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The company-microstate: The Auckland Islands and corporate colonialism in global history, 1849–52

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Abstract

The Auckland Islands, a subantarctic archipelago 465 kilometres south of New Zealand, were the setting for one of the stranger episodes in the global history of colonial expansion. From 1849–52, these remote, inhospitable islands were governed and settled by a chartered company. The project was driven by lofty ambitions to simultaneously create a flourishing settler colony and unlock vast new whaling grounds in the Southern Ocean; the reality was a commercial disaster plagued by bitter internal disputes and a speedy abandonment. Drawing on the methods of global microhistory, I argue that the colonization of the Auckland Islands was a pivotal moment in the integration of the Southern Ocean world into global processes of governance, mobility, and trade. This anomalous case contributes to recent scholarship on ‘company-states’ and the central role of such hybrid polities in processes of cross-regional interaction and globalization.

Keywords: Company-state; corporation; empire; Auckland Islands; Southern Ocean; globalization

February 1852 was a time of crisis for the British Empire’s smallest, newest, and most remote colony. Barely two years after the first colonists had arrived at the Auckland Islands, building work had stopped and the colony’s whalers and seamen were in a state of simmering rebellion. Desperate to escape the dangerous and poorly remunerated work of whaling, they were eager to abandon their subantarctic station, 465 kilometres south of New Zealand, to instead try their luck on the Australian goldfields.¹ The political situation, too, was tense and acrimonious, reaching a new low on 26 February when Lieutenant-Governor Charles Enderby barricaded himself in Government House and threatened to shoot anyone who attempted to remove him.² Endeavouring to do just that were the commissioners of the Southern Whale Fishery Company (SWFC), the chartered company responsible for colonizing these islands. Enderby had already resigned as the Company’s resident-commissioner but insisted he remained Lieutenant-Governor and, accordingly, the Crown’s legal representative.³ Over the next two months, these bickering representatives of Company and Crown exchanged threats, traded accusations, and issued

¹P.R. Dingwall, C. Fraser, J.C. Gregory, and C.J.R. Robertson eds, *Enderby Settlement Diaries: Records of a British Colony at the Auckland Islands* (Pakuranga, NZ: Wordsell: 1999), 96–112. I cite this paginated published transcription of these diaries for clarity. For the originals see Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL): MS-Group-1621, Mackworth, William Augustus, 1825–1855: Auckland Islands diary, Jan 1850–Oct 1851, Feb–Sep 1852; ATL: MS-Papers-9715, Munce, William John, 1814–1892: Diary, 27 Jul 1850–8 Jan 1852.

²Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga (ANZ): ACHK, 16569, G13/2/1, R22399703, Letter from W.A. Mackworth to Charles Enderby, 9 March 1852; ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/3, R22399705, Letter from G. Dundas and T.R. Preston to George Grey, 28 May 1852.

³ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/5, R22399707, Letter from Enderby to Grey, 18 May 1852.

contradictory orders to the colonists, each claiming to be the legitimate source of political authority on the islands. This farcical situation only ended in April, when Enderby finally stood down as Lieutenant-Governor and departed for New Zealand. In this contest, the sovereignty of the Company had triumphed over that of the Crown.

The SWFC's exercise of sovereignty was not in itself unusual. A wide variety of European chartered companies had exercised extensive sovereign powers well before the SWFC, controlling territories, waging war, signing treaties, imposing taxes, making laws, governing subjects, and establishing colonies. The English East India Company (EIC) is the quintessential example, a hybrid commercial and political entity that Philip J. Stern labels a 'company-state'.⁴ Historians have subsequently shown that other prominent early modern chartered companies, such as the Dutch East India (VOC) and Hudson's Bay (HBC) Companies, can likewise best be understood as sovereign, autonomous company-states.⁵ Andrew Phillips and J.C. Sharman have extended Stern's conception of the company-state still further, arguing that a range of smaller corporations such as the Russian American, German New Guinea, and British South Africa Companies are further examples of the company-state model, albeit with fewer sovereign powers and limited commercial success.⁶

Viewed in this context, the mere fact of a company exercising sovereignty was unremarkable. What *is* peculiar about events on the Aucklands is the place and time in which they took place. By colonizing these islands, where the 'Roaring Forties' give way to the 'Furious Fifties' in the tempestuous Southern Ocean, the SWFC was attempting to extend the limits of European settler colonization and apply the company-state model to an entirely new region. And by initiating this project in the 1840s, the company was something of a temporal outlier, having missed the company-state's seventeenth- and eighteenth-century heyday.

The global history of corporations is a booming field of scholarship, of which the literature on company-states is only one branch. Another distinct branch focuses on domestic corporations in early modern Europe, while a third focuses on tracing the history and antecedents of the modern multinational corporation.⁷ The scholarship's dominant focus, however, has been on corporations formed in early modern Europe to pursue overseas trade and colonization.⁸ This historiography has yielded significant insights, particularly into the significance of corporations to processes of

⁴Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). See also Stern, 'History and Historiography of the English East India Company: Past, Present, and Future!', *History Compass* 7, no. 14 (Jul. 2009): 1146-80; David Veevers, "'The Company as Their Lords and the Deputy as a Great Rajah': Imperial Expansion and the English East India Company on the West Coast of Sumatra, 1685-1730", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 5 (2013): 687-709; Rupali Mishra, *A Business of State: Commerce, Politics, and the Birth of the East India Company* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 2018).

⁵Adam Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press: 2014); Arthur Weststeijn, 'The VOC as a Company-State: Debating Seventeenth-Century Dutch Colonial Expansion', *Itinerario* 38, no. 1 (2014): 13-34; Edward Cavanagh, 'A Company with Sovereignty and Subjects of its Own? The Case of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1763', *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 26, no. 1 (2011): 25-50.

⁶Andrew Phillips and J.C. Sharman, *Outsourcing Empire: How Company-States Made the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

⁷See for example Phil Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth: Citizens and Freemen in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005); Henry Turner, *Corporate Commonwealth: Pluralism and Political Fictions in England, 1516- 1651* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016). For a critical discussion of the latter subfield see Philip J. Stern, 'English East India Company-State and The Modern Corporation: the google of its time?', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Corporation*, ed. Thomas Clarke, Justin O'Brien, and Charles R. T. O'Kelley (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2019), 75-86.

⁸See for example Andrew Fitzmaurice, 'The Civic Solution to the Crisis of English Colonization, 1609-1625', *Historical Journal* 42, no. 1 (March 1999): 25-51; Elizabeth Mancke, 'Chartered Enterprises and the Evolution of the British Atlantic World', in *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, ed. Elizabeth Mancke and C. Shammas (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press: 2005), 237-62; William A. Pettigrew, 'Corporate Constitutionalism and the Dialogue between the Global and Local in Seventeenth-Century English History', *Itinerario* 39, no. 3 (Dec. 2015): 487-501; Edward Cavanagh, 'Corporations and Business Associations from the Commercial Revolution to the Age of Discovery: Trade, Empire, and Expansion without the State, 1200-1600', *History Compass* 14, no. 10 (Oct. 2016): 493-510.

empire building and early modern globalization, but has also faced two key criticisms. The first is that it focuses too narrowly on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, thus overlooking both overseas corporations' pre-seventeenth century antecedents and their nineteenth-century resurgence.⁹ The second criticism is of a tendency to focus either on individual companies or to adopt narrow national or imperial frameworks.¹⁰ Phillips and Sharman suggest that a solution to this narrow spatial and temporal focus is comparative meta-analysis of company-states on a worldwide scale, while Matthew Birchall suggests it can be overcome by exploring connections over space and time, such as those between seventeenth-century North American chartered company colonization and systematic colonization in nineteenth-century Australasia.¹¹ William A. Pettigrew and David Veevers go further, urging historians to go beyond comparisons and connections to instead use corporations to study long-term global processes of integration.¹² In short, there are growing calls for a *longue durée*, global history of corporations, and the response thus far has been to produce increasingly comparative and synthetic studies of the corporate form.

Yet synthesis and comparison are not the only methods available to global historians. A persistent criticism of global history has been its tendency to downplay the importance of place-based research and knowledge.¹³ An increasingly popular response to this critique is to embrace 'global microhistory'. While there is no single definition or method of global microhistory, I use the term here to refer to scholarship that focuses on 'outliers' and emphasizes close reading and deep contextualisation of primary sources to analyse global historical processes and structures.¹⁴ This article, then, is a global microhistory of the colonization of the Auckland Islands. It reconstructs the events of this short-lived colonial project from the fragmentary sources available and shows how particular forms of society, governance, and industry developed on the islands that reveal the SWFC to be a 'company-state'.

Drawing on this close investigation of the Aucklands, the article makes three related suggestions. First, the company-state as a hybrid political and commercial form has a longer genealogy than is often acknowledged in the historiography of company-states, spanning from its medieval antecedents through its sixteenth- and seventeenth-century heyday into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this, the article contributes to a substantial body of scholarship that demonstrates the continued utility and ubiquity of various forms of corporate colonization into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from Wakefieldian companies in Australasia to private settlements like Fordlandia in Latin America to the assortment of what Steven Press dubs 'rogue empires' in Asia and Africa.¹⁵ Secondly, any such extension of the company-state's temporality

⁹David Armitage, 'Wider Still and Wider: Corporate Constitutionalism Unbounded', *Itinerario* 39, no. 3 (Dec. 2015): 501-3; Phillips and Sharman, *Outsourcing Empire*; Matthew Birchall, 'History, Sovereignty, Capital: Company Colonization in South Australia and New Zealand', *Journal of Global History* 16, no. 1 (2021): 141-57.

