Part I: Manukau Wesleyan Baptisms, 1849-1856

In 1849, Auckland, the capital of the recently established colony of New Zealand, was a centre of cultural flux. Māori, settlers, traders, government, and missionaries navigated their relationships to each other and Tāmaki Makaurau amidst colliding cultures and disputes over land and authority.

By this time, the Manukau Harbour had become a flourishing centre of Māori-missionary relations, boasting prosperous agriculture, trade, and an enthusiastic adoption of Wesleyan Methodist faith. However, the Manukau's peaceful bi-cultural exchange would be short lived, ending as tensions between the settler government and Māori developed into the Waikato War. Manukau tribes Ngāti Te Ata Waiohua and Ngāti Tamaoho had close ancestral ties with the Waikato. After the establishment of the Kīngitanga in Waikato in 1858, Māori in Manukau were treated with increasing suspicion by the settler government and many fled or were evicted from their homes by July 1863.

A unique perspective into their experiences in the changing political and social landscape of the 1850s and 1860s is provided by the baptism register of the Wesleyan mission that prospered in the Manukau during this period. An abridged version of the register, D.B.H. Gadd's *The Baptismal Register of the Ihu Matao Wesleyan Mission Station 1849-54 and the Manukau Wesleyan Circuit 1855-1869* (compiled in the 1960s), is the core focus of this project. This project aims to reveal the complexities in the popular historical understanding of Māori-settler relations hidden within the niches of the baptism register, while interweaving the story of Gadd's source itself to explore influences on the narrative it tells and how we can use the source to engage with local history.

As the first instalment in a series of three articles, this essay will introduce the baptism register as a historical source and begin to analyse it within the context of Māori-settler relations in Manukau from 1849-1856.

Early Wesleyan Methodism on the Manukau

From early European settlement, Auckland was identified as a promising site for missionary activity. As William Morley outlined in his *History of Methodism in New Zealand* (1900), missionaries identified the large Māori population surrounding Auckland, and the narrow portage which waka could be dragged over, allowing easy access to many parts of the region.[1] Reverend Walter Lawry (1793-1859) was significant in establishing the Wesleyan congregation in Auckland. A widely experienced missionary, Lawry arrived from England in 1844 to his appointment as general superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission to New Zealand. Morley highlighted Lawry's dignified, mature, and opportunistic attitude as key to the robust foundation of the Wesleyan mission in Auckland.[2]

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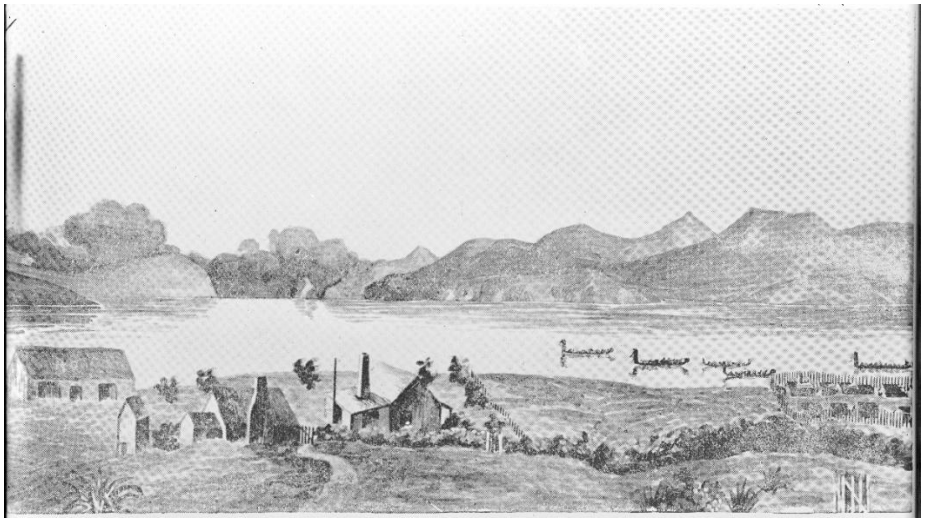
[1] William Morley, *The History of Methodism in New Zealand* (Wellington: McKee, 1900), 92.
[2] ibid., 93.

