon Gunn, The public culture of the Victorian middle class: Ritual and authority in the English industrial city 1840-1914 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 163.} Processions generally demonstrate power relations and can be effective propaganda favouring an existing political, social or religious establishment.\footnote{Processions may also be sites of dispute rather than consensus within a community, as when a parade representing one party only asserts its authority by displaying itself in the public space of the streets. People use parades, suggests Susan Davis, for “building, maintaining, and confronting power relations.” See Susan G. Davis, Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1936), 5. Amongst numerous studies of processions / parades, I have found the following, besides Gunn and Davis, most convincing or useful in guiding my own interpretation: Mary Ryan, “The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-Century Social Order,” in The New Cultural History, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 131-153; Lily Kong and Brenda S. A. Yeoh, “The construction of national identity through the production of ritual and spectacle: An analysis of National Day parades in Singapore,” Political Geography 16 (1997): 213-239; and Barbro Blehr, “Sacred Unity, Sacred Similarity: Norwegian Constitution Day Parades,” Ethnology 38 (1999): 175-189.} Their effectiveness arises from their ability to entertain both spectators and participants with their colour, movement and music. The occasion of this procession – the Otago Settlement Jubilee – also played a major role in its format. The organisers attempted to foster a united collective memory about the foundation and historical development of the province. The procession displayed a vision of Otago’s past which reinforced its display of the current social order of Otago.

The organisation of the procession lay in the hands of the Processional and Sports Committee, a sub-group of the Jubilee Demonstration Committee. It included
several prominent Dunedin citizens, among them Lieutenant-Colonel William Webb, Commander of the Otago Volunteers, accountant Thomas Graham, solicitor Alfred Barclay and dentist Septimus Myers. But some members came from humbler backgrounds, for example, carpenter Charles Brundell, clerk George Crichton and tobacconist Robert McLellan, possibly representatives of friendly societies or trades organisations.\textsuperscript{116} Later additions increased the committee’s elite membership, with local parliamentarians and prominent businessmen invited to join.\textsuperscript{117}

Although the design of the procession originated with the organising committee, who invited the participants and arranged the order of the march, they cast such invitations widely. Moreover, the participants themselves had considerable control over their representation. Organisations selected their own costumes, banners and music. Some individuals selected from a range of possible involvements, thus prioritising among multiple identities. A man might need to choose, for example, between marching with his friendly society, trade union or Volunteer company. In such decisions, the larger bodies generally won, and the friendly societies prevailed over the unions. Several organisations declined their invitations because they could not muster sufficient members to make a good showing. For example, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners declared that “as most of its members belonged to friendly societies it would not be represented as a branch in the procession.”\textsuperscript{118} The Tailoresses’ Union’s did not disclose the reason for its refusal of its invitation to join the procession.\textsuperscript{119} Did the usual male dominance of such events — marching in a procession was a decidedly masculine activity — lead them to feel uncomfortable about participating? Even their invitation is noteworthy, and a reflection of the committee’s willingness to involve a broad cross-section of society in the procession. Women remained a minority of those marching, but their involvement was considerably greater than was usually the case at such events. Children also participated, mostly as school cadets and in friendly society displays.

The committee encouraged businesses to participate by offering a prize for the best trades display, and the opportunity for excellent publicity no doubt also

\textsuperscript{116} The full committee is listed in ODT, 22 December 1897, p. 4. Occupations traced in the 1897 Stone’s Directory.

\textsuperscript{117} ODT, 7 January 1898, p. 3. The committee met weekly from this time, its proceedings reported each Saturday in the ODT.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 22 January 1898, p. 6; and 29 January 1898, p. 6.
motivated such participation. Old identities and early gold miners received their invitations through the press. The committee approached Tame Parata, MHR, enquiring about “the part likely to be taken in the procession by the Maoris.” They later “received with pleasure” a letter from Karitane Maori seeking approval for their plans to take part. The committee evidently failed to invite Otago’s Chinese community to participate, as they receive no mention in the committee’s reports or descriptions of the parade. This absence of Chinese from the Jubilee celebrations is striking, especially when compared with their active participation in royal celebrations, discussed in Chapter Six. The Chinese may have been sidelined chiefly because they were culturally alien from the majority. In an era of increasing distrust of the ‘yellow peril,’ this appears likely. Their association with the goldrushes, towards which Otago’s historical orthodoxy was decidedly ambivalent, may also have contributed towards their exclusion.

The parade had three sections. The first included numerous societies, unions and trades displays; the second section was historical, with groups representing significant players in Otago’s early history; and the third section included the dignitaries and military. The order of the procession is of note. Parades commonly present a society in hierarchical fashion, with participants marching in an order indicative of their rank. But the Jubilee procession organisers made a concerted effort to avoid such suggestions of hierarchy, an indication of the relatively egalitarian nature of Otago society. Certainly, the dignitaries appeared separately from the rank and file, but social class did not evolve as an organising structure within the event. Owners, foremen, tradesmen and unskilled workers appeared together in company displays. Friendly society membership, and presumably, therefore, their representation in the procession, also crossed class divides. The political dignitaries included the highest ranked citizen in the land, the Governor, head of a noble Anglo-Irish family. But alongside him rode two important New Zealand politicians, Premier

---

119 Ibid., 29 January 1898, p. 6.
120 Ibid., 7 January 1898, p. 3; and 29 January 1898, p. 6. Later further efforts were made to bring the invitation to early miners to their attention: see ODT, 26 February 1898, p. 2.
121 Ibid., 22 January 1898, p. 6.
122 Ibid., 26 February 1898, p. 2. Taare Parata was son of Tame Parata.
123 Ryan, “American Parade,” 140; and Gunn, Public culture, 169.
Richard Seddon and Minister of Lands John McKenzie, one the son of a school headmaster and the other of a small tenant farmer: achievement mattered more than birth in the colonial world. Moreover, the organising committee actively avoided ranking participants in the first section of the procession, selecting their order by ballot.\textsuperscript{125} Ethnicity, occupation and historical role, not social class or rank, formed the dominant organising categories of the event.

On the day, the weather was perfect and the procession ran without a hitch; a credit, as the \textit{Witness} noted, to Marshal William Woodland and his team (see Figure 41).\textsuperscript{126} Marshalling the event was no small task, as about 2500 people marched in the procession, watched by an enormous crowd, estimated by the \textit{Witness}, perhaps optimistically, as “not far short of 100,000 people.”\textsuperscript{127} Dunedin had never before experienced such a large crowd. Many lined the streets, while others watched from the tops of buildings and through windows (see Figure 42). For some spectators, the crowd itself was the most remarkable aspect of the day. G. M. Thomson and his children “went along town and got on to the front roof of the Colonial Bank building, where we had a splendid view of the crowds in the streets and of the procession. It was estimated that about 100,000 people were in the streets, and the whole formed a beautiful picture.”\textsuperscript{128} Of course, not everyone enjoyed a crowd. An old identity from the Roxburgh district, accustomed to a much quieter life, noted “Man, there were terrible crowds at the Jubilee. You had to elbow your way along the streets most times.”\textsuperscript{129} But the crowd remained good natured and in festive mood, and no reports of trouble appeared.

\textsuperscript{125} The only exception was the fire brigade, selected to head the procession for an entirely practical reason, “that being the position they could most readily quit in the event of their services being suddenly required.” \textit{Otago Witness}, 31 March 1898, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Otago Witness Jubilee Supplement}, 31 March 1898, p. 5. Woodland, a painter, had impressed the community at the previous year’s procession for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee when, mounted and clad Robin Hood style, he led the Ancient Order of Foresters: see \textit{Otago Witness}, 24 June 1897, supplement, p. 3; and Gertrude Clara Dyer, “How I spent Record Reign Day,” amongst her notes and reminiscences, MS-0117, HL.

\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Otago Witness}, 31 March 1898, p. 22; and \textit{Otago Witness Jubilee Supplement}, 31 March 1898, p. 5. The former gives a detailed description of the procession, the latter a shorter one. The \textit{Evening Star’s Otago Jubilee Record}, p. 10, also gives an account of the procession, stating that “Roughly estimated the crowd could not come far short of 75,000 people.” All three accounts give lists with numbers of participants but these vary significantly in the estimated numbers of some groups.

\textsuperscript{128} G. M. Thomson diary, 23 March 1898.

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Evening Star Otago Jubilee Record}, 12. This was a report originally published in the \textit{Mount Benger Mail}, written by an unnamed resident of the district who had arrived in Otago in 1858.
Figure 41 – Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (1)
Marshal William Woodland and deputy lead the procession along Princes Street, dressed in Ancient Order of Foresters costumes. The fire brigades follow.

Source – *Evening Star Otago Jubilee Record*, 31 March 1898, p. 16.
Figure 42 - The crowd in Dunedin on Jubilee day
Princes Street as viewed from Brown, Ewing’s corner shortly before the procession.

Source – *Evening Star Otago Jubilee Record*, 31 March 1898, p.15.
Music played an important part in the festivities. Before the procession commenced, a band stationed in the Octagon “played enlivening music from time to time” to entertain the crowds.\textsuperscript{130} Gertrude Dyer recalled that “we heard the sound of music and then we knew that the procession had fairly started … All the time the procession was moving a continual strain of music had been kept up, when one band stopped another would commence.”\textsuperscript{131} Unfortunately, there is no record of any of the music played by the bands, so it is impossible to make any detailed interpretation of its effect. We can only assume that music added an emotive and stirring element to the occasion. Six Dunedin bands performed, supplemented by two visiting bands. The Gaelic Society invited the Invercargill Pipe Band to the celebrations, and the committee decided to pay £10 towards their expenses, aware of “the great attraction which bagpipe music has for many people and the interest that attaches to a body of Highlanders in costume.”\textsuperscript{132} But when the South Canterbury Protestant Band wrote requesting “a little financial assistance” towards its participation, the committee refused the request.\textsuperscript{133} The Timaru-based band supported the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society (PAFS) and Orange Order in the procession and perhaps its association with these sectarian organisations contributed to the committee’s refusal.

About 800 friendly society members marched in the Otago Jubilee procession.\textsuperscript{134} They formed the largest contingent of participants, a reflection of their significance in many people’s lives. New Zealand historical studies of friendly societies often concentrate on the financial and welfare benefits offered by these groups, but their convivial elements must not be underestimated.\textsuperscript{135} Otago’s friendly

\textsuperscript{130} 

\textsuperscript{131} Dyer, “How I spent the Otago Jubilee Day.”

\textsuperscript{132} \textit{ODT}, 12 February 1898, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 5 March 1898, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{134} As noted above, different sources gave different estimates of the numbers participating. By the \textit{Evening Star Otago Jubilee Record} account, 830 friendly society members participated, according to the \textit{Otago Witness}, 930.

\textsuperscript{135} Two important studies of the friendly societies make only brief mention of their convivial aspects: see Jennifer Carlyon, “Friendly Societies 1842-1939,” \textit{New Zealand Journal of History} 32 (1998): 121-142; and David Thomson, \textit{A World Without Welfare: New Zealand’s Colonial Experiment} (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998), 35-51. Erik Olsson, however, notes the significance of conviviality, and of public displays, for the friendly societies: see his essay “Friendly Societies in New Zealand, 1840-1990,” in \textit{Social Security Mutualism: The Comparative History of Mutual Benefit Societies}, ed. Marcel van der Linden (Berne: Lang, 1996), 177-206, especially 189-190; and \textit{Building the New World}, 36-38. Studies of English friendly societies show that the convivial aspects of these groups were essential in attracting members: social security benefits alone were not sufficient
societies were highly visible on holidays and at civic ceremonials: as the Oddfellows' own history notes, "No excuse was ever too slight, nor public event too unimportant for Odd Fellows if they could make some sort of display from it."\textsuperscript{136} Processions allowed the friendly societies to assert their important role in the community, to promote their organisation to potential new members and, not least, to enjoy themselves.

The demonstrations of the three largest societies – the Ancient Order of Foresters (AOF), the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows (MUIOOOF) and the Ancient Order of Druids (AOD) – included complex tableaux borne on horse-drawn lorries (see Figures 43-46 for examples of similar displays). The Foresters presented three different scenes on lorries generously decorated with evergreens. Two featured pastoral scenes of shepherdesses and sheep, and the third portrayed a visit by sick-visitors to an ailing member, providing both sympathy and the society sick allowance. The MUIOOOF had a tableau illustrating 'Faith, Hope and Charity.' The Druids presented the most outlandish display. Their three lorries represented 'Youth,' 'Manhood,' and 'Old Age.' The first showed young members, "dressed in skins, etc, and armed with bows and arrows and spears," being instructed by an elder. The second portrayed "Caractacus, the British king, going to war to defend his country from the attack of the Romans ... The skin dresses and wild-looking headgear, curious shields, and strange weapons rendered the evergreen-surrounded warriors very picturesque." The third AOD tableau showed elders of the order receiving honours "under one of the ivy-clad stones of Stonehenge."\textsuperscript{137}

Beside such extravagant scenes, the displays of some groups were decidedly restrained. Ninety members of the Gaelic Society, for example, wore tartan ribbons to denote their membership of this ethnic organisation. Most participants wore similar favours, badges or sashes. Many societies also bore banners and the HACBS took this inducement to maintain the societies' popular appeal. See P. H. J. H. Gosden, \textit{The Friendly Societies in England 1815-1875} (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1960), 115-137. In colonial friendly societies with specific ethnic or religious connections the fraternal aspects of membership were particularly important. Rory Sweetman remarks that "The key factor in the Hibernian [Australasian Catholic Benefit] Society's foundation, efflorescence and longevity was its Catholic identity." See Rory Sweetman, \textit{Faith and Fraternalism: A History of the Hibernian Society in New Zealand 1869-2000} (Dunedin: Hibernian Society, 2002), 81.

\textsuperscript{136} H. W. Gourlay, \textit{Odd Fellowship in New Zealand: A Century of Progress} (Christchurch: Grand Master & Board of Directors of the Order in New Zealand, [1942]), 136-137.

\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Evening Star Otago Jubilee Record}, 10. An almost identical account appears in \textit{Otago Witness}, 31 March 1898, p. 22.
Figure 43 – Ancient Order of Druids (1)
A tableau presented by the Druids at the procession marking the opening of the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, Dunedin, 1889, photographed by H. J. Gill. The order had similar displays in the Otago Settlement Jubilee procession.

Source – Hocken Library c/neg E1816/3A.
Figure 44 – Ancient Order of Druids (2)
Another view of the Druids’ display for the exhibition procession.

Source - Hocken Library c/neg E1816/3A.
Figure 45 – Friendly society display
An unidentified friendly society display in Dunedin, date unknown. This may be the Ancient Order of Foresters, as they presented a similar tableau, with identical banner, at the Otago Settlement Jubilee procession.

Source – Hocken Library, c/neg E5721/-.
Figure 46 – Oddfellows
A display by the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows, Dunedin. Date and occasion unknown.

Source – Hocken Library c/neg E5768/41.
opportunity to display its “handsome new banner.” Made by the Dominican nuns, this banner had, suggested the Tablet,

perhaps, no equal in the procession. It is made of costly green silk, with bullion fringe, and measures about 8x5 feet. It has on the front the sunburst and the Celtic cross, with the motto: In hoc signo vinces, and the Hibernian motto: ‘Faith, Hope, Charity.’ This is flanked by the Irish and Australian coats of arms, shaded over with New Zealand ferns. Underneath is a picture typifying charity. The whole is surmounted by the figure of an angel, and surrounded by golden shamrocks. The back of the banner bears a golden harp and the inscription: ‘God save Ireland,’ surrounded also by golden shamrocks. What did the Governor think of this banner, one wonders? If his apparent favourites, the Orange Order, made an impressive display in the procession, it was not recounted in the press, which besides omitting to describe their display even disagreed about the number of Orangemen marching. Parading alongside the closely associated PAFS, it is likely that the Orange Order carried at least one banner (a large banner, probably belonging to this group, is just visible in one of the photographs of the procession – see Figure 47). Perhaps one was the splendid banner, imported from Belfast by the Dunedin Orange Lodge in 1880, “bearing on one side an equestrian portrait of his Majesty William III, and on the other side the Bible and Crown, significant of the loyalty of the Order.” Hibernian and Orange banners and regalia are notorious for inciting both pride and resentment in onlookers: it was the sight of Orange regalia which provoked an 1879 riot at Timaru. But there is no evidence of any negative reaction to the HACBS and Orange displays in the Otago Jubilee procession, although the press’s failure to describe the Orange demonstration is significant, indicating perhaps a wish to avoid fostering support for sectarian Protestant organisations. Of course, those most likely to object were the committed Hibernians and Orangemen,
Figure 47 - Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (2)
The start of the procession from the Triangle (now known as Queen’s Gardens). The display at the front appears to be that of the Shipwrights’ Union, which included a lifeboat. As they were followed by a band and then the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society and Loyal Orange Institution, the banners to the left of the picture probably belong to those organisations.

Source - Hocken Library, c/n E6887/1, from Otago Daily Times and Witness Otago Settlement Jubilee Supplementary Number, p. 2.
Figure 48 - Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (3)
The dignitaries, accompanied by the Otago Hussars, process through the Octagon. The plume of the governor’s hat is visible in the first carriage, and Premier Richard Seddon follows him in the second.

Source – Otago Settlers Museum, Box 7 No 291.
The dignitaries consisted entirely of politicians, ranging from Dunedin councillors to foreign consuls to national parliamentarians to the Governor and his aides. Ironically, however, amongst all these male dignitaries the crowd reserved their greatest interest for a woman: Lady Ranfurly, wife of the Governor (see Figure 49). Gertrude Dyer briefly noted the Governor and Premier and dismissed those with them as “men of some note.” What drew her breathless attention, “what everybody [was] looking for,” was “Lady Ranfurly in a carriage drawn by a pair of White horses ... She was dressed in green silk ... and was bowing from one side of the carriage to the other. She looked a handsome woman, dark, but with a very white skin, and had a most sweet and gracious smile.”

The procession of Otago’s history

Otago did not have a tradition of Anniversary Day processions. This was a novel and one-off event. The organisers could, however, look to processions held on other occasions in inventing the design of this one. Many elements of this event were familiar to those who had attended other Otago processions: there was nothing new about the procession’s route through the central city, or the participation of the friendly societies, military, dignitaries and trades organisations and displays. What made this procession different was its historical section: here the organisers displayed and promoted a particular view of Otago’s past.

In contrast with the first section of the procession, the order of the participants here became significant. Maori, as first residents of the province, came first (see Figure 50). Maori formed “One of the most striking features of the procession ... Many of them were adorned in true Native costume, and their greenstone ornaments were of priceless value. All along the route they were greeted with sympathetic cheers.” Undoubtedly among those cheering was Gertrude Dyer, who described the Maori as “the centre of attraction ... the foremost were the Maori princesses who were driving in two or three Whitechapel buggies with different kinds of Maori clubs and carved work in their hand and all dressed in Native costume, then came a large drag full of Maori men and children.”

---

148 Dyer, “How I spent the Otago Jubilee Day.”
149 Evening Star Otago Jubilee Record, 10.
150 Dyer, “How I spent the Otago Jubilee Day.”
Figure 49 – Lady Ranfurly
The Governor’s elegant wife attracted considerable interest during the Otago Jubilee procession. Photograph by Herman John Schmidt, about 1899.

Source – Alexander Turnbull Library, Schmidt Collection, G-1898-1/1-. 
Figure 50 - Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (4)
Some of the Maori participants.

Source – *Evening Star Otago Jubilee Record*, 31 March 1898, p.16.
reports, had been to welcome the early settlers and sell them land, and then, apparently, to continue only as a footnote in the province’s history. The land sales had been honourable – that is, the sale involved money rather than goods – although the price, admittedly, was cheap. The “dark-eyed wahines who graced the procession yesterday could not taunt the applauding crowds with robbing them of their patrimony,” claimed the paper, apparently unaware of Kai Tahu’s concerns over unjust land purchases. The “descendants of those who peacefully and honourably sold the Otago Block” were an ‘embellishment’ to the occasion.151 While Maori had joined previous processions, on this occasion they appeared as representatives of their historical forebears rather than as currently active citizens. They presented themselves, as Taare Parata explained, as people “of ancient period in perfect costume of the original Maori … every detail as of olden times.”152

The crowds reserved their loudest acclaim for the old identities, who numbered five or six hundred, about a third in carriages but the rest marching. They appeared in order of arrival: the earlier their arrival, the greater their hardships and the nobler their achievements.153 As one old identity recounted, “with all the grand show it was us old identities that the crowd wanted to see and cheered. How they did cheer us! They were packed in the streets and right up to the top windows of the houses, and it was ‘Hurrah for the old identities!’ and ‘Well done, old identities!’ everywhere.”154

The appearance of the old identities presented a marked contrast to the colourful showing of most participants in the procession (see Figure 51). Dressed in plain dark suits, gowns and hats, their sole marks of display were the occasional small simple flags denoting their year of arrival in the colony. Such an appearance confirmed their perceived role as worthy founders – plain, simple, sober and hardworking people who had pioneered a now thriving colony. These were folk who had scorned extravagance and show in order to survive the hardships of the early days and provide the

151 ODT, 24 March 1898, p. 4
152 Ibid., 26 February 1898, p. 2.
153 The Evening Star took special note of the probable “oldest old identity,” William Haberfield of Moeraki, who had arrived in Otago in 1836: see Evening Star Jubilee Record, 10. Significantly, Haberfield was not a Free Church colonist but a whaler. The label old identity proved large enough to include all of the pre-goldrush colonists, even the supposedly dissolute pre-1848 settlers.
154 Evening Star Otago Jubilee Record, 12.
Figure 51 - Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (5)
A view of the procession from AMP buildings, looking south. The old identities march past bearing flags denoting the year of their arrival.

Source – Hocken Library, c/n E6887/2, from Otago Daily Times and Witness Otago Settlement Jubilee Supplementary Number, p. 2.
foundation for those who followed. Well might their descendants and fellow residents cheer. “It was a pathetic sight,” declared the *Witness*, “to see these once sturdy pioneers marching with their simple banners through the main street of the fine city they have done so much to make.” Many of the old identities were women: gender was no barrier to significance in this vision of colonial history. The ODT Jubilee Day editorial indicates the attitude of the day towards pioneer women: “The women of the early day should not be passed without distinctive mention. Honour to the brave men who laid the foundation of Otago’s welfare! Honour, eternal honour, to the noble women who faced the struggle and shared the toil!”

The presence of both women and men characterised the old identities as settled family people, an image further fostered by the participation of siblings, married couples and some entire families in the procession. In marked contrast, there are no reports of female involvement in the following group, which brought the historical section of the procession to a close. The ‘pioneer miners’ combined with the ‘pioneers of the early sixties,’ excluded by late arrival from the old identity brigade, to present a “very creditable and attractive” display. About 150 people, some dressed in moleskin and bearing swags and panning dishes, marched behind a banner depicting gold miners. Many spectators admired the old mail coach and gold escort which formed the highlight of this display (see Figure 52). But the miners came a very distant second to the old identities in the esteem of both spectators and press. They had some advocates, notably Premier Richard Seddon, once a gold miner himself. In his Jubilee Day speech, Seddon made a point of stating that “the bold and restless” early miners “did a great deal to make Otago what it is.” Others gave more stilted praise to the role of the miners. When ‘Old Miner’ wrote to the ODT complaining that inadequate recognition was given to miners at the Jubilee, Civis responded that the miners had made a poor showing in the procession, citing, for example, their

155 *Otago Witness*, 31 March 1898, p. 33.
156 While the number of women participating is nowhere stated, their proportion was clearly significant. A press report giving a list of “additional old identities” who had “intimated their intention of taking part in the procession,” named eight men and eleven women: see ODT, 12 March 1898, p. 2.
157 ODT, 23 March 1898, p. 4.
158 *Evening Star Otago Jubilee Record*, 10; and *Otago Witness*, 31 March 1898, p. 22.
Figure 52 - Otago Settlement Jubilee procession (6)
Cobb’s coach and the gold escort, the highlight of the early miners’ display.

Source – *Evening Star Otago Jubilee Record*, 31 March 1898, p.16.
“miserably attenuated ‘swags’ of undisguisedly new blankets with nothing in them.”
In any case, “it was through a shepherd that Read found gold at Gabriel’s. No
settlement, no shepherd; no shepherd, no Read; no Read, no miners of the early
sixties.” The miners appeared as unsettled men, bearing their swags or travelling on
the old mail coach. Their banner portrayed a wandering miner resting by the wayside.
In this version of events, their hardships seemed less worthy than those of the old
identities. While the old identities had founded families, the early miners had
wandered restlessly after gold.

Other Jubilee commemorations and press reports also prioritised the role of the
old identities in Otago’s history. The Governor attended a special social function held
in their honour and the Jubilee records and chronicles were packed with stories of
their achievements. But beside the more conventional written accounts, the procession
should not be underestimated as a tool for promoting a particular version of Otago’s
history. The huge crowd who observed these actors of the colony’s early years march
past would not quickly forget the sights of that day. The centrality of the pioneers was
by no means unique to Otago. As Fiona Hamilton notes, the story of the pioneer is “a
historical narrative characteristic of colonization,” with the pioneer the prevailing
historical figure in white settler societies at the turn of the twentieth century.
Migration “severed historical continuity” with the familiar, but the pioneer narrative
allowed a new history of progress, one begun with the arrival of the first Pakeha
settlers into a previously ‘timeless’ Maori world. Otago’s distinctive history gave a
particular edge to the pioneer legend, with the gold rushes leading to a sharp division
of the colonists. To the old identities clung the aura of the worthy church settlement,
while to the migrants of the 1860s and later clung the suspicion of less noble financial
motives. While the reality was infinitely more complex, this historical orthodoxy,
fostered by the Jubilee, would prevail well into the twentieth century.

160 ODT, 7 April 1898, p. 3; and 9 April 1898, p. 2. See also Otago Witness, 31 March 1898,
p. 33, which praised the miners but noted that the pioneer settlers deserved more acclaim “because they
were the first comers, the men who made the adventure and staked everything upon it. The pioneers left
the home of civilisation and came to an unknown wilderness.”
Religion and the procession

The exclusion of particular groups or categories from a public event can tell us as much about a society as those which are included. The absence of the Chinese suggested their exclusion from the mainstream of Otago society. The organising committee was unable, however, to exclude religion from the procession. It attempted to do so, aware of the potential for division, but religion could not be so easily ignored. The Tablet reported that “Curiously enough, of all the swarming denominations in the land, not one was represented in the procession but the Catholic Church. Bishop Verdon drove in the procession, accompanied by Fathers Murphy, McMullen and Ryan. They were the only clerics present. And they were everywhere well received. The Presbyterian Church was conspicuously absent.” In the absence of invitations to the clergy, Verdon presumably participated in the procession as a citizen. His presence was a public relations coup for the Catholic church; no other clergy had thought to take part. Civis admired Verdon’s gall: “we had the Roman Catholic Bishop riding in state, ecclesiastically attended, and with a banner in front ‘God Save Ireland.’ Small blame to him! Otago after all is a free country, and Dr Verdon had as much right to be in the procession as anybody else.” His presence, however, highlighted “the only serious defect observable in the triumphant procession,” this being “the absence of the Presbyterian Synod.” Verdon had, in effect, jumped the Presbyterians’ claim to precedence.

Friendly societies also introduced religion into the procession. The HACBS, PAFS and Orange Order were distinctly religious organisations. The HACBS banner featured the Celtic cross, while the Orange Order banner probably portrayed the Bible in a prominent position. Friendly societies with less obvious religious affiliations also employed Christian messages, with the MUIOOF demonstrating ‘Faith, Hope and Charity,’ while the AOF tableau portrayed ‘I was sick and ye visited me’; both

---


162 Gunn, Public culture, 182; and Blehr, “Sacred Unity,” 183-185.

163 NZT, 1 April 1898, p. 1.

164 Apparently, although the evidence is unclear, general ‘citizens’ took part in the procession, possibly at the end: see the planned order of procession in ODT, 23 March 1898, p. 6. The press and personal accounts give no reports of this section of the parade, with the exception of the Tablet’s mention of Verdon’s party.

165 Otago Witness, 31 March 1898, p. 3.
biblical quotations. Here is further evidence for the argument presented throughout this thesis: religion pervaded life in nineteenth-century Otago. I cannot agree with Leckie, who suggests that "Religion did not play a large part in the celebrations of anniversary week. There were clear-cut divisions in society between secular and spiritual activities ... religious fervour was not in evidence outside of church services."\(^{166}\) Attempts to exclude religion from public events invariably failed, as there was no clear or simple division between the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular.’

