

*Capt. James Gordon to the Rev. S. Marsden*

Sydney New South Wales

8 Novem<sup>r</sup> 1813

Dear Sir

I now sit down to comply as far as lays in my Power with your Request of Information respecting the New Zealanders, and those Circumstances which occurred at the Bay of Islands in New Zealand previous to the Massacre of the Crew of the Ship Boyd, and tho' not an Eye-Witness to the Outrage, you will perceive on reading this that I had my Information from the most undoubted Authority.—

In the Winter of 1808 the New Zealand Chieftain Tippahee arrived in this Port in the Brig Commerce from the Bay of Islands, and as he was paid particular Attention to, by Mr Campbell I had very frequent Opportunities to see him— In the Month of August or September following the Ship Elizabeth, Capt<sup>n</sup> Bodie arrived from the Fishery off the Coast of New Zealand; on the Day of his Arrival Mr Campbell & Family dined out, and no Person at Home but Mr R. Campbell Jun[io]<sup>r</sup> and myself we asked Capt<sup>n</sup> Bodie and Capt<sup>n</sup> Cockerell to dine with us, and about 10 Minutes before Dinner Tippahee accidentally was passing thro' the Yard and I asked him also— While sitting at Table I observed that Capt<sup>n</sup> Bodie and Tippahee were not very good Friends and that the latter appeared [f] very uneasy in his Presence, on asking Bodie what occasioned it he related to us the following Circumstance— In the Month of February or March 1808 Capt<sup>n</sup> Bodie went into the Bay of Islands for the Purpose of refitting his Ship and to obtain Refreshments for his Crew— one Day while laying at

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Anchor, Tippahee went on board to pay him a Visit and was very kindly received by Bodie, in the mean time a Native came on board with whom Bodie made a Bargain to give him 20 Nails for 20 Baskets of Potatoes, the Man brought his Potatoes on board and Bodie having occasion to go below desired the Mate to receive the Potatoes and give him 20 Nails which was done,— a Shower of Rain happening at the Instant the whole of the Natives then on board went on shore except Tippahee— when the Shower was over, Bodie came on Deck and counted his Baskets and finding only 19 he fell into a violent Rage, seized Tippahee up to the Rigging and there kept him for 5 or 6 Hours' till he was ransomed with a Basket of Potatoes, tho' Tippahee offered to go on shore in his own Canoe which was alongside and bring him the Potatoes, but Bodie would not suffer him, and the Reason of his being kept so long was in Consequence of another Shower of Rain which kept the Natives on Shore— This Capt<sup>n</sup> Bodie related in Tippahee's Presence in such an exulting Manner that he put him in a Rage so violent, (even gnashing his Teeth, and distorting every Muscle in most horrid Manner) that I was obliged to walk with him [f] into the Garden to appease him. Bodie said that he was sorry afterwards, as he found the Basket of Potatoes in the Forecastle of the Ship it having been stole by one of his own Sailors—

Capt<sup>n</sup> Hingston of the Ship Speke also related in my Presence his having flogged Tippahee because he could not find an Ax which had been stole from some of the People on shore cutting Wood, when probably the Fellow had sold the Ax for a Matt—

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I was also informed by Capt<sup>n</sup> Mattinson of the Ship Spring-Grove that he was Eye-Witness to the Cruelty and Injustice practised towards the New Zealanders at the Bay of Islands by the different Masters and Crews of the Ships which were laying there in 1810 when Col[onel]: Foveaux went from hence in the Brig Experiment; and from Information I have accidentally received, I have every Reason to believe they have been most barbarously treated, particularly at the Bay of Islands. —

Since the year 1810 I have been 4 Voyages to Sea as Master of a Vessel, and except one Voyage, I had always 2 or 3 New Zealanders with me as Sailors, and I must say that I never saw in them the least Disposition to be quarrelsome either with each other or with the English Sailors, but on the contrary very obedient quiet and industrious Men, one of whom we had in Mr Campbells Employ for near 4 Years — and for 14 Months of the Time he had been [f] on an Island with no Associates except English Men, by which he had obtained sufficient of the English Language to hold a conversation among Sailors — And I have heard from several Capt<sup>ns</sup> in Mr Campbell's Employ that the New Zealanders that they had with them were just such Characters as I found those who were with me —

It is now little more than 3 months since I arrived from New Zealand where I had been to explore the Country for the Flax Plant and as we were so fortunate as to meet with the Object of our Pursuit at the first of our landing we had not much Intercourse with the Natives, but those we met with at a Village near Macquarrie [sic] Harbour, on the South Extremity of the middle Island were

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extremely Friendly for as soon as we arrived at the Village they commenced cooking Potatoes and Fish for us and when we left them the Women loaded themselves with Potatoes and carried them at least 6 or 7 Miles over a very rugged Country to the Boats —

Having asked my Opinion whether a friendly Intercourse could not be established between Port Jackson and New Zealand I have no Hesitation of giving it as my Opinion from the Knowledge I have of them among civilized Beings and also in their native State that a most beneficial Communication might be established, and that it would require no Art whatever to civilize them, for if they were treated with Humanity; and in [f] Dealing with them observe the strictest Justice you would soon find a great Alteration in their Manners— Should I have omitted anything with which you think I am acquainted, let me know and I will make any Addition to this that I can

I am

Sir — With the greatest Respect

Your Obedt S[ervan]<sup>t</sup>

James Gordon

The Rev<sup>d</sup> Sam<sup>l</sup> Marsden