¹⁰William A. Pettigrew and David Veevers, 'Introduction', in *The Corporation as a Protagonist in Global History, c. 1550-1750*, ed. Pettigrew and Veevers (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 1-39.

¹¹Phillips and Sharman, *Outsourcing Empire*; Birchall, 'History, Sovereignty, Capital', 141-57.

¹²Pettigrew and Veevers, 'Introduction', 1-19.

¹³See John-Paul A. Ghobrial, 'Seeing the World Like a Microhistorian', *Past & Present* 242, Supplement 14 (Nov. 2019): 5-10.

¹⁴For discussions and examples of this approach see for example Tonio Andrade, 'A Chinese Farmer, Two African Boys, and a Warlord: Toward a Global Microhistory', *Journal of World History* 21, no. 4 (2010): 573-91; Francesca Trivellato, 'Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?', *California Italian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011); John-Paul A. Ghobrial, 'The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory', *Past & Present* 222 (Feb. 2014): 51-93; 'Microanalysis and Global History', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* (English Edition), 73, no. 1 (Jan.-Mar. 2018); 'Global History and Microhistory', *Past & Present* 242, Supplement 14 (Nov. 2019).

¹⁵See, for example, Phillips and Sharman, *Outsourcing Empire*; Birchall, 'History, Sovereignty, Capital', 141-57; Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009); Jason Colby, *The Business of Empire: United Fruit, Race, and U.S. Expansion in Central America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Steven Press, *Rogue Empires: Contracts and Conmen in Europe's Scramble for Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

demands a corresponding extension of the concept's spatiality. That is, the company-states of the nineteenth century operated in markedly different areas of the world to their early-modern counterparts. The company-state as an organisational form had moved to new imperial peripheries, from Asia and North America to Australasia, Latin America, the Pacific, and the Southern Ocean. Historians of these spaces must therefore grapple with sovereign corporations not just as features of colonialism and settler colonialism but as central actors. Thirdly, I contend that extending the concept in this way has analytical and explanatory value. As an example of how such a spatially and temporally extended conception of the company-state can be productively employed, the article concludes by suggesting that, short-lived though it was, the exercise of sovereignty by a chartered company in the Auckland Islands was crucial to the integration of a large, marginal region - the Southern Ocean and its islands - into a matrix of global connections, networks, and processes.

The proposal

The Auckland Islands were first discovered and occupied by Polynesian seafarers sometime around 1350.¹⁶ This first settlement was abandoned within two years, and the islands were only rediscovered - and claimed - by whaling captain Abraham Bristow in 1806. This rediscovery prompted a sealing boom - dozens of ships descended on the islands each summer from 1806 to 1838 to hunt seals for the fur trade, depleting the population to the point of unprofitability within thirty years. This boom had far-reaching ramifications, transforming the islands' ecology and integrating them into wider trade networks as seal skins from the Aucklands were sold in Britain and China by the EIC and other traders.¹⁷ Yet while the islands' integration into a global trade network was brief and ad hoc, one of the temporary visitors, a Māori sealer called Matoro, began to imagine the Aucklands as a site for permanent settlement.

Matoro's *iwi* (people or nation), Ngāti Mutunga, were originally from New Zealand's Taranaki region. During a period of inter-*iwi* conflict in the first half of the nineteenth century, Ngāti Mutunga and another Taranaki *iwi*, Ngāti Tama, were driven off their lands. In 1835, members of the two *iwi* invaded Rēkohu (the Chatham Islands), 800 kilometres east of New Zealand, where they killed or enslaved most of the indigenous Moriori people.¹⁸ In 1843, perhaps because of a shortage of land in Rēkohu, Matoro chartered a ship and led a party of approximately forty Māori and twenty-five enslaved Moriori to settle the Aucklands.¹⁹ Matoro built his settlement on what Bristow had named Enderby Island, one of the smaller islands at the north-eastern tip of the archipelago, while another chief, Manature, settled across the bay on Auckland Island itself.

Conditions on the Aucklands proved harsher than anticipated. The islands' climate was cool and stable, averaging 8°C throughout the year, but was dominated by gale force westerlies, low cloud, and constant rain.²⁰ Matoro would have glimpsed the islands' unforested highlands from afar during his sealing visits, but a belt of gnarled *rātā* trees, dense scrubland, and a slippery carpet

¹⁶Atholl Anderson, 'Prehistoric Archaeology in the Auckland Islands, New Zealand Subantarctic Region', in *In Care of the Southern Ocean: An Archaeological and Historical Survey of the Auckland Islands*, ed. Paul R. Dingwall, Kevin L. Jones, and Rachael Egerton (Auckland: New Zealand Archaeological Association: 2009), 9-38.

¹⁷See Rhys Richards, 'New Market Evidence on the Depletion of Southern Fur Seals: 1788-1833', *New Zealand Journal of Zoology* 30, no. 1 (2003): 1-9.

¹⁸André Brett, "'The Miserable Remnant of This Ill-used People": Colonial Genocide and the Moriori of New Zealand's Chatham Islands', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 17, no. 2 (2015): 133-52.

¹⁹For discussion of Matoro's motivations see Alexander Shand 'The Occupation of the Chatham Islands by the Maoris in 1835, Part 5 - The Residence at the Auckland Islands', *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 2, no. 2 (June 1893): 78-86; Michael King, *Mori: A People Rediscovered* (Auckland: Viking, 2000), 88-90.

²⁰Daily temperature and rainfall recordings for May-August 1852 are published in R. Edmond Malone, *Three Years' Cruise in the Australasian Colonies* (London: Richard Bentley, 1854), 79-82.

of moss, lichens, and dead rātā leaves made accessing these highlands a gruelling endeavour. When they did, the highlands proved boggy and difficult to cultivate, and the settlers struggled to grow anything more than cabbages, turnips, and marble-sized potatoes. Matoro had seen many feral pigs during his previous visits, descendants of animals released by Bristow, but soon discovered the pigs' diet made their meat repulsive. And with the sealing boom over, the Māori settlements were almost entirely isolated from the rest of the world for six years.²¹

Just as Matoro and Manature were facing grim conditions on the islands in the mid-1840s, Charles Enderby was developing his own plans in London. Enderby was a man of eclectic interests: a prolific pamphleteer, advocate for economic reform, and founding member of the Royal Geographical Society.²² He also had a keen interest in systematic colonization and the writings of its foundational theorist, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, that saw him invest in Wakefield's New Zealand Association and the Wakefieldian Western Australian Company.²³ Indeed, Enderby developed his own ideas about systematic colonization, which he expounded on in a pamphlet promoting his Aucklands venture.²⁴ In his professional life, Enderby was a third-generation director of Enderby & Sons, one of several English companies involved in the southern whaling industry in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By the 1830s, however, both Enderby & Sons and the wider industry had entered a terminal decline, and Enderby's pleas for government subsidies had fallen on deaf ears.²⁵

It was in this context that Enderby conceived the colonization of the Aucklands. He concluded that the only way to salvage the whaling industry was for its surviving firms and investors to consolidate their capital and form a single joint stock company. This company would operate out of a permanent station on the Aucklands, providing access to both established whaling grounds and the largely untouched Southern Ocean, which Enderby believed was teeming with whales.²⁶ Operating out of the Aucklands rather than London would boost profit margins significantly, such that Enderby estimated an initial fleet of fifty ships would produce profit of £278,000 within two years, and could then be scaled up with 'progressively accumulating profits' until the tiny archipelago boasted a fleet of 600 ships.²⁷

Whaling was the impetus for Enderby's proposal, but his plans went far beyond a mere whaling station. For Enderby, the Aucklands represented a site of experimentation for his ideas about political economy and systematic colonization. In line with Wakefield's principles, colonization would focus on concentrated settlement in marginal 'waste land' and would be overseen by

²¹Shand, 'The Occupation of the Chatham Islands', Part 5, 78-86; King, *Mori Mori*, 92-7.

²²Enderby's pamphlets included *National Store and Dock Banks* (1841); *Currency: Inquiry Solicited but General Declamation, Without Reasoning, Disregarded* (1842); *The Distress of the Nation: Its Causes and Remedies* (1844); *The fallacy of our Monetary System*, (1847); *Our Money Laws: The Cause of the National Distress* (1847). For Enderby's interest in geography see British Library: M1878-M1886, Papers of Robert Peel 1804-1850, MS 40458, Item ff.307-9, Letter from Charles and George Enderby to Robert Peel, 8 July 1845 (Australian Joint Copying Project (AJCP), <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1240326724/view>).

²³A.G.E. Jones, 'The British Southern Whale and Seal Fisheries: Part II: The Principal Operators', *The Great Circle*, 3, no. 2 (Oct. 1981): 90-102. On systematic colonization see Tony Ballantyne, 'The Theory and Practice of Empire-Building: Edward Gibbon Wakefield and "Systematic Colonisation"', in *The Routledge History of Western Empires*, ed. Robert Aldrich and Kirsten McKenzie, *The Routledge History of Western Empires* (London: Routledge, 2013), 89-101.

²⁴Charles Enderby, *The Auckland Islands: a short account of their climate, soil, & productions* (1849), 27-8.

²⁵The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA): BT1/410, I16, AJCP Reel No. 3067, Letter from Charles Enderby to the Board of Trade, 1 May 1843 (AJCP, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1962797978/view>); TNA: BT1/391, O1, May 1842, Letter from Enderby to W.E. Gladstone, 26 May 1842 (AJCP, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1962517751/view>); Charles Enderby, *Proposal for Re-Establishing the British Southern Whale Fishery, through the medium of a chartered company* (1847).