**Onlookers**

Participants and spectators enjoy a procession as a festive and entertaining event, and its symbolism is effective because of its sensory appeal to those involved. No two spectators or participants will experience a procession in the same way; such rituals have “multiple overlapping meanings, dependent on context and the position of the observer.”\(^{167}\) The accounts of two spectators at the Otago Jubilee procession demonstrate the parade’s ability to resonate with the personal experiences and interests of individuals. Fourteen-year-old Dunedin schoolboy Edward Roberts recalled the procession in his diary, listing various participants, but giving most attention to the trades displays, particularly Reid and Gray’s exhibit. Roberts had a great interest in machinery, so his concentration on the working lathe is unsurprising. His list of participants was far from complete, making no mention, for example, of the fire brigade, unions, friendly societies or Maori.\(^{168}\) The interests of Gertrude Dyer, the young Dunedin woman whose descriptions of the procession are cited several times above, differed greatly from those of Roberts. It is striking that she noted in most detail the very things Roberts omitted. Costume and colour attracted her, for example, the “glittering helmets” of the fire brigade and the “green badges” of the Hibernians. Women drew her particular attention. Indeed, for Dyer the greatest attractions of the procession were Lady Ranfurly and the “Maori princesses.”\(^{169}\) Gender and personal interest clearly affected these two eyewitnesses’ interpretations of the procession.

Dyer and Roberts did have some things in common. Both were young and Anglican,

---

\(^{166}\) Leckie, “Otago Settlement Jubilee,” 51.

\(^{167}\) Gunn, *Public culture*, 168. See also Kong and Yeoh, “Construction of national identity,” 234.

\(^{168}\) Edward Fletcher Roberts diary, 23 March 1898, MS-485, HL.

\(^{169}\) Dyer, “How I spent the Otago Jubilee Day.”
and both had been born in Otago to English parents. Presumably, a spectator of Scottish or Irish ethnicity would have picked out different highlights, as would an older person or a young child.

The Jubilee procession presented a particular vision of Otago society. It displayed a relatively egalitarian world, where ethnicity and occupation provided the chief means of identity. While clearly dominated by men, it was a society which valued the family and recognised the contribution of women and children. Religion pervaded Otago society and could not be conveniently separated from any public presentation; religion also created the most contentious public discourse over community identity. Finally, the procession presented a particular vision of Otago’s past, one which made heroes of the colony’s early pioneers and sidelined all other historical players. This vision apparently pleased the majority of the enormous crowd of Otago residents who watched it pass. Processions, like all symbols, have multivocal meanings, and few observers would not find here something to attract their special interest, or with which they could claim a sense of belonging.

Irish Protestants

Lord Ranfurly and the Orange Order have drawn our attention to a group which has, as yet, received little mention in this thesis: Irish Protestants. As they are a category of Otago resident of relevance to its major themes – ethnicity and religion – some discussion of their significance is appropriate. In 1990 Donald Akenson noted that “the Protestant Irish have been ignored in New Zealand’s history.” Over the twentieth century, they “have disappeared as a separate group and have merged with the general Protestant majority in their new land.” 170 Akenson and Galbraith suggest that the Protestant Irish, in contrast to their Catholic countrymen and women, assimilated rapidly into colonial society as “they shared the core values of the majority culture within the host society,” that is, Protestant religion and British identity. Even their descendants had little knowledge of their Irish roots. 171 The New


Zealand Catholic Church's strong Irish identity led many to equate Irishness with Catholicism, but Irish Protestants were, numerically, an important group of colonists. Around 18 percent of overseas-born New Zealand residents were Irish-born in the nineteenth century and recent research by Terry Hearn indicates that about 45 percent of these migrants were Protestant.\(^{172}\)

The religious diversity of Irish Protestants contributed to their 'invisibility.' Some joined New Zealand's supposedly English Anglican Church, some the supposedly Scottish Presbyterian Church, and a smaller number joined other Protestant churches. But if Irish Protestant migrants lacked a united or visible Irish identity, their influence on New Zealand society was not negligible.\(^{173}\) Galbraith has examined the role of the Irish in Anglican and Presbyterian churches in Auckland, finding it "extremely significant." Irish clergy and church members tended to be particularly opposed to ritualism, adding to the evangelical and low church flavour of New Zealand's Anglican Church.\(^{174}\)

Unfortunately, there are no studies of Irish Protestants in Otago, and even estimating their numbers is no simple matter.\(^{175}\) Without further detailed study, which is beyond the scope of this thesis, I can only note their presence without closely quantifying it. A close examination of the 1878 census statistics does indicate that Irish Protestants mustered in significant numbers in some parts of Otago. Waitaki County (North Otago) had 983 Irish-born residents, and 832 Catholics, meaning there were at least 151 non-Catholic Irish living in the district. As not all Catholics were born in Ireland – Catholic children, in particular, are likely to have been born in New Zealand or possibly the Australian colonies – the actual number of Irish Protestants would have been considerably higher.\(^{176}\)


\(^{173}\) Akenson suggests that their Protestantism, loyalism and adherence to "the ‘British’ way of life ... played a major role in defining the emerging Pakeha consensus, which became, eventually, the New Zealand sense of identity." See Akenson, *Half the World From Home*, 158. This claim is practically impossible to prove or disprove.

\(^{174}\) Galbraith, "The Invisible Irish?" 50-53.

\(^{175}\) It is not good enough to simply assume that Protestants made up a similar proportion of Irish migrants to Otago as they did to New Zealand as a whole: as noted in the Introduction, Otago's migrants were an atypical group. Irish Presbyterian migrants may have preferred the province for its Presbyterian identity, but, equally, Irish Protestants may have preferred other districts, such as South Auckland, where Protestant Irish colonists clustered.

\(^{176}\) Other Otago districts where the Irish-born outnumber Catholics in the 1878 census statistics (although that number is in all other cases less than 50) include Clutha County and the
What of the Irish influence on the Protestant churches in Otago? A close examination of church rolls would be of interest, but is, again, beyond the scope of this thesis. An analysis of one parish – Dunedin's Presbyterian First Church, whose early communicants' rolls have been published – suggests very little Irish involvement. Ministers are easier to trace than church members. About 7 percent of Otago's nineteenth-century Presbyterian ministers were born in Ireland. While these Irish ministers were a minority group, their impact was considerable, several having notable ministries. Best-known today is Rutherford Waddell, famous as a social reformer, particularly for his exposure of sweated labour and his leadership of the Dunedin Tailoresses' Union. In addition to his involvement in many civic and social causes, Waddell was a hugely popular parish minister and a notable preacher and journalist. One of Waddell's predecessors at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Dunedin was Adam Dickie Glasgow, also an Ulsterman. His ministry there in the early 1860s may partially account for the low number of Irish members at nearby First Church. Other notable Irish clergy in Otago included Samuel Wilson Currie, minister at Balclutha for forty years, and John Ryley, who finally retired in 1927, aged 92 years, having begun his Otago ministry (which was interrupted by some years in business) in 1864. Ryley was known as an emotional and fervent preacher; in contrast,
Currie, a man with “fine qualities of ... mind and personality,” had “a reserved disposition” and “shunned the limelight.”

Amongst Otago’s Anglican clergy, likewise, a small but significant group came from Ireland. Among them was Rev. George Beaumont, “a man of scholarly attainments” and “kind, sympathetic nature” who won the affection of his parishioners at Lawrence, where he ministered for thirty years. Rev. Lorenzo Moore was a more outspoken Irishman. After ministries in various locations he arrived in Dunedin in 1876. However, Moore, an “austere evangelica.” and anti-ritualist, fell out with Bishop Nevill, a man of high church leanings. In 1880 he resigned from the Diocese to establish his own small congregation of the distinctly low ‘Free Church of England.’ Moore represents, in extreme form, the anti-ritualist tendency of Irish Protestants, but it is clear that Protestant Irish clergy in Otago were a varied group, not readily fitted into one theological category. That Moore felt uncomfortable enough in the Dunedin Diocese to secede from it suggests that low church Irishness had little influence in directing the theology of that body. But if Irish clergy in Otago, both Anglican and Presbyterian, had no consistent party line, as individuals they undoubtedly played a major role in church life in the province.

The Orange Order

In the absence of any other united Irish Protestant body, the Loyal Orange Institution (LOI) was the most visible indicator of an Irish Protestant presence in nineteenth-century Otago. The LOI had the features of many of the popular organisations of this period, notably the Freemasons and friendly societies: members enjoyed various arcane rituals and, probably more importantly, the convivial company

180 Collie, Story of the Otago Free Church Settlement, 82-83 and 137. Ryley carried out his ministerial training in New Zealand.

181 The twenty-three clergy in the Dunedin Diocese in 1883 included three graduates of Trinity College, Dublin, and some of the eight non-graduates amongst the ministers may also have been Irish. See “Clergy List 1883,” in Proceedings of the Ninth General Synod of the Church of the Province of New Zealand (Napier: Dinwiddle, Walker, 1883), 236. The three were Rev. George Price Beaumont of Lawrence; Rev. J Lloyd Keating, curate at All Saints, Dunedin; and Rev. Harry Stocker of Invercargill. The Diocese included both Otago and Southland. Also listed as a Trinity College graduate was Rev. Richard Coffey of Wellington, formerly vicar at Queenstown (1869-72) and Milton (1873-76).

of like-minded people. The distinctive feature of the LOI was, of course, its assertive Protestantism, and while the order frequently declared its religious tolerance and support of religious liberty, it was clearly anti-Catholic. In its founding province, Ulster, Orangeism played a major role in sectarian politics and sectarian violence.\textsuperscript{184} In New Zealand, however, sectarian violence was rare. The most noted instances occurred at Christchurch and Timaru in 1879 when certain Catholics, provoked by the sight of Orangemen with their sashes and banners, attacked Orange or PAFS processions.\textsuperscript{185} Although the sectarian nature of the organisation was deeply ingrained, the LOI’s most important role in New Zealand was its social one. Like other colonists, Protestant migrants from Ulster looked to familiar organisations from their homeland to assist their adjustment to colonial life, and the order functioned as “a self-help network for Irish Protestant immigrants.”\textsuperscript{186}

Orange lodges began their Otago existence in the early 1870s.\textsuperscript{187} In 1873, Dunedin residents openly celebrated for the first time the most sacred date in the Orange calendar: 12 July, the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne, when the Protestant William of Orange had defeated the Catholic King James II. About thirty brethren of Lodge No 9 enjoyed a splendid dinner at Murray’s Hotel, the speeches and toasts “interspersed with the singing of Orange songs.”\textsuperscript{188} Dinners and balls on either 12 July or 5 November (another sacred Orange date, marking the arrival of William of Orange on British soil) became regular events in Dunedin. Attendance varied hugely from year to year. At the 5 November 1878 soiree and ball for two Dunedin lodges


\textsuperscript{185} Brosnahan, “Battle of the Borough.”

\textsuperscript{186} Galbraith, “Forgotten Plantation,” 126-127. See also Akenson, \textit{Half the World From Home}, 150-151; and Coleman, “Transplanted Irish Institutions,” 119-120.

\textsuperscript{187} Joseph Carnahan, \textit{Life and Times of William the Third and History of Orangeism} (Auckland: Brett, Star Office, 1890), 297.

\textsuperscript{188} \textit{Otago Witness}, 19 July 1873, p. 15.
“the attendance was small, not more than 60 persons being present.” Just three years later, however, about 300 Orangemen witnessed the “imposing” opening ceremony of Dunedin’s 12 July celebration. “A large number of the general public were afterwards admitted, some 250 couples in all assembling, and dancing was kept up with spirit until a late hour.” One did not need to belong to the LOI to enjoy its sociability or support its general aims, and family and friends significantly boosted the numbers at Orange balls and church parades.

Actual membership of the order fluctuated greatly. The warrant for Dunedin’s ‘Star of Otago’ Lodge shifted south to Gore, along with some of its members, in 1887. The lodges at Blue Spur and Tuapeka, established by “Bro Buchanan, a most enthusiastic Orangeman,” had only short lives. The 1890 annual report of the Middle Island Grand Lodge allows an accurate measure of the LOI at that date. Otago had five lodges, based at Waitahuna, Dunedin, Oamaru, Green Island and Port Chalmers, with a total of 141 “effective” members. Analysis of late-nineteenth century membership rolls and minute books indicates that this was an overwhelmingly working class organisation. Most members were labourers and tradesmen, supplemented by a few farmers at Oamaru. The organisation clearly appealed most to ‘ordinary’ colonists. Birthplace is more difficult to determine than occupation. Of a small traceable sample, about half were Irish-born. Some fathers and sons belonged to the same lodge.

Determining the religious denomination of Orangemen is difficult, but a glance at the clergy connected with the order is intriguing. Of seven ministers who

190 Ibid., 16 July 1881, p. 10.
191 Carnahan, Life and Times of William, 297. Gore became an Orange stronghold, Carnahan noting it in 1890 as “one of the strongest and finest lodges in the Middle Island.”
192 Ibid.
193 Report of Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand, Middle Island, held on Friday & Saturday, December 26 & 27, 1890 (Christchurch: Loyal Orange Institution, 1890), 18-19. My thanks to Patrick Coleman for supplying me with a copy of this document. “Effective” is the LOI’s term: how this was defined is unclear, but current financial membership seems the most likely criterion. The largest lodge in the region, at Dunedin, had 53 members and the smallest, Waitahuna, just 8. The Order was notably stronger in neighbouring Canterbury, with lodges scattered through the province and an effective membership of 585.
194 I obtained the names of members of Dunedin’s LOL No 21 (‘No Surrender’) from their Roll Book, 1897-1899, AG-703-3/24, HL; and the names of some members of Oamaru’s LOL No 19 from their Minute Book, 1882-1900, AG-703-6/01, HL. I then traced their occupations via Stone’s and Wise’s street directories, and birthplaces via burial registers. See Appendix Three for details.
were either members or strong supporters of the LOI in nineteenth-century Otago, a remarkable number were Methodists: Wesleyans Thomas Brooke and Charles Rigg, and Primitive Methodists Joseph Sharp, Charles Ward and Josiah Ward. Besides these Methodists, Rev. Edwin Eldridge, a Congregationalist, belonged to the Oamaru Lodge, and Salvation Army officer Charles Tyer to Dunedin’s No Surrender Lodge. An investigation of clergy associated with the LOI elsewhere in New Zealand shows the involvement of a wider range of denominations, but confirms the importance of Methodist ministers to the order. Some of these men had an Irish background. For example, Rev. Andrew Mackay, Presbyterian minister at Gore and Grand Chaplain of the Orange Order, was an Ulsterman and Auckland Anglican Rev. Robert Maunsell was born near Limerick. But many of the Orange chaplains had no obvious connection with Ireland, and for them the appeal of the LOI clearly lay in its religious aspects. The largely working class nature of the order, and its ardent promotion of Protestantism, help explain the remarkably large involvement of clergy from one of the country’s smaller denominations, the staunchly evangelical and primarily working class Primitive Methodists. Although Presbyterians and Anglicans could be strongly anti-Catholic, they tended to be more restrained in their criticisms than other Protestant groups. As Peter Lineham notes, “most Anglicans and some Presbyterian ministers were carefully courteous” in their comments on Catholicism, while clergy from smaller sects showed no such restraint. Religion played a major role in the LOI’s activities, with scripture readings and hymns significant features of meetings and special ceremonies.

---

195 Names of clergy were obtained from newspaper reports of LOI activities; Carnahan, Life and Times of William; LOL No 19 Minute Book, 1882-1900; and LOL No 21 Roll Book 1897-1899. Denominations traced via Stone’s and Wise’s street directories.

196 A sample of twenty-four traceable clergy identified five Anglicans, six Presbyterians, one Baptist, one Congregationalist and eleven Methodists of different varieties (five Wesleyans, five Primitive Methodists and one Bible Christian). Names of clergy were obtained from Carnahan, Life and Times of William; and Proceedings of the Grand Lodge ... 1890. Denominations traced via Wise’s street directories.

197 For Mackay, see Otago Witness, 18 July 1889, p. 17. There are numerous references to Maunsell in Carnahan, Life and Times of William. He is remembered today as a missionary, linguist and Maori translator; he was also a staunch Orangeman and, indeed, one of the driving forces behind the LOI in the north of New Zealand. See Judith Morrell Nathan, “Maunsell, Robert,” in DNZB, 1: 285-286, which makes no reference to his Orange connections.


199 Lodge meetings always included a reading from the Bible, and ended with singing “God Save the Queen”: see LOL No. 21, Minute Book 1899-1909, AG-703-3/01, HL. Hymn sheets from the early twentieth century indicate the extensive use of hymns in Orange Order ceremonies. Most were well-known Protestant hymns, while a few, such as “The Orange Bible Song” (Rouse then,
order, not all Orangemen fully embraced this ideology: the Oamaru lodge expelled two members for marrying Catholics.  

The evidence from nineteenth-century Otago confirms what other historians have noted: that Irish Protestants were largely invisible as an ethnic group in New Zealand. Their one distinctive contribution to colonial society was the Orange Order. Due to its sectarian nature, however, the order attracted the disapproval of those who did not wish to see such rivalries imported to the colony. It appealed most to the Irish Protestant working classes, but even this, the only visible Irish Protestant institution in Otago, was not purely Irish, also attracting as members Protestants of other nationalities. Beyond the Orange Order, individual Irish Protestants made important contributions to colonial life, but were known for their achievements rather than their Irishness. The sectarian disputes of Otago’s Settlement Jubilee are especially intriguing, not only because they reveal a strong underlying current of sectarian fervour in Otago, but also because they make visible that little studied group, the Protestant Irish.

**Conclusion**

In 1899, Anniversary Day returned to its usual lacklustre state: the Jubilee fervour had been an aberration. The effects of the Jubilee were, however, more than fleeting. The historical orthodoxy it presented persisted for decades and the Otago Early Settlers’ Association formed for the occasion remains in existence today. A supposedly transient event such as a Jubilee can have a lasting impact on a society, becoming part of a community’s collective memory and an ongoing influence on its self-image. However, the aberrant nature of the Jubilee also reveals much about Otago society. Ethnic and religious diversity made reaching a consensus about celebrating the community’s existence and history fraught with difficulty. In the colony’s early years, migrants with very different experiences of commemoration — largely due to

Orangemen, rally for the Bible, work on, pray on, spread the truth abroad, stand firm like men, in the cause triumphant, for the Bible is the Word of God . . .) were especially written for the Order. See LOL Hymn collection, AG-703-15/03, HL; particularly Hymns for use in Male Lodges of the Loyal Orange Institution (Wellington: Grand Lodge of New Zealand, 1923).

200 LOL No 19 Minute Book, 3 January 1882 and 4 December 1886. Oamaru also applied to the Grand Lodge for special permission to admit as member a man who had been brought up Catholic: see the minutes for 7 August 1888.

201 Leckie, “Otago Settlement Jubilee,” 71; and Brosnahan, To Fame Undying. The organisation is now known as the Otago Settlers Association, and its Otago Settlers Museum (now run in conjunction with the Dunedin City Council) is a major social history museum.
ethnic difference – found reaching agreement impossible. As one party, the English colonists, continued their accustomed practice of celebrating the anniversary with racing, conviviality and dancing, others simply withdrew from the commemoration of Otago's special day, which never gained majority support. Religion, in the form of evangelical Protestant opposition to gambling, also played a part in the holiday's failure. The early dispute over Anniversary Day cannot be dismissed as a petty matter. It was one of the strongest early warnings of the failure of the class colony ideal. Moreover, it left a lasting legacy: even in the early twenty-first century, most Otago residents remain indifferent to Anniversary Day, although once again numerical significance fostered major celebration in 1998 for the 150th anniversary. The failure to soundly establish the annual commemoration in its early years had a remarkably persistent effect.

At first glance, the Otago Settlement Jubilee displays the triumph of consensus over previous social divisions. A deeper analysis, however, reveals that such consensus only barely disguised a strong undercurrent of sectarianism. In order to foster a vision of a united society, the Jubilee's organisers attempted to distance themselves from religion, which they knew to be divisive. In practice this proved impossible. Religion had played a major role in Otago's foundation and evolution, making it an intrinsic part of any historical presentation. Moreover, as I have argued throughout this thesis, religion pervaded colonial life and could not be conveniently separated from public events. Many Otago residents saw the Jubilee as an occasion to recognise God's part in their history. But amidst the happy acclamations of Otago's progress could be heard Anglican clergy proclaiming their superiority over all others, Presbyterians criticising Catholics and Anglicans, Catholic clergy preempting Presbyterian precedence by participating in the procession, and fierce debates over the Orange order. Religion was a contradictory force in nineteenth-century Otago. It gave people a sense of commonality, but it also separated them. In the case of Otago Anniversary Day, ethnicity and religion proved divisive forces. Careful organisation and public goodwill only partially disguised the community's latent sectarianism during the Jubilee celebrations.
Chapter Six – Royal Celebrations and Commemorations*

On 30 June 1863 the residents of the young colony of Otago held their greatest holiday to date, celebrating with extraordinary fervour the marriage of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, heir to the British throne, to Princess Alexandra of Denmark. In Dunedin a procession a quarter of a mile long, consisting of bands, schoolchildren, local dignitaries and various local organisations (amongst whom the military and friendly societies were prominent), marched through the extensively decorated town, cheered on by a large crowd. They gathered at the Botanical Garden Reserve, where Superintendent Hyde Harris planted two memorial oak trees. A great feast was then laid on at the Provincial Sale Yard. People crowded the streets that night as they enjoyed the effects of “our first attempt at illumination,” mostly consisting of back lit transparencies and Chinese lanterns. In other parts of the province also, from country villages like Tokomairiro to goldfields settlements like the Dunstan, colonists celebrated the occasion with parades, decorations, fireworks and feasts.¹

The obvious significance of this occasion to contemporaries has not prompted the interest of historians. ‘Standard’ general histories of New Zealand give the nineteenth-century monarchy only passing mention.² Furthermore, the most influential recent historians of nineteenth-century New Zealand effectively dismiss royalist sentiment as a significant feature of colonial life. This dismissal largely results from New Zealand historiography’s focus on national identity: popular monarchism does not fit conveniently into a framework of developing nationalism and independence. As noted in the Introduction, nationalist historian Keith Sinclair’s

* Parts of this chapter appeared as “‘With one accord rejoice on this glad day’: Celebrating the monarchy in nineteenth-century Otago,” New Zealand Journal of History 36 (2002): 137-160. I am grateful to editor Caroline Daley and the journal’s reviewers for their helpful suggestions.

¹ Otago Witness, 4 July 1863, pp. 2-3; and 11 July 1863, p. 2. See Daily Telegraph (Dunedin), 2 July 1863, p. 3 for another detailed account of the holiday. The royal marriage had taken place on 10 March 1863, but the colonists waited until they received official confirmation before holding their celebrations. They did not wish to celebrate an event which had fallen through for some reason, a potential hazard with the slow communications in this period before telegraphic links were established.

study of holidays mentions in passing that colonists celebrated the Queen’s birthday, but finds all nineteenth century holidays failures in comparison with Anzac Day, which answered the need for a “genuine national day.” Likewise, James Belich’s recent history pays considerable attention to nineteenth-century nationalism and imperialism, but ignores the popularity of the monarchy. Miles Fairburn is less concerned with national identity than Sinclair or Belich. For Fairburn, it is the determination to prove that colonial society lacked a strong sense of community which leads him to dismiss the significance of royal celebrations, as he does all community festivals. His study of labourer James Cox’s diary cannot avoid mentioning the monarchy for, as Fairburn briefly notes, Cox was, like most colonial workmen, a “fervent monarchist,” who enjoyed the “mammoth festival ... of the Record Reign” (Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee). Fairburn’s unwillingness to give support for the monarchy the attention it warrants is best illustrated by his suggestion that a torchlight procession watched by Cox on 24 May 1893 might be “a rare celebration of May Day.” To Queen Victoria’s subjects this familiar date required no explanation: it was the occasion of their respected monarch’s birthday.

Religion played a major role in royal celebrations, providing further evidence of the importance of religion in colonial life. Indeed, much of the Queen’s significance was spiritual, and I argue below that commemoration of the monarchy constituted the colony’s main expression of civil religion. This merging of the sacred and the secular also helps account for the failure of New Zealand historians to give adequate recognition to royal celebrations, as most confine themselves within either ‘secular’ or church-centred boundaries.

Such historiographic silences and dismissals are not unique to New Zealand, although there is a growing body of work on royal commemoration in the British empire (and elsewhere). David Cannadine, the most noted historian of the modern

---

6 Fairburn, Nearly out of Heart, 261, note 44.
British monarchy, comments that "from the generally egalitarian-cum-republican perspective of the early twenty-first century, it is easy to forget the extent to which, in its heyday, the British Empire was a royal empire, presided over and unified by a sovereign of global amplitude and semi-divine fullness." These were "shared imperial occasions" and the Otago celebrations formed one small part of a great flowering of royal ceremonial between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries.

This chapter explores the royal celebrations and commemorations of nineteenth-century Otago, both regular and one-off. These commemorations were among the most prominent and colourful events of the period, and clearly deserve more attention than historians have previously given them. This chapter demonstrates that royal celebrations had a remarkable ability to overcome the ethnic and sectarian divisions demonstrated throughout this thesis. Royalist occasions proved the least contested holidays of colonial Otago: Queen Victoria and her family were icons powerful enough to unite a diverse community. At these events, Otago residents identified themselves as loyal Britons, promoted their own colony, almost worshipped the Queen and, not least, united with strong community spirit to enjoy themselves.

**The Queen's birthday**

On 24 May 1848, just two months after the arrival of the first official shipload of immigrants to the new colony, Thomas Ferens noted that flags were flying at Rev. Thomas Burns's Dunedin home in commemoration of the Queen's birthday. Ferens, an Englishman, might have been a little surprised at this expression of loyalty, for, as with so many other festive occasions, the Scots and the English had quite different practices on such days. Although the English political calendar recognised numerous royal anniversaries, from the monarch’s birthday, marriage day and accession day to

---


9 Thomas Ferens diary, 24 May 1848, C 039, OSM.
Royal Oak day, such days were seldom occasions for holiday, and their recognition varied enormously from place to place. In Scotland, however, the monarch’s birthday was, by the nineteenth century, the sole event in the national political calendar. It was a holiday throughout the urban Lowlands, and this alone made it a highly significant event in a society which observed few holidays. On such days Victoria’s loyal Scottish subjects gathered in large numbers for civic ceremonial, excursions, considerable drinking, and, at times, riot.  

It is no surprise, then, to find the Queen’s birthday a significant holiday in the Scots-dominated colony of Otago. But Scottish influence was only one element in this enthusiastic colonial recognition of such royal holidays. As Ken Inglis notes for Australia, “the thousands of miles between mother country and colonies could give the queen an enhanced significance to such people … thinking of the queen might annihilate momentarily the ocean between the colony and the motherland.” Royal celebrations allowed the relatively small and unimportant colony of Otago to link itself with the greatest empire the world had seen. Otago could not have been more geographically remote from the imperial metropolis, yet its residents shared with all other subjects a common loyalty to the Queen: they united as a family under the maternal rule of Victoria. The empire gave legitimacy to the colonists’ enterprise in settling these ‘new’ lands, and Victoria, its figurehead, became their unifying symbol.

Although Otago residents did not observe Queen Victoria’s birthday as a holiday for the first six years of the colony, they did recognise this special day. The flying of flags and the firing of a feu de joie (small arms) were the chief forms of

---


celebration, joined, in 1851, by the public dinner.\textsuperscript{12} 1854 saw a new enthusiasm for the occasion, partly due to its happy coincidence with the first sitting of the New Zealand parliament. The \textit{Otago Witness} suggested that “some mark of public loyalty should be manifested on that day, in celebration of so auspicious an event, and as the day from which New Zealand’s true and real prosperity must no doubt be dated by her future historians.” George Smith of the Royal Hotel received much praise in the following week’s edition for his most satisfactory provision of “a sumptuous dinner.” Smith also arranged the firing of cannon both morning and evening, and a 21 gun royal salute at midday, and was given credit “for the spirited manner in which these ebullitions of loyalty were arranged.” Smith may have been loyal; no doubt he also earned considerable profits from the celebrations. There has always been a strong association between holiday activities and commercial interests, and in the still tiny colony of Otago, one gifted promoter could hold considerable sway over events. However, Smith had no shortage of supporters, and as soon as the suggestion to make special recognition of the day was published, “it was at once decided amongst the store and shopkeepers that there should be no business done on that day; and consequently the town on Wednesday presented quite a holiday appearance.” The citizens of Dunedin thus celebrated their first royal holiday.\textsuperscript{13}

By 1855, Dunedinites had been thrown into a fervour of loyalty for the crown by Britain’s involvement in the Crimean War, whose progress they enthusiastically followed and supported. As noted in Chapter Four, the Otago colonists imitated Britain by holding a day of public humiliation and prayer to implore God’s “Blessing and Assistance on Her Majesty’s Arms” in 1854. Further holidays would follow in 1856, one to commemorate the fall of Sebastopol and another to celebrate the signing of the Treaty of Peace. Meanwhile, the Queen’s birthday provided a suitable occasion to display their loyalty to Britain: as the \textit{Witness} explained, “in the present state of affairs, the home country being engaged in a momentous struggle, it is particularly desirous that the loyal custom of keeping Her Majesty’s birth-day as a general holiday should be observed.” Colonists observed the holiday with “every manifestation of

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Otago Witness}, 24 May 1851, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 20 May 1854, p. 2; and 27 May 1854, p. 4.
loyalty": flags flew, bells rang, a 21 gun salute was fired and the day drew to a close with a public dinner at the Royal Hotel.\textsuperscript{14}

By the late 1850s, the Queen’s birthday was firmly established as a holiday occasion for the Otago colonists, at least in Dunedin and Port Chalmers. However, while the colonists expressed loyalty by observing the holiday, they did not always give other public demonstrations of support for the monarchy. Recreation, rather than loyal demonstration, became the focus of the holiday, and it would take some unusual event to stimulate fervent royal celebrations in future years, as the first New Zealand parliament and Crimean War had at the genesis of the holiday.

