

publicity, he stressed the advantages of the *Columbian* over the *Stanhope*. While the *Stanhope* was cheaper and rather faster in operation than the *Columbian*, the frames of early models were prone to break at the point of maximum strain, while it was soon proved that the *Columbian* could withstand the greatest strain that a pressman could exert. For these reasons, the majority of printers in Britain and Europe considered the *Columbian* to be the superior machine. In regular use, a *Columbian* was probably no slower to operate than a *Stanhope*, being capable of about 250 impressions per hour, more or less the standard for hand presses at that time. These two makes were the most widely used presses in Britain till about 1835, when an improved model of the *Albion* press, invented by Richard Cope in 1820, appeared on the market. For many years after the mid-1830s, 'Albions' and 'Columbians' enjoyed equal popularity among British printers, the *Albion* being cheaper, lighter in weight and with a simpler mechanism, but the *Columbian* being considered by many to require less exertion in operation.²

It is only to be expected that examples of these three presses figure prominently in the early history of printing in New Zealand. While the make of the first press in New Zealand, that used by the Rev. W. Yate for his amateurish experiments in 1830 is not known, it is well known that the press brought out by William Colenso to Paihia in 1834 was a *Stanhope*. This machine had been purchased by the Church Missionary Society, and is reported as of 'Super Royal' size.³ There is unfortunately no evidence to suggest that this press was not broken for scrap.⁴ However, on 23 February 1841, the missionaries of the northern district, meeting at Waimate, resolved to request the Central Committee of the C.M.S. to send out an additional press. The Committee obliged, and a new press arrived at Paihia in July 1842,⁵ and this press, it is suggested, has survived and is now in the National Museum.

The Museum's press was donated by the proprietors of *The Chronicle*, Levin. It had been used by this newspaper since 1946 as a proof press, and since 1892 it had been at Otaki, where it was used successively by the *Horowhenua Times*, the *Otaki Times*, and the *Otaki Mail*.⁶ On the reverse of the main cross-beam of the press were painted the letters R.C.H., the initials of Richard Coupland Harding, the well-known printer who was a friend of Colenso in his later years. In November, 1908, Harding wrote to a Mr W. McLean, of Hastings, who was starting a small magazine and wanted to obtain a demy *Albion* press. Harding offered to lease to McLean a 'double demy *Columbian*' made in 1841, which he said 'formerly belonged to the Church Mission'. This press was owned by Harding but leased to the Otaki newspaper, where it was used for proofs and posters, but the printer did not have enough room for it, and would return it to Harding whenever he wished. Harding intended that his press should ultimately go to the Colonial Museum. He believed,