Thinking Local
KNOWLEDGE, SOCIABILITY AND COMMUNITY IN GORE'S INTELLECTUAL LIFE, 1875–1914

NATIONAL HISTORIES have colonized too much of New Zealand's past. While there have been recent calls to think transnationally as a corrective to the national focus of much of the writing about the histories of these islands, we need to produce critical work that thinks under as well as across the nation.[1] Our abiding preoccupation with the story of the nation has been a key factor in encouraging cultural and intellectual historians to invest considerable energy into producing histories of identities like 'Maori', 'settler' or 'Pakeha', and 'New Zealander'. Much of this work, however, has focused on the work of a narrow cohort of politicians, intellectuals and writers whose understandings of landscape, race and history have been seen as both legitimizing colonial authority and articulating the foundations of a distinctive set of identities that marked this place and its peoples off from Britain and the rest of the empire.[2] This article explores the dynamics of colonial intellectual development, but it is underpinned by a quite different set of analytical concerns. It examines how colonists in a specific location accessed information and developed cultural understandings, and where and how they shared their ideas. Rather than focusing on a set of textual exchanges between members of an emergent national intellectual elite, I scrutinize the intellectual life of a particular group of colonists from a variety of backgrounds, who lived in a certain location, and who came together in a variety of ways to discuss their understandings of the past and the present and their aspirations for the future. This kind of approach firmly locates cultural production and consumption in specific practices, institutions and sites, and in 'placing' intellectual life it undercuts the nation as the default or natural unit for the cultural analysis.[3]

The locus is Gore and its immediate district. Gore is a significant site for analysis. Across three generations the town produced a range of influential intellectual figures, including Robert McNab (b. 1864), the historian and Liberal MP for Mataura; James Herries Beattie (b. 1881), the ethnographer, collector and historian; and the historian Alexander Hare McLintock (b. 1903). In light of this tradition the local historian George Griffiths has dubbed Gore New Zealand's 'Little Lichfield', invoking the Staffordshire town that produced a remarkable lineage of writers and public figures.[4] More generally, however, Gore can sustain close scrutiny because a significant body of material relating to local institutions has survived (especially in the papers of Herries Beattie). Its vibrant print culture offers a rich window into the town's social and intellectual life. Drawing on this material, this essay does not focus on the role of Beattie and McNab in producing 'identities', but rather attempts to reconstruct the most important practices and sites through which knowledge was accessed, made and shared in Gore.[5] Where many of our studies of colonial intellectual life have been grounded in postcolonial

readings of texts, a finely grained local study grounded in archival work highlights the value of assessing both the structures and processes that determined the pattern of colonial intellectual life. Particularly important to this reframing is my emphasis on the importance of both the spoken *and* written word and the often complex relationship between these modes of communication, which, I contend, were integral to the community formation in Gore. Knowledge, sociability and the creation of social and cultural connectedness were strongly linked.

My argument should not be seen as a simple riposte to Fairburn's vision of an 'atomized' society in which loneliness, isolation and conflict were enduring features. In many ways, the material here can be reconciled with Fairburn's stress on the transformations that began to undercut atomization around 1900, but my hope is to help shift the grounds of historical analysis away from the nature of the 'ideal society', or a concern with a national intellectual pattern, towards a greater commitment to reconstructing both local complexity and the role of knowledge production in community formation. Gore is not held up here as a microcosm of 'New Zealand', nor is it seen as representative: too much time has been spent debating the extent to which Amuri county, Littledene, Caversham, Johnsonville, Kaponga and Taradale stand as suitable grounds for generalizations about the nation.[6] Instead, my hope is to focus new attention on the everyday practices and places that enabled colonists to share and test ideas and to suggest some new ways of thinking about the connections between intellectual life and community formation in the final third of the nineteenth century.