As recreation became the chief focus of the Queen’s birthday, various promoters ensured holidaymakers had no shortage of activities from which to choose. In 1859, Dunedinites could attend the Horticultural Society Show or take a boat excursion to Port Chalmers, and in the evening they could choose between Miss Redmayne’s concert and a ball at Mr Lowe’s new hall. In 1860, “little public demonstration was made” on the Queen’s birthday, but “the harbour steamers were crowded with passengers holiday-making,” and boat races and a concert provided further entertainment.\textsuperscript{15} The promotion of leisure by commercial interests was underway. The economic boom and greatly increased population brought by the goldrushes, commencing in 1861, gave a new impetus to commercial leisure operators, and holidaymakers could select from an ever-increasing range of activities.\textsuperscript{16}

Although commercial leisure activities, especially boat excursions (and later railway excursions also), remained popular holiday pursuits throughout the century, many of the colonists preferred, sometimes perhaps for financial reasons, to organise their own smaller outings. The \textit{Otago Witness} described some typical picnickers on the Queen’s birthday in 1863: “Before ten o’clock numbers of working men and their wives were to be seen great-coat and thick shawl on arm, and provender basket in hand, wending their way up High-street, Stafford-street, &c., followed by groups of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14} \textit{Otago Witness}, 19 May 1855, p. 3; and 26 May 1855, p. 4.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 28 May 1859, p. 5; and 26 May 1860, p. 5.
\end{itemize}
children – and where do children look more saucily jolly and healthful than in Dunedin – the determination evidently being to be truly rural for once, amidst some neighbouring bush.”

In 1863, the involvement of the voluntary militia (the ‘Volunteers’) introduced a new element to Dunedin’s Queen’s birthday celebrations, and uniformed military displays remained important features of the day for the rest of the century. The Volunteers mustered, paraded, fired royal salutes and held drills, displays and rifle competitions. Loyalty to the crown thus became inextricably linked with military symbols. Bands generally accompanied the parades, which drew large crowds: the Volunteers had a strong public appeal (see Figure 53). The Queen’s birthday, as the most important annual occasion for displays of imperial loyalty, became a regular occasion for an assessment of the Volunteers’ strength and ability. The press commented on muster counts and the efficiency of salutes and feux de joie.18

The Volunteers were not the only organised group to meet regularly on the Queen’s birthday: from the 1860s one of the friendly societies, the MUIOOF, held anniversary gatherings on this holiday. In many English villages, and in parts of Australia, membership was high enough to warrant special holidays being taken for club anniversaries. In New Zealand, where friendly society membership was significantly lower, the societies made use of existing general holidays to commemorate their own anniversaries.19 The Oddfellows and Foresters held their annual gatherings on the Queen’s birthday and Prince of Wales’s birthday respectively. This may have been chiefly a matter of convenience, but it also reflected the values of the friendly societies: they were explicitly loyal to the monarchy, and

17 Otago Witness, 29 May 1863, p. 2.
18 While these were often commended, at times they failed to meet expectations. In 1865, for example, Dunedin’s Volunteer Artillery gave only a 19 gun salute, “some accident with one of the cartridges preventing the completion of the 21 discharges.” See Otago Witness, 27 May 1865, p. 12. On the Volunteers, see the essay by John Crawford in The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History, ed. Ian McGibbon (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2000), 566-571; G. J. Clayton, The New Zealand Army: A History from the 1840s to the 1990s (Christchurch: New Zealand Army, 1990), 31-59; and Peter Cooke, Defending New Zealand: Ramparts on the Sea 1840s to 1950s (Wellington: Defence of New Zealand Study Group, 2000), 135-178.
Figure 53 – Volunteers
Some members of Dunedin’s B Battery Artillery Corps, photographed about the 1890s. Volunteers added considerably to the interest of royal celebrations, with their smart and colourful uniforms, parades, bands and gunfire salutes.

Source – Hocken Library, c/neg E5289/29.
such loyalty was an important expression of their respectability.\textsuperscript{20} Some Otago lodges were named after members of the royal family (the Oddfellows founded the Loyal Prince of Wales Lodge at Port Chalmers in 1864, and the Loyal Prince Alfred Lodge at Waikouaiti in 1866), and friendly society members were highly visible in loyal demonstrations and processions. In the procession in celebration of the Prince of Wales's marriage, the Oddfellows and Foresters formed a prominent part, mustering in great numbers, adorned with their regalia, and "the variety and picturesqueness of their dress gave animation to the scene."\textsuperscript{21}

The Prince of Wales's birthday

In November 1862, Edward De Carle, newly arrived in Dunedin, greatly missed his family, who remained in Melbourne. "To day is a Holiday," he wrote to his wife Annie, "but I feel like a fish out of water having nothing to do & not caring about anything but being at Lyndhurst with you."\textsuperscript{22} Royal holidays were distinctly sociable occasions, and De Carle as yet had no kindred spirits with whom to enjoy this one, the Prince of Wales's birthday. There may have been little entertainment on offer in 1862: I have found no other sources mentioning the holiday in that year. By 1863 the holiday was widely recognised in Dunedin, a new enthusiasm presumably sparked by the success of the Prince of Wales's marriage celebrations four months earlier. The Provincial Government closed its offices for the Prince's birthday and this loyal example "was followed almost universally by the banks, the chief mercantile firms, and the tradesmen of the city .... the holiday was kept almost generally by artizans [sic] as well as those engaged in commerce anc finance." Other Otago districts also kept the holiday, notably Blacks Diggings, where "the true British spirit" was displayed in a day of horse racing and athletic sports, "a bullock roasted whole and a cask of ale" supplied for all comers.\textsuperscript{23} In 1864 the General Government offices joined the holiday, and it remained a close one until the death of the Prince (by then King Edward VII) in 1910.


\textsuperscript{22} Edward De Carle to Annie De Carle, 10 November 1862, De Carle letters, OSM.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Otago Witness}, 24 October 1863, p. 5; and 14 November 1863, p. 2.
Beyond Dunedin, colonists did not everywhere keep the holiday so closely. Port Chalmers had “a partial suspension” of shipping business. There, 9 November was “not regarded as one of the strict holidays of the year,” although “recognised as one on which there should be less work and more play than usual.” And few rural workers recognised the Prince’s or Queen’s birthdays. A Balclutha report claimed that “farmer folks and dwellers in rural districts generally take no heed of the day,” and as a Taieri Ferry correspondent explained, “This being perhaps the busiest season of the year with most of the settlers, especially sheep farmers, it could hardly be expected they could sacrifice the time, however: loyally disposed they might be.” Most rural diarists made no reference to royal birthdays, and those who did, such as William Muir, generally worked as usual on those days. One rural diarist, Catherine Fulton, did record special events for royal birthdays, but she was no typical farm wife. Daughter of Otago’s wealthiest settler, William Valpy, Catherine married James Fulton, a farmer, resident magistrate and politician. The Fultons ran a successful property at West Taieri, employing considerable labour, and formed part of Otago’s social elite and its leisure activities. In 1864, for example, while on a visit to friends in Dunedin, Catherine Fulton spent the Prince of Wales’s birthday watching a volunteer review and cricket match, and driving to Port Chalmers to visit other friends. On the Prince’s birthday in 1868, the Fultons, with a large party of family and friends, enjoyed a “delightful day” on an outing to Lake Waipori. The holiday was confined to the wealthy in rural districts, but it was one of the year’s most popular for town dwellers. Prince Albert Edward had been born on a fortunate date for southern holidaymakers, and this undoubtedly contributed to the day’s success. November 9 arrived after a long spell without holidays, and the colonists enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to take a break and enjoy some outdoor recreation. The longer and warmer days of late spring made this a more appealing date for an outing than his mother’s birthday, and the Prince’s birthday was

24 Otago Witness, 15 November 1873, p. 16.
25 Ibid., 14 November 1895, p. 23; and 16 November 1872, p. 9.
26 William Muir diaries, SA-008, OSM. For example, Muir’s entry for Wednesday 9 November 1887 read, “Prince of Wales birth day. He is 46 now. Put down the fileys [fillies?] to the swamp again not good enough for show. Whiteys heffer calved a bull this morning.”
a day for recreation rather than loyal demonstration, and was often referred to as the beginning of the holiday or festive season. One newspaper columnist claimed to be "pre-eminently a loyal man, and think the Royal Family an admirable institution, if only because the birthdays of its members furnish us excuses for holidays." It is hard to escape the conclusion that in observing this holiday the colonists were opportunists as much as loyalists. As Civis explained, "the people rejoice when the Prince of Wales’s birthday comes round, because then they get a day’s amusement, not because the Prince is a year older." Although there were royal salutes from the Volunteers, often "a pretty fair display of bunting," and occasionally illuminations in the evening, these were never so marked as they were on the Queen’s birthday, and the chief activity of the holiday was undoubtedly picnicking.

Many holiday picnics were informal, involving small groups of family or friends, as in Gertrude Dyer’s 1899 Prince of Wales’s birthday outing: “Went with Flora, Annie, Miss Wilson and A. Downing to Tomahawk Beach. There were a number of picnickers scattered about, one party of which lent us their fire to boil the billy. While the others were sketching Lawyer Head, Flora and I walked to the furthest point, and took off our boots and stockings to wade in the water.” Picnics could also be larger community affairs, a good example being that held at Cromwell in 1865, where “there was a public pic-nic to Rocky Point, at which about 70 persons were present. A band of music was in attendance; the sports consisted of dancing on the green sward, singing, Aunt Sally, and other games; the profits of the affair are to be presented to the Dunstan Hospital.”

Many Otago residents enjoyed such picnics, but they faded into insignificance when compared with the huge friendly society events which dominated the Prince of Wales’s birthday during the 1860s and 1870s. The United Otago District of the AOF made the holiday its anniversary, the Oddfellows having claimed the Queen’s birthday. The Foresters generally held a fete as their annual celebration and these sometimes attracted 3000 or more holidaymakers. Clearly, not all were friendly

---

28 See, for example, Otago Witness, 13 November 1875, p. 10; 14 November 1885, p. 12; and 18 November 1887, p. 33.
29 Ibid., 12 November 1870, p. 13.
31 Gertrude Dyer diary, 9 November 1899, MS-0117, HL.
32 Otago Witness, 17 November 1865, p. 3.
society members, and if the weather was fine and public attendance large, the society could make considerable profits from the fete. The Foresters gathered in town and marched in procession to the selected ground (or to the steamer or train which would transport them there). They offered a variety of sports and entertainments during the day and members of the order, along with invited guests, also partook of a formal luncheon (see Figure 54).33

During the 1870s, motivated perhaps by the suitability of the date or the success of the Foresters’ events, other friendly societies and temperance organisations began to hold competing fetes and sports on the Prince of Wales’s Birthday. An 1871 Band of Hope picnic commenced with an impressive procession of six to seven hundred children and friends, “with a great display of banners, flags, and nosegays, hoisted on the end of long poles.” Occasionally the Foresters combined with other organisations for a joint event, as when they and the Volunteers held a combined sports day in 1872. In 1874 and 1875 there were large combined friendly societies’ fetes at St Leonards, involving the Oddfellows, Foresters and the Volunteer Fire Brigade. In 1876, holiday activities included a MUIOOF fete, Good Templars’ sports and Hibernian fete, and in 1881 the Witness reported Druids’ sports, a Catholic fete and PAFS sports.34 Friendly society events thus became more diverse, but remained an important part of Dunedin’s Prince of Wales’s birthday celebrations. They also featured in some of the province’s smaller towns, as in 1876, when “the 9th of November being the day selected by the Oddfellows to have their annual demonstration, was right loyally kept in Cromwell. It was proclaimed a holiday, and between sports, cricket matches, and other out-door demonstrations of joy during the day and a grand ball at night, it will long be remembered as our grand local holiday ...”35

33 For descriptions of typical Foresters’ fetes, see Otago Witness, 15 November 1867, p. 13; 14 November 1868, p. 18; and 13 November 1869, p. 10. In 1868 the Foresters added £34 12s 4d to their funds from the proceeds of a fete: see Otago Witness, 28 November 1868, p. 13. The extent to which this became a friendly society holiday was indicated by the decorations on the Prince of Wales’s birthday in 1867, when Mr Rogers of the City Buffet showed “a very artistic illumination” emblematic, not of loyalty to the Prince of Wales or the monarchy, but of Forestry. See Otago Witness, 15 November 1867, p. 11.

34 Otago Witness, 18 November 1871, p. 5; 16 November 1872, p. 3; 14 November 1874, p. 17; 13 November 1875, p. 10; 18 November 1876, p. 5; and 12 November 1881, p. 18.

Figure 54 — Prince of Wales’s birthday

“The pastimes of the Dunedinites on the Prince of Wales Birthday,” as depicted by *Punch* in 1866. Members and supporters of the Ancient Order of Foresters, bearing banners, march to their annual fete at Vauxhall Gardens, where a variety of activities are on offer.

Source — *Otago Punch*, 17 November 1866, p. 92.
The Prince of Wales's marriage

These two regular royal holidays demonstrated the importance of the monarchy to the colonists. However, the most significant instances of royal commemoration in nineteenth-century Otago were one-off occasions, such as the remarkably fervent celebrations in honour of the Prince of Wales’s marriage in 1863. As noted above, colonists from throughout the province celebrated with processions, feasts, decorations and a holiday. While the colonists’ loyalty to the crown clearly played a major role in the fervour of the celebration, other factors also contributed to its success, notably the wish to promote the colony and build up the community spirit of its vast new population.

Just two years earlier, discovery of a major gold field at Tuapeka had transformed Otago. As Erik Olssen notes, a “small and relatively cohesive community, dominated politically and morally by Free Church proponents of organised settlement, fast became a large and sprawling population, indifferent or even hostile to the pretensions of the founders.”36 Within a year, Otago’s population had more than doubled, and by the end of 1864 it had reached 49,000, thus quadrupling in just four years.37 Miners scattered widely throughout the once sparsely populated interior, and the province became New Zealand’s leading district. Dunedin benefited greatly. With the miners came a new influx of entrepreneurs, and the large floating population and expansion in entertainments brought a new sense of excitement. However, the pioneering town struggled to cope with the demands of its increased population. Tents and shanties crowded the town, described as exhibiting the “mushroom” school of architecture, and sanitation and water supplies proved grossly inadequate. The condition of the roads was indicated by Dunedin’s nickname, ‘Mud-Edin.’38

The new migrants of the early 1860s varied in several respects from the ‘old identities’ of the first twelve years of the Otago colony. Many had previous colonial

37 Statistics of New Zealand for 1864, Part 1, Census, Table 2.
experience, particularly in Victoria. Migrants now came from a broader range of nationalities, although the Scottish born remained the largest group, and Scots were over-represented even amongst the goldminers: New Zealand, and Otago in particular, held a strong ongoing appeal for Scottish migrants. Nevertheless, the greater diversity of the population presented a challenge to Scottish hegemony, as groups such as Irish Catholics became a force with which to be reckoned.

The biggest challenge Otago’s new immigrants presented to the ideals of the founders was their gender imbalance. The large influx of young men threatened the systematic colonisers’ model of a society centred on the conjugal family, an ideal widely promoted in nineteenth-century New Zealand. The preponderance of males was, unsurprisingly, greatest in the goldfields districts, but even in Dunedin, citizens noticed the hordes of young men living in the neighbouring districts, as they arrived in the provincial capital and later returned from the goldfields to spend some of their ‘pile,’ desperately look for alternative employment, or seek a passage to pastures new. The Provincial Government worried about Otago’s gender imbalance. In 1862 Otago immigration policy changed its focus from families to the recruitment of single women, offering them free passage to the colony. While 1300 young women supported by this scheme arrived over eight months in 1862-1863, they remained

---


41 Catholics, just 2 percent of the population in 1858, comprised 13 percent by 1864. See Appendix One.

42 Erik Olssen, “Families and the Gendering of European New Zealand in the Colonial Period, 1840-1880,” in *The Gendered Kiwi*, ed. Caroline Daley and Deborah Montgomery (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999), 37-62. Charlotte Macdonald notes that despite historians’ contentions that colonial New Zealand was ‘a man’s world,’ “the extent and magnitude of highly unbalanced populations was limited in both place and period.” Otago, in the 1860s, did however experience one of those highly unbalanced populations, and while the experience of Otago cannot be extended to explain phenomena beyond the province, the gender imbalance is essential in understanding the dynamics of Otago itself during this period. See Charlotte Macdonald, “Too Many Men and Too Few Women: Gender’s ‘Fatal Impact’ in Nineteenth-Century Colonies,” in *Gendered Kiwi*, ed. Daley and Montgomery, 17-35.

43 In 1859, 58 percent of Otago’s European population was male: in 1861, this figure had jumped to 78 per cent. By the end of 1864 the imbalance was lessening, but males still outnumbered females by two to one. In 1861, males represented 84 percent of people in the Bruce electoral district, which included the Tuapeka diggings. In Dunedin the population was more balanced, males accounting for 60 percent of the population. See Statistics of the Province of Otago, *Otago Witness*, 21 July 1860, p. 6; Census of the Province of Otago, December 1861, *Otago Provincial Government Gazette*, 21 March 1862, p. 348; and *Statistics of New Zealand for 1864*, Part 1, Census, Table 1.
vastly outnumbered by the young men attracted into the colony by gold. To achieve a stable society, it remained essential that Otago appeal to potential women migrants. A March 1863 scandal over conditions at the Dunedin Female Immigration Barracks (publicised in The Times of London in July of that year) placed Otago’s projected image as a place of opportunity for single women in jeopardy. Conditions in the barracks were undoubtedly poor, as they were in many of Dunedin’s over-stretched facilities at this time. More sensational were the claims by Maria Rye, a well-connected Englishwoman and promoter of migration schemes for women, of immorality and prostitution amongst the inmates. Such claims, while greatly exaggerated, shocked the respectable citizens of Dunedin and did little to further the promotion of female migration to the province.\(^{44}\)

Otago’s royal marriage celebrations occurred, then, while the province was in a state of some excitement and tension, and the celebrations both reflected the concerns of the day and contributed to attempts to deal with those concerns. Once Otago Provincial Superintendent John Hyde Harris had proclaimed 30 June as a holiday in celebration of the royal marriage, prominent Dunedin citizens took to the preparations with enthusiasm. Joseph Webb, insurance agent and member of Dunedin’s Town Board, chaired a public meeting which appointed a committee to arrange Dunedin’s celebrations. The committee, all male, consisted of Dunedin professionals and businessmen willing and able to commit time and money to the cause in the interests of promoting both the town and their own name or business. Some were settlers from pre-goldrush days, including pastoralist John Cargill, newspaper proprietor William Cutten, and merchants John Healey and Richard Martin. However, many of the committee members were newcomers to the town who had joined Dunedin’s business community in the wake of the gold discoveries, mostly via Victoria. They included journalists Benjamin Farjeon and Julius Vogel, doctors Alfred Eccles and Thomas Hocken, lawyer Bryan Haggitt, and numerous merchants.\(^{45}\) The committee was thus a representation of the new Otago elite, successfully combining the ‘old identity’ and ‘new iniquity’ elements of the population. Royal

---


\(^{45}\) ODT, 24 June 1863, p. 5; and *Daily Telegraph*, 24 June 1863, p. 2. The enlarged committee is listed in various press reports: see, for example, ODT, 1 July 1863, p. 4.
commemorations proved useful events for unifying a diverse population and building community spirit, while also allowing individuals and groups to display their loyalty and respectability.

The committee seized this as an opportunity to promote Otago to the world. Otago was but one of many provinces and colonies competing for the attention of potential migrants and entrepreneurs, and the settlement's leaders were anxious to attract people committed to the long-term development of the province. The goldrushes proved a mixed blessing for the province's reputation: gold represented wealth, but societies in the midst of rushes were renowned as untamed and lawless. Here, then, was an occasion to present Otago as a loyal and civilised part of the British Empire: a place of wealth, health and opportunity, and a most suitable destination for respectable migrants.

Several ploys ensured the occasion displayed Otago in the rosiest possible light. A most respectable function at the Female Immigration Barracks countered scandalous claims about the treatment, and decency, of single women migrants. "All present enjoyed themselves very much indeed, and the greatest order and decorum prevailed." Jessie Crawford, "the excellent Matron of the Barracks," and Colin Allan, the Immigration Agent, received plaudits for their parts in the proceedings.46 Moreover, children were prominent in the celebrations, reassuring prospective migrants that family life triumphed even amidst a goldrush. At Tokomairiro, the procession included a large decorated wagon, filled with children. The main ceremony of the day, the christening of a new flagstaff, was performed by Augusta Brooks, the first child born in the district. Later a large group of children enjoyed "a goodly array of cakes, fruit, &c.," and in the evening a one and a half-hour fireworks display "was hailed with shouts of pleasure."47 Nearly 1000 schoolchildren marched in Dunedin's procession. Later the children were "liberally regaled" at two special entertainments.48 During the holiday, "the clean and healthy appearance of the children ... elicited audible expressions of admiration, and which were certainly well deserved .... The presence of such a number of well-dressed, healthy-looking, well-conducted children was ... the subject of very general congratulation."49

46 ODT, 3 July 1863, p. 4.
47 Ibid., 25 June 1863, p. 6; and Otago Witness, 11 July 1863, p. 2.
48 Otago Witness, 4 July 1863, p. 2; and Daily Telegraph, 2 July 1863, p. 3.
49 Daily Telegraph, 2 July 1863, p. 3.
Initially, the celebration committee had planned a feast “for at least five hundred of the poorer classes of Dunedin,” a response to the Otago Witness’s suggestion that it knew “of no more graceful mode of celebrating events of National importance, than the old English custom which, almost from time immemorial, has been observed in country towns and villages of providing a feast for the poor.”

However, this plan to feast the poor attracted criticism from some of the good citizens of Dunedin on two grounds. Some claimed that there was no significant class of the “deserving” poor in the town, and others worried that such an event publicised poverty in Otago. “What will people in the other colonies and at home think of us when they hear of a public feed for our poor?” wondered one correspondent.

Although the press refused to deny the existence of significant poverty in the province, it was sensitive to complaints about the bad publicity arising from the mention of poverty. The celebration committee made the feast more inclusive and changed its title. The “feast for the poor” became a “feast for all comers.” The Daily Telegraph reassured its concerned readers that “the dinner ‘for all comers’ ... was not intended for the ‘poorer classes’ only, but for all classes without distinction ... the arrangements for the poor were made principally through the agency of the Benevolent Institution.” This was a clear change from the committee’s initial intention to arrange a feast specifically for the poor. The detailed reports of the holiday, designed to be sent to Britain, made no mention of the poor, referring, instead, to “the feasting ... of such of the citizens as were disposed to sit down to an ample dinner spread for the million,” and to tables “open to all comers.”

The Otago colonists did not, however, wish to appear selfish or uncharitable. Charity was, as the press rightly noted, a traditional holiday activity, and the colonists wanted to display their benevolence. They overcame this dilemma by directing their generosity towards a worthy cause beyond their own shores: the Lancashire Relief Fund. There was a large box for subscriptions to this fund in one of Dunedin’s main streets, and the celebration committee granted £5 to decorate the box. Dunedinites donated a generous £76 on celebration day, and the press happily publicised such munificence. The ODT, in its monthly summary for Europe, could “not forebear

---

50 Otago Witness, 13 June 1863, p. 4.
51 Lake Wakatip Mail, 11 July 1863, p. 10.
52 Daily Telegraph, 30 June 1863, p. 2.
53 ODT, 1 July 1863, p. 4; and 18 July 1863, supplement, p. 1.
mentioning” the donations collected on the holiday. The Otago colonists thus appeared as generous benefactors to the poorer classes in the industrial wastes of England, where the Lancashire Cotton Famine was at its height, suggesting to ‘home’ readers both the presence of colonial wealth, and, belying reality, the absence of a similar needy cause in Otago.

Competition with other colonies was one of the driving forces behind the holiday, and the press used the occasion to boost Otago’s position (see Figure 55). “The report we publish today of the rejoicings in Dunedin … will be read in many homes in England;” declared the Otago Witness, “and we believe the assurance it affords will not be unwelcome, of the strong and lasting attachment of the people of Otago – and of New Zealand, of which it is the wealthiest and most populous province – to the throne and to the empire.” Home readers learned from the Daily Telegraph that the “celebration in this city on Tuesday … was on a scale commensurate alike with the magnitude of the event and the importance of the Metropolis of the Southern Island.” The event was “an unquestionable testimony of the energy, enterprise, and activity of the colonists.” Colonists did regularly send papers to Britain, sometimes to reassure family and friends of their progress, sometimes in an attempt to encourage those at home to join them in the colony. James Cairns of Scotland received papers and letters from his uncle in Otago as part of an unsuccessful mission to induce the young man to emigrate. News of the royal marriage celebrations was a ploy in this campaign: “You would see by the Pappers

54 ODT, 29 June 1863, p. 5; 2 July 1863, p. 4; 3 July 1863, p. 4; and 18 July 1863, p. 5. These donations compared with £100 received over the entire previous three months. The former daily record was £6, also collected on a holiday, the Queen’s Birthday

55 Many Otago residents experienced considerable poverty at this time. See Olssen, History of Otago, 88. The Otago Benevolent Institution was founded in 1862 in response to the great need for charity. See John Angus, A History of the Otago Hospital Board and its Predecessors (Dunedin: Otago Hospital Board, 1984), 21-23, 30-31, and 53-55; and J. A. Torrance, “Public Institutions,” in Picturesque Dunedin or Dunedin and its Neighbourhood in 1890, with a Short Historical Account of the City and its Principal Institutions, ed. Alex Bathgate (Dunedin: Mills, Dick, 1890), 183-196. On the Lancashire cotton famine, see Norman Longmate, The Hungry Mills: The story of the Lancashire cotton famine 1861-5 (London: Temple Smith, 1978). A period of overproduction by cotton mills was followed by the failure of supply of cotton due to the American Civil War, leading to massive unemployment and poverty. While other regions, including Scotland, were affected, conditions were particularly dire in Lancashire due to the extent of the cotton industry there. Otago’s contribution was part of a large international relief effort.

56 Otago Witness, 4 July 1863, p. 2; and Daily Telegraph, 2 July 1863, pp. 3-4.
Figure 55 – Royal marriage procession in Christchurch
This engraving of the celebrations in the neighbouring colony of Canterbury, which appeared in the Illustrated London News, undoubtedly irritated the organisers of Dunedin’s celebrations, who had hoped to see a similar image of the Dunedin procession in that prestigious publication.

that I sent you,” wrote his uncle, “what sort of Rejoycings we had in the Edin[burgh] of the South Pacific.”

The newspapers provided a sanitised account of Otago’s celebrations, as befitting such a public relations exercise. The ODT congratulated itself on being able to look back “with unalloyed pleasure” on the celebration. “There is generally some accident, some contretemps, something that might have been done and was not, or something that was done which had better have been left undone, to qualify the gratification of the reflection. But nothing of the kind was heard of yesterday.” The following day’s court news, which reported eight Dunedin residents had been charged with drunkenness on the holiday and three with breaching the peace and assaulting a constable, suggests the revelry had been wilder than the paper wished to admit. The Daily Telegraph admitted holiday drunkenness, but made even the colonists’ excessive drinking appear creditable, suggesting they could drink to excess without becoming unruly. “Of course it might have been safely predicated that on an occasion of this sort … some enthusiastic souls would a little overshoot the mark, and sacrifice too freely to John Barleycorn,” declared the paper, “but of drunkenness there was far less than might … have been almost warranted by the circumstances, and of riotous noise and hurly-burly, there was none. It was a subject of general remark that those weak vessels who on Tuesday loved their cakes and ale, not wisely, but too well, did so for the most part in quiet corners.”

A more disinterested report of Dunedin’s royal marriage celebrations suggested the event was more high-spirited and less respectable than the newspapers claimed. Failed gold miner John Walker, about to leave the province forever, witnessed the events of 30 June while in Dunedin awaiting his passage to Melbourne and described the peculiarities of the day to his mother in England. The whole roasted bullock “did not look at all inviting. It was all shrivelled up to about half size. There was a sheet of galvanized iron by way of dripping pan.” There were plenty of casks of ale “set abroach in the streets by patriotic publicans with suitable toasts painted on them,” and “one man had a beer fountain playing in front of his house.” The free ale had its inevitable effect, and some of the procession’s participants were “slightly

---

57 Unidentified to James Cairns, 17 August 1863, Mabel Walker papers, AB-150-1, OSM.
58 ODT, 1 July 1863, p. 4; and 2 July 1863, p. 5.
59 Daily Telegraph, 2 July 1863, p. 3.
inebriated.” At the “free dinner to all comers … the scene was something terrific. After they had eaten their fill some of them drank more than their fill and then there was a row. They rushed the bar, we stood and watched the frantic tho’ useless attempts of the barmen to keep order.” Some of the transparencies were “very peculiar.” He copied the message of one, which had escaped the detailed press reports:

The Prince one day
Might pass this way
And view our Tom and Jerry
Maybe he’ll stop
And stand a drop
To make his subjects merry.  

