

BOOKS AS SOCIAL CURRENCY: ROBERT COUPLAND HARDING AND THE FIELD OF
BOOK COLLECTING IN NEW ZEALAND 1880-1920

BY

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A thesis

submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington

in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts in New Zealand Literature

Victoria University of Wellington

2013

Abstract

“Here, indeed, lies the whole miracle of collecting,” Jean Baudrillard asserted, “it is invariably *oneself* that one collects” (“Systems of Collecting” 12). If Baudrillard’s premise that a collection is itself a representation of the collector, then how can we read a person through his/her private library? There have been several large and important studies produced on the three preeminent figures in New Zealand book collecting: Sir George Grey, Dr Thomas Hocken and Alexander Turnbull. However, to understand book collecting as a whole during the highly active period at the turn of the twentieth century, it is vital that we investigate ‘minor’ book collectors alongside our esteemed ‘major three.’

This thesis explores the private library of Robert Coupland Harding (1849-1916), an internationally recognised expert on printing and typography, whose trade journal *Typo: A Monthly Newspaper and Literary Review* (1887-1897) was celebrated as a remarkable achievement. Very little documentation of Harding’s life exists. However, one tantalising artefact discovered in a Wellington antiquarian bookshop is the basis for this research: the auction catalogue of Harding’s extensive private library. Focusing on the New Zealand-related section of the catalogue, this thesis examines the book collecting field in New Zealand 1880-1920. Applying Bourdieu’s theories of capital, habitus and the field of cultural production, the thesis examines the social practice of book collecting during this period. Three case studies from Harding’s library illustrate some key trends in the book collecting market, and help to build a picture of Harding’s social networks and the influence this had on his collecting habits. The thesis also describes the collecting identity of Robert Coupland Harding, placing him in his circle of fellow book collectors. Describing a model of book collecting practise and presenting a method for categorising book collectors, this thesis argues for the recognition of lesser known book collectors and the contribution that they made to the field of New Zealand book collecting.

Acknowledgements

This research was made possible by a scholarship provided from the Marsden funded project “The Printers’ Web: typographical journals and global communication networks in the nineteenth century.” Robert Coupland Harding’s publication *Typo, a trade journal and literary review* (1887-1897) is a centrepiece in the project, and project leader Sydney Shep believed research into Harding’s book collecting practices would be a valuable contribution. So, firstly, I want to acknowledge Professor Shep for the opportunity to undertake this research. Thank you also for the patience, support and inexhaustible supply of advice that propelled this work. I have benefited immeasurably from your guidance and I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to have worked with you.

I want to acknowledge my family, who have had their lives re-arranged throughout the period of this research: Gareth, Arlo and Zoe. And thank you also to Grandparents and Aunt and Uncle.

Thank you to Christine Roberts for the kind gift of two boxes of her own collection of material on book collecting. This provided me with several books which became indispensable resources in my research.

A special acknowledgement to John Quilter who started all this by bringing a copy of the auction catalogue to Sydney Shep’s attention. And thank you John, and Rowan Gibbs who allowed to me to tap into a wealth of knowledge on New Zealand book collecting.

I want to acknowledge the kind and generous contribution that Mike Harding made to the case study on Hooker’s *Handbook*. Thank you for allowing me to publish parts of Sir J.D. Hooker’s letter to your great-grandfather for the first time.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge Morna Lorden and the School of English, Film, Theatre and Media Studies at Victoria University. Thank you for your support and, most crucially, providing me with an office.

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List of Abbreviations:

- N.d. No publishing date available.
 N.p. No page number available.

Introduction

“Surrounded on all sides by modern city offices and warehouses, in a quiet backwater behind Manners Street, there stood until recently a group of three ageing wooden buildings, the most historic commercial premises in the city.”

Alexander, John H. “Bethune and Hunter’s.” *Historic Wellington*.

Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1959: 9.

It is hard to imagine a more suitable setting for a nineteenth century, antipodean auction house. Auctions, opportunities of commercial trade and social exchange, were a necessity for early settlers and colonials in New Zealand. An auction house was established so early in Wellington’s history that it was built before land reclamation changed its seaside view to the back of another office building, and it was constructed with an old ship’s cannon to protect the corner of the building from horse-driven carts (Alexander 9). New Zealand was a printing nation from conception; it was a book nation too. From the first solitary printing press in 1834, to a robust and active printing trade in the 1860s which supplied the young nation with newspapers, pamphlets, reports and official records. There was a high degree of literacy amid the first contingents of settlers and many brought books amongst clothes, essential household items and family heirlooms. “My father,” Robert Coupland Harding wrote in 1911, “had a considerable library, containing many old and quaint books, which he brought to New Zealand when he came out in 1848” (“Old Time Memories.” *Evening Post* 24 Jun 1911: 3). The amount of books in the nation was increased by arrivals of consignments, mostly from the United Kingdom. Death and relocation also nourished the auction trade. Most book collectors, the sentimental ones, often talk of the auction room so descriptively you can almost hear the hammer falling on hard oak, hear the creaks of the wooden chairs, and the smell of books. It can be a place of great excitement, and great loss too, as books, “comrades once” are sold on to new owners (Fitzgerald 222). The auction room was a place

of transference, transmissibility, and new beginnings. Similarly, the focus of this research begins at the redistribution of a library. Robert Coupland Harding has been studied as a printer, typographer, friend of Colenso, but never as a book collector. This is despite amassing a significant collection of over 5000 works, including a valuable section of New Zealand-related books. The main reason for this is that Harding did not donate his collection to a local or national repository, as did many of his fellow collectors. The only surviving document of Harding's extensive book collection is the auction catalogue that aided in its dispersal. What can this catalogue inform us about the practice of book collecting in New Zealand at the turn of the twentieth century? And what can it tell us about Harding?

In recent years the topic of book buying and collecting has become a renewed interest for researchers investigating areas of print culture and book history. Among subjects explored in scholarly work are the history of individual collectors who assumed significant positions in the practice; the role of collectors in creating and consecrating literary capital; and the history of book marketplaces in a newly globalised trade network of the nineteenth century. Examples of these works are discussed in the following chapter in the context of the international experience of book collecting in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The contribution of New Zealand book collectors is well documented and the country has profited from a growing body of literature relating to book collecting activities in the small antipodean nation. Book collecting as a practice was recognised by an earlier generation of book collectors who produced works such as *Rambles in Bookland* (1922) and *More Rambles in Bookland* (1923), by Charles Wilson; *The Lure of New Zealand Book Collecting*, by Johannes Andersen (1936); *Books and Bookmen: New Zealand and overseas* (1954) and various other publications by Pat Lawlor; and autobiographical works such as *Your Bid, Sir!* by Ernest Vogtherr (1959). A recent notable addition to the literature on collecting practice is Roy Shuker's *Wax Trash and Vinyl Treasures: Record Collecting as a Social Practice* published in 2010, which explores the specialist collection of music in its various recordings and the social influence and impact of the activity. Along with numerous bibliographies which will be discussed in Chapter One, resources designed by and for twentieth century New Zealand collectors include the *Roll of New Zealand Book Collectors*, which documented the community of known collectors and their specialities, published by the New Zealand Ex-Libris and Booklovers' Society in 1958; and Andrew Fair's *Bibliophilists'*

Guide to New Zealand Book Values (1948) and his *Guide to Book Value* series (1952-1977). There are also works documenting major institutionalised collections including *The Turnbull: A Library and its World*, by Rachel Barrowman; *The Governor's Gift: The Auckland Public Library 1880-1980*, by Wynne Colgan; Iris Park's studies on the Fildes' collection and the Sir Robert Stout Pamphlet Collection at Victoria University; and recently a 2012 Masters thesis by Anthony Tedeschi on the Samuel Johnson Collection at the Dunedin Public Library. There have been several in-depth studies produced on New Zealand book collectors, although these have largely focused on the three pre-eminent figures: Sir George Grey, Dr Thomas Hocken and Alexander Turnbull. These works include *Amassing Treasures for All Times: Sir George Grey, colonial bookman and collector*, by Donald Kerr (2006); *Fascinating Folly: Dr Hocken and his fellow collectors* (1961) and *Alexander Turnbull: his life, his circle, his collections* (1974) both by E.H. McCormick; and *Dr. Hocken and his Historical Collection* (1926) by W.H. Trimble, who also provided the *Catalogue of the Hocken Collection* (1912). These works on Grey, Hocken and Turnbull are valuable not only because they provide detailed information on each figure's collecting history, but also because they contribute to painting a picture of the social, economic and cultural undercurrents during the period of their collecting – all of which took place throughout the second half of the nineteenth century through to the early twentieth century. Although Donald Kerr is currently completing a study of Hocken to complement his book on Grey, his work on Frank Wild Reed, a Whangarei-based collector who "amassed the largest collection of books and manuscripts by and about [Alexandre] Dumas outside of Paris" (i) is one of a small group of studies on collectors outside the esteemed prominent three. This work also contributes valuable insight into the role of social networks in collecting practice as a supplement to limited financial resources and the difficulties imposed on a collector who is geographically isolated from the traditional marketplace of their specialist subject. To examine the position of book collecting in nineteenth and twentieth century New Zealand, it is paramount that we investigate other book collectors, from which there is a large pool. Many of these collectors, as will be discussed in Chapter Two, have had their libraries become part of the collections held in the institutions carrying the names of Grey, Hocken and Turnbull. But there is also a need to recognise other collectors who have had their collections dispersed and where only records of their collections survive. Robert Coupland Harding, the subject of this research, is one of these collectors. In widening the scope of the community of book

collectors in New Zealand during this period, it is necessary to re-examine the way in which we classify book collectors. A purpose of this research is to argue for a non-hierarchical method of categorising book collectors to replace the traditionally utilised terms 'major' and 'minor' collectors, or various applications of connoisseur and amateur. The influence of these lesser known collectors deserves recognition and in dedicating more focus to them, we succeed in understanding better the nature of the book collecting field, its role in New Zealand society during this period, and its lasting influence on the developing sense of national culture and national identity. In using a theoretical framework as a lens on book collecting, an opportunity arises to contextualise the New Zealand book collecting community in the wider social and cultural space. Applying a social theory to the practice is appropriate in response to the inherent social nature of book collecting.

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was a French anthropologist, philosopher and sociologist whose work centred on the relationship between individuals and society. Bourdieu did not refer to book collecting as a specific topic; however, he did consider the collecting of art and other consecrated cultural objects. There are three key terms in Bourdieu's theoretical framework, which will be discussed further in this chapter. Concise definitions of these terms are: capital, a form of value; habitus, influences which make a person who they are, and inform how he or she engages in various practices; and field, a setting where agents interact with their social networks, for example, a literary field, law or government field. The movement of an individual between various fields, what Bourdieu terms a cultural trajectory, shapes his or her habitus. Similarly, there is a symbiotic relationship between capital and field, Bourdieu states that, "capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 101). An objective of this research, which will be explored in the following chapter, is to explore book collecting as a field in New Zealand 1880-1920. Before suggesting a description of the practice of book collecting it is necessary to answer first of all: What is a book collector?

There have been many propositions for describing book collectors usually based on what, where or how a collector collects. In a survey of these classifications, it is possible to distinguish two main groups. Firstly, there are those who belong to the very community they are trying to describe: book collectors who are classifying themselves. Typical of this group is nineteenth century Irish author and collector Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald who grouped collectors as the "ordinary book-hunter, stall-ranger or 'prowler'," (4); and the

“bookworm, bibliophile or book-fancier” (7). Fitzgerald also commented that the nineteenth century British auction room was under command of the “*cultured amateur* – rather than the *dilettante*” (243). This distinction is of interest because although the term ‘amateur’ is connoted with both terms, the former is more connected with the root ‘one who loves’ while the latter steers toward a deprecating tone – one who is not serious about collecting but may have financial capital which allows him or her to participate and is perhaps encouraged to do so from a perceived sense of social status associated with the practice. The more successful collector, in Fitzgerald’s view, is the one who is driven by a seasoned understanding of the cultural value of books. John Hill Burton, in his 1882 work *The Book Hunter* similarly offered a basic division of “private prowlers and auction-hunters” (63). These labels focus on where collectors acquire books, but they also lead to a suggestion of more intrinsic characteristics. Burton asserts the physical place of acquisition necessitates a certain set of personal traits: “one demands placidity, patience, caution, plausibility, and unwearied industry . . . The auction-room, on the other hand, calls forth courage, promptness, and the spirit of adventure” (89). Similarly, Fitzgerald’s book-fancier was a figure with “dim eyes, rusty clothing, and an eccentric affection for his treasures” (7). These largely romanticised descriptions fit with the autobiographically-inspired works from which they originate: but sentimentality can also inadvertently display a sense of elitism or exclusivity. In his essay “Unpacking my Library” Walter Benjamin describes the characteristics of “a true collector” for whom, “the acquisition of an old book is its rebirth . . . To renew the old world – that is the collector’s deepest desire . . . and that is why a collector of old books is closer to the wellsprings of collecting than the acquirer of luxury editions” (61). Although Benjamin provided a caveat in his opening, where he describes himself as a “genuine collector” who upon inspection is “speaking only of himself” (59), by describing the characteristics of a ‘true’ and ‘real’ collector, he is by association implying that collectors who do not display these attributes are not real, true collectors. The friction of genuine versus imposter, along with attempts at identifying good versus bad literature or cultured versus uncultivated literary taste played out in the cultural struggle of nineteenth century England. One product of this was the proliferation of manuals and guidebooks and this will be explored further in the following chapter.

The second group of categorisers are academics who, although they may be collectors themselves, offer more pragmatic classifications. A well-established category of

book collectors is the connoisseur, who participates in a particular cultural sphere, for example, of the English tradition. Jim Traue suggested that Alexander Turnbull was a collector of this type, which is characterised by an emphasis on “selection, on choice works and rarities” (*Committed to Print* 30-31). Susan Pearce defined collecting in the European tradition as characterised by a consumerist tendency, a product of the “explosion of material goods” (*On Collecting* 122). Traue also offered the term “colonial collectors” to apply to those who concentrated on historical documents and records on “anything relating to the colony” (*Committed to Print* 31). Dr Thomas Hocken and his almost complete collection of New Zealand material is a prime candidate for this category. In his essay “The Library and the cosmos” Victoria University professor and collector J.C. Beaglehole stated collectors could be divided into generalists, specialists, and generalists who specialise. In contrast to a sentimental label inspired by where a collector collected, these categorisations are largely based on what the collector acquired. Another method is to systemise according to the approach the collector takes in his/her collecting practice. In her work *On Collecting* Susan Pearce describes three approaches that represent relationships between the collector and the collecting object: souvenir (an object-autobiography, wherein the object represents part of the collector’s identity and life history); fetishistic (the obsessive influence of objects which leads to amassing and a drive to complete a collection); and systematic (rational, discriminating) modes of collecting. Similarly, in *Collecting, an Unruly Passion*, Werner Muensterberger explored a psychoanalytical approach to the influences which underpin a collector’s attraction or obsession to collecting, with a heavy emphasis on childhood experiences.

With so many differing suggestions, why does having a classifying system for collectors matter? Simply, categorising not only provides an opportunity for describing collectors; it also frames the practice. Collecting is not a simple matter of going to a book dealer, an auction, or perusing a catalogue and leisurely ordering desired books. This is why book collecting is so often referred to as a ‘game,’ one which requires substantial luck and serendipity as well as skill, experience and capital resources. In imagining a model of book collecting practice, at the very basic level, we can envisage a transaction between agents – a buyer and a seller. However, the transaction costs are only in a small part represented by

financial capital – there is a far more complicated structure involving the market of symbolic goods, the value of cultural capital, and the influence of social capital.

In his work *The Forms of Capital*, Bourdieu provides definitions of the different forms of capital: financial, cultural, social, and symbolic. Financial capital is defined as money or financial assets. Cultural capital can be defined as knowledge, skills and education. There are three sub-forms of cultural capital: embodied (which is transferred over time by the effect of habitus); objective (physical or material objects); and institutionalized (for example, credentials gained from a university, or bestowed by another organisation or society). Social capital is defined through relationships, connections or networks. Social capital and book collecting will be discussed shortly. Bourdieu later added symbolic capital which he defined as “another name for distinction . . . ranks, orders, grades and all other symbolic hierarchies” (Bourdieu and Thompson, *Language and Symbolic Power* 238). Capital can be inherited, traded, bought, sold, bargained, stolen, lose value or unexpectedly surge in value – according to often arbitrary and intangible factors. Therefore, capital is dynamic and there is a constant interdependence of structure and action (Calhoun, “Pierre Bourdieu” 380). Books as objects and book collecting as a practice can move through different layers and forms of capital. As a purely speculative investment, books can result in financial capital: however this is dependent on cultural and symbolic values. Books can be a cultural object, which Bourdieu states allows them to be both a “commodity with a commercial value” and also a “symbolic good, having specifically cultural value” (*The Market of Symbolic Goods* 13). A study on book collecting in relation to the field of cultural production would illustrate how the practice could be part of both the field of restricted production, and the field of large-scale cultural production. However, it is book collecting as a social practice that is the subject of this research and so here books are also identified as objects of social currency that can be traded for social capital, which in turn increases the ability of the collector to participate in the book collecting activity. This acknowledges that social capital is an investment that can reward collectors with returns, be that material for their collection, or access to more social capital. In *Building a Theory of Social Capital*, Nan Lin summarises why these outcomes occur. Firstly, contributing to a social network increases the traffic of information available to members to which they would not otherwise have access. Secondly, social ties can impart influence on agents who hold positions of decision making

(putting in a “good word” for someone). Thirdly, social capital can be translated as social credentials by other members and organisations attached to the field. Lastly, social networks “reinforce identity and recognition” of the individual and their place in their social group (33). These factors: information; influence; social credentials; and recognition are a product of an agent’s ability to use and trade on social capital which produces measureable rewards or outcomes. Lin explains that whereas Bourdieu described social capital as a tool for individuals from the dominant class to sustain their position in the social hierarchy, James Coleman instead identified social capital as a collective asset belonging to and under management of the social group. A study testing these two divergent definitions on the history of the New Zealand Institute or an affiliate Philosophical Society, the country’s first collecting institutes, would provide intriguing insights into the social dynamic of nineteenth century intellectual discourse in New Zealand.

Another critic of Bourdieu’s capital theory is Alison Rukavina. In *The Development of the International Book Trade, 1870-1895: Tangled Networks* (2010), Rukavina proposed a model based on the work of Deleuze and Guattari. This took the form of a rhizome which she explained “is a map or tracing that ceaselessly establishes connections: it is . . . a multiplicity of connections and interfaces between agents and structuring organisations” (25). Rukavina asserted that Bourdieu’s approach was too binary to explain the dynamic interaction between agents in the nineteenth century globalised book trade, where new marketplaces such as Australia and the United States of America were expanding their own trade networks alongside traditionally dominant centres in England and Europe. Bourdieu did address cultural collaboration in his earlier studies on Algerian society at the end of French colonial rule. He witnessed, as Craig Calhoun summarised, “how a traditional order could reproduce itself without the conscious intention to do so” (Calhoun, “Pierre Bourdieu and Social Transformation” 1405), and this informed Bourdieu’s theory on habitus. In a culturally dynamic environment, where members of separate cultural groups interact and must negotiate each other’s social and cultural differences, Bourdieu asserted that “no group escapes this intense cultural interpenetration, and there is no group which does not seek to give itself a distinctive personality by stressing certain aspects of the common cultural heritage” (Bourdieu, *Revolution dans la révolution* 93-4, qu. in Loyal 409).

Bourdieu's theories on colonisation could bridge Rukavina's rhizome model with Bourdieu's interpretation of structured societal hierarchies.

To begin to analyse the dynamics of the field of book collecting in New Zealand requires identifying the stages of book collecting practice. There are three landmarks in the practice of book collecting: selection; acquisition; and survival. These three markers have distinct processes of their own, and at all times social interactions play a determining role in their success or failure. The structure of each landmark is defined in unique terms according to the collector, the type of market engaged, the makeup of the field of book collecting and the desired object itself. The cultivation of the book collector is a process which begins well before the landmarks appear on the horizon, and yet it has a direct and lasting influence over the way the collector behaves in the field. Cultivation is directly tied to Bourdieu's term *habitus*. *Habitus* "refers to the way we intuitively, unconsciously position ourselves in the world and relate to the world" (Calhoun, "Pierre Bourdieu" 378). Put another way, *habitus* "has to do with the individual's more or less lasting physical and mental condition . . . a set of dispositions and internalized possibilities which enable a person to orient him/herself in the social world" (Kauppi 36). Initially *habitus* is projected by the direct influence of parents or caregivers on infants and young children (adults who are themselves products of *habitus*). Later the child absorbs *habitus* through wider societal influences. Bourdieu described *habitus* as "the basis of an alchemy which transforms the distribution of capital, the balance-sheet of a power relation, into a system of perceived differences, distinctive properties, that is, a distribution of symbolic capital, legitimate capital, whose objective truth is misrecognized" (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 172). Misrecognition occurs when a culturally constructed rule is taken as a natural truth by all members of society. Education plays a particularly important role. Formal education can reflect an individual's socio-economic position, although this can be circumvented by particular individuals who possess other characteristics which propel them from the normal course of their social position. The more complicated influence of education, aside from the quantity and quality that an individual receives, is the way which the institution of the education sector is moulded by the cultural values of the dominant social class. In terms of the field of book collecting this is relatable when we consider the influence of taste and distinction of the collector, and trends and fashion of the field. As well as upbringing and education, role models regularly feature as

key influences in cultivating the collector – the influence of mentor William Colenso on Robert Coupland Harding’s collecting identity and practice will be discussed in a following chapter.

After the cultivation of the collector reaches an appropriate stage he or she then enters the marketplace. The marketplace is a broad environment which includes many routine as well as obscure modes of transaction. These modes can depend as much on the collector’s access to physical spaces as social ones – again, the role of social networks is a defining feature of engagement in book collecting practice. Although some bought exclusively through overseas catalogues, many New Zealand book collectors throughout the nineteenth century were often required to travel to England in order to have a better chance of collecting particular types of material, including works relating to New Zealand. Once there, it was still hard, if not impossible, to purchase books because of an entrenched system of agents and dealers who were, in a sense, contracted to other book collectors. The book collecting market is not a simple system of supply and demand – a dealer is inclined to consider the standing relationships he or she has with other collectors as well as the potential of future sales from preferred customers and the prestige which is infused with sales to particular collectors. Even upon travelling to the marketplace, it may still be locked shut if you do not have a social invitation to enter. This will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Once finding an entry into the marketplace, the collector then goes through a process of identification – identifying desired books in whatever scope that fits the collector’s taste. At some point the identification stage breaks into two trajectories: “the book” and “the object”, or, “I want *a* book” and “I want *this* book.” Once the object is selected, the collector then moves into the process of acquisition. Auctions, catalogue ordering, face to face with dealers and private exchanges among collectors and other agents all have their own set of guidelines and regulations, many tacit rather than public, which are employed during the acquiring phase. If the collector is successful, the acquisition is complete. There may be a period of reflection and study of the object before it is introduced to the collection. At this point the object may be catalogued, positioned or absorbed into the collection and the single becomes part of a larger whole. Then the survival phase begins. The fate of the object, as an individual item or as part of a larger collection, can now be

subject to one (or more) of four options: demise (being destroyed as in a fire or flood – the object has gone and is not recoverable); lost, stolen or borrowed and not returned (in which the book ‘escapes’ – it survives but not in the hand of the collector who acquired it, in a state which was not sanctioned by the collector); dispersed through an auction (as a single book, part of a collection or an item of the whole collection); or the book becomes institutionalised in a repository such as a national collection, archive or museum. All of these options, except for demise and institutionalisation, give the likelihood of the book being reabsorbed back into the book collecting market.

