

MS 56/22

*W. Hall to J. Pratt, 22 August 1816*

Bay of Islands August 22 1816

Rev<sup>d</sup> & dear Sir,

Since I wrote in January last We have been under the necessity of shifting to Tippoonah although much against my will. When we came first to the Bay of Islands it was by the particular request of M<sup>r</sup> Marsden that we settled at Tippoonah we saw the inconvenience of it and objected to it very much, but he persisted in it so strongly which induced us to comply with his desires. Knowing it was the Societys particular request that we should cultivate Land and endeavour to support ourselves as soon as possible, and seeing we were entirely prevented from doing any thing of this kind at Tippoonah, on account of the steepness of the hills and the shallowness of the soil. And after Duaterra died we had no more protection there than at any other place, which made us come to a determination to remove to the Wythangee before we built our houses or settled ourselves, accordingly I went with the sawyers and left my Family at Tippoonah, and underwent a great deal of hard labour in cold and wet and uncomfortable nights untill I cleared the situation and built a house, and then we shifted thither in the beginning of September 1815, and in the January following I reaped both wheat and barley in great perfection. I had my garden in such a flourishing state and so well stored with kitchen vegetables in great perfection that I have no doubt but we could have had a good supply all the year round, I employed a great number of Natives constantly some fencing and others clearing ground. I cleared two acres of

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fine land for wheat, that before stood as thick with Brush as it could stand. I would have growed more wheat this year than we could have used entirely by the labour of the Natives under my direction, I kept three or four of them in my house constantly and let them sleep in the kitchen. I had begun to teach some of them to saw Timber and they offered very well [f] After we had been there some time expecting Mr Kendall to come to us according to his promise, he sent me word that he had changed his mind and that he would not come, and not only that but he encouraged the Sawyers to go away and leave us to the insults and abuses of the Natives which has given me sufficient cause to remember, so that I shall certainly never allow him to deceive me so again. The Natives perceiving that we were left alone unprotected soon took the advantage. — — — — —

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January [sic] last a party came in a Canoe from the opposite side of the Bay and staid two days watching their opportunity till at length seeing me at a little distance from the house, they came running up to me and seised [sic] me like Tygers [sic], they instantly threw me down and got upon me, while others where dancing round and shouting and brandishing their spears and other war instruments over me, Mrs [Hall] hearing the noise came out of the house and ran towards me, and a native met her and struck her a cross [sic] the face with a spear or club and knocked her down and cut her face in a horrid manner so that she lay senseless for some time upon the ground, and the blood streaming out of her wounds. —

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A native girl had the little Child in her arms and being afraid very fortunately ran quite away with her, and kept her out of the danger. — They still kept holding me down without killing me, while the other part of the party plundered the house. — They being so eager of the plunder that they all left me but two or three, and by some means I wrested myself out from under them, and they tore the cloaths off me till I was all but naked, and I strove with them untill I got to the house, and I called aloud for the M<sup>rs</sup> and she being come a little to herself with some difficulty came towards me and we got into the house. But such destruction [f] we beheld there as I can scarcely describe. Our beding [sic] and the Childrens beding were entirely taken away and the Boxes opened and the contents thrown out; and they were carrying out every article they could lay hold of. But fortunately some friendly natives being at a short distance heard the alarm and came to our assistance, and the plundering party being afraid went away with the property and we saw them no more. I never think of it but with astonishment that I was kept from killing or striking any of them, and they from killing me, after I got my liberty, and saw my wife with her eyes swelled up and the blood streaming all over her, and myself all but naked and the blood running down my arms with the scratches of their long nails, and they still persisting in carrying out the property, nature would have said “take the Bayonet and run through them”, but blessed be God for that portion of his grace, that enabled me to say, Father forgive them for they know not what they do. Nothing but the all powerfull providence of God,

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saved us out of the hands of these cruel and barbarous people, and spared us for future labours, and although my wifes sight is much impaired, yet blessed be God she has not lost the use of her eye entirely –

The Cathrine [sic] Capt<sup>n</sup> Graham was then laying on the opposite side of the Bay, and I sent a note on board by some Natives in a Canoe letting him know what had happened, and that worthy friend came up with his boat and offered us every assistance in his power, in removing us to Tippoonah he being then ready for sea, and instead of sailing out he hove his anchor and brought his Vessel up the harbour convenient to our place and in the following morning he came up with two Boats and Crews, and M<sup>r</sup> King came up from Tippoonah with our own Boat and we removed thither the same day. – But I never was so sorry to leave any place as I was to leave Wythangee.[f] Yet since it has pleased God to spare our lives we thought we had better go with them than stay and tempt providence. – We came into a small thatched hut that would neither turn wind nor rain, and there we remained without any fire place untill we removed the house from Wythangee and rebuilt it again at Tippoonah. – M<sup>r</sup> King went with me every day with the Boat untill we removed all the materials. I hope I shall never forget the kindness of that man and his family towards us when we were distressed. – We have found the most want of our Bedding of any other thing, this winter has been exceedingly wet and cold, so that we have been almost perished, especially during thirteen weeks that we lived in that miserable hut. – I wrought very hard to get another