John Walker’s report provides a corrective to the boosterism, indicating the determination of the press to create a favourable image of life in the province. Although the home editions would have it otherwise, Otago was a society revolutionised by the goldrush, numerically dominated by young men only too willing to indulge in drunken revelry. Still, if the colonists of Otago were more indulgent and less respectable than the press suggested, the celebrations of 30 June 1863 demonstrated remarkable loyalty to Britain. Living as far as possible from the imperial capital, the colonists wished to display “the strong and lasting attachment of the people of Otago … to the throne and to the empire.”

Symbols of Identity

… whilst in some minor respects the mode of manifesting the public sentiment may have been peculiar to us as a colonial people, on the whole, we have followed the ancient ways. We have walked in procession; we have feasted – and toasted the Queen, her son, and the new daughter of England; we have provided treats for the children, and free banquets for such as chose to come and partake. We have made or listened to eloquent speeches and indulged in loud peals of huzzahs; we have fired feux de joie, put up triumphal arches, and waved many-colored banners. And we have chosen as the memorial trees to render perpetual the expression of the sentiments that moved us yesterday to this unwonted display – the old traditional oak of the fatherland.


61 Otago Witness, 4 July 1863, p. 2.

62 Ibid.
The Otago colonists strongly asserted their loyal Britishness in the royal marriage celebrations. Superintendent Hyde Harris planted, in the day’s most determined expression of British identity, two sapling oaks “of the genuine English species” at the Botanical Garden Reserve. “On behalf of you all, those trees have been named;” declared Hyde Harris, “and I trust that they will in all time be known and respected as ‘The Royal Oaks.’” The large crowd greeted his declaration with loud cheers and the firing of a feu de joie. The hope that future generations would look upon these saplings “as gigantic trees, living memorials of the events of the day,” is today fulfilled. Now a huge specimen, the surviving Royal Oak is, indeed, the only reminder, outside archives, of the great celebrations of 30 June 1863 (see Figure 56).

In planting memorial oaks, the Otago colonists followed tradition. The ODT noted “that a very pleasing mode of commemorating the Royal Marriage has been adopted by some of the Australian towns and cities – namely, the planting of young English Oaks in a suitable public place.” In England, likewise, oaks commemorated the royal marriage in at least one town. Oaks, declared the ODT, were “the emblematical representatives of English royalty.” The association between royalty and oak was an old one. After his defeat at the Battle of Worcester in 1651, Charles II escaped the Roundheads by hiding in an oak tree, and oak became a symbol of loyalty to the throne, with the restoration commemorated each 29 May on Royal Oak Day.

Although the association between the oak and royalty was important, it also served as a general symbol of British, and more particularly English, nationality. As the Otago Witness noted, “the oak is the emblem of the nationality which the British colonist does not leave behind him, when he quits his native shores to carry the

---

63 Otago Witness, 4 July 1863, p. 2.

64 The planting had added significance because these were the first trees planted in New Zealand’s first established botanic garden: the need for a suitable location for the commemorative trees commenced the development of the site reserved for such a garden in Dunedin’s original 1848 survey. The original garden was surrounded by Union, Albany and Leith Streets, now the University of Otago. When it moved to its current site in 1869, one of the commemorative trees was shifted there (the other had not survived a major flood). See Eric Dunlop, The Story of the Dunedin Botanic Garden: New Zealand’s First (Dunedin: Friends of the Dunedin Botanic Garden / Longacre, [2002]), 19, 23-26, 33-34 and 41. The prominence of the tree prompted the creation of a tradition: following a suggestion by a resident, Dunedin’s mayor planted another Royal Oak in 1982, commemorating the marriage of the current Prince of Wales in the previous year. See ODT, 9 February 1982, p. 1; and Dunlop, Dunedin Botanic Garden, 184.

65 ODT, 10 June 1863, p. 4. In Malvern, Worcestershire, a procession in honour of the royal marriage ended in the planting of a ‘Prince of Wales Oak’ at one of Queen Victoria’s childhood haunts. See Illustrated London News, 4 April 1863, p. 393 (with an illustration of the procession on p. 385).

66 Hutton, Stations of the Sun, 288-294.
Figure 56 – Royal Oak
The ‘Royal Oak’ in the Dunedin Botanical Gardens provides a living memorial of the celebrations for the Prince of Wales’s marriage in 1863. First planted at the original garden site in Albany Street to mark the royal marriage, the oak was shifted to its present location when the gardens moved in 1869. Historian James Beattie provides the scale.

enterprise of his country to new lands.”

The oak’s status as a national emblem arose from its importance as a naval timber, particularly during the eighteenth century, when, with absolutist France the enemy, the oak was “fetishized” as “the bulwark of liberty, all that stood between freeborn Englishmen and Catholic slavery and idolatry.” To plant oaks, thus contributing to Britain’s “wooden walls” (her navy), displayed public and patriotic spirit. The character of the tree became symbolic of the character of the nation: the oak was “the emblem of grandeur, strength and duration; of force that resists, as the lion is of force that acts.”

The alliance of tree and nation was immortalised in David Garrick’s popular song, “Heart of oak are our ships, Heart of oak are our men ...” The Otago colonists’ planting of memorial oaks was, then, a significant act. Here they asserted both loyalty to the throne and their British nationality. They recalled the oaks of the “fatherland,” and in the spirit of colonisation determined to make them significant in Otago also.

The memorial oaks were quintessentially English, but the greenery which decorated the triumphal arches and streets of Dunedin was distinctly colonial (see Figures 57 and 58). This reflected colonial pragmatism more than any nascent colonial nationalism. After just fifteen years of colonisation, there was little in the way of traditional British foliage to spare for decorations. The colonists used, therefore, any readily available greenery, as they did with their Christmas, Easter and harvest decorations, discussed earlier. Ironically, in making decorations from the easily available – native New Zealand plants – the Otago colonists followed British custom. ‘Traditional’ British festive greenery began as that which was readily at hand, and the connection of specific plants with specific festivals eventually developed out of seasonal availability and long association.

Of the necessity to use native plants the colonists made a virtue. Having noted the limited supply of flags and bunting, the Witness recalled that it was “found necessary to resort to other devices for the adornment of the city. Luckily an ample

---

67 Otago Witness, 4 July 1863, p. 2.
68 Simon Schama, Landscape and Memory (London: Harper Collins, 1995), 153-174. The quote is from 163. I am grateful to Bill Keane for this and the following reference.
70 Mabey, Flora Britannica, 72.
71 Hutton, Stations of the Sun, 34-35 and 120.
Figure 57 – Dunedin decorated for the royal marriage (1)
Decorations, including a triumphal arch, rise above the muddy Octagon in celebration of the Prince of Wales’s marriage, 1863.

Source – Hocken Library, c/neg E1758/6.
Dunedin decorated for the royal marriage (2)

Further decorations in Princes Street celebrate the Prince of Wales's 1863 marriage.

Source – Hocken Library, c/n E 1987/36.
supply of material admirably fitted for the purpose was at hand, in the shape of the
native shrubs of New Zealand. The graceful foliage of the fern and the cabbage-palm
needs only to be disposed with some measure of taste, to lend an inexpressible charm
to any mural decoration .... The effect was novel, but decidedly good.” The Daily
Telegraph agreed that “the ferns and cabbage trees, of which such large use was
made,” were “graceful in themselves and invaluable for such a purpose,” but criticised
the “monotony” of the decorations created by the dominance of these plants and the
repetition of national colours. Others showed more approval, especially of the fern, a
plant currently highly fashionable in Britain: “the town looked very pretty decked out
with evergreens and flags,” reported Joseph Parry. “The ferns here are well suited for
such purposes growing very large. We have one variety called the Tree-fern which
grows very tall, it send[s] up a long stem about as thick as your thigh, fifteen or
twenty feet high, and then the leaves branch out very gracefully.” Although the fern
and cabbage tree did not yet have the iconic national status they would achieve by the
late nineteenth century, some, at least, appreciated their graceful forms.

An impressive display of flags marked the royal marriage. The advertisements
of two tent-makers wanting to employ 500 women at “highest wages” to make flags
indicated the large demand for these items. The colonists flew all available flags, with
some businesses displaying a collection of flags of many nations. Most popular were
the Danish flag (in honour of the new Princess of Wales), the English ensign and the
Union Jack. With the English and Danish flags both red and white, these colours
dominated the display, and participants in the processions, along with some
spectators, wore bunches of red and white ribbons. The “Harp of Erin,” the Irish flag,
also proved popular, particularly at Tuapeka, and there was a sprinkling of Royal
Standards and American flags. Perhaps most surprising was the absence of any
mention of a Scottish flag: on this occasion Scottish national identity was evidently
subsumed in British identity, as was the country’s flag in the Union Jack. The
Tokomairiro Presbyterian Church did make a show of one form of Scottish identity,

72 Otago Witness, 4 July 1863, p. 2.
73 Daily Telegraph, 3 July 1863, p. 3.
74 Joseph Parry to Charles Parry, 16 July 1863, Parry family papers, MS Copy Micro 0350A,
ATL.
75 Philip Simpson, Dancing Leaves: The story of New Zealand’s cabbage tree, ti kouka
(Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2000), especially 223; and Sinclair, A Destiny Apart, 188-
192. See also pp. 90-93 and 181-183 above.
however, by flying the blue banner of the Presbyterian Church alongside a Royal Standard and a Danish flag. Only one local flag received a mention: the Exchange Hotel displayed the Danish, American and New Zealand flags. Exactly which New Zealand flag this was is a matter of conjecture. From 1840 until 1902, the Union Jack was New Zealand’s official flag: the British naval and maritime ensigns were flown by New Zealand ships, but stars representing the Southern Cross were not added until 1869. Perhaps the Exchange flew the Flag of the Independent Tribes, recognised as New Zealand’s national flag until 1840. Whatever the case, the lack of a distinctly identifiable local flag was suggestive: on such an occasion, the Otago colonists identified themselves as British nationals, unless they happened to be Irish, American, or some other type of ‘foreigner.’

The cultural emblems displayed in Otago’s commemoration of the royal marriage were overwhelmingly British. The colonists sang their National Anthem (“God Save the Queen”) and “Rule Britannia,” ate whole roasted ox and plum pudding in traditional British style, flew Union Jacks and English ensigns, planted memorial oaks and decorated their streets with seasonal greenery. There are hints of identification with more local symbols – the occasional New Zealand flag and the extensive use of cabbage tree and fern – but there is little doubt that the colonists were first and foremost Britons. An overarching British identity conveniently included colonists of diverse ethnicities, and commemorations of the British royal family proved able to unite the colonists in a manner seldom seen.

**The Sailor Prince**

On 22 March 1868 an ODT Sunday extra informed a shocked public of the attempted assassination of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh and Queen Victoria’s second son. The Duke had been shot by Henry O’Farrell, an alleged Fenian, while visiting New South Wales. Described by the *Otago Witness* as “one of the foulest attempts at assassination that ever disgraced the annals of even crime itself,” this event created a huge upsurge in loyalty to the crown throughout the colonies. Otago

---

76 ODT, 26 June 1863, p. 3; and *Otago Witness*, 4 July 1863, pp. 2-3; and 11 July 1863, p. 2.

Superintendent James Macandrew organised a “great open-air meeting” where the community expressed its indignation at the attempted assassination. Various local notables addressed the meeting, all declaring their horror at O’Farrell’s act, and their loyalty to the crown.78

But Otago’s most notable response to the Duke’s shooting occurred two months later, on the Queen’s birthday, that traditional occasion for displaying allegiance to the crown, when the residents of Dunedin held an enormous loyal demonstration. This was the century’s most ardent celebration of the Queen’s birthday, and illustrated the way such commemorations could respond to current events. The holiday commenced as usual with a Volunteer muster, parade and royal salute. Despite appalling weather, a crowd of perhaps 2000 people then gathered for a “public expression of loyalty and attachment to the Queen” and “of sympathy with HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.” The demonstration involved colonists of “all classes,” and the obligatory procession included mounted troopers, a band, various friendly societies, numerous groups of tradesmen, the fire brigade, the Band of Hope, the Caledonian Society and “citizens on horseback.” Uniforms, regalia and banners abounded. A few Maori joined the procession, the press explaining that more would have been present if the Native Land Court had not been sitting.79

The Chinese demonstration was the most novel part of the parade:

The Chinese were few in number, but were strong in display, and they attracted no little attention. They carried a large symbolical banner, and smaller banners of very imposing appearance. On each there were inscriptions in Chinese, and these inscriptions were not only loyal and complimentary, but explanatory. Some of them have been translated to us. ‘This is the Queen’s Birthday.’ ‘May she live long, and be happy.’ ‘This Government is good to the Chinese.’ ‘This is a good country;’ and ‘There would have been more present to-day, but many are in the country.’ Two of the Chinese carried large gongs, which they continually beat, and others bore monster clusters of crackers, giving a feu de joie along the route.80

The Chinese were a curiosity to most Dunedin citizens. It was just two and a half years since they had commenced their migration to Otago, and the majority lived on

---


79 The claim for recognition and compensation of unjust land purchases was to be the focus of much local Kai Tahu energy through both nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See Bill Dacker, Te Mamae me te Aroha, The Pain and the Love: A history of Kai Tahu Whanui in Otago, 1844-1994 (Dunedin: University of Otago Press / Dunedin City Council, 1994).

80 Otago Witness, 30 May 1868, pp. 5-6.
the goldfields. By the mid-1870s, the Chinese would be a significant minority group in Otago, representing over four percent of the population. In 1868, though, they were a new and visibly different group of immigrants, being ‘other’ in appearance, language and culture. Most “clung tightly to their own religious and cultural traditions in such an alien New World environment.” They were demonstrably not British, yet here they marched in loyalty to Queen Victoria. In response, Mayor Thomas Birch proclaimed that the “Celestials … might well be included among Her Majesty’s most loyal subjects.”

The attempted assassination of the Duke had the potential to raise sectarian tensions. Initial fears that the shooting was an organised Fenian plot proved unfounded. O’Farrell was a madman working alone. There was, however, no disputing O’Farrell’s ethnicity: he was an Irish Catholic. In New South Wales, and on the South Island’s West Coast, the incident accelerated sectarian animosity. It was otherwise in Otago, where the event appears to have united the colonists. Two Irishmen, brewer James Copeland and Catholic priest Father James Williams, spoke at Dunedin’s indignation meeting, their views echoed by ‘An Irish Catholic’ who wrote to the ODT expressing his disgust at “the cowardly act of the vile wretch O’Farrell, who has disgraced the name of Irishmen by his attempt to assassinate our beloved Sailor Prince.” Moreover, Fenians “should not be considered to represent the Irish Nation,’ and it was entirely untrue ‘that the Catholic Clergy are at the bottom of all this mischief.” Although there were no visibly Irish or Catholic groups in the Queen’s Birthday procession, the press made no comment on their absence. One of the speakers, Rev. D.M. Stuart, a Highland Scot, declared that should the Queen commission a royal visitor to Otago, “it is absolutely certain that our rulers and people, our sons and daughters – the Rose, and the Thistle, and the Shamrock – will


83 Otago Witness, 30 May 1868, p. 5.

84 David McGill, The Lion and the Wolfhound: The Irish Rebellion on the New Zealand Goldfields (Wellington: Grantham, 1990); Richard P. Davis, Irish Issues in New Zealand Politics 1868-1922 (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1974), 16-21; and Inglis, Australian Colonists, 104.

85 ODT, 26 March 1868, p. 5; and 28 March 1868, p. 5.
combine to give him the welcome of loyalty and love.” English, Scots, Irish, Maori and Chinese stood united in loyalty to the throne.

Goldfields Commissioner Vincent Pyke reflected the mood of the day when he declared that “Victoria, our Queen, is truly the People’s Queen: at once the highest lady, and the most beloved woman in the land – a household word and a delight for ever.” Following the speeches and presentation of a loyal address, the crowd sang the National Anthem, cheered the Queen, the Superintendent and the Mayor, then finally escaped the rain. Many no doubt appreciated the “couple of barrels of Wilson and Birch’s best beer” laid on by the Mayor for all comers. In the evening, illuminations, fireworks and a bonfire completed a remarkable day’s proceedings.

In 1869, the colonists again proved their enthusiasm for the monarchy when the Duke of Edinburgh visited New Zealand (see Figure 59). As Judith Bassett noted in her study of the next royal visit, “royal tours are narcissistic festivals; the 1901 visit provided New Zealanders at all levels with a wonderful chance to show off.” Royal visits within nineteenth-century England also boosted the society concerned. In “a mutual act of recognition” both visitor and visited “were enhanced by the other’s approbation.” For the Duke’s visit, the Otago colonists likewise put their civic pride and personal respectability on display. We should not discount, however, their genuine excitement at the occasion and their admiration for the young sailor prince, living proof that their beloved monarch took an interest in their colony. The Witness was struck by the colonists’ welcome to the Duke: “It seemed as if the citizens of Dunedin had taken an epidemic, and gone simply Prince mad. There was no measure to their joy, nor limit to the extravagance with which they expressed it.” Country residents flocked to town. Decorations of flags and foliage and, in the evening, the most impressive illuminations yet seen in the town, attracted admiration from crowds of spectators (see Figures 60 and 61). A large procession welcomed the Duke. During his four-day stay in Dunedin he held two levees, where he was introduced to local notables and received addresses from numerous organisations, ranging from the

---

86 Otago Witness, 30 May 1868, p. 6.
87 Ibid, pp. 5-7.
90 Otago Witness, 1 May 1869, p. 10.
Figure 59 – Duke of Edinburgh
Prince Alfred, the ‘Sailor Prince.’ A portrait by Dunedin photographer Robert Clifford, from the album of Miss Spratt.

Source – Otago Settlers Museum, Album 2, page 35.
Figure 60 – Decorations for the Duke of Edinburgh (1)
A triumphal arch in the Octagon, Dunedin, for the Duke’s 1869 visit.

Source – Hocken Library, c/neg E4317/41.
Figure 61 – Decorations for the Duke of Edinaburgh (2)
The village of Milton prepares to welcome the Duke in 1869. His planned visit to the district was cancelled after changes to his crowded schedule.

Source – Otago Settlers Museum, Box 4, No. 174.
Provincial Council to the friendly societies, Chinese residents and the Presbyterian Synod. He danced Scottish reels at a Citizens' Ball, attended a Caledonian gathering, enjoyed two days at the ‘Duke of Edinburgh Races,’ and attended a Horticultural Society Show.91

As in the previous year’s loyal demonstration, royal fervour united colonists of all backgrounds, with the probable exception of Maori, whom the press did not mention. The Chinese “mustered in force,” intriguing their fellow citizens with their costumes, banners and music. During the procession “their gongs sounded forth upon the day with a striking peculiarity.” The Otago Witness reminded its readers that “our Mongolian friends and fellow citizens have always evinced their anxiety to do honour to Royalty.”92 In another demonstration of agency, the Chinese address to the Duke conveyed both loyalty and a desire to be honoured as respectable law-abiding citizens: “Although aliens from the Crown of Great Britain, we rejoice that our lot has been cast in a land governed by the wise and beneficent laws which have made that great country so renowned; and we pray your Royal Highness to believe that we shall always make it our study to obey and reverence those laws.”93

The Caledonian Society’s prize poem, “Otago’s Welcome to the Sailor Prince,” penned by W.J. Steward of the Oamaru Times, stressed the united loyalty of the colonists, as the first stanza makes clear:

Unfold the British ensign, let its red folds kiss the breeze,
The brave old flag that proudly claims the empire of the seas;
Let sunbeams on St George’s cross and on St Andrew’s shine,
And round about the flagstaff now a Royal garland twine,
Where thistle, rose, and shamrock, interwove with fern leaves green,
Shall tell Otago’s welcome to the son of England’s queen.

The poem, which included phrases in broad Scots and both Irish and Scottish Gaelic, made no reference to Otago’s Chinese or Maori residents.94 It did, however, illustrate that devotion to royalty could override the significant ethnic differences that also occurred within the category of ‘British.’

91 Otago Witness, 1 May 1869, pp. 9-14; and 8 May 1869, pp. 6-7.
92 Ibid., 1 May 1869, pp. 9-10.
93 Ibid, p. 10.
94 Ibid, p. 11.
Criticismandsupport

The Duke’s visit to the colony coincided with several crises: war in the North Island; an economic recession; and threats by the British Government to reduce (or terminate) financial and military aid. The relationship between New Zealand and the imperial government was thus under unusual strain.\(^95\) The period around 1870 was also the high point of the English republican movement, assisted by Queen Victoria’s prolonged period of retirement from public duties and the frivolous lifestyle of her son and heir. As Prime Minister William Gladstone wrote at this time, “To speak in rude and general terms, the Queen is invisible, and the Prince of Wales is not respected.”\(^96\) But for the colonists of Otago, the 1860s proved a high point of loyalty, with more celebration of the monarchy than during any other decade. While some might have been concerned about plans to withdraw military power from New Zealand, the North Island wars held little relevance for everyday life in Otago. The Queen’s prolonged seclusion also had little impact on the colonists because they had no expectation of seeing her in person. Moreover, the 1860s were also a period when Otago faced the challenge of integrating a large and diverse influx of immigrants, and royal commemorations proved useful community building events.

A timely royal illness dealt an unexpected blow to the growing English republican movement, after which it would never fully recover. At the end of 1871, the Prince of Wales came close to death from typhoid, and “the little wave of republicanism” fell back into “the eternal ocean of sentimentality.” The “picture of the Queen, watching at the bedside of her son, evoked widespread sympathy.”\(^97\) A public holiday marked thanksgiving for the Prince’s recovery and jubilant crowds cheered the Queen, Prince and other members of the royal family as they drove to a service at St Paul’s Cathedral. It was a “public relations triumph” for the monarchy.\(^98\) Otago followed Britain’s example by observing ‘Thanksgiving Day’ on Thursday 4


\(^97\) Martin, *Crown and Establishment*, 49.

May 1872 to celebrate the Prince’s recovery. In Dunedin, the holiday was closely observed and special church services well attended. Elsewhere, the response was less enthusiastic: at Arrowtown business carried on as usual, and at Tokomairiro (Milton) only half the businesses closed.99

The colonists’ support for the monarchy was never wholly uncritical. British newspapers and the local press ensured readers knew of royal weaknesses, particularly the various misdeeds of the Prince of Wales. The Queen, also, was not immune from criticism.100 Criticisms were, however, in the case of the Queen at least, balanced by more laudatory reports. When an attempt was made on her life in 1882, the Otago Witness expressed relief “that a glorious reign has not been closed by a bloody tragedy,” asserting that “wherever the name of Queen Victoria is known it is beloved.”101 Positive reports of the royal family – their social calendar, dress and lifestyle – also provided regular fodder for the “ladies’ pages” of the local press.

In 1892, an editorial in the Otago Witness found that “Royalty and its ways are doubtless far away from colonists, in every sense; and the sentiment which we call loyalty to the throne – and which is, in reality, only the national pride, conveniently attached to the name of the person who represents the Constitution in our minds – is one so inborn in Englishmen, and so independent of conscious cultivation, that it plays no part in our daily lives and thoughts, and is only made manifest when extraordinary circumstances call it forth.”102 ‘National pride’ remained pride in Britain and loyalty to the throne was inextricably linked to Britishness. While royal celebrations served to unite the diverse community of Otago, they also allowed the colony to feel part of the great British Empire. As subjects of Queen and empire, Otago residents achieved an effective connection with important world events, and imperial ideology provided a justification for their colonial enterprise in this most distant location.

---

100 For example, see ibid., 12 November 1870, p. 13; 9 November 1872, p. 13; and 30 April 1886, p. 17.
The interest of Otago residents in the monarchy clearly waxed and waned according to current events: it was a dormant emotion waiting for the opportunity to manifest itself. The “extraordinary circumstance” inducing the 1892 editorial was the unexpected death of 28-year-old Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, eldest son of the Prince of Wales and second in line to the throne. The colonists heard by telegraph of the Duke’s death and held appropriate ceremonials on the day of his funeral. Dunedin businesses closed while the Town Hall bell tolled at one-minute intervals for an hour, flags flew at half-mast, and the Volunteers fired a funeral salute of 60 guns. The Duke’s death was the topic of many a sermon that Sunday. The “mournful interest” of the colonists was no doubt heightened by the peculiar pathos surrounding the event: the Duke was to have been married the following month, and “the very same column of cablegrams that told of his death contained joyful references to the stream of magnificent presents which were arriving from abroad to commemorate his fast approaching marriage.”

**Queen Victoria’s Jubilees**

Queen Victoria’s Golden and Diamond Jubilees provided late-nineteenth century Otago residents with a new opportunity for royal celebration in two massive events. It would be difficult to overstate the extent and fervour of these commemorations, and the impression they made on individuals. Christina White lived through two world wars, but in her memoirs declared: “My life I might say was a very ordinary one. I think that the most noteworthy historical event to record was the celebration in the year 1897 of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee.” She had experienced the Jubilee as a ten-year-old child in Edinburgh, shortly before her family migrated to Dunedin, and vividly recalled the decorations and bonfires into her old age. Dunedin, the ‘Edinburgh of the south,’ might be a much smaller settlement, but its celebrations, and those of other Otago districts, were no less fervent for that.

The 1887 Jubilee set a pattern that would be followed with even greater enthusiasm in 1897. Many settlements created memorials to the occasion, with parks and trees proving popular. In Dunedin, a memorial oak was planted at the new Jubilee

---

103 Otago Witness, 21 January 1892, pp. 24, 26 and 35.

104 Christine Smeaton White, reminiscences, Misc-MS-0004, HL. While Victoria had ascended the throne in 1836, on her personal insistence the 50th Jubilee was not celebrated until she had completed 50 years as Queen. The Diamond Jubilee followed ten years later.
Park, while Queenstown received a new free library and 150 gum trees. The school children of Arrowtown also planted “the nucleus of a jubilee park,” and a “jubilee oak tree” was planted at the Milton recreation ground. The Queen featured in numerous sermons on Sunday 19 June, and special Jubilee church services took place on Monday, with congregations singing new Jubilee hymns.\footnote{105}

In Dunedin, despite cold wet weather on Jubilee Day, crowds gathered to watch a military procession. A large number of volunteers turned out, including several corps from the country districts, and the column “looked exceedingly well.” They marched to the new park, where Mayor Richard Leary planted the Jubilee oak, and the volunteers fired a royal salute and \textit{feu de joie}. In the evening, an “immense number of people” enjoyed a spectacular fireworks display in the Octagon, and later “ploughed cheerfully through the mud in order to view the illuminations which were pretty general in all the principal thoroughfares.”\footnote{106}

Processions and fireworks were a popular means of celebrating the Golden Jubilee throughout the province. At Milton, the celebration “passed off with great \textit{éclat}.” A crowd of 2000 (in a borough with a population of 1200) watched the procession, which included bands, volunteers, friendly societies, school children, politicians, trades vehicles and the general public. An ‘exhibition’ demonstrating the progress of the past fifty years was opened in the evening. At Arrowtown a brass band, volunteers and school children formed the parade, the latter carrying an impressive collection of banners, including “a large banner resplendent with a golden crown and other rich ornaments.” An impressive communal feast followed the royal salute and tree planting: “The intensity of the loyalty displayed may be estimated by the fact that a whole bullock, a large pig, a number of hams and rounds of beef, 40 loaves of bread, and hundred-weights of plum pudding (hot) were consumed.” This was substantial consumption in a borough of 440 people (see Figure 62). Naseby celebrated the occasion “right loyally and enthusiastically,” with the formal opening of a new ward at the hospital and a volunteer parade. In the evening the community gathered at a huge bonfire where all comers, some heavily influenced by alcohol, performed impromptu dances, songs, and recitations on an improvised platform.\footnote{107}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[105] \textit{Otago Witness}, 24 June 1887, pp. 10-11; 10 June 1887, pp. 9-10; and 8 July 1887, p. 18.
\item[106] Ibid., 24 June 1887, p. 10.
\item[107] Ibid., 24 June 1887, p. 10; and 8 July 1887, p.18; \textit{Mt Ida Chronicle}, 23 June 1887, p. 3. Population figures (rounded in the case of Milton) are from the 1886 census, and exclude Maori.
\end{footnotes}
Figure 62 – Royal feast at Arrowtown
The roasting of a whole bullock to celebrate Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee at Arrowtown proved so successful that the feat was repeated ten years later. This photograph shows the Diamond Jubilee beast, donated by publican John Jopp, being carved.

One did not need to watch a procession or fireworks to be involved in the Golden Jubilee, as the diary of Waikouaiti’s Rev. John Christie illustrates. With Monday and Tuesday as Jubilee holidays, his three eldest children arrived home on Saturday for a delightful family reunion. Jessie brought her father “a Jubilee present of a pair of glasses.” On Sunday, Christie preached at Flag Swamp, where he “remembered the Queen in prayer.” In the evening he “made a few Jubilee remarks” at the Waikouaiti service. On Monday Christie perused the paper, which “contained some account of the Queen and Jubilee affairs,” and later that day read “the Queen’s Life as it appeared in the Supplement to the Otago Daily Times.”

