

Sarah Selwyn saw that his tenure of life was now 'most uncertain'.⁹ Whytehead eventually arrived at Paihia on 27 October after a rough and cold Tasman crossing on the *Bristolian*. William Cotton met him and observed that the Maoris would have little difficulty carrying him from Kerikeri to Waimate:

... for he is a mere shadow. His ultimate and complete recovery is I fear quite hopeless—though he talks of the work which he should like to do. . . . But still it is a great blessing to have him amongst us once more though it be but for a time.¹⁰



The Church Mission Station, Waimate. Engraving from an original by S. Williams published in the Missionary Register April 1836, p [215].

Thomas Whytehead's 'time' was only to run for a further few months. In that time he was able to tutor the Church Missionary Society veteran Richard Davis in his preparation for ordination, and collaborate with the latter's son James in the translation into Maori of Thomas Ken's 'Evening Hymn'. He presided at the high table—suitably capped and gowned—over some of the 'College' meals, but never moved more than half a mile outside the confines of the mission compound.¹¹ Increasingly the tuberculosis overpowered him, with Sarah Selwyn tending him almost constantly by day, and Cotton nursing him through the night. On the morning of 19 March, after joining the Bishop in prayers, Thomas Whytehead died peacefully. Selwyn 'sank on his knees by the bedside, and gave vent to his tears.'¹²

Dean Howson described Whytehead as slender, with black hair and an olive tinge to his complexion. Always scrupulously neat, he had fine hands, and looked every inch the poet, although, he added, he was not eccentric or moody, but cheerful and sociable.¹³ One