²⁶Enderby was likely relying on firsthand accounts published in James Clark Ross, *A Voyage of Discovery and Research in the Southern and Antarctic Regions, During the Years 1839-43*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1847), 140, 169; Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1845), 347, as well as personal conversations with Ross.

²⁷Enderby, *Proposal for Re-Establishing the British Southern Whale Fishery*, 41-2; TNA: BT 1/463/8, Letter from C. and G. Enderby to Committee of Privy Council for Trade, 20 December 1845.

the SWFC, not the state.²⁸ The colonists would be sober, industrious craftsmen and seamen, accompanied by their entire families and drawn principally from the coastal maritime communities of England and Scotland. Every whaler and settler would be an employee of the company, contracted for a set term, paid fair wages, and offered plots of land to settle permanently upon expiration of their contracts.²⁹ Agriculture was central to Enderby's colonial vision, his expectations shaped by the accounts of previous visitors such as Benjamin Morrell, a sealer prone to hyperbole who declared the Aucklands an 'Eden of the south' ideally suited to farming.³⁰

Enderby expected the first generation of settlers to clear the forests and establish market gardens and small farms with herds of livestock. While the colony would initially rely on supplies from Australasia, the farms would soon provide sufficient food for both the colonists and, as the Aucklands developed into a major port, for sale to visiting ships. To encourage investment and settlement, the colony would be a free port without taxes or duties, while land speculation would be discouraged by requiring anyone wishing to purchase land to immediately use it. Other staples of Wakefieldian systematic colonization included an assisted migration scheme and a large program of public works, all funded by land sales.³¹ In short, the colony was to simultaneously revitalize Enderby & Sons, salvage the British southern whaling industry, provide a model for systematic colonization, and stand as a permanent tribute to Charles Enderby himself.

Enderby began developing his plan in April 1844.³² He unsuccessfully approached Prime Minister Robert Peel for government support in July 1845, then spent the next year petitioning the Privy Council to lease him the islands at a nominal rent and the Board of Trade to recommend a royal charter for his proposed company.³³ Enderby's case rested mainly on a claim that his project would serve the public good by reinvigorating the British whaling industry, providing useful resources of whale oil and whalebone and creating a pool of skilled seamen that could be placed at the Royal Navy's disposal in wartime.³⁴ In this Enderby's claims, which secured him a thirty-year lease in 1847, were part of a long tradition of public good arguments invoked by corporations to justify the privileges they sought.³⁵

With the lease secured, Enderby turned his attention to establishing a company. He published a pamphlet outlining his proposal for a combined whaling-colonial enterprise and invited prominent businessmen to join the incipient SWFC's Court of Directors.³⁶ A prospectus was published in October 1848, with 6,000 £50 shares made available for subscription in an effort to raise the £300,000 Enderby estimated was necessary to outfit fifty ships and commence the

²⁸See [Edward Gibbon Wakefield], *A Letter from Sydney, the Principal Town of Australasia* (1829); Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Birchall, 'History, Sovereignty, Capital', 141-57.

²⁹Enderby, *Proposal for Re-Establishing the British Southern Whale Fishery*, 61; British Library: M1878-M1886, Papers of Robert Peel 1804-1850, MS 40458, Item ff.307-9, Letter from Charles and George Enderby to Robert Peel, 8 July 1845 (AJCP, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1240326724/view>).

³⁰Benjamin Morrell, *Narrative of Four Voyages to the South Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean, Chinese Sea, Ethiopic and Southern Atlantic Ocean, Indian and Antarctic Ocean from the Year 1822 to 1831* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1832), 358, 361.

³¹Enderby, *The Auckland Islands*; Enderby, *Proposal for Re-Establishing the British Southern Whale Fishery*, 61; *The Times*, 14 March 1849, 6.

³²TNA: BT 1/463/8, Letter from Enderby to J.G. Shaw Lefevre, 27 January 1846.

³³British Library: M1878-M1886, Papers of Robert Peel 1804-1850, MS 40458, Item ff.307-9, Letter from Charles and George Enderby to Peel, 8 July 1845 (AJCP, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1240326724/view>); TNA: BT 1/463/8, Letter from C. and G. Enderby to Committee of Privy Council for Trade, 20 December 1845, Letter from C. Enderby to J.G. Shaw Lefevre, 27 January 1846, Letter from Enderby to Lefevre, 22 May 1846.

³⁴NA: BT 1/463/8, Letter from Enderby to Lefevre, 10 July 1846.

³⁵*The Standard*, 12 October 1848, 2. See Pettigrew, 'Political Economy', in *The Corporation as a Protagonist in Global History*, 43-67.

³⁶Enderby, *Proposal for Re-Establishing the British Southern Whale Fishery*; *Daily News*, 16 January 1847, 2; London Metropolitan Archives: Records of Baring Brothers & Company, MS18321, HC.1.95, Item C, Letter from Enderby to Michael McChlery, 9 February 1848, (AJCP, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1270382990/view>).

colonial project.³⁷ Nearly a third of this target capital was subscribed within three months, and, on 7 December 1848, the Company was officially constituted and an eighteen-man court of directors appointed.³⁸ Enderby immediately transferred his personal lease of the Aucklands to the SWFC, while a Royal Charter was granted in January 1849, giving the Company the exclusive rights to colonize the islands and hunt whales and seals in the surrounding seas.³⁹

The Charter came with a stipulation, however. All expenses of government would have to be met by the Company, one result of which was the decision that the offices of the Crown's Lieutenant-Governor and the Company's resident-commissioner would be jointly held by one man: fifty-two-year-old Charles Enderby.⁴⁰ Enderby was answerable to the SWFC's court of directors but acted with the authority of both company and state on the ground. In this the Company resembles other, better-known company-states. Edward Cavanagh, for example, has argued that, other than granting and extending its charter, the Crown 'had barely a part to play in the operation' of the HBC.⁴¹ Indeed, the HBC pursued policies, particularly in regard to French trading posts in Rupert's Land, that openly diverged from metropolitan aims and interests. In similar fashion, the state had little interest in the SWFC's project, which was at odds with the interests of the existing British settler colonies in New South Wales, Van Diemen's land, and New Zealand, each of which was eager for metropolitan investment and would have welcomed the establishment of a major whaling station within their territories.⁴²

Despite a promising start to its attempts to raise capital, the SWFC's operations were almost immediately truncated. The project was endorsed by various publications and public figures, including polar explorer James Clark Ross and President of the Board of Trade Henry Labouchere, but the £300,000 Enderby had deemed essential for success proved impossible to raise.⁴³ Accordingly, the Company's final prospectus dropped its call for investment to £100,000, while the fleet of fifty ships proposed in 1847 was cut to just three – with plans to construct five more – by the time the first settlers departed in July 1849.⁴⁴ Yet while the project's budget was slashed, its ambition was undiminished. Joining Charles Enderby on the first fleet were approximately 75 settlers, chosen to fill roles that included surveyor, civil engineer, medical officer, surgeon, midwife, accountant, storekeeper, butcher, harbour pilot, cooks, farmers, whalers, and various craftsmen and general 'company servants'. At least eighteen women and several young children sailed with the first fleet, with others set to follow once the additional ships were constructed.⁴⁵

³⁷*The Standard*, 6 October 1848, 1; *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, 4 November 1848, 1410.

³⁸'British Southern Whale Fisheries', *The Standard*, 8 December 1848, 1; *Watchman and Wesleyan Advertiser*, 13 December 1848, 595.

³⁹ATL: fMS-Papers-0758, 'The Southern Whale Fishery Company and Messrs Enderby Declaration of Trusts of Assignment of the Auckland Islands'; TNA: BT1/785, Southern Whale Fishery Company 1849, Letter from Directors of the Southern Whale Fishery Company to S.H. Northcote, 22 March 1849 (AJCP, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1963828099/view>); ATL: fMS-Papers-0758, Southern Whale Fishery Company: Records, Royal Charter of Incorporation.

⁴⁰ANZ: ACFP, 8217, NM8/55/[114], 1852/719, R24519002, Copy of Charles Enderby's Commission as Lieutenant-Governor.

⁴¹Cavanagh, 'A Company with Sovereignty and Subjects of its Own?', 28-31; David Chan Smith, 'The Hudson's Bay Company, Social Legitimacy, and the Political Economy of Eighteenth-Century Empire', *William and Mary Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (Jan. 2018): 71-108.

⁴²See for example *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 January 1850, 2; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 May 1852, 2; *Argus*, 20 May 1852, 4.

⁴³*London Quarterly Review*, 141 (June 1847), 100; *The Times*, 14 March 1849, 6; *Daily News*, 14 August 1849, 2; Charles Enderby, *Proceedings of a Public Dinner Given to Charles Enderby* (London, 1849), 22; Ross, *A Voyage of Discovery*, 140.

⁴⁴Enderby, *Proposal for Re-Establishing the British Southern Whale Fishery*, 41-2, 50, 60-3; 'Prospectus of the Southern Whale Fishery Company', in Enderby, *The Auckland Islands*, 49-57.

⁴⁵*Abstract of reports from the commissioner of the Southern Whale Fishery Company to the directors* (1850); Charles Enderby, *A Statement of Facts Connected with the Failure of the Southern Whale Fishery Company at the Auckland Islands* (1854), 20-1; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 19-23. See also a list of settlers and visitors to the colony collated by Dingwall et al and published as an appendix in *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 243-60.

A more sensible option may have been to prioritize the whaling station and ensure it was profitable before committing funds to colonization, but the SWFC was determined to combine both from the outset.