Much recent work on the place of knowledge in British imperial formations has stressed the ability of native knowledge traditions and indigenous experts to shape colonial knowledge. There has been a tendency to extrapolate from the most important case studies of these processes, such as Eugene Irschick's pathbreaking study of the Madras hinterland, to insist that all colonial knowledge was 'dialogic'.[7] But in most colonies, including New Zealand, the indigenous imprint on colonial knowledge was uneven. In the case of Gore, we can see cross-cultural engagement clearly in the work of a few individuals — especially in the collecting and writing of Herries Beattie — but matauraka Maori, te reo and mahika kai remained beyond the experience of the majority of colonists in this part of Southland.[8] Unlike parts of coastal Otago, Bluff and Riverton, where Kai Tahu communities were socially visible and worked hard to maintain their lifeways, Gore had no resident Kai Tahu population. Interactions between colonists and Kai Tahu in inland eastern Southland between 1880 and 1910 were limited. Yet despite this lack of direct cross-cultural engagement with the mana whenua, it is important to recognize that knowledge production in Gore remained profoundly colonial in nature. Being colonial was defined by both a set of relationships between the colonists and the peoples that they dispossessed *and* a set of relationships that connected those colonists to the United Kingdom, Ireland and component parts of the empire. Institutions, practices and debates in Gore were determined by the material and social realities of a specific colonial location: the absence of pre-existing urban structures, a small and often transient population, mediocre communication linkages, and a settler cultural world that was an *ad hoc* assemblage of a divergent body of languages, institutions and practices drawn from Europe, particularly the United Kingdom and Ireland, but especially Scotland and England.

I open with a sketch of Gore's transformation between 1875 and 1900 that reconstructs the development of institutional structures that allowed the exchange of knowledge. The middle sections of the article examine two fundamental aspects of intellectual life in the town between 1880 and 1910: the centrality of print culture and mutual improvement societies. The final section reflects on the ways in which these sites and practices shaped community formation, stressing both the intellectual significance of the development of a rich associational culture and the ways in which this associational culture was itself a key site for the conflicts and contestations that were central in defining community (and its limits) in late-Victorian Gore.

Gore was settled relatively late. The town was established north of the inland tracks used by Kai Tahu Whanui and the settlement grew with little reference to pre-existing indigenous patterns of mobility.[9] Gore developed as a ferry town where colonists could cross the Mataura river. While a handful of pastoralists settled in the district in the 1850s, the discovery of gold in the Waikaka and Nokomai rivers in 1862 made the river crossing a significant staging point for miners travelling inland.[10] But it was the expansion of the railway north from Invercargill in 1875 that breathed life into the tiny hamlet: small stores, hotels and lodging houses were quickly built. In 1880 the opening of the Waimea railway line, which ran west to Lumsden and beyond, promoted further growth, spurring the closer settlement of rural land and the emergence of new manufacturing and service industries in Gore itself.[11] At the close of the nineteenth century, Gore stood at the centre of a mesh of networks that connected it to small settlements and farming communities across northern and eastern Southland and the southern portions of Otago. By this stage, Gore was firmly connected to both Dunedin and Invercargill by road and was an important stopping-point on the main trunk rail line; mail to and from these main points north and south moved in and out of Gore three times a day.[12]

Gore's population grew rapidly, from 709 in 1886 to 3500 in 1905.[13] In 1905, the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* listed an extensive range of industries and businesses in Gore as well as a substantial number of public facilities and institutions. This inventory emphasized the comparative sophistication of the town, and the *Cyclopedia* entry concluded that it had 'gone ahead by leaps and bounds'.[14] A few years earlier, the local correspondent to the *Otago Witness* noted Gore's modern infrastructure and precocious adoption of new technology and suggested that 'our town is not likely to lose the go-ahead name one occasionally hears applied to it, viz., "The Chicago of the South"'.[15] A few years later, Frank T. Bullen, the popular British novelist and lecturer, observed that: '[Gore] gives itself, with a sublime air of importance, the proud title of "Chicago of the South". It would be ludicrous if it were not said in such deadly earnest; and yet when the visitor sees the energy and the up-to-date methods manifested by this tiny community he is bound to take his hat off to its citizens.'[16]

By 1900 an important constellation of buildings, institutions and societies shaped the community's intellectual life. In particular, schools were an essential foundation for the town's development. Education was a deep concern for early settlers, and in many communities informal schools were launched in hotels, stations and homes before teachers were formally appointed or schools built.[17]

Gore's first private school was established in 1876, but such *ad hoc* arrangements were soon set aside; public schools opened in 1879 and 1885 and a public high school erected in 1897.[18] Gore's sizeable Catholic community — mainly Irish, but with smaller numbers of German and Polish-speaking families — were enthusiastic supporters of the town's Catholic schools from 1890.[19] Despite these growing resources only a small number of children were able to go onto high school in 1900 and even fewer completed these 'advanced' studies. Some aspiring students felt this lack of high school education was a profound check on their aspirations and a substantial determinant of their future financial security and social status.[20] While completing high school might have been a prized stepping stone towards a profession, by 1900 a primary school education — focused on the acquisition of core literacy and numeracy skills — was fundamental for a growing array of jobs, particularly in 'town' settings, and a key condition of what we might think of as social citizenship.[21]

