

“(2) The price of each allotment of 201 acres will be £300. Then, after conditions of payment, terms of balloting for choice of selections, &c., the prospectus states,—

“(7) The Company engages, subject to an arrangement with Her Majesty's Government, to add to the 201,000 acres offered for sale a quantity equal to one-tenth thereof as Native reserves; so that the quantity of land to be appropriated will in fact consist of 221,100 acres and the town of 1,100 acres. The plan of the Native reserves in the first settlement will be followed, unless the regulations of Her Majesty's Government, or any unforeseen difficulty should prevent its adoption.”

The founding of the settlement of Nelson introduces a fourth member of the Wakefield family into the colonization of New Zealand⁽¹⁾, Captain Arthur Wakefield, R.N. (a younger brother of Edward Gibbon), who had entered the navy at the age of ten and served with distinction. Captain Wakefield was selected by the Company to command the Nelson expedition, and upon its arrival he became the Resident Agent, with powers subordinate only to those of his brother, Colonel William Wakefield. The preliminary expedition for the choice and survey of the site of Nelson sailed from Gravesend on the 28th April, 1841. It consisted of two vessels—the “Whitby,” 347 tons, carrying the flag, and the “Will Watch,” 251 tons—and was followed nineteen days later by the brig “Arrow,” 225 tons, laden with stores.⁽²⁾ The chief surveyor selected by the Company was Mr. Frederick Tuckett, who had under him a staff of assistants and labourers, and accompanying the expedition was Captain Liardet, of the Royal Navy, who was appointed agent at New Plymouth. After a somewhat protracted voyage the “Arrow” was the first to arrive at Wellington, on the 28th August of the same year, a few weeks ahead of the other two ships. Captain Wakefield's first objective was the selection of a suitable site, and he at once applied to Governor Hobson, who had been instructed by Lord John Russell on the 22nd April, 1841, to allow the Company to select the land for its second settlement, out of the limits prescribed by the original agreement of November, 1840.⁽³⁾ Governor Hobson offered the choice of three sites in the North Island, but the Wakefields decided that Port Cooper (Lyttelton) was a more suitable locality⁽⁴⁾. Captain Hobson, however, refused Port Cooper, on the ground that it was claimed by various individuals, including the Nanto-Bordelaise Company, and Colonel Wakefield eventually directed his brother to select a site at Blind Bay (Tasman Bay).⁽⁴⁾ The insufficiency of suitable land adjacent to the site which was selected was the cause later of serious difficulties, including even the massacre of Wairau in 1843.

Leaving Wellington on the 30th September, 1841, the little fleet came to anchor eight days later in Astrolabe Roads, and exploring parties were at once despatched in different directions to search for available country, and also for a suitable port. On the run across, Captain Wakefield called at Kapiti to acquaint Rauparaha of his intention to form a settlement in Blind Bay. The first site selected—much against the wishes of the chief surveyor—was at Kaiteretere, near Riwaka; but later the harbour of Wakatu was discovered and found to be more suitable. The parties immediately re-embarked, and on the 1st November, 1841, the brig “Arrow” leading the way, steered past the rock which is now known by her name and sailed into Nelson Harbour.

The chief surveyor, Mr. Tuckett, although satisfied with the port of Wakatu, and the ground contiguous to it as a site merely for a town, reported that there was insufficient land in the vicinity to provide for the rural and accommodation sections. Mr. Charles Heaphy, the Company's draughtsman who had accompanied the expedition from Wellington, and who possessed the gift, according to Mr. Alfred Saunders⁽⁵⁾ of “putting non-existent land of the highest quality upon paper,” was quite hopeful, however. In a letter which was published in Wallace's “Early History of New Zealand” he stated that “this settlement will require 500,000 acres, and that amount of available land is here.” There was little time, however, for further search, the emigrants were on their way out from England, and Captain Wakefield decided to remain at Port Wakatu and select his country lands in the districts of Waimea, Moutere, Motueka, and Massacre (Golden) Bay.

The first emigrants for Nelson sailed from the Downs in September, 1841, and on the 1st February, 1842, since commemorated as Nelson's Anniversary Day—the “Fifeshire” dropped her anchor outside the Boulder-bank. A few days later the “Mary Ann” showed up, followed by the “Lloyds” and the “Lord Auckland.” From April, 1841, to August, 1842, forty-two vessels sailed from England to different parts of New Zealand, and, of these, nineteen for Nelson.⁽²⁾

The work of settlement now commenced; tents were pitched among the fern, and buildings which had been brought in pieces from England were erected for the accommodation of the people. Wheelbarrows were the only means of conveyance until the arrival from Port Nicholson of the redoubtable but rather profane Sam Phelps and his celebrated team of bullocks. The Natives were friendly, and kept the settlers supplied with fish and kumeras, and Auckland Point, where the present hostelry now stands, was the camping-ground of many curiously interested Maori visitors, with their “poakas” tethered awaiting pakeha purchasers.

(1) The youngest brother, Felix, was also induced to go to New Zealand a few years later, and in 1849 he wrote a valuable report for the Company on colonial surveying: “Colonization of New Zealand,” by Dr. J. S. Marais. Another brother, Daniel, came out with the first colonists, and later held office as Attorney-General for the colony, residing at Wellington, before representative institutions were introduced; subsequently he was appointed Judge of the Supreme Court and stationed at Wellington: Cox's “Men of Mark of New Zealand.” Note.—Daniel Wakefield was on the Board of Management for the reserves at Wellington prior to the passing of the 1856 Act.

(2) “Nelson,” by “Kappa,” 1842.

(3) Great Britain—Papers relating to New Zealand, 1841, p. 138.

(4) *Ibid.*, 1842, p. 157.

(5) “History of New Zealand,” by Alfred Saunders.