“The Southern World is my Home”:
The Working Life of Thomas Ferens 1848 – 1888

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Abstract

This thesis is a case study of Thomas Ferens, a Methodist lay preacher from England. Utilising personal testimony, it follows his life in New Zealand from 1848 – 1888, focussing upon his various occupational pursuits to explore how his sense of ‘self’ affected his migrant experience, analysing how he navigated life in the settlement, and how he was influenced by the world around him. Typically, migrant scholars using personal testimony focus on those of a (literate) middle to upper class status. A focus on Ferens, however, provides a working-class perspective. He similarly offers a perspective on Methodists in the Scottish Presbyterian Otago settlement. This work engages with studies of missionaries, religion in New Zealand, intercultural relations and constructs of self/other. It also addresses the impact of runholding and declaration of hundreds in North Otago and the need for personal mobility, both geographical and occupational, in this early period of settlement.
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Acknowledgements

My study was spurred on by my interest in family history. Thomas Ferens is amongst the most prominent individuals in my family tree, so it seemed right to explore his life and present it to others who enjoy early settler history and migratory tales. I would like to acknowledge my grandfather and grandmother, Roy and Shirley Ferens, for their contribution to my family history knowledge before they passed away. Their absence highlights the importance of communicating information using more than just oral methods, leaving several photos and articles without source information, dates or explaining who was pictured. Hence, the significance of Ferens’ surviving correspondence, diaries and other pieces of ephemera.

A huge thank you goes to Professor Angela McCarthy for being my supervisor for both of my postgraduate qualifications in a row, and encouraging my interest in migration history, taking time out of her very busy schedule to ensure I submitted my best work. She consistently drove me to reach higher standards and provided me with much needed grammatical teachings along the way. Thanks is also due to my secondary supervisor, Associate Professor John Stenhouse, for imparting his religious knowledge, a subject which I had no real understanding of before undertaking this project, and who has done Ferens justice. Also, to Professor Tom Brooking for standing in whilst John was on leave and suggesting runholding and early Otago based literature. It was useful to have a third perspective to shape my writing and research.

I would like to thank my partner Sam for his continual support, and, as a special treat, cleaning up the house whilst I was in the final stages of my writing. Also, my family, Anna, Steven and Caspian, for their occasional welcome distractions and support from afar. Also, to Elly Lang for offering to proofread for me, as at this level it is hard to find willing participants! And if my two dogs Luna and Odin could speak, I would thank them for keeping me entertained throughout this writing process.
Figure 1

Thomas Ferens; photograph, n.d.

Source: Ferens family records.
Introduction

To what extent did a migrant’s working life have implications for their sense of self-worth? This study examines this key question through a focus on the occupational mobility of Thomas Ferens (see figure 1). Ferens was born at East Rainton, in Durham, England, in 1822, one of five children of John and Maria Ferens. His father was a draper, a profession which Ferens and his three brothers also joined. There is no evidence to illuminate what level of schooling Ferens received, but his literacy, and that of his family, suggests that the children were well educated. Choosing to turn away from the draping profession, Ferens became heavily invested in Methodism and trained to become a lay preacher to Māori in New Zealand. Though he sought funding for such a venture, he was denied this by the Wesleyan Society, and was forced to pay the full cost of passage himself.¹ Ferens travelled directly to the Otago settlement in 1848, onboard the John Wickliffe, one of the first migrant ships to Dunedin. From his arrival until his death Ferens became involved in a variety of occupational ventures in public and agricultural sectors, including lay preacher, runholder, bookseller and auditor. These occupational transitions, and the skills and mobility required of Ferens, provides plenty of material to analyse and determine how his working life affected his sense of self-worth.

Concentrating on Ferens’ migrant experience is important because he leaves behind a wealth of personal testimony. Using this significant source, we are able to map the various stages of Ferens’ working life and ascertain how each occupational and geographical transition had the potential to affect his value system and ways of thinking about the world. Furthermore, as an individual he offers an alternative perspective to many other studies of migrants in New Zealand, as he was an educated working-class citizen of a dissenting religion. As studies of migrants typically focus on middle to upper class figures, this study acts as a form of history ‘from below’ presenting opportunities for comparison and contrast.

¹ W.H. Bramwell (Sunderland, England) to Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago), 27 April 1848. It is unclear if he had been trained to become a lay preacher prior to his desire to travel to the colony, or if this had been a spur of the moment decision to leave England.
To address the central question regarding implications of self-worth, this study firstly surveys scholarship about the English migrant experience, presenting a contrast to the majority of scholarly works that focus upon Scottish and Irish migrants. Secondly, this study of Ferens brings to the fore more explicitly the geographical as well as occupational mobility of migrants. Thirdly, it provides a little explored focus on Methodism in Otago, a region renowned for its Presbyterian ethos. The introduction will address each of these issues in turn.

Ethnic History

This study focuses upon the migration period of the 1840s – 1860s, when New Zealand was still coming to fruition as a British colony. New Zealand was envisaged by Edward Gibbon Wakefield as a means of solving England’s social issues of unemployment, low wages and living conditions. He theorised that colonisation and emigration would lead to greater opportunities for those choosing to go abroad and also alleviate pressures on those who remained at home. Scholarly works for this period are not as plentiful as those based on the 1870s Vogel era of assisted passages, which leaves room for more work to be done. One such work is Rollo Arnold’s *The Farthest Promised Land*, which is one of the most extensive studies based on the English alone and, importantly, emphasises the working-class experience. However, Arnold’s work was published in 1981, and there has been a distinct lack of studies of the English until more recent years. In 2012, over thirty years later, Lyndon Fraser and Angela McCarthy stressed the need for more studies of a uniquely English experience, as, typically, migrant based works (both within and beyond a New Zealand context) focus upon the Scottish and the Irish.

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5 Works which have attempted to address this gap in purely English focussed study namely include: Rollo Arnold, *The Farthest Promised Land – English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s* (Wellington, N.Z., Victoria University Press, 1981); Lyndon Fraser and Angela McCarthy (eds.), *Far From 'Home': The English in New Zealand* (Dunedin, N.Z.: Otago University Press, 2012); Raewyn Dalziel, “Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth: Why Did it Occur?”, *New Zealand Journal of History*
Although some studies concentrate upon the experiences, networks and identities of the English for the 1840s – 1860s period in question, they are often used as a tool for comparative analysis with the Scottish and Irish coming into New Zealand, as opposed to a specific ethnic focus. Why is there such a gap in studying English migrants?

Both Charlotte Erickson and Marjory Harper attribute this lack of material to the English migrants’ seemingly invisible expression of identity, observing that there is a tendency to regard them as easily acculturated ‘because in many places they did not settle in conspicuous and distinct communities’ and ‘default dominance obviated the need to demonstrate institutional ethnicity’. James Watson similarly asserts that, due to their majority status, the English were disinclined to emphasise their inherent ‘Englishness’. Despite the inclination to regard them as invisible, ‘Englishness’ can be analysed using different types of lenses, as opposed to an umbrella approach. As Stephen Constantine identifies, there is not ‘a singular English identity but several’. This finding is supported by the existence of distinctive regional and denominational ‘English’ identities. Watson highlights that regional identity was particularly distinguished, as exemplified by the formation of county associations, such as the Yorkshire Society. Raewyn Dalziel similarly broke down the regional makeup of English migrants to New Plymouth in the early 1840s, finding that they were targeted from the regions of Devon and Cornwall, with smaller units from Dorset and Somerset. Additionally, these migrants were often working-class family units, which offered the opportunity to analyse the strength of kin groups, and expressions of their specific


8 Ibid., 86.


10 Ibid.
Considering denominational distinctions can also reveal how Englishness was not necessarily a shared identity. Anglicans were the largest migrant group in New Zealand and were therefore regarded as representative of the English. However, other denominations which shared these English origins did not identify themselves alongside this dominant group. For example, Methodists, as a dissenting religion, did not possess the same value system and were typically more reserved and pious.

Another major factor contributing to the relative lack of studies of the English migrant experience is the surplus of information regarding Scottish and Irish migrants. In a colony which was dominated by the English, these migrant groups were motivated to fight harder to maintain their ethnic and cultural differences. Many in the latter groups shared the stigma of eviction and economic hardship, and the motivations to secure their independence abroad. Migrants who suffered such conditions tended to exaggerate the ‘negative qualities of the Old World’. Quite simply, the Irish and Scottish experience was more visible, and as a result attracted more scholarly attention. For the Scots, initial mass migration to New Zealand began with weavers from the town of Paisley, near Glasgow. These disenfranchised migrants had suffered at the hands of industrialisation in the early 1840s, with a quarter of the population unemployed and on the verge of starvation. From then on Scots migrated in great numbers, comprising one in every five of the United Kingdom’s migrants to New Zealand, and closer to one in three in the 1860s. Until the twenty-first century, most New Zealand studies of Scottish migrants tended to focus on the Highlanders, as ‘the

12 *Associational culture became one such means of showcasing and strengthening their sense of home, with St Andrews Societies, Orange Lodges, Burns Clubs and Caledonian Societies* - Watson, “English Associationalism in the British Empire”, 84 - 85.
13 *Hearn and Phillips, Settlers, 5.*
15 Ibid., 1.
16 Ibid., 54.
smaller and more suspect the group’ the more likely they found ‘some sense of a distinctive tradition’.\textsuperscript{17} Highlanders drew the strongest scholarly interest, as a large number were affected by the land clearances, evicted from their land to make way for sheep farms, and were also victims of famine. The Scotsman that is imagined by today’s populace is modelled after this more visible Highlander identity, with their culture of shepherds, kilts and bagpipes.\textsuperscript{18} However, statistics show that Lowlander Scots were the more common migrants to New Zealand, particularly to the Otago region during the 1840s.\textsuperscript{19} This regional group were affected by the loss of work, as Scotland was becoming a highly industrialised society, which put pressure on both craftsmen and agricultural workers and forced internal mobility.\textsuperscript{20} Propaganda targeted at Lowland Scots was regularly published in editorials, including advertising columns and correspondence, which promised independence and modest prosperity through land ownership.\textsuperscript{21} Through emigration these migrants felt they could gain a sense of independence unavailable to them in the home country.

The majority of the Irish who migrated to New Zealand in the 1840s were those of a white-collar background, who had the funds to emigrate, rather than poor farmers affected by the potato famine.\textsuperscript{22} However, later migrants of the 1870s were of a lower-class background and often relied upon assisted passages, and nominations from family already established in New Zealand. Most took up employment as domestic servants and agricultural labourers. Others came by their own means to mine the goldfields.\textsuperscript{23} These circumstances engendered scholarly interest in their victimisation, and analysis of how they were treated by the English and Scots as lesser migrants, not only economically but religiously too, as many Irish were Catholic and regarded as inferior by Protestants.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 108. This pattern changed during the gold rushes of 1850s – 1860s, with more Highlanders in Otago.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 114.
\textsuperscript{22} Earlier scholars suggested these poorer Irish were among the emigrants, but they could not afford the passage to New Zealand. - Hearn and Phillips, \textit{Settlers}, 118.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 121 - 123.
\textsuperscript{24} O'Farrell, \textit{Letters from Irish Australia}, 2 - 3.
Religious Belief

Whilst this study makes clear separations between religion and ethnicity for analytical purposes, in reality these forms of identification often overlapped, particularly in the Otago context. Missionaries, and religion more generally, were intrinsic to the colonisation of New Zealand, with a heavy emphasis placed on the need to Christianise the ‘uncivilised heathens’. As Marjory Harper describes it, ‘the sinking of religious anchors was an integral part of migration and settlement. Those anchors had many denominational hooks’. The sparsity of inhabitants presented abundant opportunities for these ‘hooks’ to claim particular areas of the country. This is reflected by the religious compositions of the main settlements. In Canterbury, a primarily English settlement, Anglicanism was the dominant religion (a composition reflected throughout the colony), whilst Otago was claimed by Scottish Free Church Presbyterians. Although these intersecting religious regions had a ‘friendly rivalry’ they would work together for a common cause. For example, as early as 1838, Wesleyans and Anglicans united in their dislike of the newly arrived French Catholic mission.

Geoffrey Troughton stresses the need to build upon our knowledge of religious history, and by consequence, the formation of our distinctly New Zealand identity. Identity formation is not restricted to a national stage, for religion is also an important avenue to examining aspects of the ‘self’. As David Maxwell reflects, the unfamiliar and challenging circumstances historical actors found themselves in ‘presented situations where the struggles of human existence were amplified and values were laid bare’. Furthermore, ‘the interaction of religions with contrasting codes of belief and practice has provided rich examples of how the construction of identity through difference, or ‘otherness’, has occurred’. Stephen Constantine also argues that political and religious factors and access to capital ‘were often more important to individuals

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29 Ibid.
than shared ethnic or national origins’. This thesis will therefore analyse Ferens’ identity and construction of ‘self’ through his attachment to Methodism and how he perceived the religious ‘other’ in the Otago settlement to determine the validity of these findings.

It is important to situate this study of Ferens in its geographical context, for he chose to migrate to Otago, which was designed to be a settlement for dissenting Free Church Presbyterians from Scotland. Ferens was therefore an outsider, in terms of both his ethnicity and religious identity. Recent studies of the district focus upon significant societal figures such as Captain William Cargill and Johnny Jones and situate them within the wider historical and societal changes that they affected. Many sources mention the English ‘little enemy’ in the settlement, but do not distinguish between their Anglican or Methodist background or explore this minority perspective, choosing instead to focus on the Scottish Presbyterian majority. This study of Ferens therefore offers an important angle, which could determine whether David Hempton was correct in describing Methodism as a ‘litmus test for social tension’.

John Stenhouse raises three central concerns regarding scholarly interpretations of religion, which are theses of ‘secularisation’, ‘lapsed masses’ and ‘bad religion’. ‘Secularisation’ is the practice of scholars who perceive New Zealand society as inherently anti-religious or non-religious, which, by interpretation, renders religion a weak societal force. Essentially, little emphasis is placed on religions’ influence in the social, cultural and political spheres. These scholars tend to view secularism as progressive and desirable compared to the ‘dark and oppressive’ Old World value systems of religious groups, and, according to Stenhouse, do not sufficiently scrutinise

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30 Constantine, “In Search of the English and Englishness”, 38.
31 For examples see Brooking, And Captain of Their Souls; Tom Brooking Lands for the People? The Highland Clearances and the Colonisation of New Zealand: A Biography of John McKenzie (Dunedin, N.Z.: University of Otago Press, 1996); Diana Harris, Johnny Jones: A Colonial Saga (Auckland, N.Z.: Reed Books, 2007).
32 One such example, which focuses on the English elite specifically, is Erik Olssen, A History of Otago (Dunedin, N.Z.: McIndoe, 1984), 32 - 47.
secular ideologies and leading figures.\textsuperscript{35} To combat this thesis, Stenhouse argues that the secular state and education system in fact ‘reflected the vitality of transplanted religious identities more than their weaknesses’, as the lack of an overarching established church led religious groups to form alliances and work towards a more open, inclusive and religiously plural society.\textsuperscript{36} Anglican support for religious liberalism was crucial to the creation of secular institutions, as they comprised the majority of migrants. Stenhouse observes how the ‘transplanted outsider’, such as Methodists and Free Church Presbyterians, fought to circumnavigate the early attempts of Anglicans to create an established church, a resistance which helped to form the more inclusive society that we know today.\textsuperscript{37}

This case study challenges the secularisation thesis, as Ferens visibly retained his ‘cultural baggage’. As he fought to maintain his religious difference and identification with Methodist values, he offers an alternative to secular interpretations of society. Scholars have addressed the need to consider migrants’ cultural baggage, as Jock Phillips states, ‘we cannot understand New Zealand’s national identity without considering the differing values and habits of the migrants who came here’.\textsuperscript{38} Raewyn Dalziel also argues that migrants’ cultural baggage ‘contained not only religious beliefs, a political and legal system, literature, art and music, but also a set of values and a repertoire of popular protest’.\textsuperscript{39} Dalziel further contends that ‘Old World’ social tensions returned when migrants were under pressure, as can be said for the Otago settlement with its split between the English ‘little enemy’ and the Scots.\textsuperscript{40}

The ‘lapsed masses’ thesis relates to scholarly assumptions that the working classes were ‘largely indifferent or hostile to organised religion’.\textsuperscript{41} These proponents of secular history repeatedly emphasised that Protestant churches were largely middle-class institutions.\textsuperscript{42} Stenhouse criticises how the notion of class divided religion implied

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 331 - 332.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 331 - 332, 340.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 340 - 341.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Jock Phillips, “Of Verandahs and Fish and Chips and Footie on Saturday Afternoon”, \textit{New Zealand Journal of History} 24, no.2 (1990), 133.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Raewyn Dalziel, “Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth: Why Did It Occur?”, \textit{New Zealand Journal of History} 20, no.1 (1986), 4.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 5.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 333.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Stenhouse points to Erik Olssen, Peter Gibbons. A.R. Grigg as among these proponents. - Ibid.
\end{itemize}
that the churches ‘were largely allied with privileged middle-class ‘haves’ against working class ‘have nots’. This class division was certainly not the case for Dunedin, for Stenhouse observes that working class people and skilled workers dominated most southern Dunedin congregations, especially evangelical churches. Marjory Harper similarly remarks that Methodism appealed to the lower classes and flourished in New Zealand. This case study reflects these findings, as Ferens was a working class lay preacher, who actively encouraged people of all classes to follow the gospel. He worked particularly closely to those who would not otherwise have access to religion, such as lower class agricultural labourers and farmers, as they were located outside of the main townships.

Stenhouse’s identifies the ‘bad religion’ thesis as the church and clergy being treated with hostility. This tradition reportedly began in the 1830s, with disparaging, anti-religious single men of the lower-class. These men were personally affronted by missionaries criticising their drunken misconduct in the colony. Religious men, such as Ferens, would have incited such tensions, by making reproachful comments about the whaling community and openly condemning the ‘evils’ of alcohol. Fiction writers of the 1880s began to adopt this hostile attitude against religion, referring to mainstream culture as ‘pious, prudish and puritanical’. Stenhouse argues that this tradition of hostility has continued in the writings of historians, as scholars refer to a secular society resisting Old World religious puritanism. This is visible in Olssen’s description of Free Church Presbyterianism appealing to ‘rising and aggressive sections of Scotland’s middle class’, and in Keith Sinclair’s portrayal of the Reverend Thomas Burns as ‘a censorious old bigot’. Freethinking was another popular form of resisting church influence, which worked its way into universities. Freethought lecturers challenged established forms of ‘Old World’ Christianity and propagated secular liberty. Stenhouse challenges this ‘bad religion’ thesis, arguing that the ‘emergence of open,

43 Ibid., 333.
44 Ibid., 346.
45 Methodism was particularly strong in the Taranaki region. - Harper, “Everything is English”, 55 - 56.
47 Ibid., 334.
48 Ibid., 338 - 339.
50 Stenhouse, “Religion and Society”, 334 - 335.
liberal, tolerant and inclusive forms of Christianity, often peddled by lay people, took the sting out of freethinking propaganda’.

Engaging with all three theses, Stenhouse argues that whilst puritanism was prevalent, it did not serve to weaken the church. To preserve their influence, religious groups worked together to formulate a more cohesive society, by separating church and state. Taking this action liberated and secured civil equality for all religious bodies. According to Stenhouse, New Zealand’s identity formation rested, in part, with Protestant laypeople (often Anglican), who sought to build a ‘united, Christian and non-sectarian British nation out of the apparently antagonistic elements of Protestant and Catholic, Anglican and Nonconformist, Irish and English, High Churchmen, Broad Churchmen and Evangelicals’. Furthermore, laypeople ‘determined religion’s place, meaning and social significance more decisively, in the end, than clergy’. This study seeks to understand how Ferens, as a lay preacher, affected such changes in society, and why he described himself as ‘always a disciple of “progress”’. Was he successful in spreading religion? Did he participate in this ‘unified society’ or were his religious affiliations too strong to associate with those of differing denominations?

Occupational Mobility

Occupational mobility is often studied in tandem with social mobility, with most migrants hoping to improve their life prospects, under the assumption that upward movement in one would lead to a consequent rise in the other. Although some significant work exists on occupational mobility in the Otago region, it focusses heavily upon the industrial and agricultural sectors, tending to ignore white collar, professional jobs. This gap leaves room to discuss more diverse forms of employment. By studying

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51 Ibid., 335 - 336.
52 Ibid., 341.
55 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 6 January 1851.
56 The exception here being Tom Brooking’s Lands for the People? which is based on both agricultural and political sectors. Fortunately, Andrew Sharp’s work on Anglican Missionary Samuel Marsden, offers some information regarding how missionaries lived and demonstrates how Ferens had the
Ferens we gain some insight into his working-class position of lay preacher and his later immersion into the public sector. This is supplemented by his agricultural experience as an estate manager and runholder. Access to this perspective allows for comparison and contrast between the sectors and an assessment of occupational and social mobility.

Typically, research focusing on occupational mobility is executed at a regional level. Due to the sheer scale of research required, a national study would be challenging for any one historian. Certainly, Erik Olssen’s work on Caversham reflects this, as his focus on just one suburb took many years and the assistance of several researchers to complete.\(^{57}\) Historians of occupation are forced to rely on records other than the census, as these were systematically destroyed until 1966, so instead utilise the New Zealand births, deaths and marriages register, and electoral rolls.\(^{58}\) K.A. Pickens argues that there are deficiencies in using any one source to collate information, for electoral rolls are only of use to studying men of property in the middle and upper classes, whilst the lists of assisted migrants on shipboard records are better for studying the lower classes.\(^{59}\) Furthermore, we cannot know for certain whether occupational mobility resulted in socio-economic change, as sources only provide generalised descriptions of each occupational sector. For instance, a migrant ‘farmer’ could refer to a runholder, with thousands of acres, or, conversely, a man tending to his one-acre family plot.\(^{60}\)

In his study of Caversham, Olssen defines the basic categories of workers as follows: employers, professionals, semi-professionals, masters (self-employed), officials, white-collar, skilled, semi-skilled, un-skilled, and retired.\(^{61}\) Despite a relative benefit of entering an already well-entrenched missionary culture, where basic provisions, facilities and relationships with local Māori had already been established. - Andrew Sharp, *The World, the Flesh and the Devil: The Life and Opinions of Samuel Marsden in England and the Antipodes*, 1765 – 1838 (Auckland, N.Z.: Auckland University Press, 2016).


\(^{59}\) Pickens, “Occupational Mobility”, 404.

\(^{60}\) Pickens, “Occupational Mobility”, 405; Hearn and Phillips, *Settlers*, 16. As an example of this, Ferens slightly altered how he referred to his role within the agricultural sector. He first defined his role as ‘stockholder’ in 1856, and ‘runholder’ from then on. Information found on the *Otago Nominal Index*, accessed 10 January 2018, http://marvin.otago.ac.nz/oni/basic.php.

\(^{61}\) Olssen, *Building the New World*, 33.
stasis regarding class mobility and many male workers following the same occupational path as their fathers, they expected to improve their material comforts through hard work and perseverance, a concept which Miles Fairburn refers to as becoming a ‘real colonial’. Essentially, workers desired independence, and New Zealand’s ‘natural abundance’ could offer this with attainable land and home ownership. Ferens associated the term ‘real colonial’ with practical skills and knowledge. He first identified with the term during his time as a runholder, equating the practicality of the profession with becoming a true New Zealander. This was a very masculine concept, and had been propagated by influential men, such as emigration agent for the New Zealand Company, Charles Hursthouse, who wrote a two volume guide for emigrants to New Zealand. Phillips suggests that Hursthouse had become aware of an anxiety regarding sex roles in Victorian Britain, with the rise of urban and sedentary occupations which could be performed by either sex. As a means of boosting masculine confidence, Hursthouse marketed emigration to New Zealand as ‘a career which calls up pluck, bottom, energy, enterprise, all the masculine virtues ... It is the strong and bold who go forth to subdue the wilderness and conquer new lands. For men on the frontier all work was physically hard, and it was in this environment that ‘a respect for strenuous muscular performance became a central element in the male culture’.