Churches were also key sites where mentalities were made in eastern Southland. Before 1880 (and even later in rural areas), groups of children and adults gathered in schoolhouses and individual homes for religious services.[22] The 1880s and 1890s witnessed a boom in church construction across the district.[23] Building churches was a top priority not because they were 'bait' to lure new colonists, as Hamer has claimed, but rather because churches were vital social, educational and spiritual centres.[24] Churches were important sites of knowledge-sharing and opinion-making; morals were shaped by sermons and biblical teaching, memorized verses and hymns were linguistic touchstones, services frequently contained discussions of both domestic and foreign missionary work, and the conversations that preceded and followed service allowed the sharing of news relating to families, farms and businesses, as well as pressing local matters.[25] Alison Clarke has suggested church-going and, more broadly, the continued authority of the Bible shaped the fundamental moral outlook of most settlers in southern New Zealand at the close of the nineteenth century.[26] The significance of the church was particularly strong in rural Southland where attendance rates were substantially higher than the national average.[27] Significant numbers of young people in the Gore district were also involved in the numerous faith-based groups. Bible classes were successful in creating spaces for young adults in Southland to extend their Christian knowledge, and in the 1890s large numbers of youths were drawn into the distinctively Protestant forms of faith-based sociability offered by Christian Band and Christian Endeavour.[28]

Sunday schools wove together faith and education, playing a pivotal role in community life. Sunday schools drew strong community support in the far south, with 74% of children in Otago and Southland enrolled in a Sunday school in 1896. A significant percentage of the remainder would have had some connection to Catholic educational institutions, meaning that approximately 80% of children under the age of 15 were involved in religious education to some degree.[29] Around Gore, Sunday schools preceded the establishment of both day schools and churches.[30] Sunday schooling was especially significant for at least some of the 20% of children who did not attend public school on a regular basis in the 1890s.[31] This is hinted at by the large attendance at the Sunday schools in Gore run by relatively small denominations, such as the Wesleyans.[32] These figures suggest

the vast majority of settlers in Gore wanted their children not only to gain a basic education but that they wanted part of that education to be gained in an explicitly Christian context.[33]

The other feature of Sunday schools that made them central to community life was their libraries. Just as in Britain, where Sunday school libraries strongly supported by working-class Christians were a prominent part of Britain's educational landscape, these libraries were significant sites where young colonists accessed print culture.[34] In some cases, communities worked together to establish libraries. In 1880, an alliance of Protestant denominations held a concert in East Gore to raise funds to start a non-denominational Sunday school library.[35] By this stage, several church hierarchies were pushing ahead with extensive library initiatives. Most notably, the Sabbath School Committee of Otago and Southland Presbyterian Synod created a funding mechanism that enabled Sunday schools to build up libraries. By 1891, the vast majority of Sunday schools had dedicated libraries (distinct from congregational libraries geared to adults), which on average held over 200 books each.[36] Drawing upon London and Edinburgh publishers, Presbyterian churches in Southland also distributed a range of books and magazines for little or no charge to children who attended Sunday school.[37] In a society where books were relatively expensive, these gifts were valued, even if they were not quite as popular amongst young Presbyterians as novels, which were viewed with some scepticism by the church's leadership.[38]

Beyond churches and schools, information, ideas and arguments were exchanged in a range of public meeting points and spaces. Initially, hotels were crucial gathering places, and some offered dedicated meeting spaces; this pattern endured, particularly in the countryside, past 1900.[39] In Gore itself, Green's Assembly Hall opened for business in 1878. It hosted many events that were too large or inappropriate for hotels, quickly becoming an important venue for political meetings, public lectures and dramatic productions.[40] Over the next decade a strong culture of society-formation emerged. In 1878 the Gore Dramatic Club and the Oddfellows Lodge were founded; in 1880 the Good Templar Lodge opened; in 1882 the first public events by the Caledonian Society, the Agricultural and Pastoral Association, and the Literary and Debating Society were held; in 1887 the Orange Lodge and the Oddfellows Hall were erected; in 1888 the Masonic Hall was opened and the district's farmers' club set up; in 1889 the Druid's Lodge was established and the Horticultural Society formed.[41] The sharing of information and the circulation of knowledge were important threads within a thriving associational culture that engaged a substantial portion of Gore's population.