The colony

The passengers of *Samuel Enderby*, the flagship of the SWFC's tiny fleet, expected to arrive on a remote and uninhabited island. They were shocked, then, to be welcomed to the Auckland Islands by a party of Māori, who met the ship on 4 December 1849 and piloted it into Port Ross.⁴⁶ This was the first of many shocks for the Company's colonists; where Enderby had promised 'fine harbours, ready formed, and land ready for the ploughshare', they found impenetrable scrub, dense forests, steep hills, swampy ground, brutal westerlies, and a month of ceaseless rain.⁴⁷ It was imperative that the three ships unload their passengers and cargoes and commence whaling quickly, but the land first had to be cleared and levelled, and the presence of women and children meant Enderby felt compelled to keep the ships in harbour as temporary accommodation until housing could be constructed ashore.

Poor planning further complicated the colony's chaotic early days. To take one example, the SWFC was formed to hunt the industry's preferred species, right whales, which tend to swim slowly, calve in shallow waters, and float when killed. The southern species of right whales, *Eubalaena australis*, had been hunted to commercial if not total extinction in Tasmanian and New Zealand waters by the 1840s, but there remained a significant population which returned annually to its calving grounds around the Aucklands and Campbell Island.⁴⁸ Yet while the Company's ships were chosen and outfitted to target these right whales, the men recruited to crew them primarily had experience in hunting sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*). Sperm whaling was a distinct branch of the industry requiring its own skills and knowledge and usually prosecuted from smaller ships, leaving Enderby livid at the unsuitability of his whaling crews to the venture he had proposed.⁴⁹ Worse still, when the Company's smallest ship, *Fancy*, limped belatedly into Port Ross it was immediately deemed unseaworthy, further undermining the Company's whaling capacity.⁵⁰

Over the next two years, however, the settlers devoted their energy to clearing the land and constructing a small settlement. By December 1851, twenty acres of land had been cleared, five acres of farmland cultivated, and a clear sense of order imposed on the site.⁵¹ The diaries of two colonists, Assistant Commissioner William Mackworth and accountant William Munce, and a handful of more fragmentary accounts, provide some insight into life in this Company colony.⁵²

The Company faced immediate challenges in establishing its jurisdiction, order, and authority, with the Māori settlements seen as a particular threat. To attempt to resolve it, Enderby and Mackworth met with Mātioro and Manature. With Te Reo-speaking whaling captain George Cook, whose mother was Māori, to translate, the Company men insisted that the islands and

⁴⁶Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 39; *Lloyd's Illustrated Newspaper*, 22 September 1850, 8; *The Standard*, 18 September 1850, 3.

⁴⁷Enderby, *Proceedings of a Public Dinner*, 17; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 19-24.

⁴⁸See Ryan Tucker Jones, 'A Whale of a Difference: Southern Right Whale Culture and the Tasman World's Living Terrain of Encounter', *Environment and History* 25 (2019): 185-218.

⁴⁹Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 20-6; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 19-22.

⁵⁰Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 22-3.

⁵¹Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 21.

⁵²See also Conon Fraser, *The Enderby Settlement: Britain's Whaling Venture on the Subantarctic Auckland Islands* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2013).



Figure 1. A view of the settlement at Port Ross painted by Charles Enderby, c. 1850-52⁵³.

everything on them were Company property.⁵⁴ A compromise was eventually struck: the Company would pay Matoro and Manature a small indemnity and allow them to continue growing crops freely; in exchange, the chiefs would sign an agreement renouncing any claim to the islands and enter Company employment as ‘special constables’. These roles were far from symbolic. Enderby relied on Manature, for example, to detain as prisoners those employees who refused to work.⁵⁵

Many other Māori settlers followed Matoro and Manature in signing on as Company employees, doing much of the land clearing, construction, roadbuilding, and boat-handling in the settlement in exchange for wages, rations, and access to the Company’s store.⁵⁶ The two communities lived separately but relations were broadly positive. The Company did not impose its sovereignty over the Māori community by force, but rather engaged in a delicate process of negotiation and mutual adaptation. In common with other company-states, such as the HBC and the Russian-American Company, Māori settlers became employees and subjects of the SWFC.⁵⁷ The Company imposed some laws affecting both communities – such as a law banning the sale of firearms to Māori – but in other cases shied away from imposing controversial laws.⁵⁸ For instance, the Company had a relaxed attitude towards slavery, allowing the Māori settlers to continue enslaving Moriori. Indeed, it was the labour performed by enslaved Moriori workers at the two Māori settlements that allowed so many Māori to devote time and energy to working for the Company. Just as the EIC carved out an exemption from the 1833 Abolition Act, so too did the

⁵³ATL: A-093-008, ‘Enderby, Charles Henry, 1797-1876, Port Ross, Auckland Islands, Between 1850 and 1852’ (See Figure 1).

⁵⁴Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 20-2.

⁵⁵*Abstract of Reports*, 8-9; Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 9; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 20-3.

⁵⁶Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 30, 39, 82-90, 108-11, 118, 122, 129, 133, 146, 149; Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 63, 100; Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 20-1; *Abstract of Reports*, 9.

⁵⁷See Cavanagh, ‘A Company with Sovereignty and Subjects of its Own?’, 28; Phillips and Sharman, *Outsourcing Empire*, 158-61.

⁵⁸Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 86.

SWFC demonstrate a permissive attitude towards the continued existence of slavery within its jurisdiction that was at odds with metropolitan attitudes and interests.⁵⁹

Questions of jurisdiction and order were not limited to relations between the European and Māori communities, with outsiders made similarly aware of the Company's jurisdiction. The techniques of companies like the HBC and EIC in asserting the exclusivity of their rights and barring interlopers are well chronicled.⁶⁰ Whilst the privileges granted to the SWFC – the exclusive rights to colonize the Aucklands and hunt whales and seals in the surrounding seas – were a fraction of those granted to the likes of the EIC and HBC, the Company was nonetheless anxious about interlopers. Enderby published notices in the Australian and British press informing the public that the Auckland Islands had become the 'private property' of the Company, with whaling and sealing in the region now strictly limited to Company ships.⁶¹ Republishing this notice in March 1851, the London *Daily News* observed that the notice had been issued by Enderby 'in his capacity as Lieutenant-Governor, who it appears is legally entitled to prevent encroachments of the nature of those indicated'.⁶² Poaching and interloping were never actually an issue in the Company's remote colony, but the approach taken to prevent this mirrors the strategies of earlier company-states.

The clearest insight into the Company's exercise of sovereignty, though, is the way it governed the lives of its employees and their families, implementing laws, imposing punishments, and issuing currency. A persistent complaint about life under Company rule was that Enderby acted simultaneously as 'judge, prosecutor, law adviser of the court, and executor of the sentence' and that colonists were unable to 'appeal against any decision of Mr Enderby'.⁶³ The Company's approach to law and judicature was ad hoc, echoing observations about the HBC's approach to law and governance in Rupert's Land.⁶⁴ Enderby appointed – and regularly dismissed – magistrates and constables to assist in maintaining order.⁶⁵ He implemented laws, such as restrictions on the sale of wine and spirits, and imposed punishments ranging from fines to imprisonment on an outlying island or dismissal from the Company's service.⁶⁶ For more serious offences, Enderby was instructed by the Colonial Secretary simply to deal with them 'to the best of your ability according to the law of England, summoning juries of settlers if it should be absolutely necessary'.⁶⁷ This was deemed necessary only once, when a case of slander was before Enderby and a jury of seven colonists in the colony's first and only civil trial in January 1852.⁶⁸

Ad hoc judicature was far from the only source of complaint about Company rule. The Company exclusively used its own currency, promissory notes equivalent to British denominations, to pay employees, and only accepted Company notes at its store.⁶⁹ This fuelled resentment, particularly amongst the seamen, who unsuccessfully demanded Enderby pay them in cash so they could purchase goods in other ports that could not be obtained at reasonable

⁵⁹An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies (1833), 64. The experience of Moriori on the Aucklands is discussed further in King, *Moriiori*, 93-102.

⁶⁰See for example Cavanagh, 'A Company with Sovereignty and Subjects of its Own?', 33-5; Stern, *The Company-State*, 44.

⁶¹For example *Britannia and Trades' Advocate*, 26 September 1850, 3; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 October 1850, 1; *The Times*, 29 March 1851, 6.

⁶²'Auckland Islands', *Daily News*, 29 March 1851, 2.

⁶³Malone, *Three Years' Cruise*, 74; 'The Auckland Islands', *Morning Chronicle*, 24 August 1850, 6.

⁶⁴H. Robert Baker, 'Creating Order in the Wilderness: Transplanting the English Law to Rupert's Land, 1835-51', *Law and History Review* 17, no. 2 (1999): 213.

⁶⁵Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 19, 24, 66.

⁶⁶See for example Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 29, 46, 62, 66-7, 76, 95-106, 111; Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 53, 99.

⁶⁷TNA: CO394/1, Entry Book of Correspondence, 18 December 1850-6 September 1853, Despatch to Charles Enderby, 18 December 1850 (AJCP, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1881281298/view>).

⁶⁸Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 99.