Rev. Walter Lawry, General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission to New Zealand, played a significant role in the establishment of the Methodist congregation in Auckland and the Manukau Circuit. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 7-A06901.

In Manukau, local Māori welcomed Wesleyan missionaries. In 1846, Ngāti Tamaoho rangatira Te Rangitāhua Ngāmuka (c.1816-1856, baptised Jabez Bunting or Ēpiha Pūtini in 1835) welcomed the Wesleyan Missionary Society to establish a station at Ihumātao.[3] As Lucy Mackintosh has outlined, this decision was based not only on the perceived material benefits of a mission station, such as literacy, connections, and commerce, but a genuine belief in Christianity's potential to bring law and peace.[4] Buildings were in place at Ihumātao by 1849, and Henry Hassal Lawry (1821-1906), Walter Lawry's son, took charge of the station.[5] Simultaneously, Ēpiha Pūtini also facilitated the establishment of a mission station at Pehiakura, at the base of the Āwhitu Peninsula, which Henry Lawry also serviced.[6] Ēpiha Pūtini lived between Pehiakura and Ihumātao, and assisted Wesleyan missionaries at both locations. In some sources, Ihumātao and Pehiakura are listed as the same mission station, but Mackintosh pointed out that they were separate stations and local Māori travelled fluidly between them.[7]

[3] Lucy Mackintosh, 'The Crooked Place' in *Shifting Grounds* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books) 2021, 82.
[4] ibid., 88-89.
[5] ibid., 90.
[6] ibid., 87.
[7] ibid.



Ihumātao Mission Station, with Manukau Heads in background, sketched by Elizabeth Forsaith, sister-in-law of Rev. Henry Hassal Lawry. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 4-1252.

Initially, Pehiakura and Ihumātao were worked into the wider Auckland Circuit, before joining the Manukau Circuit in 1855.[8] There were daily services at Ihumātao and Papāhinu (near Ōtāhuhu), and 'regular' services at Māngere and Pehiakura.[9]

In the early 1850s, Wesleyan Methodism thrived on the Manukau Circuit, with an 1851 report citing the influence of preachings, deepening of experimental religion, and steady progress in Sunday schools.[10]

Places of Service on the Manukau Circuit, ca.1855, according to William Morley. Figure by Author using map from Google Earth.

[8] Morley, 104.
[9] ibid., 96.
[10] Unsigned, Reports of the New Zealand Districts to Secretaries, 1851. MS-39, Box 7, Record 25, New Zealand Missionary Correspondence, Kei Muri Māpara/Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives (KMM/MCNZA), Christchurch, 7.

D.B.H. Gadd's edited register

When missionaries arrived at their stations, they were equipped with two crucial stationery items: baptism registers and marriage registers. Upon conversion to Christianity, Māori would be baptised by missionaries and recorded in the register. Marriages were recorded in a separate register, often on the same day for adult Māori converts.

Mission registers provide rich historical information. As significant artefacts, they preserved details of early contact between Māori and European missionaries and reveal trends in the Māori uptake of Christianity. Further, reading and analysing registers against known historical context can help to shed light on how Māori reacted to events and the impact that significant incidences had on their faith. In this way, a baptism register presents much more than a simple tally of baptisms: it tells intricate stories of social, political, and religious relationships, the impact of and on values that conflicts have, and geographic movement. Moreover, because a register provides simple, quantitative data, it can be analysed in both a quantitative and qualitative manner, allowing clear trends to be observed.

Conversely, analysing nineteenth-century records of Māori-European interactions presents several challenges. Firstly, despite early Māori uptake of literacy and the creation of Māori dictionaries for missionaries, missionaries transcribed Māori names phonetically. Therefore, spelling of Māori names varied between registers, newspaper articles, and other records, making tracing individuals difficult. This is compounded by the custom of Māori converts taking on baptised names different from their birth names, and the transliteration of many English names into Māori, allowing Māori and some Pākehā to be known by two different-language versions of their name. Similarly, Māori place names varied in the ways they were spelt across sources, and some places have come to be known by different names over time. Lastly, nineteenth-century handwriting can be tough to decipher, disallowing specific details. For example, in entry 173 of his edited register, Gadd transcribed the location from the original as '?..atutai,' indicating that he could not make out what was written.[11]