Athenaeums, associations for the advancement of learning particularly in the fields of science or literature, helped underpin the institutionalization of intellectual life. These typically offered a reading room, a lending library and some limited meeting space. Small towns like Knapdale, Clinton, Pukerau, Tapanui and Waikaia had established Athenaeums by the 1890s, while others like Wyndham, Mimihau and Knapdale had libraries (often with literary societies attached).[42] Moves to establish a public library and reading room began in Gore itself with public meetings in spring 1881.[43] Progress raising funds and constructing the building was slow. By June 1883, the *Mataura Ensign* was exasperated, asking its readers: 'How is it that we as a community have allowed the Committee to

"diddle" along in this somewhat apathetic way for so long without taking steps to remedy the present unsatisfactory state of affairs?' The *Ensign* was convinced that an Athenaeum was not only a key instrument in improving the town's intellectual life, but was central to its reputation as well: 'If such places as Clinton, Pukerau and even Tapanui can carry through projects of this nature, a town with the past history and future prospects of Gore ought not to be behind its neighbors.'[44] Stung by the *Ensign*'s rebuke, the Athenaeum Committee pushed construction ahead, and once the building was completed the institution became an important centre of the town's intellectual life. The Athenaeum Committee defined the Athenaeum's role as providing a public reading room that carried a 'supply of Colonial, English and other newspapers and periodicals' and establishing a 'Public Library, embracing literary, scientific, and other works, and also making provision for rational amusement'.[45] The library listed some 567 volumes in its 1889 catalogue, a collection that featured significant bodies of fiction (307 volumes, mainly contemporary novels), 'biography, history and travel' (cumulatively 139 volumes), and science (91 volumes).[46] The Athenaeum also hosted 'entertainments' of various types, including songs, speeches and displays. In 1893 one such display included collections of shells from the Pacific, various photographs, antique books and coins, and a collection of 'the weapons of the Fijians'.[47] Events such as this combined entertainment and education, sociability with popular science. These occasions were not only open to adults, but attracted children and teenagers as well.[48]

These institutions — Athenaeums, Sunday schools, meeting rooms, and various associations and clubs — enabled a range of voices to be raised in public discussion, and the spoken word was central to local life. Teachers and inspectors assessed the literacy of local children, like their counterparts throughout the colony, through their ability to speak well and pronounce words accurately as they read, connecting elocution with social cultivation.[49] The spoken word was the very foundation of family life, it suffused the world of church and was what made meeting at hotels, sports events and community organizations socially meaningful. Most importantly, talk was central to the ways in which knowledge was generated. Talk — both formal and informal — was, for example, a vital way of communicating experience and experimentation among farmers and crop-growers. In 1892–3 one local farmers' club had a busy calendar of social gatherings and political discussions; in addition, its members heard papers on 'Bee Culture', 'Turnip Growing', 'Breaking Up Tutu and Fern Land', 'Branding and Earmarking Sheep' and 'Dairying' and discussed pest control, including the various measures that members had used for the 'destruction of small birds'.[50] This kind of localized low-level scientific work — which included observation, data-collection and experimentation — rarely filtered up to provincial philosophical societies or specialist print culture, so it has been largely overlooked in the historiography on colonial science.

Talk was also a crucial way in which basic scientific knowledge was shared within the community: the gender-specific lecture series offered by the American doctors John Charles Harrison and Anna Longshore-Potts on the human body and reproduction, for instance, were extremely popular.[51] These kinds of events connected people in Gore to new ideas and international debates, and in Gore's

Sunday schools, churches, community halls and lodges there were regular talks
that brought the world to Gore in this manner. In June 1893, for example, H.J.
Lewis, the minister of the Congregational church, was in the middle of a series of
lectures on world religions ('The Religion of Egypt,' 'Brahminism', 'Buddhism',
'Confucianism', 'Mahommedanism', and the 'Religions of Ancient Greece'),
while the Reverend J.D. Jory of Balclutha gave a lantern-slide lecture in the
Oddfellows Hall on his time as a missionary in Fiji. A couple of months later
R.L. Begg presented a public lecture to an audience of 150 describing his travels
through Australia, Sri Lanka and India.[52]

Even though Gore produced a thriving print culture, on which the next part
of this article focuses, the spoken word remained heavily embedded in the
town's newspapers, as in most colonial newspapers. The detailed recounting of
speeches and political debates was a staple of both the *Mataura Ensign* and the
Southern Standard. Frequently, extensive transcriptions of whole speeches were
reproduced from the shorthand notes of local journalists. This kind of reporting
became especially prominent at times of heightened political contention, such as
the debates over women's suffrage in the winter of 1892 or the disputes over the
location of the Gore bridge in 1893. Newspapers were valued in part because they
able to transmit speeches made in Gore to readers across the district. And not all
the reported speech was that of local dignitaries or visiting luminaries. The regular
'What Folks Are Saying' column in the *Southern Standard* offered a sequence
of short one- and two-sentence snippets, capturing local opinion and gossip in a
manner that suggested overheard conversation, and provides a particularly striking
illustration of the interweaving of spoken and published words. Speech and print
were interlaced in colonists' cultural life.

