

# Some preliminary notes on the original and revised issues of the McDonnell-Wyld 1834 chart of New Zealand.

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One of the more interesting series of early charts in the Alexander Turnbull Library map collection is that of the McDonnell-Wyld chart first published in 1834. The original and revised states of this chart, numbering at least 27 different issues, portray a great deal of data relating to New Zealand's early exploration and settlement.<sup>1</sup> As a series, they graphically illustrate the vast changes that were occurring throughout this country between 1834 and the 1860s. Recent acquisitions bring a detailed study of this important chart a step closer as the number of different issues held by the Library now totals 16. The purpose of this article is to discuss the original issue, investigate some of the problems associated with a study of the various states of the chart, establish a tentative list of different revised prints and perhaps create an interest that might bring to light states of the chart not hitherto recognised as being separate issues.<sup>2</sup>

The chart was printed from an engraved copper plate and issued in some cases partly hand coloured. Some prints were issued as a large single sheet; others were dissected, pasted on cloth and folded into a slip-case. No doubt part of the reason so few copies of the early issues have survived is that the chart is large (780 × 540 mm.), and thus very vulnerable to damage. The work received excellent reviews in the *New Zealand Journal* (London). A review in the 20 June 1840 issue describes it as '... the best general map of New Zealand extant';<sup>3</sup> the review of the third edition in the 21 November 1840 issue notes: 'This edition is executed with Mr Wyld's usual care. No pains have been spared to collect the best information, . . .'<sup>4</sup>

The chart was originally compiled by a noted early New Zealand trader Lieutenant Thomas McDonnell. Retiring from naval service in 1815, McDonnell spent some years in the service of the East India Company and in 1831 became a resident at Hokianga.<sup>5</sup> J. O'C. Ross in his book *This Stern Coast* discusses McDonnell's chart (p.95) and assumes that in 1834 McDonnell took his chart to England and persuaded James Wyld the Elder, a noted English map publisher, to publish it. But there is no evidence to support either the idea that