Although this model is logically structured, the reality of a book collector’s experience within the field as he or she travels through different stages of book collecting practice is far more complex. The overarching factor is the social nature of the practice and the collector’s ability to use all capital resources to achieve desired aims. In addition to various capital funds, the collector is able to trade books as social currency in order to secure profitable relationships which could, in turn, provide a further channel for acquiring desired books. This utilisation of social capital also allows for the collector to rearrange or bypass stages of the processes; and there are other deviations from the standard model. One example is acknowledging that there are different methods of acquiring books other than buying them. In “Unpacking my Library” Walter Benjamin describes alternative ways of acquiring books: writing them, the “most praiseworthy” method as it contributes to the body of literature (61); borrowing them and not returning them is “most appropriate” for a book collector (62); but the “soundest way” to acquire books is to inherit them, for “the most distinguished trait of a collection will always be its transmissibility” (66). Nineteenth century printer, scholar and collector William Blades wrote in *The Enemies of Books* detailed descriptions of the dangers confronting the survival of books. Among enemies such as fire, bookworms and children, particularly “boys . . . between the ages of six and twelve” (N.p.), Blades identified collectors as posing a serious risk. He provided examples of various biblioclasts and bibliotaphs who, according to their particular collecting bent, performed vivisections in order to attain title pages, illuminated initials, illustrative plates and frontispieces. Blades accused collectors, including renowned diarist, parliamentarian and collector Samuel Pepys of “being unable to carry their treasures into the next world, [so] do all they can to hinder their usefulness in this” by placing unworkable conditions on access to

their collections: another death sentence for books (N.p.). Sir Thomas Phillipps, a compulsive hoarder-collector had in his “crammed mansion . . . cases of books bought twenty years before his death . . . never opened, and the only knowledge of their contents which he possessed was the Sale Catalogue or the bookseller's invoice” (N.p.). Finally, Blades argued that:

. . . the possession of any old book is a sacred trust, which a conscientious owner or guardian would as soon think of ignoring as a parent would of neglecting his child. An old book, whatever its subject or internal merits, is truly a portion of the national history; we may imitate it and print it in fac-simile, but we can never exactly reproduce it; and as an historical document it should be carefully preserved. (N.p.)

If a book collector is anyone who acquires books for a purpose other than merely reading them, then as Blades suggests, a book collector's first impulse is toward the book as an object of significance, a symbolic object. Identifying books as symbolic objects that impart an imbued status as a cultural asset is of relevance to the field of book collecting in New Zealand 1880-1920. Before defining this field further through the activities of one collector, Robert Coupland Harding, who by the way, was a friend of Blades, it is necessary to provide an overview of the general trends and influences of nineteenth century book collecting.

Chapter One: The Field of Book Collecting in New Zealand 1880-1920

Throughout the nineteenth century, the epicentre of the world trade in books for New Zealand collectors was London. This was a similar experience for book collectors from other newly colonised nations who were almost entirely dependent on the marketplace in London, not only for rare books that contained the cultural capital of the Old World, but also for works relating to their own countries. While printing technologies were taking a foothold in the young nations, much literature was still printed and traded in England. Although recent scholars have suggested that a collection could be built from afar, Traue suggested that it was a necessity for New Zealand connoisseur book collectors to have robust connections to London booksellers and book agents and to take a trip “Home” to find and secure material for their collections (*Committed to Print* 34). The ability to hire a book agent or bookseller to work on a collector’s behalf in the local UK markets itself necessitated a trip Home: a costly voyage which involved months at sea was not a viable option for all except the very privileged book collectors. But this sets the stage on the field of book collecting in New Zealand toward the turn of the twentieth century: the geographic distance from the traditional centres of the book collecting trade required alternative systems to become established. In response, social networks held up the marketplace and the ability of members of the field to navigate through social channels impacted on their collecting success far more than simply financial capital alone. Books were traded, not only as direct transactions of acquisitions but also indirectly as objects of social currency. To contextualise the field of book collecting in New Zealand 1880-1920, it is important to present an overview of the international activities in the practice of book collecting. As it has been discussed in the Introduction, there have been several concentrated and comparative studies produced on this topic which will not be revisited here in detail. However, in highlighting some key activities in collecting during this period, it becomes apparent that book collecting as a practice is closely tied with social, economic and cultural influences.

The social upheaval in England during the Victorian period caused a massive shift in the way the cultural elite, book collectors amongst them, viewed themselves. The education reforms of the nineteenth century, including the Elementary Education Act of 1870 which

paved the way for compulsory schooling, caused an explosion in the population of a literate public. The effects of the literacy boom shook the elite class to its core, and the response was divided. Such figures as Andrew Lang resented what he believed to be the debasement and demoralising of literature in the hands of the lesser classes. He wrote in the introduction to Joseph Shaylor's 1914 *Pleasures of Bookland*: "People who deserve to be able to read, did read, and now that everyone can read, few people deserve to do so, for few go beyond a newspaper . . . the result is that authors endeavour to reach that vast public which, in no age and in no country, has cared for the pleasures of literature" (xii). Lang belonged to a group who believed that one "must be born to love books and to inherit the citizenship of the Republic of Letters" (xxiv). The education reforms which led to the propagation of literacy among classes of people who did not 'deserve' it had not only degraded literature, but it had eroded civilisation itself: the daily newspapers, the rise of popular fiction, and circulating libraries were the evidence. The circulating libraries put books into the hands of a previously deprived public, but to the lament of the cultural elite who believed these institutions were full of trash. There would have been many who agreed with Richard Sheridan's character Sir Anthony in his play *The Rivals* when he stated, "Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge! It blossoms through the year!—And depend on it, Mrs. Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last" (*The Rivals* 3.1).

The mass production of books was an additional influence which fuelled not only the new literate class, but also a new literary class. In response, Mary Hammond describes an anxiety during the nineteenth century about discussing 'good books' and 'bad books'; 'literary' and 'popular' works. An invigorated focus on the 'classics' or old books in general was a safer retreat for the old book connoisseur than to try and navigate the new literary landscape. She states that "the rise in literary purism in the 1890s emerges . . . less an aesthetic than as a social response" (15). This sense of distinguishing and promoting a desirable taste in literature extended to the growing field of book collectors and a product of this, in tune with the general Victorian impulse toward learning and betterment, was the proliferation of manuals and guidebooks.

For those who possessed a more benevolent outlook toward the growing literate population, manuals and guidebooks provided an opportunity to reach down and help

coach the uninitiated toward a proper employment of their new skill. Typical of these teaching apparatuses, the “Book Lover’s Library” series included such titles as *How to Collect a Library* (1889); *How to Catalogue a Library* (1889); *How to Make an Index* (1902); and *How to Use a Library* (1910). As well as providing instructions on basic skills and systems, manuals attempted to impart the essence of cultural elucidation. Arnold Bennett, who famously opined “Good taste is better than bad taste, but bad taste is better than none,” wrote *Literary Taste: How to Form It* in 1909. More than ten years after its initial publication, in an address to the New Zealand Territorials called “Books and Reading” Chief Parliamentary Librarian Charles Wilson recommended *Literary Taste* as a useful guide to novice readers (*Evening Post* 21 Jul 1922: 7). Members of the established privileged class were themselves not immune from the attempts of some to provide proper instruction in this area. Thomas Frognall Dibdin addressed *The Library Companion, or the Young Man’s Guide and Old Man’s Comfort in the Choice of a Library* (1824) to the young members of the upper class, whom he identified needed correct instruction as their financial capital often spoke over the top of their cultural education. Dibdin believed his instruction would “devote them to the gratification of a legitimate taste in the cultivation of literature” (Introduction i). This work was, however, largely panned by the same community he was trying to instruct. John Hill Burton savagely rebuked: “One of the reasons why Dibdin’s expatiations among rare and valuable volumes are, after all, so devoid of interest, is, that he occupied himself in a great measure in catering for men with measureless purses” (165).

The sentiment of the established English book collectors toward the emerging colonial societies was often portrayed as decidedly paternalistic. The United States of America was singled out in particular for what was perceived by some to be an alarming invasion of their literary and cultural wealth. “For many years,” W. Roberts wrote in the periodical *The Nineteenth Century*, “past American collectors have been draining England of rare books and manuscripts, and more particularly of works relating to British genealogy and county history” (963). Burton also discussed this problem at length: “as the book-trade and book-buyers know very well, the ‘almighty dollar’ has been hard at work, trying to rear up by its sheer force duplicates of the old European libraries, containing not only all the ordinary stock books in the market, but also the rarities, and those individualities—solitary remaining copies of impressions—which the initiated call uniques” (174). The celebrated

American collector, antiquarian book trader and philanthropist A.S.W. Rosenbach defended this activity, noting that “It is a curious thing that rare books and precious things of the collector follow the flow of gold” (246). Rosenbach asserted that many of the artefacts were being transferred from private collections in England to public institutions in the United States which was a benefit to both the books and those who are able to access them. It was not simply the competition from wealthy Americans that alarmed the old guard of English book collectors, but also the way in which they approached collecting. Robert A. Shaddy suggested that the American collector “during the time of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a time of rapid and disorientating cultural and technological change, felt that possessing books, manuscripts, and other collectibles allowed a recovery of an idealised past which had slipped or was slipping away from them” (68). Shaddy also asserted that the American penchant for sporting further enticed Americans to take up the pursuit of book collecting. These two defining characteristics of sentimentality and sporting/competitiveness portray a book collector that is driven by emotion. This is at odds with the notion of the ‘traditional’ book collector, who as well as collecting passionately collects studiously, rationally and intelligently. This is a portrayal that William Carew Hazlitt validates while diplomatically discussing the American’s preoccupation to first editions, or *editio princeps*:

It is by no means that we seek to ridicule or discourage the pursuit, but we want and wish to see a more healthy and discriminating spirit among buyers. Let intending collectors devote a reasonable time to preparatory study of the subject and survey the field and then they will perhaps accomplish better results at a lower price. (*The Book Collector* 146)

In contrast to the taste for old and rare books which typified nineteenth century American collectors, the collectors across the channel from England were reacting in a very different way to an upheaval of social and cultural order.

In her work *The New Bibliopolis: French Book Collectors and the Culture of Print 1880-1914*, Willa Silverman addresses the field of book collecting following the tumultuous events of the Revolution and the advent of the Third Republic in 1870. Silverman posits that at this time France was becoming increasingly populated by an emerging upper-bourgeois

bohemian community. Far from searching for historical artefacts, and inspired not by nationalism but by the growing influence of materialism, the members of this class were identified by their desire to collect the new, the *beaux livres* or *livres de luxe*. Even with the technological advances in mechanical reproductions, print-runs were downsized to meet the desires of the new book collecting class for both 'new' and 'rare'. The fashionable collecting habits of the day had a direct and immediate impact on the creative class – not only writers, but paper makers, typographers, printers, illustrators and book binders. The new collector – not interested or too worn out by searching for traditionally desirable works, “decided to make them instead” (Silverman 18). In another perspective on book collecting in post-Revolutionary France, Tom Stammers focuses on “objects that were displaced, rather than destroyed or displayed, by revolutionary fervour” (297). He asserts that the great dispersal of French cultural artefacts, including books and ephemera, during the period immediately following the Revolution created a great reallocation of former elitist-guarded material into the hands of the greater public: “The revolution set loose countless objects from their traditional settings, and swept them into new circuits of exchange, display and interpretation” (301). Stammers also emphasises the role of the private collector in establishing *what* history is collected, and therefore, what *becomes* history. This was an area of pertinence to the collectors of Australia and New Zealand, who were in their own way grappling with the issue of amassing records towards a definition of a unique cultural and national identity.

The activity of private collectors in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century was vital to the establishment and growth of national repositories in New Zealand and Australia, at a time when there was little, if any, institutionalised material. The intention to donate all or part of a private collection is a feature that contributes to shaping the field of book collecting during this period. The three preeminent book collectors of New Zealand gifted their collections in this way: Dr Thomas Hocken’s collection became the Hocken Library of Dunedin, opened to the public in 1910; in 1918, Alexander Turnbull’s library became the core of a national archive; and Auckland Libraries state Sir George Grey’s collection accounted for more than half of the stock when it opened its new buildings in 1887 (“About Sir George Grey”). Other book collector contemporaries of Hocken, Grey and Turnbull contributed valuable collections to local and national institutions either as donations or

acquisitions. Among these were Sir Frederick Chapman's collections which *Footnotes on Official History* note were distributed among the Hocken Library (featuring his extensive pamphlet collection), the Dominion Museum (now Te Papa) and the Alexander Turnbull Library; collections of Robert Hogg, Montfort Trimble, Walter Mantell, Robert McNab and Henry Wright are also held in the Turnbull Library; The Auckland Public Library includes Frank Wild Reed's prestigious collection of the work of Alexander Dumas, and the collections of brothers Henry and Fred Shaw; Victoria University of Wellington received Sir Robert Stout's extensive pamphlet collection in 1928, and the book collection and personal archives of local historian-collector Horace Fildes in 1937. This is only a brief description of the contributions of private collectors to institutions – a full survey of rare book collections in New Zealand has not been undertaken, although this is the subject of a paper by V.G. Elliott and more detailed information about some collections is contained in this work. Other sources of information, including an outline of individual's collections, are contained in *Book & Print in New Zealand* (206-211); and Szentirmai's *Dictionary of Information and Library Services in New Zealand*.

Before national or state institutions devoted resources toward appropriate housing for collections and invested in developing skilled and professional curators, collectors were naturally hesitant to gift collections. Alexander Turnbull initially voiced the desire to donate his collection to Victoria University College, but later changed his mind and offered it to the Government (McCormick, *Alexander Turnbull* 286). This change of heart was likely to have been informed by the situation surrounding Hocken's donation to the city of Dunedin. Hocken announced his intention to gift his collections in 1897, on the condition that suitable housing be provided. By 1906, the *Otago Daily Times* had joined the campaign to push for the housing to be made available, and lamented at the "singular apathy on the part of the public of this city" to do so, warning that "it will redound to the everlasting discredit of the people of Dunedin if they any longer treat Dr Hocken's generous offer with the indifference they have up to the present manifested towards it" (5 Jul 1906: 6). The Hocken Collection was then provided with a special wing in the Otago Museum and managed by the University of Otago, and finally opened to the public in 1910. Likewise, after making the announcement in 1883 that he was going to donate his collection to the city of Auckland, Grey held on to his collection until suitable housing was provided – made vigilant perhaps by

the finance-induced demise of the Auckland Mechanics Institute and the hasty adoption of its library by the Auckland City Council, and the memories of Grey's first library being destroyed by fire in 1848. Even after making the donation, Grey stipulated that until his death only he could remove any material and that he would "have the privilege of taking any books out and keeping them as long as I require" (qtd. in Colgan 31). Certainly the high-profile undertakings of Grey and Hocken raised in the public consciousness the importance of collecting and preserving the nation's historical records. While Turnbull was more publicly aloof, his place in the network of book collectors was well-ingrained, and along with Hocken and Grey their collecting activities played a part in developing interest among collectors in acquiring New Zealand material.

The collecting of New Zealand material is another characteristic of the country's field of book collecting from the nineteenth century. It is not only that collecting New Zealand-related literature was a popular pursuit among the members of the book collecting community; it also drove the establishment and strengthening of social bonds between collectors. There was a common trade of duplicates and unwanted material as a form of social currency to improve network connections, as will be illustrated in the exchange between Hocken and Harding in the following chapter. The popularity of collecting New Zealand-related material was two-fold: firstly, there was a sense of urgency, displayed by dedicated collectors of New Zealand material like Hocken, to hunt down material and this precipitated an active correspondence between collectors. A stocktake of New Zealand literature was being undertaken, and many of the known literary artefacts of early New Zealand were still within living memory of members of the collecting field – indeed, some members (for example, William Colenso and Robert Coupland Harding) were the printers who brought forth the material. The vast amount of ephemeral material, pamphlets and newspapers, were a feature of early New Zealand printing which reinforced the need to find any surviving examples of these works before they succumbed to natural demise. Secondly, there was a renewed vigour in the publishing of New Zealand-related material toward the end of the nineteenth century – a characteristic of New Zealand literature which will be explored in more detail in Chapter Two. Many of the members of the book collecting field were themselves taking part in this increase of literature: Guy Scholefield, Robert McNab, S. Percy Smith, William Colenso, Edward Tregear, T.F Cheeseman, Augustus Hamilton and

William Miles Maskell to name only a few – all published books on areas of New Zealand history or science which were in line with their collecting interests. The increase in the publishing of New Zealand books also allowed collectors to expand from rare and old material to include new material. Publishing houses responding to this increased interest in New Zealand literature also contributed to the body of attainable books by republishing material which had become scarce. In his review of *A Narrative of Nine Month's Residency in New Zealand in 1827*, Robert Coupland Harding noted that the book “is another of the reprints of early books on New Zealand, the original issues of which are becoming increasingly sought for. The publishers are doing a good service in making these works accessible . . .” (*Evening Post* 22 Feb 1909: 13). Hocken's endeavours were, above all others, the best example of an almost exclusive and comprehensive New Zealand collection. The impetus behind his specialisation in New Zealand literature was fuelled by his efforts towards compiling a national bibliography. In the article “A Collector's Sacrifice” Hocken escorted an *Evening Star* reporter around his collection and is reported to have proclaimed, “I have them all in this library. I suppose I have a copy of almost every book written upon New Zealand. This bibliography simply means cataloguing and describing the books you see around you” (N.d. N.p.).

Bibliography was another defining characteristic in the field of New Zealand book collecting during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. This preoccupation with bibliographic records was a feature shared with Australia. The earliest reference resources for nineteenth century Australiana collectors were in fact catalogues, not bibliographies, prepared by Australia's first bibliographer, bookseller Edward Petherick. His first significant contribution began with *The Catalogue of the York Gate Library*, formed by Mr S. William Silver and published in 1882 (republished and widely expanded in 1886), followed by the catalogue of the library of Francis Edwards in 1899 – the first catalogue devoted entirely to Australian related literature, including (then) current prices (Burmester, “Edward Augustus Petherick.” *Australian Dictionary of Biography*). Petherick also established the *Colonial Book Circular and Bibliographical Record* (afterwards titled *The Torch*). While there were bibliographies centring on literature relating to defined geographic areas (for example, Thomas Gill's *Bibliography of South Australia*, 1886; and C.P. Billot's *Melbourne – an annotated bibliography to 1850*); it was not until 1941 that a comprehensive record of

Australiana was compiled in Ferguson's *Bibliography of Australia*. In contrast, across the Tasman, New Zealand was significantly more advanced in the realisation of compiling a national bibliographic record.

Traue raises the question whether any other country could compete with New Zealand in terms of genuine attempts at cataloguing a comprehensive national bibliography. He suggested that the achievement was far more likely in New Zealand, where there was – by international standards of the time – a far smaller body of work to record: “The literature relating to New Zealand was perceived manageable, and this was the lure to which the bibliographers rose” (*Committed to Print* 9). Traue supported this by stating that before the colony's first centenary there had been four serious attempts at delivering such a record. The works referred to were: *Contributions towards a bibliography of New Zealand*, by James Davidson Davis published in 1887; *Literature relating to New Zealand* compiled by James Collier, 1889; *Catalogue of the General Assembly Library of New Zealand*, 1897; and Hocken's *A Bibliography of Literature Relating to New Zealand*, first published in 1909. Another work of note is *A bibliography of printed Maori to 1900*, compiled by Herbert W. Williams in 1924. Hocken's *Bibliography*, as well as the *Supplement to Hocken's Bibliography of New Zealand Literature* compiled by A.H. Johnstone and published in 1927, was the most authoritative and comprehensive bibliography available to collectors of the period until A.G. Bagnall's *New Zealand national bibliography to the year 1960* was published in 1970. Robert Coupland Harding reviewed Hocken's work in the *Evening Post*: “the latest and most extensive of New Zealand bibliographies, is by many degrees the best” (21 Aug 1909: 13). A cluster of bibliographies found in the auction of Robert Coupland Harding's library exemplifies the ubiquitous appearance of the resources in a book collector's collection – his library contained Hocken's *Bibliography* (lot no. 119); the *Catalogue of the General Assembly Library* (2 vols), “and two others” (lot no. 120); and Collier's *Bibliography* (lot no. 121). A comprehensive national literature was not the only objective for bibliography. Robert Coupland Harding noted in his paper “An Ornithological Note” presented to the Wellington Philosophical Society that he was helping Augustus Hamilton compile material for a bibliography of literature relating to the moa. Hamilton produced several bibliographies on other subjects which were published in the Society's *Transactions*, including one on literature relating to the Maori. This bibliography was largely a product of

preparing his outstanding work *The art and workmanship of the Maori race in New Zealand* which appeared in five parts 1896-1900, and a compiled edition published as *Maori Art* in 1901. "Hamilton's Maori Art," as the work became known, quickly became a collector's item – on a par with Sir Walter Lawry Buller's *A History of the Birds of New Zealand* (commonly referred to as "Buller's Birds" published in 1873, and a second edition in 1888) and George French Angus's *New Zealanders* (1847). Hamilton, who was appointed the Director of the Dominion Museum in 1903 (Dell, "Augustus Hamilton." *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Te Ara*), was a significant collector of Maori artefacts and his private library was auctioned by Bethunes on 9 February 1917 (advertised in *Evening Post* 8 Feb 1917: 8).