Newspapers were fundamental to Gore's life. Accounts of the latest happenings
in Waikaka, Waimumu, Waikoikoi, Waipahi, Waiwera, Kelso, Otama, Chatton,
Gore and Mataura were regular features of the Dunedin-based *Otago Witness*
and Invercargill's *Southland Times*. Both papers maintained extensive networks
of local correspondents.[53] This pattern of reportage and reading reminds us that
even after the provinces' abolition, they remained important sources of social
identification and continued to shape the circuits of colonial life. But Gore and
its surrounds had their own papers too. Many small towns launched papers in the
final decades of the nineteenth century: Riversdale had its *Waimea Plains Review*,
Clinton the *Popotunoa Chronicle* and then the *Clinton County Gazette*, Waikaia
its *Herald*, and Mataura produced the *Southern Free Press*. By 1890 most of these
local papers had been absorbed into the *Mataura Ensign*, Gore's longest-running
and most influential paper. Initially launched in May 1878 by Joseph Mackay,
proprietor of the *Bruce Herald* (Milton), the *Ensign* was initially a weekly, but
quickly became a bi-weekly and then, from 1895, a tri-weekly publication. Its
self-defined role was to offer local readers 'judiciously selected general reading
matter, full district reports, trenchant editorial comments, and the advertisements
of leading business residents'.[54] From 1882, the Dolamore family, especially
Alfred Dolamore who also served as Gore's mayor, controlled the paper and
after 1887 its politics were expressly defined in opposition to its new rival, the
Southern Standard. The bi-weekly *Standard* had good circulation in the Mataura

and Waikaka valleys and across the Waimea plains. It distinguished itself from the *Ensign* by its commitment to rural stories and 'progressive' politics, in the 1890s championing the cause of Liberalism and women's suffrage. The two papers were also aligned with rival local political factions and competing regional newspaper empires. In opposition to the *Ensign*'s support of the Dolamore family in local politics, the *Standard* was sympathetic to the pro-suffrage, pro-temperance politics of James Beattie, an editorial position that was not surprising given that Beattie was the president of the paper's founding board of governors. The *Standard* also had formal links with both the *Otago Witness* and *Otago Daily Times*.[55] Despite these divergent political orientations both the *Ensign* and *Standard* were dependent on Gore's telegraphic and postal links, which provided stories from both near and far. From the mid-1880s, the papers received breaking national and international news by telegraph (sourced through a telegraphic combine or news agency), while depending on the post office (which was established in 1867) and rail connections for more extensive international stories, literary content and local news.[56]

A sustained reading of both these papers suggests that they broadly conform to the 'village and the globe' model identified by Rollo Arnold in his discussion of the settler press in the mid-1880s.[57] Local affairs, things that transpired in Gore and its surrounds, received extensive treatment and formed the largest body of the paper's content, with a large minority of content being international in flavour (slanted towards Australia, the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the United States), and a smaller minority being 'national' in character. It is certainly true that what we might see as *national* politics captured the imagination of local readers in 1892 and 1893, but it was essentially the *local* aspect of these developments that garnered most interest and analysis, especially the MP for Mataura G. F. Richardson's vacillation on women's voting rights, the remarkable public exchanges between local men and women over suffrage, and Richardson's electoral fate in the 1893 election.[58] At the same time, however, the *Ensign* and *Standard* coverage of local events and developments was inflected by transnational press networks and international debates. The *Standard*'s arguments for enfranchisement borrowed extensively from overseas sources, offering, for example, an analysis of voting patterns in municipal elections in Kansas to suggest that women might be more engaged with electoral politics than men.[59]