These ideas of masculinity and independence tie into the concept of worker ‘transience’, a term that applies to those migrants who worked on a seasonal basis, relying on geographical mobility and transferrable skill sets to sustain their livelihood. Historians argue that this was a capitalist venture, as opposed to a failure to remain in one form of employment. In opposition to this role, ‘persisters’ are defined as those

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63 Fairburn, The Ideal Society, 42 - 59.
65 Ibid., 4 - 5.
who remained in one locality, but did not necessarily remain within the same profession, consequently contributing to the formation of communities.\textsuperscript{69}

Olssen accentuates that a judgement of social mobility that is based solely on occupational data ‘ignores other variables, such as residency, residential location, education, lifestyle and the various subtleties that go into determining status and measuring social mobility in an accurate and fine-grained way’.\textsuperscript{70} He also highlights the importance of occupation as a determinant of individual identity, affecting the work one did, the pay or income one got, the quality of house one lived in and where it was situated, and one’s life chances more generally.\textsuperscript{71}

Sources and Methodology

If a study of Thomas Ferens offers insight into some little explored areas of migration to New Zealand, the sources utilised mirror established approaches, especially analysis of personal correspondence. Ferens left behind more than eighty letters and received as many in turn. Upon his arrival in Otago, Ferens wrote home every three months, but began to write more infrequently as time wore on, with the intention of writing at least twice a year. His main correspondents were his sister Mary Anne Wood and her husband John Oliver Wood, and later his brother William Henry Ferens. Although correspondence penned by Ferens after 1856 has not been found, we gain insight into his life from the letters he received back, some being from his other brothers and sisters whom he had previously neglected. I transcribed all his letters, which amounted to around six pages each and 60,000 words in total.\textsuperscript{72} Some were too affected by watermarks, ink seepage and the effects of cross hatching to be readable in their entirety, but nonetheless provided insight into Ferens’ life, reactions and opinions. Other primary source material includes his diary, bills of sale and other small pieces of ephemera.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70} Olssen and Hickey, \textit{Class and Occupation}, 134.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{72} All excerpts used in this case study have been kept in their original form, with their original spelling and punctuation and emphasis placed on certain words, as is indicated by underlining or capital letters.
According to Angela McCarthy, the major benefits of utilising migrant letters include ‘illuminating quite vividly and emotionally the varied migration experiences of individuals’. Yet, letters which have survived are ‘exceptional and unlikely to be representative of either migrants or letter writers’. In this case the benefits of using the letters outweighs the drawbacks, as, being ‘exceptional’ does not necessarily impede our understanding of Ferens’ personal experiences, so much as highlight his individuality. As Jennifer Ashton describes the focus on individual migrants, in her study of the timber trader John Webster, ‘settlers are brought out into the clear light of day and put back on the frontier in order to understand how they helped to bring about economic and political changes, and to see how these changes were inscribed on daily cultural and social practices’. However, it should be argued that it is not just those who brought about economic and political changes whose lives are important, for the working class settlers whom these changes affected can offer insight into the ‘everyday’ migrant experience.

Some migrant letters were used as manipulative tools, constructed to attract other migrants, and tended to paint the colony in the best light possible. Occasionally, the manipulation of others was successful and inspired chain migration. One must, therefore, be wary of the ways in which certain subjects were approached, or avoided altogether. One must also consider the audience receiving these letters; were the letters destined to be read aloud by extended family and friends or remain private? By contrast, Charlotte Erickson asserts that private letters, in an American colonial context, rarely encouraged others to emigrate, whereas public letters did. Ferens’ audience was intended to be a private one, as is reflected by his personal requests for his sister to keep his thoughts and opinions to herself. However, there were a few letters in which he

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77 Erickson, Invisible Immigrants, 5.
78 A direct quote being: ‘I very much disapprove of the use of private letters being used for public principles, though even there may be sentiments which refer to public matters that they should be
spent much of his time openly trying to persuade others of the many opportunities New Zealand offered in terms of climate, soil and availability of land and employment. Yet, he was not reserved in his complaints about lack of infrastructure, the presence of unsatisfactory countrymen or his own sense of loneliness. Essentially, he kept his readers informed of both the positive and negative aspects of migrating, feeling morally obligated to remain honest. On the topic of manipulation, it has been found that many migrants only corresponded with their relatives after a period of many years, to receive remittances or for fear of losing legacies. Ferens was among these remittance seekers but did not write solely to receive money. In other cases, remittances were sent back by migrants to support their families at home, which Patrick O’Farrell establishes as an expected Irish norm to demonstrate filial piety, spontaneous generosity and family closeness. Despite these potential areas of bias, the benefit of using letters is that they offer ‘an intimate insight into how the migrant actually thought and felt, expressed without constraint, and with the honesty and candour appropriate to close family situations’.

Scholars have highlighted the difficulty of analysing migrant letters in only one direction, so the opportunity to study a two-way perspective is very beneficial to this research. Return correspondence is important because it creates a framing device in which the reader can picture both the sender and receiver of the letters and, vitally, enables claims and accounts from one side of the exchange to be contextualised. Two-way correspondence also offers the possibility to define trends, such as Ferens’ proclivity to write in a much more emotionally expressive manner to his sister than that afforded to his brothers. It also enables a fuller examination of character development across an extended period.

Letters were used as a form of entertainment, or story-telling, as migrants could visualise how their families were living. This helped to suppress their own sense of

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used in an indirect manner’ - Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 6 January 1851 and similarly in Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham) 5 July 1852.

79 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham) various, 1850 - 1851.


82 Ibid., 3.

83 Ibid.
loneliness. By maintaining ties to home, the migrant had the security of their personal networks in a foreign environment. One of Ferens’ contemporaries, James Adam, believed the best way to cope was to lead a busy life and engage in ‘an extensive correspondence about men and things to one’s parents, friends and relatives’. Of course this is already what Ferens was attempting to do, and Fairburn explains that this process built a comforting illusion that the receivers of the letters were really present, and the writer was actually conversing with them. As another contemporary, Sarah Courage, related, ‘every trifling episode of their everyday lives, which one’s relations or friends think of no moment, will provide us with fresh thoughts and perhaps conversation for many days here in the country, where life is such a blank’. As a consequence of writing home so frequently, migrants constructed their thoughts and feelings to fit the (perceived) ideals of the recipient, essentially assuming the eyes of the ‘other’ to scrutinise themselves. However, it has been found that, over time, the migrant began to integrate into their new way of life, and consequently their need to send and receive correspondence lessened.

This thesis also draws from contemporary newspapers, to supplement Ferens’ personal testimony and to establish his place in the wider community. Newspapers are particularly beneficial to the historian, as they convey contemporary issues, and grant historical agency to those who did not leave behind personal testimony. Newspapers reveal how Ferens presented himself to a wider public, and how he interacted with leading members of society. They are invaluable to analysing Ferens’ many occupations during his time in Oamaru and in exploring his controversial thoughts and actions. Newspapers are not, however, a reliable source when considered alone, due to their opinionated viewpoints, and pointed advertising, and the historian must remain wary of the editor’s political and religious affiliations and the breadth of readership. Despite

84 Fairburn, *The Ideal Society*, 201.
86 Fairburn, *The Ideal Society*, 201.
89 Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 5.
this, they allow for an analysis of how a particular sector of society felt about certain subjects, such as religious tensions. For instance, the *Otago Witness* in Dunedin was run by Captain Cargill’s own son-in-law, and consequently, the paper favoured Cargill’s actions as the settlement’s leader. Whilst the views expressed in this paper might have satiated most of the Scots Presbyterian populace, this was not the case for Englishmen such as Ferens. I accessed newspapers using the search engine on the Papers Past website, using the term ‘Ferens’ and setting varying dates alongside other key terms such as ‘church’ to access the relevant information. Changing key terms was crucial to producing results, as searching ‘Ferens’ alone yielded information which pertained to his children. This proved to be a particularly useful source, as it includes publications as far back as 1839, and includes a wide range of newspaper titles from across New Zealand. Rather than trawling through microfilm entries this database offered an efficient way to analyse several newspaper articles in quick succession.

When assessing the life of an individual, there is much benefit to be gained from analysing a migrants’ sense of ‘self’. This concept is crucial to understanding how an individual reacted to their environment, and how their attitudes, opinions and feelings changed over time. Personal testimony is an important tool to unpack this sense of ‘self’. As David Gerber argues, this primary source is especially significant to studies of migration, as migrants had experienced much personal upheaval in both a materialistic and psychological sense, and letter writing was ‘a basis of personal continuity crucial to individual identity’.  

Gerber also intimated, in the late 1990s, that social historians tended to overlook aspects within personal testimony, which ‘conform more closely to peoples lived experience and aspirations’, such as relationships, security, fear, and health. This criticism has since been addressed and migrant historians now refer more frequently to correspondence to better understand the personal circumstances affecting individual experiences.

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Studies of the ‘self’ are not restricted to personal expressions of it. For instance, the concept of ‘self versus other’ is particularly popular among social historians, especially in studies of colonised nations. By their definition, the ‘self’ is in direct opposition to anything considered ‘other’. Commonly, it is then understood that anything non-European is by necessity less civilised and therefore inferior. It is possible to apply the same dichotomy to other divisive topics, such as religion and interclass conflicts. It is important, therefore, in the context of this thesis, to unpack what the migrant distinguished as ‘other’ to determine ‘self’. Ferens’ own definitions of ‘other’ tended to be based on ideology more than racial or cultural difference, a concept which shall be addressed across all three chapters of this thesis.

Chapter Outline

This study examines how Thomas Ferens navigated his religious and occupational life during the period of 1848 – 1888. It will be divided into three chapters, which reflects the significance of these turning points in Ferens’ life, regarding not only occupational transitions, but also family circumstances, economic positions and geographical locations. The first chapter will therefore focus on his religious ‘calling,’ for which he migrated to New Zealand as a Methodist lay preacher. Importantly, this chapter offers a new perspective on the alienation of an English migrant in the primarily Scottish settlement. It shall explore tensions, denominational and otherwise, and relationships formed with Māori, to deconstruct how Ferens’ sense of ‘self’ began to develop in relation to the ‘other’. This early period, 1848 – 1851, is crucial to understanding how Ferens reacted to the foreign environment, as it influenced his future relationships, thoughts, actions and occupational ventures.

The second chapter focuses on Ferens’ life in the agricultural sector, from 1852 to 1871. He pursued several occupational avenues, including estate manager, superintendent and runholder. An analysis of runholding, which was during this period a particularly lucrative trade, allows for an exploration of North Otago’s history and the region’s leading figures. A focus on Ferens’ employer Charles Suisted will highlight how Ferens’ story fits into the wider North Otago disputes between the squatters (large land owners) and the humble farmers on smaller holdings. As practical skills were favoured in the settlement, this chapter shall analyse whether Ferens considered himself a ‘real colonial,’ and the underlying theme of ‘self’ will continue to be analysed within this new environmental, occupational and social context, to identify whether there were any perceptible changes.

The final chapter, focussing on 1872 – 1888, follows Ferens’ assorted employment opportunities within the Oamaru township. This was the first period that Ferens lived in a town in New Zealand, as he usually preferred more isolated locations. As a consequence of this change, Ferens involved himself in a variety of societies and became a prominent member of Oamaru society. By ascertaining how others perceived Ferens, using the medium of newspapers, we can determine whether Ferens’ premises for ‘othering’ were well founded. This was a particularly tumultuous period of change for the Ferens family, which allows for analysis of the impact of bankruptcy and the struggle to establish a livelihood with the responsibility of a large family of 10 children. This chapter also highlights the migrant need for occupational mobility and establishes how Ferens persisted despite numerous setbacks and analyses of how his sense of ‘self’ was affected in the process.
Chapter One

Religious Influences, Intercultural Relationships and Examination of the ‘Self’, 1848 – 1851

This chapter, focussing on the period 1848 – 1851, addresses Thomas Ferens’ early career as a Methodist lay preacher in the Waikouaiti settlement, located just outside of Dunedin. The wealth of Ferens’ personal testimony available to the historian enables us to measure perceptible changes in his personality and perspectives. By drawing upon this primary source, this chapter examines how Ferens viewed himself and others, and how his interactions with people of differing ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds shaped his sense of ‘self’.

Missionaries in New Zealand have received much scholarly attention. Their presence was intrinsic to the formation of trade relations with Māori, and much of their focus was on ‘civilising’ them in an attempt to expand the Empire.¹ Missionaries reportedly reflected the European drive to ‘know’ the indigenous other, by attempting to categorise and simplify their culture in relation to an evangelical way of life.² Scholars have also observed missionaries’ changing perceptions of Māori, once familiarised with their cultural traditions.³ It is necessary, therefore, to draw comparisons to the experiences of missionaries, to analyse whether Ferens’ beliefs, mannerisms and conduct were a reflection of the religious community as a whole, or if they were intrinsic to Ferens on an individual level. Existing studies have also brought to attention how Methodism influenced its followers, which shall be explored in conjunction with Ferens’ perception of his ‘self’.

Regarding perceptions of Māori, this chapter will also analyse wider European views of superiority, using the self/other dichotomy to explore the fatal decline thesis, whereby the Māori race was believed to be on the verge of extinction. Using Ferens’ occupational responsibilities as an analytical lens, it is possible to assess how his work and social networks influenced his personal development, to provide a multi-layered analysis of the self/other construct.

Original Self

The 1840s were a significant period of migration for settlers to New Zealand who all wanted to secure land, better employment and living standards. Personal motivations also inspired emigration, such as the drive for the acquisition or preservation of independence, status and masculinity. Ferens’ motivations conformed to the norm, as he retrospectively described himself as ‘anxious’ and too dependent upon others to support him. Additionally, he felt oppressed by family affairs and the ‘evils’ of English society. At this low point in his life, Ferens identified migration as the best means to get ahead, and he wrote enigmatically:

How many 100’s … have forsaken the Lands of their births and sworn as they have bid farewell, “never to return” to the lands of their fathers – Why?! – Because misery & tyranny raised their crushing, oppressive machinery into despotic play. The People affrighted, disgusted with the black forebodings of the future gathering upon them; caused them to decide upon a

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6 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 30 July 1853.

7 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 17 April 1851.
departure. They listened to the sound of Emigration, until
they were delighted that by it Deliverance from the
Monster would be speedy. Thus leaving The Hydra
Headed Foe to writhe & rave at his departed, flying prey. 8

Ferens painted a tangible picture of hatred, discouraged by England’s inaction to relieve
the drastic effects of poverty, immorality and sickness. In his eyes, ‘home’ was a place
filled with personal despair. Upon the event of his father’s death his older brothers
shared the bulk of the inheritance, yet one brother, Robinson, had accused his late father
of being insolvent. This accusation led to a court hearing and the breaking of family
ties. The brothers had furthermore lost all of the money they received (his oldest
brother, Joseph, had squandered his portion on alcohol) and Ferens was concerned that
‘the bankruptcy of my Brothers have caused a prejudice against me or my sister’. 9 The
family name seems to have held great importance for Ferens, for he further asserted that
‘better had the name of Ferens been annihilated – expunged from paper – washed from
memory – than for indignities to have come upon it in the page of history’. 10 The stress
of this legal dispute left Ferens weakened both physically and mentally and pushed him
to ‘seek my own health which was brutally undermined – to gain a standing – a
competence – and an Honest Living’. 11 With his departure from England he declared ‘I
am free from them, and fled before disgrace might stamp the name. For such disgraceful
conduct I could forever disown them’. 12 Ferens was not unusual in this. Emigrating to
escape family matters was common, for many migrants wished to flee from
embarrassing or disgraceful personal situations and marriages or were exiled. 13

In 1847, at 25 years of age, Ferens set off on his three-month voyage onboard
the John Wickliffe. The ship left from Gravesend, England, carrying only 97 passengers.

8 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, New Zealand) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, England), 30 August 1850.
9 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 2 September 1850.
10 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 28 March 1849.
11 Ibid.
12 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 2 September 1850.
It also transported essential building materials for the whole settlement as well as food supplies. The voyage experience has been well documented by historians, focussing on themes of networks, class and religious conflicts, atomisation and general living conditions. Ferens’ diary has been used in conjunction with some of this literature, so it is fitting that this case study offers greater recognition of his historical importance. Although the *John Wickliffe* was, unusually, free from any deaths, Ferens recorded that there was still sickness, occasional violent outbursts and general issues regarding hygiene. He also described the more positive aspects of the voyage such as the beauty of sunsets, the various species of fish and dolphins and the joy of running a Sunday School. Furthermore, living on a steady diet of barley, rice and potatoes, or ‘chicken feed’, put him in ‘much better health’ than he had been in for some years. This led him to believe that he would be ‘able for “all works”’ upon arrival in New Zealand.

Amongst the passengers on the *John Wickliffe* there was a mixture of people from differing classes, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Most were Scottish Free Church Presbyterians, led by Captain William Cargill, who had helped organise the formation of the settlement and was to take charge upon arrival. The English onboard were relatively few and were of Methodist and Anglican faith. The money these

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17 Thomas Ferens Diary, 1848 – 1852, Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, AG-99 Box 2 of 2.
18 Ibid.
19 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 1848.
migrants had to spare determined where they were housed onboard the ship. Among the poop cabin passengers were the Cargill family and other middle to upper class citizens migrating to settle land purchases made by their families. In the fore cabin was Ferens, alongside a gaoler, engineer and clerks, whilst steerage passengers were comprised of the working class. As Ferens did not receive funding from the Wesleyan Society, his family presumably helped to pay the cost of passage which enabled him to live in this more comfortable form of accommodation, separate from the other working-class passengers.

The voyage experience offers the opportunity to analyse the self/other dichotomy, for Ferens possessed a sense of inherent superiority as an Englishman. His initial report home highlights this, in the context of the ‘crossing the line’ ceremony. The execution of this ceremony entailed the crew members dressing up as Neptune and his entourage and initiating the passengers’ crossing to the other side of the equator.

Regarding this part of the ceremony Ferens made no particular comment, however, the second part of the ceremony consisted of the crew forcibly shaving the male passengers. Ferens openly discouraged and objected to this act onboard, emphasising that he

protested strongly against it as an Englishman – and going out in a ship under the inspection of a Religious Community – and especially considering ourselves to be raised so high in the scale of civilisation, and particularly as we were upon an expedition to colonise and civilise a class of Barbarians.

Such thought led to the divisions of ‘superior’ and ‘lesser’ humans between races, as is reflected by Ferens’ prejudices against Māori ‘barbarians’. Sociologist Aileen Moreton-Robinson asserts that the white population (in the context of colonial Australia), commonly viewed themselves as dominant, and thereby rendered non-white races as

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20 Reportedly it cost 35 - 60 Guineas for the poop cabin (first class), 20 for the fore-cabin (second class), and 16 for steerage (third class). – Brett, White Wings, 80 - 81.
22 Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 1848.
23 See David Hastings for more details of this ceremony and the ‘dead horse’ ceremony. – Hastings, Over the Mountains of the Sea, 52 -57.
24 Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 1848.
‘less than human’. Further to this, she deduces that ‘whiteness as an epistemological *a priori* (almost tautology) provides for a way of knowing and being that is predicated on superiority, which becomes normalised and forms part of one’s taken for granted knowledge’, a comment which highlights the significance of the self/other construct.

The above passage also highlights Ferens’ nationalistic sense of identity, not merely referring to himself as European, but as an Englishman specifically. As he was onboard with people of mixed cultural heritage this is an important distinction to have made. Similarly, he emphasised how people of a “Religious Community” should be treated with more respect, which illustrates his underlying prejudices against irreligious people. Developing this practice of ‘othering’, Ferens further asserted that public shaving was ‘a custom that found its existence with the dark and brutal ages to gratify the gross latter and passions of Man for Drink – But I hope to see the day when all men will be moved and actuated by pure morale, intellectual and Religious Principles’.

From such strongly opinionated commentary, it is not difficult to deduce why this disorderly sector of the working-class did not appreciate missionaries trying to spoil their ‘fun’.

Correspondence reveals that Ferens distancing himself from other passengers and crew was common practice. Building upon this notion of superiority, Ferens informed his sister that

being in such close connexion with such a number of people it gives an opportunity to discriminate and make observations by the principles of Physiomy (sic). I am prudent with whom I talk and especially the subjects, because by such I endeavour to measure their kinds of stature and actuating principles.

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26 Ibid.
27 Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 1848.
29 Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 1848.
This action resulted in Ferens only keeping a small group of friends onboard and presumably led others to think him unsociable. His proclivity to base the intelligence of others on their physical appearance reveals the importance of Ferens’ principles and how they affected his sense of ‘self’ and ‘other’. The concept of physiognomy was quite common during this time period, with detailed studies explaining intricacies such as the arch of one’s nose determining particular aspects of their character. As Ferens was an educated man, it is not surprising that he was keeping abreast with the popular literature of the time. According to Joanna Burke, ‘readers of physiognomic works understood that they were being given a technique for the mastery of other people and animals’. This observation supports the notion that Ferens did indeed perceive himself as superior to others, which in such close quarters could have had serious repercussions should he have offended a ‘lesser’ passenger or crew member.

Fortunately, the physical confinement of ship life broke down the rigid religious and social divisions of the homeland by forcing those of different class backgrounds to interact on a daily basis, and share the life changing experience of leaving home for a new land. This transition from self-enforced alienation to openly interacting with other passengers is reflected by Ferens’ choice to become the barber on the ship, ‘cutting a great number of the passengers and their children’s hair – as it is necessary to do in order to keep from many of the evils that arise at Sea in hot weather’, a task which presumably led to Ferens’ acquaintance with a variety of people. This was an important social development, as the migrants destined for New Zealand were travelling towards a (planned) egalitarian society, designed as an improved model for British

30 Joanna Bourke, *What it Means to Be Human: Reflections from 1791 to the Present* (Berkley, U.S.A.: Counterpoint, 2011), 211 - 235, is particularly illuminating on the various lines of thought circulating around popular culture and offers several examples and references, including early studies comparing peculiarities in face shapes to animals.


33 O’Farrell also suggests that confinement could strengthen tensions with the pressure of living in close quarters, but the circumstances of shared experiences helped to break down this rigidity. As O’Farrell put it: ‘acceptance of and conformity to the old world social order weakens with distance form home’. - Patrick O’Farrell, *The Irish in Australia* (Kensington, N.S.W.: New South Wales University Press, 1987), 19 - 20.

34 Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 1848.
society to follow. Despite rigid divisions breaking down, there were still some cultural areas that remained separate. For example, scholars have found that dissenting and non-conforming religions like Methodism tended to consist of working class people and therefore flourished in the steerage compartments, but onboard the John Wickliffe there was no Methodist missionary to lead such people.\footnote{David Hastings, \textit{Over the Mountains of the Sea: Life on the Migrant Ships, 1870 – 1885} (Auckland, N.Z.: Auckland University Press, 2006), 117.} Whilst open religious services were held onboard to meet the passengers’ religious needs, private meetings were often held afterwards. As an example of this compromise, Ferens helped run a Sunday school with Mr Monson, yet had to resort to listening to the sermons of Mr Nicolson, who was a Presbyterian Minister for the Free Church of Scotland.\footnote{Ferens was chosen as Assistant by Mr Monson to run this Sunday School and preserve the power of religious influences upon the children. Miss Westland, Ferens’ future aunt-in-law also helped to teach ‘the little ones’. Thomas Ferens’ Diary, 13 February 1848 and Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 1848. Mr Monson was Ferens’ close friend and became the Gaoler of Dunedin soon after arrival.} Ferens found Nicolson to be personable, but did not believe his teachings were accurate, referring to his sermons as a ‘No Go!!’\footnote{Thomas Ferens’ Diary, 13 February 1848.} So, whilst passengers could happily share a Sunday service, they did not necessarily agree with what was preached by the representatives of other denominations. Despite this, the passengers of the John Wickliffe were relatively peaceful in each other’s company, leading to an expectation of continued harmony on arrival.