As John Christie’s experience indicates, the press played an important role in the Jubilee, not least by heavily promoting its own special Jubilee supplements, which featured numerous illustrations of the royal family, biographies of the Queen, and reports on the major events of her reign. While most of the press coverage was highly laudatory of Victoria, in 1887 a new dissenting voice had been added to the Otago press in the form of Samuel Lister’s radical Otago Workman. Lister was a republican and the Workman disseminated his critical views of the monarchy. He disparaged the community’s enthusiasm over the Jubilee, describing “the Jubilee lunatics” as “worse than a cage full of drunken chimpanzees. And why? Because a stout old lady—good and gracious no doubt—has punctually drawn her salary … for forty-nine solid years, and is about to do so for the fiftieth time. … Certainly she has lived a cleaner life than most monarchs and has not been guilty of any very conspicuous sins, but most washer-women could say the same thing.”

The Workman here used the most potent weapon in the republican armoury: criticism of the monarchy’s expense. The paper presented mocking reports of Dunedin’s Jubilee celebrations, and followed up with a pro-republican editorial. But while the Otago Workman might have claimed to be the voice of the working man, other evidence suggests New Zealand workers were enthusiastic supporters of the

---

108 John Christie diary, 18-22 June 1887, AG-102, OSM.

109 The Otago Witness published a sixteen page supplement, the “Queen’s Jubilee Special Edition,” on 17 June 1887, and the 24 June edition also carried eight special Jubilee pages, with engravings and biographical details of the Queen. The 20 June supplement of the ODT carried the same material as the Witness’s 24 June edition (the two papers were owned by the same company).

monarchy. The friendly societies, explicitly loyal organisations which were highly visible in royal commemorations, represented a cross-section of Otago society, and had considerable working class membership. The Primitive Methodists, the most working class of all Protestant churches, held special Jubilee services as eagerly as other denominations. Rev. John Nixon of Dunedin, for example, declared in 1887 that “such a queen as we had must receive on this the jubilee year of her reign the tribute of the loyal love and honour of the empire which she ruled.” Radical Frenchman Albert Métin, who visited New Zealand in 1899, noted that the colonial worker “manifests utterly unequivocal attachment to the monarchy and the most profound reverence for the sovereign and the royal family.”

Victoria’s Jubilees presented some difficulties for Irish Catholics. In Ireland, despite a wide variety of opinion, the British monarchy attracted extensive popular support. By the late nineteenth century, however, royalty had become symbolic of resistance to home rule and many nationalists strongly opposed it. Dunedin Bishop Patrick Moran, an ardent Irish nationalist, scoffed at suggestions that the Queen’s reign had been one of glorious progress. He honoured, instead, those Irish who refused to participate in the celebrations. The Tablet, Moran’s mouthpiece, declared that the Irish could not display loyalty towards their sovereign without displaying disloyalty towards their country, the latter being “a grave offence.” The Catholic friendly society, the Hibernians, took no part in the celebrations, although individual Irish Catholics may have done. By the time of the Diamond Jubilee, Moran had died and the Tablet was taking a more moderate line. It still championed Ireland’s cause, noting that the Irish there had little reason for jubilation, but it advocated celebration by Catholics in New Zealand, who enjoyed the blessings of home rule and political,

111 Olssen, Building the New World, 36-38.
112 Otago Witness, 24 June 1887, p. 11.
113 Albert Métin, Socialism Without Doctrine, trans. Russel Ward (Chippendale, NSW: Alternative, 1977), 189. A 1904 French visitor, André Siegfried, likewise commented that “the King enjoys an undisputed position and a prestige which we run no risk of exaggerating. It would be very difficult to find a single republican in the whole of New Zealand.” See André Siegfried, Democracy in New Zealand, trans. E. V. Burns (London: Bell, 1914), 274.
115 NZT, 1 July 1887, p. 1.
legal and religious freedom.¹¹⁶ The Hibernians still failed to appear in Dunedin’s Diamond Jubilee parade, but Catholic churches joined other denominations in offering special Jubilee thanksgivings, and the Dominican Priory was noted for its “capital display” amongst Dunedin’s Jubilee illuminations.¹¹⁷

The success of the 1887 Jubilee fostered enthusiasm for the Diamond Jubilee ten years later. No English monarch had ruled as long as Victoria: this was recognition of her “Record Reign.” This occasion seemed to warrant a greater memento than the memorial trees of the Golden Jubilee, for larger settlements at least (see Figure 63). Memorials created considerable debate in some towns, as various promoters put forward their pet projects, some taking advantage of the opportunity to obtain funding for a long-desired or half-completed scheme. Dunedin eventually decided on a new children’s ward for the hospital as its Jubilee project. The press criticised utilitarian approaches to the Jubilee, as demonstrated in the comment by Civis in the Otago Witness:

The Jubilee enthusiasm, in danger of running to waste, has been fairly captured by the doctors. Without further debate, apparently, we are all going to put our money into a new children’s ward at the hospital .... I am not against free libraries .... What I am against is the notion that the Queen has reigned 60 years mainly for the purpose of giving a lift to the free library movement in Dunedin. It will be found, I think, as a matter of fact that she must have had some other purpose, - probably a new children’s ward to the hospital.¹¹⁸

Disapproval of utilitarian memorials reflected the reluctance of many in the community to desecrate what was widely seen as a spiritual event: “mercenary loyalty in any shape or form is no loyalty at all,” declared a correspondent from the small town of Milton, where there was an unfortunate quarrel over the Jubilee arrangements. The local football club took charge of the celebrations, aiming to commemorate the event by paying off an old debt on the recreation ground. The brass band, essential in any attractive nineteenth-century procession, protested by refusing to reduce its usual fee for the occasion, incurring the wrath of the organising committee: “Hence the sacred peace of our ancient community is imperilled, and the whole town is at daggers drawn.”¹¹⁹ While Otago’s other Jubilee projects were more

¹¹⁶ NZT, 18 June 1897, p. 17.
¹¹⁷ Ibid., 25 June 1897, p. 17; and Otago Witness, 24 June 1897, supplement, p. 4.
Figure 63 – Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Oamaru
A crowd gathered in Oamaru for the planting of an oak commemorating the Jubilee. Oamaru’s major Jubilee memorial was Victoria Home, an institution for the care of ‘incurables.’

Source – North Otago Museum, No. 29.
overtly charitable, they were also utilitarian: in contrast, Auckland’s Jubilee memorial took the more purely patriotic form of a statue of Queen Victoria.\textsuperscript{120}

Dunedin experienced an “unprecedented influx of visitors from the country districts” during the Jubilee holidays. In Palmerston “the town was quite deserted, the inhabitants going to Dunedin to view the sights,” and in Waiwera, “the Record Reign celebrations were not carried out on a very elaborate scale, many going to Dunedin.”\textsuperscript{121} Catherine Fulton of West Taieri spent three days in Dunedin for the commemoration. Farmers in more isolated districts, although they might have taken little notice of the Jubilee themselves, sent their children to the Dunedin celebrations: the families of William Muir and William Bennett travelled from Tuturau and Strath Taieri respectively. G. M. Thomson of Dunedin put up several relatives from out of town, noting that “town was crammed with people, and it was said that some hundreds of visitors could not find sleeping accommodation at night.” Gertrude Dyer, waiting for the procession to begin, amused herself “by watching the people among whom appeared a number of strangers and country persons.”\textsuperscript{122}

For many, the celebrations began when they attended church on Sunday 20 June, Jubilee Thanksgiving Day. Catherine Fulton reported that the West Taieri Presbyterian Church was “prettily decorated” and “our Queen’s long reign referred to.”\textsuperscript{123} At St Mark’s Anglican Church, Green Island, “an open thanksgiving service for all” was held in the afternoon, when “the church was packed to the outer door, there being the largest congregation ever assembled within its walls.”\textsuperscript{124} Many of the activities that commemorated royalty in Otago were explicitly religious. This is not surprising when we consider how the royal family themselves celebrated these occasions: weddings, funerals, coronations and Jubilee thanksgivings were centered


\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Otago Witness}, 24 June 1897, supplement, p. 2; and 1 July 1897, pp. 20 and 29.

\textsuperscript{122} Catherine Fulton diary, 21-23 June 1897, AG-613, HL; William Muir diary, 19 June 1897, SA-008, OSM; William Bennett diary, 22 June 1897, MS-0165-0168, ATL; George Malcolm Thomson diary, 21-22 June 1897, AG-839, HL; and Gertrude Clara Dyer, ‘How I spent Record Reign Day’, amongst her notes and reminiscences, MS-0117, HL.

\textsuperscript{123} Catherine Fulton diary, 20 June 1897.

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Otago Witness}, 1 July 1897, p. 20.
on church services, with the most public form of pageantry being the royal procession to Westminster Abbey or St Paul’s Cathedral. Royal religiosity is well indicated by the Golden Jubilee proclamation which notified Queen Victoria’s New Zealand subjects “that Her Majesty desires to render thanks to Almighty God for many mercies vouchsafed during her reign, and for the loyalty of her faithful subjects throughout her dominions.”

While Otago’s loyal subjects could not watch the Queen in procession, they could create their own processions, and they could most certainly hold thanksgiving services in her honour. These services attracted very large congregations, clearly appealing to those who were not regular church attenders but felt the occasion required religious observance. Churches took special care to make the services attractive: for example, the Lovell’s Flat Presbyterian Church produced a decorative Diamond Jubilee Souvenir (see Figure 64). Generally each congregation held a separate service, but occasionally the colonists overcame their denominational rivalries to hold combined services, a good example occurring at Naseby during the Diamond Jubilee. A citizens’ service at the town hall “was attended by the largest congregation that ever listened to the Gospel in Naseby, nearly the whole of the town being present.” The local Anglican minister conducted the service, his Presbyterian colleague delivered an address, and the choir was interdenominational. Even when attending separate services worshippers united in sentiment with others throughout the country, the combined spirit sometimes accentuated by particularly coordinated activities, such as when multiple congregations joined in singing the National Anthem at four o’clock on the 1897 Jubilee Thanksgiving Day.

Community singing, particularly of “God Save the Queen,” the National Anthem, was a universal characteristic of royal commemorations. Many of the other songs considered appropriate to such public occasions also had significant religious content. “God Bless the Prince of Wales” proved popular, but so did hymns with no special reference to royalty, as when the school children at Dunedin’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations joined in the Doxology (“Praise God from whom all blessings flow”), or 200 factory employees sang Psalm 100 (“All people that on earth do

---

125 New Zealand Gazette, 21 June 1887.
126 Mt Ida Chronicle, 25 June 1897, p. 3.
Figure 64 – Diamond Jubilee souvenir
Front cover of the souvenir produced by Lovell’s Flat Presbyterian Church to mark Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee. The inside contained the words of the National Anthem, including special Jubilee verses, and the back had the names of the minister, Rev. P. B. Fraser, and the church’s elders and deacons.

Source – South Otago Museum, Balclutha, 5839.
dwell”) at the Owaka celebrations. As noted in Chapter Four, hymns pervaded Victorian life. Most Otago residents, pious or not, would have been familiar with the best-loved hymns of their era, and happily sang them, along with patriotic national songs, on public occasions. The Queen’s Jubilees gave rise to special new hymns, and additional Jubilee verses for the National Anthem. One of these verses, sung at several Dunedin events, epitomizes the combination of community spirit and religiosity:

Lift we both heart and voice,
With one accord rejoice
On this glad day;
On our Queen’s Jubilee
Bend we to God the knee,
Singing right heartily
God save the Queen.128

On Tuesday 22 June, Record Reign Day, Dunedin’s celebrations were, as G. M. Thomson noted, “very thorough & effective.”129 In the morning 4532 school children gathered in the Octagon for a demonstration. Some had already held flag-raising, anthem-singing and tree-planting ceremonies in their school grounds before commencing their march. After the Doxology and “Rule Britannia,” the children sang the National Anthem, and as they commenced their singing the Royal Standard was hoisted and “a boom in the distance announced the commencement of the Royal salute of 60 guns.” The children then raised “countless ‘Hurrahs’” and waved flags. The cheering was, indeed, impressive: Edward Roberts, who might have been a participant himself, recorded that the children “sung ‘God Save the Queen’ & cheered for about 10 minutes.”130

Tuesday’s grand event was the Jubilee procession, watched by a crowd of about 20,000. The spectators “formed, from number, holiday attire, Record Reign emblems, and cheerful aspect, no small part of the scene.” The procession was a most impressive one, led by a large military contingent. Bringing up the rear was a “Maori representative party,” headed by MHR Tame Parata. The Maori contingent was popular with spectators: “the most general and lusty cheers were reserved for our
Maori compatriots." Many Otago dwellers had little contact with Maori, and their interest in seeing them in the processions seems to have been heightened by the then pervasive discourse of Maori as a ‘dying race.’ As one correspondent noted, “Although they are, in comparison with the North Island natives, a very small body, still it is worthy of note that the South Island Maoris have always been good, true, and loyal subjects of the Queen, and it is sad to think that in a few years even the small number that are now left will have passed away.”

Dunedin’s Chinese citizens took no part in the procession. Their contribution to the Jubilee celebrations was a fireworks demonstration on Friday night, which raised £186 for the new Jubilee children’s ward, donated “with a request that Messrs Sew Hoy and his countrymen be considered in the allotment of cots.”

The Dunedin procession marched to Jubilee Park, the memorial of the Golden Jubilee, where dignitaries gave speeches and planted fifteen oak trees to form ‘Victoria Grove.’ Mayor Hugh Gourley stressed the significance of these new royal oaks: “Long after the boom of the cannon, the sound of the children’s voices and our own, and the excitement of the present enthusiasm have died away, these emblems of England’s sturdy growth will, I hope, be themselves growing steadily and silently where we have now planted them .... long may they grow to remind us and those who come after us of this occasion, on which we celebrate the growth and prosperity of the great Empire to which we have the privilege of belonging under the beneficent reign of our great and good Queen.”

The decorations and the evening illuminations, fireworks and bonfires were major attractions. Gertrude Dyer observed that “nearly every house and cottage had tried their several ways to commemorate the event by having flags large and small waving at the side of the houses or on poles while some had bright coloured papers in the windows with V.R. cut out in the centre.” In the evening, she “walked slowly up the town looking at everything, not knowing which to admire most, every thing seemed to be so brilliant and bright.” At seven o’clock, bonfires were simultaneously set ablaze on prominent points surrounding the town, and also blazed on hills further afield. From his home at Waikouaiti, John Christie enjoyed the spectacle: “Every

---

131 Otago Witness, 24 June 1897, supplement, pp. 2-4. Most of Otakau’s Maori residents participated in the smaller Port Chalmers procession.

132 Otago Witness, 1 July 1897, pp. 20-21 and 34.

133 Ibid., 24 June 1897, supplement, p. 3.
eminence had a fire. The sky was all aflame with the numerous lights .... The lagoon, with sea and sky reflected the flames.”

The celebrations in smaller settlements followed a similar pattern, with gatherings of school children, tree planting, processions, mass singing of the National Anthem, royal salutes, decorations and illuminations, fireworks and bonfires (see Figure 65). At Balclutha, “gay with bunting,” floral arches and illuminations, “a monster bonfire was lit on top of Gilroy’s Hill, the highest point in the neighbourhood, from whence it could be seen for miles, connecting with the Clinton, Wangalooa, and Waihola Gorge bonfires.” At Naseby, “only a small and very insignificant part of the great British nation, and very far distant from the large centres of population, the residents determined that no effort should be wanting on their part to show their loyalty and devotion to their Queen.” The parade of school children, each carrying a flag of red, white and blue, was considered by many to be “the prettiest sight of the day”. About 2000 people gathered to watch the procession, which included, besides the usual volunteers, dignitaries and friendly societies, a group of curlers, and citizens, “including a few Chinese.”

The Diamond Jubilee was nineteenth-century Otago’s greatest celebration, reflecting the imperial fervour of the day, though the celebrations were mostly fleeting, and no doubt enjoyed as much for their entertainment value as for any deeper significance. Some Jubilee memorials proved long lasting. The oaks still thrive at Dunedin’s Jubilee Park, even if public memory of the park’s origins has long disappeared (see Figure 66). Not only trees, parks and buildings received Jubilee names. Nearly 10 percent of New Zealand children born in 1897 were named Victor or Victoria, and amongst the Otago birth registrations also appear William Diamond Sneddon, Victoria Recorda Spooner, Alfred Reign Fagan, and Olive Jubilee Scott. Personal Jubilee mementos – the medals distributed to numerous school children, and china adorned with Victoria’s image – remain collectors’ items. Some of these items

---

134 Gertrude Clara Dyer, ‘How I spent Record Reign Day’; G. M. Thomson diary, 22 June 1897; and John Christie diary, 22 June 1897. See also Otago Witness, 24 June 1897, supplement, p. 2.

135 Otago Witness, 24 June 1897, supplement, p. 5; and Mt Ida Chronicle, 25 June 1897, p. 3.

136 As the Otago Workman observed, “Reflection ... whispers that such bonfires, such fireworks, such illuminations, and such cannonading would attract an equally large concourse of people even though the celebration was in honour of a dead kitten or a live parroquet.” See 26 June 1897, p. 6.

137 Index to the New Zealand Register of Births, 1897, in Births, Deaths and Marriages Indexes ([Lower Hutt]: Department of Justice, Registrar-General’s Office, 1987), microfiche. Perhaps the most unfortunate recipient of this honour in New Zealand was baby Record Reign Ross of Drury.
Queenstown's Diamond Jubilee procession included the band, freemasons, friendly societies and school children.

Figure 66 – Victoria Grove
A grove of oaks planted to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee at Jubilee Park, Dunedin, founded ten years earlier in honour of the Golden Jubilee. The plaque marking the occasion disappeared long ago.

were locally made: Dunedin engravers H.I.M. Ross and Co produced various mementos, with designs “characteristic of New Zealand and the event about to be commemorated. Thus the brooches consist of three divisions or parts, on the central one of which is the Queen’s head in relief from the latest medallions. At the sides of this are representations of a Maori canoe and a New Zealand palm tree. The palm tree and the canoe, together with something emblematic of the ‘Diamond Jubilee,’ ran through all the articles.” 138 Margaret Fleet’s Jubilee medal, received as a Caversham schoolgirl, depicted the Queen on one side, and on the other ferns, cabbage trees and a kiwi (see Figure 67). The Jubilees, like other royal commemorations, celebrated both local pride and the community’s membership of the great family of the British Empire. After nearly fifty years of colonisation, Otago residents identified closely with the land of their adoption or birth, confidently using local items as cultural icons. There is no doubt, however, that they still identified strongly as Britons: ferns, cabbage trees, kiwi and waka were celebrated as a part of the vast, colourful, diverse empire ruled by the ultimate icon, Victoria herself, and the Jubilee medals, like all aspects of royal commemorations, were a form of ‘cultural colonisation.’ 139

Although their voices were almost drowned out by the patriotic fervour of the majority, the Diamond Jubilee had its critics. The cost of the celebrations, particularly the expense involved in sending Premier Richard Seddon and a military contingent to the great imperial Jubilee gathering in London, was the greatest cause of complaint. The Otago Workman championed the protest of Dunedin’s Workers’ Political Committee over this expense, which the ODT dismissed as unrepresentative of public opinion and “spurious radicalism.” Republicanism, as espoused in the columns and letters of the Workman, did not, however, exclude imperialism: fervent royal critic ‘Chiseler’ declared that “The Britisher who does not rejoice at the growth and expansion of the empire during the past sixty years is devoid of true patriotism, and is unworthy of the great empire to which he belongs. In so far as next week’s rejoicings

138 Otago Witness, 22 April 1897, p. 20.

**Figure 67 – Diamond Jubilee medals**

Two medals commemorating Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee (both 25mm in diameter). The top medal belonged to Margaret Fleet.

have reference to British greatness they must claim the unstinted enthusiasm of every true Briton.”

The critics were undoubtedly a minority: almost all Otago residents participated in some Jubilee commemoration, with most expressing admiration for their beloved monarch. Official speeches and sermons combined praise for the achievements of the British empire with praise of Victoria herself. Typical was the claim of William Downie Stewart, chairman of Dunedin’s demonstration committee, that the “splendour of the Queen’s reign over the British Dominions has only been rivalled by the purity of her character and the simplicity of her life.” As John Stenhouse remarks, “Victoria was the supreme exemplar of middle-class feminine virtue, and thus struck a very responsive chord in New Zealand hearts.” It was not only the middle classes who valued respectability and admired the monarch: as noted above, there was considerable working class support for the monarchy. Countering the Otago Workman’s parodies of the National Anthem, “God save the People” and “God save our Old Tom Cat,” were claims of the progress of the working class during the record reign. Naseby Mayor William Guffie declared that “During the sixty years’ reign of the Queen it is impossible to say how much has been done for the working classes. I will mention but one instance, the repeal of the Corn Laws by Sir Robert Peel, when the duties were taken off many necessaries of life. I consider that was one of the greatest measures ever passed in the interests of the labouring man. Queen Victoria always gave hearty support to any scheme for the welfare of her subjects.”

**Conclusion**

The Diamond Jubilee combined celebration of two powerful icons: Queen Victoria and the British Empire. “The aged and blameless Queen of the empire” headed a mighty commemoration “of the greatest empire the world has yet seen.”

---

140 John Stenhouse, “The New Zealand Response to Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee of 1897” (BA Hons diss., Massey University, 1979), 11; and Otago Workman, 19 June 1897, p. 7. ‘Chiseler’ was probably Samuel Lister.

141 Otago Witness, 24 June 1897, supplement, p. 3.
143 Otago Workman, 19 June 1897, pp. 4-5.
144 Mt Ida Chronicle, 25 June 1897, p. 3.
145 Otago Witness, 17 June 1897, p. 25. For an exploration of the Jubilee as “a festival of imperial strength, splendour and unity,” and of the British empire at this moment of apotheosis, see Jan Morris, Pax Britannica: The Climax of an Empire (London: Faber & Faber, 1998).
The residents of Otago were conscious that they took part in an enormous empire-wide event. Still “basking in the afterglow” ten days later, Civis wrote:

Do I love my country? Ask it not!
In spite of all temptations
To belong to other nations,
I remain an Englishman!

A Briton, I should have said, perhaps, in deference to our Scotch (or Scottish) friends; but the scansion was against it. No offence, however! To-day I am English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh; I am Canadian, Australian, New Zealander; - the whole multitudinous nationality rolled into one. I am prepared to assert kinship with the rabbi of the synagogue ... Have I not read his sermon! I have brethren in the Indies, East and West; I have Dutch cousins in South Africa; the Maori, the Fijian, the Australian blackfellow are my poor relations. We are all of one Queen, of one nation, of one flag. The Jubilee is something like the miracle of Pentecost over again. We are all of one heart and one soul, and, when it comes to the praises of the Queen, we all speak one tongue ...

The comments display the major reason for the success of royal celebrations in nineteenth-century Otago: they united the diverse array of colonists into one group of loyal Britons. Even those most distant from British traditions, the Chinese and Maori, positioned themselves on royal holidays as loyal subjects of the Queen, for to be disloyal was to position oneself outside the community.

Except at the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, Maori were not highly visible at royal commemorations: Otago never held the large Maori feasts that featured on royal holidays in northern centres. This probably resulted from their low numbers and low profile: Kai Tahu lived, to a significant extent, on the margins of nineteenth-century Otago society. Their respect for the Crown was, however, never questioned. Unlike some northern iwi, southern Maori had, as Tame Parata declared, “been loyal to her Majesty from the day when the first European landed in New Zealand”; they looked upon the Queen “as our mother”; they were “the children of the Queen.” Religion presumably also played a part in the loyalty of Kai Tahu, many of whom were devout Anglicans or Methodists.

The case of Otago’s Chinese residents is particularly interesting. Brian Moloughney and John Stenhouse argue that historians’ focus on the undeniably significant racism against Chinese too often leads to the Chinese appearing as “passive victims of white prejudice” rather than “active historical agents.” The actions of Chinese on royal holidays displayed considerable agency: wary of the racial

146 Otago Witness, 1 July 1897, p. 3.
147 Ibid., 24 June 1897, supplement, p. 3.
148 Moloughney and Stenhouse, “Drug-besotten, sin-begotten fiends,” 44.
attitudes of many colonists, they had no wish to become ‘victims’ and from the beginning actively pre-empted potential discrimination by taking part in loyal demonstrations recognising the primacy of that icon of colonial identity and power, Queen Victoria. Such displays had a distinctly useful function, and like their fellow colonists, the Chinese could take a utilitarian approach to memorials. Their donation to the Jubilee Children’s Ward, as noted above, carrying the suggestion that their children be granted access to its services.  

The true feelings of the Chinese about Queen Victoria and her family remain a matter of conjecture. Alexander Don, Presbyterian missionary to the Otago Chinese, remarked on the “conceit” of some who referred to the Prince of Wales “as ‘the son of a prince’, while the Emperor of China is ‘the son of heaven’. ’

Don’s comment hints at one possible factor behind the Chinese displays during royal commemorations: they came from a culture with a long history of respect for a spiritually imbued monarchy (see Figure 68). Their involvement in these occasions contrasts with their absence from the Otago Settlement Jubilee celebrations, providing further evidence of the remarkably cohesive nature of the former.

It is clear that the monarchy was a symbol powerful enough to cross ethnic divides; it also went a long way to overcoming the religious sectarianism that bedevilled colonial Otago. In 1867 the constitutional scholar Walter Bagehot noted that the monarchy gave to the English constitution an important ‘dignified’ element, also serving as a symbol of unity. Much of the Queen’s significance was spiritual: “The mystic reverence, the religious allegiance, which are essential to a true monarchy, are imaginative sentiments that no legislature can manufacture in any people.”

Ian Bradley has recently restated the spiritual significance of the monarchy, both past and present. Spiritual aspects played an important part in the cohesive effect of royalty in Otago: ceremonies supporting the monarchy acted as a form of ‘civil religion’ – an official or public expression of community spirituality –

---

149 While most of Otago’s Chinese were adult males with no New Zealand resident children, there were some with young families in the province. For example, Choie Sew Hoy, a local Chinese leader and prominent member of the fireworks demonstration committee, had children in Otago.

150 N. Z. Presbyterian, 1 September 1882, cit. Ng, Windows on a Chinese Past, 2: 140.


Figure 68 – Chinese royalists
In the absence of any images from Otago, this photograph shows Chinese residents marching in the procession for Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in Greymouth, 1897.

Source – West Coast Historical Museum, Hokitika, #113.
in a society beset with sectarian rivalry. As noted in Chapter Four, the separation of church and state in New Zealand resulted from sectarianism more than secularism, and New Zealand had a de facto culturally established religion, essentially Protestant. Commemoration of the monarchy both fitted within this ethos, and moved beyond it. The monarchy was an historic bulwark of Protestantism, retaining to this day the title 'Defender of the Faith'. For New Zealand Anglicans, the Queen remained head of both church and state; for other Protestants she headed state alone, but earned their respect for her well-known personal piety, which took a distinctly non-ritualist form. However, civil religion can move beyond such tradition, forming "a minimal creed from which few would be excluded"; a "sort of 'least common denominator' religion." All Christian denominations encouraged respect for the Queen. Anglicans revered her as Supreme Governor of their church, and the Prayer Book orders for morning and evening prayer included special prayers for the Queen and royal family. Queen Victoria also earned the special respect of Presbyterians for her attraction towards their simple forms of worship. To the dismay of the Anglican hierarchy, the Queen regularly took communion at the Presbyterian Church of Crathie, near her Highland home at Balmoral, describing the experience sympathetically in one of her own hugely popular books. New Zealand Catholics were more ambivalent about the monarchy. Yet, even the ardent Irish nationalist Bishop Moran admitted that the

---


“personal character of her Majesty ... has always been most respectable.”

Other Catholics with reservations about participating in the royal Jubilees also admitted “that to Her Majesty is due every mark of unaffected loyalty,” and recognised “the imperative teaching of their church that to Her, as their legitimate Sovereign, they are bound by Divine law to show every token of outward respect.”

Acknowledgement that ‘Divine law’ required respect for the legitimate Sovereign pervaded Christian society, including those denominations originating outside the British establishment: in New Zealand, for example, Baptists, Methodists and Congregationalists were as much loyal monarchists as their Anglican and Presbyterian brethren.

Of course many Otago residents were not regular churchgoers, holding only a nominal denominational allegiance; a handful of others did not recognise the Christian God at all. This does not mean, however, that such people lacked religion. Non-Christians, like Catholics, might feel uneasy commemorating a representative of Protestantism, but they could have few scruples celebrating the monarch as represented in public ceremonies on royal holidays. She appeared as a noble and virtuous woman, and a worthy head of state under whose beneficent rule the Empire had prospered. Her reign was a blessing from God, although that God remained sufficiently undefined to allow maximum breadth of interpretation. Commemorations of the monarchy were undoubtedly religious events, whether or not the participants were Christians. According to Durkheim’s classic definition, religion unites into a community those who adhere to beliefs and practices relative to the sacred, that is, to things set apart and forbidden. Alongside explicitly religious practices such as church services and hymns, royal commemorations included many other activities that fit Durkheim’s definition of religion. Processions, feasts, decorations, illuminations, tree-planting, speeches, cheers and salutes were communal practices recogniseing Queen Victoria, undoubtedly a person ‘set apart’ or ‘sacred’, respected by those with or without conventional religious convictions. She was generally described using reverent language; she was also the ‘well-beloved’ of her subjects. She personified the power of the British Empire, but also embodied womanly virtue, and was admired for her moral standards as much as her position as Queen and Empress. The celebrations

---

156 NZT, 1 July 1887, p. 1.
157 Ibid., 10 June 1887, p. 13.
on royal holidays commemorated the individual woman, the Empire she ruled, and the role of the Otago community within that Empire; they united the community in a form of civil religion.