While bibliographies, Hocken's in particular, were viewed as essential aids among collectors of New Zealand material, the composition of the marketplace for acquiring books also features as a defining characteristic in the field of New Zealand book collecting. Australia had the benefit of astute and dedicated booksellers Angus and Robertson, established in the mid-nineteenth century, who propelled the availability and the quality of books in that colony; New Zealand book collectors had to wait longer for the trade of bookselling to progress to a fully professionalised industry. That being said, booksellers were founded almost instantly in many settlements in New Zealand. The first booksellers in Wellington run by William Lyon (who later partnered with John Rutherford Blair to establish the local printing institution of Lyon & Blair) opened in 1840, the same year as the first boat of pakeha settlers arrived in the harbour (Rogers, *Turning the Pages* 48). Although parts of New Zealand were serviced by knowledgeable booksellers, the profession as a whole suffered from a lack of training and organisation. Booksellers often diversified their undertakings, and along with books they advertised themselves as stationers, printers, and merchants of household sundries and supplies. It was not until the establishment of the Booksellers Association by Harry South in 1921 that the trade became a self-aware, and self-promoting professional industry. In a manner that mirrors the attitudes expressed in manuals and guidebooks, booksellers had realised that they too had power to mould the tastes of book buyers. "We booksellers can be the guides and friend of the reading public," Association member G.H. Bennett (of Bennett's Bookshop) proclaimed, "we can help the people who read in choosing the best to read; we can help form good reading taste" (qtd. in *Evening Post* 21 Sep 1922: 8). As will be discussed shortly, one product from this lack of a

professionalised industry in the nineteenth century was the appearance of travelling book salesmen. Another outcome was the reliance New Zealand book collectors had on auction houses to provide opportunities for increasing their collections.

There were several auction houses operating across the country throughout the nineteenth century, and they held a vital presence in the life of the colony's settler society before more specialised trade industries were formed. Indeed, they were a major avenue for buying almost anything – from property to livestock; household wares to antiques. Book collectors were equally as dependent on auction houses for expanding their library shelves. This resulted in a centralisation of the book collecting trade; it also became the main social hub for book collectors. Bethune and Hunter commenced trading in 1852, and became J.H. Bethune & Co in 1877 (*Book and Print* 203). The firm quickly rose to become the premier auctioneers for book collectors in New Zealand. Ernest Vogtherr reminisced about his early experiences at Bethunes, which he credits with triggering his activities in book collecting: "Most books are bought at various sales, but Bethune's stands supreme, it sets the standard" (3). Pat Lawlor dedicated a chapter to Bethunes in his book *Books and Bookmen*, which provided glowing memories of J.H. Bethune, "the man who made possible a booklover's paradise" (104), along with stories of the auctions and the auctioneers. "There is A.H. wrapped up in my books," wrote Lawlor about Bethune's auctioneer Arthur Hollis, "He sold to me the best of Dick Harris's library, and many choice items belonging to Robert Hogg and Charles Wilson" (109). Lawlor's statement encapsulates the imbued romance of books bought at auction which would have been a common sentiment among book collectors. If we are to assume that collections represent in some way the collector, then acquiring books from the library auction of other known collectors, friends amongst them, is not unlike keeping a part of them. The auction of a fellow book collector's library is a kind of funeral wake, an objectified 'scattering the ashes' back amongst the collecting community. In *The Book Fancier*, Percy Fitzgerald wrote of the "mixed-feelings" in the auction room, a place where competitiveness, recklessness and greed is displayed alongside muted sadness at the "drawing and quartering" of whole libraries:

There must be a secret dramatic history connected with many a book or library that has found a few week's lodgings in these [auction] rooms. One collection, and now another – comrades once, during a century's span – arrives; a glorious compact

companionship, in all honour and distinction, in a few days to be disintegrated, sold into captivity, scattered or adopted into a new collection. With them the late owner's soul is associated. (222)

Sales of private libraries were always a feature of book auctions in the nineteenth century, but the mainstay of books entering the market largely depended on the business decisions of individuals on the other side of the world. Book auctions in nineteenth century New Zealand were reliant on consignments shipped from overseas booksellers – almost exclusively from the United Kingdom. The history of the consignment trade in the Australian and New Zealand market is well documented by Wallace Kirsop who noted a surprising statistic from the *Annual Statement of the Trade and Navigation of the United Kingdom* that by 1854 the trade of book exports via consignments to New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific islands was comparatively level with the trade to the United States (*Books for Colonial Readers* 11). Is this evidence of a vigorous local interest in books, or does it demonstrate the dominating trade practices of the time?

The consignment trade was speculative by nature, as the ownership of the goods remained with the sender until the goods were on-sold at the final designation. Because these goods were not directly ordered or paid for in advance, success in the endeavour required astute foresight of demands and a chain of trade agents bound together by good faith and business acumen. However, in practice a well-researched selection of relevant books for the destination market was not often the primary motive of the early book traders. Kirsop suggests that throughout the nineteenth century the antipodean market was a convenient destination to dump excess stock and it was not until the late 1850s when entrepreneurial booksellers such as George Robertson of Melbourne established their own book agencies in London and began consigning shipments directly did the quality and consistency of the book imports to Australia improve (“Selling books at auction in nineteenth century Australia” 204).

One consignment trader who did comparatively well was English bookseller Edward Lumley, whose primary trade was with the United States, but who also had success in both the Australian and New Zealand market (Kirsop, “Bernard Quaritch” 15). There are three documented auctions of Lumley's consignment sales in Wellington: 1848, 1850, and 1851 –

Grey's Collection holds catalogues from each of these auctions. Although the consignments were heavily stocked with Lumley's own publications, remaindered stock and cheap editions, his success was due to the 'something for everyone' factor, as well as a heavier emphasis on antiquarian books, including some very rare and desirable items with provenance highlighted (Kirsop, *Books for Colonial Readers* 58). Bernard Quaritch, who only tried once to enter into the New Zealand market with an 1893 consignment of books to be sold by T. Kennedy Macdonald & Co in Wellington, was less successful. The sale was advertised as "direct from the world-celebrated stock of Mr Bernard Quaritch, of London, the greatest bookseller in the British Empire" (*Evening Post* 16 Jan 1893: 3). Another advertisement stated Quaritch's object for the sale was to "test New Zealand as a market" (*Evening Post* 18 Jan 1893: 3). The sale did not yield satisfactory results for Quaritch, who spent years trying to get the records and underwhelming profits of the sale forwarded back to his office in London (Kirsop, "Bernard Quaritch" 20). Kirsop highlights Quaritch's lack of tailoring to the taste of the local market for his failure, and as evidenced by the newspaper advertisement above, he notes that the motive for "the great bookseller was primarily aimed at reducing his stock and advertising his existence to the monied bookbuyers and collectors" (*Books for Colonial Readers* 41). Although the sale itself was a failure, the auctioneers continued to invoke Quaritch's name to advertise future sales: "The great majority of these Books will be found on inspection to be fully equal to the former shipment from the celebrated Library of Mr. Bernard Quartich" the hopeful auctioneers proclaimed (*Evening Post* 14 Jun 1893: 3). The only positive that amounted from the failed consignment endeavour was the relationship Quaritch developed with Alexander Turnbull, whom he had enlisted in his attempts at settling the affair. "In the bibliographical partnership of a favoured customer and a trusted bookseller," Kirsop noted, "there is much more to be hoped for than the marginal resource of sporadic consignment sales" ("Bernard Quaritch" 20).

The use of UK-based book agents was a technique of acquisition that was well utilised by antipodean book collectors who were able to secure them. An example of such a collector was Sir George Grey, and his activities in this method are well documented in the research of Donald Kerr (including a thoroughly detailed history of Grey's collecting activity in his work *Amassing Treasures for all Time: Sir George Grey, colonial bookman and*

collector). Grey is an example of a well-connected book collector – he had strong professional relationships with the giants of the nineteenth century book trade: Henry G. Bohn, Edward Lumley and Bernard Quaritch. However, the effect on other collectors, who suffered from possessing less social capital, was significant. C. R. Carter returned to England in 1890 endeavouring to make “more complete” the collection of New Zealand related books he had gifted to the Wellington Museum and Colonial Institute. This time he had success and remarked, “considering the present state of the market for this class of books, which have become more difficult to procure, have gone up in price, and, in some cases, bring – as a bookseller told me – ‘fabulous prices.’ In fact, almost anything with the name of New Zealand attached to it is eagerly sought after and bought up by Australasian book-speculators” (*Continuation* iii). This is a situation that Carter had already discussed in his first *Catalogue of Books on New Zealand*. While he went on to describe booksellers who met his standards of fair and knowledgeable tradesmen, he lamented that the use of “wealthy colonial collectors” employing book agents in London had detrimental effects for the outsider book collector:

These agents had their sub-agents, who instructed the most likely of the London and country booksellers, to report to them the titles and price of all books on New Zealand that they could procure. Even the owners of street book stalls were enlisted in the service. The result was that the books were bought at low prices and sold at high ones. This new colonial book business I found was in the hands of about a dozen large and small bookdealers, (four of them very dear ones), I applied to them but even then I could not get all I wanted at any price. I advertised in the “Bookseller” with similar results. I visited Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh, and was fairly successful in each of these cities, though I had to compete against ‘Orders from London for New Zealand books.’ (37-38)

This demonstrates that book collectors needed to make strong and profitable social connections with UK intermediaries, and the arrangements were not easily secured. Exclusivity for favoured book collectors meant that other collectors could not easily break into the trading circle, which not only translated to difficulty in acquiring desired books, but also meant they were not given support or advice on other titles which could be of interest or of benefit to their collection. It is interesting that Carter noted in his introduction to the

Second Continuation to the Catalogue that Grey, an unwitting participant in the situation, “agreed with me in my remarks in the Catalogue on the disreputable practices of some London booksellers” (Introduction iv). Those book collectors who could not attain this service were more reliant on the chain of supply between booksellers, auction houses and the community of book buyers themselves.

One curious, and overlooked, role in the book trade was the travelling salesman, more affectionately referred to as the Book Fiend. This was the commonly used term for the person who travelled from community to community signing customers up for subscriptions to book publications: a book canvasser. The travelling salesman was a common figure in the nineteenth century, although the role of the profession was largely maligned by the communities that the salesmen frequented. This was not always caused by the hard-selling techniques characterised by pushy salesmen, but it has been argued that the role of the travelling salesman was abrasive to Victorian sensibilities, particularly toward the twentieth century when a growing lower middle class placed “particular emphasis . . . on the family and local community as the centres of . . . culture” (French 353). The travelling salesman was both an outsider and an intruder. Robert Coupland Harding commented that “the book-fiend is becoming an important and unpleasant factor in our social system” (*Typo* 4.47 (1890): 131). Criticism also suggested that the practice was unregulated and populated with characters with “infinite glibness of tongue, who by dint of volubility, assurance, and sticking to his victims makes them buy books which they don’t in the least want, and very often for an amount which they can ill afford” (*Nelson Evening Mail* 1 Apr 1890: 4). Newspapers reported almost gleefully on the conflicts between agents and communities, with stories frequently swapping both sides of the Tasman. In Australia and New Zealand the most famous example connected to this practice was the publication *The Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*. Tony Hughes-dAeth wrote a comprehensive history of the publication *Paper Nation: the Story of the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* focusing on how the work represented colonial attitudes of Australia. In all, forty-two volumes of the *Atlas* were published and they were received with almost universal praise – including in reviews published in *Typo* – for their publication quality. Robert Coupland Harding praised the second volume, which had a section specific on New Zealand: “Of the artistic merits of the book it is scarcely possible to speak too highly” (*Typo* 3.35 (1899): 131). There is an auction

lot of two volumes of the *Picturesque Atlas* in the auction catalogue of Robert Coupland Harding's library, which suggests Harding did not himself collect the entire set, and that these two volumes were likely copies that were sent to Harding for the purposes of review in *Typo*. The glowing reviews for the *Atlas* did not stop the publication becoming embroiled in a scandal which was played out in courts, local communities and newspapers. A columnist pen-named "Allegro" described in Brisbane's *The Queenslander*, "It is a well-meaning book, a work of many merits, and yet no publication of our day or perhaps any other day, has caused such widespread misery or given rise to such wrathful passions. Its course has been marked by litigation, repudiation, charges of forgery, charges of perjury, distraint, starvation, and, in one instance at least, suicide – the whole accompanied on every step of the road by an unceasing hail of anathemas" (4 Jul 1891: 9).

From the outset, the publication was marketed as a collectable series. The reviewer for Queensland's *Morning Bulletin* remarked that "the *Picturesque Atlas* will form an heirloom worthy of transmission to future generations" (29 Mar 1888: 5). The same article also praises the work for its "present and speculative value." On reviewing the first volume Harding stated, "Nothing so superb a scale has heretofore been attempted on this side of the equator; and but for the very large edition printed, the work might be expected to rise rapidly in value" (*Typo* 2.22 (1888): 93). The publication satisfied many desires of the collectors: a local and national setting, history, high standard illustrations, and most importantly (for the publisher also) a series which would increase in value if collected as a complete set. The publication also provided one of the first examples of an antipodean *edition de luxe*, as it was described in the *Evening Post*, the publishing of which was to be singled out "for special comment as indicating a distinct era of progress" (17 Jan 1887: 4). To maximise the earning potential of the work, the publishers employed the service of travelling book agents to sell subscriptions to the publication. One such story was an event that occurred in Naseby, a remote settlement in Otago. Robert Coupland Harding reported the incident in *Typo*:

The *Picturesque Atlas* and *Early History* book-fiends have had some exciting adventures in endeavouring to deliver their volumes, especially in the South Island. At Naseby the Picturesque man had a particularly warm reception. The fire-bell was rung, crowds assembled round his hotel, and placards were posted up bearing the

terrifying words: “The Book-Fiend has Arrived! Lynch Law Proclaimed!” The bibliodaemon, notwithstanding all this hostile demonstration, departed with a whole skin. (5.54 (1891): 101)

The incident was also reported, in a cut and paste style, in the *Queenslander* the following week. The journalist mused on the possibility of “a few more incidents of this kind and the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* will become simply priceless. A riot or two in some of our large cities, with perhaps a fire involved, would, in conjunction with the previous history of the work, cause it to be bid for at any price by the book-lovers of England and the continent of Europe” (4 Jul 1891: 9).

Another vision of the book agent was typified in an article printed at length in *Typo*, allegedly written by a reformed canvasser entitled “Confessions of a Book-Fiend.” The article, about the personal experience of a well-meaning man who against his better judgement takes up a job as a book agent for an off-shore publisher, was written “so that you may not lay the sole blame upon the unhappy Book-fiend. With all his cunning, he makes a very poor living” (*Typo* 4.48 (1890): 139). This article was an exception to Harding’s treatment of the practice – several other reports on the activities and legal proceedings against book agents did not receive such a kind hand. The previous year, when rumours that Julius Vogel was planning a separate New Zealand edition to the *Picturesque Atlas* came to the attention of Harding he had already made up his mind on the practice and reported in *Typo* that such a scheme “is, or ought to be moribund” (*Typo* 3.27 (1889): 29). The publication did not proceed. In his short paper to the Wellington Philosophical Society “An Ornithological Note” Harding illustrates the inaccuracies rife in such publications after finding an obvious mistake in one American book peddled by travelling salesmen on the subject of moa: “I quote it by way of solemn warning against the showy compilations by hack writers, which are worked off in large numbers on a confiding public by the agents commonly known as book fiends” (*Transactions* 28 (1895): 377).

In some parts of New Zealand and Australia the practice of employing travelling salesmen was a necessity because of the distance between communities and cities of trade. The profession was tolerated until the stories and experiences of the likes of Book Fiends became more commonly shared. By the last decade of the nineteenth century it seems that

the position of the travelling book agent was a regular sight and particularly scorned.

Thomas Bracken recounted his experience as a canvasser for his own publication *Musings in Maoriland* to a reporter for the *New Zealand Herald* in 1891: "I cannot for the life of me understand why the man who travels in the book trade should not be respected quite as much as the ordinary commercial traveller. The occupation will, I think, compare favourably with that of the gentlemen who solicit orders for beer, whisky, tobacco, etc. The man who introduces a good book is a public benefactor" (qtd. in *Ashburton Guardian* 15 Jun 1891: 2). Before Bracken continued to retell his unfortunate run-ins with hostile locals and their even more ferocious wives, he stated that his opinion was the lack of good booksellers "men who will introduce new books to their customers and point out the peculiar merits of the works, necessitates the existence of the book fiend."

Another publication which received notoriety for its employment of book canvassers was *Brett's Early History of New Zealand*, by publisher and newspaper proprietor of several titles including the *Auckland Star*, Henry Brett. The legal history of that publication is equally as tumultuous as the *Atlas*. Figures quoted in a letter to the editor by co-publisher Arthur T. Keirle stated they had been required to issue legal summons to 250 people in Dunedin alone for failure to pay subscriptions for the work, out of an estimated 400 defaulters from a subscription base of around 2600 (*Otago Daily Times* 18 Nov 1890: 3). One of those caught up in the event was historian-collector Robert McNab. Arthur Keirle attempted to sue McNab for £2.10s for his refusal to accept the subscription. McNab won the case with his argument that the book delivered was not Dr Hocken's long awaited "great work on New Zealand" as was promised by the book agent (*Southland Times* 7 Aug 1891:2). Robert Coupland Harding reported this incident in *Typo* claiming that "a book fiend was defeated, and there is a general feeling of grim satisfaction in consequence" (5.56 (1891): 119).

The ultimate consequence of "the amazing amount of litigation of late years caused by the advent of the individual, commonly known as the Book Fiend," (*Star* 12 Jul 1890: 2) was a Bill introduced in Australia which sought to tighten up laws around book canvassing for subscription publications, particularly in relation to the documentation of their records. The following year, the *Observer* declared "The Book Fiend Doomed" (25 Jul 1891: 7) as New Zealand took a similar action with George Fisher's Book Protection Act – which made it a legal requirement to have the total amount owing to the publishers of the work made

clearly visible on the contract, as well as duplications of the contract made available to the purchaser. “Where will the craze for legislation end?” opined one of the few opponents to the introduction of the Act, Henry Brett’s *Auckland Star*, “that book canvassing has developed into a nuisance, is certainly notorious, and that many people have been victimised by what are termed “book fiends” is equally notorious; but to call upon Parliament to suppress the evil is, in our opinion, a mistake and unwise course” (27 Jul 1891: 2).

Auctions, bibliographies and book fiends constitute part of what makes up the field of book collecting in New Zealand 1880-1920. These characteristics help to frame the field because they are defining features of how and what members of the field collected and they are inherently linked with the social dynamic of the collecting community in New Zealand during this period. Book fiends and auctions were both an economic and a social response to the trading landscape in New Zealand during this period. As well as constituting an essential mode of book trade, auctions encouraged social interactions between members of the book collecting community. Auctions were the collector’s classroom: they educated the collector on what was available in the market, for how much, and who was collecting what material. They also demanded knowledge of a specialised language and protocol in order to participate successfully. A particular feature of auctions is the auction catalogue, which, like the various bibliographies available to New Zealand collectors were a valuable resource for collectors – this will be explored further in the following chapter. Examining the members of the social group is the next step in constructing a picture of the field of book collecting.

There have been, as described in the Introduction, several categories proposed to characterise book collectors. The terms can be criticised as too simplistic to be the principal labelling system when referring to members of a large and diverse group. As definitions they describe mostly *where* a collector collected (auction hunters), and *what* they collected (specialists). Generally, this ignores the social dynamics of book collecting practice. One further consideration is *how* the collector collected. Applying what is known about influences on the collector, for example, education, social, political and economic considerations, and most importantly the role the collector assumes as part of a wider social group results in isolating the collector’s collecting identity. The collecting identity refers as a central point to the activities, history and habits of the collection itself. It places the

collection in the centre, and draws on all associations that are linked with the collection: social, cultural, professional and financial. In a broad sense, this means that the collecting identity can be seen separate from the known personality characteristics of a collector. An example of applying a brief collecting identity to a well-known New Zealand book collector, Alexander Turnbull can illustrate this point. Turnbull is at times referred to as a recluse, as his biographer E.H. McCormick describes: “except for a term as honorary vice-consular representative for Spain, he held no office and took no part in public life” (*Alexander Turnbull* 19). This places him in an uncommon position among his fellow book collectors, who as well as constituting a large part of the membership of various societies and organisations, often took roles in politics at a local and national level. One reading of this characteristic suggests that it was not a matter of shyness towards becoming a public figure, but that Turnbull, having descended from a wealthy family still with strong ties to England (where Turnbull lived during his adolescence, where he was educated, and where he undertook his early collecting) was a member of the elitist class - a particularly lonely position in early-twentieth century New Zealand. Rachel Barrowman alludes to his social position being a possible motivator for his activities in book collecting: “In becoming a collector and bibliophile he was engaging in a well-established cultural tradition, and one which appealed particularly in the nineteenth century to the genteel, wealthy middle class” (*The Turnbull: a Library and its World* 3). However, the characteristics of his collecting identity offer a different perspective. Placing Turnbull’s collecting at the centre, his collecting identity is characterised by engagement and a deep connection to his social networks. He was a networker-collector, indeed, he was an extreme networker. Turnbull established and fostered social relationships with key figures in the international book trade as well as corresponding vigorously with other collectors in New Zealand. Turnbull utilised these networks to further his collection, indeed it seems that during a period of his life, his social connections were almost solely for the benefit of his collecting practice.

The descriptive labels of historian-collector; hoarder-collector; merchant-collector; broker-collector; and critic-collector relate to the role of the collector in relation to the field of book collecting, as well as describing how they approach the collecting activity. This is because the taxonomy facilitates a description of how, why and what a collector collected; it provides fluidity in the representation of stages through the period/s of collecting (this is

relevant when assessing the influence of familial, professional, social and financial factors).

A taxonomy also provides the opportunity to compare and contrast collectors within the same category so that an evaluation of external and internal influences can provide more insight into the collectors individually, as well as examining the larger field. Of particular benefit to the taxonomy is that it allows the addition of new terms which can be used to characterise further studies on book collectors; it is also flexible so that different terms can be used or added through stages of a collector's activity to reflect developmental stages in their approach to collecting, or a change in their private or personal circumstances.

Therefore, a collector can be described using several descriptors, which provides a more encompassing view of their collecting identity. The benefit of a taxonomy of book collectors is particularly relevant for figures such as Robert Coupland Harding for whom little or sporadic documentation is available directly tied to their collections and collecting habits because it can account for general themes in his collecting activity. Harding's book collection is recorded in the auction catalogue that aided in the dispersal of his library. The catalogue documents, among several thousands of books, Harding's achievement in amassing a valuable collection of New Zealand material. Focusing on this New Zealand section provides an opportunity to place Harding in his community of fellow collectors, to explore his approach to the book collecting practice, identify important influences that drove his collecting, and describe Harding's own book collecting identity.

Chapter Two: Robert Coupland Harding, Book Collector

To date, printing and typography are the most prominently explored themes in the story of Robert Coupland Harding. While research into these facets of his life provide important and surprising information about his ambitions, his craft and his reach; approaching Harding through his library can offer additional insight into his life and work, as well as contributing to a larger understanding of the field of book collecting in New Zealand over the turn of the twentieth century.