The original baptism register for Ihumātao and the Manukau Circuit is held in the Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives. Yet, my research began with an abridged version of the register, D.B.H. Gadd's *The Baptismal Register of the Ihu Matao Wesleyan Mission Station 1849-54 and the Manukau Wesleyan Circuit 1855-1869*. Donated to the Auckland War Memorial Museum in 1964, the abridged version of the manuscript compiles data from Wesleyan baptisms between 1849 and 1871 at Ihumātao, Pehiakura, Papahina [sic], Pūkaki, Taotaoroa (Māngere), Ōtāhuhu, Woodside (Papatoetoe), and Papakura.[12] Gadd presented a tally of Māori and European baptisms for each year, an index of Māori and European families (listed by child's name, parents' names, father's occupation, abode, when born, when baptised, and by whom). Alongside his tally for each year, Gadd included notes on events he perceived as having influence on the number of baptisms, such as 'increasing fear of Pākehā domination,' the election of the Māori King, and the Waitara Dispute.[13]

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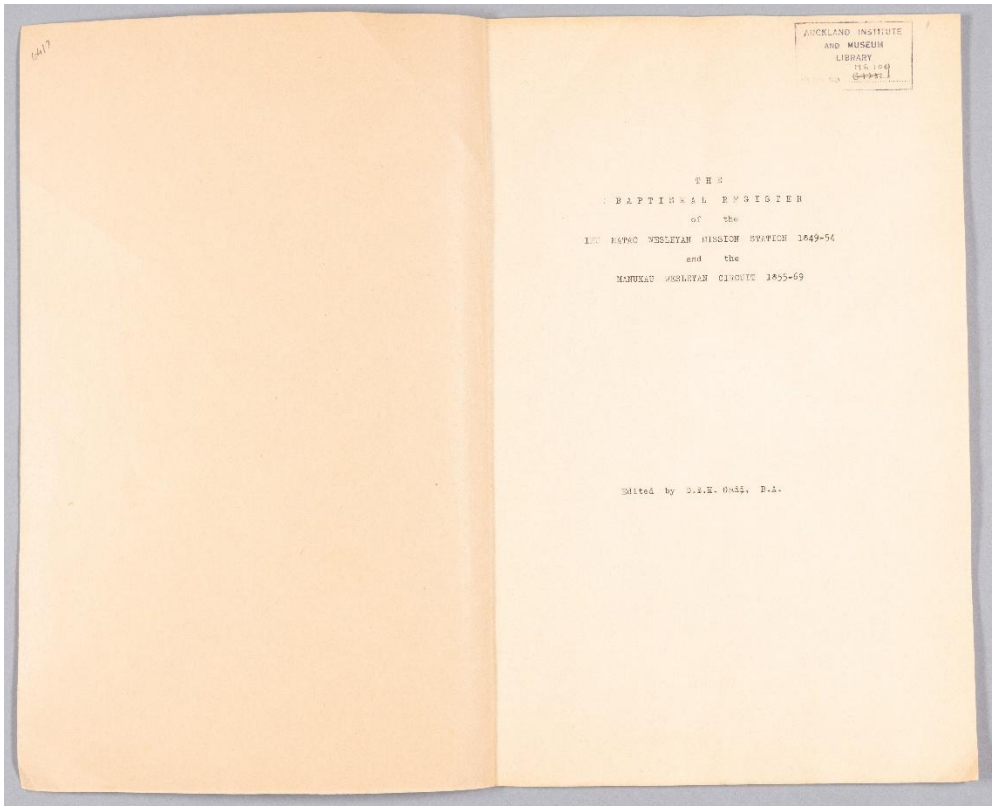
[11] D.B.H. Gadd (ed.), The Baptismal Register of the Ihu Matao Wesleyan Mission Station 1849-54 and the Manukau Wesleyan Circuit 1855-1869, c.1964, MS-109, Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, Auckland, 9.
[12] Gadd, 2.
[13] ibid., 3.