Occasionally Otago residents, notably Samuel Lister, attempted to remove Queen Victoria from her pedestal, but had little success: few activities could so resolutely unite the community as a royal commemoration. Displays of royalist sentiment have been too readily dismissed by Sinclair and Fairburn, and too long ignored by other historians of nineteenth-century New Zealand, perhaps because such events do not readily fit into a nationalist or secular paradigm. Queen Victoria was “a myth and an icon”; she “reflected back to her subjects their own values … they in turn created her in their image to serve their social and economic needs.”¹⁵⁹ One of nineteenth-century Otago’s greatest needs was community integration: in a province peopled with a wide variety of ethnic groups, further factionalised by religious sectarianism, the British monarchy provided a useful, and largely uncontroversial, unifying symbol.

Conclusion

Secular and nationalist paradigms have long dominated New Zealand historiography, and the teleological search for rationalism and secularisation has caused many historians to ignore important features of colonial life. In crossing the supposed boundaries between the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular’, in moving outside the nationalist framework, and in taking note of the ethnic differences within Pakeha society, this thesis has taken a new approach to New Zealand’s colonial history. It has, in effect, reordered the history of colonial life according to the priorities of the colonists themselves, revealed in their personal writings, images and material objects. In their holidays and celebrations, Otago’s nineteenth-century residents revealed what they valued: their Christian religion, their imported ethnicities, the fruits of the land and their labour, their local communities, and their membership of the mighty British empire. In taking a serious look at such events, this study has provided new insights into the complexities of colonial culture. Several of the predominant themes of the existing historiography – nationalism, secularisation and the importation of a pre-existing ‘British’ culture – prove inadequate in accounting for the realities of colonial experience.

Holidays and ethnicity

The evidence of Otago’s nineteenth-century holidays clearly demonstrates the absence of a homogeneous culture in this period and place. The migrants who came from Britain and Ireland did not bring with them a comprehensive shared culture, and neither did they quickly or easily develop such a culture in the colony. Certainly the colonists had many things in common, but there were also significant differences between the various ethnic groups that resided in Otago.

Scots were the most visible ethnic group within Otago’s Pakeha society. This stemmed, in part, from their numerical dominance. In the earliest years of the colony, Scots evidently felt little need to assertively display their ethnicity. Nevertheless, the ceremonies of the Presbyterian communion season and enthusiastic celebration of New Year, both foreign to other migrants, distinguished Otago as a peculiarly Scottish colony. From the 1860s, as the population expanded and became more diverse as a result of the goldrushes, Scottish colonists began to display their ethnicity in more
visible and self-conscious ways, using the Highland myths and symbols which had become the distinctive marker of the Scot. Perhaps the strongest expressions of Scottishness were the remarkably widespread and popular New Year Caledonian games, distinguished from other sports events by Highland dance, Highland music, Highland dress and Highland sports events. These explicitly Scottish displays persisted into the twentieth century, long after the majority of migrants had arrived and long after the majority of the population was New Zealand born.

In contrast with the Scots, the English, numerically Otago’s second most significant group of migrants, did not have a culture of explicit ethnic display. ‘Old English’ Boxing Day sports were a passing attempt by an entrepreneur to attract customers rather than a lasting cultural tradition. Accustomed to political and cultural dominance within Britain, the English viewed themselves as normal. Even in Otago, the only New Zealand province where the English did not form the largest ethnic group, they assumed such displays were only necessary for others. Many English colonists felt dismay, however, at the disregard colonists of other ethnicities had for the best-loved traditional English holidays, Christmas and Easter. The eventual adoption and popularity of these holidays is evidence of English influence within the colony.

Irish Protestants were a far less visible ethnic group and even determining their numerical strength is difficult. Because they shared aspects of their identity with other ethnic groups – their religion with Scottish or English migrants and their country of origin with the Catholic Irish – they were not easy to distinguish and generally merged into larger groups. The Orange Order gave them one avenue for ethnic display. Resented by many other colonists for its sectarian nature, the LOI did provide support for Irish Protestant culture and, although 12 July parades never became established in Otago, Orangemen proudly participated in larger community processions.

Irish Catholics, meanwhile, were a distinctly visible ethnic group. Apart from the earliest years of the colony, when Scottish laymen and French priests led Otago’s tiny Catholic community, Catholicism was inextricably linked with Irishness. The church, headed by a strongly Irish nationalist hierarchy, encouraged a sense of Irish ethnicity amongst its members. Hibernian games and St Patrick’s Day celebrations displayed this pride in Irishness, as did the participation of the HACBS and Catholic clergy in community processions.
Several of the holidays explored in this thesis both demonstrated and fostered ethnic and religious difference within Otago's Pakeha community. Communion seasons were a distinctly Presbyterian tradition and those outside the church had no reason to become involved in their rituals, apart from the general holiday for the fast day. To Scots, whether Presbyterian or not, sacramental fast day holidays were familiar, but other colonists found them distinctly peculiar. English and Irish colonists also found the New Year holiday unfamiliar and those who valued respectability disapproved of its wilder revelry. Scots dominance ensured, however, that fast days and New Year became general holidays, so non-Scots seized them as opportunities for recreation. This created little controversy at New Year, a time favoured for recreation by Scots also, and colonists of all ethnicities attended the popular Caledonian games. Devout Presbyterians did not, however, approve of the light-hearted recreation of many colonists during sacramental fast days. The inappropriate use of these holidays contributed towards their eventual abolition. In observing New Year and sacramental fast days, the Otago colonists expressed their Scottishness.

Many Otago colonists also expressed their Scottishness by ignoring Christmas and Easter, or using them for recreation. As English and Catholic Irish migrants valued these holidays highly, this created considerable tension, particularly in the case of Easter, the most sacred time of the year for devout Anglicans and Catholics. The desecration of these holidays generally resulted from cultural difference, although occasionally groups such as the Freethinkers consciously offended Catholics and Anglicans through such actions. The continued promotion of these holidays by the English and Irish, and late-nineteenth century changes in Presbyterian theology, resulted in their gradual acceptance, although some rural Scots continued to ignore Christmas and Easter into the twentieth century. As with the English adoption of the Scottish holiday, New Year, the adoption of Christmas and Easter by many Scots did not always include adoption of the cultural practices attached to those holidays. Many colonists were happy enough to adopt unfamiliar holidays, but used them for their own familiar recreations, especially for that pervasive nineteenth-century holiday activity, the picnic.

Otago Anniversary Day proved a site for sectarian tension from the outset of the colony. Scottish and English colonists had very different ways of recognising anniversaries, the former with religious observance and the latter with feasting and sports. This resulted in a major dispute at the first anniversary. The failure to reach a
consensus about how to celebrate the province’s anniversary resulted in a continued lack of satisfactory commemoration of the colony’s beginnings. The holiday’s close (although inconsistent) association with horse racing contributed to its failure, as evangelical Protestants became increasingly opposed to gambling late in the nineteenth century. In 1898 the colonists attempted to rise above such long-term disagreements to celebrate the settlement’s Jubilee. While largely successful, this occasion only barely overcame the strong undercurrents of sectarianism which pervaded colonial society, with different religious denominations in dispute and heated discussions over the Orange Order.

On some holidays the colonists proved better able to overcome their ethnic and sectarian differences. Otago’s rural communities united in celebration at their harvest homes. The success of these occasions partly stemmed from their applicability to all residents. Most holidays were human constructs, important in some cultures but not in others. The harvest, however, was a natural event (although admittedly much altered by human intervention) which played a vital part in all agricultural societies. The source cultures of all Otago colonists celebrated the harvest and therefore these occasions attracted little controversy or division. Urban residents also recognised the significance of the harvest in their church harvest thanksgivings. Although each denomination performed the harvest thanksgiving in a slightly different manner, as appropriate to their liturgy, the different Protestant churches used remarkably similar decorations and music to celebrate the harvest. There was, however, one notable omission that prevented this from becoming an occasion for all colonists: Catholics did not adopt the innovation, making the harvest thanksgiving a purely Protestant phenomenon.

Celebrations of the British monarchy were the least contested holidays of nineteenth-century Otago, uniting colonists of all ethnicities and religions to a remarkable extent, especially when contrasted to other occasions which might have been expected to create united community support but did not, such as Anniversary Day. In the absence of other suitable holidays, the colonists seized the largely uncontroversial royal celebrations as opportunities for community integration and community display. Royal birthdays, marriages, visits and Jubilees became occasions of great celebration, the colonists identifying themselves as part of the great British empire and subjects of a Queen of whom they could be proud. British identity served to encompass colonists of all ethnicities, even including, remarkably, the Chinese.
This does not mean, however, that Britishness completely subsumed other ethnicities. The colonists remained highly conscious of their diversity. Their ethnic differences contributed to the splendour of these occasions and to the reputation of the empire as a vast, varied and colourful marvel.

Although small in numbers, Maori played a visible part in many of Otago’s nineteenth-century holidays, most notably the processions celebrating Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee and the Otago Settlement Jubilee. They also contributed significantly towards the early Anniversary Day sports events, a sign of their closer association with the English than the Scottish colonists. Most Kai Tahu had evidently adopted the English religious holidays of Christmas and Easter with their conversion to Christianity, generally as Anglicans or Wesleyans. By contrast, very few of Otago’s Chinese residents converted to Christianity during the nineteenth century, keeping their own traditional holidays without adopting those of other colonists. The notable exception is, of course, their participation in Otago’s royal celebrations. As the most important public occasions for community bonding and displays of loyalty, royal commemorations attracted those groups most marginal to mainstream society – Maori and Chinese – who therein actively displayed their attachment to the Otago community.

**Holidays and religion**

This thesis has demonstrated the remarkable extent to which the religious beliefs and practices of the colonists pervaded nineteenth-century Otago life. Their religion played a vital role in all the holidays examined here. This is, of course, unsurprising for such explicitly religious occasions as communion seasons, Christmas and Easter. Yet religion also had a major impact on the celebrations that might be considered ‘secular,’ both through individual attitudes and actions and communal worship. Indeed, every holiday explored in this thesis included a religious service of some kind, from New Year watch nights to harvest thanksgivings to Jubilee thanksgiving services. The bipolar opposition of sacred and secular simply cannot account for the content of Otago’s nineteenth-century holidays. By the late nineteenth century, government authorities often attempted to avoid disputes by distancing themselves from the organisation of the ‘religious’ elements of public events. This, however, reflected the strength of sectarianism rather than secularisation, and often proved unsuccessful. The Otago Settlement Jubilee procession provides a good
example of the way in which religion intruded into a supposedly secular event. The colonists’ religious beliefs and practices were an intrinsic part of all public occasions, and could not be conveniently separated into their own sphere.

Furthermore, while religion became in some senses increasingly privatised, in others it became increasingly visible, and certainly did not decline in importance. The large and growing popularity of church harvest thanksgiving services in late-nineteenth century Otago suggested an increasing rather than decreasing respect for God’s role in the natural world. Christmas and Easter also became more explicitly religious occasions from the late nineteenth century, as Presbyterians, who had once gloried in ignoring or desecrating these holidays, began to adopt them as sacred occasions.

This study of holidays has provided a valuable window into the religious experience of the Otago colonists. The communion season, highlight of the year for devout Presbyterians, revealed incongruous elements for a culture often considered intellectual. Communion was an emotive and mystic experience for many Presbyterians; one on which they depended for the maintenance of spiritual fervour. Moreover, many abstained from communion for fear of their unworthiness. The boundaries placed around communion, from the administering of tokens to the fencing of the table, indicated also the boundaries of accepted moral behaviour, with public drunkenness and evidence (through pregnancy) of fornication deemed particularly unacceptable. By the end of the nineteenth century staunch Calvinism was losing its hold over some Presbyterians, leading to gradual changes in religious practice. The decline of communion tokens and fencing the table, as well as the increasing controversy over special fast days, indicated the colonists’ increasing unwillingness to view God as a severe judge. Although many Presbyterians supposedly scorned ritual, a phenomenon they closely associated with the dreaded Catholicism, the proceedings of the communion season clearly incorporated ritualised behaviour. If Presbyterian ritual was simpler than Catholic or Anglican ritual, it was no less significant for participants. By the late nineteenth century, the declining influence of Calvinism and reduced fear of ritual led some Presbyterians closer to their fellow Protestants as they adopted (although often after bitter dispute) hymn-singing and instrumental music in church, the celebration of Christmas and Easter and the use of flowers and festive decorations in worship.
Anglican and Catholic religious practice also displayed an increasing taste for ritual over the period studied. Worship shifted from homes and temporary buildings to permanent churches. By the 1890s Dunedin contained the magnificent St Joseph’s Catholic Cathedral, while St Paul’s Anglican Church had also been gazetted a cathedral. Wealthy benefactors donated furnishings and worship became increasingly ornate along with its settings. Christmas and Easter, in particular, demonstrated the richness of Catholic and Anglican religious practice, with splendid music and decorations. Of course many smaller rural churches remained relatively simple. Furthermore, some churchgoers, particularly some Anglicans, disapproved of increases in ritualism, as evidenced by the difficulties of Rev. Algernon Kerkham, an extreme high churchman, at St John’s Anglican Church in Roslyn and, at the opposite extreme, the secession of low church Irishman Rev. Lorenzo Moore from the Dunedin diocese. Nevertheless, the trend over the period was clearly towards increasingly complex ritual, promoted by an Anglican bishop of high church tendencies, the increasing wealth of the churches, and the more general fashions and tastes of the late Victorian era.

This thesis has also revealed something of Anglican attitudes to communion. Like Presbyterians, Anglicans had a fear of receiving communion unworthily and many abstained rather than taking this risk. Ironically, while Catholics had a reputation amongst Protestants and freethinkers for superstition related to the sacraments, Anglican and Presbyterian communicants also held deep concerns about the improper taking of communion. And Catholics had no monopoly on religious guilt: the self-examination required of Protestant communicants and their occasional disappointment in the experience of the sacrament led, not uncommonly, to feelings of guilt and failure. Catholics were certainly more frequent communicants than Anglicans or Presbyterians, but it is clear that all these denominations valued the sacrament very highly.

The religious practices of Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists and the other groups labelled ‘non-conformist’ in Britain fell somewhere between the experiences of Presbyterians and Anglicans. They appear to have treated communion as a more routine practice, with less ritual surrounding it, but further study is required to evaluate this more fully. Certainly it does not seem to have been the outstanding experience for them that it was for Anglicans, Catholics and Presbyterians. Like all other churches in this study, these groups also joined the general trend towards
increased ritual over the nineteenth century, evidenced, particularly, by their growing use of ornate decorations and music. Although Methodists marked Christmas and Easter with religious ceremony throughout the period, Baptists and Congregationalists, like Presbyterians, began to adopt the religious observance of these festivals late in the nineteenth century. Methodists introduced the New Year watch night service to the colony, a practice later also popular with Baptists, Congregationalists and some Anglicans. This service prompted sober reflection on both past and future and fostered dependence on God. While not all Otago churches adopted the watch night tradition, diaries indicate that devout Christians of all denominations treated the New Year as an occasion for spiritual stocktaking.

Church attendance figures confirm the popularity of Christmas and Easter services, Presbyterian communion seasons and, especially, harvest thanksgivings and special services commemorating royal occasions. These festive occasions clearly involved people who existed on the margins of organised religion, yet retained a ‘diffusive’ Christianity which acknowledged the existence of a God who ruled the natural world and blessed nations with mighty rulers. Hymns and carols formed a particularly important element of this culture, as did the life-cycle rituals not examined in this thesis.

**Holidays in Otago**

Otago was half a world away from the ‘home’ of most of its colonists, making changes in some of their imported festive traditions inevitable. The reversed seasons of the southern hemisphere had a particularly strong impact on Christmas practices. Some English migrants found a summer Christmas strange and uncomfortable, its peculiarity heightened by the lack of religious celebration by the majority of their fellow colonists. Time, however, brought with it adaptation and summer puddings and new season’s vegetables replaced holly, ivy and snow as signs of Christmas. Ethnic diversity made Christmas more a family than a community occasion in Otago, harbinger of a change which came later to Britain. Seasonal change also affected New Year but made it, ironically, more overtly Scottish rather than more colonial, as, from the 1860s, Otago residents adopted this as the best occasion for the popular Caledonian games.

Other holidays displayed more continuity with practice in the colonists’ countries of origin. These holidays certainly changed over time, as is seen in the
changes to the Presbyterian communion season and the increasing adoption of regular church harvest thanksgivings, but such changes were responses to international shifts in religious belief and practice rather than to the local environment. One interesting and important exception is the organisation of harvest homes, which altered radically in response to the more egalitarian social structure of Otago. The use of native flora for festive decorations indicated, besides the pragmatic need to use what was available, a growing comfort with the colonial natural environment, and yet, English oaks remained the memorial tree of choice. Significantly, the most distinctly colonial of Otago’s holidays – Anniversary Day – was also its least successful. Although ethnic and religious diversity created difficulties, the residents of nineteenth-century Otago remained firmly attached to the holidays brought to the colony in their cultural baggage. These occasions helped make their strange new land seem comfortable and familiar in an important, but previously overlooked, element of the colonising process.

This study of holidays in nineteenth-century Otago has revealed the significance of ethnicity and religion in the colonists’ lives. Theirs was not a society in the midst of rampant secularisation, despite the assumptions of many New Zealand historians. Neither was it a society absorbed in a search for national identity. Keith Sinclair’s claim that in New Zealand “nationalism fulfilled some of the roles of religion” is manifestly untrue for the residents of nineteenth-century Otago. The role of religion was fulfilled by conventional religion itself, supplemented by a form of civil religion based, not on the nation, but on respect for the British monarch.

In their holidays, the Otago colonists revealed a rich and varied culture, adapting to a new environment, yet clinging fast to traditions imported from their various northern hemisphere home regions. Those now unfamiliar occasions – public fast days and the Prince of Wales’s birthday holiday – have, along with the holidays we still observe, provided us with valuable insights into an intriguing and complex colonial world.

---

Appendix One – Population Statistics

Most of the data in this Appendix comes from government censuses. From 1881, these took place every five years, but prior to that they occurred at varied intervals, so caution must be taken when reading the tables and graphs below for changes occurring over time.¹

Changing geographical boundaries make the creation of consistent tables and graphs difficult. In particular, the province of Southland separated from Otago in 1861 but the two provinces reunited in 1870. This thesis concentrates on the area most consistently defined as Otago, which excludes the southern counties of Southland, Wallace and Fiordland. However, as nineteenth-century statistics were inconsistent and generally did not separate Otago and Southland in this way, to enable the illustration of trends over time I have included both regions in Tables 2-10 below. As the population of Southland was small and resembled Otago with respect to the origins of Pakeha migrants, this makes little difference to the percentage results relating to religion and non-Maori ethnicity. It does, however, make a major difference to Maori population statistics, as Southland had a relatively large Maori population during this period, especially when Ruapuke and Stewart Islands were included in its statistics. For example, in 1867, when clearly differentiated data was available, 400 Maori lived in Otago and 426 in Southland, 190 of the latter living on Ruapuke and Stewart Islands. Therefore, when reading Tables 5 and 6 and Figure 71 it should be borne in mind that the proportion of Maori in Otago was lower than that of the combined Otago and Southland regions. To help counter this bias, and also to provide information from an earlier period, I have included in Figure 72 an illustration by Atholl Anderson, which shows the Maori population in eastern Otago, derived from a wide variety of sources.

Although some of the nineteenth-century censuses counted Maori, they recorded less information on Maori than on Pakeha. The figures in Tables 2-4 and 7-13 below, therefore, exclude Maori, as did the census tables from which they are derived.

## 1. Statistics relating to ethnicity

### Table 2 - Country of birth of non-Maori Otago and Southland residents 1848-1864, as a percentage of the total population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Date (total population)</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Date (total population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>August 1848 (485)</td>
<td>December 1856 (3796)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Europe*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – calculated using:


1858: *Statistics of New Zealand*, 1858, Table 3.

1861: Ibid., 1861, Table 9.

1864: Ibid., 1864, Part 1, Table 13.

---

*This total excludes those of unknown or unspecified birthplace. Numbers in this category were as follows – nil for 1848, 1856 and 1858; 2848 for 1861; and 392 for 1864.

Includes only France and Germany for this period.
Table 3 - Country of birth of non-Maori Otago and Southland residents 1867-1881, as a percentage of the total population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>December 1867 (56,400)</th>
<th>February 1871 (69,427)</th>
<th>March 1874 (85,046)</th>
<th>March 1878 (114,132)</th>
<th>April 1881 (133,916)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Europe(^5)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – calculated using:
1867: *Statistics of New Zealand*, 1867, Part 1, Table 11.
1871: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand*, 1871, Table 11.
1874: Ibid., 1874, Part 4, Table 6, p. 83.
1878: Ibid., 1878, Part 5, Table 6, p. 232.
1881: Ibid., 1881, Part 5, Table 6, p. 196.

\(^4\) This total excludes those of unknown or unspecified birthplace. Numbers in this category were as follows – 120 for 1867; 64 for 1871; 67 for 1874; 337 for 1878; and 161 for 1881.

\(^5\) Includes only France and Germany for 1867.
Table 4 - Country of birth of non-Maori Otago and Southland residents 1886-1901, as a percentage of the total population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Date (total population&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;)</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Date (total population&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;)</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Date (total population&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;)</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Date (total population&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March 1886 (148,976)</td>
<td>April 1891 (152,821)</td>
<td>April 1896 (163,807)</td>
<td>March 1901 (173,063)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Europe</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – calculated using:
1886: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand*, 1886, Part 4, Table 5, p. 133.
1891: Ibid., 1891, Part 2, Table 5, p. 83.
1901: Ibid., 1901, Part 3, Table 7, p. 127.

<sup>6</sup>This total excludes those of unknown or unspecified birthplace. Numbers in this category were as follows – 178 for 1886; 276 for 1891; 137 for 1896; and 82 for 1901.
Figure 69 – Country of birth of non-Maori Otago and Southland residents

Source – statistics from Tables 2-4.
Figure 70 – Scottish, English and Irish born residents of Otago and Southland as a percentage of all foreign born residents

### Table 5 - Maori and non-Maori population of Otago and Southland 1858-1878

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1858</th>
<th>1867</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th>1878</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maori</td>
<td></td>
<td>725</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Maori</td>
<td></td>
<td>6944</td>
<td>56,520</td>
<td>69,491</td>
<td>114,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>7669</td>
<td>57,346</td>
<td>69,971</td>
<td>115,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maori as % of total</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:
1858: *Statistics of New Zealand*, 1858, Tables 1 and 10.
1867: Ibid., 1867, Part 1, Table 1 and Appendix C.
1874: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand*, 1874, Table 1 and Appendix A, Table 1.
1878: Ibid., 1878, Part 1, Table 6, p. 3, and Appendix, Table 1, p. 357.

### Table 6 - Maori and non-Maori population of Otago and Southland 1881-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1896</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maori</td>
<td></td>
<td>837</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>1023</td>
<td>718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Maori</td>
<td></td>
<td>134,077</td>
<td>153,097</td>
<td>163,944</td>
<td>173,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>134,914</td>
<td>153,862</td>
<td>164,967</td>
<td>173,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maori as % of total</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:
1881: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand*, 1881, Part 1, Table 6, p. 3, and Appendix, Table 1, p. 312.
1891: Ibid., 1891, Part 1, Table 6, p. 3, and Appendix C, Table 4, p. lix.
1896: Ibid., 1896, Part 1, Table 6, p. 3, and Appendix, Table 4, p. lv.
1901: Ibid., 1901, Part 1, Table 6, p. 3, and Appendix B, Table 4, pp. Ivi-lvii.

7 The Maori population is not available at a provincial level in the 1886 Census.
Figure 71 – Maori and non-Maori population of Otago and Southland 1858-1901

Source – statistics from Tables 5 and 6.
Figure 72 – Maori population of east Otago 1844-1868

2. Statistics relating to religion

Religious allegiance

The census denominational tables give little indication of the active religious involvement of the Otago population. They do, however, provide a guide to the self-stated religious identity of the colonists. In Tables 7-9 I have included as separate categories all of those religious groups which reached a threshold of 1 percent of the population at any time during the nineteenth century. All others (except Jews, which have been included separately as they are a particularly distinctive group) fall into the category of “other.”

Table 7 – Religious allegiance of non-Maori Otago and Southland residents 1848-1864, as a percentage of the total population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Date (total population)</th>
<th>August 1848 (481)</th>
<th>December 1855 (2747)</th>
<th>December 1858 (6910)</th>
<th>December 1861 (25,675)</th>
<th>December 1864 (56,369)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td></td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregational</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant (unspecified)</td>
<td></td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – calculated using:
1858: *Statistics of New Zealand, 1858*, Table 5.

---

*This total excludes those of unknown or unspecified religion. Numbers in this category were as follows – 4 for 1848; 105 for 1855; 34 for 1858; 3508 for 1861 (which includes the “otherwise described,” unable to be distinguished from the “not described” at a provincial level); and 735 for 1864.

*This figure for 1848 consists of the category labelled “Other Dissenters,” which included Presbyterians.*
Table 8 – Religious allegiance of non-Maori Otago and Southland residents 1867-1881, as a percentage of the total population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Date (total population)</th>
<th>Anglican</th>
<th>Presbyterian</th>
<th>Methodist</th>
<th>Congregational</th>
<th>Baptist</th>
<th>Lutheran</th>
<th>Church of Christ</th>
<th>Protestant (unspecified)</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>Pagans, Chinese &amp; Heathen</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>None / Object to state</th>
<th>None / Object to state to state</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December 1867 (55,801)</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 1871 (69,306)</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March 1874 (84,974)</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March 1878 (113,948)</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April 1881 (133,718)</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – calculated using:
1867: Statistics of New Zealand, 1867, Part 1, Table 15.
1871: Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1871, Table 15.
1874: Ibid., 1874, Part 3, Table 6, p. 59.
1878: Ibid., 1878, Part 6, Table 6, p. 257.
1881: Ibid., 1881, Part 6, Table 6, p. 221.

---

10 This total excludes those of unknown or unspecified religion. Numbers in this category were as follows – 719 for 1867; 185 for 1871; 139 for 1874; 521 for 1878; and 359 for 1881.
11 Provincial figures were not available before 1874, and were also not given for 1881.
12 Category first recorded in the 1867 Census.
13 First available as a census option in 1871.
Table 9 – Religious allegiance of non-Maori Otago and Southland residents 1886-1901, as a percentage of the total population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Date (total population(^{14}))</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March 1886 (148,873)</td>
<td>April 1891 (152,764)</td>
<td>April 1896 (163,797)</td>
<td>March 1901 (173,016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregational</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Christ</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army(^{15})</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant (unspecified)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagans, Chinese &amp; Heathen</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None / Object to state</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – calculated using:
1886: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand*, 1886, Part 3, Table 5 (p. 106).
1891: Ibid., 1891, Part 3, Table 5, p. 112.
1896: Ibid., 1896, Part 2, Table 6, p. 90.
1901: Ibid., 1901, Part 2, Table 6, p. 88.

\(^{14}\) This total excludes those of unknown or unspecified religion. Numbers in this category were as follows – 281 for 1886; 333 for 1891; 147 for 1896; and 129 for 1901.

\(^{15}\) Category first recorded in the 1886 Census.
Figure 73 – Religious denomination of non-Maori Otago and Southland residents.

Source – statistics from Tables 7-9.
Church attendance

From 1874, the New Zealand Census included figures for church attendance. As noted in the Introduction, there are considerable difficulties in interpreting these figures. It is unclear whether or not those making returns included Sunday school children, and whether they counted those attending church more than once on Sunday once or twice. Moreover, the Census required returns of those “usually attending public worship,” a category open to wide interpretation. Did those attending church once a month, for example, count as “usual” attenders? In Table 10, I have included two percentages for each year. The first assumes that children were counted, and calculates the proportion of the entire population attending church. The second assumes that only adults were counted, and calculates the proportion of the population aged 15 years and over attending church (I selected the age of 15 because the Census groups people in the age bracket 15-20 years into one category). The actual number may well have fallen somewhere between these two percentages. Church attendance statistics for individual denominations are not available for individual provinces and, therefore, not included here. A fire in the census office destroyed some of the 1901 returns, so attendance figures are not available for that year.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th>1878</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1886</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1896</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Usual” church attenders</td>
<td>17,209</td>
<td>24,051</td>
<td>27,292</td>
<td>42,563</td>
<td>42,958</td>
<td>52,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>85,113</td>
<td>114,469</td>
<td>134,077</td>
<td>149,154</td>
<td>153,097</td>
<td>163,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total attending</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population 15 years &amp; over</td>
<td>50,362</td>
<td>66,210</td>
<td>77,556</td>
<td>87,953</td>
<td>92,835</td>
<td>105,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of adults attending</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – calculated using:
1874: *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand*, 1874, Part 10, Table 9 (p. 272); and Part 2, Table 14 (p. 36).
1878: Ibid, 1878, Part 10, Table 9, p. 349, and Part 2, Table 14, pp. 61-61.
1881: Ibid., 1881, Part 19, Table 17, p. 305, and Part 2, Table 13, pp. 68-69.
1886: Ibid., 1886, Part 10, Table 33, p. 356, and Part 2, Table 10, pp. 80-81.
1891: Ibid., 1891, Appendix B, Table 37, p. xl, and Part 4, Table 10, pp. 146-147.
1896: Ibid., 1896, Appendix A, Table 44, p. xxxiii, and Part 4, Table 14, p. 166.
4. Population of various Otago settlements

These tables summarise the available census population statistics of Otago’s largest towns and villages. Unfortunately, little information is available prior to 1871, and many goldrush towns rose and fell during the 1860s. Caution should be taken when making comparisons over the period, as geographical boundaries used by collectors of the original statistics altered.