Fairburn has suggested that reading British papers and magazines allowed colonials to escape a 'socially arid world' and allowed them to re-enter a culture of 'community events, celebrations, recreations, and endless opportunities to chat, exchange opinions and ideas'.[60] There is no doubt that British papers and periodicals played an important role in colonial intellectual life and that well into the 1880s there was an almost insatiable hunger for news from 'Home' amongst Anglo-Celtic settlers. Yet, these colonists did not only find community in metropolitan print culture: local newspapers were thick with community news, and both the *Southern Standard* and *Matura Ensign* offer an image of a rich local social life, full of picnics, balls, dances, lectures, dramatic productions, 'entertainments', society meetings, public debates, public shows and exhibitions, and sporting matches, all occasions which offered opportunities for social engagement even though many settlers lived with undeveloped road networks and in relative isolation. It would be wrong to discount Fairburn's claim about the continued relevance of the British

press to settlers' lives, but in the case of Gore, Fairburn's willingness to allow the importance of sociability in metropolitan print culture while discounting the cultural significance of the local press (and the evidence it provides of colonial sociability) seems a puzzling double-standard. One explanation of this tension is tied to questions of scale. The *Ensign* and *Standard* suggest that while Gore was part of an emergent 'New Zealand' as well as 'British Empire', the district and the province remained central to colonial life around 1900. Even after the mobilizations of the 1890s invested national politics with a new salience and key players in intellectual circles were articulating a distinctive nationalism within an imperial frame, these Gore papers remained deeply invested in speaking to local audiences who were worried about bridges, the fate of the local library, the operation of road and domain boards, and the latest news from Dunedin and Invercargill.[61]

At the heart of these local and regional concerns was the question of farming. Both the *Standard* and *Ensign* offered extensive coverage of agriculture and pastoralism, providing information that was not only relevant for farmers themselves, but also for the craftsmen, bankers, solicitors and local leaders who were dependent on the capital and commodities generated by primary producers. Given this dependence between town and country, it is hardly surprising that Gore papers offered regular detailed reports on Dunedin produce and grain markets, regional beef, sheep, hides and tallow markets, the extension of cultivation, the progress of hay-making and harvest time, and the destruction of rural pests.[62] Although the *Standard* was seen as the 'farmer's paper', the *Ensign* also provided extensive treatment of rural matters and saw the dissemination of useful knowledge to farmers as an important function. This was gratefully received in the district. In 1883, the *Ensign*'s Chatton correspondent wrote that: 'I am very pleased to see that your proprietor is giving the readers of the ENSIGN an outline of farming, as well as some very valuable information on the management and experience of farmers in the lower portion of the Mataura valley. These short sketches cannot but be of benefit to the farming class, tending as they do to disseminate the experiences of others throughout the country for the benefit of all. It is, generally speaking, by the experience that has been gained by others that we get our most valuable information.'[63] Arnold has discussed the importance of international information and news relating to agriculture, horticulture and raising stock in the *New Zealand Farmer* and *New Zealand Country Journal*.[64] While Southland readers may have drawn on these national publications to access the latest developments from across the empire and Anglophone world, the *Ensign* and *Standard* allowed information about specific issues to be quickly disseminated within a distinctive environment where agriculture had developed relatively late.

Gauging the reception of these papers is always difficult, but in the case of Gore we do have an intriguing series of observations in the journal of the young Herries Beattie. In his 1893 diary a 12-year-old Beattie noted that by reading the local papers he learned 'anything important' and 'what is going on in public'.[65] Through the *Standard* and the *Ensign* he not only followed local news, such as the debates over suffrage and the impact of the measles epidemic, but also followed international news. His diary suggests that these news stories — such as the marriage of the Duke of York, debates over Home Rule in Ireland, conflicts

between France and Siam, and the sinking of the HMS *Victoria* off Tripoli — were a key part of both familial and public conversation in Gore. Beattie observed that his friends also read the papers and 'then come to school & tell the news to their mates'.[66]

Beattie's diaries offer some other insights into reading practice and the place of books in everyday life. It is clear that reading was a way in which the 'world' entered Gore: Herries was an enthusiastic consumer of books about empire and adventure. He was fond of titles such as Achilles Daunt's *In the Land of the Moose, Bear and Beaver*, and when playing games imagined himself as a Native American in the mould of 'Fennimore-Copper' [sic].[67] This love of Fenimore-Cooper was encouraged by his Standard Three teacher, Mr McNeill, who read to his class, much to Herries' pleasure: 'I delighted in hearing thrilling stories of bloodthirsty hair-raising scalping harassing mocasined [sic] Indians'.[68] Books were an important anchor for both the intellectual and emotional life of the Beattie family. Amongst Herries' papers is a list of the books his mother, Mary Roden Thomson, carried with her to New Zealand in 1862.[69] These mementoes from 'Home' — whose value at least partially lay in the inscriptions that articulated connections to particular people, institutions and places — were freighted with emotions and those emotions replayed in the Beattie family traditions of gift giving, where books were particularly prominent.[70] Across the district books were important items, presents and keepsakes, given to mark birthdays, marriage, and regular attendance and the completion of school and Sunday school.[71] Less ritualized exchanges of books seem to have been fairly commonplace as well. As in Britain, books circulated freely in families of all social stations.[72]