Bernard Gadd. The Baptismal Register of the Ihu Matao Wesleyan Mission Station 1849-54 and the Manukau Wesleyan Circuit 1855-69" edited by D.B.H. [David Bernard Hallard] Gadd, B.A. *Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira. MS-109.*

Gadd compiled the register to demonstrate a glimpse into what he described as 'the most tragic period in the history of the Christian church in New Zealand'.[14] In his introduction to the register, he highlighted the thriving Wesleyan congregation on the Manukau Circuit during its year of inception, tallying 59 Māori and 32 Pākehā members across nine locations.[15] However, after Māori-settler tensions escalated during the late 1850s and early 1860s, Gadd stressed the tragedy of how Māori left the Manukau and their stations of worship. By 1865, Gadd counted an increase in European worshippers to 46, noting the disappearance of Māori members.[16]

Gadd's edited register demonstrates a thorough, well-presented analysis of the Manukau Circuit's baptism register. He successfully contextualised the quantitative data within known historical events. Gadd also highlighted trends in Māori and European annual baptism tallies, and drew his conclusions on the catalysts of these trends based on known historical events. It is important to note that at this point, Gadd's analysis is subjective as he marked events he perceived as significant from an Arts-educated, Pākehā, Methodist perspective. The influences on Gadd's interpretation will be further explored in my third article. Notwithstanding, Gadd's edited register presents a convincing explanation for decreasing Māori baptisms, consistent with popular histories of the Manukau such as Albert E. Tonson's *Old Manukau* and Lucy Mackintosh's *Shifting Grounds*. Mackintosh particularly cites Gadd as evidence to her explanation of the rise and fall of the Ihumātao Mission Station.[17]

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[14] ibid., 2.
[15] ibid.
[16] ibid.
[17] Mackintosh, 78-115.

Baptisms 1849-1856

From the beginning of his edited register in 1849 to 1856, Gadd's tally of Māori baptisms remains steady. In 1849, 11 Māori were baptised. The annual total of Māori baptisms fluctuated between 5 and 17 until 1857. In total, 83 Māori were baptised between 1849 and 1856. This period was the high point of the Wesleyan mission, and reflected the welcoming of missionaries into the Manukau, and the peaceful exchange of commerce and ideas that Lucy Mackintosh best outlined in her revised history of Ihumātao Mission Station.[18]

Despite the flourishing mission activity, the years 1852 and 1853 represent a temporary drop in Māori baptisms, with only 6 and 9 respective baptisms compared to 16 and 17 in the years immediately before and after. This aligns with Ēpiha Pūtini's withdrawal of support from the Wesleyan mission in 1852. Despite his hopes that the mission would aid peace and unity between settlers and Māori, Pūtini became disillusioned with the colonial government and the missionaries' ability to help and withdrew his support for the mission.[19]

Nevertheless, Māori baptisms rose again in 1854. The reason for this increase in Māori baptisms is not clear, but may be due to the migratory habits of Māori, and the maintenance of lands in various different locations, as discussed by both Morley and Mackintosh.[20] An 1852 Wesleyan report framed the withdrawal of Pūtini's support as part of the 'enmity of the world,' that God had 'used as the howling of the wolf to drive the frightened flock for refuge closer to the Chief Shepherd'.[21] This metaphor was used to show that despite changes in the support of some Māori, uncertainty about the future had brought the Wesleyan congregation closer and deeper into their faith.

During the same period, 37 Europeans were baptised at the relevant stations. 1849 began the period with zero European baptisms, before steady growth from 4 baptisms in 1850 to 7 in 1856. This likely shows the growing Pākehā settlement of the area.

1856 marked the end of the heyday for Māori baptisms on the Manukau Circuit. From 1857, racial conflict wore down the Māori congregation, reflected in a stark drop in Māori baptisms. Despite this trend, several Māori continued to have their children baptised, even after Māori were issued with an ultimatum to pledge allegiance to the Crown or leave the Manukau. The next article will explore why some Māori continued to be baptised on the Manukau Circuit after race relations began to deteriorate and how they challenge the popular historical narrative.

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[18] ibid.
[19] ibid., 103.
[20] Morley, 104; Mackintosh, 93.
[21] H.H. Lawry, Letter and reports to Secretaries from J. Watkin, 1852. MS-39, Box 7, Record 26, New Zealand Missionary Correspondence, KMM/MCNZA, Christchurch, 8.

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