Table 11 - Population (excluding Maori) of Otago towns and villages 1857-1861

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>1857</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1864</th>
<th>1867</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dunedin</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>5850</td>
<td>15,790</td>
<td>12,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oamaru</td>
<td></td>
<td>1377</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waikouaiti (Hawkesbury)</td>
<td></td>
<td>481</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Chalmers</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
<td>1347</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton (Tokomairiro)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>527</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:
1861: *Statistics of New Zealand*, 1861, Table 4.
1864: Ibid., 1864, Table 1.
1867: Ibid., 1867, Table 3.
Table 12 - Population (excluding Maori) of Otago towns and villages 1871-1881

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th>1878</th>
<th>1881</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dunedin</td>
<td>14,857</td>
<td>18,499</td>
<td>22,525</td>
<td>24,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburbs of Dunedin:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td>1799</td>
<td>2754</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Harbour</td>
<td></td>
<td>926</td>
<td>1213</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roslyn</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>1565</td>
<td>2875</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornington</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>2208</td>
<td>2886</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maori Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td>344</td>
<td>1136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caversham</td>
<td>2250</td>
<td>3425</td>
<td>3989</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td></td>
<td>546</td>
<td>773</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dunedin</td>
<td>1690</td>
<td>2796</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Island</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>462</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Dunedin &amp; suburbs</td>
<td>22,968</td>
<td>35,443</td>
<td>43,256</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oamaru</td>
<td>1657</td>
<td>2819</td>
<td>4927</td>
<td>5791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampden</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmerston</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waikouaiti (Hawkesbury)</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Chalmers</td>
<td>1406</td>
<td>1535</td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>2182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outram</td>
<td></td>
<td>385</td>
<td>272</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosgiel</td>
<td></td>
<td>399</td>
<td>418</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton (Tokomairiro)</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>1161</td>
<td>1287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaitangata</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>135</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balclutha</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>257</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapanui</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>1009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxburgh</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cromwell</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queenstown</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrowtown</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naseby</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:
1871: Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1871, Table 3.
1874: Ibid., 1874, Part 1, Table 19, pp. 21-22.
1878 and 1881: Ibid., 1881, Part 1, Table 14, p 9.
Table 13 - Population (excluding Maori) of Otago towns and villages 1886-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1886</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1896</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dunedin</td>
<td>23,243</td>
<td>22,376</td>
<td>22,815</td>
<td>24,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburbs of Dunedin:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East Valley</td>
<td>3221</td>
<td>3337</td>
<td>3374</td>
<td>3527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Harbour</td>
<td>1295</td>
<td>1297</td>
<td>1366</td>
<td>1465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roslyn</td>
<td>3609</td>
<td>3845</td>
<td>4118</td>
<td>4632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornington</td>
<td>3334</td>
<td>3523</td>
<td>3584</td>
<td>4008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maori Hill</td>
<td>1388</td>
<td>1426</td>
<td>1483</td>
<td>1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caversham</td>
<td>4448</td>
<td>4690</td>
<td>4763</td>
<td>5266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Kilda</td>
<td>1078</td>
<td>1153</td>
<td>1185</td>
<td>1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dunedin</td>
<td>3902</td>
<td>4222</td>
<td>4592</td>
<td>5363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Island</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Dunedin &amp; suburbs</td>
<td>46,154</td>
<td>46,556</td>
<td>47,943</td>
<td>53,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oamaru</td>
<td>5330</td>
<td>5621</td>
<td>5225</td>
<td>4836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampden</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmerston</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waikouaiti (Hawksbury)</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Chalmers</td>
<td>2235</td>
<td>2028</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>2056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outram</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosgiel</td>
<td>1181</td>
<td>1304</td>
<td>1382</td>
<td>1463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton (Tokomairiro)</td>
<td>1177</td>
<td>1158</td>
<td>1139</td>
<td>1241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaitangata</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>1145</td>
<td>1362</td>
<td>1463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balclutha</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>1017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>1052</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapanui</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>1084</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>1159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cromwell</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queenstown</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrowtown</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naseby</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:
1886 and 1891: Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, 1891, Part 1, Table 20, p. 26.
Appendix Two – Biographical Notes

This appendix includes biographical notes on the diarists, letter writers and memoirists whose records I have used in this thesis. Their detail varies considerably because only sketchy information is available for some people and, moreover, I have paid less attention to those people who appear only briefly in the main text. I have collected this information from a variety of sources, including archives catalogues, internal evidence of the diaries, letters and memoirs, obituaries, local histories and standard genealogical sources and indexes. References are given to any available published biographical information at the bottom of the entry.

Abbreviations

*Cyclopedia* Cyclopedia of New Zealand, Volume 4: Otago and Southland (Christchurch: Cyclopedia Company, 1905).


Adam, Thomas
Born in 1835 in Renfrewshire, Scotland. Migrated to Otago in 1856 after serving his apprenticeship to an engineer and millwright. Worked as a roadmaker and then carpenter until the goldrush, when he was one of the early miners at Gabriel’s Gully. His family then joined him in Otago and together they established an accommodation house at Otokaia, which proved a great success as it was located on the route between Dunedin and the goldfields. In 1864 Thomas Adam married Miss Gordon, a recent migrant from Linlithgow, Scotland, and they had at least five children. They farmed for several years at Otokaia and then at “Eaglescarnie,” Waiala. In his old age, Thomas retired from active farming and his sons took over the property. The family were devout Presbyterians, and Thomas Adam was appointed first deacon, then in 1884, elder, at Waiala Presbyterian Church.
See *Cyclopedia*, 656-657.

Barrell, Frederick
Born in 1847 at Fremantle, Western Australia, the son of English parents. His mother was a farmer’s daughter and his father a whaler. Frederick’s father travelled to the
goldrushes in Victoria, returning to find all of his family had apparently died of a fever. However, unbeknownst to him, young Frederick had survived and was raised by his grandparents. Frederick later heard that his father had gone to New Zealand, and moved to Otago in the early 1870s in the hope of finding him. He settled at Albert Town, near Wanaka, for some years, working as a labourer for the storekeeper / publican. He attended an evangelistic YMCA service while visiting Dunedin in 1874, but described himself as “not very religious.” He eventually found his father, living in straitened circumstances in Dunedin. In 1880 Frederick Barrell returned to Australia, where he worked as a miner and then a storekeeper. In 1881 he married Margretta Grenfell and they had two daughters. He died in 1935 at Ballarat.

Begg, Alexander Campbell
Born in 1839 in Liberton, near Edinburgh, Scotland, the son of Rev. Dr James Begg, who was later a prominent leader in the Free Church of Scotland, notorious for his conservative and strict Calvinism, yet was also an important Scottish housing reformer. After working for several years in an insurance office, A. C. Begg migrated to Otago in 1859. He worked for a merchant, spent a few years farming at Clutha, and then returned to Dunedin where he established his own business as stock and station agent. In 1867 he married Katharine Clarke, a farmer’s daughter, originally from Highland Perthshire, and they had a large family. A. C. Begg served on numerous public bodies and was Mayor of Roslyn for some years, although he failed in two bids to enter the House of Representatives. He was a devout Presbyterian, served as an elder at First Church, Dunedin, and was “a Presbyterian of the old type, who, when occasion required it, strenuously opposed modern innovations in the Presbyterian form of worship or church government” (Obituary, Otago Witness, 16 October 1907, p. 33). He died in 1907 at Dunedin.

See Cyclopaedia, 120.

Bennett, William
Few details are known. He farmed at Strath Taieri from 1856 and remained living there until his death in about 1913. He attended the Presbyterian Church at Hyde and appears to have served on some type of church committee there.

Brown, James Elder
Born in Scotland where he trained as a teacher. He also had experience working with machinery. He migrated to Otago in 1849, probably with other members of his family, and initially worked for wealthy landowner W. H. Valpy, building his flour and sawmill. In 1856 Brown settled in the Tokomairiro district, farming there until his death in about 1900. Evidently a staunch Presbyterian, he served as a deacon at Tokomairiro Presbyterian Church.


Burns, Thomas
Born 1796 in Ayrshire, Scotland, the son of an estate manager. His paternal uncle was the poet Robert Burns. Thomas studied theology at Edinburgh and was licensed to preach by the Church of Scotland in 1822. After a few years of tutoring he became minister at Ballantrae and later Monkton. In 1830 he married Clementina Grant, daughter of a Scottish episcopal minister. They had seven children. In 1843 Burns lost
his comfortable living when he joined the Free Church of Scotland at the Disruption. In 1848, after various delays, he arrived in Otago as religious leader of the Free Church colony. For the first six years he was sole Presbyterian minister, travelling extensively to visit his scattered flock. As other ministers arrived, he initiated a presbytery and later a synod. He also fostered education in the colony and served as foundation Chancellor of the University of Otago. Thomas Burns’s farming background proved valuable to the colony; he ran his own property and provided useful farming advice to others. Viewed as dour and strict by some, he was nevertheless much respected and admired by many Scottish colonists. He died in Dunedin in 1871.

See DNZB 1: 58-59; Southern People, 70-71; and Ernest N. Merrington, A Great Coloniser: The Rev. Dr. Thomas Burns, Pioneer Minister of Otago and Nephew of the Poet (Dunedin: Otago Daily Times & Witness, 1929).

Christie, John
(see Figure 15)
Born 1830 in East Kilbride, Lanarkshire, Scotland, one of the eleven children of farmer Andrew Christie and his wife Janet Campbell. Shortly after his birth they took the tenancy of a farm in Renfrewshire. He attended Glasgow University and was licensed to preach by the United Presbyterian Church in 1860. In 1862, at the Original Secession Church, Carluke, he married Rachel Stewart, daughter of a druggist, and they migrated to Otago soon afterwards. After a few months of preaching around the province, John Christie was appointed minister of Waikouaiti Presbyterian Church in 1863, a position he retained until his retirement due to failing health in 1901. Christie immersed himself in the life of the village and the large district surrounding it which formed his parish. He wrote a respected history of the area which ran to two editions. Christie’s other interests included geology and gardening, the latter presumably chiefly in the interest of feeding his large family: John and Rachel Christie had nine children. Christie’s maternal uncle, Rev. William Campbell, a Free Church minister, also came to Otago, and may have lived with the Christies in his old age. John Christie was a great advocate of temperance and a leading light of the local Good Templar lodge. With respect to religion, he was a conservative to the end. He played little active role in wider church politics, but diligently attended Synod meetings and wrote in his diary of his bitter disappointment at any ‘downgrade’ of traditional Calvinist standards. After his retirement, John and Rachel Christie moved to Dunedin, and he died there in 1913.

See Cyclopedia, 436.

De Carle, Edward
Few details are known. He arrived in Dunedin about 1862 and set up in business as an auctioneer. He evidently came from Melbourne, where his wife Annie and children remained for a while before joining him in Otago. They may originally have come from Essex, England, as they exchanged letters with family there.

Douglas, James Haddow
Born 1884 at Lake Hayes, near Arrowtown, Otago, the son of Scottish parents. His uncle, Dr James Douglas, arrived in the district about 1862 and was the first doctor at Frankton Hospital. James Haddow Douglas’s father, Archibald Douglas, followed his medical brother to Otago in 1868, taking up farming at “Douglas Vale,” Lake Hayes.
They ran a few sheep, but principally raised grain crops. They also broke in their own horses, and Archibald Douglas was a keen racing man. He died in 1889, but his family evidently remained on the farm after this. James Haddow Douglas eventually became an engineer. He died in 1958.

**Dyer, Gertrude Clara**
Born in 1878 in Milton, Otago. Her father, William Dyer, was born in London and migrated first to Sydney, and then in 1857 to Otago. Following the death of his first wife he married Ann Redmayne in 1860. She had migrated from Yorkshire with her family in 1857 and worked as a governess for the family of Johnny Jones. William Dyer had various Dunedin businesses, including a hotel. Around 1863 the Dyer family moved to Milton, where they ran a farm and store and William served in local politics, including a period as Mayor. In 1886 they returned to Dunedin where William sold insurance. Gertrude had nine siblings and at least two half-siblings. She attended Caversham and George Street Schools. After leaving school at the end of her primary education she apparently entered some form of employment, possibly in the clothing trade. The Dyers were Anglican and Gertrude was a devout young woman, regularly attending services at St Paul's Anglican Cathedral. A woman named Gertrude Clara Dyer, perhaps the same person, became a registered nurse after training at Wanganui Hospital in 1917, and in 1933 was listed as being resident in San Francisco.

**Evans, Christina (nee Hain)**
Born in 1865 in Auchtermuchty, Fifeshire, Scotland, the daughter of William and Jessie Hain. The family migrated to Otago in 1879 and settled in Invercargill. In 1880 Christina Hain was appointed a pupil teacher and taught at various schools in the district until 1890, apart from a three year break due to ill health. In 1890 the Wyndham school in which she was teaching closed, and she seems to have kept house for her brothers from this date. The Hains were deeply involved in the Presbyterian Church, and William Hain became a Home Missionary in 1889, serving at Orepuki and later Mayfield. In 1904 he received ordination as a Presbyterian minister. Christina Hain was a devout evangelical Christian. She served as organist for the Orepuki Presbyterian Church and started a bible class there. In 1897 she married Walter Fairlie Evans. In 1902 he commenced training in Dunedin as a Presbyterian minister, later continuing his studies in Edinburgh. They then returned to New Zealand and Walter enjoyed a long career as minister in various parishes throughout the country, ably supported by Christina. He retired in 1936 but continued to work as a relieving minister for many years after that. Christina died in 1945 and Walter died in 1966.

**Fail, William Gowan**
Born in 1834 in London, England, the son of Frederick and Theophania Fail. In 1854 William migrated with his wife Eliza to Melbourne. They came to Otago in 1864 for the Dunstan goldrush and William spent some time mining on the Manuherikia River. They soon settled in Port Chalmers where they became longtime residents. They had at least three children. During the mid-1860s William worked as a waterman. By the 1880s he was working as a journalist, becoming the *Evening Star* Port Chalmers reporter. He died in Port Chalmers in 1923.
Falconer, William
Born in 1849 in Highland Perthshire, Scotland, the son of James Falconer and Jane Campbell. The family migrated to Otago in 1863 and settled on a farm at Warepa. William Falconer worked in Dunedin and on his family’s property before establishing his own farm in the Catlins, where he was one of the earliest European settlers. In 1877 he married Georgina Strachan. They had 15 children. William was a devout evangelical Christian who attended many religious meetings. He initially attended the local Presbyterian Church but was instrumental in the establishment of the Owaka Baptist Church in 1875. In 1896 he took a leading role in the founding of an Open Brethren congregation. He died in 1935.

Fell, Jane McMinn (nee Christie)
Born in 1870 at Waikouaiti, Otago, the fourth of the nine children of Rev. John and Rachel Christie (see his biographical note above). She married Ben Fell in 1903. They had no children. When Ben died in 1951 he was town clerk at Waikouaiti. Jane Fell died in Dunedin in 1964.

Ferens, Thomas
Thomas Ferens was from East Rainton, Durham, England, where he had some experience in business. He migrated to Otago in 1848 on the John Wickliffe with the first party of official settlers. Thomas Ferens was a devout Methodist and had been a local preacher in Durham. He spent his first three years in Otago as a teacher at the Waikouaiti Wesleyan Mission’s school. When the mission ran out of funds to pay him, he became manager of the Otepopo sheep run. In 1854 Thomas Ferens married Margaret Westland, who had also arrived on the John Wickliffe, and bought his own sheep station, Stotfield, 23 miles from Oamaru. They later had to surrender the station due to economic depression, and moved to Oamaru. Ferens remained a devout Methodist and leading light of the local church until his death. See William Morley, The History of Methodism in New Zealand (Wellington: McKee, 1900), 135, 487 and 490.

Fowler, Alexander John (Jack)
Born in about 1859 in London, England. His family ran a shoe making business and Jack trained in the trade. His letters suggest a limited formal education. In 1883 he migrated to Otago and settled in Dunedin where, after a few short term jobs, he obtained work with Simon Bros, bootmakers, as a clerk and shop assistant. In 1888 he married Jane (Jeannie) McNeill Broome, a machinist at Simon Bros. She was born in Otago in 1866, one of the eight daughters of John and Jane Broome, migrants from Scotland. “You must not think that the factory girls here are like the home ones being of a higher class with exceptions,” Jack reassured his mother. Before coming to Simon Bros, Jeannie had worked as a dressmaker. They moved into the house Jack had built before their marriage. Jeannie died in 1894, leaving three young children. Jack’s Broome in-laws helped him care for the children. In 1896 Jack Fowler returned to live with his family in London, along with two of his children. He left one daughter in Dunedin to be raised by the Broomes. Jack Fowler participated in various community organisations, especially before his marriage. He was a freemason, a bugler in a volunteer company, and a member of the Ancient Order of Foresters. He started attending the local Hanover Street Baptist Church shortly after his arrival in
Dunedin, and probably came from a Baptist family. Jeannie was a Presbyterian, but joined Jack at the Baptist Church after their marriage.

**Fulton, Catherine Henrietta Elliot (nee Valpy)**
Born in 1829 in England, one of six children of William Henry Valpy, a wealthy East India Company judge, and his wife Caroline Jeffreys. He retired to England in 1836. The family toured Europe in the mid-1840s. In 1849 they arrived in Otago, taking up land at Forbury and Caversham and playing an important role in the economic and social life of the fledgling colony. In 1852 Catherine Valpy married James Fulton, who had travelled to Otago with the Valpies. He was born in India into the family of an Anglo-Irish army officer, but was brought up in England after the death of his father. James and Catherine Fulton farmed a large property at West Taieri, ‘Ravenscliffe,’ for the rest of their lives. They had eight children. Although both were raised as Anglicans, after they moved to the Taieri James and Catherine joined the local Presbyterian Church. They also held regular services in their home for family, servants and neighbours. Catherine was a devout evangelical Christian. She was baptised at Dunedin’s Baptist Church in 1868, but remained a committed Presbyterian. James Fulton served as a resident magistrate and in all levels of government, including the Legislative Council. Catherine was heavily involved in various social, philanthropic and religious organisations, including the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, which she served as New Zealand president. After James’s death in 1891, Catherine managed Ravenscliffe until her own death in 1919. See DNZB 1: 140-141 and *Southern People*, 173-174 and 526.

**Godley, Charlotte (nee Wynne)**
Born in 1821 in Wales into a wealthy upper class family. In 1846 she married John Godley, an Irish lawyer and justice, also from a wealthy Anglican family. John Godley became an ardent campaigner for colonisation and, in company with Edward Gibbon Wakefield, founded the Canterbury Association, which established an Anglican colony in New Zealand. John Godley was appointed resident chief agent of the colony, and travelled to Canterbury with his family in 1850, stopping at Otago and Wellington on the way. In 1852 the Godleys left New Zealand. John Godley served in various government positions in England and Ireland until his death in 1861. Charlotte died in 1907. See DNZB 1: 150-152.

**Grant, Isabella**
Born in 1848 in London, England, the daughter of George and Forrestine Grant. George and Forrestine were Presbyterians, and possibly Scots. The family migrated to Otago in 1870. In 1876 Isabella Grant married Thomas Whitson, to whom she had been engaged before coming to New Zealand. Thomas was born in East Lothian, Scotland, and worked in businesses in Edinburgh and London before migrating to Otago in 1847. In 1879 he joined the Union Steam Ship Company and eventually became Company Secretary. Isabella Whitson died in 1905. On Thomas Whitson, see *Cyclopedia*, 403.

**Hall, Robert Charles**
No details are known. He farmed at Tuapeka West.
Hayward, Charles Edward
Born in 1833 in Bungay, Suffolk, England, the son of a schoolmaster. He went to sea and became captain of various whaling and coastal vessels at an early age. By 1861 he had arrived in Otago and served as captain of vessels sailing between coastal ports in the region. In 1863 Charles Hayward married Agnes Lees. Agnes, born in Melrose, Roxburgh, Scotland, in about 1843, had settled in the Catlins with her parents and siblings. Charles and Agnes set up home in the Catlins, where they raised nine children. Charles was harbourmaster at Catlins River (Owaka) from 1872 until his death in 1887. He drowned, along with one of his sons, in a shipwreck. See Southern People, 218 and Cyclopedia, 383.

Hepburn, George
(see Figure 16)
Born in 1803 in Leslie, Fifeshire, Scotland and worked as a merchant in nearby Kirkcaldy. In 1833 George Hepburn married Rachel Paterson. They had 8 children. In 1850 the extended Hepburn family migrated to Otago and established a farm at Halfway Bush, near Dunedin. George joined his brother-in-law James Paterson in his business as general merchants. At various times George also served on the Provincial Council and in the House of Representatives. George Hepburn was a devout Presbyterian, and an elder in the Kirkcaldy Presbyterian Church. He joined the Free Church at the Disruption. Soon after arriving in Dunedin he became an elder at First Church. He was later one of the founding elders of Knox Church. He had a great interest in Sunday Schools, which he taught and superintended. His grandson remembered him as “a man of kindly and genial disposition, who loved hospitality.” George Hepburn died in 1883.


Jeffery, Benjamin
Born in 1844 at Little Horsted, Sussex, England, where he worked as an agricultural labourer. His letters suggest he had a limited formal education. He migrated to Otago in 1872 as part of the contract of Brogden and Sons to bring labourers to Otago to build railways (although he does not appear to have worked in this capacity). After a few months ditching and harvesting on the Taieri, he became gardener at the Shag Valley Station. He later worked at a variety of jobs, including barman and rabbiter. Benjamin Jeffery never married. He died in Naseby in 1912.

Johnstone, William
Born in 1823 in Craigellie, Scotland, the son of farmers James and Ann Johnstone. He obtained a Master of Arts degree from the University of Aberdeen and then undertook theological training. He was licensed to preach by the Free Church of Scotland in 1853. He migrated to Otago in 1858 and served as Presbyterian minister at Port Chalmers, initially a huge parish which extended north to the Waitaki River, until his death. In 1861 he married Margaret King, who had come out from Scotland to join him. They had four children. He died in 1881.
Kempthorne, William Oke
Few details are known. He was probably born on the family farm in Heriot, West Otago. He was the son of Edward and Priscilla Kempthorne who had migrated from Cornwall, after first spending some time in Australia. The family were devout Christians. Edward had been raised as a Wesleyan and Priscilla as an Anglican but neither denomination had many adherents in their community, so they became involved in the Presbyterian church. They also hosted Salvation Army and Brethren visitors to the district.

Kennard, Thomas Baker
Born in 1841 at Waikouaiti, Otago, and acclaimed as “the first white boy born in Otago.” His parents, William Kennard and Maria Baker, were English and had migrated to Australia in about 1838. They arrived at Waikouaiti in 1840 as part of a small agricultural colony founded by whaler and entrepreneur Johnny Jones. The family moved to Halfway Bush when the official Otago colony migrants arrived, but in 1850 shifted back to Waikouaiti, soon establishing a farm and accommodation house at Goodwood. In 1863 Thomas Kennard married Mary McNicol. They had children, but I do not know how many. For the rest of their long lives the Kennards lived in a variety of locations, some beyond Otago, and Thomas had a variety of jobs, including bullock driving, butchery, cattle dealing, saw milling and farming. He died in Waimate, South Canterbury, in 1936.


Kilgour, James
Few details are known. He lived in Roslyn, Dunedin. He was a merchant who had established a business in Dunedin by the late 1850s.

Langlands, Lachlan
Born in 1830 on the Isle of Sanda, Argyllshire, Scotland, the son of a navy captain. He was an early migrant to Otago, arriving in July 1848. He worked for the post office until 1857, when he became manager of a North Otago estate. He managed various Otago and Southland estates over the next 40 years. Langlands retired to Dunedin in 1898 and in 1899 became first secretary of the newly-formed Otago Early Settlers’ Association, a position he held until 1909. He was a most effective secretary, and was also known as a lively raconteur. He wrote various historic articles for local newspapers. He married in his retirement and died in 1911.

See Southern People, 275 and Cyclopedia, 373.

McArthur, John Bonar
Few details are known. He probably came from Glasgow, Scotland. He migrated to Otago in 1873 with his mother and stepsisters to join his stepfather, a seafarer, who had come to New Zealand two years earlier. They settled in the Queenstown district. John McArthur worked as a shearer on various properties in inland Otago and Canterbury.

McCosh Smith, Jane Agnes (nee Lumsden)
Born in 1845 in Aberdeen, Scotland, the daughter of William Lumsden and Jane Abernethy. Theirs was a “cultured home.” Jane Lumsden married Rev. James
McCosh Smith, a Free Church of Scotland minister, in about 1870. In that year they migrated to Otago and James became minister at Naseby, where he served until his retirement in 1907. After this James and Jane remained in the Maniototo, farming with some of their family at Blackstone. They had at least three children. Jane McCosh Smith died at Dunedin in 1936.

See Alexander Don, Memories of the Golden Road: a history of the Presbyterian Church in Central Otago (Dunedin: Reed, 1936), 157-159.

MacGregor, Agnes Susan Craig
Born in 1867 in Paisley, Scotland, daughter of Rev. James and Grace MacGregor. James MacGregor, originally from the Highlands, was minister of the Paisley Free High Church. In 1868 he became Professor of Theology at the University of Edinburgh; he was a noted Calvinist theologian. The MacGregor family (there were at least six daughters and one son) migrated to Otago in 1881 because of concerns over the children’s health. James MacGregor was minister of Columba Church, Oamaru, from 1882 until his death in 1894. Agnes MacGregor was a devout Presbyterian, as were her sisters; Helen (‘Nell’) went to India as a Presbyterian missionary. I have been unable to confirm Agnes’s profession, but she may have been a teacher (at least two of the six sisters were teachers). She did not marry, and in retirement lived with some of her sisters in Seatoun, Wellington. She died in 1962.

On Rev. James MacGregor, see DNZB 2: 286-287.

Mackay, Jessie
Born in about 1836 in Banffshire, Scotland, one of the five children of William Mackay and Isabella Hepburn. The Mackays were devout Catholics. Banffshire was a stronghold of recusant Scottish Catholicism and, by the nineteenth century, Catholics, who made up about a third of the population, were well integrated into the community. Jessie Mackay’s brother John became a priest. He arrived in Otago in 1872 as a missionary priest, an appointment designed to assist his poor health. His parents and most of his siblings accompanied Father John Mackay to Otago. The family ran a boarding house in Dunedin. Jessie Mackay did not marry. She died in Dunedin in 1914.

Mackie, David
Born in 1870 in Arrowtown, Otago. His parents, Gilbert Mackie and Helen Ewing, had married in Dunstan. They both came originally from Scotland. Gilbert, a farmer at Crown Terrace, died in 1879. David Mackie also became a farmer. He died in Arrowtown in 1950, survived by his wife Alice.
Maclean, Annie (nee Mosley)
Few personal details are known. She was the daughter of William Alfred Mosley, who arrived in Otago aboard the John Wickliffe in 1848, accompanied by his wife, Mary Housley, and three children. Mary was the daughter of a Wesleyan minister in Derbyshire, and William was the son of a silk lace manufacturer in Nottingham. William and Mary originally migrated to the USA, returning after a year to England before coming to Otago. The Mosleys lived in Halfway Bush, then Port Chalmers, before settling as farmers at Inch Clutha around 1855. They eventually had eleven children. Mary Mosley died in 1865, and William later remarried. I know no details of Annie's own life.
See *Cyclopedia*, 390.

Marchbanks, James
Born in 1862 in Dunedin, Otago, the son of David Marchbanks and Mary Venables. His father, from a farm at Annandale, Dumfries, Scotland, migrated to Otago in 1859. David Marchbanks went to the gold diggings, and later became an Inspector for the Chief Engineer and built several bridges. James Marchbanks, raised in Dunedin, became a prominent civil engineer. He died in 1947.

Mieville, Frederic Louis
Born in 1830 in England, where he worked on the London Stock Exchange. He migrated to Otago in 1851 and worked as a cadet on Charles Suisted's North Otago sheep run. In 1854 Frederic Mievillemarried Fanny Stokes Richardson, daughter of J. L. C. Richardson, a retired Indian army officer who later became prominent in Otago and New Zealand politics. Frederic and Fanny moved south, establishing a farm at Glenham, Mataura, where they raised their 11 children. The Mievilles were Anglican. I know no details of their later lives.