\textbf{Waikouaiti Settlement}

Upon arrival in Otago, Ferens was sent to the Waikouaiti settlement to aid the Reverend Charles Creed. He travelled around the Otago region preaching to any and all inhabitants he came across on the way. Waikouaiti was the first organised settlement on the east coast of the South Island, and the first farm in Otago.\footnote{E.J. Tapp, ‘Jones, John’, \textit{Dictionary of New Zealand Biography}, quoted in \textit{Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand}, accessed 7 March 2017, http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1j4/jones-john.} John ‘Johnny’ Jones established the settlement in 1840, it was composed of a mixture of forty European whalers, sailors and escaped convicts as well as various foreigners.\footnote{He only joined these settlers himself three years later, Ibid. and T.A. Pybus, \textit{Māori and Missionary: Early Christian Missions in the South Island of New Zealand} (Wellington, N.Z.: Reed Publishing Ltd., 1954), 9 - 10.} Jones wished to
establish moral conduct amongst his workers at the whaling station, and requested help from the Mission Board in Sydney to achieve this. In response to this request, the Reverend James Watkin, previously stationed in Tonga, arrived in 1840. Watkin had failed to convert the Tongan people, yet appeared to welcome the challenge the Māori posed, despite his being in ill health at the time of his arrival.\footnote{Ibid.} Jones was not alone in his request, for local Otakau chiefs Karetai (who sold land to Jones in 1839) and his cousin, Te Matenga Taiaroa, made a similar appeal for a mission to be established in Waikouaiti, believing that with a school and church the Māori children would soon be able to read and write like those living in the North Island.\footnote{Ibid., 1.}

Figure 2
Following this invitation to establish a mission in Waikouaiti, Watkin instructed Hoani Wetere Korako (John Wesley), and Tari Wetere Te Kahu (Charles Wesley), noting that they had great oratory skills and were ‘very animated and full of natural and appropriate gesture’. These men soon became preachers themselves and carried the Methodist gospel on to their people. Watkin also oversaw the building of a mission station, which became the place of religious instruction for his Māori followers. This station later acted as the residence of Watkins’ successor, the Reverend Creed, and of course, Ferens himself (see figure 2).

Missionaries, Methodism, and Ferens’ Sense of Religiosity

It is important to analyse the impact that religion had on Ferens’ principles because ‘Christian morality infused family life, as well as social behaviour in and out of the workplace’, and cultural influences often encouraged self-evaluation and meaning in life. Essentially, religion formed ‘a complete worldview for many colonists’. Analysing Methodist teachings is therefore crucial to understanding the basis of Ferens’ personal values. Because Methodism thrived on the margins and frontiers of race and class, with its emphasis on personal experience and personal and communal disciplines, New Zealand was an ideal location to spread the gospel. Methodism flourished through acculturation and indigenisation, adapting to local cultures and changing its character from place to place. David Bebbington asserts that this ‘indigenising’ role was undertaken in parallel to a ‘pilgrim’ role, whereby missionaries attempted to Christianise the local population. These roles are often overlooked, but remain historically important, as missionaries could adopt aspects of local culture whilst

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43 Ibid., 6.
45 Hearn and Phillips, Settlers, 182.
47 Ibid.
simultaneously acting as a force of innovation in new lands.\(^{49}\) An example of these dual roles comes in the form of hymn singing, with the intention of transferring complex theological ideas into accessible language, and helping to build communal solidarity and collective devotion.\(^{50}\) In the ‘pilgrim’ role, missionaries encouraged Māori to learn English and become literate. Although the missionaries’ primary purpose was to spread Christianity through biblical passages, Māori were drawn to these offers of literacy, recognising the potential to preserve their culture and traditions outside of the oral sphere.\(^{51}\) Possessing literary skills in English also allowed for further education and a broader choice of occupations for Māori which, therefore, consolidated the relationship between them and missionaries.\(^{52}\)

Interestingly, the first missionaries to New Zealand prior to 1840 were, like Ferens, most commonly not from ministerial/religiously based occupations. One was a cabinet maker, one a miller and baker, and one a naval man.\(^{53}\) This disparity in background demonstrates that it was a fierce dedication to the mission and desire to spread the gospel that drove these men to the farthest reaches of the Empire. Missionaries who possessed a trade were also of great use in this very early stage, providing the ‘arts of civilisation’ to Māori, with the aim of making them more desirable citizens for the new colony.\(^{54}\) The ‘simple arts’ were an aspect of missionary expertise which renowned Anglican missionary Samuel Marsden encouraged. He perceived the intersection of trade and evangelisation as an assurance of respect, and ensured that his missionaries were kept from idleness, demoralisation and potential starvation.\(^{55}\)

To keep entertained during this early and somewhat isolated period, migrants attended religious services, such as lay preaching, and engaged in Bible reading. These

\(^{49}\) Ibid.

\(^{50}\) Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, 71.

\(^{51}\) Ballantyne, *Entanglements of Empire*, 66.

\(^{52}\) Ibid.


\(^{54}\) Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), August 1848.

activities were sources of continuing education for migrants who had a thirst for spiritual and intellectual stimulation.\textsuperscript{56} Further to this, the frequency with which the settlers wrote home about religion demonstrates how reading the Bible and attending religious services acted as a form of meditation and reflection.\textsuperscript{57} This might explain why Ferens developed a particularly strong connection to Methodism as, having no familial or strong social networks, he relied upon denominational books for entertainment, inspiration and religious instruction.

Methodists saw two doctrines as fundamental: justification, in which all humans are born sinners, and receive salvation by faith in the Saviour, Jesus; and the new birth, the renewing of our fallen human nature at the time of conversion.\textsuperscript{58} Ferens’ contemporary Samuel Chadwick reckoned that ‘conversions not only bring posterity to the Church, they solve the social problem’.\textsuperscript{59} The ‘social problem’ he refers to was the fault of traders, whalers and sealers who fed the Māori preoccupation with tobacco and alcohol, the introduction of which had a drastic effect upon their people as a whole. Consequently, Methodists sought to develop the character of the nation by discouraging the influence of irreligion, and instead perceived discipline, austerity and moral earnestness as essential elements to developing a Christian utopia.\textsuperscript{60} With lay preachers and open-air services Methodism was a classic religious revival. Appealing to less privileged people, it provided a culture of dissent which helped give focus to resistance and eventual migration.\textsuperscript{61}

How did Ferens maintain his strong sense of religious duty? It appears he found it challenging, as preaching was an isolating profession, and he felt this loneliness more when he compared himself to the loving relationship of the Creeds. Marriage before departure was the norm for many missionaries, to make the ordeal of living in a foreign

\textsuperscript{56} Gerber, \textit{Authors of Their Lives}, 49.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} David W. Bebbington, \textit{Evangelism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s} (London: Unwin Hyman Ltd., 1989), 16.
\textsuperscript{60} Bebbington, \textit{Evangelism in Modern Britain}, 46.
\textsuperscript{61} Hearn and Phillips, \textit{Settlers}, 94 and Barry Reay, \textit{Rural Englands: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century} (U.K.: Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 164, quoted in Ibid., 100. These studies of Methodism support John Stenhouse’s argument that religion was not restricted to the middle classes. – Stenhouse, “Religion and Society”, 333.
land more bearable. Ferens’ own desperation for a female companion is well documented throughout his correspondence. He did have a love interest, Betsy Raine, in East Rainton. However, he failed to propose to her before departure, blaming his lack of initiative, which ‘altogether rose from a religious scrupulosity – not from any disrespect or from want of affection, it lended (sic) rather to comb my feelings and keep them in restraints. But now I can plead no longer, my health being restored and my circumstances otherwise’. He proposed to Betsy by way of a letter two years after settling in New Zealand. His sister, Mary Anne, highlighted the folly of his decision to leave the proposal so late, commenting that ‘it is my firm belief that had you been here to have pleaded your own cause you would have been successful, as words spoken are far different from words written honey & thy canny kind looks, would have done more than anything else’. Unfortunately for Ferens, Mary Anne was correct in her judgments, and Betsy declined his offer of marriage, unwilling to migrate to an unknown country devoid of familial networks. With Betsy’s rejection, Ferens surrendered himself fully to his work, becoming resolute in his decision to remain in New Zealand for at least the next ten years, until his work was ‘done’.

Ferens’ sense of religious duty was reinforced by an article he copied, an action which signifies the importance of its central argument:

There is, be it observed, a wide difference between selfishness and self-love. This is a principle necessary to all sentient existence. In man, it is the principle … to preserve his own life and promote his own happiness … Pity is only the principle of self-love … It is the act or habit of man who so loves himself that he gives himself to God. Selfishness is fallen self-love. This self-love in

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63 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 2 September 1850.
64 Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham) to Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago), 26 February 1851.
65 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 2 September 1850.
excess, blind to the existence and experience of God, and seeking its happiness in inferior objects.  

Ferens would have held onto this reminder to keep his own ‘selfish desires’ at bay in a time of great change and isolation. This notion is reflected in his brief consideration of an alternative occupation, which would have been a more secure form of income. However, his resolve to remain true to the Methodist cause prevented him from following this path: ‘were it not an earnest desire to benefit others, especially the natives, I would go to Sawing into the woods – away from Society. But duty and the responsibility to follow Jesus weighs heavily upon me’. It was this sense of duty which had brought him to New Zealand, and the reluctance to strike out alone, away from his very limited social networks, was understandable. There is some suggestion by his sister that Ferens had only continued lay preaching as he felt ‘obliged to Mr Creed for his kindness in taking him by the hand … & through persuasion become a Missionary … they had no expense in sending you out & to them that was a very great advantage … the Methodists will turn thee adrift.’

Issues with the Wesleyan Society

Mary Anne’s predictions were not entirely unfounded, but Ferens’ relationship with Methodism was not necessarily one of blind faith, for he recognised that the Wesleyan Society was corrupt. Despite his distance from home, Ferens benefited from reading about and discussing issues which related to the operation of the Wesleyan Society and did not let his missionary ambitions cloud his negative opinions of the Society’s officials. Common themes in Ferens’ misgivings were that of ‘priestly bigotry’, ‘priestly domination’, and ‘malevolent institutions’. Ferens criticised the corruption of the

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66 Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, AG-99 Box 1 of 2, Series 2, Thomas Ferens correspondence, [Hammis Mammon 9?], n.d.
67 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 11 June 1849.
68 Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham) to Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago), 30 October 1849.
69 This is reflected by his consistent comments upon issues raised in the Wesleyan Times, to which he had subscribed to remain up to date with the Wesleyan Society. He suggested that laypeople should be admitted to Conference to air their concerns and have some say in Society matters. – Thomas
upper-class Wesleyan officials. He believed that they held too much sway in society, despite lacking any real sense of principle or human decency, and that they swindled money from their well-meaning followers:

Methodist people have been looked down upon by those Usurping Law Controls to be creatures – poor imbeciles – blind, deaf & dumb, only capable for maintaining their Superiors “by begging”. Give and contribute – was the demand … to make a profitable gain for this extension of power they uttered thrilling themes in their ears, that they may go and cry & and sing these notes into the ears of others, such as: “Pity the heathen” “Oh do pity the New Zealand Cannibal!” “Pity poor Fegee! [Fiji]” “Pity poor Africa!” “Do pity a world in gross darkness!” All solemn truths in themselves … How touching those pathetic appeals are on a tender, sympathising, Christian people. Here a benevolent people have given of their monies, for the express principle of evangelising the Heathen World? Can it be possible that they could be pulled in their desires and endeavours for blessing a fallen World? … The Mission cause is damaged materially in the foreign field, no one Missionary is a free responsible man, his skill is neutralised … You may again ask by what? Only by those monstrous powers that general superiors are invested with. They … Overrule and destroy the means of extending and benefiting. Hence it is that a Missionary is crippled, afraid and powerless.  

This passage perfectly encapsulates the controversial nature of the Society and acts as opprobrium of the greediness of those in positions of authority. Despite his strong

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Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 8 October 1848; 16 January 1850 and 6 January 1851.

70 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 23 August 1851.
reservations about the fraudulent nature of the Society, he was willing to ‘live in peace and quiet’ until such a time that he was ‘moved to act either in self-defence or for the liberties and rights of those I am surrounded with’. 71

Ferens maintained his decision to remain a Wesleyan preacher, claiming that he did ‘not feel the pressure of those evils – I enter it … because Christ needs faithful, willing and zealous servants in these Lands’, in an attempt to counteract the negative associations. 72 This action reveals how Ferens’ sense of ‘self’ and moralistic principles persevered in the face of opposition. He worked scrupulously to genuinely improve the ‘native’s’ situation, displaying a true commitment to propagating and living by the principles of the Methodist gospel. As early as 1849 Ferens believed he would have difficulties entering the ministry, as

I am considered to be too great a Radical – ay amongst Church governments, Rules, Systems. What I propose is to let me go altogether amongst the Natives, as I love them in their true, original character. They are just the people I would sit and learn from. 73

Suggesting his willingness to become fully immersed into Māori society was certainly a bold (and radical) idea, especially as he was willing to do this without the promise of a position in the mission.

He continued his work under Creed until 1851, when his application to become a missionary was denied, somewhat ironically, due to a lack of funds. 74 Despite his earlier assertion that he ‘did not feel the pressure’ of the Wesleyan Society’s ‘evils’, his failure to secure this employment led to his revelation that ‘glad I feel that I have been frustrated in entering the Wesleyan Ministry, for I would never have given a pledge, nor

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71 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 16 January 1850.
72 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 30 April 1850.
73 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 11 June 1849.
74 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 30 July 1851 - 23 August 1851.
never consented to the religious infringement on Truth & Liberty’. Presumably leaving secure employment was too much of a personal financial risk, but being forced out allowed him to express his feelings more openly.

**European Relations**

Ferens’ points of tension were not confined to the Wesleyan Society, for his personal grievances stretched into the cultural and denominational fields. This section will outline Ferens’ relationships with individual figures, to demonstrate how his perceptions of people were shaped by his sense of principle. This analysis allows for further exploration of the self/other dichotomy. Scholars tend to analyse this concept in relation to studies of ethnic tensions and notions of superiority between the coloniser and the colonised. However, engaging with David Maxwell’s observations that ‘the interaction of religions with contrasting codes of belief and practice has provided rich examples of how the construction of identity through difference, or “otherness”, has occurred’ offers a new perspective of the self/other construct. This is a useful concept to utilise regarding the well-established conflict between the Free Church Scottish Presbyterians and the English ‘little enemy’. Ferens, as part of the latter group, and the Methodist minority, offers a little explored perspective of the Scots, whom he regarded as intrinsically ‘other’.

Focussing on the leaders of the Otago settlement, Captain William Cargill and the Reverend Thomas Burns, Ferens’ correspondence reveals that he defined his ‘self’ in direct relation to the thoughts and actions of these Scottish ‘others’. Ferens had

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75 Ibid.
77 Cargill was spurred on by Scots politician George Rennie, to establish an Otago settlement scheme, having heard of Edward Gibbon Wakefield’s intentions for ‘systematic colonisation’. The land was colonised in 1848 with the arrival of the John Wickliffe and shortly thereafter the Phillip Laing. The Reverend Thomas Burns was offered the position as Minister for the Free Church scheme in 1843, convincing Cargill that the settlement should be exclusively for Free Church followers rather than a secular venture (which Rennie had proposed). Although he was originally quite staunch on this matter, he came to accept those of a wider Presbyterian lean. But, as it will be discussed, he did not tolerate those who were of opposing denominations. - Tom Brooking, “Cargill, William”, first published in the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography 1 (1990), in Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, accessed 22 August 2017, https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1c4/cargill-william; and Tom Brooking, “Burns, Thomas”, first published in the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography 1 (1990), in Te Ara – The
fostered amicable relations with both Burns and Cargill within the first few years of the settlement’s operation. Although Burns was a Presbyterian, Ferens admired his oratorical abilities and respected his religious values. This is reflected by Ferens’ commentary that he and Creed travelled to Dunedin to seek out Burns, who ‘preached an excellent sermon from 130 Psm 4, he is a man of talent, and of tall athletic form, but aged’. Referring to the sermon as ‘excellent’ certainly highlights how Ferens appreciated Burns’ oratory skills, and sense of moral worth. Making the special excursion to see Burns upon the latter’s arrival further suggests the intention to forge closer inter-denominational relations. This positive interaction also serves to support Stenhouse’s argument that laypeople actively encouraged religious unification and liberty, which combats the secularisation thesis propagated by some scholars.

Despite this initially favourable encounter, Ferens began to observe what he perceived as negative aspects of Burns’ character, condemning how he was ‘swallowed in jobbing with the Church Lands – neglecting the cries of numerous and scattered people – and cries out against others who come to satisfy their wants’. This comment presumably refers to the Methodists having to step up and answer the ‘cries of the people’. This reaction was an over exaggeration, for in Burns’ own detailed journal, he personally recorded that he spoke with and identified 1,100 Presbyterians, 250 Anglicans, 61 Independents and 11 Catholics in the settlement, and helped to establish four schools. This information suggests that a fair few ‘scattered people’ were attended to. Yet, Ferens confidently asserted that ‘I was the 1st who had ever attempted outdoor work at the Colony. I felt much yet sensible of the dreadful position – I spoke from Eph. 1: 13-14. Something that the Scotch People are not treated with’. To expand upon this, the biblical passage from Ephesians reads:

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you

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78 Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), April 1848.
80 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 28 March 1849.
82 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 28 March 1849.
believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession – to the praise of his glory.\textsuperscript{83}

Here Ferens refers to the Methodist belief that people from all walks of life, of all races and classes should be offered the opportunity to convert and become ‘saved’. Traditionally, Methodists believe that ‘All need to be saved. All may be saved. All may know themselves saved. All may be saved to the uttermost’.\textsuperscript{84} This is in opposition to Calvinists (the so called ‘Scotch people’) who believed only a select few, as chosen by God, could be saved.\textsuperscript{85} Ferens’ comment therefore appears to challenge the elitism which Burns espoused. By undertaking ‘outdoor work’, Ferens, as a lay preacher, could spread the gospel beyond the main township, to any and all who wanted to listen. This practice of lay preaching has been established as crucial to the spread of Christianity, as it ‘determined religion’s place, meaning and social significance more decisively, in the end, than clergy’.\textsuperscript{86}

Stenhouse asserts that ‘power struggles between Scottish Presbyterian ‘Old Identities’ and ethno-religious Outsiders – English Anglicans and Dissenters, Irish Catholics and freethinkers – bubbled for decades’.\textsuperscript{87} Evidence of this lies with the leaders of the Scottish Free Church Presbyterians referring to the English Episcopalians and Wesleyans as the ‘little enemy’, a term which described all those individuals, groups, institutions and forces who opposed the religious, economic and political ideas of Cargill and Burns.\textsuperscript{88} This term was propagated by Burns in retaliation to the compromised sanctity of the Free Church settlement, as he reportedly perceived the


\textsuperscript{86} Stenhouse, “Religion and Society”, 329.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 341.

\textsuperscript{88} Seán G. Brosnahan, \textit{To Fame Undying: The Otago Settlers Association 1898 – 2008} (Otago, N.Z.: Otago Daily Times Press, 2008), 15 and Brooking, \textit{And Captain of Their Souls}, 77 - 78.
opposing denominational groups as ‘second place only to Papists as henchmen of the devil’. Some scholars have suggested that these ethnic tensions served to ‘cement the communal solidarity’ of the Scots and once freedom of religion was attacked ‘ethnic divisions were encouraged and the supposedly cohesive Wakefield settlement experienced a split between the English and Scots leadership’. This solidification led to a mass exodus, with many English moving to Canterbury to join the Anglican settlement there. Charlotte Godley, a contemporary of Ferens, referred to this ethno-religious conflict as a ‘black spot’ in Dunedin society.

Ferens also contributed to these negative portrayals of the ethnic split, complaining that the ‘powers that be’ were

anything but free and liberal. Religiously narrow, sectarian bullishness pervades the whole. The English are not allowed free and full play … the English are leaving almost every week and going to the other Settlements or to Sydney, for to breathe freely, and for a wider field of action, Scottish bye laws do not suit the Englishmen.

This statement supports the argument that migrants continued to carry their cultural baggage after they arrived in New Zealand, and that distinctive ethnic identities were prone to become more visible in social and political conflicts. The English were not commonly found in the inferior position and the tendency for the Scots to favour their own kind served to discourage English migration to Dunedin. Otago has been emphasised as a region prone to expressing ‘Old World’ identities, and Ferens clearly expresses these divisions in his correspondence.

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89 Brooking, *And Captain of Their Souls*, 36.
91 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 25 October 1849.
93 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 16 January 1850.
95 Stenhouse, “Religion and Society”, 341.
It is important to recognise that Ferens did not blame the Scottish community as a whole for these tensions but focused his frustrations at the pointedly religious attentions of Otago’s Scottish leaders. In his perspective the church was:

At great discount, as they have commenced upon ruinous principles – established land funds, controlling and arbitrary in their proceedings in carrying out the scheme. Capt. Cargill has turned out a complete selfish monpolyer (sic) in crushing the Working Classes … The Dunedin district is progressing very rapidly, and her principle life and vigour arises from opposition to her Heads. It is a shame that such a district should have come into the hands of such bloodless-moniless (sic) paupers. English capital is the mainspring, and it is from there that such strides have been made.96

There is a marked contrast between Ferens’ initial response to Burns and Cargill and the above commentary, so what sparked this escalation of conflict? Upon the arrival of the passenger ships, Creed had taken it upon himself to act as Minister to the English Anglicans in the Dunedin township, who were based in the gaol, for no church had been built. In protest, Cargill sent a letter to Creed, recommending that he limit his evangelism to the heathen and keep out of Dunedin, despite having been active in the area for five years before Cargill’s arrival.97 Cargill further argued that the English migrants knew Dunedin was a class settlement and that they would only receive a Bishop once their numbers warranted one.98 In the process of accusing Creed of negligence, Cargill deemed Ferens an inappropriate ‘substitute’ for the Waikouaiti mission, stating that Ferens was ‘an unordained person … who has not a word of the language, and consequently unintelligible to the Māories (sic)’.99 Creed responded to

96 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 28 March 1849.
97 Brooking, And Captain of Their Souls, 78 - 80 and Charles Creed, “To the Editor of the Otago News”, Otago News, 2 May 1849.
98 Captain William Cargill (Dunedin, Otago) to Charles Creed (Waikouaiti, Otago), 15 March 1849, quoted in Charles Creed, “To the Editor of the Otago News”, Otago News, 2 May 1849.
99 Ibid.
this attack of his religious duties by publishing the letter in the *Otago News*, and enquiring:

who delegated the power to Captain Cargill of seizing the reins of government over a Wesleyan missionary, and prying into the discharge of his public duties; or upon what authority Captain Cargill makes the assertions to the inadequacy of the provision for Waikouaiti during my tours to different parts of *my circuit*.¹⁰⁰

Publishing this rebuttal was of course intended to rouse public debate, and openly question Cargill’s right to involve himself in the matter. In his defence, Creed elucidated that the Wesleyan mission, whilst primarily directed towards the Christianisation of the ‘heathen’, was also aimed to ‘extend our pastoral care of our fellow-countrymen … a duty which we most cheerfully perform’.¹⁰¹

The gravity of these religious tensions was not lost on the populace, as is reflected by the *Otago News* arguing that it was ‘an attempt at religious persecution and intolerance worthy of the 16th century’ and accusing Cargill of sharing the values of the ‘Pilgrim Fathers’.¹⁰² The *Otago News* expressed a particular desire to encourage the protection and acceptance of denominations which lay outside of the realm of the Free Church.¹⁰³ Unfortunately, unregulated discussion of the rights for such freedoms led to the paper’s termination in the 1850s, as Cargill had pulled subscriptions in retaliation.¹⁰⁴

This conflict undoubtedly fuelled Ferens’ own thoughts on the subject and, because Cargill and Burns so strongly pursued their Scottish Presbyterian differences, they helped to distinguish their ‘otherness’.