The movement of books between friends and family, as well as the flow of books into the community through libraries, missionary groups and Sunday schools was just one element in an escalating traffic in the printed word that was a crucial element of the cultural landscape. The constant shuffling and shuttling of paper was supported by technologies which made communication cheaper and faster, and by the growing significance of writing and reading as regular practices for the vast majority of settlers in the far south. The colonists of the south were an increasingly literate population. In Otago and Southland in 1874, 68% of settlers could read and write, while 8% could read but not write, leaving 24% of the population as non-literate. By 1901 84% of the population could read and write, 2% could read only, and 14% remained illiterate.[73]

Gore's settlers were writers as well as readers. The area developed during a period characterized by a remarkable extension of communications infrastructure and the amplification of older practices of letter writing. Many individuals maintained extensive webs of correspondence, encompassing local social networks, more expansive links within the colony, and a diverse range of relationships to 'home' and to other colonial sites. These kinds of connections, as Angela McCarthy has shown, fashioned 'bands of fellowship' that linked friends and families to each other and their homelands in meaningful ways.[74] Correspondence grew as commercial life intensified and associational culture grew from the 1880s: long after the advent of the telegraph and telephone, letters were fundamental to the operation of most businesses and institutions.[75] This new level of correspondence remained fairly stable into the early years of the

twentieth century, as this substantial transformation in the nature and scale of interpersonal communication was consolidated. The constant traffic of writing and receiving of letters, lettercards and postcards had become central to many key aspects of economic and cultural practice by 1900 and was an almost ritualized act of community-building as well: connections, near and far, were fashioned, maintained and transformed by the written word.

Many of the issues explored in this essay — talking, reading, writing, and the development of an associational culture — came together in one particularly important set of institutions: mutual improvement societies. These drew on long-standing English and Scottish traditions of mutual education and institutional models familiar to many settlers from their homes in the United Kingdom. These societies were generally easy to establish once colonial towns had developed a modest population and a basic infrastructure (essentially a public meeting space), and like their British counterparts they offered opportunities for remedial education, opportunities that were particularly important in a recently settled region like northern Southland.[76] The colonial tradition of mutual improvement, as it developed around Gore, diverged from British models in the much greater role that churches and para-church organizations (such as temperance societies) played in the organization of these groups. This was particularly noticeable in Gore itself, where mutual improvement societies developed along congregational lines, whereas smaller rural centres typically had a mutual improvement society that would serve the whole community. In Gore, however, distinct Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian mutual improvement societies operated, and a Congregationalist one was established after a schism tore the East Gore Presbyterian congregation apart.[77] These societies flourished in the 1890s, with the Gore Presbyterian Mutual Improvement Society boasting 150 members in 1893.[78] The Gore Literary and Debating Society, established in the mid-1880s, and societies sponsored by local temperance groups, worked alongside the denominational societies. Faith, morality and intellectual life were woven together in the Gore Young Men's Temperance Mutual Improvement Society (hereafter GYM), which was an important part of Gore's busy civic life.[79]

These mutual improvement societies served two very important functions. First, they provided forums for discussion and debate. The 1899 syllabus of GYM reveals a programme built around a range of topics of the kind that engaged newspaper editors and politically active individuals throughout the country: capital punishment, tax policy, prohibition and federation.[80] These kinds of subjects were also the occasion for meetings and exchanges between groups. Around 1900 the Gore Literary and Debating Society met with its Riversdale counterpart to debate 'Should the Empire Federate?'[81] Societies might also stage lecture series on topical issues. In 1899, GYM hosted a lecture series comprising five lectures and a concert. The Reverend William White, the Presbyterian minister from Wallacetown, discussed the 'Growth of Democracy', the lawyer and coroner J.W. Poynton lectured on 'Microbes', while Miss Caroline Freeman of Dunedin's Girton College spoke on 'The Cry of the Children'.[82] Designed to disseminate knowledge to a broad audience, these lectures also attempted to cultivate 'a taste for mutual improvement among the young people of both sexes'.[83] Two years later

members of the public paid 2s. 6d. to hear a sequence of six lectures and a 'popular concert' sponsored by the same society. The speakers were significant figures, including Robert McNab, the historian and MP, who spoke on 'Federation', Dr George Copland (son of well-known minister and physician James Copland) on the 'Senses', the Reverend White on 'Socialism', and Reverend Dr Rutherford Waddell on 'How to Read A Novel'.[84]