Muir, William
Born in 1840 in Fenwick, Ayrshire, Scotland, son of David Muir and Jean Bicket. His diaries suggest he had a limited education. He migrated to Otago in 1863, along with his younger brother Andrew Muir and friend Andrew Watt. William Muir obtained work as a farm labourer at East Taieri. He then worked as an itinerant farm labourer around South Otago, possibly taking contracts for fencing and other jobs together with his brother and Andrew Watt. In 1866 William bought land at Tuturau, south of Mataura, and farmed there for the rest of his life. In 1868, at Dunedin, he married Jane (Jeannie) Bicket, a cousin from Scotland. They had seven children. William Muir was a devout Christian, heavily involved in the local Presbyterian Church. He also served on the Tuturau school committee. He died in 1923.

Nichol, William
Born in 1849 in Scotland (in either Selkirk or Roxburghshire). He commenced his training as a Presbyterian minister in Edinburgh, but in 1874 migrated to Otago in the interests of his health. As there was no minister: on the *James Nicol Fleming*, his ship to New Zealand, he conducted the services. He worked as a home missionary at Orepuki and Tokomairiro before completing his theological training in Dunedin. After about ten years in North Island parishes he returned to Otago where he served as minister at Hampden from 1889 until his retirement in 1917. William Nichol died in
1922, survived by his wife Mary. A son and grandson also became Presbyterian ministers.
See Cyclopedia, 459.

**Nicol, Robert**
Born in 1846 in Aberdeen, Scotland. He migrated to America in 1865, but later returned to Scotland due to health problems. In 1875 he migrated to Otago, where some of his siblings also settled. Robert Nicol was a miller. He worked at mills in Green Island and Oamaru before founding the Maniototo Co-operative Flour Mill in Naseby. In 1878 Robert Nicol married Elizabeth Andrews. They had seven children. In 1891 they moved to Waimate, Canterbury, where Robert established a mill and entered local politics. He died in 1926.

**Parry, Joseph S.**
Few details are known. He probably came from England (possibly Manchester), as he wrote to family there. In the 1860s Joseph Parry was working at Cohen Brothers' furniture store. He died in 1893 and his wife Ann died in 1871.

**Pillans, Francis Scott**
Born in 1810 at Myres Castle, Fifeshire, Scotland. He travelled extensively as a young man, working as a merchant and diplomat. He migrated to Otago in 1849 and settled at Inch Clutha, where he ran a large estate which was later broken up into smaller farms. Francis Pillans did not marry, but other family members, including one thought by contemporaries to be his son, joined him in Otago. He was a JP and served on the Legislative Council for some time. He died at Inch Clutha in 1889.
See Southern People, 389, and Cyclopedia, 391.

**Riddell, Walter**
Born in 1837 at Eskdalemuir, Dumfries, Scotland. He worked as a joiner on the estate of the Duke of Buccleuch. In 1862 Walter Riddell married Wilhelmina Brown Glendinning and soon afterwards they sailed for Otago. They lived in Dunedin for two years before buying land at Sandymount on the Otago Peninsula. Here they established a dairy farm, and Walter also did building work for various neighbours. In 1871 he became foreman of works for the building of Larnachs Castle, a position he held for ten years. Meanwhile, the Riddells became involved with the establishment of New Zealand’s first co-operative dairy factory, the Pioneer Cheese Factory. In 1891 Walter became manager of the Taieri and Peninsula Milk Supply Company. The Riddells had at least seven children, and Walter served on the local school committee for many years. He was a devout Presbyterian, who briefly served as an elder in the local parish. He died in 1922.
See Cyclopedia, 300-301.

**Roberts, Edward Fletcher**
Born in 1883 in Dunedin, Otago, the son of Edward Roberts and Elizabeth Fletcher. His father, an engineer, was born in Cornwall, but moved to Victoria with his family as a young child. Edward and Elizabeth Roberts were married in Victoria in 1879, and moved to Otago in 1881. Their son Edward Fletcher Roberts attended Kaikorai
School, Otago Boys High School and Otago University. He served in the Royal Artillery during World War One, and was a consulting civil engineer in Otago for many years. I know no details of his marriage or family. He died in Dunedin in 1951.

**Smaill, William**
Born in about 1849 in Edinburgh, Scotland, one of the large family of Andrew Smaill. The family migrated to Otago in 1858 and established a farm in the Clutha district, probably around Kaitangata. William Smaill remained farming in the district for the rest of his life. He was an enthusiastic Volunteer and became a Major in the local force. He also served as a Presbyterian elder. I know no details of his marriage or family. He died in 1929.

**Smith, Edmund**
Born in 1830 in India. His father, Rev. John Smith, was a missionary who died when Edmund was young. Edmund received his education in Yorkshire, England and became a clerk. He migrated to Otago on the *John Wickliffe* in 1848. He initially established a farm at Kuri Bush, then moved to North East Valley about 1857. He worked at Reynold’s bonded warehouse until 1864, when he became manager of the newly formed Dunedin Savings Bank, a position he held until his death. Despite his Anglican upbringing, Edmund Smith became heavily involved in the Presbyterian Church. He was an elder at Knox Church from 1866, and kept the books of the Church’s property board. I have been unable to trace any details of his marriage or children. His sister, Sarah Marsden Smith, lived with him in later years (see her biographical note below). They had other family in Otago, possibly including Edmund’s children and grandchildren. He died in 1895.

**Smith, Sarah Marsden**
Few details are known. She was a sister of Edmund Smith (see his biographical note above) and they were living together in Dunedin in the 1880s and 1890s. Sarah Smith took an active part in local social and philanthropic circles. She was a devout member of Knox Presbyterian Church, although, like her brother, was probably raised as an Anglican. They hosted some members of the New Zealand Anglican hierarchy when they visited Dunedin for Synod. Sarah Smith d.d not marry. She died in Perth, Western Australia, in 1914.

**Smith, William**
(Note there is another William Smith below)
Born in 1837 in Darvel, Ayrshire, Scotland, “of poor but honest parents.” He worked as an agricultural labourer and later trained as a blacksmith. William Smith migrated to Otago in 1857. He was unable to obtain work as a blacksmith and worked in various labouring jobs. During the goldrushes he spent quite some time as a goldminer on various Otago diggings. He then established a dairy farm at Manuherikia, but sold up after losing many of his cattle to pleuro-pneumonia. After this failed attempt at farming he returned to goldmining, following the rushes to the West Coast and Thames. He eventually settled in Auckland. I know no details of his family or later life.
Smith, William Turnbull  
(Note there is another William Smith above)  
Born in 1847 at Stobo, Peebles, Scotland, where he learnt his trade as a joiner. He migrated to Otago in 1863. He spent a short time on the Dunstan goldfields and then returned to his accustomed work as a carpenter in Dunedin. He soon moved to Inch Clutha where he worked as a carpenter before becoming storekeeper at Kaitangata. He later farmed at nearby Wangaloa. William Smith attended the local Presbyterian Church. He took “a prominent part in all public affairs in Kaitangata” (obituary, *Otago Witness*, 2 June 1898, p. 24). I know no details of marriage or family. He died in 1898.

Squires, Catherine (nee Dewe)  
Born in 1843 in Leamington, Warwickshire, England, one of five daughters of John Dewe, a bookseller, and Eliza Woodhead. The family migrated to Otago in 1848 and established a farm at Tokomairiro. They were devout Anglicans who played a major role in the foundation of an Anglican church in the district. John Dewe, the son and grandson of clergymen, became, after many years as a lay reader, an ordained Anglican priest. In 1861 Catherine Dewe (known as Kate) married John Squires who, with his brothers, lived with the Dewe family, helping on their farm. The three Squires brothers, sons of a Liverpool doctor, had arrived in Otago in 1858. John and Kate Squires farmed on the Tokomairiro for a couple of years before moving south to Invercargill, eventually establishing their own farm at Woodend. They later farmed near Gore and near Bluff, and also spent two periods of several years back in England. Kate was a devout evangelical Christian who joined the Brethren in the early 1860s. She became a leading promoter of the Brethren in the Southland district, preaching and holding prayer meetings in her home. She led a schism from the Wendon congregation, the “Squireites,” who worshipped in a special building attached to the Squires’ home. She Squires died in Bluff in 1912.  

Stewart, Mrs.  
No details are known, but she was presumably a relation of William Downie Stewart, as her diaries are amongst his personal papers. William Downie Stewart was born in Dunedin in 1878, the son of Rachel Hepburn, daughter of early Otago migrant George Hepburn (see his biographical note above) and William Downie Stewart, a migrant from Stirling, Scotland, who became a prominent lawyer and politician. William Downie Stewart junior followed his father into law and politics. The family were heavily involved in the Presbyterian Church.

Stobo, Andrew  
Born in 1832 in Avondale, Lanarkshire, Scotland, the son of a farmer. After education at Glasgow and Edinburgh, interrupted by periods of ill health, he was licensed to preach by the Free Church of Scotland in 1857. He migrated to New Zealand in 1860 and served as minister in Invercargill from then until 1879. Ill health forced his resignation, but he continued in home mission work until his death. He married twice and had three sons. He died in 1898.  
See Southern People, 484-485 and *Cyclopedia*, 868-869.
Strachan, James
Born in 1842 near Cupar, Fifeshire, Scotland, the son of a miller. He went to sea in 1856, but within a couple of years ran away from his ship and lived and worked at numerous jobs and places around New Zealand. He was early on the Tuapeka gold fields and in ten weeks he and his mates made £100 each. In 1868 James Strachan returned to Scotland to join his father in business.

Stuart, Donald McNaughton
(see Figure 12)
Born in 1819 in Styx, Perthshire, Scotland, one of the large family of farmer and builder Alexander Stewart and Janet McNaughton. After some years teaching he commenced studying at the University of St Andrews but was expelled due to his support for the Free Church leader Thomas Chalmers. He moved to England, teaching and studying for the ministry. He completed his studies in Edinburgh and was licensed to preach by the Free Church of Scotland in 1848. In 1850 D. M. Stuart married Jessie Robertson. They had three sons. He served as minister at Falstone, Northumberland, England until migrating with his family to Otago in 1860. He became first minister of Knox Church, Dunedin, a position he held until his death. Besides ministering to his large congregation, D. M. Stuart became involved in many community activities. He was a notable proponent of all forms of education, playing an important role in the establishment of Dunedin’s secondary schools, technical school and university. He also aided the establishment of new Presbyterian parishes throughout Otago. D. M. Stuart was a genial, tolerant and compassionate man, who became one of the best-loved residents of Dunedin. A tall man, he dressed in a plaid and supported his native language through his involvement in the Gaelic Society. Stuart’s family affairs gave him much heartache. His wife Jessie died in 1862 and two of his sons died before him, one of tuberculosis. Several family members had drinking and financial problems. Stuart’s grandsons lived with him at various times. He died in Dunedin in 1894.

Sumpter, George
Born in 1836 in Middlesex, England. After ten years in South Australia, he migrated to Otago in 1861, settling at Oamaru. In 1858 George Sumpter married Susannah Newall, from a Sussex, England, family; they had eleven children. He had his own business as a grain merchant, land agent and auctioneer, and became heavily involved in local politics, with some time as Mayor of Oamaru. He also served as chairman of the local school committee for many years, and commander of the local Volunteer corps. He was a devout Anglican. He died in 1900.
See Cyclopedia, 506.

Thomson, George Malcolm
(see Figure 13)
Born in 1848 at Calcutta, India, the son of William Thomson, a Scottish trader and tea planter, and Margaret Pratt. G. M. Thomson went to Edinburgh, aged five, for his education, then joined his father in a merchant business in London. The business failed and the Thomson family migrated to Otago in 1868. After some unsuccessful years farming in Southland, they settled in Dunedin, where George commenced his
long career as a science teacher at the Boys’ and Girls’ High Schools. In 1876 G. M. Thomson married Emma Allan, daughter of a Taieri farming family. They had six children and also raised the two children of one of George’s brothers, who lived in India. G. M. Thomson was a man of great energy who became involved in many community organisations. He was the driving force behind the establishment of technical education in Dunedin. His greatest legacy, however, was his important work as a naturalist. He published many papers and founded the Portobello marine research station. G. M. Thomson was a devout Presbyterian and an elder at Knox Church, Dunedin. He taught Bible Class, served as president of the Young Men’s Christian Association and helped found the Dunedin City Mission. Family prayers and hymns were part of everyday life in the Thomson home. After his retirement from teaching, G. M. Thomson entered national politics, serving in the House of Representatives and then the Legislative Council. Tragedy afflicted his family life. Emma Thomson died of tuberculosis in 1894, leaving a young family and bereft husband. In 1910 G. M. Thomson married his long-time friend Alice Craig, but she died of cancer within a year. Several of his children also predeceased him, one as a young child, one of illness while serving as a soldier in France, and two as young adults of tuberculosis. G. M. Thomson himself suffered much from a wound received during Cadet Corps practice in 1882, and eventually had his foot amputated in 1892. His strong Christian faith and the support of his large extended family helped him cope with his various trials. George and Emma Thomson’s son James Allan Thomson was New Zealand’s first Rhodes scholar and had a notable career as geologist and director of the Dominion Museum before his early death. G. M. Thomson died in Dunedin in 1933.


Walker, John George
Few details are known. He came from England to New Zealand for the Dunstan goldrush in 1862. His brother William had already been two years in the country, working on a Canterbury sheep run. After some time spent prospecting at the Dunstan, the brothers began transporting and selling stores to other miners. As they failed to make a success of their business, the brothers left Otago to try their luck in Melbourne in July 1863.

Watkin, James
Born in 1805 in Manchester, England, but was of Welsh ancestry. His family were Wesleyans, and James became a local preacher as a young man. In 1830 James Watkin married Hannah Entwisle. He was ordained in the same year and sent to Tonga as a missionary. In 1837 he was suspended as Tongan missionary due to his ‘improper conduct’ with a Tongan woman. He worked as a circuit minister in Sydney for two years before the missionary committee sent him to establish a new mission at Waikouaiti, Otago. The Watkin family lived and worked at the Waikouaiti mission from 1840 until 1844. While the mission met with considerable success, with several important Maori converting to Christianity, Watkin found his position depressing and miserable. After leaving Waikouaiti, he served as a Wesleyan minister in Wellington, Melbourne and Sydney. He died in Sydney in 1886.
See Southern People, 535-536.
White, Christine Smeaton
Born in 1886 in Edinburgh, Scotland, the youngest of the large family of James White, a customs officer. The family migrated to Otago in 1897, and Christine attended Caversham School. I know no details of her adult life. Christine White did not marry. She died in 1969, at which time she was living at Michies Crossing, near Waitati.

Wither, John and Archibald
John Wither was born in 1840, one of the sixteen children of James Wither and Margaret McCaig of Stranraer, Wigtownshire, Scotland. He migrated to Otago in 1863 and became a sheep farmer at Sunnyside, eight miles from Queenstown. In 1906 he moved to a farm at Meadowbank, Palmerston. John’s brother Archibald Wither was born in 1861 and became a banker in Stranraer. Along with his sister Sarah, born in 1858, he visited John in Otago in 1896-1897, hoping the climate would help cure his tuberculosis. Archibald Wither died in 1899.
Appendix Three – Orange Order Members

The two tables below give some indication of the status of members of the Orange Order in nineteenth-century Otago. I traced the birthplaces of Dunedin members through the burial records of Dunedin district cemeteries, but this only identified those members who remained in the district until their death and, furthermore, not all burial registers note birthplace, so only a small number were traced. These tables do not include all members of the two lodges concerned. The Oamaru list is compiled from the minute books, and not all members’ names were recorded therein. Furthermore, I have omitted names of members whose occupation and/or birthplace I was unable to trace: 37 names for the Oamaru lodge and 18 names for the Dunedin lodge. Most were untraceable because of common names.

Table 14 – Members of Loyal Orange Lodge No 19, Oamaru, 1882-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith, Alexander</td>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, William</td>
<td>Blacksmith (journeyman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepperd, William Henry</td>
<td>Bridge keeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver, John</td>
<td>Butcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson, William</td>
<td>Cabinetmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKeeman, Robert John</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldridge, Rev. Edwin</td>
<td>Congregational minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coburn, Joseph</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennison, David M</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson, John</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson, Hugh</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellman, Charles</td>
<td>Gardener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillchrist, John</td>
<td>Grazier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christeson, Louis Peter</td>
<td>Hairdresser &amp; tobacconist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smyth, William</td>
<td>Horse-trainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begg, Charles</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas, Robert</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewart, William</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox, Henry</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross, William</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson, Charles Frederick</td>
<td>Painter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogilvie, James</td>
<td>Plumber and ironmonger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reid, Thomas</td>
<td>Post Office clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillies, John</td>
<td>Storeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig, James</td>
<td>Timber merchant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – Names from LOL No 19 Minute Book, AG-703-6/01, HL. Occupations traced through Stone’s and Wise’s directories.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ball, John junior</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[Son of John Ball senior]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgeworth, W</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>[Son of R. W. Edgeworth]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escott, Harry Walduck</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>England (Nottinghamshire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cummock, William</td>
<td>Asylum attendant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoular, James Douglas</td>
<td>Baker (journeyman)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fowler, Walter Joseph</td>
<td>Building contractor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coulter, Samuel</td>
<td>Butcher (journeyman)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straw, H</td>
<td>Butcher (journeyman)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox, Joseph</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright, Walter William</td>
<td>Commercial traveler</td>
<td>New Zealand (Dunedin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunning, John James</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawker, Charles George</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthews, Frank</td>
<td>Engine driver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson, James</td>
<td>Fireman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hewitt, Frank</td>
<td>Fish curer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busby, Samuel</td>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball, John senior</td>
<td>Hawker</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henderson, William</td>
<td>Ironmoulder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clugston, Richard</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crockett, Joseph</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeromeson, Henry</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McFarlane, Louis</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>USA (New York)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulligan, James</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horwood, James</td>
<td>Lithographic printer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodgers, Samuel Henry</td>
<td>Lumper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knox, John James</td>
<td>Maltster</td>
<td>Ireland (Co Cavan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willis, Frederick E</td>
<td>Manager United Friendly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Societies Dispensary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, John Truman</td>
<td>Packer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burleigh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams, David</td>
<td>Painter</td>
<td>Scotland (Glasgow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler, Charles</td>
<td>Salvationist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgeworth, Robert</td>
<td>Seaman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant, Robert</td>
<td>Seaman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jardine, John</td>
<td>Signalman</td>
<td>Scotland (Clackmannanshire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reid, Hugh</td>
<td>Stonemason</td>
<td>Ireland (Co Antrim)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low, John</td>
<td>Storekeeper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, William</td>
<td>Stone mason</td>
<td>Ireland (Co Antrim)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beresford, Lewis</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow, Charles Mosley</td>
<td>Typist</td>
<td>England (Yorkshire)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – Names from LOL No 21 Roll Book and Minute Book, AG-703: 3/24 and 3/01, HL. Occupations traced through Stone’s and Wise’s directories. Birthplaces traced through burial register transcripts, HL.
Bibliography

The bibliography is arranged as follows:

**Primary Sources**
1. Newspapers and periodicals
2. Unpublished diaries, letters, reminiscences and sermons
3. Published diaries, letters, reminiscences, autobiographies and sermons
4. Church records
5. Records of other organisations
6. Government publications
7. Other historical publications

**Secondary Sources**
1. Published
2. Unpublished

**Primary Sources**

1. *Newspapers and periodicals*

   *Bruce Herald* (Milton)
   *Christian Outlook* (Dunedin)
   *Daily Telegraph* (Dunedin)
   *Dunstan Times*
   *Evangelist* (Dunedin)
   *Evening Star* (Dunedin)
   *Illustrated London News*
   *Illustrated New Zealand News* (Dunedin)
   *Lake Wakatip Mail* (Queenstown)
   *Mt Ida Chronicle* (Naseby)
   *New Zealand Country Journal* (Christchurch)
   *New Zealand Spectator and Cook’s Strait Guardian* (Wellington)
   *New Zealand Tablet* (Dunedin)
   *New Zealand Wesleyan* (Christchurch)
   *N. Z. Presbyterian* (Dunedin)
2. Unpublished diaries, letters, reminiscences and sermons

At the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington:

Bennett, William. Diary. MS-0165-0168.
Parry family. Letters. MS-Copy Micro-0350A.

At the Hocken Library, Dunedin:

Adam, Thomas. Diary extracts. MS-0582/F/1.
Begg, Alexander Campbell. Diary. AG-497-01.
Dyer, Gertrude Clara. Diary and reminiscences. MS-0117.
Fulton, Catherine. Diary. AG-613.
Grant, Isabella. Diary. Misc-MS-0303.

Johnstone, William. Diary. MS-0993/1.

MacGregor, Agnes. Diary. Misc-MS-1291.

Marchbanks, James. Reminiscences. MS-0550.

Mieville, Frederick. Reminiscences. Misc-MS-1670.


Roberts, Edward Fletcher. Diary. MS-0485.


Smith, William Turnbull. Diary. MS-0578-A.

Stewart, Mrs. Diary. William Downie Stewart papers, MS-0985, Series 5, Box 139.

Strachan, James. “James Strachan’s Experiences: My first twelve years on my own – Commencing from 20th April, 1856 – nearly 61 years ago.” MS-0563.

Stuart, D. M. Diary. William Downie Stewart papers, MS-0985, Series 46, Box 164.


Watkin, James. Diary. MS-0440/04.

White, Christine Smeaton. Reminiscences. Misc-MS-0004.


At the Lakes District Museum, Arrowtown:

Douglas, James Haddow. Tape of interview by unidentified member of New Zealand Army, 1948.

Mackie, David. Tape of interview by unidentified member of New Zealand Army, 1948.

At the Otago Settlers Museum, Dunedin:

Burns, Thomas. Diary. C-017.


De Carle, Edward. Letters.

Ferens, Thomas. Diary and letters. AG-099 and C-039.


Hayward, Charles. Diary. AB-023.


McKay, Jessie. Letters. Lamb papers, Biog Box 62.3.

Muir, William. Diary. SA-008.


Smaill, William. “Recollections of William Smaill from 1858 to 1862-3 around Mayfield Farm.” C-098.


Stuart, D. M. Letters.


At the Port Chalmers Museum:


At the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand archives, Dunedin:

Evans, Christina. Diary. DA 3/2.

Fell, Jane. “Ministers & Manses, Waikouaiti.” Paper read at the Waikouaiti Presbyterian Church anniversary gathering, 12 August 1950... BI 3/1.


Smith, Jane McCosh. Diary. DC 10/7.


Watt, Michael. Sermons. DA 5/2.

At the South Otago Museum, Balclutha:


At the Tuapeka Goldfields Museum, Lawrence:

Hall, Robert Charles. “History of Tuapeka West.”

3. Published diaries, letters, reminiscences, autobiographies and sermons

Barr, James. The Old Identities: Being Sketches and Reminiscences During the First Decade of the Province of Otago, N.Z. Dunedin: Mills, Dick, 1879.


Burns, Thomas. A Discourse, delivered in the Church of Otago, on Friday, the 23rd of March, 1849, being a day of public thanksgiving, humiliation and prayer, and the anniversary of the arrival of the first party of settlers. Dunedin: Otago News, 1849.

________. “The last sacrament in the old church. December, 1864. Table Addresses by the Rev. Dr. Burns.” In Religious Commemoration of the Seventieth Anniversary of Otago, ed. Alex. Whyte, 31-34. Dunedin: Otago Early Settlers’ Association, 1918.


4. Church records

At the Hocken Library, Dunedin:

All Saints Anglican Church, Dunedin. Register of Services. AG-80/C1, C2 and J2.

All Saints Anglican Church, Tapanui. Register of Services. AG-221/04.

Hanover Street Baptist Church, Dunedin. Church Members’ Meeting Minutes. 96-116-05/02.

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Port Chalmers. Service Register. MS-1084/11.

Moray Place Congregational Church, Dunedin. Church Meeting Minutes, Deacons’ Meeting Minutes, and Annual Reports. ARC-040: AG-36/3; 36/8; and 36/30.

Port Chalmers Congregational Church. Church Meeting Minutes. AG-141/1 and 141/2.

St John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Roslyn. Vestry Book. 84-088/1-1.

St Mark’s Anglican Church, Balclutha. Service Register. AG-519/21 and 22.

St Paul’s Anglican Cathedral, Dunedin. Preacher’s Book. AG-147/F1 and F3.

St Peter’s Anglican Church, Caversham. Service Record Book. AG-040/A-1, 1 and A-7, 1.
St Peter’s Anglican Church, Queenstown. Service Register. AG-166/5-1 and 5-2.

Trinity Methodist Church, Dunedin. Quarterly Meeting Minutes. ARC-048, Series 64, AG-640-64/02/2.

At the archives of Knox Presbyterian Church, Dunedin:
Knox Presbyterian Church, Dunedin. Communion Rolls and Session Minute Book.

At the North Otago Museum, Oamaru:
Columba Presbyterian Church, Oamaru. Session Minute Book. 2453/26c.
Duntroon Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. 2649/27c.
Hampden Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. 654/25c.
Lower Waitaki Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. 2468/26a.
Otepopo Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. 662/26b.
Presbytery of Oamaru. Minute Book, 113f.
St Paul’s Presbyterian Church, Oamaru. Session Minute Book. 2619/27b.
Waiareka Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. 477/26a.

At the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand archives, Dunedin:
Alexandra Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. AL 2/4.
Andersons Bay Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BA 1/7.
Balclutha Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BK 3/2.
Blueskin Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BI 4/1.
Caversham Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BA 2/5.
Chalmers Presbyterian Church, Dunedin. Session Minute Book. BA 4/4.
East Taieri Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BC 1/4.
First Presbyterian Church, Dunedin. Session Minute Book.
Green Island Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BC 2/6.
Inch Clutha Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BL 2/1.
Kelso Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BN 2/2.

Knapdale Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. AN1/4.

Lawrence Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BK4/2.

Mornington Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. AM 17/5.

North Dunedin Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BA 5/1.

North East Valley Presbyterian Church, Dunedin. Session Minute Book. BF 4/5.

North Taieri/Mosgiel Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BD 1/6.

Otago Peninsula Presbyterian Parish (North East Harbour, Portobello Road and Portobello Churches). Session Minute Books. BG 1/1.

Palmerston Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BZ 1/1.

Port Chalmers Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book, Deacons’ Court Receipts and Cash Book. BG 3/12; 97/79/31 AE 18/4; and BG 4/1.


Pukerau, Waipahi and Otaraia Presbyterian Churches. Session Minute Book. BN 1/1.

Queenstown Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BR 1/2.

Ravensbourne Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. AK 11/3.

St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Dunedin. Session Minute Book. BB 2/11.

South Dunedin Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BA5/10.

Tapanui Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BN 3/2.

Taringatura Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. AM 16/3.

Tokomairiro Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BM 4/2.


Waikouaiti Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BI 3/1.

Waitahuna Presbyterian Church. Session Minute Book. BL1/2.
5. Records of other organisations

At the Hocken Library, Dunedin:


Loyal Orange Lodge Hymn Collection. AG-703-15/03.

Loyal Orange Lodge No 19, Oamaru. Minute Book. AG-703-6/01.


Published:


Report of Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand, Middle Island, held on Friday & Saturday, December 26 & 27, 1890. Christchurch: [Loyal Orange Institution], 1890.

6. Government publications

Series:

General Government Gazette of the Colony of New Zealand.

Government Gazette of the Province of New Munster.

New Zealand Gazette.

Otago Provincial Government Gazette.

Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand.

Statistics of New Zealand.

Statutes of New Zealand.

7. Other historical publications


Carnahan, Joseph. Life and Times of William the Third and History of Orangeism. Auckland: Brett, 1890.


*Evening Star Otago Jubilee Record.* Dunedin: Evening Star, 1898.


Ross, C. S. *The Story of the Otago Church and Settlement.* Dunedin: Wilkie Caffin, 1887.


Sutherland, George. *The Lord’s Supper; or, the Nature, Benefits and Obligations of the Comemorative Rite of the Christian Church.* Dunedin: Wise, 1870.

Torrance, J. A. “Public Institutions.” In *Picturesque Dunedin or Dunedin and its Neighbourhood in 1890, with a Short Historical Account of the City and its Principal Institutions*, ed. Alex Bathgate, 183-242. Dunedin: Mills, Dick, 1890.


Secondary Sources

1. Published


———. “Avenues of Enquiry: Religious History.” New Zealand Historical Association Newsletter 2 (December 2001), 4-5.


Harris, Bob, and Christopher A. Whatley. “‘To Solemnize His Majesty’s Birthday’: New Perspectives on Loyalism in George II’s Britain.” History 83 (1998): 397-419.


Hilgendorf, F. W. *Wheat in New Zealand.* Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, [1939].


McDonald, K. C. *History of North Otago*. Oamaru: North Otago Centennial Committee, 1940.


Miles, Clement A. *Christmas Customs and Traditions: Their History and Significance.* New York: Dover, 1976 (1912).


Saunders, W. A. Historical Racing Records and Inauguration of the Racing and Trotting Clubs in Otago and Southland. [Dunedin: Evening Star, 1949].


2. Unpublished