In direct contrast to his relationship with these men, Ferens’ most amicable connection was to his superior, the Reverend Charles Creed. Creed opened his home to Ferens in exchange for his assistance as preacher and school teacher. He made a lasting

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¹⁰⁰ Charles Creed, “To the Editor of the Otago News”, *Otago News*, 2 May 1849.
¹⁰¹ Brooking, *And Captain of Their Souls*, 78 - 80.
¹⁰² Editor, “In Reply”, *Otago News*, 16 May 1849.
¹⁰³ Ibid.
¹⁰⁴ Brooking, *And Captain of Their Souls*, 81.
impression upon Ferens, who wrote about him and his wife as ‘decidedly the most sincere individuals I have met with in the Ministry. Kind, benevolent – in many cases to the extreme – free, independent, honesty, in words and actions’.\textsuperscript{105} Creed acted as a fatherly or brotherly figure, which is demonstrated through the overwhelmingly affectionate sentiment Ferens expressed toward him throughout his correspondence.\textsuperscript{106} Similarly Mrs Eliza Harris Creed’s open and warm personality and concern for his well-being reminded Ferens of his sister.\textsuperscript{107} The Reverend encouraged familial relationships with local Māori, and with his guidance Ferens became a more confident individual, trusting in his abilities to teach the gospel and literary skills to the native people.

A formidable character in Ferens’ life was Johnny Jones, the founder of the Waikouaiti settlement. Despite Jones’ stature in the community, Ferens found him a highly unsatisfactory individual to be acquainted with. Although it was at Jones’ request that there was a Methodist missionary presence for his workers, Ferens regarded him as cruel, and bordering on satanic. He openly accused Jones of fuelling the decline of the Māori population in his correspondence:

\begin{quote}
Many promising young men who are married have been led away by the Intolerable Enemy of all Good – that man Johnny Jones. He has given them spirits under a pretext that it would keep them from getting cold … However, it fed on them, until nearly the whole number of them became prey to the seducer … He accomplished His object – in destroying the good which has been wrought in them … they are to be pitied because He is a Subtle Enemy. The Mission suffers materially from Him; Envy, Malice & Revenge in the leading features of his character, with much vanity and hateful overbearing pomposity.\textsuperscript{108}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{105} Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 28 March 1849.

\textsuperscript{106} Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 19 November 1851.

\textsuperscript{107} Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 28 March 1849.

\textsuperscript{108} Whether the use of ‘Him’ refers the devil’s actual presence, or Jones as a channel for satanic impulses is subject to individual interpretation. Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 6 January 1851.
This was a serious slander of Jones’ person, and it becomes very clear that Ferens empathised with the Māori and wished sincerely for them to escape Jones’ negative influence. Reportedly, however, Jones was known for his ‘ungovernable and impetuous temper’ yet was generous and kind to women and children (a softer side which Ferens presumably never saw).  

Ferens was similarly troubled by the uncivilised influences of the whaling community stationed near Waikouaiti and considered them disruptive, violent drunkards. This animosity was reciprocated, for the whalers regarded missionaries and preachers as prudish and controlling. This attitude of indifference and amusement is reflected by a whaler who wrote ‘if you see you reading or writing or know that you have not a girl aboard, you must then be a missionary man … a most opprobrious name’. Such commentary feeds into John Stenhouse’s ‘bad religion’ thesis, whereby single working class man fostered hostility towards missionaries and lay preachers. Unsurprisingly, Ferens found these men repulsive, as they did not share his Methodist principles of remaining disciplined, austere and morally earnest.

In short, Ferens began his life in the Otago settlement expecting harmony with other religious denominations and was willing to remain on good terms with those of differing class, ethnic and religious backgrounds. However, the growing tensions, worsened by the words and actions of Cargill and Burns, shattered this dream. A consequence of this conflict was Ferens questioning the alleged superiority of the European, as he perceived Otago’s leaders, Johnny Jones, and the whaling community as more barbaric than the Māori he converted. With these negative encounters he was encouraged to distinguish his sense of ‘self’ against the European ‘other’.

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110 This hostility between single working-class men and missionaries increased over time, affecting how religious men were perceived by wider society - Stenhouse, “Religion and Society”, 333.
113 Bebbington, Evangelism in Modern Britain, 46.
Forging Closer Intercultural Relationships

It is important to address the development of intercultural relationships, exploring how missionaries sought to establish the ‘arts of civilisation’ and to demonstrate how Ferens’ perception of the indigenous ‘other’ began to transform in relation to this. The self/other construct shall be discussed in depth to establish Ferens’ perceptions in relation to other religious men. With this analysis, it is possible to determine whether Ferens stood out with an individual perspective or prescribed to the norm.

It has been established that ‘self’ is always defined in relation to the other. What then happens when the ‘other’ supersedes, or is regarded as superior in any way, to the ‘self’? It is this question that drove colonials to know the other; to collate information about their culture and construct discourses based around European interpretations of it. By such means, Tony Ballantyne identified that missionary texts were ‘clearly structured by an evangelical world view that led them to dismiss Māori cosmography, ritual and religious beliefs as primitive superstition rather than religion’.114 Fundamentally, the construction and dissemination of these texts allowed for European superiority to remain within the dominant discourse. Edward Said also explored this self/other construct, in relation to the Orient. He described colonial knowledge as attempts to harness its foreignness by ‘making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient’.115

Studies of physiognomy exemplify this practice of othering, as they were used to determine people’s intelligence, and more specifically, the intelligence of an entire race of people in relation to the ‘civilised’ appearance of the European. Descriptions of the body were used to stimulate public opinion of an established racial hierarchy. For instance, Aboriginals and Tahitians were presented as a less intelligent race due to their

116 ‘Fears of indigenous violence and resistance drove a pan-European desire to ‘civilise’ native peoples, which propagated theories of social Darwinism and phrenology, the study of cranium size in relation to one’s intelligence’. - Victoria Freeman, “Attitudes Towards Miscegenation in Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia, 1860 – 1914”, in Native Studies Review 16, no. 1 (2005), 44.
117 Freeman, Attitudes Towards Miscegenation in Canada”, 44.
stark physical differences from Europeans. However, Māori were described as fit and strong with pleasing facial features and intelligent eyes. The way in which these racial ‘bodies’ were described evidences how Europeans sought to establish their superiority. Phrenology and physiognomy are concepts reflected in the words of Ferens’ contemporaries. As the Reverend Watkin asserted, Māori were much more receptive to European influences than the Tongan people, as many had ‘fine intelligent countenances, with the expansive forehead of the philosopher’. By insinuating physical inferiority, colonial powers rectified the need to step in and ‘civilise’ the indigenous populace.

Regarding Ferens’ own interactions with Māori, he worked on the mission station ‘from 9 ½ to 11 ½ or 12, mornings – from 2 ½ to 4 ½ afternoons’, essentially requiring a full-time commitment. He also preached weekly to the Europeans at Waikouaiti and Matanaka (located 4 kilometres further north) under Creed’s guidance and was in partial charge of Māori adults. Creed held primary responsibility for their education, as he possessed superior knowledge of the Māori language and culture. Jennifer Ashton indicates that learning and speaking Māori was a crucial step in an environment where a ‘bullish insistence on European norms would lead to personal failure’. Samuel Marsden, stressed that missionaries should ‘devote as much time as possible to learning the New Zealand language, instructing natives to read and write it, and preparing themselves to deliver the gospel message by the printed words as well as word of mouth’. Ferens heeded this advice, as he prepared to teach in Māori, taking the children for morning and evening prayers, and teaching an English school for them once a week. He made great efforts to learn the language, recognising how well they reacted to Creed’s presence and how they listened intently to his sermons:

I cannot speak it so as to keep up an interesting conversation, I am persuaded to do so I must take to the

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120 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 28 March 1849.
122 Ibid., 400.
123 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 28 March 1849.
Blanket and live amongst them in some other place where the duties are not so many. I am much interested in them, as they have enemies on every hand, and for that reason I will strive to befriend the despised and oppressed.  

Offering to live amongst Māori and ‘befriend the despised and oppressed’ spoke volumes about Ferens’ determination to understand Māori culture and improve their situation, going above and beyond the expectations made of a lay preacher. This comment also reflects his nonconformist sympathy for the ‘subordinated’, a theme which runs through religious history literature, as Dissenters fought for political, social and religious freedom and equality. The intention to hold an ‘interesting conversation’ was no doubt strengthened by Cargill’s earlier remarks about his unintelligibility in communicating with Māori. He further intimated that ‘it is not [enough] merely to know the words, but it requires the mind to drink into the spirit of the Māori’.  

Endeavouring to question them on cultural aspects, Ferens found that they spoke without ‘fear or bashfulness upon [their] customs’. By immersing themselves in Māori culture, Ferens and Creed subscribed to the Methodist ‘indigenisation’ role. Creed even planned to write a history of New Zealand following these close interactions, focussing upon ‘Māori history, mythology, traditions, customs, wars, arts and sciences’ in addition to analysing ‘the modern History and present positions of the NZ’ers (sic) – Advantages and Disadvantages of European Civilisation’. Ferens offered to help write this book, determined to form ‘a more correct knowledge of the ways, manners and habits of them’. He went a step further, however, with his desire to ‘get well grounded in Māori manners … and to be able to turn to good account the knowledge in benefiting them as a people and of proving the superiority of the Māori to

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124 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), March 1850.
125 Stenhouse, “Religion and Society”, 328.
126 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 28 March 1849.
127 Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), August 1848.
128 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 11 June 1849.
129 Referring to a ‘more correct knowledge’ seems to suggest that Ferens interpreted existing sources of information as flawed in some manner. - Ibid.
a European in Knowledge in Virtue and in Skill’, which reflects how he was
reconstructing previously understood notions of the Māori ‘other’. 130 This is a very
significant comment, as it demonstrates that Ferens intended to change the minds of the
wider public, and inspire the re-evaluation of the Māori status as a lesser race. This
commentary suggested an overhaul of accepted norms which defined the European
‘self’ against the Māori ‘other’. It appears then that Ferens and Creed were not
attempting to ‘know’ the other. Rather, they were genuinely interested in both the
preservation of Māori culture in written form and creating a work that portrayed Māori
as people and not savages. This notion is reflected by Ballantyne’s findings that the
Reverends Watkin and Creed ‘consistently individuated social actors and exhibited an
abiding interest in the genealogical connections and social relationships that shaped
these [Māori] communities’, an assertion which suggests that these men were of
honourable intent. 131

It is important to acknowledge that whilst Ferens was undoubtedly interested in
the Māori race and their culture, he retained some Old World prejudices, such as a
distaste for miscegenation. This term refers to those of impure blood, or mixed race
parentage, as they were perceived as leading to the degeneration of the nation as a
whole. 132 Ferens believed that pure blood was an important factor of intelligence and
social graces as, of the 40 children he taught, he decided ‘I would at all times prefer
taking a Māori Boy to learn English, than either European or Half Caste’. 133 He
reiterated his preferences in a letter, commenting ‘I do decidedly prefer the Native
child’. 134 Ferens asserted that the Māori possessed ‘intelligence much superior to any of
our English children’ in learning the alphabet and believed that ‘the future excellencies
(sic) of the race’ lay in an English education, and in ‘the useful arts of civilisation’. 135
Establishing the Māori as his preferred students certainly illustrates Ferens’ changing

130 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 11 June
1849.
131 ‘Individuating’ here refers to treating individuals as people of significance, not generalising
them as ‘Maori’ in their writings. - Tony Ballantyne, Webs of Empire (Wellington, N.Z.: Bridget
132 Freeman, “Attitudes Towards Miscegenation in Canada”, 45.
133 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), December
1848.
134 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 28 March
1849.
135 Ibid.
sensibilities regarding their race, and demonstrates how he judged them based on actual perceived intelligence rather than physiognomic attributes. However, his reaction to ‘half castes’ suggests he did believe in keeping pure blood and the contradiction prevents the historian from judging him as progressive on all fronts. By making such commentary Ferens could have himself been accused of falling into the vices of degeneration, and some may have thought he was ‘going native’ by praising Māori in such a manner.\textsuperscript{136} ‘Going native’ is a term that refers to one abandoning their culture, customs or way of life in favour of those belonging to the ‘native’.\textsuperscript{137} Ferens’ contemporary, German anthropologist Theodore Waitz believed ‘the civilised man, living among savages, relapses after a short time into a state of barbarism which, on that account, we must consider as the primitive condition of man’.\textsuperscript{138} This statement establishes firm divisions between ‘self’ and ‘other’, a form of fearmongering created for the purpose of retaining a power balance between the ‘superior’ colonials and their conquests. To combat such perspectives, Ferens worked tirelessly to convince his family of the advanced position of the Māori, believing them to have a ‘fine noble spirit of independence’ and found that ‘when reproved they feel in a most keen and sensitive manner, that would affect the most austere and frigid spirit’.\textsuperscript{139} This statement is indicative of Ferens’ changing perspective of the ethnic ‘other’, having once described them as ‘barbarians’, he now chose to privilege Māori over Europeans.\textsuperscript{140} He attempted to convince his sister of their progress, presumably so that she might help propagate beneficial stereotypes of Māori abroad, writing that he had ‘many opportunities of seeing into their characters and their different transactions, and have not seen anything dishonourable or deceitful treachery belong to them’.\textsuperscript{141} He further believed that he was

\textsuperscript{136} As an example of ‘going native’, Charles Tripp, a contemporary of Ferens travelled to New Zealand, and when he returned home his fellow villagers looked upon his family as ‘curiosities’ and expected his children ‘to be black’. - Tales of Pioneer Women, Collected by the Women’s Institutes of New Zealand, ed. A.E. Woodhouse (Christchurch and London, 1940), 245 quoted in Harper, “Everything is English”, 44.


\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{140} Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 1848.

\textsuperscript{141} Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), May 1848.
Fearmongering about Māori was common practice, and Ferens’ efforts to convince his family and other potential readers was an important aspect of encouraging their emigration. Influential people like William Hobson viewed Māori habits as ‘so inveterately opposed to those of civilised life, and their practices so repugnant to the Englishmen’ that he must have scarcely hoped to preserve peace with more settlers arriving. Cannibalism was among these ‘repugnant practices’ and was thought by many to be widely practiced. Ferens challenged this assumption:

Don’t imagine that I am prejudiced and that I am speaking or writing in strong terms in their favour, for the more they and their systems are entered into the more they make me ashamed of myself. The system of Cannibalism is founded on natural principles, as they assent in philosophic terms everything eats its fellow – worms, fishes, birds, animals – and why not man eat man?

The use of personal testimony allows for deeper examination of Ferens’ transformative views, as he was encouraged to understand tikanga Māori through the perspective of the ‘other’. Writing in a nonchalanant manner reveals how he was trying to understand the practice and demonstrates an empathetic reaction to the concept of cannibalism. Though, in reality it was not something to be feared under normal circumstances. As Anglican missionary William Yate found, cannibalism was a gesture of brutality in Māori warfare, as opposed to an everyday occurrence. Human flesh was rarely eaten,

142 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 28 March 1849.
143 Hobson was instigator of the Treaty of Waitangi. - Hobson to Russell, 15 October 1840, Great Britain Parliamentary Papers, 1841 (311), 113, quoted in Alan Ward, A Show of Justice: Racial Amalgamation in Nineteenth Century New Zealand (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 58.
144 Sharp, The World, the Flesh & the Devil, 391 - 392 and Harper “Everything is English”, 44.
145 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 11 June 1849.
unless in times of war or on special occasions such as the arrival of prominent visitors.\(^{147}\) Therefore Ferens, and his European contemporaries, were never realistically in any danger.

It is important to understand that, by the time Ferens was writing about the relative peacefulness of Māori, they had already been exposed to ‘the blessings of a peaceful Gospel’, so his experience of intercultural relations was a relatively new progression.\(^{148}\) This idea is reflected in the writing of missionary J.F.H. Wohlers, a German Lutheran. Arriving in the same decade as Ferens, Wohlers believed that New Zealand had a strong missionary presence, and lamented how ‘the mission field was already occupied for a long time past, whilst in other lands the people were dwelling in dark heathendom, without any missionaries at all’.\(^{149}\) He further claimed that the Māori had ‘already given up murder and cannibalisms, and especially all cruel and gross sins which had formerly existed among them as something quite common’.\(^{150}\) By such means, Ferens experienced relatively benign relations with Māori, rendering this study an important contribution to the existing historiography on intercultural exchanges.

**Fatal Decline**

Any examination of Ferens’ contact with Māori must also incorporate a consideration of the fatal decline thesis. This was perhaps the most influential factor for Ferens’ continued devotion to spreading the gospel. The devastation wrought by disease, and the effects of alcohol abuse amongst Māori had led to a notable population decline and fed the belief that the Māori would not survive these products of colonisation.\(^{151}\) Exposure to new diseases proved to be particularly fatal to Māori, including viral

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\(^{148}\) Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 17 August 1850.


\(^{150}\) Wohlers, *Memories*, 103 - 104.

infections, influenza and measles, and ‘old’ world diseases like cholera, typhus, tuberculosis and smallpox. Catharine Coleborne suggests it was common belief that the Māori race was weaker and thus more susceptible to these diseases. It was thought that civilising Māori would provide them with tools for survival, whilst, in reality, uprooting Māori populations had a negative effect upon their health practices. There were some measures taken by settlers to combat the ‘fatal impact’ of smallpox by issuing vaccinations to Māori which, Derek Dow argues, challenges the notion that settlers were resigned to the fact that the race was going to disappear. Though some may have been optimistic about this progression, others, such as Isaac Featherstone, a medical graduate and politician of the 1850s, reported that ‘the Māoris are dying out, and nothing can save them. Our plain duty as good, compassionate colonists is to smooth down their dying pillow. Then history will have nothing to reproach us with’. Ferens conformed to this theory, perceiving conversion as a means of easing the Māori burden, believing ‘they will die – and become an extinct people – despite all the efforts and desires of their friends. The only thing desirable is to lead as many to Heaven as possible’.

James Belich identifies some of the central factors driving this sense of decline as inter-tribal and interracial conflict, which were exacerbated with the introduction of European guns, and depopulation by European disease reducing Māori numbers throughout the nineteenth century. According to Belich, Māori also helped propagate this fatal decline thesis, as exemplified by one spokesperson who believed, ‘our people will be gradually supplanted and exterminated by the Europeans’. This was reportedly a concept shared by others for the purposes of securing European missionary support in particular regions. For example, Ruatara, a chief of the Ngā Puhi tribe,

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153 Ibid, 489.
154 Dow, Māori Health & Government Policy, 48.
155 Walter Buller in New Zealand Journal of Science 2 (1884 - 5), 57, in Dow, Māori Health & Government Policy, 48.
156 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 6 January 1851.
157 Belich, Making Peoples, 156.
158 Unnamed Māori to Ferdinand von Hochstetter, New Zealand: Its Physical Geography, Geology and Natural History (Stuttgart, Germany: J.G Cotta, 1867), 222 in Belich, Making Peoples, 147.
intentionally portrayed his tribal neighbours as dangerous and unpredictable, and urgently requiring the civilising influence of Christianity, in order to secure his own trade with missionaries. The notion of a ‘fatal decline’ also acted as an excuse for the extension of the Empire, as mass deaths left a gap in which ‘agents of virtue’ could ‘step in and save them from the agents of vice by imposing benign empire’. Furthermore, the concept of fatal impact implied that the Europeans were superior, and it was their responsibility to become ‘heirs to the dying’, which echoes Ferens’ and Featherstone’s beliefs.

Ferens identified a further cause for decline in Māori exposure to material goods, such as clothing. Though one would not typically deem it dangerous, Ferens argued that the European clothing Māori chose to wear was much too thin for the climate. They would also wash the clothes only to immediately wear them again, and ‘remain damp and shivering’, consequently contracting hypothermia and sickness. Additionally, Māori suffered from their introduction to tobacco and alcohol, of which Ferens noted that ‘alcoholic liquors have done more to brutalise and destroy them than anything else’. Due to this visible decline, Ferens had further incentive to ‘befriend the oppressed’.

Conclusion

Following the first period of Ferens’ migration experience has exemplified how Ferens began to redefine his perception of ‘self’ and ‘other’. This chapter has highlighted how Ferens’ involvement with Methodism encouraged particular morals and principles, which in turn affected how he perceived his ‘self’ and his duty to spread the gospel. His negative interactions with the Otago leaders and Johnny Jones led him to re-evaluate his sense of ‘other’ based on principles and actions rather than racial differences. Through his occupation as a lay preacher, Ferens learned that Māori were not all barbarians, and

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159 Belich, 147.
160 Ibid., 126.
161 Ibid., 126.
162 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 6 January 1851.
163 Ibid.
he realised that they had been misrepresented by previous settlers and emigration agents’ fearmongering back home. He recognised the fault of their decline lay mostly at the feet of Europeans. He also acknowledged that Europeans were not as superior as it was commonly believed. This chapter charted a significant period of Ferens’ personal development and provided an insight into how he formulated his thoughts, and how he interpreted the actions of others. It also provides a backdrop to explore his future occupational opportunities and how he navigated through these.
Chapter Two

Pastoral Pursuits, 1851 – 1871

Following his lay preaching career, the first major turning point in Ferens’ occupational life, which ultimately boosted his confidence and expanded his repertoire of skills, was his appointment as manager of Charles Suisted’s farming estate in North Otago.

Utilising this new agricultural experience for his own gain, Ferens delved further into the sheep trade, becoming a runholder, managing his own stock, and negotiating the wool export trade. Occupational historians have argued that altered socio-economic prospects improved social mobility, so it is necessary to address how Ferens transitioned into the agricultural sector, and whether this was a successful occupational move.¹

Most importantly, did Ferens’ sense of ‘self’ change with his new occupation? To ascertain the answer to this central question, I have analysed Ferens’ goal to become ‘a practical man – a real colonial in every way’.² In Ferens’ eyes a ‘real colonial’ was self-sufficient and practical. This was a term which, scholars attest, was marketed by the Home countries as successful migrants who became materially independent and competent by embracing the opportunities for agricultural pursuits.³ Personal success in the New World was measured by industry and self-sufficiency rather than the acquisition of material goods.⁴ For males who were forced to migrate due to the lack of opportunities at home, maintaining a masculine image through land ownership and

² Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 19 November 1851.
⁴ Ibid.
working the land was particularly important, as they often carried the stigma of victimisation and emasculation.⁵

Other factors crucial to the formation of Ferens’ identity were his social and familial networks. This chapter will therefore address whether these connections broadened or suffered with his turn to pastoral occupations. And, following on from the previous chapter, it is also necessary to consider any changes in Ferens’ religiosity. Did his prejudice against domineering denominational representatives follow him into his pastoral career?

To explore these issues, this chapter firstly examines how Ferens adjusted to his new job as an estate manager, working under the instruction of a well-established and successful land owner. Secondly, it discusses the challenges associated with Ferens securing his own run and engages with wider societal issues facing agricultural workers at this time, such as the practice of squatting and the formation of the hundreds. This chapter also engages with the ‘real colonial’ concept and establishes the masculine imagery associated with agricultural work. Thirdly, there is an analysis of Ferens’ continuation of religion and the networks he formed in the agricultural sector, to determine whether occupational endeavours affected his sense of ‘self’.