Two detailed biographies on Robert Coupland Harding are provided by D.F. McKenzie in the *New Zealand Dictionary of Biography*, and in the introduction by Sydney Shep to the digitised collection of *Typo* at the New Zealand Electronic Text Centre. Harding was born in Wellington in 1849 and grew up in Whanganui; he did not leave New Zealand throughout his life. In many ways Harding was born into the printing profession – his London-trained father Thomas Bennick Harding was a local printer and his son reminisced that, “I learnt my alphabet from an old Caslon type-specimen book” (“Old Time Memories.” *Evening Post* 24 Jun 1911: 3). After a fire in his father’s printing establishment destroyed both the business and the family home, the family relocated to Hawke’s Bay (McKenzie, “Robert Coupland Harding.” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Te Ara*). Harding senior opened another printing office in Ahuriri, Napier in 1861. Once Robert Coupland Harding completed his printing apprenticeship, he worked on the *Hawke’s Bay Times* which his father acquired in 1864 and Robert Coupland discontinued ten years later. Another major influence in Harding’s life also appeared in his youth; fittingly the setting for the first encounter was at a book auction. Harding reminisced about the first encounter,

A bench laden with books took my eyes and those of another lad, and we became very busy with them. A striking-looking gentleman, with dark ringlets flowing over his shoulders, bought a good many books, and coming to us he handed one to each to us, remarking that he had observed that we had a fancy for reading. Mine was

“Paul and Virginia, and the Indian Cottage,” with many French woodcuts – a great prize. “Don’t you know Mr. Colenso?” asked the other boy, surprised, when I enquired the stranger’s name. (“Old Time Memories.” *Evening Post* 1 Jul 1911: 10)

Harding continued his connection with Colenso until his great friend and mentor died in 1899. The surviving correspondence between the two, which shall be explored throughout this chapter, reveals a profound friendship and suggests that Colenso was perhaps the most influential figure in Harding’s life.

Harding’s printing accomplishments included *Harding’s Almanac*, of which he produced eleven editions. The publication provided Harding with an opportunity to explore his passion – typography. McKenzie documents that in 1876 Harding, “had imported direct from the Johnson foundry of Philadelphia the first parcel of American type brought into New Zealand, and in 1877 the first German type at a time when, even in Britain, the German typefounders and their job material of this period were unknown.” Harding’s most celebrated achievement was *Typo: A Monthly Newspaper and Literary Review* which was produced in varying regularity 1887-1897. The publication was a landmark work in New Zealand publishing history, and it was received with much praise internationally, “For the future historian of typefounding of the present generation,” McKenzie quotes an English typefounder, “we shall certainly have to go to New Zealand.”

Unfortunately, a run of financial problems beset Harding after he moved to Wellington in 1890. After taking a position as a journalist and reviewer at the *Evening Post*, a position he held for a decade, Harding retired due to ill health in 1912. Throughout 1890-1910, and in particular the last decade of the nineteenth century, Harding participated in several institutes and organisations which placed him in a vigorously active intellectual community. This will be explored in more depth in this chapter. Harding died on 16 December 1916 at the age of 68. He was survived by his wife Sophia, two daughters Hilda and Alethea, and two sons Arthur and Victor.

Four years passed between Harding’s death and the auction of his library in 1920. It is unclear why there was such a lengthy delay, although the sheer volume of Harding’s library comprising of at least 5000 volumes, would have presented a substantial task to manage. It is likely that it took time for Sophia and other family members to decide on the

best way forward. The impact of the death of Harding's son Victor to influenza in 1918 could certainly have played a role. Some items, as will be discussed in the following chapter, were already gifted to family members as directed in Harding's will. In the same year as the library auction, Sophia donated part of Harding's inheritance from William Colenso to the Alexander Turnbull Library: a box of Mission Type; three blocks used for illustrations in the Mission Press; and Colenso's original composing stick which he used when he set up his printing establishment in Paihia in 1834 (*Evening Post* 2 Oct 1920: 4). The auction to disperse the remainder of Harding's private library took place over two days, Thursday 8 April and Friday 9 April, 1920. The auction catalogue is the only extant primary archive which provides a detailed inventory of the books that Harding collected. Before examining Harding's catalogue more specifically, it is necessary to provide a wider background into the role of auction catalogues as material objects which both present items for sale, and illustrate a wider dynamic of book collecting practises and market trends.

Unfortunately, although auction catalogues have been recognised as a valuable resource by book collectors and bibliographers there is a very low survival rate for the pre-1900 New Zealand catalogues, and there are only sporadic examples of catalogues in public institutions until the 1930s. Catalogues likely suffered the same fate as much ephemeral material. Potentially the collector or the people responsible for the management of their collections after their death did not consider them worth keeping. In addition, the quality of their printing dictated that unless they were carefully looked after they simply did not survive.

There were several auction houses operating in New Zealand throughout the period relating to this research. However, the catalogues that are still held in archives are almost entirely those of Bethune & Hunter (later called J.H. Bethune & Co. and hereafter referred to as Bethunes). As it has been noted in Chapter One, Bethunes was the premier book auction house in New Zealand and it held regular auctions at the head office in Wellington and occasionally in Auckland. It is possible that more auction catalogues exist, but that they remain unlisted in current archival collections as they are often found bound in volumes of pamphlets and other ephemera. The Alexander Turnbull Library holds the Bethunes company records; however these relate to the other parts of the auction business, mostly property. The Turnbull also retains a solid run of Bethunes catalogues from the 1930s

onwards (which were used by the acquisition team with many annotated with prices and other notes), and there are a dozen earlier catalogues dating from 1899-1907. The Hocken Library in Dunedin contains several Bethunes catalogues; and the Grey Collection in the Auckland Public Library includes Grey's personal copies of a 1852 Bohn consignment sale catalogue, and the catalogue from the 1853 Bethune and Hunter auction of part of Grey's own collection.

In his 2009 Fergusson Memorial Lecture "Selling books at auction in nineteenth century Australia," Wallace Kirsop noted that in the absence of surviving catalogues, newspaper advertisements are the next most important reference for reviewing and analysing book auction trends. Kirsop noted however, that caution must be taken when reading these advertisements as they were prone to "exaggeration and hyperbole" (211). The first advertisement for the auction of Harding's library appeared in the *Evening Post* on 20 March, 1920. "Important Sale of a Well-Known Library" appears prominently in caps above "In estate of the late R. Coupland Harding". Highlighted in bold, and in large print is the number "5000", followed in caps by Volumes Books. An extended description of the particulars in the sale will appear in "future advertisements," and the auctioneers invited requests for the catalogue, which would be posted. The advertisement also stated that the books were available to view on and after 29 March. A longer, more detailed advertisement appeared in the same column on 27 March. The



1: Newspaper advertisement for sale of Robert Coupland Harding's library. *Evening Post* 7 Apr. 1920: 10. Clipping inserted in catalogue of Robert Coupland Harding's library sale. In private collection, John Quilter. Printed with permission.

additional information included the subjects of books contained in the sale, but the most attention is paid to a list of works found in the New Zealand section. That the New Zealand books were most prominently marketed in the advertisement indicates that the auctioneers believed this would be the most effective selling point to reach their target audience. These highlighted works showcased Harding's collection of New Zealand books, piquing collectors' interest in what else the library might contain. Among the books emphasised for inclusion in the auction were such collectable staples as Robert McNab's *Murihiku* (1909); Alfred Domett's *Ranolf and Amohia* (1883); Buller's *Manual of the Birds of New Zealand* (1882); Hamilton's *Maori Art* (1901); and Johannes C. Andersen's *Maori Life in Ao-tea* (1907). A short reference is made to Theological Works and Works on Art. By 31 March, the advertisement is republished in the longer form but it has moved into the prominent position at the top of the column. It is repeated on 3, 6 and 7 April, to which is added in large caps across the top "To-Morrow." The repetition and prominent position of the advertisement demonstrates the importance of the auction, which apart from the aforementioned popular books, was significant also for its size.

Harding's collection, in comparison to other private library sales, was enormous. A survey of Bethunes' advertisements reveal the closest rival was the sale of Col. J.R. Purdy's library in October 1923, which was advertised as containing 4000 volumes, although there is no mention of any New Zealand related material in the collection. Other notable examples of private library auctions during this period, for which Bethunes placed advertisements in the *Evening Post*, included Solicitor-General W.S. Reid, auctioning 1600 volumes, held on 18 February 1921; R.T. Turnbull, 1600 volumes, 25 October 1923; and M.J. Reardon, size unspecified but a considerable New Zealand section advertised, 4 April 1924. Bethunes described all libraries as being "famous", "important" or "well-known." The collector's name and size of the library is also prominent, and the consistently emphasised works were New Zealand related books. This illustrates Bethunes' preferred marketing strategy for private libraries: emphasising the importance of the collector (supported by its size if it is significant) and making a special mention of New Zealand related material.

Book auction catalogues are documents which aside from their primary purpose to order the auction items serve other important functions. Both individual book collectors and institutional collectors utilise sales catalogues for recording prices achieved at the auction.

This serves not only as a memento of the auction event, but provides a useful cumulative record of trends in pricing of particular books. The annotations that appear in surviving New Zealand auction catalogues frequently include information on who bought what at the auction. In 1948, Bethunes' auctioneer Andrew Fair compiled the *Bibliophile's Guide to Book Values* based on a compilation of prices reached at Bethunes auctions over several years, a resource he described as producing "reliable guides" for collectable goods (Forward 1). The book was so popular amongst collectors that Fair followed it with a series called *Guide to Book Values* which was produced roughly every three years 1949-1974. The marking up of auction catalogues with information on prices and purchasers can also serve as a tactic for keeping up with the fast pace of auctions. Catalogues were frequently used as bibliographic resources: the highlighting of certain works by the auction house supplements this utility, although any well-informed book collector would be cautious of such use of emphasis by the auction house. Lastly, auction catalogues were themselves a popular and useful collecting item and frequently appear in auction catalogues. In 1920, London auction house Sotheby and Co. re-printed the catalogue of the famous Huth Library Sale, which lasted ten years and netted over £300,000, with an appendix of purchasers and prices met included. The catalogue became a collectable item, not only as a historical reference to a landmark auction, but also as a bibliographic resource. One copy of this catalogue is found in the Alexander Turnbull Library.

The common treatment of arranging items in an auction catalogue is to provide the title, author and date of publication. Different auction firms may have a preferred house style, but even this is subject to frequent change and experimentation. While the attention paid to the arrangement of auction catalogues reflects the increasing interest and scholarship in bibliography, because by nature they are also marketing resources, they vary widely in style, content and format. The catalogue may, or may not, be divided into subject sections and the listing itself is often presented in alphabetical order (usually author's name, sometimes titles, and often a mix of the two). In some instances, auction cataloguers employ other techniques for drawing attention to certain items. Bolding titles is a frequent practice. Another common method is to provide additional comment on the book, often in the form of an excerpt from a book review, or a sentence or statement such as 'The first book printed on field sports and heraldry.' John Carter describes the use of blurbs, "puffs or

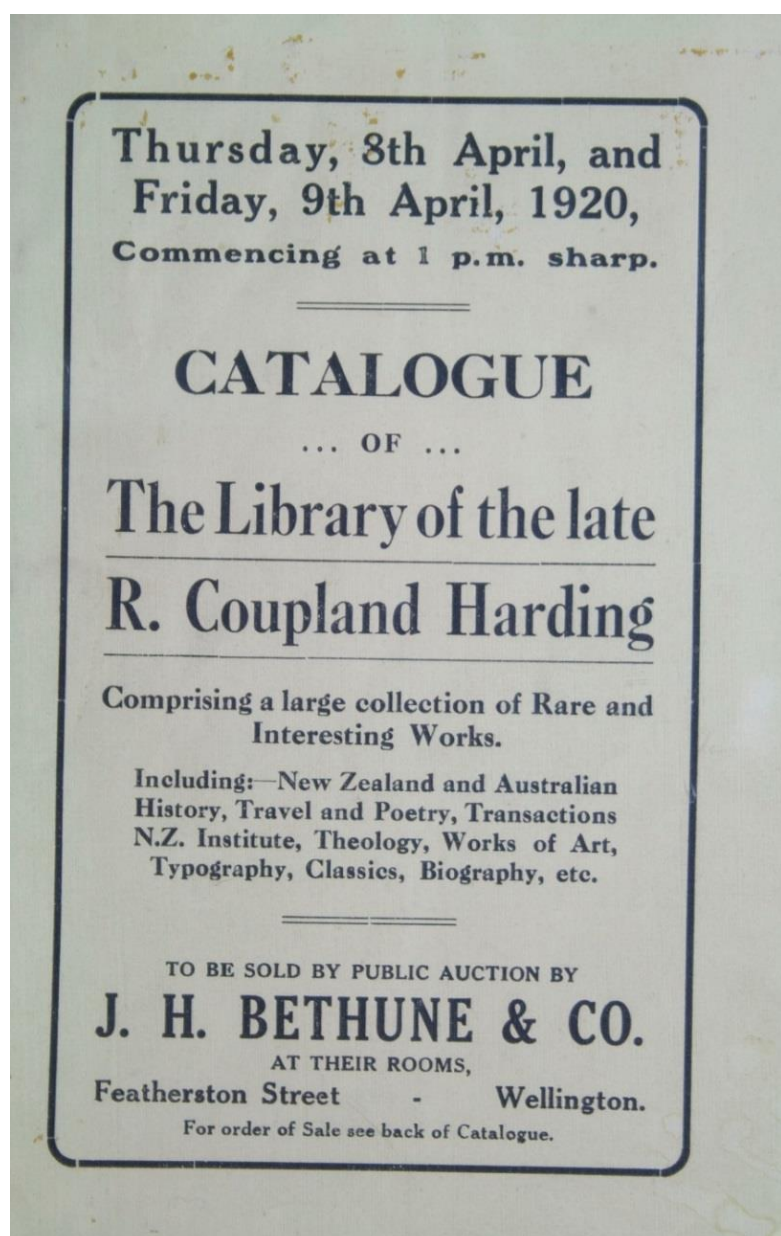
‘write-ups’ with which some booksellers sometimes embroider their catalogues” (Carter, *ABC of Book Collecting* 38). According to Carter, blurbs are composed of three styles: quotations (usually from well-known critics or authoritative references); original composition, impersonal (general comments on the work, which is further subdivided into solid and dull, enthusiastic, and the picturesque); and the ostentatiously personal (when the views or preferences of the cataloguer themselves are used). “Good ones,” Carter observed with an air of experience, “are much harder to write than you think.”

A survey of extant Bethune catalogues illustrates that sales are generally presented as one of two types: consignments and private library sales. Occasionally a library sale will be included in a consignment sale, and the catalogue will provide a separate section to list the library lots. More frequently the library sale will stand alone and larger collections will be auctioned over multiple days. It is with the library sales that it is more common to see several items listed together in one auction lot and often these additions are not given a full title but are described as ‘etc’ or ‘and another’ in the catalogue. This would indicate that the bundled material was potentially of poorer quality, or the auction cataloguer did not consider it valuable enough to stand as separate lots. However, this would appeal to some collectors with the potential of ‘snapping up a bargain.’ There are also instances of the grouped lots being made up of works on the same subject or by the same author. This points to the auction cataloguer believing that assembling the books together would generate a higher price than if the books stood apart. An example of a grouped lot in Harding’s auction is lot number 100 which lists three Tregear’s works: *Aryan Maori*; *Hedged with Divinities*; and *Fairy Tales*. Duplicates of these books also appear separately elsewhere in the catalogue. This strategy would also be particularly useful if one of the books was not a good copy of an otherwise popular work, for example, in Harding’s auction (lot 133) Buller’s *Manual* is listed together with *Scale Insects*. In the New Zealand Poetry section, all of the sixteen lots comprise two or more books per lot.

The format of Bethunes catalogues from the 1890s through to the end of the 1920s is small, pamphlet-sized with stapled binding. The covers are consistent in style with the catalogue of Harding's library, in type as well as the presentation of information relating to the date and time of the auction, and the predominant genre of books which comprise the auction. The layout of the listing of lots is standardised, and it is likely the lot numbers were part of the skeleton forme or left standing. The technique of bolding titles is popular during this decade but thereafter the practice disappears, along with the infrequent utilisation of blurbs. From the 1930s, Bethune catalogues are compiled on a typewriter, printed in full A4 and stapled in the top left corner only. The covers are hand-drawn, featuring new designs and layouts with each issue. During this period there are examples of whole catalogues

printed on a large poster – these would have been on presentation at the auction rooms and perhaps distributed to other establishments and institutions interested in the sales. There is a return to typed covers and a stapled format in catalogues from the 1940s, and for the first time in-catalogue advertisements for the firm appear. The catalogues from this decade inform that they were printed by Roydhouse & Son, Carterton, who were also the printers for A. Fair's *Guide to Book Value* series.

There are several extant copies of the catalogue from the sale of Robert Coupland Harding's library. For the purposes of this research, the following three copies have been most frequently used. One is held in the JC Beaglehole Room at Victoria University which has prices handwritten in the margin for all



2: Catalogue cover of Robert Coupland Harding's library sale. In private collection, John Quilter. Printed with permission.

titles in the New Zealand related sections. A second copy is found in the collection of Wellington antiquarian book trader John Quilter – a clean copy with a newspaper clipping advertising the auction inserted. The third (in private collection of M. A. Hughes) has miscellaneous marginalia throughout the New Zealand related section. Some annotations suggest that the catalogue was used by a representative attending the auction on behalf of a collecting institution, supported by statements such as “We have Citizen in Red Corner” and “We have Vol I Zealandia.” The two catalogues which contain marginalia both confirm vigorous interest in the New Zealand related section of the library. There is also a copy held in the Chapman Pamphlet Collection at the Hocken Library, Dunedin. This may be evidence that Frederick Revans Chapman was present at the auction of Harding’s library. Chapman was a distinguished book collector based in Dunedin, and a founding member of the Polynesian Society, which places him in a society circle with Harding. However, Chapman’s pamphlet collection was extensive, and it is possible that he collected Harding’s auction catalogue as he would any other ephemera. The catalogue, which is very clean with no markings, is bound in a volume of other miscellaneous pamphlets, and is directly followed by the Bethune auction catalogue for Col. J.R. Purdy’s library, which was held in the year following Harding’s auction.

The catalogue for Harding’s library sale is divided into sections. The first section is untitled but includes general fiction, history (including several items on royal history), expedition stories (*Heart of the Antarctic* by Shackleton is bolded), some magazines, biography and various non-fiction. This is followed by a short section under the heading “Works on Australia”, then a larger section on “Australian Poetry” and a handful of lots in “Works on Polynesia” which included two lots of *Cook’s Voyages to Pacific Ocean* (1784). The next section “Works on New Zealand” contains slightly less than 100 lots but is peppered with dozens of bolded items; this is followed by a smaller 20 lot section “New Zealand Poetry and Literature.” Almost all of the lots in this section are bundled with several items per lot. A sizable section on “Theological Works” contained a handful of works dating back to the seventeenth century. The order of sale, printed on the back cover, states that the last section to be auctioned on the end of the first day was “Works on Art,” which although slightly less than 40 lots contained several highlighted items. Here in the catalogue there are a handful of lots untitled, that included bookshelves and two engraving proofs

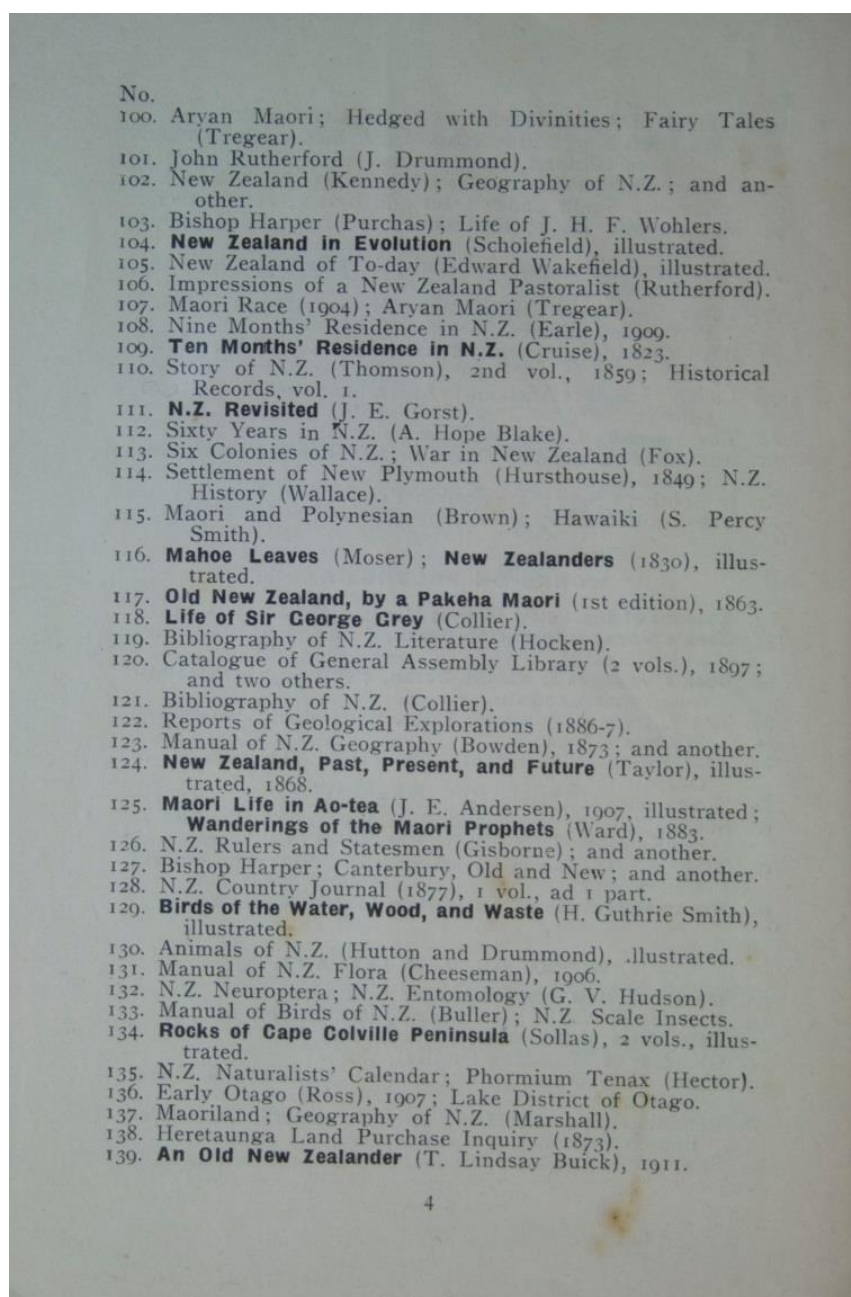
before letters - all but one lot is bolded. The second day of the auction started with the large group of books on "Typography."

Very few works are bolded in this category and roughly half of the section consists of trade journals, newspapers and magazines. Harding collected many books for their typographical or illustrative interest, and used them in his practice as specimen books: this would account for the huge array of eclectic works which are included in this section. The last titled section is "Poetry" and this consists of almost 200 diverse lots. The ordering of the catalogue, particularly its larger and more specimen-rich Typographic section, suggests

that there was an element of 'cataloguing off the shelves.' One

can imagine the collection being pulled from the bookcases, into boxes, transported to the auction house for the preparation of the catalogue – in which case large sections of the catalogue could very well reflect their physical positioning on Harding's library shelves. That the cataloguer did not arrange the books into alphabetical order, the standard format of book auction catalogues throughout this period, supports this assumption.