⁶⁹See for example Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa: GH007483, Promissory One Pound Note, Southern Whale Fishery Company (1849).

prices – or often at all – at Port Ross.⁷⁰ It also caused trouble for Company employees who tried to use this currency in New Zealand; Mackworth, for example, arrived in Dunedin in November 1850 with Company notes to purchase urgent supplies, only to discover that circulation of the Company's currency in New Zealand was illegal.⁷¹

Wages and rations were a constant source of discontent. In his first year as Assistant Commissioner, Mackworth had to deal with a seamen's strike and a petition over wages, a five day general strike over potato rations, and two deputations about flour.⁷² Many colonists supplemented their wages by undertaking private work; documented examples include Mrs Evans, wife of a ship's officer, taking sewing and carpet-making commissions, Mrs Clarke, wife of a general labourer, taking work as Munce's cook, and surveyor George Bond, who had a side-line distilling spirits.⁷³ Munce himself arranged for a friend to send him first £100 and then £600 worth of supplies from Sydney, which he sold to the Company to supplement his £186 salary.⁷⁴

The issue of rations was more difficult to overcome, with the colony plagued by shortages.⁷⁵ Pigs, sheep, and cattle were deposited on Enderby Island, but quickly became feral and proved nearly impossible to catch – one party spent four fruitless days trying to slaughter a bullock without success, while a day of pig hunting in 1851 resulted in several injured colonists but no pork.⁷⁶ Even imported supplies were unreliable; of 415 sheep sent from Sydney on one occasion, forty survived the passage.⁷⁷ The settlers' first potato crops failed completely, while in subsequent years they could only grow potatoes 'an inch and a-half in diameter, and bad'.⁷⁸ When the British naval ship *Fantome* visited in 1852, the only vegetables its crew could purchase were cabbages and turnips grown by the Māori settlers, and even these were deemed 'good for nothing'.⁷⁹

These challenges – alongside weather that destroyed boats and hurled roofs into the harbour – forced colonists to develop strategies to cope with their situation.⁸⁰ Alcohol was a favoured crutch, with drunkenness rife amongst ordinary seamen and senior colonial officials alike.⁸¹ The colony's surgeon was an infamous drinker, on one occasion falling off the jetty and being placed in the lockhouse to sober up, earning it the sobriquet 'Rodd's Castle' in his honour.⁸² Some colonists responded by refusing to work, others by resigning their position with the Company, forfeiting their pay just to get off the islands.⁸³ Some settlers fell into despair – the chief medical officer's sister, for example, locked herself in a room of their cottage, attempted to shoot her brother through the wall, then shot herself in the head.⁸⁴ Both survived, but quietly departed the colony soon after.

Other colonists sought out leisure activities. Shooting birds and seals for sport was a popular pastime for colonial elites, while painting, visiting the outlying farms, fishing, chess, cribbage,

⁷⁰Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 38.

⁷¹Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 57.

⁷²Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 20, 48, 25-6, 36-7.

⁷³Diary of William J. Munce, in Dingwall, Fraser, Gregory, and Robertson eds, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 58, 73, 98; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 46.

⁷⁴Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 38, 61, 64, 74, 82.

⁷⁵See for example Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 70, 89, 124; Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 72, 86, 89-90, 97.

⁷⁶Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 69-70, 80, 89, 124.

⁷⁷Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 74-5.

⁷⁸Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 69-70; Malone, *Three Years' Cruise*, 64-5.

⁷⁹Malone, *Three Years' Cruise*, 65.

⁸⁰Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 75, 92, 107; Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 47, 72.

⁸¹See for example Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 47, 53, 92, 95, 99; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 46-7, 62-7, 77, 127; Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 55.

⁸²Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 66-7.

⁸³See for example Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 68-70, 75.

⁸⁴Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 46; Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 47.

music, reading, picnics, and boat cruises were all features of cultural life at Port Ross.⁸⁵ A roster gave families a chance to live on the farm at Enderby Island for a week at a time, and there were occasional excursions to the southern coasts or outlying islands.⁸⁶ Special occasions, such as Christmas or the colony's anniversary on 4 December, were celebrated with general holidays and communal activities such as boat races, sports days, a public lunch, and a theatrical performance.⁸⁷ Religion was a minor part of life at Port Ross, and there was never a priest or church. Mackworth read a service most Sundays, but the congregation was usually small, ranging from a high of six adults and a child in August 1850 to a low point in May 1852, when the service was cancelled 'in consequence of no one attending.'⁸⁸ The colony was filled with children, but they were rarely counted in population estimates and their lives are poorly documented, though the funerals of two babies born at Port Ross were recorded.⁸⁹

The colony's growth was slow – its population peaking at approximately 300 – and was affected by differing visions for its future. A notable area of disagreement was the question of private enterprise. From the outset, the Company retained ownership of all land in the colony, as well as its only store, where colonists could purchase goods using Company currency. Tools and wine were popular items, but, to the colonists' frustration, they were also sent a bewildering array of luxury goods. While basics like nails, roof shingles, tallow, and shoes were in short supply, dress swords, mahogany wardrobes, and a railway cart sat unsold.⁹⁰ Enderby sought to encourage private enterprise and planned for Hardwicke, a site north of the main settlement, to become a bustling town with private houses and independent businesses.⁹¹ During a visit to Sydney, Enderby and Robert Towns, the Company's agent, discussed the prospect of Towns purchasing land in Hardwicke to operate a general store. This was blocked by the Directors, however, who refused to countenance the sale or lease of land during the colony's early years, preferring to retain a perfect monopoly over all land and retail on the islands.⁹²

The dismissal

While the colonists were making the best of their situation at Port Ross, the whaling operation was foundering. Shortly after the first fleet's departure, the Company commissioned five additional whaling ships at a cost of £8,200 each, 60% higher than budgeted.⁹³ Returns from whaling were simultaneously far lower than anticipated. By July 1851, the Company's fleet had harvested just 919 barrels of oil, valued at £5,200, against expenses of £98,332 in the same period.⁹⁴ While the directors publicly promised shareholders they could 'expect a satisfactory amount of produce within twelve months', such dire returns forced them into action. George Dundas, a director and Member of Parliament, and Thomas Preston, the Company's secretary, were appointed special

⁸⁵See for example 'Southern Whale Fishery Company', *Daily News*, 26 February 1851, 3; Auckland Islands', *Standard*, 18 September 1850, 3; Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 36, 38-40, 50, 58, 62, 86, 88, 92, 96, 99; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 67, 90, 108-9, 132, 135, 150.

⁸⁶Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 76, 78, 81-4, 111; Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 96.

⁸⁷Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 59, 62.

⁸⁸Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 37; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 128.

⁸⁹Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 56; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 90.

⁹⁰Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 38; Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 96; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 83, 86, 134.

⁹¹Enderby, *The Auckland Islands*, 48; Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 37-8; 'Money Market and City Intelligence', *The Times*, 14 March 1849, 6.

⁹²*Abstract of reports*, 7; Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 37-38; 'Southern Whale Fishery Company', *Daily News*, 26 February 1851, 3.

⁹³Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 30.

⁹⁴*Daily News*, 26 February 1851, 3; *The Times*, 1 July 1851, 6. This figure for expenses is based on financial records compiled by B.I. Fotheringham, see 'The Southern Whale Fishery Company, Auckland Islands', (MPhil diss., Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, 1995), 52-6.

commissioners tasked by the directors with personally inspecting the settlement and, if necessary, relocating it to Australia or New Zealand.⁹⁵

Dundas and Preston arrived at Port Ross on 18 December 1851, and almost immediately clashed with Enderby. The first flashpoint came on 7 January 1852, when Dundas and Preston, who had essentially taken over management of the settlement, were struggling to find enough seamen willing to join the *Lord Duncan* for another whaling voyage. Their solution was to reassign Enderby's long-serving cook, William Crozier, from Government House to the *Lord Duncan*.⁹⁶ Crozier had no maritime experience and was likely a member of Enderby's household in London before coming to Port Ross, but as a subject of the Company had no choice but to accept his new assignment in the galley of a whaling ship. Enderby was left without a cook, an action Munce deemed unjustified and 'most ungentlemanly'.⁹⁷ Munce ceased writing his diary after this, perhaps wishing to avoid putting further criticisms of the Special Commissioners in writing. Mackworth was in Sydney and did not return until February, meaning there is no account of events at Port Ross from 8 to 28 January 1852, when Enderby sent a letter to Dundas and Preston giving twelve months' notice of his intention to resign as resident-commissioner.⁹⁸ He also gave Dundas and Preston a letter addressed to the Colonial Secretary resigning as Lieutenant-Governor, which he asked them to forward 'unless we should meanwhile agree to the contrary'.⁹⁹

As soon as the Commissioners accepted his resignation, having waived the notice period, Enderby demanded they provide a written explanation of 'any specific charges or causes of complaint' against him.¹⁰⁰ They replied with a set of ten accusations they had planned to use as grounds for dismissal had Enderby not resigned first, including ignoring instructions from the directors, providing 'erroneous information', twice leaving the settlement 'without sufficient cause', 'ruinous expenditure', detaining ships at Port Ross instead of sending them to the whaling grounds, allowing colonists to incur debts to the Company they were unlikely to ever repay, and 'constant oscillation of purpose; impulsive action, and capricious conduct'.¹⁰¹

Many of these accusations were fair. Enderby was absent from the colony for 118 of the 785 days of his Lieutenant-Governorship, for example, and while he had clear reasons for travelling to Wellington and Sydney his absences were never approved.¹⁰² He also demonstrably failed to follow instructions, such as failing to send duplicates of his despatches by multiple ships, leaving the directors without detailed reports ten months after Enderby's arrival at Port Ross, even as the London press published extracts from private letters.¹⁰³ Wracked with indecision, averse to criticism, and suffering from seizures, he was also temperamentally and physically ill-suited to his position. Mackworth's diary documents his mounting frustration with Enderby's constant backtracking on decisions, such as when he signed off on a punishment imposed by Mackworth against a colonist found guilty of burning Company-owned shingles, only to change his mind and 'quash the whole proceeding' that afternoon.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁵Certificate of the Directors of the late Southern Whale Fishery Company', in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, Session 1854-55, No. 369, 6 July 1855, 67; 'Southern Whale Fishery Company', *The Standard*, 1 July 1851, 2.