**Estate Manager (1851 – 1855)**

Following his rejection from the Wesleyan Society, Ferens waited only two days to apply to Charles Suisted (Sjöstedt), for a position as an assistant superintendent and manager on his farming estate at Otepopo, North Otago.⁶ Farming was not an entirely new experience for Ferens, as he had been instructed on basic tasks and agricultural

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⁶ Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 19 November 1851. Suisted had squatted on the 50,000 acres of land prior to their establishment as runs. According to some members of the Ngāi Tahu tribe, Ot-e-popo was a literal translation for a mother carrying her child on her back, as Maori perceived the hill to construct a similar imagery. - Dorothy McKenzie, *Otepopo and Herbert Township* (Dunedin, N.Z.: Otago Heritage Books, 1995), 9
practices whilst housed with the Reverend Creed.\(^7\) Creed proved to be a particularly useful reference, as he ‘acted the part of the Father and Friend in conversing upon the talents, powers and capabilities of your Brother Thomas’.\(^8\) This remark demonstrates the close bond these men enjoyed and, due to Creed’s recommendation, Ferens believed he had gained ‘a standing in society and a moral character established’.\(^9\) Once under Suisted’s instruction, Ferens superintended Suisted’s sheep and cattle station at Moeraki, with a steady yearly advance of £40.\(^10\) He did not reveal in his letters home whether this was an increase compared to his lay preaching income, but he still required constant supplies and remittances from his family, suggesting that his profit margin was not great.\(^11\)

Suisted was central to the formation of North Otago. He was the first European to settle near Pleasant River and brought with him wealth and an established workforce which provided the basis for the later Otepopo township.\(^12\) He was only the second Swede to emigrate to New Zealand and stood out in the primarily British society.\(^13\) This statement was also true in the literal sense, as he stood six foot six. Ferens described him as:

Mature … weighing 22 stones – ruddy complexion, and a truly kind and hospitable man. The whole family partakes of the character, hence I am comfortable in good quarters. Being a large man with a large family, in a large house at Goodwood – all that he does is large – thought and

\(^7\) Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 17 April 1851 and 19 November 1851.
\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) Ibid.
\(^10\) Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 30 July - 23 August 1851.
\(^11\) Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 14 January 1855.
speculations are large – and nothing is diminutive with him.\textsuperscript{14}

Suisted was obviously ‘larger than life’ in Ferens’ eyes. Indeed, he was so large that he always took two horses with him on his journeys to share the burden of his weight. His two favourites were Violet and Dick, whom he fed oats from his own silk handkerchief.\textsuperscript{15} It seems Suisted was well known for his hospitable attitude, as S.C. Brees noted Suisted looked and acted the host, whilst Mrs Suisted contributed much to the comfort of the visitors.\textsuperscript{16}

Suisted was a well-known publican at Barrett’s Hotel in Wellington before venturing to the South Island where he purchased 550 acres near Pleasant River.\textsuperscript{17} He named this large property Goodwood, which is today located between Waikouaiti and Palmerston. This purchase was partly financed with salvage money from the wreck of the ship \textit{Tyne} in Wellington harbour.\textsuperscript{18} Suisted also held the Otepopo and Kakanui runs, and Ferens found himself travelling between all three properties to manage the stock.\textsuperscript{19} Suisted employed six Scottish shepherds, in addition to carpenters, sawyers, a shoemaker, a blacksmith, and a brick maker.\textsuperscript{20} With this cohort, he was able to build a solid basis for his run operations. Ferens described the estate as ‘a large run … 60 square miles in area and extent. Horses, cattle, sheep … &c’s of an establishment or Station as they are termed in the Colonies’.\textsuperscript{21} Suisted and Johnny Jones had the largest estates in the area, producing their own crops and hiring labourers on a seasonal basis.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{14}Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, New Zealand) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 16 June 1852.
\textsuperscript{15}McKenzie, \textit{Otepopo and Herbert Township}, 14
\textsuperscript{17}Erik Olssen, \textit{A History of Otago} (Dunedin, N.Z.: McIndoe, 1984), 50.
\textsuperscript{18}Bremner, “Charles Eberhard Suisted: Otago Daily Times Historical Biography”, 20.
\textsuperscript{19}Olssen, \textit{A History of Otago}, 50.
\textsuperscript{20}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21}Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, New Zealand) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 16 June 1852. Suisted also branched out into sheep farming and borrowed £4,000 from Jones to achieve this. - Olssen, \textit{A History of Otago}, 51. In such an isolated society, maintaining ties to neighbours was crucial for these run holders, and despite Miles Fairburn suggesting this was not typical of common society, he admitted that the large estate holders tended to form their own associational networks. - Fairburn, \textit{Ideal Society}, 158.
\textsuperscript{22}Both groupings were subject to the boom and bust trade of wheat, potatoes and oats exported to Australian markets. The later farmers were most often Scottish Presbyterians. - Olssen, \textit{A History of Otago}, 50.
Subsequent farmers in the area operated in a much smaller scale. To extend the size of one’s estate, settlers bought free sections outside of the settlements, which were often referred to as ‘waste lands’. These sections were deemed available for purchase, as they were not observably cultivated by Māori. As the Select Committee for New Zealand reported, ‘unoccupied land … was of no value to them, they were neither a pastoral people nor one living … by the chase’. Māori did not realise however, that they were forfeiting this land, leading to several debates and trials which are still being investigated by the Waitangi Tribunal today. So great was the desire to monopolise these ‘waste lands’ that large estate owners became involved in the practice of ‘squatting’, which essentially blocked others from obtaining the land. Squatters were partial to the use of ‘dummies’ to trick officials, with temporary housing/fencing used to gain pre-emptive rights to property. Their goal was to secure boundaries, and render their holdings more profitable in the long term. Many did not make any improvements on this land, which led settlers to view the practice of squatting, and land monopoly in general, as immoral as well as socially and economically unsound. This issue was so widespread that Crown taxation was threatened from 1863, which encouraged land improvements to be made within a four year period, with the repercussion of land repossession, should these enhancements not be made. Suisted was a member of the Squatter’s Association, and undoubtedly used this tactic to gain more land when he first settled in Otago.

Suisted’s station attracted the first permanent settlers to the Otepopo area. It was not a significantly large population, as the 1856 Electoral Role testifies there were

around 30 settlers in the Northern District and 11 at Otepopo specifically. As women and children were ignored however, the population was probably much larger, especially when one considers how many children each family produced. The Suisteds themselves had 11 surviving children and lived in a luxurious 16 room house. The estates demonstrably attracted workers and in Suisted’s case helped to form the roots of the settlement which still exists today.

Regarding Ferens’ relative inexperience in agriculture, what responsibilities could Suisted entrust him with? It appears that Ferens was involved with a variety of activities. He was assigned to care for and break in all the young horses, drove bullock teams and hunted cattle (locating strays from around the hillsides). His responsibilities also included procuring items for the Mount Station, milking cows and planting crops. He also became involved with sheep shearing, bathing and packing wool. Ferens perceived this transition into farming as a ‘practical’ occupational choice, one befitting of a ‘real colonial’. Widespread adoption of the term ‘real colonial’ signposts how social standing was enhanced by perseverance, as opposed to status symbols, such as fine clothing, grand houses and lavish furniture, resulting in the overturn of Old World values. As Alfred Saunders, a contemporary of Ferens, wrote ‘[those] who have not learned to work, soon lose all their money or property in the colony, while those of steady habits, who can work, are pretty sure to rise to the position of employers’. Essentially, perseverance and the acquisition of new skills and mobility within the workforce led to personal advancement in the socio-economic sphere. Jim McAloon similarly indicates that the South Island rural wealthy were generally hard working and productive, often of humble origins, and suggests that as long as migrants stuck to the principles of business, investment, thrift and hard work they could be socially mobile.

30 Bremner, “Charles Eberhard Suisted: Otago Daily Times Historical Biography”, 16 - 17. (This statistic included Ferens himself, although by this time he owned his own run further north).
31 Bremner, “Charles Suisted”, 132.
32 Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 19 November 1851 and 16 June 1852.
33 Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 19 November 1851.
34 Ibid.
35 Fairburn, Ideal Society, 42 - 44, 70 - 72.
36 A. Saunders, New Zealand, its Climate, Soil, Natural and Artificial Productions, Animals, Birds and Insects, Aboriginal and European Inhabitants, etc. (London, 1868), 46 quoted in Fairburn, Ideal Society, 66.
Ferens’ noted this expectation soon after arrival to New Zealand, observing that colonists had to expect socio-economic changes, as each settlement possessed its own peculiarities, which determined how migrants formed their livelihoods.\textsuperscript{38} Regarding his own social position, Ferens believed he was ‘heeled as a gentleman’, despite being of a humble background.\textsuperscript{39} He did not elaborate as to who might have thought this, but insisted that he would not let this status reflect upon his work ethics: ‘you know my character too well – to think that wise [to] divert my mind from doing my duty ... I never allow any man to say “come do something” whilst here’.\textsuperscript{40} With this self-restraint, Ferens assumed control and independence from the other workers, and henceforth emulated the ‘real colonial’ role. Arguably, he wished to use his time wisely and learn as many applicable skills as possible before venturing out on his own and saw these requests from others as unnecessary distractions.

During this early period, Ferens believed he would remain a bachelor, and feared he would be driven mad with loneliness and lack of intimacy. He firmly believed that ‘a colonist must have a wife’.\textsuperscript{41} Remaining single would then, by interpretation, mean that he would not fulfil his goal of becoming a ‘real colonial’. Fortunately for Ferens, his time at Goodwood was cemented with his marriage to Margaret Westland in October 1854. He requested the Reverend William Kirk (Creed’s replacement at Waikouaiti) travel specially to preside over their wedding, which was the first European marriage in North Otago.\textsuperscript{42} Westland was only sixteen years of age, whilst Ferens was thirty-two. They most likely met six years prior, onboard the \textit{John Wickliffe} (see figure 3). From this point onwards, Ferens’ family grew, with 10 of their 14 children surviving until adulthood. Interestingly, Margaret was born in Glasgow, Scotland, so presumably she was of a different denomination to Ferens. Although evidence of her religion is currently unlocatable, she presumably converted to Methodism after marrying Ferens, as she took part in his preaching sermons by accompanying him with singing.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{38} Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), July 1853.
\textsuperscript{39} Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 19 November 1851.
\textsuperscript{40} Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 19 November 1851.
\textsuperscript{41} Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 14 January 1855.
\textsuperscript{42} McKenzie, \textit{Otepopo and Herbert Township}, 14.
\textsuperscript{43} As his eldest son William Henry recorded ‘my mother used to lead the singing as she had a very good voice’ – quoted in “50 Years of Methodism in North Otago”, \textit{Oamaru Mail}, 30 August 1913.
Runholding (1855 – 1871)

Runs are large high-country farms, which house sheep and cattle.⁴⁴ During Ferens’ time, a run could be any size, but was limited in size to no more than 25,000 sheep under the Otago Land Regulations of 1856.⁴⁵ As such, the limiting factors were sufficient labour, sheep, the need for shepherds where there were no fences, and the obligation to stock the run according to the terms in the runholder’s individual licence.⁴⁶ Ferens’ run, which

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he acquired in 1856, was the largest in North Otago (in the 1850s).\textsuperscript{47} Despite its overall size, his land was inferior, with much being unusable, hilly terrain, when compared to that of his neighbours, who became more prominent in the early runholding community by possessing smaller, more numerous and more useable tracts of land for their sheep. Among these men were William Teschemaker and Edward Bland Atkinson. Teschemaker (another Englishman) was one of the most prominent sheep farmers in North Otago and the first to build a home station in that region.\textsuperscript{48}

Ferens’ commentary confirms that he was a significant land owner, for: ‘in the term “Run” you will understand that it consists from 5000 to 50000, just as the claimant may require – I require one of 30000 acres in order to give me full scope for my own stock & those in my charge for grazing and increase’.\textsuperscript{49} The same year he purchased his run, his sister Mary Anne passed away, making it a tumultuous time to take on so much responsibility. Despite this psychological setback, Ferens persevered.\textsuperscript{50} He named his run ‘Stotfold’, after an area of Durham where his cousins lived.\textsuperscript{51} It was ‘an irregular, narrow and somewhat inaccessible block north of the Kakanui River’.\textsuperscript{52} This naming suggests Ferens might have been reminded of home in terms of the scenery, or that he wished to represent some part of his past in the New World. Notwithstanding the irregularity in Stotfold’s shape, Ferens and Teschemaker possessed the most sheep in the North Otago region in 1859, with around 4,800 each. By 1864 Ferens had surpassed Teschemaker and possessed 12,150 sheep whilst the latter had only 10,500. Atkinson was only just behind the frontrunners with 10,000 sheep.\textsuperscript{53} Although this early lead in stock numbers promised better things to come, runholding was subject to boom and bust, and depended upon the stock market in Australia.

\textsuperscript{47} Its official name was Run 134. - Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{48} Teschemaker, in 1860, was also a representative for the Northern District in the Provincial Council, making him a well-known figure in the Oamaru community - Scotter, \textit{Run Estate and Farm}, 3 and \textit{“Superintendents of Otago”}, \textit{Cyclopedia of New Zealand [Otago and Southland Provincial Districts]} (Christchurch, N.Z.: Cyclopedia Company Limited, 1905), 32.
\textsuperscript{49} Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), August 1856.
\textsuperscript{50} Ferens wrote extensively of how the loss affected him. - Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to John Oliver Wood (East Rainton, Durham), August 1856.
\textsuperscript{51} Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham) to Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago), 14 November 1851.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{53} Scotter, \textit{Run, Estate and Farm} 10.
One of Ferens’ major concerns was infectious sheep diseases such as scab. Scab was particularly bad in New Zealand during these early years of large scale farming, as farmers had to innovate ways to dip and wash their sheep. This process was difficult for smaller scale runholders, as they could not afford to build sheep dips. Ferens became embroiled in such troubles in 1865, when he was forced to pay £100 for 4,000 scabby sheep found on his run. This punishment arose because, as early as 1849, a Scab Ordinance was passed to control the import of scabby sheep from Australia, and sheep inspectors could order infected flocks to be slaughtered (which could, in effect, bankrupt affected stock owners). Fortunately for Ferens, he was granted conditions to clean the flock, as opposed to disposing of them entirely.

In North Otago many runs were in close proximity, and often did not possess sufficient fencing, which led to several disagreements and judicial trials to solve remuneration issues. For example, Ferens sued Julius Saunders Jeffreys for £50, as his cattle ‘came into the possession of the defendant’ and was then utilised for personal gain. The immediate concern of the runholder was fencing property to protect stock. The Otago Fencing Ordinance of 1867 dealt with fencing issues, referring to the use of broom, gorse, rail and thorn and the ditch and bank fence. Certain acts within this Ordinance still apply today, such as halving construction costs between neighbours.

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56 “Resident Magistrate’s Court: Prosecutions Under Scab Act”, North Otago Times, 10 August 1865.
58 “Resident Magistrate’s Court: Prosecutions Under Scab Act”, North Otago Times, 10 August 1865.
60 This was before the widespread use of no.4 wire – “An Act to Validate Certain Provincial Acts and Ordinances Also to Give Force of Law to Certain Bills Passed by the Provincial Legislatures and Disallowed by the Governor [10th October 1867] Second Schedule: An Act to Consolidate and Amend the Laws Relating to Fencing Within the Province, [Assented to 11 June 1867]”, New Zealand Victoriae Regine, no. 79 Anneo Tricesimo Primo, 603, accessed 16 April 2017, http://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/hist_act/tpava186731v1867n79416.pdf, 15.
61 Ibid., 5.
sufficient fencing materials were unattainable, runholders relied upon the use of shepherds, who were expected to guard the borders of the property day and night.62

Important political figures, such as Edwin Gibbon Wakefield perceived squatting (practiced by many large scale runholders, such as Suisted) as socially irresponsible. To circumnavigate this issue, settlement leaders focussed on the promotion smaller tracts of land, to enable families and workers to settle in agriculturally rich areas.63 The land policy of ‘hundreds’ was declared to allow small farmers to establish a life for themselves on these blocks of arable land.64 Prior to 1869 no compensation or proper notice was given to those runholders whose leases were terminated by the hundreds.65 The Otago Witness propagated the rights of the runholder (despite the editor’s support for smaller agricultural properties), believing:

Throwing open large tracts of land beyond what there is an actual demand for, tends rather to hinder than to advance agricultural progress, by tempting settlers to spot themselves in isolated positions, instead of settling in masses and where their combined labours would produce much greater results.66

The editor made a valid point, for land like Ferens’ was located many miles from the town centre, a distance which would hinder the practicality of smaller scale farming. By 1870 - 1871 most declared hundreds had only 2,000 - 4,000 acres remaining to be sold, all except the Kakanui hundred which had 22,500 acres. Fortunately for the North

63 G.C. Hensley, 31 - 32 quoted in Department of Conservation, 59.
64 Aptly named for the ability to sustain one hundred families - McIntyre, 94. Settlers of Scottish descent were the most likely to fear this accumulation of capital, for, as the Otago Witness explained, war ‘has been fiercely raged in the Highlands of Scotland between the small agriculturalist and the large sheep farmer’. Lowland Scots were particularly drawn to the Otago region, and sought to establish themselves and secure their economic independence on these hundreds. - Editorial, “The Pastoral Interest”, Otago Witness, 4 December 1858, quoted in Herries Beattie, Early Runholding in Otago (Otago, N.Z.: Otago Daily Times and Witness Newspapers Co. Ltd. 1947), 9; Brad Patterson, Tom Brooking and Jim McAlloon, Unpacking the Kists: The Scots in New Zealand (Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press; Dunedin, N.Z.: Otago University Press, 2013), 23, and McKenzie, Otepopo and Herbert Township, 25.
65 Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 13.
Otago runholders, monopolists still had permission to buy up the hundreds if they did not sell, and Ferens took such an opportunity during the sale of the Kakanui hundred, alongside his neighbours E.B. Atkinson and W.H. Teschemaker.  

A pastoralist was typically regarded as a ‘picturesque figure – nearly always a gentleman immigrant, a man of education, hospitable on his home station, a man of the world in his city club, a hard worker and a sportsman’. Although, arguably, Ferens did possess some elements of this description, W.H. Scotter deduced that Ferens depended too much upon Atkinson, and possessed no social pretensions. This was a harsh deduction, considering how active Ferens remained with the church and encouraged his workers to attend local services.  

W.H. Scotter postulated that Ferens’ workers at Stotfold Station probably numbered more than the two or three at Atkinson’s neighbouring Clifton Falls property (see figure 4). Ferens also employed a Māori woman, who appears to have gone by the name Kooti or Sarah Ellen Smith, and had originally helped Mrs Atkinson around the house. As soon as Ferens’ severely ill daughter, Maria, was weaned she was given to Smith’s charge, but unfortunately died in childhood from some form of inflammation. Smith died just one month later and was buried alongside Maria, an act which signified continued intercultural relations between Ferens and Māori. Burying Māori and Europeans together was somewhat common, as, according to Stephen Deed, early European settlers located outside of the main townships, until at least the 1860s, often made use of Māori urupā (burial ground). By the 1850s Christian influences had begun to affect Māori burial practices, which in turn may have influenced the decision to bury Smith and Maria together. Deed does not, however, detail whether it was usual for Māori workers to be buried alongside their employer’s family, so presumably, this

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67 Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 15.
68 Ibid., 17.
69 Ibid., 17.
71 Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 19.
72 W.H. Ferens in Ferens family records, transcribed by Gayle Prescott, 4 January 1991 and Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 19.
74 Ibid., 80.
case was quite striking and indicative of the closeness of the relationships Ferens formed with Māori, even outside of the lay preaching sphere.

Figure 4
The Old Home - Stotfold Station, near Oamaru; 1856; photograph.
Source: North Otago Early Settlers’ Association Collection, Waitaki District Archive 3592P

Networks and Independence

To return to the central theme of Ferens’ sense of self, it is necessary to examine whether Ferens’ personal networks broadened with his change of occupation from lay preacher to runholder. This concept is important to explore because networks form part of one’s identity, shaping how they present themselves to others and how they fit into wider society. Miles Fairburn suggests that the ‘vast amount of labour’ required to attain independence in the colony resulted in minimal social networks.75 Developing on this, he asserts that the term ‘neighbour’ was merely a geographical construction, as opposed to a social one.76 Consequently, people were more likely to visit each other for

75 Fairburn, Ideal Society, 158, 168.
76 Ibid.
a specific purpose, such as sharing news or gossip, as opposed to random social calls. Driven by the need for self-reliance, he argues that neighbourly ties were most likely not a primary expectation of migrants. Fairburn buttresses his thesis by referring to the mobility required of migrants in professions such as sawing and gum digging, that restricted the development of social ties beyond a superficial level. Ferens’ experience, however, proves an exception to Fairburn’s atomisation thesis, as he maintained close ties to his English neighbour E.B. Atkinson. Atkinson had been a Customs Service Clerk in England, and reportedly continued employment under provisional administrators in Dunedin. Onboard the John Wickliffe, he had been storekeeper for the ship’s passengers, in charge of rationing the food and handing out other provisions. Ferens was his assistant, which undoubtedly sparked their long running friendship. Atkinson’s duties continued on arrival to Dunedin, as he was in charge of the Company stores for two years before turning his hand to sheep farming. Ferens was heavily dependent on Atkinson for support during his early years as a runholder, utilising his ties as a neighbour, but also as a relative and good friend, to stay at Clifton Falls for a year whilst the Waste Land Board fixed the boundaries around his run. They remained very close throughout the 1856 - 1871 period, eating meals together and attending religious services in Atkinson’s dining room (as there was not yet an established church for the area). Atkinson was an Anglican, which demonstrates that Ferens did not take issue with those of other religious orientations, so long as they were men of principle and strong moral standing.

Ferens also maintained close ties with Atkinson’s wife, Margaret (nee Westland). She and her brothers, William and George, brought their orphaned ten year old niece, also named Margaret Westland (later Ferens’ wife) to Otago on board the John Wickliffe. Presumably, Atkinson and the elder Margaret Westland began forming ties whilst at sea, as they married in 1849, just one year after arrival. Young Margaret

78 Fairburn, Ideal Society, 171.  
79 Ibid., 172.  
80 Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 4.  
81 Ibid.  
82 Roberts, Place Names, 14. Boarding with Atkinson also allowed or Ferens house to be built by W.B. Scandrett, later mayor of Invercargill – Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 18.  
83 Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 20.  
lived with the newly wed Atkinsons until her aunt and uncles all fell victim to tuberculosis in 1850, 1852 and 1853 respectively. She married Ferens the following year.

A further aspect of Fairburn’s thesis is the argument that ties formed on the voyage would disintegrate after arrival due to the migrant drive for independence. Olssen’s findings of working class men in Caversham conform to this thesis, as the men kept a ‘minimal framework of associations’. It is debateable, however, whether they ‘left behind mutualism and cooperation either during their voyage or due to their experiences in the New World’. Ferens’ experience contradicts Fairburn’s and Olssen’s observations, as he proved that ties could be maintained after arrival. During the voyage interpersonal relationships were important to Ferens, as he did not have a familial network for emotional support. He relied on a small social group who were, in these early stages of settlement, crucial to Ferens’ emotional well-being. The friends he made in E.B. Atkinson, Henry Monson (Methodist Gaoler) and a few others comprised his only connections until he met with Creed at Waikouaiti, and he maintained contact with these men throughout his life.