As outlined in the first chapter, collecting New Zealand related books was arguably the most universally popular pursuit of a book collector in New Zealand during this period.



3: Example of layout in Harding's library auction catalogue, New Zealand section. In private collection, John Quilter. Printed with permission.

The selection of books in Harding's "Works on New Zealand" demonstrates that Harding had a valuable collection including many 'must haves' among collectors of this subject. Strongly represented are books on New Zealand national and regional history, including settler history and settler biographies; Maori culture, history and language; sciences, including geology, geography and biology; and a sizable collection of ephemera including set of *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* and the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, bundles of newspapers, trade journals and pamphlets.

While there is no available evidence to demonstrate a timeline of acquisition, the publishing dates of the material collected in the New Zealand section offers some important information about Harding's collecting habits. The publishing date of any particular book in itself offers no more evidence than it was not possible to have acquired the object before that date. However, groups of books published within similar dates can suggest periods of collecting activity. Almost half of Harding's New Zealand collection listed in the catalogue was published 1900-1910. This is despite Harding writing to a family member in 1906 that in relation to collecting New Zealand books, "I long since ceased to think of doing so, it is too expensive a line" (R.C. Harding to J.W. Harding, 5 May 1906). The last decade of the nineteenth century was a difficult period professionally for Harding. He was obliged to take a position as a timework compositor at Government Printing Office which, while a return to his typographical roots, was a placement well beneath his level of skill and experience. He then moved up to take the position of the literary editor at the *Evening Post*. This posting provided Harding with the opportunity to build on his considerable literary acumen as well as feed his book collection without the outlay of financial capital, which he was severely lacking. Although the reviews are uncredited, the correlation between the books profiled and the books that appear in Harding's library provide a strong basis for assuming most, if not all, of the books that appear both in the newspaper review section and on Harding shelves are review copies. There are just over 60 items listed in the New Zealand section of Harding's library auction catalogue which were published 1900-1910, and withdrawing the journals and other serial publications, 77 per cent are reviewed in the *Evening Post*. The style and reoccurring themes in the reviews indicate a distinct voice, which support the reviews being authored by the same person. This will be expanded on shortly in this chapter.

Despite his financial circumstances, Harding collected a significant representation of New Zealand-related books published during this period and this was enabled by the practice of keeping review copies. This reveals an important insight into his collecting identity as an opportunist collector. Harding overcame a lack of financial capital by using his employment as a conduit for his collecting. Harding is also reshaping the model of book collecting practice: in his position as a reviewer presenting books to the market, he has acquired material in a pre-market environment. Although acquiring these books did not change his financial situation, it supported his wealth of cultural capital. The early-twentieth century saw a vigorous increase in appreciation for, and marketing of, books about New Zealand for the New Zealand market, and the acquisition of these books were important for any book collector interested in New Zealand material.

The evidence that review copies occupied such a large place in Harding's library is demonstrative of another characteristic in Harding's collecting identity, that of a critic-collector. Harding demonstrated an acute understanding of the role of a good reviewer, and his reviews provide ample evidence of his critical expertise. His reviews move far beyond paraphrasing the marketing material that would have been presented by the publisher along with the book to review: Harding's evaluations are balanced, thorough and they often reference other New Zealand books. The characteristic of demonstrating an exhaustive knowledge of New Zealand literature is another of Harding's reviewing attributes. As a critic-collector he would have utilised his collection as a kind of reference library in the same way that a historian-collector would have employed his or her collection to undertake their work. One example that demonstrates Harding's style is his review of T.F. Cheeseman's *Manual of the New Zealand Flora*, which Harding acknowledged as "one of the most important publications issued by the New Zealand Government for some years" (*Evening Post* 13 Oct 1906: 11). Harding sets the scene of botanical exploration in New Zealand, which he explains is of interest to the scientific world on account of the "light it throws on the wider problems of botany," and he provides a list of individuals to illustrate New Zealand's rich history in this domain. He continues the review demonstrating his in-depth knowledge of the history of J.D. Hooker's *Handbook of New Zealand Flora*, from which Cheeseman's work is derived. The image of Harding holding both books in his hands to

compare length and to note Cheeseman's additions is strongly suggested by Harding's extensive descriptions:

In size of page and arrangement of typography it is uniform with its predecessor of forty years ago, but it is 'brought up to date.' The results of subsequent research have been added, the necessary corrections have been made, and its bulk is increased from eight hundred pages to twelve hundred pages, by the inclusion of something like a thousand additional species. In the large and characteristic genus *Veronica*, for instance, eighty-four species are included, against forty in the original work.

Hooker's *Handbook* (which will be explored more in-depth as a case study in the following chapter) was a cherished book in Harding's library, given to him by his mentor Colenso, and handed down to Harding's daughter Hilda in his will. Harding in fact mentions Colenso several times during the review of the *Manual*, emphasising his work and legacy in New Zealand botanical science.

It can be argued that a book reviewer of Harding's calibre is also a type of historian, but one that specialises in books. As well as commenting on the merits of the book, the reviewer uses his or her expertise to appraise a book's place in the field of literature. This was particularly pertinent for Harding's audience during the time of his tenure as a reviewer for the *Evening Post* because of the increase in the publication of New Zealand books at the turn of the twentieth century. The growth of New Zealand-related literature was a point that was often referred to in the reviews of New Zealand books in the literary column of the *Evening Post*, a trend which was both congratulated and reproved. The increase in popularity for books on New Zealand produced endeavours into re-reading historical events, as well as exploring previously unknown or forgotten ones; biographies of well-known New Zealanders and lesser-known settlers; and reprints of early New Zealand books. But the rush to capitalise on this new trend in literary taste compromised the quality of the body of work, a point that Harding reiterated. In the review for *New Zealand in Evolution: Industrial, Economic and Political* by G.H. Scholefield, Harding noted:

In this handsome book of three hundred and fifty pages, he has made a notable contribution to the growing library of books concerning New Zealand, and one that

is marked by much original work. There is already a bewildering mass of mere bookmaking, written round photographs of tourist resorts and padded out with obvious extracts from Domett and verse less appropriate; also paste-and-scissors compilations from earlier books, in which long-exploded errors are successively handed down, with new to keep them company. Mr Scholefield's book is in quite another category. (*Evening Post* 15 Jan 1910: 13)

Harding's approach to reviewing New Zealand books was not only to promote books of which he approved, but in light of the expanding market for New Zealand books, Harding takes a special interest in selecting the 'right ones to have.' As well as frequently commenting that a book may make a valuable contribution to the body of literature, he also concludes reviews of especially favoured books with lines such as "The book is one which will find a place in every library of New Zealand literature" (review of *Old Manawatu* by T. Lindsay Buick. *Evening Post* 19 Sept 1903: 11) or, "a book indispensable, henceforth, to every New Zealand library" (review of *Historical Records of New Zealand* by Robert McNab. *Evening Post* 23 Nov 1907:13). Harding also noted the effect that the increase in New Zealand material was having on the book collecting community. In his review of *Sir George Grey: Governor, High Commissioner, and Premier* by James Collier, Harding pointed out that "We have had among these books a few good and serviceable biographies, some filling a valuable place in the increasing mass of historical material accumulating in New Zealand – increasing so fast that collectors of New Zealand literature will soon be constrained to specialise" (*Evening Post* 8 May 1909: 13).

The expanding opportunities to review New Zealand books also enabled Harding to demonstrate his own intellectual prowess. Harding often corrected errors of historical fact and frequently highlighted improper translation or misuse of Maori language and mythology. "We note one error in the book," Harding writes in the review of *Bishop Harper and the Canterbury Settlement* by Rev H.T. Purchas, "The name of the river Taipo is said to mean 'devil – so called by the Maoris on account of its turbulent character.' Many tidal rivers and streams bear the name 'Taipo,' which signifies 'The Night Tide'. The word is vulgarly confounded with 'Taepo,' a goblin or demon" (*Evening Post* 26 Sep 1903: 11). This is a mistake Harding picks up on again in his review of *Folk-Tales of the Maori* by Alfred A. Grace: "We see that 'taepo', which the author, not without some reason, questions as a

Polynesian word, is spelt 'taipo'. This is not in accordance with the general usage of Maori scholars, who discriminate not only in sound but in sense between the two words" (*Evening Post* 21 Dec 1907: 17). By addressing the quality of paper stock, illustrations and use of typographical features, Harding's expert knowledge on printing is also evident in many of his reviews. In his review of J. MacLennan's *Neptune's Toll, and Other Verses*, Harding corrects the author's portrayal of the printing room:

The operations and apparatus respectively of the composing-room and press-room are confounded, and the compositor of the old days is represented as 'singing 'mid ink and pie' (misspelt 'pye'). Ink is the pressman's concern, and pie is the compositor's reproach and an object of his strong aversion. And the lino operator would smile to be told that his 'intricate keys' 'tip up the type with infallible ease'. (*Evening Post* 14 Dec 1907: 17).

The book reviews offer evidence of a few of Harding's other idiosyncrasies. The omission of publishing dates is a personal *bête noir* on which he expounds in the review of Andersen's *Maori Life in Aotea*:

In early life, Walter Savage Landor, Jephthah-like, 'swore a great oath.' He vowed 'never write a sonnet,' and lived, like the Hebrew warrior, to regret a pledge he was too conscientious to break. We begin to half-suspect that the enterprising publishers of 'Aotea' must have made the rash vow that they would never date their books ... Why should a reader have to rummage through a volume to find that which is as necessary as the title itself? (*Evening Post* 24 Aug 1907: 13)

Harding demonstrates his precocity on the subject by noting in the review of *The Story of Te Waharoa* by John Alexander Wilson: "The date is more than a mere convention, and its omission is always resented by book-lovers. The best English publishers do more than date editions now – they usually insert a full list of former impressions with dates of issue" (*Evening Post* 2 Mar 1907: 13).

Another example of Harding's personal interests which he finds space to insert into his reviews is his adoration of poet Rudyard Kipling. It was reported in the *Evening Post* that Harding had contributed an article to the *Young Man's Magazine* on Kipling "A Laureate of

the People" (8 Dec 1900: 2). "He forms a very high estimate of Mr. Kipling's mission as a poet, seer, patriot, and leader of thought," the article says, "Although many may think Mr. Harding is a little inclined to hero-worship." This statement is not far-fetched: Harding explains that in writing his article he may "seek to define some of the outstanding characteristics of the man and his work – realizing at the same time that behind it all lies the living, constructive, and incommunicable power of genius" (Harding, "A Laureate of the People." *The Young Men's Magazine*). Harding extends his appreciation of Kipling into his reviews, often quoting or comparing Kipling to authors he is reviewing. Having already referenced Kipling once in the review of *The Tracks we Tread* by G.B. Lancaster, Harding offers a great compliment: "It is fair to say though she is far behind Kipling as a story-teller or in discrimination of character, she is fully his match in word-painting and phrase-making" (*Evening Post* 15 Feb 1908). He conjures up Kipling again while reviewing *Stokin', and Other Verses* by Will Lawson: "There is often an irresistible suggestion of Kipling both in themes and rhythms" (*Evening Post* 2 Jan 1909: 13). He quotes Kipling directly in reviewing *New Zealand Revisited* by Sir John Eldon Gorst: "Kipling asks what they know of England 'who only England know.' With greater pertinence it might be asked what those folk know of New Zealand, whose knowledge of the land dates back only, say, to the eighties" (*Evening Post* 2 May 1908: 13). Kipling was not alone in benefiting from Harding's public promotion as he frequently inserted into his reviews references to friends Colenso and Edward Tregear; and the Wellington Philosophical Society and the Polynesian Society.

The history of the Wellington Philosophical Society is yet to be written, but it is a fascinating subject which includes leading figures of New Zealand's intellectual elite. Harding's involvement with the Philosophical Society began in Napier and it marked the beginning of a socially active and connected period in his life. His uncle (John Harding of Mount Vernon) was a founding member of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute, as was Colenso. Harding printed the branch's *Reports* at his Napier printing office. Harding was elected as a member in 1881 and Treasurer in 1890, the same year that Harding helped establish the Masters Printers' Association. In 1890, Harding also relocated to Wellington and in the following year the New Zealand Institute of Journalists, which Harding had long championed, was established. At the same time as his involvement in various social groups was increasing, the financial viability of *Typo* was deteriorating. Colenso's correspondence

records the publication's demise and Harding's unwillingness to cut his losses and discontinue. Colenso's early encouragements, "I admire your *principle* for keeping it on – but your pocket cannot afford it!" (Colenso to Harding, 8 Dec 1891) became firmer, "you are wrong in determining to carry on your *Typo* – *ever a losing monetary concern!*" (Colenso to Harding, 10 Jan 1892), until he exclaims in exasperation, "dare I tell you that I was somewhat grieved to see it—hoping it had *quietly* died, w. the *end* of 1891.—I would you had allowed it to expire, & I am *not* the only one of your *friends* who has expressed same opinion" (Colenso to Harding, 1 Aug 1892).

In contrast to the increasingly sporadic publication of *Typo*, Harding's involvement with the Wellington Philosophical Society was becoming more rigorous. His article "Unwritten Literature" was published in the *Transactions* for the year 1892, he was elected an officer of the Society for two years before becoming Vice President for the Wellington branch in 1895, a position which he held for three years. In the last year of his Vice-Presidency, *Typo* was finally discontinued. The *Transactions* record Harding taking an active role in the Society's meetings, as well as his presentations to the Society and his contributions to the debates of other member's papers. Harding's participation in the Society reflects his intellectual capacity. He took the opportunity to present papers as diverse as his own interests, from the scientific phenomena of will-o-wisps to the etymological history of "Kerns and Serifs" (1896). He was in the company of many of Wellington's intellectual elite including Sir James Hector, William Miles Maskell, Thomas Kirk, William Travers, Thomas Easterfield, Sir Walter Buller, and his good friend Edward Tregear.

As well as contributing to the Philosophical Society, Harding delivered lectures at other organisations during this period, including a speech on Thomas Love Peacock to the Newtown Public Library; a presentation on Mars "The Red Planet" at the Hutt Mechanic's Institute; and an address on modern versions of the Bible to the St James's Mutual Improvement Society. His involvement with collecting and learning institutions provided him with a vehicle for progressing his own intellectual endeavours. Additionally, the exposure that Harding gained by having his papers published in the *Transactions* gave him the opportunity to connect with a public audience as well members from other societies. One such product was the connection he made with Dr Thomas Hocken, a member of the Otago

Institute, an affiliate of the New Zealand Institute. The correspondence between Harding and Hocken has survived in only two letters, but the content of those letters point to a larger acquaintance, and they illustrate the value which Harding's knowledge of printing history in New Zealand was regarded.

In 1900 Hocken was researching for his paper "Some Account of the Beginnings of Literature" which he presented to the Otago Institute in September of that year. During his research he contacted Harding. Harding's response dated 15 August 1900 indicates Hocken had read his article "Relics of the First New Zealand Press" which Harding had presented to the Wellington Philosophical Society on 20 March 1900. "Relics" was as much a paper on the history of the first printing press activities in New Zealand as it was Harding's tribute to Colenso, who had died the year before. Harding's letter is full of the information that Hocken had requested: about the Maori newspaper *Karare* and the history of the *Hawke's Bay Times*. Hocken had asked specifically if Harding knew where he could acquire copies (or a full set) of these publications. Harding said he was unable to help personally, but he stated that Henry T. Hill, a close associate of Colenso's and fellow member of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute, had bought many of the items from Colenso's estate auction which might include the material Hocken sought. Harding also informed Hocken that he knew Alexander Turnbull was hunting for the same sets. Harding knew this because he was perhaps at that time already in negotiations with Turnbull over a trade of the *Hawke's Bay Times*, which Harding sold to him in that same month as evidenced by Turnbull's acquisition book – this will be returned to shortly. Harding ended his letter with a request to Hocken for any duplicates of early copies of *Karare* which he remembered from his childhood for their old French type. For his contributions, Harding was acknowledged in Hocken's paper which was published in the *Transactions* 33 (1900): "Mr R. Coupland Harding, a well-known pressman at Wellington, who takes great interest in all details connected with his business, thinks [the press] was broken up in Auckland for old metal" (486) and, "Mr Harding, in a letter to me, thinks [Bishop Selwyn's press] belongs to himself, but it is not quite certain. After purchase he leased it to a printer, who became bankrupt, and it passed into other hands. To recover it would cost more than its value, but Mr Harding keeps a strict eye upon it, and hopes to see it some day safely in some nook of the Colonial Museum" (490). The other extant correspondence is a letter from Hocken to Harding dated 13 April 1905, and its

contents suggest the two had continued to exchange material. They had also kept up a conversation about typography: Hocken, always eager to entice people to visit his home in the deep south, invited Harding to see him in Dunedin so he could show Harding the book in question. Unfortunately the journey was too long and difficult for Harding to undertake. Hocken also asks for an author's copy of the *Transactions* (perhaps Harding's paper "Relics"), a set of Harding's *Hawke's Bay Times*, and any copies of "old and beautiful Typo" which indicates that the traffic of printed material continued.

There is evidence Harding participated in supplying another of the most well-known collectors of his generation. Over a period of two years 1900-1902, Harding sold material to Alexander Turnbull and lists of these transactions are recorded in Turnbull's acquisition book for 1869-1918. Almost all of the items which Harding sold were ephemeral including bundles of newspapers and pamphlets on various social and religious issues. Some transactions involved material printed by Harding including copies of *Typo* (acq. ref 2279) and the *Catalogue of books in Tenui Public Library* (acq. ref 2287); and some were given to Turnbull *gratis*. In August 1900, as aforementioned, Harding sold five volumes of the *Hawke's Bay Times* (1857-62) for £5, along with two volumes of *Hawke's Bay Weekly Times* (1867-8) for £1 (acq. ref 2165). The date range recorded for the *Hawke's Bay Times* belongs to the period before Harding's father acquired the paper in 1864. This indicates that it was not the full set of the newspaper that Hocken had sought, but a substantial part of it. Another entry records a purchase of five volumes of the *Hawke's Bay Herald* from Harding in October 1900 for £5 (acq. ref 2213). Harding continued a social connection with Turnbull. The two were well enough acquainted that Harding wrote of his ailing health and the impact it was having on his work in a letter shortly after Harding had retired from the *Evening Post*. "My outlook has greatly changed since I left the Post," he wrote, "and books I have accumulated for uses which I have slight hope of fulfilling — books which their natural enemies have begun to assail — do not look the same as of old" (Harding to Turnbull, 11 Nov 1912). Harding suggests a possibility of betterment in the last lines of the letter, and as evidence of this includes with his letter a product from his type-case "dusted and oiled," a "first fruit of the season." Harding also uses a mutual social connection to both start and finish the letter — reminding Turnbull of their last conversation about "our friend the Archdeacon." Characteristically, Harding discusses in the letter a matter of typography in

relation to the Archdeacon Herbert William Williams' experiments with a new orthography and printing types for written Maori. Williams was also an esteemed book collector and the auction to disperse his library after his death was held on two occasions by Bethunes (25-26 August and 20-21 October 1938). In attendance at the auction were representatives from the Turnbull Library and Sydney's Mitchell Library who reportedly paid £10 for copies of the *Church Missionary Record*, which was printed by Williams. (*Evening Post* 22 Oct 1938: 14). The collection contained much important and interesting material, which was the subject of two lengthy reports in the *Evening Post*, including an extensive list of prices reached for selected books, paying particular attention to the New Zealand related material (*Evening Post* 27 Aug 1938: 11; 22 Oct 1938: 14). Although the selling of material to Turnbull was likely dictated by financial necessity, supplying other collectors with material was a pattern in Harding's engagement with the field of book collecting. Investigating this activity supports the addition of another description to Harding's collecting identity: a broker-collector.

In his slim, anecdotally-driven book *Your bid, Sir* (1969) Ernest Vogtherr warns against a kind of collector he labels a "dealer-collector." He cautions against transactions with such agents because they have the habit of keeping the "plums for himself" (Preface N.p.). Although Vogtherr was not in the same book collecting generation as those who would have interacted with Wellington eccentric book dealer and hoarder-collector Robert Holt Carpenter (1819-1891), this label is an apt description of his collecting identity. Carpenter was famous for having an immense repository of books in his Molesworth Street shop. He was equally famous for his habit of refusing to sell books and keeping the best of his stock for himself. Harding described in Carpenter's obituary, "He was noted for his eccentricities. In his old shop he had a large and extraordinary collection of old books—many of them worthless, and some rare and valuable. Though they were exposed for sale, he would not always part with them" (*Typo* 5:21 (1891): 44). In contrast to Vogtherr's dealer-collector, a broker-collector is characterised as an agent that connects books to other collectors. He or she is a kind of middleman, one who may not have any further direct ties to normal trading arrangements, but who is acknowledged to have a trusted judgement in taste, and the experience to conduct a reasonable transaction in the acquisition of the book. There are several key documented occasions where Harding fulfilled such a position for various people including friends, family and other book collectors.

Colenso wrote to Harding acknowledging the passing of Carpenter, a figure that Colenso knew “*well – often in his shop, & bought 1-2 books from him*” (Colenso to Harding, 2 Mar 1891). The subject of the sale of Carpenter’s stock (advertised as holding over 7000 items and auctioned by Bethunes on 20-21 April 1891) was discussed several times between Harding and Colenso in subsequent letters. Colenso showed increasing interest in the sale of Carpenter’s stock, telling Harding, “I note what you say, in your last kind letter of the 5th, *re* Carpenter’s books: how I should like to see them! – and, I wish you to purchase that big Herbal and the Barbadoes books, up to £1. ea, or (say) £2. For both; I fear I many not get a Cat. in time” (Colenso to Harding, 9 Apr 1891). Harding’s report on the auction in *Typo* is evidence that he did in fact attend the auction. Harding described the material that made up the auction, “There were a few curious old works, but no really valuable books in the whole stock, and the amount of rubbish was enormous. Innumerable old cyclopædias, and other obsolete scientific books, “elegant extracts,” shabby old bound magazines and reviews, long-forgotten school-books and worthless remainders, antiquated lexicons, &c., constituted the great bulk of the stock” (*Typo* 5.54 (1891): 80). However, Harding was successful in acquiring the books Colenso had requested, as evidenced in later correspondence. That Colenso was flexible in his instructions to Harding about bidding for the books demonstrates the level of trust Colenso had in Harding’s ability to participate successfully in the auction – an environment notorious for blindsiding many unsuspecting novices with competitive bidding wars and unanticipated expensive outcomes. It suggests that Harding not only regularly attended auctions himself, but that he was an experienced bidder. Colenso’s interest in the sale continued after the event, as he asks Harding “Did you notice in Carpenter’s Cat. No. 682. “Willie’s. first Eng. Book”? Who got the Maori “Rob. Crusoe”?” (Colenso to Harding, 6 May 1891). It is tantalising to imagine that Harding himself was the successful bidder for the ‘Maori “Rob. Crusoe”, as this title appears as lot number 152 in Harding’s library auction, an item that appears bolded in the catalogue with the comment ‘very rare’ attached.