⁹⁶Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 100.

⁹⁷Munce, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 100.

⁹⁸ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/1, R22399703, Letter from Enderby to Dundas and Preston, 28 January 1852.

⁹⁹ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/1, R22399703, Letter from Enderby to Earl Grey, 28 January 1852; Letter from Enderby to Dundas and Preston, 28 January 1852.

¹⁰⁰ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/1, R22399703, Letter from Dundas and Preston to Enderby, 28 January 1852; Letter from Enderby to Dundas and Preston, 30 January 1852.

¹⁰¹ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/1, R22399703, Letter from Dundas and Preston to Enderby, 31 January 1852.

¹⁰²Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 30, 40, 81, 91-2; Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*, 42-4.

¹⁰³ATL: fMS-Papers-0758, Southern Whale Fishery Company Records, Letter from Thomas Preston to Robert Towns, 19 September 1850. See for example 'The Auckland Islands', *Morning Chronicle*, 24 August 1850, 6; 'Auckland Islands', *Standard*, 18 September 1850, 3; 'Settlers on the Auckland Islands', *Lloyd's Illustrated Newspaper*, 22 September 1850, 8.

¹⁰⁴Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 70. See also Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 20, 23, 69

Yet whatever failings Enderby had as the Company's commissioner, he was dedicated to the office of Lieutenant-Governor. He understood these to be separate offices and insisted to Dundas and Preston that he remained Lieutenant-Governor until his resignation was accepted by the Queen.¹⁰⁵ Enderby's attempt to separate his dual offices exposed tensions between Crown and Company sovereignty, leading to a farcical situation whereby the representatives of Company and Crown competed publicly for authority.¹⁰⁶ These tensions can be clearly seen in three further flashpoints.

The first was ignited by the death of a black American seaman, John Downs. Downs was one of many seamen suffering from illness when the *Lord Nelson* returned from a whaling voyage on 8 February 1852. With limited space at Port Ross, Downs and two others were housed in the laundry, a draughty, leaky building never intended for occupation. Downs' condition deteriorated, and he died on 21 February.¹⁰⁷ Dundas and Preston excluded Enderby from all decisions on Downs' care and arranged for his body to be quickly interred on 23 February. When Enderby learned of Downs' death, he ordered the Company's medical officers to investigate the cause and present him with a death certificate before he would register it. The commissioners instead seized the colony's registry of births, death, and marriages, barred the medical officers from investigating further, and ordered Mackworth to conduct a burial service. Enderby, in a brief letter signed as Lieutenant-Governor, ordered Mackworth not to inter the body. Mackworth sided with the commissioners and Downs' body was interred without further investigation.¹⁰⁸

The second flashpoint was a dispute over Enderby's house. Every building on the islands was Company property, including Enderby's residence, a vast prefabricated wooden building with fourteen rooms, glazed windows, and ten-foot ceilings.¹⁰⁹ Enderby considered this to be 'Government House', the Lieutenant-Governor's residence; Dundas and Preston argued it was provided to the Company's resident commissioner and that Enderby lost his right to reside there when he resigned that office.¹¹⁰ On 26 February 1852, Mackworth instructed Enderby to vacate his house so that Dundas and Preston could move in. Enderby viewed this attempt to evict him as a grave insult against the Crown's representative, and threatened to shoot Mackworth or any other man who attempted to remove him. This standoff lasted for a week until Enderby reluctantly agreed to swap residences on 2 March.¹¹¹

Stung by what he considered a public 'usurpation' of his authority in the disputes over his house and Downs' death, Enderby posted notices around Port Ross announcing that he could no longer fill the office of Lieutenant-Governor, since 'all the Islands are in the pay of the Southern Whale Fishery Company'. Whilst he would retain the appellation Lieutenant-Governor, he would cease attempting to fulfil the duties of the office and released the colony's magistrates and constables from their own oaths and duties.¹¹² He followed this up with another scathing letter to Dundas and Preston, vowing that he would 'not venture out of the house during the day, thereby subjecting myself to acts of incivility'.¹¹³

¹⁰⁵ ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/1, R22399703, Letter from Enderby to Dundas and Preston, 23 February 1852.

¹⁰⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 May 1852, 2; *Argus*, 20 May 1852, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 101; Letter from Enderby to F. Peel, 28 October 1854, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, 6 July 1855, 48-57.

¹⁰⁸ ANZ: ACHK, G13/2/5, C 474459, Letter from Enderby to Grey, 18 May 1852; ANZ, Wellington: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/1, R22399703, Letter from Enderby to Dundas and Preston, 23 February 1852; Letter from Enderby to Mackworth, 23 February 1852; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 101; Letter from Enderby to Colonial Secretary, 4 September 1852, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, 6 July 1855, 1-5.

¹⁰⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 October 1852, 3.

¹¹⁰ ANZ: ACHK, G13/2/5, C 474 459, Letter from Enderby to Grey, 18 May 1852. For the 'Government House' usage see for example Mackworth's annotated sketch published in *Abstract of Reports*, frontispiece.

¹¹¹ NZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/1, R22399703, Letter from Mackworth to Enderby, 9 March 1852; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 102-4.

¹¹² ANZ: ACHK, G13/2/5, C 474 459, Letter from Enderby to Grey, 18 May 1852; ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/1, R22399703, Copy of Notice, Auckland Islands, 24 February 1852.

¹¹³ ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/1, R22399703, Letter from Enderby to Dundas and Preston, 23 February 1852.

This vow did not stop Enderby engaging in acts of political theatre though. On 28 February, he ordered Mackworth to read ‘the Prayer usually offered up for a Lieut. Governor’ at the next morning’s religious service. Mackworth simply cancelled the service.¹¹⁴ The commissioners responded in kind, confiscating mail addressed to ‘Governor Enderby’ and replacing references to ‘Governor’ with ‘Mr’ in logbooks.¹¹⁵ When a Royal Navy ship, *Calliope*, arrived at Port Ross on 28 March, Mackworth, Dundas, Preston, and Enderby all rushed to convince its captain, Everard Home, to endorse their claims about Enderby’s anomalous position. Home refused to intervene, informing them that he considered Enderby to remain Lieutenant-Governor until he received instructions from the Colonial Office, but that Enderby could not interfere with the affairs of the SWFC, leaving him essentially unable to act at all.¹¹⁶ This confirmation of his political impotency – combined with threats by Dundas to have him removed from the colony in irons – finally persuaded Enderby to leave Port Ross.¹¹⁷ After a final unsuccessful attempt to stay on the Aucklands by proposing to purchase land from the Company and reside at Port Ross as a private citizen, Enderby reluctantly sailed to Wellington with Dundas and Preston on 24 April.¹¹⁸

With Enderby gone, Mackworth was ordered to dismantle the settlement and ship the buildings, stores, and equipment to Australasian ports to be auctioned.¹¹⁹ Mackworth’s diary entry as he departed the islands for the final time on 4 August 1852 likely summed up the feelings of many of the colonists: ‘The satisfaction I feel at this moment is beyond description. My miserable life at Port Ross will never be forgotten.’¹²⁰ There is some confusion about the Māori community’s reaction to the Company’s plans to abandon the colony though. Mackworth reported that his offer of passage to New Zealand for all the Māori and Moriori settlers was declined, which Matioro seemed to confirm in a letter to the Governor of New Zealand confirming that his people had chosen to remain at Port Ross.¹²¹ A contradictory account from a visiting naval officer suggests that the Māori and Moriori settlers had a request to be taken to New Zealand rejected.¹²² In any case, the Māori and Moriori remained when the SWFC departed. Most seized a chance to relocate to Stewart Island in 1854, while a ship arrived from Rēkohu to relieve the two remaining families in 1856.¹²³

It is notable that Enderby finally renounced his position and departed the islands because he deemed it impossible to give any orders as Lieutenant-Governor that did not meet the special commissioners’ approval. When the hitherto overlapping sovereignties of Company and Crown came into direct conflict, it became apparent that practical sovereignty lay with the Company. When Enderby reached Wellington, he tried to persuade Grey to intervene on his behalf, but the Governor insisted he had always ‘declined to interfere in the affairs of the Auckland Islands’.¹²⁴

¹¹⁴Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 104.

¹¹⁵ANZ: ACHK, G13/2/5, C 474 459, Letter from Enderby to Grey, 18 May 1852; Letter from Enderby to Colonial Secretary, 4 September 1852, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, 6 July 1855, 1-5.

¹¹⁶Letter from J. Everard Home to Enderby, 30 March 1852, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, 6 July 1855, 11; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 114-15.

¹¹⁷ANZ: ACHK, G13/2/5, C 474 459, Letter from Enderby to Grey, 18 May 1852; Letter from Enderby to Colonial Secretary, 4 September 1852, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, 6 July 1855, 1-5.

¹¹⁸Letter from Enderby to Mackworth, 8 March 1852, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, 6 July 1855, 9; ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/1, R22399703, Letter from Mackworth to Enderby, 9 March 1852; Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 120.

¹¹⁹Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 106-158; *Empire*, 5 Jun 1852, 4; *Otago Witness*, 21 August 1852, 2; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 October 1852, 3; *Argus*, 12 November 1852, 6.

¹²⁰Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 158.

¹²¹Mackworth, *Enderby Settlement Diaries*, 110; ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/2, R22399704, Letter from Matioro to Grey, 23 April 1852.

¹²²Malone, *Three Years’ Cruise*, 78.

¹²³See King, *Moriiori*, 100-3.

¹²⁴ANZ: ACHK, G13/2/5, C 474 459, Letter from Enderby to Grey, 18 May 1852; ANZ: ACHK, 16569, G13/2/8, R22399710, Letter from Enderby to Grey, 4 June 1853.