To help contradict feelings of isolation during the 1840s – 1860s, seasonal workers, who were required to remain geographically mobile, started their own families to keep them company. Emigration agent, Charles Hursthouse, believed that a wife and children would always provide company, for ‘these are his nearest and dearest friends, and these always go with him’. Based on Fairburn’s research, those with larger families created a surrogate society in which the members were able to satisfy needs for companionship, material welfare and recreation. Having many children also aided men who needed labourers but did not have the money to fund such a venture. It is not clear whether Ferens also exploited the availability of his children in his run operations, but one would assume that they were expected to help in some capacity.

85 Fairburn, Ideal Society, 171 - 172.
86 This analysis was regarding the later part of the century but still acts as a representative model. - Olssen, Building the New World, 160.
87 Thomas Ferens (Dunedin, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 1848.
88 Fairburn, Ideal Society, 198.
90 Fairburn, Ideal Society, 198.
91 Ibid., 94.
Once starting a family of his own, Ferens’ correspondence became remarkably more positive in tone, and he tended to ask less frequently about the tidings of those who remained in England. This shift suggests that the acquisition of new, and immediate, familial networks helped acculturate the migrant faster.

Ferens also retained his ties to Māori, despite his new occupational and geographical circumstances. This network did not take the traditional form, as he was invited to lecture at the new Mechanic’s Institute on the subject of ‘The Māoris and Their Traditions, Historical and Mythological’. At his first lecture he attracted a crowd of over sixty people. Ferens’ lecture offers some insight into his continued intercultural relations, as he had ‘mixed much with them since [leaving the lay preaching profession]’. He maintained his genuine interest in presenting Māori culture, in a way which remained respectful, as opposed to a European drive to ‘know’ the indigenous ‘other’. In his lecture he claimed that the ‘present race of Māoris were very different to the Māoris of a few generations ago’, which focussed, for the most part, upon knowledge production and lost traditions. He asserted that despite the darker aspect of Māori culture, such as tribal warfare, they were ‘further advanced in many matters than many persons were aware of’, particularly regarding astronomy, arithmetic and criminal punishment. The content of this lecture suggests that he wanted to influence others to change their perspectives about the Māori character, without openly sharing his opinion that they were in fact superior ‘in knowledge and skill’. He was aware that the wider populace was not yet ready to hear his deeper insights on the subject.

92 Here referring to return correspondence from William Henry, which reveals that the focus of their writing was more on economic issues than Ferens’ concern about his wider circle of friends. Although, it should be noted that reasons for this shift may have been because William was less inclined to engage in gossip than Mary Anne had been. William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Stotfold Station, New Zealand) November 1856 – 10 March 1875.

93 “Mr Ferens’ Lecture”, North Otago Times, 30 July 1867.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.
Maintenance of Religion

Despite changing occupation, Ferens remained dedicated to the mission cause. One driving factor was his belief that religion was regarded as a ‘secondary thing altogether by the majority of the people out here, the absorbing question is the “thoughts of the morrow” and the accruing of Wealth & Station – Land, Cattle & Sheep … the principle sources from whence the means of many receive their funds of support & c’. Ferens took no such liberties in his own observation of religion, as his sense of ‘self’ was intimately tied to his belief and principles. He sought to encourage others to do the same by inviting ministers and travelling preachers to Stotfold Station, where his workers and those of neighbouring runs could congregate. His intention was to support and reinforce their mental and spiritual wellbeing. Services were also held at Atkinson’s large dining room at his neighbouring property, Clifton Falls, with a combination of Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodists ministers invited to preach there. In 1863, Ferens arranged for the Wesleyan minister, Reverend Henry Flamank, to hold divine services in North Otago, his stipend guaranteed by run holders in the district. Ferens also conducted his own services in his woolshed at Stotfold Station, which were ‘much appreciated’ in the isolated countryside. William Henry, Ferens’ eldest son, asserted that ‘the family and the men or others on the station were expected to attend’.

Ferens was perhaps overzealous in his intention to promote Methodist belief, as some of his workers who were of differing denominations felt that they were unable to seek out their own ministers, a restriction worsened by their distance from the township. Three of these workers requested the presence of Presbyterian Minister, Reverend Charles Connor, without first asking Ferens’ permission. Ferens did not take kindly to those who threatened Methodist influences and did not respond well to the Reverend Connor encroaching upon his place of worship (located on private property),

97 Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), August 1856.
98 “New Advertisements”, Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter, 8 September 1864.
99 Reportedly it contained an eighteen by fourteen-foot dining table. Atkinson also purchased an old barrel organ from the English Church in Dunedin for hymn singing. – Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 20.
100 Roberts, Place Names, 14.
101 Ibid.
102 “50 Years of Methodism in North Otago”, Oamaru Mail, 30 August 1913.
103 “Open Column”, Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter, 15 September 1864.
which demonstrates continuity of ‘self’. Ferens was understandably incensed by the situation and decided to publish the details of this religious encroachment in the local newspaper. Presumably he wanted to gain public sympathy for his noble efforts to establish religious services and moral support on his station. Ferens argued that Connor and lay preacher, Mister Ryley, had entered his property with the express purpose of undermining his Methodist support for his workers. He believed his workers were:

supplied with Gospel privileges, and my people full permission to attend them, and get all the good they can, and are not called upon to renounce their conscientious views, that when they go away from me to do all the good they can … How would you like me, or any one else, to go direct to your established congregation and preach?106

The Reverend Connor was allegedly surprised that the matter had been made public and asserted that they had the right to preach to fellow Presbyterians within the confines of their own properties, even though the workers lived on Ferens’ land. Connor also reported that the head shepherd, John Oliver, had referred to Ferens as a ‘ despotic tyrant’, and was greatly affronted by the lack of religious freedom. Using this accusation, Connor demanded ‘who gave Mr Ferens the right to exercise lordship over the consciences of the Presbyterians, and to compel them to be satisfied with the ministrations “enjoyed by himself.”’107 Both debaters had well-reasoned arguments, and the matter appears to have quietened down following Connor’s response. Scotter reported that others had also complained of Connor’s presence, as he had ‘spoilt friendly relationships between churches’ and ‘almost split his own congregation’, which suggests he was a particularly inflammatory character and most likely entered Ferens’ property with the intention of rousing this debate.108

104 His conflict with Burns and Cargill discussed in chapter one demonstrated his proclivity to defend Methodism’s place in society.
105 “New Advertisements”, Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter, 8 September 1864.
106 Ibid.
107 “Open Column”, Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter, 15 September 1864.
108 Ibid. Interestingly Oliver’s son later became a Methodist minister, perhaps due to Ferens’ early influence - Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 20.
109 “Open Column”, Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter, 15 September 1864.
110 Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 20.
Ferens’ continued devotion to Methodism is further reflected by his primary responsibility for the establishment of the Methodist church in North Otago (1863), and his invitation to the Reverend Isaac Harding to hold the first Methodist service in Oamaru. Harding was described as possessing ‘excellent qualities as a preacher and organiser, he laid broad and deep the foundations of Methodism wherever he went’. In that first service, held at Stotfold Station, Harding baptised seven children, including one of Ferens’, and preached the first Methodist sermon in the Oamaru township. Ferens also acted as key contributor towards purchasing land for a church on Hull Street in Oamaru, which opened in 1864. He donated £25 towards securing the site and presumably donated towards the actual building of the church which cost £450. Ferens was among the first to preach there, which proved his significance in the Methodist community. This was the first church established in Oamaru of any denomination, making it significant piece of Oamaru’s history. Reportedly, the whole township attended the opening soiree, and within a short time new converts became local preachers.

Ferens’ dedication to Methodism was also reflected in his efforts to keep Oamaru included in the Dunedin Methodist Circuit. He succeeded in this venture and he reportedly ‘never failed to attend the quarterly meeting, and indeed occasionally took preaching appointments in Dunedin itself’, despite the distance to Dunedin. It is obvious that Ferens went above and beyond the responsibilities expected of most Methodists, and this discussion has revealed how his missionary drives strengthened over time with the ability to divest his money in religious ventures. This dedication also influenced his rise in social hierarchy, as he had transitioned from an isolated farmer to an Oamaru socialite, as is reflected by the sentiment that Ferens was a man ‘to whom Otago Methodism owes a deep dept of gratitude’.

111 Ibid., 19 - 20.
112 “50 Years of Methodism in North Otago”, Oamaru Mail, 30 August 1913.
113 ibid.
114 Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 20.
115 “50 Years of Methodism in North Otago”, Oamaru Mail, 30 August 1913, 7.
116 Scotter, Run, Estate and Farm, 20.
117 “50 Years of Methodism in North Otago”, Oamaru Mail, 30 August 1913, 7.
118 He took one such appointment in the absence of Reverend Taylor at the Wesleyan Church - Ibid. and Editorial, Oamaru Times & Waitaki Reporter, 24 May 1867.
119 Ibid.
Experiences of a ‘Real Colonial’

Although Ferens did not learn as much as he had hoped from Suisted, it was enough to make ends meet on his own farm, and further his opportunities as a ‘real colonist’. Ferens knew it would not be an easy road to take by any means, observing:

Many many things has a Colonist to contend with. An inventive Genius finds full play for his faculties here. Without the proper materials for certain works – that which is on the ground, however foreign the object – must be used to surmount the present difficulty.

Referring to oneself as an ‘inventive Genius’ paints a clear picture of how Ferens considered his skills and abilities had developed since arrival and suggests that he had become quite self-sufficient. This type of commentary differs significantly from his sense of dependence on his family and others close to him that was mentioned in the previous chapter.

Ferens’ sense of becoming a ‘real colonial’ conformed to the contemporary belief that independence and economic autonomy strengthened one’s masculine qualities. Autonomy was a particularly prominent goal amongst Scottish settlers, who actively sought the creation of the hundreds system in New Zealand, to enable land ownership for working class migrants. This goal was furthered by men like John McKenzie (active during the same period as Ferens), who wanted more grazing areas for small farmers and achieved this with the support of local Scots Presbyterians. Emigration agents specifically targeted agricultural labourers, like the Scots, as they were the most likely migrants to possess the physical adaptability required for cultivation of the new settlement. Jock Phillips observes that there was a respect for

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120 Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), August 1856.
121 Ibid.
122 Olssen, Building the New World, 165.
123 Tom Brooking, Lands for the People?, 43, 165.
those migrants who displayed physical dexterity and ‘muscular performance’. With his new occupation Ferens’ began to identify himself among these masculine men, and expected this to impress his family back home. This is reflected by his in-depth discussion of the wide range of duties and challenges associated with living in the rugged landscape. His commentary makes it clear that physical work was an impressive feat and serves to evidence that men of ‘pluck and patience’ would succeed and that ‘any man can do anything, and that any man does do anything’. Supporting this contemporary thinking, Phillips defines the most valuable settlers as those who were considered a ‘Jack of all trades’, essentially those who could adapt new skill sets as demand required. Although Ferens did not set out to be an agricultural labourer he succeeded in learning practical skills, and from the tone of his writing it is clear that he was proud of what a formerly ‘anxious’ and ‘dependent’ man had achieved. He boasted about his new farming attire: ‘can you imagine then a stout and squarely framed man … a blue flannel shirt with a leather belt & brass buckle of about 2 inches broad – fastened around his waist – and cored trousers – speaking with … the language of bullock’. Insinuating that he had learned to communicate with bullock teams certainly suggests that he felt himself to be a true, masculine, farmer. Conceptualisation of masculinity is also reflected in the need to be self-sufficient, and Ferens exemplifies this with his fixation to repay his brother-in-law with interest. He asserted that ‘Thomas is unchangeable in principles, stern & upright in all his doings with men & things’, a comment which conveyed Ferens’ drive to become economically independent.

New Zealand was marketed as a country full of opportunities for working men to become materially independent, and gain a ‘competency’, which was perceived as of equal importance to owning capital. The colony was advertised as an Arcadia, and contemporary literature suggested that as long as one worked hard and kept his wits and

\[125\] Ibid., 17.
\[126\] Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 30 July 1853
\[129\] Ibid.
\[130\] Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 14 January 1855.
\[131\] Fairburn, *Ideal Society*, 42 - 44.
morals he would succeed, as personal worth was based on a hardworking attitude.\textsuperscript{132} New Zealand was considered to be an Arcadia because it offered enough land and natural resources to support equal opportunities for all migrants. It aimed to be a classless society, where even poorer migrants could work their way up through discipline and strong work ethic.\textsuperscript{133} As Ferens described it: ‘imagine freedom – yea in health, mind & body – a boom, an indescribable, invaluable thing – “natural abundance.”’\textsuperscript{134} Erik Olssen explores this Acadian promotion, identifying access to land, shortages of labour, and the primacy of physical strength and skills on the frontier as a means to support equality.\textsuperscript{135} Some sense of egalitarianism also arose from the opportunities for education, because it ‘flattened out the contours of relative occupational and status gradations’ and rewarded migrants based on ‘merit, ambition, hard work, rather than pre-existing rigid social structures of wealth, seniority, sex, race and kinship’.\textsuperscript{136} Ferens was particularly invested in this ‘meritocracy system’, and, asserted that all should expect to work hard upon arrival and none should leave their home country with ‘false Notions by expecting to live the life of Gentlemen & Ladies!’\textsuperscript{137} As such, equality did not necessarily result in riches and capital so much as it did greater individual worth.\textsuperscript{138} Personal merits were based upon working ethics and principles, and immediate luxury would not await them, for:

\begin{quote}
  everything must be had by Manual labour in order to get any comfort … you must be reliant upon your own Genius – Strength & Capital … every Individual – Respectable or Poor, Gentleman or Mechanic – must prepare to encounter a vast amount of labour. Toil, Industry, Patience and Perseverance must be the Motto … allow necessity to be
\end{quote}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 51. \\
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{134} Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 16 June 1852. \\
\textsuperscript{135} Olssen, \textit{A History of Otago}, 38. \\
\textsuperscript{136} Nolan, “Constantly on the Move, But Going Nowhere?”, 368. \\
\textsuperscript{137} Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 18/24 October 1850 and Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 30 July 1853. \\
\textsuperscript{138} Although, for those elite members of society (like Johnny Jones and Charles Suisted), success in their societal tier was still fed by access to Old World capital and education - Fairburn, \textit{Ideal Society}, 51, and Olssen, \textit{A History of Otago}, 38.
\end{flushleft}
the teacher. Be Frugal, Diligent, Industrious & Hospitable.

These 4 points constitute a true Colonial.¹³⁹

As it can be deduced from this commentary, Ferens wholly ascribed to contemporary marketing of New Zealand’s ‘natural abundance’ and attempted to encourage other family members to immigrate. So fortuitous was Ferens’ experience in becoming self-sufficient, and overcoming his prior sense of worthlessness, that he was ready to accept a New Zealand identity, ‘for the Southern World’s my Home! The Scene of future struggles, of Sorrows & Happiness! The sepulline (sic) of the earthly atoms!!’ (see figure 5).¹⁴⁰

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¹³⁹ Fairburn, *Ideal Society*, 51 and Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 18/24 October 1850.

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 16 January 1850.
As it was intimated in the previous chapter, Ferens was highly self-reflective, and took care to accurately present his experiences, thoughts and opinions to his correspondents. This was a skill which only seems to have strengthened with his occupational transition. In his words:

Self is the controlling & predominating power that moves and actuates the man out in these parts, on everything and on every subject all derive to be independent and affluent either as graziers or merchants or some other line that will suit the moment … Men in the colonies are wide-awake for doing business and seizing opportunities to gain the penny … this is a business spirit – and if spirit is pursuit of business – the business must be a spirited one … there men rise or fall – fall and rise.\textsuperscript{141}

This commentary conforms to the thesis that independence and self-sufficiency led to personal success, and the growth of social worth. Hence, following his own advice to engage with the business spirit, Ferens had purchased his own run. In the spirit of business, Ferens was also one of the first to introduce draught stock to North Otago in the 1860s. He entered agricultural shows, in which his horses Hero, Goldendrop, Valliant and Monarch won prizes, a feat which Margaret Westland describes as one of Ferens’ greater accomplishments.\textsuperscript{142} He was also the first to introduce blood horses to the region, with his horse Fergus winning first prize in 1864.\textsuperscript{143} Similarly, he was the first to introduce draught stock (Clydesdales and Timor breeds of high quality) to the North Otago district.\textsuperscript{144}

In spite of his new-found independence, Ferens suffered at the hands of the stock trade, a market which had always been subject to boom and bust periods. In 1871,

\textsuperscript{141} Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 30 July 1853.
\textsuperscript{142} “Stock Notices”, \textit{North Otago Times}, 15 September 1864, and Margaret Ferens to William Henry Ferens, Saturday 4th [1897?].
\textsuperscript{143} “Entire Horses”, \textit{Otago Witness}, 25 November 1864.
\textsuperscript{144} His horses were descended from “Prince Royal” which appears to have been a superior horse of strong breeding. – “Commercial Horse Bazaar”, \textit{Otago Daily Times}, 12 September 1862. The assertion that he was the first was made in his obituary in Editorial, \textit{Oamaru Mail}, 9 June 1888.
he was among a handful of runholders who found their stock spiralling down in value, dropping from a worth of 16 pence to just 3 in some cases.\textsuperscript{145} Many had banks foreclose on them, unable to cover financial losses in the market which led to several changes of hands. E.B. Atkinson was among those affected but managed to maintain some sections of land.\textsuperscript{146} Ferens’ chosen stock and station company, Dalgetys & Co., foreclosed Stotfold and sold it to Philip Oakden and his partner, M.I. Browne, who consequently changed the name to Tapui.\textsuperscript{147} With this bankruptcy, Ferens was forced to consider a future outside of his accustomed social and occupational sphere.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined how Ferens’ life changed for the better with his appointment as manager of Charles Suisted’s estate. This career change led to greater self-confidence and practical knowledge that he would later use on his own run. This chapter also explored the land disputes, and the creation of the hundreds. With this background, we can better understand the environment which Ferens found himself working in, and the ties he formed with the land. Ascending to the position of runholder, Ferens intimated that he had become a ‘real colonial’. This sentiment proved exceedingly important to contemporary migrants. Success was reflected by perseverance, and by emphasising this goal, migrants demonstrated an intense desire to fit into their new society and sustain their livelihood in a self-sufficient manner. With the help of his wife, Margaret, Ferens also gained a family to support him, which greatly improved the state of his mental health and sense of self-worth. This chapter also highlighted how Ferens’ religious devotion continued, despite entering a new occupational field. By financially backing the establishment of local churches and supporting the religious needs of his workers through preaching, his religiosity was publicly recognised. With the strong support of fellow Methodists within the community, Ferens also gained the confidence to speak against those he found threatening to his religion.

\textsuperscript{145} Scotter, \textit{Run, Estate and Farm}, 16.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 23. It still operates under this name today.
1871 – 1888 was one of the most challenging periods for Ferens, as he encountered economic struggles and strained workplace relationships. In the face of his bankruptcy, it was necessary for the family to move into the Oamaru township, rather than live on the outskirts. The move would have been beneficial for them all, with the eldest children ready to start work and families of their own, and the younger ones to continue schooling in the township. They purchased a ‘substantially built 6 - roomed cottage’ with a two acre section, on Main North Road, a quarter mile from the town boundary. Oamaru was, by this time, a considerably large township, reaching 5,098 inhabitants in 1879. The 1870s heralded financial decline for the whole Oamaru township; many businesses were forced to shut down, property values declined, and the building boom ceased. It is in this climate that Ferens sought to re-establish his social and economic prospects and undertook multiple occupational avenues to achieve this.

As a ‘real’ colonial, being malleable and learning new skills were a means of safeguarding one’s economic security. Unskilled migrants, who travelled for work as required, also needed local contacts and information about its markets to truly succeed in this manner. These ‘transient’ migrants were the most likely to cut ties with those at

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1 Ferens had previously employed Governesses to teach the children at Stotfold Station and sent William Henry (his eldest) to Oamaru public school. Waiareka School was established in 1869, which reportedly had the ‘best and only complete school system in New Zealand during the provincial period’, and when it opened Ferens sent the elder boys to stay with relations nearby and complete their schooling. – W.H. Scotter, *Run, Estate and Farm: A History of the Kakanui and Waiareka Valleys, North Otago* (Otago, N.Z.: Whitcombe and Tombs Limited, 1948), 19, 44.

2 This information was gleaned from an advert in which the family was selling this property in 1880, so may have been smaller upon purchasing in 1871. – “Sales by Auction”, *Oamaru Mail*, 9 March 1880.


home to achieve this geographical mobility. For those with skills or ‘intellectual capital’ working in a specialised field, wages were likely to rise as they climbed the hierarchical ladder, and over time they could become indispensable. But, because they relied upon the requirement for their skills in the market, if there were no need their time spent learning the trade was void. In this way Ferens’ lack of qualifications may have actually benefitted him. ‘Persisters’ are defined as those migrants who wished to remain within the geographical confines of a community but were required to stay occupationally mobile to do so. These settlers provided the basis to form communities. During this period, 1871 – 1888, Ferens became a ‘persister’, changing his occupation several times to remain economically stable. As a point of comparison, James Cox, a contemporary of Ferens, remained highly occupationally mobile in the later years of his life. However, Cox’s experience was slightly unusual, having 20 jobs within a sixteen year period, and becoming part of a lower class. Miles Fairburn asserts that this decline in social mobility was not the norm, for in capitalist societies people tend either to remain in the class they were born into or climb the socio-economic ladder. Certainly Ferens conformed to this thesis by moving between professions and generating greater income. It is useful to compare Cox and Ferens, as Cox was a transient single man without property to keep him tethered in any one place, which rendered him highly mobile for job opportunities. Ferens, on the other hand, had a wife and family to support, and owned property.

This 1870s period has received much attention by scholars of the migrant experience, but research commonly pertains to those assisted migrants destined for work as domestic servants, labourers and agricultural workers. This study differs from the norm, as the central thrust of this chapter engages with the underlying theme of

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8 Ibid.
10 Ibid., 93 and Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 394.
11 This information is gleaned from an auction of several properties and stock animals advertised in Advertisements, *North Otago Times*, 10 December 1874. Presumably the auctions were due to economic pressures or the family downsizing as the children grew older and moved out.
‘self’, considering Ferens’ occupations as a means of investigating how he was expected to adapt his skills for socio-economic stability. This chapter also offers an insight into Ferens’ social and political activities as he became more immersed in town life, and therefore generates a sound basis from which to analyse his sense of ‘self’ in relation to the opinions of others.

To address these central points, the chapter firstly investigates Ferens’ forays into fields within which he had relative experience and knowledge, that of a butcher and a bookseller. Secondly, an examination of how Ferens adapted to employment outside of his comfort zone, requiring him to become highly occupationally mobile and actively learn new skill sets. How Ferens maintained his religious faith will also be addressed, focusing upon his personal contributions to the church and involvement in a range of religious societies that pertained to wider societal debates of temperance. The final section follows Ferens’ career in the political and clerical fields, reflecting upon his changing role in society and how he interacted with people outside of the church sphere, and upheld his strong distinctions between his ‘self’ and ‘others’.

**Economic Hardship and the Importance of Family**

Following Ferens’ bankruptcy, the family’s livelihood lay in the hands of his brothers, William Henry and Robinson and his brother-in-law John. William Henry was Ferens’ primary point of contact following their sister’s death in 1856, and the most invested in Ferens’ venture on an emotional level, offering empathy and support alongside more general assistance. Ferens’ first born son was also his namesake. Ferens’ money troubles were not an easy fix, owing as he did, a grand total of £11,605 to Dalgety’s stock and station company upon the foreclosure of his run, a figure which greatly perturbed his brothers. 13 Margaret Ferens believed that ‘if he had only plodded on with shepherds and one man for ten years he would have laid a better foundation – and not a Bill of 11,000 pounds. Woefully sad to toil hard for nothing’. 14 Understandably, Ferens’

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13 William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand), 26 July 1871 and Margaret Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand) to William Henry Ferens (Junior) (Dunedin, New Zealand), 15 December 1897.