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house built, but I was kept back by rainy weather, and likewise by working at Mr Kendalls house and the Schoolhouse, There is a Mr Carlisle come out to join us by Mr Marsden's recommendation, and he seems to be a very quiet sober man, he and Mr Kendall has put the boards on the two houses by my directions. I always took care care [sic] that the Schoolhouse was never kept back for the want of people to work it, the Timber was always wrought up as fast as it could be sawed, for I was sorry to see never a school begun in N. Zealand yet although at the same time convinced it was not for the want of a schoolhouse, for there has been several empty houses amongst us since we came to N. Zealand that might have done very well at least for a time till better could have been got. As a school is the best means that can be used at present for civilising the natives it certainly should have been commenced as soon as possible. When Mr Marsden was here there were a small number of Children collected and a school commenced in Mr Kendalls [house] but after Mr Marsden went away they were dispersed and there has [f] never been a school since. But now we have built a Schoolhouse thirty feet by eighteen, with a small apartment at one end raised seven inches above the floor intended for the teachers and the European Children, divided off by a low partition about brest [sic] high, the whole is nearly compleated, and then as soon as provisions can be obtained, we hope that we will be able to give some account of a school. There has been a small Book printed at port jackson for the use of the school, composed of words and sentences out of our vocabulary, which Mr Kendall has put together,

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and although very defective yet it will be of some use, if it were but to teach them the Alphabet and a beginning for further improvement. I find it is almost impracticable to make Mechanics of them or to teach them the Arts at N. Zealand they are not arrived at that state yet, I cannot work amongst them they pilfer the Tools so much, they have at different times stole my working Axes so that I have not had one left to do any thing with. And the Chiefs have very little authority over the lower class especially in the recovery of any article stolen from us. Some time ago a large party from Whangaroa visited our Settlement, and a powerful Chief along with them called Tiparee, and some of his people stole my Saw, I went and acquainted him with it offering him a reward if he would get [it] again for me, he went amongst them in a very mild manner, and found out who had it, but they had broke it into four or five pieces, and divided it amongst them, and they with some reluctance gave them out, but not without offering some small reward for them, and although the pieces were of no use to me, yet it served to give us an Idea of the authority of the Chief, but I think that was almost the only instance [f] of the kind I ever knew. — They are so inclined to ramble that they will not be confined to learn a trade, and although I were supplied with Tools, Victuals, payment and Cloathing for them so as to enable me to keep them in employment, they are so fond of fighting and plundering that nothing will divert them from it or prevent their going away at certain times. — Parties keep coming and going and if we employ any that will work, by that means we can get Land cultivated rough fences

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made and such work as requires no time to learn it, but they would never learn a trade at that rate. Yet I can spend my time very beneficially [sic] amongst them by conversing and Bartering with them, visiting their sick and relieving them, by giving them suitable food and medicine which they are frequently in great need of. — —

They cannot let any thing remain amongst them that has got any nails in it, neighter [sic] do they make any use of a Wheelbarrow. I had one at Wythangee that I used to wheel the stones off the ground with, but they would as willingly bear them off in Bucketts, and when I was robed they chopped [sic] it all to pieces to get the nails out of it. There was also a wooden house at the Wythangee that the Sawyers left and I gave them liberty to sleep in it, but the nails in the weatherboards was such a temptation that they could not suffer it to stand although it was for their own benefit, they pulled it down to the ground and split up every bit of it to get the nails out. We have also heard of Whalers that has left them a Boat sometimes, but they could never suffer them to remain but has [f] immediately broke them to pieces for the sake of the nails and iron. They have no patience to wait for any future benefit even when we tell them that we come to teach them our ways and improve their Country. all their object is to get hold of our property immediately right or wrong however it might defeat our designs or disfit [sic] us for our labour. — The best employment for them at present is the cultivation of Land but our settlement at Tippoonah is very unfavourable for that

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work on account of the steepness of the hills and the shallowness of the soil, and on that account we shall be able to do but very little towards our own support. I have used my utmost exertion since I came to N. Zealand in striving to establish an eligible settlement as a means of supporting ourselves, but I find my designs all obstructed, and I have almost paid too dear for making the experiment. – I mentioned in a former letter the want of a little bedding, such as Blankets, sheets, Covers &c. with a few Carpenters Axes, Table knives, Spoons and Teaspoons, a Mettle [sic] Tea pot or two and a Copper tea Kettle and frying pan. – I do not mean to make any charge of my losses, neighter [sic] do I expect them to be made good. But if the Committee should think proper to send me out a few usefull articles such as I have mentioned I shall be very glad and remain Dear Sir

Your most Obedient

Humble Servant in Christ

W<sup>m</sup>. Hall