

The production of the *Nelson Examiner* in the context of the early New Zealand press

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Printing was introduced into New Zealand in 1830 by the Anglican Church Missionary Society. On the recommendation of the Reverend William Yate, the Mission established a small Albion hand press at Kerikeri in the Bay of Islands for administrative and evangelistic purposes.¹ When colonisation began in earnest a few years later, printing facilities were set up as part of the apparatus of colonial settlement as well as commercial ventures.

The establishment in Wellington on 18 April 1840 of the *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator*, first published in London on 21 August 1839 as the *New Zealand Gazette and Britannia Spectator*, was under the impetus of the New Zealand Company, and Samuel Revans, its printer, merely an 'ostensible owner'.² In Auckland, the *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette* was founded on 7 August 1841 as a limited liability company³ with half the company's shareholders being officials in Governor Williams Hobson's administration as well as business entrepreneurs in Auckland. But that was not a common pattern. Nelson's first newspaper, the *Nelson Advertiser and Echo of New Zealand*, first appeared in London on 16 August 1841.⁴ This was followed by the *Whitby Times and General Advertiser*, which was issued on 13 June 1841 as a handwritten newsletter aboard the *Whitby* by Musgrave, Browne and Arnold. Less than a month later on the same vessel, James Smith, E. Wastney and T. Doughty produced a rival newsletter on 8 July 1841 called *Hand in Hand and Port Nelson Herald*.⁵ In Nelson itself, the establishment of the *Nelson Examiner* by Charles Elliott with 'a loan chargeable with interest'⁶ from the New Zealand Company may be seen as a normal commercial undertaking. Elliott decided to come to New Zealand with Frederick Cooper, a literary friend of Mr Aglionby, with whom he had jointly loaded his printing equipment and personal effects into the *Mary Ann* by 24 September 1841. But Cooper suddenly dropped out of this initial partnership and disembarked with his family at the Downs on 2 October 1841⁷ which was why Elliott travelled to New Zealand under the umbrella of the New Zealand Company with financial guarantees and other forms of support. Elliott thus like Revans became an 'ostensible proprietor'⁸ of the printing press in Nelson.