14 Margaret Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand) to William Henry Ferens (Junior) (Dunedin, New Zealand), 1897. She later lamented that this financial deficit somewhat complicated her future: ‘what a
brothers were very displeased upon learning the extent of the sum, especially as Ferens had been pushing them to start up a ‘Colonial Loan Company’, which they had, quite fortunately for themselves, refused to do.\(^{15}\) Presumably this suggestion was a flight of fancy on Ferens’ part, a temporary remedy for his financial troubles. Although the brothers had originally attributed all the blame for the extent of the large debt to Ferens, they later found it was the Dalgety Company which was misleading and extortionate.\(^{16}\)

Ferens’ brothers contributed remittances to him every two to three months. It is surprising that William Henry offered £10 so frequently, having described his own situation as ‘little better than your own’.\(^{17}\) John also contributed £10, but Robinson, the wealthiest in the family, offered a regular donation of £50.\(^{18}\) Obviously, desperation for money superseded Ferens’ sense of pride and stubbornness regarding his hatred of Robinson, but to express that he had not yet forgiven Robinson, he avoided any direct contact him, until William Henry eventually convinced him it was quite rude.\(^{19}\) Ferens was happy to exploit Robinson’s wealth for his own gain, ostensibly asking for as much as £400 in one transaction towards starting a new business venture (of which he did actually pay half, despite referring to the plea as extortionate).\(^{20}\) The re-establishment of the relationship with his brothers echoes the experience of other migrants, who used correspondence home for the purpose of receiving financial support.\(^{21}\) Charlotte Erickson states that it was individuals in the professional and clerical sectors who tended to rely upon family to bail them out in their older age, often communicating with family solely for the purpose of maintaining this economic relationship.\(^{22}\) Men receiving remittances were not always depicted in a favourable light in contemporary

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15 William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand), 13 December 1871.
16 William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand), 21 August 1872.
17 William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand), 26 July 1871.
18 William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand), 30 May 1874.
19 Ibid. Robinson maintained the greatest wealth as he owned a colliery in Durham and was a property developer - (Henry) Cecil Ferens, *Love, Pearson, Ferens and Marshall Papers*, GB 033 SGD-51, 1836-1920, Durham University.
20 William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand), 23 December 1874.
22 Ibid., 402.
literature. In later years, particularly after the 1860s, there were ‘frequent expressions of contempt for the remittance man, the “new chum” who enjoyed a life of ease on the basis of cheques sent from home’. The term ‘new chum’ referred to those men who were not yet ‘colonised’, essentially those who had not yet learned to adapt to new situations or experienced the ‘real colonial’ lifestyle. If Ferens had been one of these later migrants it is doubtful he would have remained a ‘new chum’ for long, as he was set in his goal to succeed by his own merits and not off the back of his family’s money: ‘if I cannot get my ends accomplished by patience, I must do it by energy and enterprise and become a cautious speculator, be not a carried. I will not sacrifice principle for riches, neither will I kill myself for the sake of gaining my object.’ This commentary resonates with the earlier discussion of the meritocracy system prevalent in New Zealand’s colonial culture, whereby successful migrants were deemed to be those who persevered and became self-sufficient. Although dedicated to maintaining his own source of capital, Ferens made it clear with such commentary that his principles overruled job opportunities and demonstrates how his sense of self-respect had not changed.

As a means of escaping his debts Ferens toyed with the idea of moving his whole family to England, but only as a contingency plan because he saw migration back home as indicative of failure. However, William Henry discouraged such a move, and strongly advised against his migration home:

There is no prospect at all of your making a livelihood … leaving New Zealand with your large family without any absolute certainty of success would be perpetrating an act of inconceivable folly … in your letter you say “there are many predilections for New Zealand, I sacrificed my own for the ultimate good of my large family” … to bring your family here would not be bringing them home, their home

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24 Ibid., 24.
25 Thomas Ferens (Goodwood, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), July 1853
26 Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, New Zealand) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, England), March 1850.
is in New Zealand … It would be emigration to all but
yourself, and as I have said nothing but absolute certainty
of success would alone justify.27

William made a fair argument, for Margaret had been raised in New Zealand since she
was ten years old, and her only surviving family was an uncle who lived in Glasgow.
Moreover, Ferens’ children had lived in New Zealand their whole lives, and some had
already reached adulthood, or were on the cusp of it, and were ready to start their own
families. William’s sensible observation was enough to convince Ferens to remain and
face the reality of colonial life.

The stresses of economic hardship began to affect Ferens’ physical appearance
(see figure 6). William responded with shock to the likeness that Ferens had sent him:
‘I cannot tell you the disappointment I felt on seeing the one you sent, for I could not
trace the painted resemblance to your old self neither in feature nor expression and there
was a look of such sadness that the picture served to say “see how much I have
suffered” – it seemed to ask “for sympathy,” my heart ached to see it’.28 William was so
perturbed by the image that he requested an earlier likeness to be sent in its place,
insisting on exchanging with another of Ferens’ friends if this could not be done.29 Due
to the lack of personal testimony for this period we cannot truly know how much stress
Ferens suffered, but, fortunately for the Ferens family, their luck improved from this
point, with Robinson stating that he would ‘be glad to assist him with any business to
make a living for his family’.30 The family also had some money hidden away, for
which William Henry admired Ferens’ forward thinking, commenting that it ‘afforded
me supreme satisfaction … to find that each of the members of your family had legacies
left them, and also that your wife had private money … I only hope that is sufficient for
you to live upon’.31

27 William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand), 23
December 1874.
28 William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand), 30 July
1868.
29 Ibid.
30 William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand), 26 July
1871.
31 William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand), 13
December 1871.
Figure 6  
Mrs and Mrs Thomas Ferens; Late 19th Century; photograph.  

**Butchery and Stock and Station Agent (1871 - 1874)**

Armed with the financial backing of his brothers, Ferens was able to start his own business as a butcher. This was a logical transition, as he already possessed his own slaughter house, in addition to a paddock, several animals and a piggery, all of which
were essential elements for a ‘self-made’ butchering business.\textsuperscript{32} Before refrigeration was the norm, butcheries had carcasses strung out front, saw dust coating the floor to soak up the blood, and people had meat safes to preserve their goods at home.\textsuperscript{33} Abattoirs were located outside of towns to supply the butcheries, or butchers could do their own slaughtering. Ferens preferred the latter option which allowed him to remain self-sufficient and cut down on expenditure. One could speculate that he encouraged his sons to help, as most butcheries were family-operated to cut costs.\textsuperscript{34}

During this period Ferens also dabbled in the profession of stock and station agent, ironic given that a stock and station company (Dalgety’s) had led to his financial demise.\textsuperscript{35} Given that his bankruptcy was publicised, it is not surprising that he did not last long in this venture. In this position he probably sought familiarity, as he had gained the relevant experience of negotiating the stock market and managing stations during his agricultural career.

In 1874 Ferens sold all his stock and the butchery, so he could travel back to England.\textsuperscript{36} This included over 300 stock animals including dairy cows, harness horses, and other animals with various working specialties, in addition to carts, saddles, sectioned leased properties (numbered 91-94, 97, 99, 102 & Block II), and a further 280 acres in Papakaio. He also sold the slaughterhouse, paddock and piggery.\textsuperscript{37} Selling significant amounts of property must have greatly improved the family’s financial position, for his brother, William Henry, wrote: ‘Congratulate yourself that you are still in N.Z. I think the distress you speak of at N.Z. must only be local, as all the magazines and papers here speak of it as being the most flourishing of all our colonies and offering a much better prospect than any under the British Crown for the enterprising emigrant. Emigration seems largely directed your way from England.’\textsuperscript{38} This comment reveals

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Advertisements, \textit{North Otago Times}, 10 December 1874.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Locating information about how butcheries were operated before the freezing works incorporated refrigeration in the 1890s is exceedingly difficult to obtain and highlights an avenue for future research. One of the stronger sources is Carl Walrond, “Food Shops - Butchers and Fishmongers,” \textit{Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand}, accessed 3 July 2017, http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/food-shops/page-2.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Advertisements, \textit{North Otago Times}, 27 February 1872.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Advertisements, \textit{North Otago Times}, 3 December 1874.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Advertisements, \textit{North Otago Times}, 10 December 1874.
\item \textsuperscript{38} William Henry Ferens (Durham, England) to Thomas Ferens (Oamaru, New Zealand), 10 March 1875.
\end{itemize}
that Ferens had openly communicated to his brother the struggles associated with living in a town caught in a depression. William’s words also highlight how emigration agencies tended to paint the colony in a favourable light, which was crucial to supporting Vogel’s assisted immigration scheme. Despite appearing to be in a more secure financial position, the particulars of why Ferens left for England and whether he was joined by his family are not available due to the lack of surviving correspondence.39

Bookselling and Assorted Extras (1876 – 1879)

After a period of roughly eight months abroad, Ferens found employment as an agent for the book importers Thomson and Niven, specialising in books published by William Collins and Sons from Glasgow (which is now the world-renowned company HarperCollins).40 As his wife, Margaret, was from Glasgow this connection may have been drawn specifically through her family channels.

As a result of this appointment, he was able to start a new business specialising in ‘standard works and stationery’.41 Booksellers/collectors tended not to keep much evidence of their business, as they ‘shed the burden of keeping ever more encumbering records, shifted their premises and in the process jettisoned other reminders of the past, or simply disappeared into oblivion.42 Ferens’ own recordkeeping appears to conform to this practice. Fortunately, with the aid of contemporary newspaper advertisements, it is possible to deduce that Ferens’ store was situated next to the Queens Hotel (which still stands today) and Gailbraith and Co’s saw-mills.43 The store appears to have had multiple names over the years, and was known variously as the “Bibles and Standard Works Depot”, “Thames Street Book Warehouse” and “Ferens’ Book Store”.44

39 Deduced based on the gap in advertisements in his local newspapers.
40 Business Notices, Oamaru Mail, 17 July 1876. This was among other publishers such as Cassel and Company, from London and Chambers from Edinburgh among other unnamed publishers.
41 Ibid. The combined business was located on Thames Street.
43 Advertisements, North Otago Times, 2 June 1879 and Business Notices, Oamaru Mail, 10 February 1879. This business was similarly located on Thames Street, although it is unclear whether it was the same shop as his butchery.
44 Business Notices, Oamaru Mail, 17 July 1876; Advertisements, North Otago Times, 26 February 1878 and Business Notices, Oamaru Mail, 10 February 1879.
Literature in the nineteenth century was both cultural and educational, with immigrants using these works to reinforce their value systems and promote self-improvement. The public interest in this form of literature was embraced by Ferens, who chose to sell books specialising in general non-fiction topics. His personal preference for rational and educational works was reflected in his specialisation in ‘books of science, books of poems, books of entertainment, books on freemasonry, books of travel, books of history, school books and school stationery, children’s books and devotional books for all denominations’. Charles Elliot, a fellow bookseller and contemporary of Ferens, and founder of the Nelson Examiner newspaper, had 221 listed items available for purchase, of which 15% were religious works, 21% tales for children, 18% entertainment and instruction works, 22% general literature and 24% other standard works. Comparing Elliot and Ferens highlights how Ferens’ choices tended to be of a more informative nature, whilst Elliot’s were chosen more for pleasure. Elliot, being a man of the paper, sensed that the market tended to favour certain genres and appears to have met those customer expectations. As Lishi Kwasitu observes, ‘there was … a growing market of gentlemen of considerable culture and education eager to keep abreast of literature of the time’, highlighting how settlers were looking to read for pleasure. Fiction was at this time quite popular, but was often referred to as ‘second rate’ literature, and whilst Ferens ignored the demand for it, the Dunedin Athenaeum and Mechanic’s Institute requested its home agent to ‘send out from time to time further supplies of the best new novels as the demand has increased for that class of literature’. By continuing to promote more ‘sensible’ works, Ferens would have lost the opportunity for a wider clientele and consequently a more profitable income.

Ferens’ continued devotion to religion is reflected by his choice to sell religious works. Wesleyans were known for pushing their catechists into studious reading of religious texts and classical authors, a requirement which Ferens freely accepted in his early years at Waikouaiti. Dulcie Gillespie-Needham asserts that these religious studies ‘provided an opportunity to learn from example, to engage in self-examination, and, in the enthusiasm of response to the written word, to dedicate oneself anew to God’. Ferens acknowledged how religious works reinforced moralistic principles, and promoted devotional books for all denominations. By offering this variety he no doubt grew his popularity beyond the Wesleyan church community and into the wider Oamaru township. Book shops selling purely religious material were common at this time, as many settlements were church sponsored, and the shops reflected this evangelical spirit. Several of these shops operated on a national scale, including the Presbyterian Bookroom chain, the British and Foreign Bible Society's depots, and other Catholic and Methodist shops.

Historians suggest that the most successful national chains of book stores played the multifaceted role of bookseller, binder, publisher and printing press due to the relatively small and unspecialised New Zealand economy forcing the interconnection of these roles. Whitcombe & Tombs, the partnership formed in 1882 by bookseller George Whitcombe and publisher George Tombs, was the most notable of these chain stores. Following the Education Act of 1877, this company seized the opportunity to publish their own school text books, therefore circumnavigating the high costs of importation. Ferens also sold school text books, but they would have been imported

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51 Ibid.  
52 Advertisements, North Otago Times, 26 February 1878.  
54 Ibid.  
57 Ibid., 651.
works and most likely outdated, as British exporters keen to maintain their profit sold their obsolete stock to the colonies.\textsuperscript{58}

Not all booksellers could afford to invest in the publishing and binding business, but fortunately for them, due to the isolation of New Zealand and lack of material available to read, bookselling offered ‘literary consolation for the isolation from a culture left behind’ and thus guaranteed a flourishing trade.\textsuperscript{59} As one of Elliot’s readers complained, ‘whilst in the old country they are luxuriating in the rich pastures of history, philosophy, travels, politics, and fiction, we are left to pick out a precarious living on scraps out of reviews, or such stray productions (seldom the best) as chance may cast on our distant shores’.\textsuperscript{60} As this comment shows, there was a great demand for newer works of varying genres, creating plenty of opportunities for booksellers to step in to fill this void.

To supplement his income Ferens also sold stationery and other various goods. Diversification was essential to secure the income of the pioneering businessman.\textsuperscript{61} Selling a range of goods rendered the migrant occupationally mobile, becoming knowledgeable in areas beyond the book trade, and learning skills such as balancing the books and the importance of ordering stock in bulk to cut down on expenses. Transience of abilities was essential to supplementing income from multiple jobs.\textsuperscript{62} By acting concurrently as bookseller and general storekeeper, Ferens demonstrated versatility and a willingness to adapt to suit consumer needs and the economic climate in Oamaru.

Despite his best efforts, Ferens was unable to sustainably maintain his business. Possible causes for Ferens’ failure included his choice of titles, his prices, and competition with other booksellers in the region. Potential readers were also affected by geographical isolation from town centres and the lack of transportation associated with this. The economic position of migrants in the immediate area, difficulties in finding leisure time and the educational level of the migrants were other potential factors

\textsuperscript{58} Kwasitsu, \textit{Printing and the Book Trade}, 48 - 50.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Nelson Examiner}, 28 December 1859, 4 - 5, quoted in Kwasitsu, \textit{Printing and the Book}, 52.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{62} Erickson, \textit{Invisible Immigrants}, 60 - 61.
driving away clientele. Ferens publicly announced his resignation from bookselling in 1879, and this same year he became bankrupt for the second time.

**Propagation of Religion (1871 – 1888)**

During this period, 1871 – 1888, Ferens proved to be instrumental in organising various church based events and activities. In fact, it appears that his desire to convert and reinforce the religiosity of others only strengthened as he moved up the social and occupational ladder. Oamaru was the largest community Ferens had lived in since leaving Durham, and the town provided plenty of opportunity for him to converse with fellow Methodists and propagate his religion to others. As discussed in the previous chapter, he had contributed to the building of a Methodist church on Hull Street, and this act was not quickly forgotten by the district. He was also mentioned regularly in the local newspapers in connection to his involvement with the Band of Hope, church events, and the Wesleyan Society, in addition to preaching on special occasions, and his children were regular participants in the Wesleyan choir, which performed weekly. He was secretary for the Wesley Church in Oamaru, but his involvement was not limited to this one location or denomination. He attended several religious events and was often in charge of organising them. One example of his involvement with differing denominations was his address to a crowd of 200, at an event celebrating the third anniversary of the South Oamaru Primitive Methodist Church, on the topic of “The Moral influence of Christianity upon the World,” a title that reflected his ongoing concern with the moral values of his fellow settlers. Ferens was also Chapel Steward for the Wesleyan Methodists in 1874 and invited the Reverend F.C. Dewsbury to

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65 *North Otago Times; Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter* and *Oamaru Mail*, 1871 - 1888.
66 Before his death he preached here before his death and was acknowledged in “Emmanuel Congregational Church Soirée”, *North Otago Times*, 27 October 1888. Among these was the Wesley church soirées, as exemplified by “Wesley Church Soirée”, *North Otago Times*, 18 February 1875 and 6 April 1876. He was also part of the committee for the Sons of Temperance – “Sons of Temperance”, *Oamaru Times*, 15 December 1871.
67 I say differing denomination as Primitive Methodists were distinct from the Wesley Church - “Primitive Methodist Soiree”, *Oamaru Mail*, 1 November 1887.
Oamaru, with the hopes of reconstructing the town into a Circuit, a task in which he was successful.  

The Oamaru public recognised that Ferens was prone to ‘identifying himself more particularly with temperance work’ and always exhibited ‘in his acts the principles he consistently advocated’. This is apparent with his involvement in various temperance movements, often presiding in leading roles. He actively protested against the presence of alcohol in the colony, especially regarding its abuse by the whaling community and the subsequent damaging effects upon the Māori people. Alcohol was perceived as the ‘enemy of the settled and respectable parts of society’. This prohibitionist attitude was shared by Methodists more generally, although as a collective, they did not take action until 1874, with the first New Zealand Conference. The Conference members were ‘impressed by the terrible moral and social evils resulting from the prevalence of intemperance’ and expressed their sympathy with ‘all efforts conducted in a Christian spirit, having in view the lessening of this public vice’. ‘Lessening’ is the key term here, as the Conference members were not at this early stage prepared to support total abolition. Ferens also acted as chairman at the soirée of the Good Templars. This religious society originated in America around 1851 and was an international brotherhood which practiced total abstinence from alcohol. They named themselves for the Knight’s Templars, who had been said to practice abstinence, and perceived themselves as enacting a modern-day crusade against the evils of intemperance. The soirée was reportedly attended by ‘400 persons, among whom were the largest number of the fair sex we have seen gathered together for a long evening.’

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68 Whilst he was a runholder, Ferens’ property was part of one such Circuit alongside the properties of Otepopo, Clifton Falls and Eweland – Advertisements, North Otago Times, 8 May 1874.  
69 Editorial, Oamaru Mail, 9 June 1888.  
70 I say ‘early stages’ as the movement itself had not yet been given an official title and purpose. Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), September 1848.  
73 Ibid.  
74 Ibid., 39.  
75 “Good Templars’ Soiree”, North Otago Times, 7 November 1874.  
time’. 77 This composition of the ‘fair sex’ is not overly surprising, given that women were the most affected by the drunken habits of their husbands. According to the newspaper, ‘the great principle for which he stood there as a witness was becoming the absorbing question of the civilised world’, a comment which very clearly reveals continuity of Ferens’ character, illustrated by his concern for the evil influences of alcohol, which I addressed in the first chapter. 78

Both the Temperance Union and Band of Hope societies were established to combat the ‘evils’ of alcohol, and were channelled through Methodist circuits. 79 Band of Hope was a platform upon which the group members pledged to abstain from alcohol, and was comprised of several children, who would have been the easiest to indoctrinate and supervise the dedication to that pledge. 80 Ferens became President of the Oamaru branch in 1873, where his daughter Sophia was also enrolled. 81 Ferens acted in the capacity of motivational leader, and made an address to a crowded hall, with ‘nearly 100 children present’. 82 He entreated that although he had suffered ‘taunts and jeers’ as a younger man, remaining abstinent was an act which he ‘earnestly recommended’ boys to do, ‘to avoid the danger of falling victim to that greatest of evils and most fatal of poisons – alcohol’. It was his opinion that alcohol was the influence of Satan, whose ‘fell purpose is the ruin of man’. 83 Ferens left a good impression upon the Band of Hope, as they commended his influence upon the children. 84

Ferens also became vice president of the Federal Temperance Union in Oamaru. All members were expected to be abstinent, and promote the personal, social, commercial, legislative and moral aspects associated with the temperance movement. 85 The movement became mainstream in the 1880s, with the establishment of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and the New Zealand Alliance in 1885 and 1886.

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77 “Good Templars’ Soiree”, North Otago Times, 7 November 1874.
78 Ibid.
79 Murray and Cocker, Temperance and Prohibition, 38 - 40.
80 As suggested by the descriptions published in “Band of Hope, Oamaru”, Bruce Herald, 2 January 1874.
81 Ibid. The other Ferens children are not mentioned, so were presumably not dedicated to the Band, or were not distinguished as exemplary students like Sophia was.
82 Editorial, Oamaru Times and Waitaki Reporter, 15 March 1870.
83 Ibid.
84 One article extended ‘the cordial thanks of the portion of the community to which these children belong’ – “Band of Hope, Oamaru”, Bruce Herald, 2 January 1874.
85 “Federal Temperance Union”, Oamaru Mail, 5 August 1881.
The former group also campaigned for women’s political rights on other platforms, as reflected by their success in gaining women’s suffrage in 1893. The New Zealand Alliance sought to convince Parliament to abolish the sale and consumption of alcohol altogether. The chance to achieve these goals came with the Licensing Act of 1881, whereby each electoral district could elect its own licensing committee, empowered with the ability to grant or refuse certificates for licenses. Should temperance movements be successful in their campaigning efforts, an electorate could be rendered ‘dry’. Under this Act, Ferens campaigned for the Papakaio District, becoming the Presiding Officer of the licensing committee there. These committees were elected by the ratepayers, so Ferens had to gain the favour of the local populace, despite living outside the area. The requirement for a licence to sell liquor had been in place since 1842 and restrictions for the licences included an age minimum of sixteen years, no alcohol sold on Sundays, Christmas Day or Good Friday, and no overtly intoxicated people could be served. Despite these efforts to restrict the sale and consumption of alcohol on a nationwide scale, Prohibition was not enforced in Ferens’ lifetime.

Religion was intrinsic to Ferens’ sense of ‘self’, and he modelled his thoughts and behaviour on biblical teachings. I would argue that his religiosity reached its peak during this 1871 – 1888 period, as is reflected by his involvement with many religious groups, and the associated activities he helped to organise. Ferens’ involvement with these groups was intrinsic to the formation and maintenance of them, and his efforts were well received by the public. Within the religious sphere he was an influential figure and was treated with much respect.

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87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
90 “Licensing District of Papakaio: Local Option”. Oamaru Mail, 1 May 1885.
Officer for High Ward (1872 – 1887)

Politics was, like religion, of great interest to Ferens. His correspondence with his family consistently enquired into matters of local politics in Durham and offered some sense of the political situation in Otago. This personal identification with politics most likely led to Ferens’ decision to apply for the position of Representative Officer for the Oamaru Borough Council. To give some context, during the 1870s there were a collection of Provincial governments which controlled public spending and invested in infrastructure within the respective provinces. Oamaru was not a Province in its own right, as it lay within Otago’s provincial boundaries. However, due to insufficient funds within the Provincial Council, the Borough of Oamaru and associated Borough Council were established in 1866. The Borough area was 1111 acres and was divided into four wards: High Ward, to the southwest of the town boundaries; Jetty Ward to the southeast; Severn Ward to the northwest; and Thames Ward to the northeast. His first appointment was as the Officer for Thames Ward in 1872, which coincided with the location of his bookshop. The Officer’s purpose was to communicate the public’s needs back to the mayor and council, which was achieved by frequent polls regarding public opinion on council actions and personnel appointments. Each ward was entitled to two representatives on the Borough council, but Ferens was the only representative elected in both Thames and High Wards respectively, until eventually losing his position in the High Ward in 1887. It is unclear what sparked the change to High Ward from Thames, but one could speculate his family may have moved house or his new occupational locations led him further afield.