In 1906, Harding wrote to family relative Walden Harding and this letter documents another occasion that Harding acted as a broker-collector. The purpose of this letter was to inform Walden of two books of interest that he had seen come up in a Bethune sale

catalogue, and to encourage Walden to purchase them. The first was a copy of Buller's *Birds*, which Harding explained:

[It] is in its original binding, and unusually well preserved – perfectly clean and fresh within, as far as I could see, and is complete. (Valuable illustrated books are often mutilated.) The binding is a little damaged at the back, as if the books had stood on too low a shelf and had been rubbed by people in passing, but the injury is not serious, and you might wait a long time before you would find another not in such good a condition. (R.C. Harding to W. Harding, 5 May 1906.)

The counsel that Harding provides demonstrates that he not only visited a pre-inspection at the Bethune sale room (books were routinely on display ahead of auctions), but that he had enough experience in judging the quality of books that he could testify as to whether the copy was worth investing in or not. This also illustrates that Harding had attained the understanding of more experienced books collectors, particularly of popular New Zealand material: the condition of the book was more important than simply having the desirable title on your shelf. This was a downfall of many novices to the book collecting field, where the rarity of early New Zealand material seduced unseasoned collectors to acquire poor quality copies. Harding continued in the letter to encourage Walden to buy a “rarer and more valuable book still – a fine copy of Angas's *New Zealanders*.” Again, Harding provides a detailed description of the condition of the copy, and demonstrates his experienced judgement adding that although the book had some damage (which he states could be easily repaired), “faultless copies, which are extremely rare, bring a much higher price.” This is typical of Harding's approach to his role of a broker-collector. He used his experience as both a collector and printer to find books that he knew would interest people (in this instance a family member); evaluated the books in consideration of their condition and their rarity; and acted as an agent in the acquisition of the item. Attached to the letter is a receipt from Bethunes, dated 22 May 1906, made out to R.C. Harding for Walden Harding, with listed Buller's *Birds* and Angas's *New Zealanders* (with a charge to repair the bindings). It was not the first time Harding had played a part in acquiring a copy of Buller's *Birds* for a family member. A similar occasion is recorded in a letter Colenso wrote to Harding years earlier. Colenso wrote, “I have this day recd. a note from your cousin Miss Lydia A. Harding enclosing chq. For her copy Buller's *Birds* – which in her former note was to be delivered to

you - & so I have written to Mr Ferguson to give it to you for her" (Colenso to Harding, 8 Aug 1889). There is no evidence to suggest Harding ever acquired a copy of Buller's *Birds* for himself – it is not listed in the auction catalogue, nor is it known to still be in Harding's descendent family. The auction of Harding's library included a copy of Buller's *Manual of Birds of New Zealand*, which Harding reviewed in *Typo* stating that, "The splendid work by Sir W. Buller on the native birds is a luxury beyond the reach of most people; but in the neat little Manual . . . we have the essential parts of the larger book, and at less than one-twentieth the price" (*Typo* 3.30 (1889): 65). The motivation for Harding in helping two family members acquire a copy of the more expensive *Birds* suggests he recognised the value of the book, and if he was unable to afford a copy his own collection, he was pleased to otherwise help it find its way into the family. Unless a commission is involved, and there is no evidence to support Harding ever received one for his agency, the broker-collector does not gain a financial outcome from the transaction. But in acting as an agent transmitting the book, he or she can trade on the social currency of the object as it passes through them. Therefore, another aspect to the broker-collector was the use of books to strengthen social bonds.

Initiated by *Typo* Harding developed a friendship with renowned English collector, printer and printing historian William Blades. A record of their correspondence, two extent letters, is held in the Alexander Turnbull Library. Harding sent Blades several of Colenso's pamphlets, including *50 Years Ago in New Zealand* which Colenso wrote documenting his first experiences of printing in New Zealand, and Harding had printed in 1888. This transaction initiated two important responses. Firstly, the material impressed Blades enough that he requested more copies which he then sent to public libraries around England and Scotland; secondly, Blades, a Caxton scholar, wrote an article on Colenso for the *Printer's Register* called "A New Zealand Caxton" (Harding records this event in his tribute to Colenso after his death in *Transactions* 31 (1889): 724). A small cluster of letters from Colenso to Harding indicates that Colenso had participated in selecting pamphlets to send to Blades. Although the letters are undated, Ian St George places them in the year 1889, which is supported by the two letters that Blades wrote to Harding in that same year discussing various pamphlets. Blades also received from Harding a copy of Colenso's *Ancient Tide Lore*, which was originally a paper Colenso read to the Hawke's Bay Philosophical

Institute in 1887 and printed as a pamphlet by Harding in 1889. Blades died suddenly in 1890 – an event that Colenso commiserated with Harding “is much to be regretted, and I am sure gave you a shock” (Colenso to Harding, 26 Jun 1890). The posting of Colenso’s pamphlets demonstrates the high regard Harding had for Colenso. It suggests Harding wanted Colenso’s works to travel across the geographic divide and be planted in other establishments where his knowledge and labour would be appreciated: that many of the pamphlets sent to Blades were printed by Harding illustrates that he was doing the same for his own work. Had Blades lived and his relationship with Harding continued it is likely that Harding would have used his correspondence to transmit more material.

As a broker-collector, Harding participated in the transmission of printed works even as he was increasingly unable, due to failing health and financial circumstances, to contribute in his original faculty as a printer and typographer. It also gave Harding the opportunity to use books as social currency to develop and strength his networks, particularly with other collectors. Consequently, his own reputation as a bookman became more robust. The same can be said of his role as a critic-collector where he was able to demonstrate his vast knowledge of literature and apply his expertise in printing and production. A critic engages with the field of cultural production by legitimising cultural works for a public audience as well as for members of the specialist field. Harding demonstrated this in *Typo*, a trade journal and literary review, and his work for the popular newspaper *Evening Post*. Harding’s critical expertise was informed by his intellectualism, but he was not affected by an air of intellectual elitism. In Harding’s obituary, writer George Osborne noted Harding “was a clever man in many ways, but arrived at no more definite point than leader-writer and reviewer for the *Evening Post* . . . His style as a writer was remarkable for its consistent adherence to the policy laid down by the paper, and its plain but remarkably sound English” (*The Triad* 10 Jan 1917: 65). In participating with various institutions Harding was able to combine intellectual curiosity and what McKenzie identified as a “sense of social purpose” (McKenzie, “Robert Coupland Harding.” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Te Ara*). Harding’s involvement in the Wellington Philosophical Society will be explored in more depth in the following chapter. Three case studies from Harding’s book collection will now be used to further illustrate Harding’s collecting identity, and to

explore the relationships which provided crucial influences in his personal and professional life.

Chapter Three: Case studies from Harding's Library

Jean Baudrillard stated that at the heart of collecting, "it is invariably *oneself* that one collects" ("Systems of Collecting" 12). In the case of Robert Coupland Harding, a person for whom only a small and sporadic personal archive remains, is it possible to reconstruct an image of him through a study of books from his collection? Using a sample of case studies, an opportunity arises to explore some key relationships in Harding's life. Placing this in context with his book collection and his known collecting habits offers important additional insights into his collecting identity. The case studies also contribute to the written record of these three books, documenting their place and relevance in the body of New Zealand literature and their position in the book collecting market.

The Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) is a conceptual entity-relationship model for describing and cataloguing informational objects. The system identifies four levels for group one entities: work, a distinct intellectual or artistic creation; expression, the intellectual or artistic realisation of a work; manifestation, the physical embodiment of an expression of work; and item, a single exemplar of a manifestation (OLCL Research). A similar approach has been used for the case studies in this research, but only two levels are applied: work; and item, which is here renamed, artefact. Each case study separates the work, which includes information on the author, publishing history, intended audience, and the context for the work; and the artefact, the copy of the work that resided in Robert Coupland Harding's library. Dividing these two levels allows for an examination of the influence and impact of the work on the field of literature and book collecting; and the relevance of the artefact to Robert Coupland Harding and his collecting identity. All three case studies were works published during Harding's life, and describing the context of the work and the artefact helps to build a picture of the social and cultural influences on Harding and his generation of book collectors.

Robert McNab's *Murihiku* is an example of Harding acquiring the classic items of New Zealand book collecting. This book occupied a place in his collection that, as discussed in Chapter Two, demonstrates Harding's considerable knowledge on the subject of New Zealand literature. A study of Edward Tregear's *Fairy Tales and Folk-lore of New Zealand and*

the South Seas illustrates the formative friendship Harding had with the book's author. This artefact also provides an opportunity to profile the one individual who is documented to have attended the sale of Harding's library, where he acquired the artefact for his own collection. The subject of the first case, J.D. Hooker's *Handbook of the New Zealand Flora*, has a unique publishing history involving a figure who was pivotal in Harding's life. This figure not only contributed to the publishing of the work, but who also presented the artefact to Harding. The artefact escaped the library auction because it was regarded so highly by Harding that he included it in his will, and his family cherished it so highly it remains with them today.

Case Study One: *Handbook of the New Zealand Flora*, by J.D. Hooker.

The *Handbook of the New Zealand Flora: a systematic description of the native plants of New Zealand and the Chatham, Kermadec's, Lord Auckland's, Campbell's, and Macquarrie's Islands* by Joseph Dalton Hooker was published in two volumes in 1864 and 1867. Both volumes were published by L. Reeve & Co., Covent Garden, London, owned by publisher, conchologist and Linnean Society member Lovell Augustus Reeve who specialised in publishing books on natural history (Dance, "Lovell Augustus Reeve." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*). Dance records that Reeve also published works by Hooker's father William Jackson Hooker, director of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, as well as many other leading scientific figures. A thorough account of the book's commissioning history is available in D.J. Galloway's essay "Joseph Hooker, Charles Knight, and the Commissioning of New Zealand's First Popular Flora: *Hooker's Handbook of the New Zealand Flora* (1864-1867)." This case study will contribute additional information on the social history of the work and its impact on the New Zealand intellectual community.

Joseph Dalton Hooker was born in Suffolk, England in 1817. Hooker was enlisted as the ship's assistant surgeon on the *H.M.S. Erebus* expedition to Antarctica which departed from the Chatham Islands in September 1839 (Simpson, "Joseph Dalton Hooker." *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Te Ara*). On his return from Antarctica, Hooker spent three months in New Zealand where he met and became good friends with William Colenso and naturalist Andrew Sinclair. The three took time together botanising during Hooker's stay (Oliver, *Botanical Discovery in New Zealand: the visiting botanists* 27). Hooker thereafter maintained a lifelong correspondence with Colenso, which developed into a close friendship.

Hooker's first book on New Zealand flora, *Flora Novae Zelandiae*, was part of his larger work *Flora Antarctica* (1852-4). In this publication, Hooker had prepared a highly attractive work which contained a comprehensive list of (the then-known) New Zealand plant life. Oliver noted that *Flora Novae Zelandiae* "marks the beginning of a new era in New

Zealand botany, that of the appearance of monographs with adequate descriptions and illustrations" (27). The high quality of the publication meant it was expensive and as a consequence it was unaffordable for many New Zealand colonists. However, there was an appetite for another publication which would provide useful information on New Zealand's unique native plants. Figures such as Sir Julius von Haast, William Colenso, Andrew Sinclair, John Carne Bidwell, William Travers and others studiously catalogued botanic discoveries, contributing to the specialist knowledge of the natural sciences and raising interest in the general public. Publications on the topic were also increasing. In the same year that the first volume of the *Handbook* appeared, Travers' *On the flora of Canterbury, Nelson, and Marlborough*; and another internationally authority on botany, Dr Ferdinand von Mueller's *Vegetation of the Chatham Islands* were published.

It was the mood of the government of the day to have a book published on the subject of New Zealand flora, and as Galloway remarked, "for a small colonial government to commission one of the scientific world's most illustrious botanists to devote at least three years of his life to such a task was no mean achievement" (31). The New Zealand Government, driven into action by public servant and botanist Charles Knight committed £600 towards publishing costs and the author's remuneration. In the end, an extra £53.14s was paid out for additions to the book (Galloway). A project of this scope, authored by a figure of such renown would produce a work which was both a recognition and celebration of a unique New Zealand botanic identity. It also provided a thorough work of reference for specialist and amateur botanists alike.

Hooker himself played an important social role throughout the period of the book's publication. The product of Hooker's interaction with New Zealand scientists provided a "direct and personal link between the few, isolated plant collectors in New Zealand, and the wider botanical and scientific world of which the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew was such a centre and focus" (Galloway 35). Hooker did this by keeping regular communication with New Zealand collectors, who in turn sent him specimens of and observations on plant life. The product of their labours, and the appreciation Hooker had for their contributions is evidenced by his remarks in the Introduction of his *Handbook*. Colenso in particular was singled out as the principal contributor to the *Handbook*. As a fellow of the Royal Society of London, and a fellow of the Linnean Society, Colenso continued to contribute specimens to

Kew long after the *Handbook* was published. He mentions in a letter to Harding, “I took up my Crypts., Fungi, & Hepat. for Kew, and have finished them – in about 300 lots w. notes on the Fungi: these in 2 small (?) boxes will go to England by “Arawa” next week” (Colenso to Harding, 24 Jan 1893).

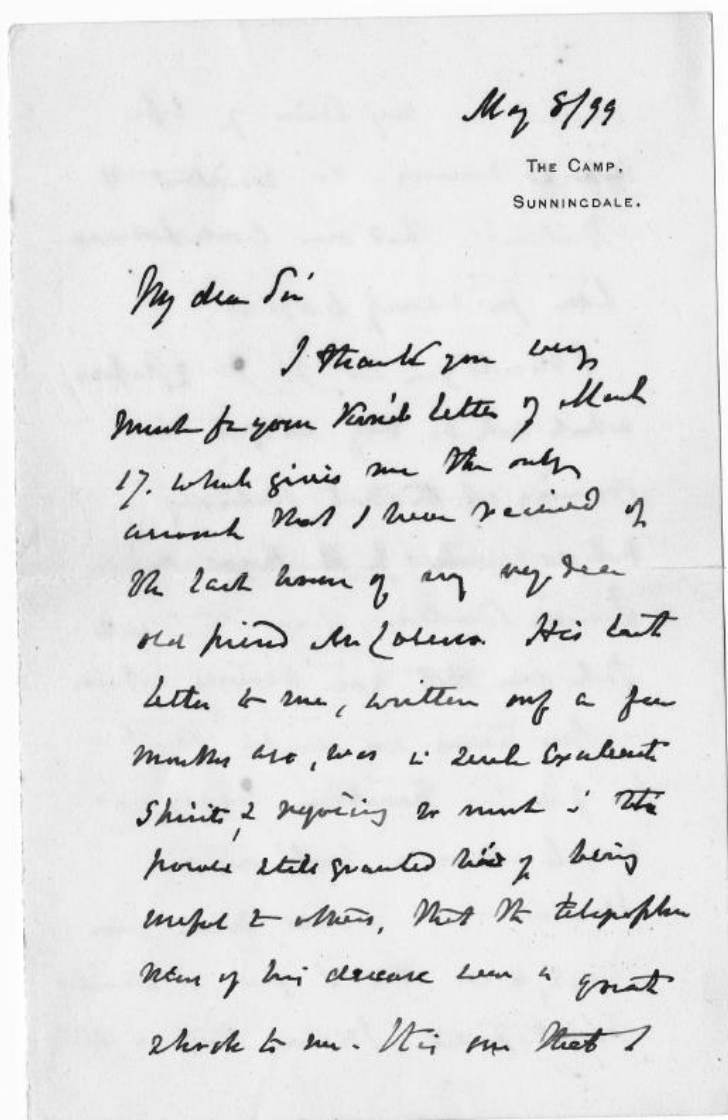
Galloway asserted that the publication of Hooker’s *Handbook* was an important milestone apart from feeling reconnected with Home: it also participated in the independence of New Zealand scientists as “it marked the decline of the imperialist dominance of British and foreign taxonomists in the description of New Zealand plants, and also provided a solid baseline for future work by New Zealand botanists themselves” (57). However, it was by taking advantage of the established order of the English scientific body that New Zealand was able to gain so much ground in developing its own scientific institutions. New Zealand, although going through a period of maturity in the development of an intellectual and scientific community, was still dependent on the established hierarchy in England for legitimisation of their work. In some way, Hooker’s *Handbook* represents this quite blatantly: most of the work in searching and finding botanic specimens and describing and cataloguing them was done by a group of New Zealand-based botanists. All the work in pushing forward the commissioning of the book was done by New Zealanders. Hooker, an undisputable international authority on the science of botany, dedicated his expertise to ordering and presenting the information, but it was just as much his personal social capital which elevated the book as an authoritative work than the amount of work that he personally laboured with during the vital information gathering process. Although by the end of the nineteenth century the community of scientists had matured enough that some felt confident in positioning New Zealanders at the centre of future publications, Colenso disagreed. In 1893, the Hawke’s Bay Philosophical Institute proposed an updated version of the *Handbook*, which eventuated as Cheeseman’s *Manual of New Zealand Flora*. In a letter to the Chairman of the Institute, Colenso suggested that the “editing of Handbook No.2 should be placed in the Hands of a first class English Botanist at Home, — one conversant with General and Geographical Botany etc. etc. As the fame of our first Handbook (or No.1) should be duly maintained” (Colenso to Chairman of the HBPI, 17 Jul 1893).

To make a personal connection with someone as esteemed and internationally renowned as Hooker would have supported a sense, personal and public, of increased social

capital. Harding was able to utilise Colenso's link with Hooker to establish his own connection. In 1890, Colenso wrote to Harding to report that "a letter just to hand from Sir J. Hooker—full of warm praise for your "*Typo*" w. portrait" (Colenso to Harding, 10 Sep 1890). Issue forty-one of *Typo* contained an article about Colenso, which would have encouraged Colenso to send it to Hooker. Although Harding was himself a keen amateur botanist, it was not for this that he would make a connection with Hooker: Harding was able to use *Typo*, his best asset, as currency to gain social recognition from someone who would otherwise not be a usual recipient of his work. The surviving evidence of a direct communication between Hooker and Harding was precipitated by the sad event of Colenso's death in 1899. Hooker replied that Harding's news of Colenso's death,

... gives me the only account that I have received of the last hours of my very dear old friend Mr Colenso. His last letter to me, written only a few months ago, was in such excellent spirits, & rejoicing so much in the power still granted him of being useful to others, that the telegraphic news of his decease was a great shock to me. It is [?] that I cannot at my time of life hope to recover – so constant & affectionate had our correspondence been for nearly 60 years! (Hooker to Harding, 8 May 1899)

This last statement must have resonated deeply with Harding, for whom the loss of Colenso would have made a significant impact. Characteristically, Harding had supplied Hooker with material and he was thanked for "the 2 papers which will be very useful in drawing up of therewith obituary notices required by the Royal & Linnean Societies: of which I will take care that you receive copies." Hooker demonstrates the symbolic power of objects, acknowledging Colenso's "far too handsome legacy to me, to whom a book or a personal object would be been enough." He mentioned Colenso's collection again assuming "that Napier will obtain his Library, which must be a very rich one in scientific works." Unfortunately, as is discussed below, this was not the case. Harding inserted Hooker's letter into the artefact and made a specific note of it in his will, which suggests it was greatly valued. It remains there today.



4: The first page of J.D. Hooker's letter to Harding. Inserted into Harding's copy of Hooker's *Handbook*, given to him by William Colenso. In family's private collection. Printed with permission, Mike Harding.

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, after Colenso's death Harding inherited all of his printing equipment. This included the composing stick which was used in the first printing Colenso undertook after his arrival in Paihia, which Harding identified as the first printing in New Zealand (Harding, "Old Time Memories." *Evening Post* 1 Jul 1911: 10). Harding decided these treasures belonged to the public and although he held on to the composing stick until after his own death in 1916, he gifted the other items to the Colonial Museum and the Alexander Turnbull Library. The remainder of Colenso's estate was sold at

auction as directed by Colenso's heir, his son Ridley Latimer Colenso, who

hastily travelled to New Zealand from England in order to "cash in" his inheritance (Webster 217). Colenso gifted £100 to Harding and another £100 for Harding's son and Colenso's namesake William Colenso Harding (Webster 218), who died shortly thereafter. There is no evidence that Harding acquired any additional items from the sale of Colenso's estate. Ridley Latimer Colenso had arranged the sale of his father's private library separately, reportedly to Angus and Robertson of Melbourne. In light of the extraordinary loss of Colenso's book collection the *Handbook*, gifted to Harding many years before, must have been particularly cherished.

In his will, held in Archives New Zealand, Robert Coupland Harding provided a list of books he wished to bequeath to his immediate family. He set aside several books on William Blake for his daughter Alethea. To his eldest son Victor he gave a revolving bookcase presented to Harding from the Young Men's Bible Class, as well as the books of reference which it contained. To his daughter Hilda he gave several books: Hooker's *Handbook of the New Zealand Flora* "the gift of the late Rev. W. Colenso, with enclosed autographed letter of Sir Joseph Hooker (1899) and his presentation portrait dated 1896"; *Oeuvres d'Horace* which had been presented to Harding by the renowned publisher, Claude Motteroz; Harding's late brother Walter's school prize *Cicero's Life and Letters*; and any French or Latin books as Hilda wished from the collection. To his younger son Arthur he gave presentation volumes from "three of my friends: Theodore L. De Vinne of New York, the late William Blades of London, and the late Claude Motteroz of Paris – all master printer craftsmen of the Nineteenth Century." The rest of his library he gave to his wife Sophia. That Harding made books almost the sole objects which he specifically listed in his will demonstrates that he held his books, and these artefacts in particular, in the highest regard. Aside from their monetary value, rarity, binding and association: as objects they represented an aspect of him that he wished his children to remember after his death. All of the books specifically identified for inheritance in Harding's will were works which represented important relationships Harding had with significant figures. The books were objects of high symbolic value, which along with their inherent financial worth, were made vastly more valuable because of the degree of social capital that they represented.