Grey's refusal to intervene was a final reminder that, regardless of how British government officials felt about Enderby's treatment, the Crown had no desire to interfere with the Company's affairs.

The abandonment of the colony failed to save the Company. When it was liquidated in 1854, shareholders received just 15 shillings for every £50 share.¹²⁵ The directors blamed the failure on Enderby's mismanagement and the effect of the Australian gold rushes on the availability of maritime labour. Enderby blamed the directors for insisting on sending families out with the First Fleet, recruiting whaling crews with no experience in the branch of whaling the Company was established to prosecute, providing him with oversized vessels, and insisting on having the Company's ships constructed and outfitted at an inflated price in Britain rather than for a quarter of the price in North America.¹²⁶ Each of these reasons likely played a role in the Company's failure, while historian Ryan Tucker Jones offers another compelling reason for the failure of a whaling company based in the centre of a Southern Right Whale breeding ground. Drawing on research in cetacean science, Jones argues that Southern Right Whales developed strategies to avoid being hunted, such as rapidly changing direction under water, that were transmitted to other groups and generations.¹²⁷ It is for this reason, says Jones, that the Company's whalers managed to kill only one of the thirty right whales they pursued in the waters around Port Ross, a catch rate of 3% that was markedly lower than rates of 30-40% in South Australian waters in the late-1830s or 8% for New Zealand's Banks Peninsula in 1832.

Despite the Company's collapse, Charles Enderby tried to salvage both his position and his reputation. He unsuccessfully petitioned first the Governor of New Zealand and then the Colonial Secretary to intervene.¹²⁸ He rejected Mackworth's description of life on the Aucklands as 'miserable' and continued to search for a way to return, suggesting to the Colonial Office that the Aucklands be used as a penal colony and requesting a position in any such enterprise.¹²⁹ Enderby & Sons had already declared insolvency in October 1849, shortly after Enderby departed for the Aucklands.¹³⁰ Given he was also one of the Southern Whale Fishery Company's largest shareholders, the collapse of both companies left Enderby almost destitute. None of Enderby's later schemes came to fruition, and he retired to live with his daughter in London until his death in 1876.¹³¹

Conclusion

The Southern Whale Fishery Company's colonization of the Auckland Islands was self-evidently calamitous. Yet it is a failure that can yield significant historical insights. The SWFC was a hybrid political and commercial body; its sovereignty, territory, and privileges were more limited than those of the quintessential company-states, but it nonetheless controlled a delineated territory, imposed and enforced laws, negotiated with Māori settlers, issued currency, and exercised sovereignty over its subjects. If the SWFC was a kind of company-state then, the question must be asked whether it was, in essence, the last gasp of what was fundamentally a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century phenomenon? Contextual evidence suggests that it was not. As historians such

¹²⁵*The Standard*, 15 March 1854, 2; *The Standard*, 30 November 1854, 1.

¹²⁶*The Standard*, 30 November 1854, 1; Enderby, *A Statement of Facts*.

¹²⁷Ryan Tucker Jones, 'A Whale of a Difference: Southern Right Whale Culture and the Tasman World's Living Terrain of Encounter', *Environment and History* 25 (2019): 185-218.

¹²⁸TNA: CO394/1, Entry Book of Correspondence, 18 December 1850-6 September 1853, Despatch to Charles Enderby, 16 April 1853 (AJCP, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1881281298/view>); Letter from Duke of Newcastle to Enderby, 16 April 1853, in *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, 6 July 1855, 15; *The Times*, 18 July 1855, 12.

¹²⁹TNA: CO394/1, Entry Book of Correspondence, 18 December 1850-6 September 1853, Despatch to Enderby, 5 September 1853 (AJCP, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1881281298/view>).

¹³⁰*The Times*, 23 October 1849, 5; *The Watchman and Wesleyan Advertiser*, 31 October 1849, 349.

¹³¹*Daily News*, 4 September 1876, 1.

as Angela Woollacott and Matthew Birchall have shown, the 1830s and 1840s was an era of renewed interest in company colonization that led to a series of new private colonial enterprises in Australasia.¹³² Scholars such as Jason Colby have similarly pointed to the 1840s as the beginning of more than a century of US imperialism in Central America driven by private actors and corporations, most notably the corporate colonialism of the United Fruit Company.¹³³ And, as Steven Press has shown, filibusterism in Borneo in the mid-nineteenth century laid foundations for the revival of chartered company sovereignty as a cornerstone of European imperial expansion in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific in the 1880s.¹³⁴ The colonization of the Aucklands was part of a new proliferation of hybrid commercial and political enterprises on the margins of the colonial world in the mid-nineteenth century, from the Falkland Islands and Kerguelen to Alaska, New Guinea, Africa, and Borneo, suggesting that the chartered company remained a significant aspect of private and corporate colonialism.¹³⁵ Far from an anachronism, the SWFC was at the crest of the wave of a new kind of company-state, much reduced in scale and profitability but essentially unchanged in character from its seventeenth century counterparts.

The Auckland Islands' brief colonial history should therefore not be seen as absurd or anachronistic, but rather as evidence of a subtle spatial and temporal change in the company-state. The hybrid model was well-suited to the colonization and exploitation of remote and marginal spaces, which is precisely what the likes of India, Rupert's Land, Virginia, Bermuda, and the Dutch East Indies were from the perspective of European states and investors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The chartered company, by sharing financial risk and pooling investors' experience, networks, and expertise, provided a way to manage the inherent risks of pursuing commerce in such regions, while for governments it provided a way to outsource the cost of imperial expansion and administration to facilitate trade or emigration without demanding significant government resources.¹³⁶

Yet the same factors that made the chartered company well-suited to pioneering risky enterprises rendered it less desirable in less risky contexts. As corporations helped to incorporate marginal spaces into increasingly cross-regional and global networks of communication, settlement, governance, and trade these spaces were reconfigured into globally connected nodes. This reconfiguration gradually eroded the advantages of monopolistic, autonomous, sovereign companies and resulted in increased state regulation and the removal of monopolies and other privileges. Even as the EIC and HBC lost first their monopolies and then their territories, however, the company-state model was applied to new peripheries in places like Africa and Australasia. As these spaces too were reconfigured from marginal to central, the company-state model remained a way to exploit and develop particular spaces, such as Kerguelen or North Borneo, that had hitherto been overlooked and undervalued. These kinds of enterprises, obscure and diminished as they were, should be understood if not as company-states then as another species of a common genus – as company-microstates, perhaps, reduced in scale but identical in their hybridity.¹³⁷

¹³²Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies*; Birchall, 'History, Sovereignty, Capital', 141–57.

¹³³Colby, *The Business of Empire*.

¹³⁴Press, *Rogue Empires*.

¹³⁵Stephen A. Royle, 'The Falkland Islands, 1833-1876: The Establishment of a Colony', *Geographical Journal* 151, no. 2 (July 1985): 204-14; Patrick M. Arnaud and Jean Beurois, *The Shipowners of the Dream: The Bossière's Leases and the Exploitations of the French Companies in the Southern Indian Ocean (1893-1939)* (Marseille: F. Jambois, 1996); Phillips and Sharman, *Outsourcing Empire*, 110-52; Press, *Rogue Empires*; Claire Lowrie, "'Shameful Forms of Oppression': Anglo-American Activism and the Slow Decline of Chinese Indentured Labour in British North Borneo, 1920s–1940s", *Labor History* 61, no. 5-6 (2020): 640-57.

¹³⁶For discussion of the evolution of chartered companies and their suitability to managing risky enterprises see Stern, 'English East India Company-State and The Modern Corporation', 75-86; Sharman and Phillips, *Outsourcing Empire*.

¹³⁷This term is borrowed from F.W. Maitland's description of state and corporation as different species of a common genus. See F.W. Maitland, *State, Trust and Corporation*, ed. David Runciman and Magnus Ryan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1.

When treated as such, two related implications become clear. First, the company-state has a longer and more complex genealogy than is often recognized. Whilst the company-state's significance for processes of imperial expansion and cross-regional integration undoubtedly peaked in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it has both medieval roots and a nineteenth and twentieth century afterlife. The case of the Auckland Islands therefore contributes to suggestions that the company-state, its descendants, and its antecedents are worthy of deeper investigation within a single frame.¹³⁸ Secondly, extending the temporal scope of the company-state requires a corresponding expansion of its spatial extent. Viewed over a longer period, the company-state as a hybrid form can be seen operating far beyond Europe, India, North America, and West Africa in places like sub-Saharan Africa, the Pacific, Australasia, and the Southern Ocean. The Auckland Islands offer one example of this wider spatial conception of the company-state; the work of Birchall on Australia and New Zealand, Press on Africa and Borneo, and Jonas Rüegg on the 'corporate islands' colonized by Japanese companies in the North Pacific offer others.¹³⁹ Taken individually these cases may be considered outliers; taken collectively, they suggest a perpetuation – or reinvention – of the company-state model in processes of imperial expansion, restructuring, and reorientation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁴⁰

Why does it matter whether we extend the study of company-states to the nineteenth century and expand it to include peripheral spaces like the Auckland Islands? Such cases can yield fresh insights into the role of sovereign corporations in wider processes of cross-regional integration. Short-lived though it was, the SWFC's colonization of the Auckland Islands was a pivotal moment in the integration of the Southern Ocean World into wider networks of governance, settler colonization, trade, and environmental exchange. In accordance with the territory granted to the SWFC, the colony of New Zealand's southern boundary had been set at 50°S. in 1852, placing the Aucklands 101 kilometres outside New Zealand jurisdiction.¹⁴¹ This led to confusion about the islands' legal status after the Company's collapse, which was ultimately resolved in 1862 by extending New Zealand's southern boundary to 53°S.¹⁴² This added not only the Aucklands but also Campbell Island, another 290 kilometres further south, to New Zealand's territory.