In his role as Representational Officer, Ferens would have interacted with people he may have otherwise avoided, especially with regards to taking the polls for the introduction of the 1881 Licensing Act. Becoming a Representational Officer marked a significant shift in Ferens’ practicable skills and becoming part of the council also pushed him towards a more professional career. Presumably by undertaking this role in

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93 Ibid., 7.
95 Ibid.
96 “Election of Councillors”, *Oamaru Mail*, 31 August 1887.
tandem with his businesses, he would have made a distinctive economic gain during this fifteen year period and raised his level of respect in the community.

**Elections (1884)**

In 1884 Ferens chose to take his political aspirations to the next level and ran as a Radical nominee for the Member of Parliament position. Oamaru had a brief respite from depression, only to re-enter a period of debt in 1883 – 1884 after investing too heavily in waterworks and other infrastructure.\(^98\) The main trunk railway was one such investment, spanning across the Awamoko (Kurow to Oamaru today) railway line the Ngapara (Waireka) line and the Oamaru breakwater.\(^99\) This era of disenfranchisement was utilised by Ferens, who formed his election campaign in protest against the taxation of the farmers whose properties were affected by the Ngapara line.

Ferens advertised himself as the ‘working man’s friend’, attending to the ‘sore places, which were the result of the misappropriation of public money’.\(^100\) He argued vehemently against the construction of railways in the district, for the government had used loans to erect them and was then forced to borrow further money to pay off the accrued interest.\(^101\) He also perceived the railways as poorly constructed, leading to further inconveniences for the taxpayers.\(^102\) His campaign therefore sought ‘the suffrages of the people … upon principles, not of men or party’, and promised to maintain the ‘unswerving purpose of Radical sentiments’.\(^103\)

As a supporter of the working class, Ferens stood against monopolisation of lands. The public may have thought this hypocritical, considering that Ferens had owned an extensive amount of land himself. However, he assured the populace that he did not intentionally seek out more than he had needed, but was ‘compelled by the action of the Government and by encroachments’ to buy up surrounding tracts of

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\(^{99}\) Ibid., 11.

\(^{100}\) “Mr Thomas Ferens at South Oamaru”, *Oamaru Mail*, 3 July 1884.

\(^{101}\) Ibid.

\(^{102}\) Ibid.

\(^{103}\) “To the Electors of Waitaki”, *Oamaru Mail*, 9 July 1884.
land.¹⁰⁴ To gain voter support, he openly disclosed the sum he owed Dalgety’s upon the foreclosure of his lands.¹⁰⁵ Whether he divulged this information because he was a well-known resident, and did not wish to ignite opposition, or whether it was his intention to gain sympathy, is difficult to say. Using this negative experience to his advantage, he marketed to the ‘working man’ a policy of forced land improvements, with the consequence being that other migrants would have the opportunity to purchase that land, should the monopolists fail.¹⁰⁶ In essence he wished to emphasise the ‘real colonial’ experience and allow men of less capital the opportunity to have a fighting chance.

Ferens was not averse to discussing controversial matters, and this is reflected by his suggestion to abolish the Upper House. He determined that ‘the monopolists and creatures of the Government would hold sway’ if this was not achieved.¹⁰⁷ Questioning the authority of the government did not stop here, for he further maintained that the Education Board required restructuring, and he regarded the presiding legislators as underqualified.¹⁰⁸ He asserted that ‘if doctors, lawyers, engineers, and scientific men had to pass a strict examination before they were allowed to practice, then surely our representatives should pass a similar examination before being sent to make laws for the proper government of the people’.¹⁰⁹ Such stances illustrate that Ferens did indeed encompass the ideals of a Radical elector, attacking the Government in an outspoken fashion that demanded the attention of his ‘working man friends’. This sentiment also reflects Ferens’ continued sense of principle regarding the need to challenge the corrupt upper classes.

In an unexpected move, and despite his own reservations, he was in favour of giving the Licensing Act a fair trial, as he recognised certain provisions would benefit the public.¹¹⁰ This stance is in direct opposition to his previously understood notion of self/other, as he had always distinguished alcohol as an evil substance that bred violence. We must therefore assume that this major concession was made to gain the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.
¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
¹⁰⁶ “To the Electors of Waitaki”, Oamaru Mail, 9 July 1884.
¹⁰⁷ Ibid.
¹⁰⁸ Ibid.
¹⁰⁹ “Mr Thomas Ferens at South Oamaru”, Oamaru Mail, 3 July 1884.
¹¹⁰ Ibid.
popular vote. Also, somewhat unpredictably, Ferens did not think it appropriate to teach the Bible in public schools. His reasoning was that school teachers did not believe in or understand Biblical teachings, which thereby led to the possibility of ‘malevolent influence upon the minds of the children’. This concern perhaps says more about Ferens’ own preoccupations than that of the general populace.

In a controversial move, Ferens supported the dissolution of the Armed Constabulary, as ‘the way in which the land had been wrested away from the natives was disreputable to the white population; and if the natives were dealt justly by, there would be no longer any occasion for such a force’. The significance of this statement speaks volumes of Ferens’ sense of ‘self’ and ‘other’. Ferens was, by this time, well known as a Māori scholar, but this was the first time he had openly expressed his feelings about Māori ability to match European intelligence and civilisation. For some this would have been a strong point of contention and it may have lost him potential voters.

There is evidence to suggest that Ferens had an adversary with the pseudonym of ‘Māori’. Presumably this was one of his competitors attempting to rouse opposition. ‘Māori’ accused Ferens of being ‘disinclined to work’, expecting ‘a nice little honorarium’ by running for the MP position, and accused him of ‘foolishness and laziness and covetousness’. This accusation would have undoubtedly perturbed Ferens. Certainly, his piouiness and notion of an ideal society would have rubbed more than a few people up the wrong way. Such strong political stances would have encouraged his enemies to speak their mind at this crucial point in Ferens’ campaigning. Public defamation of Ferens’ character may have led to the loss of votes, but due to his radical nature, and the fact that he was running against a well-known candidate, he was unlikely to succeed on his own merit. The results of the voting for the Waitaki district

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111 Ibid.
112 “Mr Ferens at Duntroon”, Oamaru Mail, 18 July 1884.
113 He had lectured on their character at the Mechanic’s Institute but did not establish then that they were superior. Whilst Ferens had emphasised that Māoris’ possessed superior intelligence prior to this, it was a belief expressed purely within the private sphere. – “Mr Ferens’ Lecture”, North Otago Times, 30 July 1867.
114 “To the Editor of the Oamaru Mail”, Oamaru Mail, 4 July 1884.
115 Ibid.
116 Duncan was running for re-election.
was as follows: 462 votes for Thomas Duncan; 279 for Duncan Sutherland; and just 43 for Ferens. 117

Despite his failure, Ferens did not lose heart, and remained adamant that his policies were the most beneficial. This continuation of personal values is reflected by his letter to the editor of the *North Otago Times* four years later. He presented twenty-one points which he felt needed to be addressed by the presiding authorities. 118 These points were almost identical to the issues he stood for in his campaign. This demonstrated his unchanging principles on subjects such as giving the working man a fair chance, encouraging warmer intercultural relations and teaching children to follow the gospel.

**Auditor for the Oamaru Borough Council (1882 – 1888)**

Although Ferens had failed to achieve the Member of Parliament position, he had secured financial support in 1882, in the form of his job as Auditor for the Oamaru Borough Council. He was elected by ratepayers, and evidently remained quite popular, as he was re-elected each year until his death in 1888. 119 In terms of occupational mobility, this position marked how far Ferens had climbed the occupational ladder since arriving in New Zealand. He now served in one of the most respected institutions in the township, and he had crawled back from bankruptcy for a second time. It is surprising that Ferens was able to become an auditor, given that he had been bankrupted in the past. Presumably Ferens had enough financial experience to support his appointment as auditor, having run his own businesses and acted as secretary for the Wesley church.

Controversy arose when Ferens and his fellow auditor, John Church, were asked to produce the latest reports in 1887, but claimed they could not as they had sent their findings directly to the Auditor-General of New Zealand. This was problematic as they did not report to the Council the discrepancies they had found for the gas accounts. 120

118 “Questions for the Electors: To the Editor”, *North Otago Times*, 23 July 1887.
120 “Auditing the Borough’s Books”, *North Otago Times*, 13 May 1887.
Although the Council conceded that it was the auditors’ duty to report to the senior authority, ‘common curtesy should have impelled them to intimate what they had discovered to the Council’. The issue became further entrenched in the public arena when the Council employed a clerk, William Brown, to revise the auditing reports (being within their rights to do so). Church and Ferens demanded what business the clerk had with their reports, thinking it wise to confront him directly. The Mayor defended the Council, stating that the auditors had no right to interfere in Council matters or act in this ‘impertinent’ manner. The Mayor felt personally aggrieved by this confrontation, which was made worse by the auditors, who reasserted that the Council had no business knowing the information contained within the accounts, and who demanded the newest balance sheet, as per their duty as deputies to the Auditor-General. The Mayor referred to this as ‘the most impertinent letter that council had ever received’. It appears that the Mayor felt particularly strongly that he was in the right, for another councillor, Mr Spence, felt Mr Brown had been called quite hastily, and the Council had not given ample warning to the auditors. Nevertheless, despite his absolving the auditors’ initial reaction, Spence was handled brusquely by Ferens when he endeavoured to question him on the street. Ferens allegedly questioned how Spence dared to ask for information that pertained not to council, but to Government, and proceeded to ‘turn on his heel and walked away’. This unprofessional behaviour suggests that Ferens was quite affected by the matter, which is not surprising, given that the Council was effectively questioning both the auditors’ ability to do their jobs, and their principles.

Despite public backlash, the auditors demanded to be paid for extra work undertaken, pressing the Council for these funds the following year, just three months before Ferens’ death. They wrote, ‘we are naturally reluctant to take legal proceeding for its recovery’ posed as a thinly veiled threat to stir up more trouble. In this display

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121 Ibid.
122 Ibid.
123 This proved a change from Ferens’ usual form of complaint by way of writing to the newspaper.
124 “Auditing the Borough’s Books”, North Otago Times, 13 May 1887.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
129 “Borough Council”, Oamaru Mail, 16 March 1888.
of impertinence, Ferens demonstrated how he had retained his principled and self-righteous attitude, in challenging the accepted social order. By acting in such a fashion Ferens would have lost the esteem of fellow council members and the public more generally, leading to a decline in socio-economic status.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the many ways in which Ferens sought to re-establish himself following his bankruptcy of the 1870s. He proved unable to hold down any one occupation for more than a few years, before being forced to acquire new skill sets to earn a living. His character in these later years of his life was much the same – pious, somewhat reserved and enthusiastic about preaching and local politics. Although he was well meaning, he often incited other members of society (outside of the Methodist church) and became more stubborn and argumentative after his move to the main township. Economic necessity drew Ferens into Oamaru, allowing him to earn a greater profit and flower as a ‘mover and shaker’ within the community. In comparing this experience to his arrival in New Zealand, Ferens displayed greater independence and self-confidence, seeking to gain support beyond his immediate isolated networks. Instead of merely complaining of the changes that needed to be made through correspondence he began to campaign for them on a public platform which demonstrates his overall self-improvement.

Ferens proved to be highly occupationally mobile, transitioning from his role as a self-employed butcher to his position as auditor for the Borough Council, which demonstrated the importance of an adaptable skill set. Ferens relied on his brothers to send remittances and keep his family afloat, and had he not had access to this network, the Ferens family may have fallen into poverty and been forced to seek habitation elsewhere, or work in more labour-intensive sectors.

In 1888, aged 66 years old, Ferens fell from his horse. Suffering from internal bleeding he did not last longer than a week and died on 9 June.130 Fittingly, the fall

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130 From Ferens family records and death notice in Editorial, Oamaru Mail, 9 June 1888.
occurred as he was making his way home from a sermon, bringing his time in New Zealand to a symbolic and cyclical end. His obituary revealed that his self-confidence did not go unnoticed, for ‘during his residence in Oamaru he took an active part in public matters, identifying himself more particularly with temperance work, and he always exhibited in his acts the principles he persistently advocated’. This study has shown that he did indeed live by his principles, and recognition of this would have been important to his surviving family. Significantly, the newspaper described him as ‘one of our worthiest citizens’, a comment which would have greatly pleased Ferens.

Ferens’ obituary in the *Oamaru Mail* remembered him as one of the oldest settlers in the settlement, survived by only one other North Otago based (male) settler from the *John Wickliffe*. It noted his time spent in agricultural pursuits, as the majority of his life in New Zealand was spent working in that sector. The newspaper also attributed the introduction of draught horses to the district to his enterprise. It further recognised Ferens’ continued dedication to lay preaching for the Wesleyan church and identified him as ‘a good Māori scholar’ who ‘mastered the native tongue’ soon after his arrival. It is interesting that despite the nineteen years spent within the township of Oamaru itself, Ferens’ time there was only visible to others in the form of preaching and dedication to promoting temperance, as opposed to his actual occupational life. The obituary highlighted how Ferens’ religious sense of ‘self’ had not altered since his arrival in New Zealand, and how he had remained dedicated to maintaining the religiosity of others in an isolated society.

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132 Ibid.
133 The paper did not mention the women who survived, including Margaret Ferens, which highlights the gender inequality common to this period. – Editorial, *Oamaru Mail*, 9 June 1888.
134 Ibid.
This case study of Thomas Ferens sought to reveal some sense of the early 1840s working class English migrant experience. It is important to acknowledge that this is the experience of one individual, so should not be taken to represent the whole. This study offered a little explored perspective of an English migrant navigating life in the Scots Presbyterian-dominated settlement of Otago. This viewpoint was imperative to illuminating the other side of a well-analysed conflict between the allegedly puritanical Scottish leaders and the ‘little enemy’. Utilising personal testimony proved crucial to understanding Ferens, as he offered detailed accounts of his feelings, personal struggles and successes, and strong sense of principle. Drawing upon thirty years of correspondence between Ferens and his family in England revealed how his sense of ‘self’ was intrinsically altered by his migrant experience.

One of the most significant changes was Ferens’ reimagining of the ‘other’. Initially, his perspective of Māori had been shaped by propagandist tales of their savagery and heathen ways. Within the first few weeks in New Zealand, however, he was able to make his own observations and concluded that what may have been true for the first European encounters with Māori was no longer relevant. The influence of missionaries had their desired ‘civilising effects’, and led Ferens to believe he could ‘turn to good account the knowledge in benefiting them as a people and of proving the superiority of the Māori to a European in Knowledge in Virtue and in Skill’.¹ Suggesting that Māori were not only equal in intelligence to, but exceeded the European, was a very significant and controversial claim to make in this early period, especially so with government battling over land claims and attempting to establish a ‘civilised’ and European dominated society. This study revealed that Ferens continued to defend the progressiveness and intelligence of Māori throughout the rest of his life, hiring a Māori maid to look after his terminally ill daughter and hosting lectures about Māori at the Mechanics’ Institute to large crowds. In his election campaign he even

¹ As it has been mentioned, Ferens became confident enough to present this belief to the public sphere in the final years of his life, having previously kept his opinions confined to the private sphere. - Thomas Ferens (Waikouaiti, Otago) to Mary Anne Wood (East Rainton, Durham), 11 June 1849.
went so far as to suggest the dissolution of the Armed Constabulary, as Māori were not a valid threat and deserved to be treated with more respect and understanding. Although many missionaries were apt to change their opinions of Māori, Ferens should be considered amongst the most progressive, especially considering his rank as a lay preacher, with the great strides he took to inform the wider populace of Māoris’ societal worth.

The first and subsequent chapters revealed how Ferens began to redefine his understanding of the ‘other’ as those who did not respect religion, or Methodism, and corrupt members of the upper class. This was demonstrated by his criticisms of Captain William Cargill, Reverend Thomas Burns and Johnny Jones. His staunch attitude towards the ‘other’ also led to controversial articles in the local newspapers, as reflected by his condemnation of the Reverend Charles Connor for ‘intruding’ on the religious sanctity of his station, and in his disagreement with the Oamaru Borough Council as an auditor several years later. These conflicts highlighted Ferens’ stubbornness and serious dedication to upholding his sense of principle, even if it resulted in public controversies that could embarrass both parties. Ostensibly, it was due to Ferens’ growing sense of confidence and independence that he could so staunchly defend his position, for it was certainly not behaviour indicative of the ‘anxious’ man he described on the voyage to New Zealand.

Another significant way in which Ferens’ sense of ‘self’ was intrinsically altered was his success in becoming a ‘real colonial’. Although this achievement was not a goal he carried with him to New Zealand, it materialised soon after arrival, influenced by popular opinion of the hard working and successful migrant. Emigration agents and propaganda led migrants to expect land ownership in the ‘naturally abundant’ countryside, and they were willing to risk everything to achieve their goal of independence. Ferens did not initially express the need for owning property, until beginning his career as an estate manager. Surrounded by hard working men who stressed the physicality required in agricultural work, he developed new skills which drove his desire to strike out on his own and become self-sufficient. His perseverance and adaptability paid off, and upon the event of his marriage, Ferens was able to purchase a sizeable run to provide for his forthcoming family. Gaining a wife was perhaps one of Ferens’ subtler achievements but had been an aspiration of his before
migrating. It was his firm belief that ‘a colonist must have a wife’ and once attained, Margaret affected his quality of life considerably.

Although bankruptcy led to the loss of many assets, he was still able to maintain a decent level of living for his family, and ownership of a home. Many migrants during this early period had agricultural aspirations and experience yet did not possess his ability to become one of the largest runholders in North Otago. This was a considerable feat, especially considering Ferens’ working class status and relative inexperience in the agricultural field, having grown up as the son of a merchant draper. Despite losing the bulk of his assets, I would argue that Ferens retained his status as a ‘real colonial’, for he maintained his ambition to remain independent and self-sufficient. This is reflected in his ability to persevere and start anew within the township, whilst the town was in an economic depression nonetheless. He was able to start his own businesses and become a representative officer and auditor for the Oamaru Borough Council. Further to this, the town itself declared him to be a real colonial and highlighted his perseverance and dedication to migrant life in his obituary. This article also highlighted his importance as a founder of the township.

One aspect of Ferens’ identity that continuously proved its influence was his commitment to Methodism. In the face of unsavoury disputes, economic hardships, learning new occupational skills and raising a large family, the one thing that never changed was his morality and sense of principle. This was one characteristic of his ‘self’ that could be said to both remain the same and take on a new importance as a result of his migrant experience. I say this because he remained unswerving in his principles and desire to continue spreading the gospel, yet his changed circumstances allowed him to contribute to the building of the first Methodist church in Oamaru and to therefore establish his religion in North Otago. In this sense his personal attributes remained the same, but his public persona increased dramatically, which inherently affected his social networks and importance within the Oamaru township. Ferens’ commitment to Methodism and moralistic way of perceiving society was well recorded in local newspapers and was further demonstrated by his leading roles in many religious societies and adaptability to preach in lieu of a minister on several occasions.
Methodism was, therefore, not only intrinsic to Ferens’ own sense of ‘self’, but it was also his defining characteristic in the minds of others. In some cases, this led others to perceive him as domineering and overbearing, but this did not seem to perturb Ferens. John Stenhouse’s assertion that lay people were crucial to spreading and maintaining the gospel in more remote regions, and working towards a unified society accepting of all religions was evidenced by Ferens preaching to his workers at Stotfold Station, selling religious books for all denominations in his book store and heading the original temperance groups in Oamaru (which unfortunately did not reach an official capacity until after his death). Religion provided Ferens with solace during his darkest times in the settlement, for he believed that the Saviour continued to support him and provided a light at the end of the tunnel. It was his belief in Methodism that led him to New Zealand, and it was his faith that kept him here, despite a myriad of personal struggles.

This study revealed the need to further uncover the working-class experience in early New Zealand. Some steps have been taken towards this lower-class approach, but historians have typically used personal testimony as a contribution towards a nationwide or regionwide study, as opposed to a focus on individual actors. The broader implications of consulting Ferens’ correspondence are the revelations that one did not need to be politically important, or wealthy to incite societal changes. This study also highlighted the intensity of intercultural relations for working-class people like Ferens. Early settlers in the Otago settlement worked closely with Māori, to learn agricultural practices and set up trade. Because of these interactions men gained wives, but perhaps, like Ferens, they also gained an understanding and appreciation for their culture. This study suggested that Ferens’ intercultural relationship was not the norm, for most colonists were not willing to ‘take to the blanket’ and live among the Māori, and further studies could assess the validity of this finding.

Exploring the concepts of ‘self’ and ‘real colonial’ proved to be particularly useful in this study, as Ferens spent much of his time pondering these topics in his personal correspondence. This study demonstrated that Ferens’ sense of self-worth increased with each new challenge he surpassed. The concept of ‘self’ should be explored more by social historians, especially those focussing on individual migrant experiences using personal testimony. It feeds into existing discussions of ethnic
identity and offers a deeper level to analysis of topics such as atomisation and network formation. Study of the ‘self’ can also reveal more about occupationally based history, revealing the reasons why migrants followed particular lines of work and whether these were enjoyable. Using Ferens’ definition of the term ‘real colonial’, to refer to a self-sufficient man of ‘practical’ means was also worthwhile, as it offered a contemporary perspective on how success was measured. A ‘real colonial’ status was not earned by simply migrating to the other side of the world, it required dedication and a zest for the challenges presented by a burgeoning society.

An avenue for further study would be a full biography of Thomas Ferens, including information about his wife and children, and how they adapted to new circumstances as a family. There is a wealth of correspondence received by Ferens which still needs to be transcribed, including letters from his younger sister, whom he had vowed not to speak to until she accepted the Saviour in to her life (having two children out of wedlock at a young age). Her letters offer an interesting insight into Ferens’ strongly moralistic personality and reveal how his aloofness had greatly affected her, suggesting that she genuinely loved her older brother and formerly had a close relationship with him. Ferens’ eldest son, William Henry Ferens, also left behind detailed writings about the family which are currently held by his descendant in the North Island, alongside the family bible. I would be particularly interested in following up on Margaret Ferens’ migrant experience, for she had migrated at a much younger age and experienced the deaths of close family members in quick succession. Beating this trend, she became one of the four last surviving passengers from the *John Wickliffe* and somewhat of a local celebrity. As a Scottish woman, she would provide many interesting points of comparison and contrast with her older English husband.

Another future area of study could be a comparison of Ferens’ experience to his superior the Reverend Creed. Creed has not received much historical attention, despite his importance in providing an English education and Christianisation of the Ngāi Tahu tribe based around Waikouaiti. This research could include the Reverend Watkin, to analyse how intercultural relations changed with the influence of each new party. Being so far removed from decent European society (not counting irreligious whalers) would have been more affecting for Watkin and Creed than it was for Ferens, for he had arrived in conjunction with the entire township of Dunedin. By concentrating on all
three men, who left some record of their achievements and findings that still survive today, it would be possible to mark the progress of Methodism in Otago. Furthermore, this three-way focus could illuminate whether they held similar personalities and principles, or if their individualism shone through despite their shared occupation and base values. If this could be supplemented by Māori perspectives or that of the early European settlers in Waikouaiti we could gauge the influence and importance of Methodism in an isolated part of the colony, before the arrival of the Scots Presbyterians in 1848.
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