Unfortunately, Harding's daughter Hilda died suddenly in 1920 only a few months after the auction of her father's library. However, the *Handbook* still remains in Harding's family: Robert Coupland's son Arthur Harding received it after Hilda's death; Arthur passed it on to his son Stephen Harding; who in turn handed it down to his son Mike Harding, the current guardian of the book. It has Hooker's letter inserted, but it is no longer attached to the presentation portrait that was mentioned in Harding's will. The artefact is bound with both volumes of the *Handbook*, with dedications from Colenso. The first volume carries the inscription "Robert Coupland Harding with the best wishes of Wm Colenso. Napier, Nov.21st/63"; the second volume: "RC Harding from Wm Colenso: – with kind regards and best wishes. Napier, Aug 19 1880." The date of the first volume overlaps with the end of

Harding's printing apprenticeship when he turned eighteen years old, and it may have been a gift from Colenso in recognition of this achievement. The second date matches a letter from Colenso in which he wrote, "We talked together so long this morning on the one subject, that I quite forgot to say, that I had a 2nd. part of Hooker's "HandBook N.Z. Flora" in keeping for you, (having lately received some ordered copies of that work from England among our Institute Books,)—and now I have great pleasure in forwarding the same for your acceptance" (Colenso to Harding, 19 Aug 1880). A sticker on the front pastedown indicates the books were bound by Robert Burrett of Wellington.

Why did Colenso give Hooker's *Handbook* to Harding? Harding, no doubt encouraged by his mentor, showed a keen interest in botany as evidenced by the dozens of examples of the subject being discussed in their early correspondence. If it can be assumed that the auction catalogue for Harding's library could represent a physical positioning of books on Harding's library shelves, a cluster of books on natural science supports the assertion that Harding used a set of books for reference. Listed in the catalogue between lot numbers 129-135 are: *Birds of the Water, Wood and Waste*, by H. Guthrie Smith (in bold); Cheeseman's *Manual of New Zealand Flora*; G.V. Hudson's *New Zealand Neuroptera and Entomology*; *Manual of Birds of New Zealand*, by Sir Walter Buller; Maskell's *New Zealand Scale Insects* (which was acquired by the JC Beaglehole Room at Victoria University in 2012, carries the stamp "from the R. Coupland Harding collection, Napier" and dated 3 November 1887); Hector's pamphlet *Phormium Tenax*; and *Rocks of Cape Colville Peninsula*, two volumes, by William Johnson Sollas (in bold). This last book is a publication that was, like Hooker's *Handbook*, under the stewardship of an internationally renowned expert who was forwarded specimens to his office at Oxford University in England, but who in this case never set foot in New Zealand (MacKay, *Rocks of Cape Colville Peninsular* Intro. 5-6; Smith Woodward and Watts, "William Johnson Sollas." *Biographical Memoirs of the Fellows of the Royal Society of London*). As documented in their correspondence, Colenso frequently directed Harding to refer to entries in the *Handbook* when they were discussing the identification and characteristics of plant specimens. As well as sharing this common interest, it is perhaps above all the pride Colenso had in the publication, and his role in it, that inspired him to give it to Harding. Harding's recognition that it was more than a reference book but an object that in itself represented the bond between himself and

Colenso is evident in the privileged place it had as an item listed in his will. Harding demonstrated in his review of Cheeseman's *Manual of New Zealand Flora* that he linked Colenso directly to the publishing history of the *Handbook*. He also referred to Colenso's specialisation, often demonstrated in his correspondence with Harding over botanical matters: "Few, if any, will carry subdivision so far as the late Mr. Colenso," Harding wrote in the review, "who observed and noted details almost infinitesimal. His favourite fields were those comparatively unknown to the superficial observer" (*Evening Post* 13 Oct 1906: 11). He singled out Colenso again while discussing the addition of Maori names to plant descriptions to Cheeseman's *Manual*, "which has not only the advantage of thirty years further research by the late Mr. Colenso, but the valuable aid of more recent investigations."

Hooker's *Handbook* is not a particularly beautiful book – there are no illustrations or interesting typographical detail – but essentially it was never intended to be. It was a reference book, and this was how Harding used it. It is therefore very fitting that the book was passed on to Robert Coupland's great-grandson Mike Harding because of his interest in native plants and his work as an ecologist; inherited from his father, who was also a keen botanist.

Case Study Two: *Fairy Tales and Folklore of New Zealand and the South Seas*,
by Edward Tregear.

Edward Robert Tregear was born in England in 1846. After a financially comfortable upbringing, Tregear travelled to New Zealand as a teenager with his mother and sisters after the bankruptcy and sudden death of his father. Significantly, Tregear imported with him his childhood fascination with Celtic and Nordic mythology, which provided him with a deep attachment to his ancestral, and personal, history. This interest became a driving force in his writing output throughout his life, and particularly pertinent to the work here discussed. There is one major biographical work written on Edward Tregear, *Singer in a Songless Land*, by K. R. Howe. Howe states Tregear's life achievements indicate "an associated social progress through ability, as opposed to birth or wealth, from total obscurity to a position of some influence in New Zealand" (9). Tim McKenzie reiterated this view in stating that Tregear's "output stands as a reminder of a bygone literary age in which polymaths, undeterred by their amateur status, endeavoured to create an emerging national literature" ("Edward Robert Tregear: 1846-1931" 38). Tregear's obituary in the *Evening Post* proclaimed, "his name must always have an honoured place beside those of Sir George Grey, Mr. Percy Smith, and the late Mr. Elsdon Best" (28 Oct 1931: 11).

After serving in the volunteer forces during the New Zealand Wars, Tregear travelled throughout the North Island trying his hand at a variety of work. However, he suffered from a series of financial disasters and was at one point, bankrupted. It was during this period that another experience proved a pivotal influence in his future endeavours. While working as a Government surveyor in Taranaki, Tregear spent extended periods of time in the exclusive company of local Maori where he was introduced to Maori language, customs, stories and culture. This experience provided the opportunity for Tregear to apply "his classical schooling and his passion for new sciences of comparative mythology, religion and

linguistics to try and comprehend his strange new country and its alien Maori inhabitants” (Howe, “Edward Robert Tregear.” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Te Ara*).

In 1885, Tregear moved to Wellington – a relocation which dramatically improved his circumstances. Tregear entered into the company of the intellectual elite of the age - initially through his activity in the Freethought movement which held Robert Stout, John Ballance and William Reeves as esteemed members (Howe, *Singer in a Songless Land* 33). Tregear then took up the opportunity to join, in both member and administrative roles, several influential organisations including the Wellington Philosophical Society (of which he was a founding member), the Theosophical Society, the Union Debating Club, and the Polynesian Society (also a founding member alongside Elsdon Best and S. Percy Smith). Another hallmark of Tregear’s intellectual output was the amount of his work that appeared in overseas publications which resulted in his name becoming recognisable among international scientific and philologist communities. Tregear was honoured with the positions of Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and Fellow of the Royal Historical Society for his work on the *Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*. He was also recognised by the French Government for services to the French colonies and awarded the title of Officer of the French Academy. Overseas recognition was something that Tregear worked hard to attain, particularly to legitimise his controversial book *Aryan Maori* (1885), in which he provided philological evidence that Maori travelled to New Zealand from India, having originated in Europe. The work was widely criticised in New Zealand. Johannes Andersen’s obituary for Tregear in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* stated Tregear even tried at a later date to recall this work (40.4 (1931): 245). However, this appears to be more of a posthumous attempt at misguided grace saving: Tregear reiterated his theories throughout his life even after they were thoroughly dissected by other scholars. Anticipating a backlash at home, Tregear stated in *Aryan Maori* that he was “so assured of the truth of my view . . . that, if not one man in New Zealand agreed with me, I could wait with calm confidence for the verdict of the European scholars” (104). In response, he was granted recognition for his theories from esteemed international intellectuals, including, perhaps most satisfyingly for Tregear, the leading philologist Frederick Max Müller who was one of the founders of the study of comparative religion.

Fairy Tales and Folk-lore of New Zealand and the South Pacific was published by Lyon and Blair in 1891. In his role of the “antipodean Hans Christian Andersen” Tregear provided thirty-four fairy tales largely from New Zealand, Hawaii, the Cook Islands and elsewhere in the Pacific (Howe, *Singer in a Songless Land* 66). It is a derivative work, which was characteristic of Tregear – the stories were lightly rewritten accounts published by other writers including William Colenso and George Grey. Tregear focused on folklore involving fairies and other supernatural characters, as opposed to classic genealogy-inspired tales, which is characteristic of Maori mythology. The work is considered the first book to be published in New Zealand for New Zealand children (Gilderdale, “Children's Literature.” *Oxford History of New Zealand Literature* 453).

A review in the *Taranaki Herald* summarises Tregear’s motivation for publishing a book on fairy tales aimed at New Zealand children: “New Zealand children are not being taught as those of the last generation were educated – when fairy books formed part of every boy’s and girl’s library – but are made to study subjects which are devoid of all the poetry of life, and, like Gradgrind’s children, will become hardened in their ideas, and in after life have none of those pleasant recollections to fall back on which their parents now enjoy” (23 Feb 1892: 2). In his article, “The Fairies and Giants of Polynesia” published in *Longman’s Magazine*, Tregear argued that in a comparison with the new generation of children in New Zealand “the widest mental difference to be noticed between the colonist and the colonial is the lack of the imaginative and poetic faculty in the later” (17.100 (1891): 440). Tregear continued to suggest that the lack of regard with which the new colonial children looked to their elders was a product of their inability to “look backward” and a failing to be able to place oneself “in the position of ancestors whose once living presence still speaks from cairn, and abbey, and ivy-covered tower” (440-441). Tregear argued that it is the characteristic of a cultured society to foster the imaginative power in children, so that as adults they possess an enriched understanding of the intergenerational bond between them and their communities.

It is evident that Tregear and his publishers intended to create public momentum for the book to be made available *en masse* to school children. The book was printed in the format of a school reader and reviewers were asked to comment on the idea the book should be placed in schools across the country. Indeed, included in the back matter was a

double page advertisement for other school publications from Lyon and Blair. William Colenso commented on this campaign in a letter to Henry Hill in 1892. In contrast to the favourable opinions of most newspaper reviewers, Colenso was not a proponent and believed a widespread dissemination of the text would prove “ultimately injurious to *both races*” (Colenso to Hill, 14 Feb 1892). This gives a foretaste of Colenso’s opinion of Tregear and his work.

Harding is not mentioned in Howe’s biography on Tregear, but it is evident that the two men were long-time, close friends. They were both active members of the Wellington Philosophical Society – sharing the position of Vice President of the Wellington branch in 1893. Their affinity can be more linked: both men, of a similar age, had participated in the New Zealand wars – Harding had acted as New Zealand’s first war correspondent (Osborne). They had both suffered financial hardship – Tregear, even with his steady work “never had any money” (Howe, “Edward Tregear.” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography - Te Ara*). Both Harding and Tregear sought and were awarded with overseas recognition for their work, more often than the acknowledgment their work received at home. Additionally, they would have shared many political views, particularly on the issue of labour: Harding campaigned for improved labour conditions in the printing trade and a professionalization of the industry; Tregear was a passionate public servant who built the Department of Labour from a largely one-man operation to one of the largest and most powerful state agencies (Howe, “Edward Tregear.” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Te Ara*).

Tregear and Harding were acquainted before Harding left Napier for Wellington in 1890, and Tregear may have played a part in helping Harding find work immediately after his relocation at printers Lyon & Blair. A comment in a letter from Colenso suggests that Harding may have worked on Tregear’s *Comparative Dictionary*, he writes: “I find (from you), that Tregear’s big book is *finished*: and that the “Monthly Review,” is also *ended*. How does all that affect you? Has L. & B. sufficient future Book work to keep you on? (Don’t think I am prying into your own private affairs.) *I much wish to know*” (Colenso to Harding, 2 Mar 1891). Additionally, in 1896 Tregear wrote Harding a letter of recommendation for the position of head of the Government Printing Office in which he mentioned Harding had done “much dictionary work” for him (Tregear to the Colonial Secretary, 20 May 1896). It is likely that Harding was also involved in the production of Tregear’s *Fairy Tales* which was

published by Lyon and Blair in 1891 while Harding was still working there, although there is no direct evidence to substantiate this. Tregear's comments in the aforementioned letter of recommendation encapsulate the high regard that Tregear held for his friend, and an almost desperate desire to see Harding awarded a post worthy of his talents. He wrote, "I have no doubt that if placed in a position where his talents could be applied to the national service, instead of being wasted in continual struggle against mere tradesmen, he would justify your patronage and show himself as acute in the management of the Printing Office as he is learned in every requirement of his art." Written on Department of Labour stationery, Tregear signed the letter as Secretary of the Polynesian Society. He was perhaps too earnest in his support for Harding, or, Tregear was not the right reference for an important government position – Harding was not awarded the post. Finally, Tregear and Harding also shared in common a connection with William Colenso. The correspondence between Colenso and Harding reveals a relationship feud between Colenso and Tregear, of which Harding is placed uncomfortably in the middle between his great friend and his great mentor.

The discord is associated with what Colenso perceived was Tregear's appropriation of his intellectual work, largely in relation to Tregear's *Maori-Polynesia Comparative Dictionary*. Colenso believed Tregear played an active role in scuttling his own publication, the *Maori Lexicon*, which was commissioned by Parliament but which through a series of unfortunate events only a part A was ever printed. Obviously in response at an attempt by Harding to defend his friend, Colenso replied:

I can *fully* understand your kind & friendly remarks on my letter to him – "that I was *hard* on him" – but then you are quite ignorant of our *former* free & full correspondence on Maori matters, &c. &c. – some day *you* may know *all*: - *till then* suspend yr judgement . . . Depend upon it, that *now* my Dy. will *never* be pubd. – I have little doubt but that the Govt of the day *knew* of Tregear's work, "So many years in prepn.," and that *this* was a reason (if not the only one) for their conduct towards me. (Colenso to Harding, 24 Apr 1891)

If Colenso was attempting to be minutely appeasing in his letters to Harding, he did not hold back in his reply to Tregear after he was sent a copy of the *Comparative Dictionary* (Colenso's emphasis):

The announcement of your book in the Papers of the day greatly surprised me. I *could not* understand it, believing that you were otherwise fully employed on Mao. subjects And when I heard that, - "*it had been many years in publication,*" and recollected your numerous letters (of enquiry etc.) to me during past years, in which – which they were both friendly + long, and on Maori words, with *frequent reference to the Dicty. on which I have been so long occupied* – yet you never once *alluded to your being so engaged, I was still more surprised!* . . . But that is over, here is your work: and I must now plainly + honestly tell you that it seems to me to savour strongly of forestalling under the apparent guise of friendship. (Colenso to Tregear, 9 Apr 1891)

Clearly, Tregear had shown this letter to Harding, and it is in response to Harding's protest at his friend's treatment that Colenso defended himself in the aforementioned letter. Colenso also used Harding as an intermediary for information he wanted to extract from Tregear, but which he was obviously not prepared to ask directly: "Would you kindly enq. of Tregear (but *not* as coming from me,) what plant, or shrub, it is that the *Taranaki* Maoris call *Turuhuhu*?" (Colenso to Harding, 2 Mar 1891). It must have been a difficult position for Harding – particularly because Tregear and Colenso were both such important influences in his life, his work and his collecting practice.

Robert Coupland Harding's auction catalogue contains at least one copy of every major book Tregear published. The catalogue also lists duplicates of Tregear's works *Aryan Maori*, *Maori Race* and several copies of *Hedged with Divinities*. Except for perhaps Colenso, no other single author was given as much space in his New Zealand collection. This is despite Harding disagreeing on several of Tregear's theories, including arguing against the premise of *Aryan Maori*, "a work which," Harding wrote in *Typo* in 1887, "as a scientific treatise, deserves to rank with Rowbottom's Zetetic Astronomy or Hine's Identifications" (*Typo* 1.12 (1887): 88). As well as a genuine interest in amassing his friend's publications, Harding's collection would likely have benefited by Tregear's generosity. Harding's copy of

Fairy Tales was sold at auction in a bundled lot with two other works by Tregear: *Aryan Maori*; and *Hedged with Divinities*. *Hedged with Divinities* was Tregear's only attempt at prose fiction. It was not a success. "Mr Tregear's many friends," stated a review in the *Evening Post*, "will, we think, regret that he has published this little book. . . . We cannot commend [it] to favourable notice" (*Evening Post* 10 Aug 1895:2). Harding printed *Hedged with Divinities*, and it is perhaps due to his position in his trade's social networks that the book was reviewed in almost all of the major New Zealand newspapers. Unfortunately, the only positive comments about the book were in relation to Harding's effort. The book was "finely printed . . . there are charming block headings to the chapters" (*Daily Telegraph* 13 Aug 1895: 3); and, "printed by R. Coupland Harding, of Wellington, in his best style, which does service to his establishment" (*Taranaki Herald* 19 Aug 1895: 2). The lot was sold for 3 shillings and 6 pence, bought by Horace Fildes, and all three books are now held in the JC Beaglehole Room at Victoria University. Both *Fairy Tales* and *Hedged with Divinities* have been wrapped in plain brown paper, the latter book includes a small file of newspaper clipped reviews constructed by Harding. *Hedged with Divinities* contains an order slip for booksellers, as well as a compliments' card which suggests it may have been prepared as a review copy. *Aryan Maori* contains has two newspaper clippings about the debunking of the "Aryan Fallacy" which was likely added by Fildes in his inimitable bibliographic style.

Horace Fildes, a historian-collector and a bibliographer-collector, was interested in all areas of New Zealand history but his speciality was the early settlement period and the influence of the E.G. Wakefield, who was both related to Fildes through his mother, and whose history is fused with the colonisation of New Zealand (Bibliographical note in *Finding Aids for Archives*, JC Beaglehole Room, Victoria University: Horace Fildes Papers). Fildes amassed the most conclusive private archive of material on, about and by the Wakefields. He was also dedicated to the collection and study of early New Zealand books. His collecting, started around 1896, was interrupted in 1906 when he sold 200 volumes of his collection to the Palmerston North library, for reasons unexplained; he recommenced collecting almost immediately thereafter (Coleridge, "Horace Fildes." *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Te Ara*). Coleridge also documents that by the 1920s, Fildes had begun collecting additions to Hocken's *Bibliography*, and in 1925 he began a *Supplement to Hocken* – although this was never completed. One of Fildes' most valuable contributions to future

researchers and historians was the handwritten card catalogue of his own collection, which is held in the JC Beaglehole Room at Victoria University. In his index Fildes included references to a vast amount of information including biographical data on authors, printers and publishers; notes on others works of relevance to a particular book; as well as notes on where and when he acquired book, often providing the price he paid for them. Along with the index, Fildes produced numerous scrapbooks and other files on his areas of interest including newspaper clippings and other ephemera, correspondence, book auction catalogues and his own auction receipts. The index notes on *Fairy Tales* records that Fildes bought it from Harding's auction. Fildes made references about other acquisitions he made at Harding's library sale. These artefacts were also from the New Zealand-related section including several history, geography and poetry books. There is no available evidence that shows Harding and Fildes were friends – Fildes was twenty-six years younger than Harding and belonged to another generation of bookmen. It is likely however, that they would have moved in the same circles in Wellington and that they were known to each other, at the very least in a peripheral sense. Fildes would have been aware of Harding's recognition through *Typo* and his reputation as a fellow book collector. Fildes is the only person for which there is direct evidence placing him at Harding's library sale. It is solely a result of Fildes' meticulous and systematic cataloguing habits that we are aware of his attendance, and his acquisitions at the sale.

Another possible attendee at Harding's auction was George William von Zedlitz, the first Professor of Modern Languages at Victoria University, Wellington. In mid-2012, a book bearing Robert Coupland Harding's bookplate surfaced from the stacks at the Victoria University Library. The Library's *Accession Register* notes the book was sold to the library by von Zedlitz in 1941 or 1942, for 7 shillings and 6 pence (Acc. number 43408). The book is *Francisco de Goya* by Valerian von Loga, published by Grote, Berlin, in 1903. It is most likely listed in the auction catalogue as lot number 549, which includes "Francisco de Goya" and "Le Style Empire." The latter title does not appear in the Victoria University Library catalogue. Von Zedlitz was a victim of anti-German hysteria in New Zealand during WWI and eventually lost his position at the university, who for a long time fought for him to stay (T. Beaglehole, "George William Edward Ernest von Zedlitz." *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Te Ara*). During the same year as Harding's library auction, von Zedlitz was

setting up the University Tutorial School on Lambton Quay in Wellington (von Zedlitz 140; Childs 20). Harding's auction would have interested von Zedlitz because of the large amount of foreign language books included in Harding's collection. It is highly likely that von Zedlitz acquired *Goya*, written in German, either for his school library or for his own library shelves.

It is tantalising to image how many more books from Harding's library float undetected in New Zealand's libraries. One of these books yet to be discovered is the subject of the last case study – the only case study artefact which was unable to be located.

Case Study Three: *Murihiku: A History of the South Island of New Zealand and the Islands Adjacent and lying to the South, from 1642-1835*, by Robert McNab.

In December 1907, a fire ripped through the Parliament Buildings in Wellington and within hours had destroyed everything except the Parliamentary Library, which was protected by fire walls (“Parliamentary Library.” *New Zealand Historic Places Trust Registry*). The following day, a large crowd gathered on Molesworth Street and witnessed the damage to “portraits, half-burnt, of early legislators, parliamentary papers, fire-grates, portions of chairs, charred remnants of Mr McNab’s ‘Murihiku’ which have fallen from his room above” (*Malborough Express* 14 Dec 1907). It was not the last time the Parliamentary Buildings suffered the effects of fire, and it was not the first time McNab’s famous work had met an untimely end.

At the conclusion to his chapter on Robert McNab’s *Murihiku: A History of the South Island of New Zealand* former Turnbull librarian Johannes Andersen proclaimed: “And now, who will say that the book ‘Murihiku’ has not an attraction apart from its absorbing contents?” (*Lure of New Zealand Book Collecting* 38). Andersen provides the most detailed account of the complicated history of *Murihiku* and its various incarnations. As described often opaquely by Andersen, McNab produced at least three editions of *Murihiku* over the first decade of the twentieth century but only two of them made onto the market. The last two editions (1907 and 1909) were received as some of the most important historical contributions on New Zealand, and one of McNab’s most celebrated achievements. It was significant because it was one of the first books which set out to document, in precise reporting based on primary artefacts held in institutions from around the world, a period of “post-pakeha, pre-colonial history” (Richards, ‘*Murihiku*’ *Re-viewed* 6). It was also significant because it focused entirely on a geographical area that had until then been largely ignored by writers of New Zealand history: the southern tip of the South Island.

Robert McNab (1864-1917) was a born and bred New Zealander, growing up in Southland and attending the University of Otago in Dunedin (Traue, "Robert McNab." *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Te Ara*). As a member of the Liberal Party, McNab went in and out of Parliament, losing and winning various electorate seats in Mātaura, Palmerston North and Hawke's Bay (Traue). His activities into historical research were more consistent throughout this period. McNab was recognised by the Government as a diligent collector and researcher of primary material. He was commissioned by Parliament to edit records for a government-subsidised publication, amassed as the *Historical Records of New Zealand* which were published in two volumes in 1908 and 1914.