Despite the SWFC's dismal failure, attention soon returned to utilising New Zealand's newly acquired subantarctic islands. The colony's government received unsolicited proposals for settlement projects on the Aucklands in 1868 and 1871, finally leasing them to Invercargill surgeon F.A. Monckton in 1873.¹⁴³ Monckton had abandoned his pastoral project by 1879, but visitors to the islands continued to insist on their potential for settlement, resulting in new pastoral leases advertised for the Aucklands and Campbell in 1894.¹⁴⁴ Various leases were agreed, notably a

¹³⁸On this see for example Press, *Rogue Empires*; Phillips and Sharman, *Outsourcing Empire*; Armitage, 'Wider Still and Wider', 501-3; Tom Leng, "'Corporate Constitutionalism", the Merchant Adventurers, and Anglo-European Interaction', *Itinerario* 39, no. 3 (Dec. 2015): 509-12.

¹³⁹Birchall, 'History, Sovereignty, Capital', 141-57; Press, *Rogue Empires*; Jonas Rüegg, 'The Kuroshio Frontier: Business, State and Environment in the Making of Japan's Pacific' (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2022).

¹⁴⁰On the reorientation of European empires in the nineteenth century, see for example Alan Lester and Nikita Vanderbyl, 'The Restructuring of the British Empire and the Colonization of Australia, 1832-8', *History Workshop Journal* 90 (Autumn 2020): 165-88.

¹⁴¹*New Zealand Constitution Act* (1852), Section 80.

¹⁴²New Zealand Parliamentary Papers: 'A-05 Papers Relating to the Auckland Islands', Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1 January 1863.

¹⁴³ANZ: IA1/299/21, Letter from Donald Beatson to Governor Sir George Bowen, 7 February 1868; ANZ: IA1/340/11, Telegram from F.A. Monckton to William Gisborne, 24 October 1871; ATL: MS-Papers-2366-360, Copy of lease of Auckland Islands to F.A. Monckton.

¹⁴⁴ANZ: G13/4/126; Robert Carrick, *New Zealand's Lone Lands* (Wellington, 1892), 19, 48-9, 58-62; ATL: MSO-Papers-2366-526/4, Southland Land District No. 76, Notice of Pastoral Runs for Lease in Auckland, Adams, and Campbell Islands, 30 August 1894; Karri Horton Hartley, James Beattie, and Janice M. Lord, 'Shepherds to the Subantarctic: The History and Legacy of Pasture Plant Introductions on Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku, 1895-1931', *International Review of Environmental History* 8, no. 2 (2022): 103-25.

pastoral venture in the southern Aucklands (1900-1910) and another by a succession of leaseholders on Campbell (1895-1931).¹⁴⁵ With the failure of these projects, New Zealand's relationship with its subantarctic islands was recalibrated, gradually shifting from a vision of transforming and exploiting them to a vision of conservation. The subantarctic islands were designated Fauna and Flora Reserves between the 1910s and 1950s and collectively designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998. Islands that had previously been outside the limits of colonial settlement, law, and governance were, as a result of the SWFC's initial activities, steadily integrated first into colonial and later national and international structures.

A similar process of gradual integration initiated by the SWFC's colonial project can be observed from an ecological perspective. Pigs, goats, sheep, cattle, rabbits, cats, and mice were all introduced to the Aucklands in the nineteenth century, particularly during the years of company rule. The impacts of introduced species on island ecologies have been well chronicled by environmental historians. These impacts are commonly characterized as 'biological invasions', whereby, in John McNeill's evocative phrase, 'humans tear open the fabric of an ecosystem' and create the conditions for introduced plants and animals to displace or eliminate endemic species.¹⁴⁶ This is evident in the Aucklands, where an endemic bird species became extinct, but the case of New Zealand's subantarctic islands affirms that this was not simply a unidirectional process.¹⁴⁷ In some instances, biological invasion generated new forms of conservation practice that were subsequently exported around the world, as in the case of techniques developed to eliminate rats on Campbell Island that were taken up in rat eradication programs internationally.¹⁴⁸

In other instances, introduced species adapted to subantarctic conditions and were re-introduced to other parts of the world as 'rare breeds'. Notably, the Auckland Islands Pig was discovered to be the world's only confirmed virus-free pig breed, sparking enormous interest amongst biotechnology researchers. The descendants of the pigs that so frustrated the SWFC's colonists have been reimagined as a precious resource uniquely suited to xenotransplantation, the transplantation of animal cells or organs into human recipients.¹⁴⁹ Two herds of these pigs have, since 1999, been bred in secure, pathogen-free facilities in New Zealand and used for research into porcine-human kidney transplants and cell therapies for Type 1 diabetes and neurological diseases. The Aucklands may not have become the global trading hub Charles Enderby envisioned, but they were, eventually, incorporated into the circuits of global trade; the Auckland Islands Pig has become a source of heart valves, cells, and kidneys that have been distributed around the world.¹⁵⁰ More than simply a unidirectional process of biological invasion, biological exchanges in the Southern Ocean World in the nineteenth century initiated a multidirectional process of integration that became increasingly visible in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as knowledge and biota were transmitted back from this subantarctic periphery.

¹⁴⁵Paul R. Dingwall, 'Pastoral Farming at the Auckland Islands', in *In Care of the Southern Ocean*, 105-22; ATL: MS-Papers-2366-329, Sheep on Campbell Island.

¹⁴⁶John R. McNeill, 'Islands in the Rim: Ecology and History in and Around the Pacific, 1521-1996', in *Pacific Centuries: Pacific and Pacific Rim History Since the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Lionel Frost, Dennis O. Flynn, and A.J.H. Latham (London: Routledge, 2002), 74.

¹⁴⁷Department of Conservation, *Technical Feasibility Study Report for Eradication of Pigs, Mice and Cats from Auckland Island* (2021), 22.

¹⁴⁸See for example P.J. McClelland, 'Campbell Island: Pushing the Boundaries of Rat Eradications', in *Island Invasives: Eradication and Management: Proceedings of the International Conference on Island Invasives*, ed. C.R. Veitch, M.N. Clout, and D.R. Towns (Auckland: IUCN: 2011), 204-7; A.R. Martin and M.G. Richardson, 'Rodent Eradication Scaled Up: Clearing Rats and Mice from South Georgia', *Oryx* 53, no. 1 (2017): 27-35; Department of Conservation, *Technical Feasibility Study Report for Eradication of Pigs, Mice and Cats from Auckland Island*.

¹⁴⁹See for example Katie Todd, 'Auckland Island pigs: "It's a big call to eradicate them"', *Radio New Zealand*, 17 January 2020, accessed via <<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/407544/auckland-island-pigs-it-s-a-big-call-to-eradicate-them>>.

¹⁵⁰Lisa Callagher, Brian Karlson, Nadine France, and Cristiano Bellavitis, 'Living Cell Technologies: Finding a Path to Market for Xenotransplantation Therapy', *International Journal of Technology Transfer and Commercialisation* 16, no. 1 (2018): 37-60.

To see the SWFC as a kind of company-state is to recognize it as an example of a corporation as cross-regional actor: drawing the settler colonial gaze southward, integrating a new region into wider systems of law, trade, and governance, and initiating processes of biological exchange that would become increasingly global in nature. Put another way, the company-state provides a way to see the Southern Ocean as a dynamic space of interconnection and integration in the nineteenth century in which corporations were key protagonists. While there have been calls for a narrower vision of globalization and global history that avoids treating it as something affecting the entire planet, processes of global integration in the Southern Ocean suggest that there remain parts of the planet still to be recognized as legitimate subjects of global history.¹⁵¹

Corporations played a crucial role as drivers and mediators of global interactions and integration and are therefore a growing area of focus for global and imperial histories. Yet while comparative, connective, *longue durée*, and synthetic histories of company-states and trading corporations offer one way of understanding these processes, this article argues that the methods of global microhistory offer another perspective. This is not to call for a return to narrow histories of individual corporations in isolation, rather to emphasize the distinct analytical value of fine-grained investigations of the outlier or anomaly. In this I follow Sheila Fitzpatrick's observation about the significance of anomalous life stories. Fitzpatrick argues that if Carlo Ginzburg's investigation of one sixteenth century miller's idiosyncratic cosmology reveals the diversity of unorthodox *ideas* existing within a nominally Catholic society, then her investigation of the travels of a single Russian tramp reveals the diversity 'of wholly unorthodox *behaviours and practices* existing within a nominally Soviet society.'¹⁵² In similar vein, this investigation of a single island's peculiar colonial history – an outlier in space and time – reveals the range of unorthodox *processes* of global integration and political organisation existing in the nineteenth century, when states were nominally asserting a monopoly over sovereignty and globalization consisted of intensifying interconnections between regions more so than fresh pulses of expansion into places like the subantarctic. Such stories do not simply add colour and texture to narratives derived from an investigation of the average or the ordinary; instead, they provide new ways of thinking about behaviours, patterns, and processes. In the case of the Auckland Islands, they also draw attention to new spaces for historical investigation on the margins of the world.

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¹⁵¹See James Belich, John Darwin, Margaret Frenz, and Chris Wickham, eds, *The Prospect of Global History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁵²Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'The Tramp's Tale: Travels Within the Soviet Union and Across its Borders, 1925–1950', *Past & Present* 241, no. 1 (2018): 259–90. Emphasis in original. See also Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).