Andersen states the first offering of *Murihiku* was printed in 1904, which McNab entitled *Murihiku. Some Old Time Events* (33). This edition was a compilation of twelve essays that had been printed in the *Southern Standard* and Andersen assumed that "the type was evidently kept standing, or the columns were at once rearranged for the printing in page form, the only alteration being in the chapter-headings" (37). He then describes the work as more like a pamphlet. Andersen records that an accompanying letter from McNab to Turnbull explains "Only three copies are in existence. One is held by myself, a second by Mr. Ewen and this is the third" (36). Andersen suggests that two of these copies may still be found. Mr Ewen's library, Andersen reports, was sold to Angus and Robertson after his death, so one copy could still be found in Australia. It is not known where McNab's copy went after his death. Andersen records another *Murihiku* published in 1905, a royal octavo expanded version of the 1904 edition, again printed by the *Southern Standard*. He does not mention the size of the print run, but states that sight of this edition would cause "little fluttering in the hearts of collectors" (36). Andersen then describes what he calls the "Maui-Murihiku," another edition published in 1905 which McNab stopped mid-print and destroyed all but a handful of copies. McNab gave one copy of this edition to Alexander Turnbull together with a letter dated 1908 which stated that, "Only some dozen copies out of 600 were retained, and six of that number have been destroyed" (qtd in Andersen 35). Andersen called this suppressed edition the "Maui-Murihiku" because he resolved there could be at least half a dozen elusive copies still in existence. In the preface to the 1907 edition, McNab reflected on this short-lived edition, explaining

Eighteen months ago the work was almost ready for the public, and the first portion of an edition of six hundred copies was printed off when the opportunity already referred to presented itself and the author visited America, where his researches resulted in such an amount of new material relating to Southern New Zealand that on his return the whole edition was destroyed and the work re-written, necessitating long delay. (x-xi)

The second edition was printed in 1907 with a print run of 1000 copies, by William Smith of Invercargill and entitled *Murihiku and the Southern Islands. A History of the West Coast Sounds, Foveaux Strait, Stewart Island, the Snares, Bounty, Antipodes, Auckland, Campbell and Macquarie Islands, from 1770 to 1829*. In 1909, McNab produced another extended edition which carried the title *Murihiku: A History of the South Island of New Zealand and the Islands Adjacent and Lying to the South, from 1642 to 1835*, printed by Whitcombe and Tombs of Wellington. McNab states in the preface of this edition that it had a limited print run of 515 copies. Andersen provides more detail: "Of the 515 copies, 15 were on special hand-made paper, quite different from the soft paper of the others. These 15 volumes were also specially bound in calf for presentation to particular friends and prominent people. Of the remaining 500, 30 were retained for presentation to other people, and 470 were offered for sale. Collectors will be on the watch for the copies on hand-made paper" (34). A handwritten note inserted in Turnbull's copy lists the recipients of the special fifteen copies of the 1909 edition. Antiquarian book trader Rowan Gibbs of Smith's Bookshop Ltd, Wellington, transcribed this list in a catalogue of *Recent Acquisitions*, which is reproduced here with permission. In order of precedence: 1) The Gov, Lord Plunkett; 2) The Rt. Hon Sir J.G. Ward; 3) Hon. Wm Hall-Jones; 4) Hon. James Carroll; 5) Hon. James McGowan; 6) Hon. Sir John Findlay; 7) Hon. Andrew Millar; 8) Hon. G. Fowlds; 9) McNab's author copy; 10) McNab's brother Angus; 11) Dr. Hocken; 12) A.H. Turnbull; 13) Wm McAra (?), Gore; 14) E.R. Boroler (?), Gore; 15) second author's copy. Andersen also documents that the Turnbull Library acquired two author's copies of the 1909 edition and that one copy is heavily annotated with remarks and corrections. He asserts this as evidence that McNab may have been preparing yet another edition.

There are only two entries for *Murihiku* in Hocken's *Bibliography*: the 1907 and 1909 editions. Hocken describes McNab's 1907 work dismissively as a "mass of old history,

unearthed from early whaling and other logs and New South Wales newspaper records” (475). Of the 1909 edition he only states, “Second edition” (485). In his card catalogue Horace Fildes chastises the flippant comment on the 1907 edition: “Dr Hocken’s curt references to this work and the 1909 ed. of it are not creditable to him.” He also corrects Hocken, noting that the 1909 edition “is the third edition, not the second as given in Hocken’s N.Z. Bibliography. It contains a vast amount of new matter. The illustrations are most valuable, and as only 515 copies were printed and quickly sold out, copies of the work are difficult to find.”

The last two editions of *Murihiku* were widely acclaimed. However, a common critique was against the historical narrative style McNab had chosen to present the information. For example, the reviewer for the *Wanganui Herald* stated the narrative “cannot be said to be a model of literary graces and style” (10 Aug 1909). Wordsworth Standish asserted that the “watering down of his scholarship to suit popular taste has weakened the value of his work” (“Robert McNab.” *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*). The value of McNab’s historical research was almost universally appreciated. The publication of the 1909 edition was itself a news story and updates on its progress were reported in newspapers before it was published. This was because the 1907 edition had also been highly acclaimed and eagerly anticipated before its eventual publication, largely due to the publicity generated by the fire at Parliament which destroyed an early manuscript and McNab’s research notes.

However, McNab was not without his critics. One vocal opponent to McNab’s historical stature was the editor of the *Akaroa Mail*, who published an editorial that accused McNab of “claiming his findings as quite original, while what he writes about has been published many years previously” (21 Jun 1910: 2). The writer continues his column with a series of examples which he provides as evidence that McNab “like many other historians . . . seems to think that the ground upon which he is prospecting has undergone no previous examination.” Among the more serious accusations against McNab’s character related to a remark McNab made to a *Dominion* reporter. McNab claimed that during one of his research expeditions in Paris he had unearthed a document which told the story of a cannibalistic feast in Akaroa by Te Rauparaha’s forces. He gave this story as an example of the finds he was making in foreign archives, previously unknown to the general public in

New Zealand. However, the editor of the *Akaroa Mail* rebuked McNab's claim, reporting that the same story was told in Howard Charles Jacobson's *Tales of Banks Peninsula* which was published in two editions in 1884 and 1893 respectively. To illustrate that the misappropriation of new historical findings was not an isolated incident, the *Akaroa Mail* continued its attack on McNab's reputation. In response to McNab's assertions that he had again unearthed documents, this time a whaler's journal from 1840. In another interview McNab stated that "A portion of the journal was donated by Mr Anson to the Canterbury Museum, but the authorities could not find it. However, I got other people interested in the work, and a special search resulted in its discovery in some outlandish place" (*Northern Advocate* 18 Jun 1910: 3). Contradicting McNab's account, the *Akaroa Mail* asserted that in response to a request to see the journal in his possession "Mr Anson at once granted permission, only telling Mr McNab that he had the copyright. What does Mr McNab do; but come out to New Zealand and announce to a Dominion reporter that he had unearthed Hempleman's log, taking to himself the glory of finding this old seaman's diary. We have published Mr Anson's indignant letter about the subject, calling attention to Mr McNab's very unequivocal behaviour" (25 Oct 1910:2).

Despite this episode, McNab's reputation as a valuable historian spread over the country, and all editions of *Murihiku* quickly gained prominence amongst collectors of New Zealand books. Although there were earlier, and rarer, editions of *Murihiku* available to book collectors, it was the 1909 edition that was most sought after, primarily because it was the most extended, revised and complete edition of the work. Devoted book collectors on New Zealand history would also hunt for the other editions, as Horace Fildes did, collecting all three available editions of the work. This was mirrored by comparative prices of the different editions sold at auction throughout the twentieth century. Apart from some exceptions, the 1909 edition realised higher prices than the 1905 or 1907 edition, although the 1907 edition had the highest incidence rate of appearing at auction, which was not surprising as it had an initial print run double the size of the 1909 edition. A further evaluation of the available pricing information for *Murihiku* illustrates its place as a highly desired item for book collectors.

A Whitcombe and Tombs advertisement in the *Dominion* shows that the 1909 edition was originally sold for 12 shillings and 6 pence (12s.6d.), which was more expensive

than the 1907 edition which sold on publication for 10s.6d. In 1926, the *Evening Post* reported the library sale of Dunedin writer, conservationist and book collector Alex Bathgate, and noted his 1909 edition of *Murihiku* sold for £1.13s (6 Mar 1926:21). By 1934 the price had grown to £1.9s as evidenced in a record published in *The Evening Post* (11 Jul 1934). From the late 1940s, there are more sustained records available to assess the trend in prices realised at auction, in large part due to the series publication *Book Values* by Andrew Fair. In a survey of Fair's *Guide to Book Values* the 1909 edition surged in value over the twentieth century. In Fair's 1954 issue, the book consistently sold at auction for more than £4. In the 1956 edition of the publication, Fair recorded *Murihiku* selling in a range of £3.7s.6d - £6.5s. By the 1970s, prices were between \$20-30 (for poorer quality copies) to \$60-74 (for better quality copies). In *New Zealand Book Values* (1996), the 1909 edition was selling at auction \$140-170. The year previously Rowan Gibbs of Smith's Bookshop Ltd., Wellington valued one of the fifteen handmade copies (this copy given to Sir John Findlay) at \$750. In 2012, Auckland auction house Art+Object sold one of the fifteen hand-made copies for \$2450, more than twice the anticipated value.

Murihiku was listed as lot 141 in the auction catalogue of Robert Coupland Harding's library sale and highlighted in bold to attract the attention of collectors. The catalogue also noted it was a copy of the 1909 edition. That there are no other listings of the work possibly suggests Harding did not acquire other editions of *Murihiku*. The only other book written by McNab listed in the catalogue is the first volume of *Historical Records* which was sold together with the second volume of Arthur Thomson's *Story of New Zealand* in lot 110. The copy of the Bethune catalogue with miscellaneous marginalia has a note "see Galloway" written in pencil next to the entry of the *Murihiku* lot 141: but the relevance of this remark is presently unknown. Possibly, the owner of the catalogue is recording that Galloway purchased the lot, or that he or she wanted more information on the book and thought Galloway could help. The copy of the catalogue which has prices annotated in the margin indicates the artefact was sold for 13 shillings: not much more than the original purchase price, and a figure that dips below the pricing trend for this edition according to the few available records of the period. Utilising the Reserve Bank of New Zealand's inflation calculator the original sale price of 10 shillings would have been comparative to \$18.99 in today's currency (2012); the price realised at Harding's auction in 1922 was only worth

\$11.70. However, the price realised at Bathgate's auction in 1926 of £1.13s equates to \$103.30 in 2012. Because of problems inherent in the historical application of a consumer price index, a comparative study of these monetary values is not wholly robust and there are not enough recorded prices for this edition of *Murihiku* through the 1920s to allow for a more solid assessment of pricing trends. However, comparison with the low price achieved at Harding's auction could indicate that his own copy was either not a high quality example of the book, or it was not in great condition. Another possibility is the auction attendees had focused their interest on several high profile lots which followed the artefact in the catalogue including some particularly rare books and several lots which raised the highest prices in the New Zealand section. These lots included: a 1854 Maori translation of Bunyan's *Pilgrims' Progress*, *He Moemoea* (lot 151, in bold and noted "a very rare book"), sold for 26 shillings; a 1852 Maori translation of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, *Ropitini Kuruho* (lot 152, in bold and noted "very rare"), sold for £2.2.6; the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* volumes 4-25, and three volumes of *Transactions* (lot 164, in bold), sold for £2.17.6; Hamilton's *Maori Art* (lot 171 in bold), sold for £4.7.6; and a complete set of the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* from 1880-1911 (lot 172, in bold), sold for £2.15. The artefact did achieve a higher price than the two lots which came direct before it in the catalogue, both of which were also bolded: T. Lindsay Buick's *An Old New Zealander* (lot 139), sold for 11 shillings; and T. Lindsay Buick's *Old Manawatu* (lot 140), sold for 10 shillings.

A comparison of the literary column in the *Evening Post* between the two listed Buick works and McNab's *Murihiku* reveals the likelihood that Harding did not write the *Murihiku* review, as the article does not demonstrate the characteristics of Harding's reviewing style. In his review, Harding recognised the valuable contribution that Buick had made with his works *Old Manuwatu* and *Old Marlborough* by adding to the vital first hand records of early settlers in New Zealand. Harding wrote that "[w]orks like Mr Buick's though necessarily not free from error and defect, form a nucleus indispensable to the future historian" and that the book "will find a place in every library of New Zealand literature" (*Evening Post* 19 Sept 1903: 11). Harding repeats the relevance of these earlier works in his review of Buick's 1911 publication *An Old New Zealander: or Te Rauparaha, the Napoleon of the South*, which is characteristic of Harding's critical approach of placing the book in context with other works by the author. Typically, he also draws on his knowledge of other

publications which provide narratives on Te Rauparaha, among which Harding noted, “W.T.L. Traver’s biography, originally published in 1872 and reprinted in later years, is well known” (*Evening Post* 23 Dec 1911: 17). Harding also asserted that the publication was needed to counter the harsh contemporary portrayal of Te Rauparaha as “bloodthirsty and cruel beyond description,” and commends Buick for striving “impartially to weigh him in the balance, judging him, as he is entitled to be judged, by the recognised standards of his people and his times.” This is characteristic of Harding’s approach to reviewing works relating to Maori history from a pakeha viewpoint which he also demonstrated, as discussed in the previous case study, in his papers to the Wellington Philosophical Society. The distinguishing features of Harding’s critical style that are demonstrated in his reviews of Buick’s works are lacking in the 1909 *Evening Post* review of *Murihiku*. In tone it is not assertive or authoritative, nor does it display any of Harding’s frequent displays of eloquence. The review is very descriptive of the contents of the book, but it does not compare or contrast with other publications on similar subjects or themes. There is no mention of the publishing history of the book, which would have been an area of interest for Harding, particularly as it already had a reputation as a collectable book before the 1909 edition was published. There are a few remarks on the quality of publishing, but it is unlikely that Harding would have referred to “thick spongy paper” (*Evening Post* 24 Jul 1909: 13). It is also not likely that Harding would have referred so euphemistically to “regrettable incidents” between Captain Cook and Maori that resulted in bloodshed and there is no mention of Colenso, even though he wrote a paper for the New Zealand Institute on the date Cook took possession of New Zealand (which he directed Harding to read in an undated letter). Lastly, there is no assertion on the place of *Murihiku* in the body of New Zealand literature, or its desirability among collectors. Harding had suffered poor health for many years and he retired in 1912 largely for this reason. It is very likely that he was substituted for this review due to sickness; or, if it is his hand, he was suffering from a bout of illness which resulted in a very uncharacteristic piece of writing. If Harding did not write the review, this would suggest that he either bought the book on another occasion, or was gifted it from elsewhere. Another likely possibility is that Harding’s seniority in the literary department of the *Evening Post* entitled him to retain the review copy.

In an assessment of what is not likely to be an example of Harding's work as a reviewer, it becomes more apparent the high standard that Harding's reviews characteristically demonstrate. In the life cycle of a book, the agency of a critic is not simply to act as a filter between the publisher and the market of readers: in assuming an active role in the reception of a work, the reviewer is themselves becoming part of the future history of the book. Harding's writing style demonstrated that he took this responsibility seriously. A tribute to Harding upon his retirement from the *Evening Post* acknowledges the contribution that Harding made: "Journalistically, he has been recognized as a writer of exceptional ability on many subjects. His scientific and literary bent and constant never-satisfied thirst for knowledge in these spheres has enabled him to make the most valuable contributions to the columns of the daily press" (*New Zealand Journalist* 27 Jul 1912). Harding's position as a reviewer also produced some considerably valuable works for his private library. It is earnestly hoped that at some time in the future, Harding's copy of *Murihiku* will resurface and be recognised as an artefact from his large and significant New Zealand collection.

Conclusion: An end and a beginning

On a large scale the artefacts from Harding's collection cannot be retrieved and physically placed back on library shelves. However, through the auction catalogue it is possible to recreate Harding's library digitally. Utilising the legacy library function (personal libraries of well-known deceased people) on the online book cataloguing service Library Thing (<http://www.librarything.com/catalog/RCouplandHarding>) provides an opportunity to move the last remaining record of Harding's collection into an interactive digital format. This new form of preserving Harding's collection has started with the cataloguing of his New Zealand section, and is an on-going project. Each book entry includes notes about the artefact's lot number, whether bolding or additional notes were added, and prices according to the auction catalogue which provided these figures. Information on where the artefact is presently held is also included, if that information is known. Expanding the online index of Harding's collection to include all artefacts listed in the auction catalogue would be a valuable, if not time consuming, addition. However, legacy library projects currently underway are open to new members who wish to contribute, and so there is an opportunity for a group to undertake this challenge. There are currently over 1700 legacy libraries on Library Thing including the collections of Emily Dickinson, Rudyard Kipling and Andy Warhol. At present there is only a small amount of antipodean libraries, two notable inclusions in this group are the library of Maori scholar and writer Pei Te Hurinui Jones (1898-1976), whose book collection of around 300 works is held at the University of Waikato; and the catalogue of the second Premier of Australia, Alfred Deakin (1856-1919). Deakin's collection of around 1800 works was, like Harding's, dispersed after his death and the only extant record of the contents of his collection was a catalogue made by his family before the library was auctioned.

Although this is a twenty-first century approach to exploring a much older group of book collectors, there is a pertinent connection between the practice of book collecting and the construction of online legacy libraries. Library Thing is built around the social networking

of books and people. Members are able to join groups and participate in discussion boards. Users are able to access information on whom else shares a work in his or her collection. It is interesting to note for example, that like Harding, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle held a copy of Johannes Andersen's poetry book *The Lamp of Psyche* in his library; and the most popular book shared from Harding's New Zealand section is *A Narrative of Nine Month's Residence in New Zealand*, by Augustus Earle, which is also found in the private collections of Lewis Carroll, American statesman Daniel Webster, and in the on-board library of the *H.M.S. Beagle* which carried Charles Darwin on his historic researches. It will be possible, when more legacy libraries are added, to track the movement of books from the point of origin to collections around the world. Applying this to a group of works, for example early New Zealand books, would further enrich what is understood about that period's global transmission of print, and the social networks which underpin it. It is even possible artefacts from Harding's original collection could be found through this service. This new tool to explore the social nature of books is a suitable partner for the older tradition of book collecting. As this research has demonstrated, book collecting practice not only depended on social networks and the ability of collectors to navigate through social channels; the activities of book collectors in New Zealand 1880-1920 created and strengthened social bonds.

Robert Coupland Harding in many ways typified the characteristics of the book collecting field in New Zealand at the turn of the twentieth century. As a printer, publisher and journalist, Harding intimately understood the book trade. He applied this insider knowledge to further his book collection by absorbing review copies received from both *Typo* and the *Evening Post* into his library. As a critic-collector he utilised his collection as a reference library in order to perform in his position as a reviewer. His library also nurtured his on-going intellectual curiosity. He wrote on the exploits of book fiends in *Typo*, attended book auctions, and utilised less formal modes of acquisition by procuring material from other collectors, often in a mutual exchange. Harding's experience in these methods of transaction promoted his reputation amongst his family, friends and acquaintances as a trust-worthy and effective broker-collector. Using books as social currency, Harding established and strengthened relationships with both internationally renowned figures as well as well-known and respected New Zealand identities. His relationships with Colenso

and Tregear, and his participation in the Wellington Philosophical Society were important influences in his life, his work, and his collecting habits. As well as contributing to the body of New Zealand literature in the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, *Typo*, the *Monthly Review* and his numerous printing efforts, Harding participated in the legitimisation of New Zealand literature in his role as a critic – participating in the consecration of cultural capital. Many of Harding’s judgements on valuable and future-worthy literature are validated by the sought-after position those works still have in contemporary New Zealand book collecting.

Despite this record of socially engaged activity Harding was, like Alexander Turnbull, referred to at times as a recluse, a “singular man” (Osborne), who “lived a curiously private life” (McKenzie). As evidenced, Harding did not shun opportunities to participate and connect with social groups: Robert Coupland Harding was, in some ways, a man without peers. His areas of expertise, printing and typography, placed him in an isolated position in late-nineteenth century New Zealand. The nation’s printing trade during his time was industrial, not artistic, as was Harding’s speciality. Osborne recognised this, and suggested in Harding’s obituary that:

In London the late Mr. Harding’s special knowledge in typography and printing would have ensured him remunerative employment, for in London, when properly introduced, one can sell anything from a technical article on shoe-uppers to a poem on daffodils. You must be known, of course. Well, Harding’s intimacy with Caslon’s, De Vannes, and other type-founders would have secured him an entry, and he would have succeeded, I feel certain, in making a quite comfortable living on most congenial work. But as it was thirteen thousand miles of blue water have rolled between him and opportunity all his life.

Although a book auction fulfils an important stage in the cycle of book collecting, it also represents a lost opportunity to keep the collection intact. Over ninety years since the dispersal of his library, it seems an impossible task to relocate even a small portion of Harding’s once vast collection. During the period of this research there have been some serendipitous discoveries, in contemporary auction catalogues and antiquarian book shops, as well as on shelves in subterranean library stacks. And there is always the possibility of

more artefacts reappearing in the future. They may announce their presence in the form of Harding's beautifully designed bookplate, or a stamp bearing his name. Alternatively, there may be artefacts which carry inscriptions or dedications to Harding, or a compliments' card from a publisher indicating another review copy. Perhaps, the obscurity of the work on a subject of specialist typography or nineteenth century printing suggests all too strongly of Harding. In light of the increasing scholarship on Harding and his work, it is possible that in the future, artefacts from his collection will be prized by collectors of New Zealand books.



5: Robert Coupland Harding's bookplate. From *New Zealand Book-Plates Illustrated History & Bibliography*, by Shibli Bagarag [Pat Lawlor].

List of illustrations

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Figure 1: Newspaper advertisement for sale of Robert Coupland Harding's library. *Evening Post* 7 Apr. 1920: 10. Clipping inserted in catalogue of Robert Coupland Harding's library sale. In private collection, John Quilter. Printed with permission.

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Figure 2: Catalogue cover of Robert Coupland Harding's library sale. In private collection, John Quilter. Printed with permission.

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Figure 3: Example of layout in Harding's library auction catalogue, New Zealand section. In private collection, John Quilter. Printed with permission.

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Figure 4: The first page of J.D. Hooker's letter to Harding. Inserted into Harding's copy of Hooker's *Handbook*, given to him by William Colenso. In family's private collection. Printed with permission, Mike Harding.

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Figure 5: Robert Coupland Harding's bookplate. *New Zealand Book-Plates: Illustrated History & Bibliography*, by "Shibli Bagarag" [Pat Lawlor].

Works Cited – Primary Material

Due to the large amount of primary material, it is logical to provide a separate list of primary sources. Web addresses for main sources are provided. The material is divided into sections to facilitate quicker access to references. The sections are, in order:

Ungrouped primary material

Auction Advertisements

Book Reviews

Correspondence

Historic Newspaper and Journal articles

Information sourced from the *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*.

All material was accessed during the research period: 1 July 2011 – 1 July 2013.

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