 As these kinds of events suggest, these societies aimed to 'improve' their members. The banner head of the first 'journal' of the GYM proclaimed: 'For the dissemination of useful knowledge and the enlightenment and improvement of members of the above society.'[85] Meetings were designed to sharpen members' ideas, to elevate their moral and religious understanding, and, most importantly, to refine their ability to explain their beliefs through the written and spoken word. Most societies had special evenings or timeslots which were devoted to allowing (or requiring) their members to practise these skills: these included debate nights, sessions of 'impromptu speaking', 'object nights' (where speakers discussed a specific artefact), recitations of poetry, the staging of theatrical skits, mock trials and spelling competitions.[86] These efforts remind us that speaking skills were highly valued in the colonial public sphere.[87]

 But writing was another important part of the improving process. Most societies, including the Gore Girls' Literary Club, produced 'journals': hand-written magazines collated by the senior members of the society (occasionally a designated 'editor') which allowed talks, debates, pieces of fiction and 'letters to the editor' to circulate amongst the society's members. These literary skills were broadly appreciated: in 1895 the *Standard* observed: 'One of the most desirable and delightful accomplishments of modern times is to be able to write readily, and to convey to paper one's thoughts in a clear, concise and pleasant manner. This accomplishment is not entirely a gift, as many think, but can be obtained with practice and study.'[88] Both the *Ensign* and *Standard* followed the activities of these societies closely and the *Standard* had a regular self-contained column for local mutual improvement societies.[89]

 These societies were significant forums for young women as well as men. There was some divergence between the objects of these societies along gender lines. The societies dedicated to young women had a stronger focus on literature than on politics and science. Whereas the Gore Literary and Debating Club, which was dominated by men in the 1880s and remained so after its re-invention in the first decade of the twentieth century, had an abiding concern with political and scientific matters, the Gore Girls' Literary Club was primarily that, a club focused on literature. Their 1904 syllabus devoted three weeks to *Hiawatha*, four weeks to the Arthurian romances, three nights to *As You Like It*, and a poetry evening. The syllabus did have two talks by prominent local men, including an Anglican minister, and a single talk on fossils by Mr R. Browne; but the overwhelming focus of the society's work was literature, a pattern that was the basis of other extant syllabi from that society.[90] In mixed-gender societies, such as the Presbyterian and Wesleyan mutual improvement societies, women were active members, holding offices and wielding considerable influence. These societies frequently had 'Lady Presidents' and regularly held 'Ladies' Evenings' and 'Men's Nights' when an entire evening's programme was provided by one gender.[91] As Rosemarie

Smith has shown these occasions were central in catalysing the intense debates over women's suffrage in Gore during 1892 and 1893, debates which captured the whole community's imagination and were instrumental in the ousting of G.F. Richardson from the Mataura seat in 1893.[92]

What can these societies tell us about the connections between intellectual activity and community formation? Even though he recognizes the emergence of 'associational machinery' in the late nineteenth century, Fairburn nevertheless discounts the significance of the kinds of associations that this article has examined.[93] He suggests that they were weak, 'thin' and tended to be ephemeral, arguing they were unable to produce an 'associational machinery of control' or the moral glue to wield 'atomized' colonists together.[94] Conversely, Erik Olssen has argued that 'voluntary organizations' had grown rapidly in the cities by 1890, but these associational cultures had not taken root in the country where church and lodge remained key community nodes.[95] In eastern Southland it is clear that a strong associational culture had flourished in Gore itself and that significant attempts to develop formal structures that provided mutual connections, in the guise of athenaeums, reading rooms and especially improvement societies, were underway in most small settlements. As Derek Drinkwater has argued in the Australian context, these institutions were central to processes of community formation and key sites for the cultivation of political understanding and literary taste. This pattern was manifested in many parts of New Zealand.[96]

Two further observations are necessary. First, colonists concerned with improvement and institution-building were perennially anxious about their progress. These societies required a hefty commitment and investment, and there was widespread apprehension that their energy would be sapped by poor attendance and constant turnover in membership. In 1899, as it entered its sixth year, the GYM equalled the record for longevity of a local mutual improvement society: it proved to be a very durable institution, lasting through to the First World War.[97] These societies faced challenges quite different from their British antecedents, which frequently developed in isolated villages and mining communities that had stable and largely self-contained populations.[98] The particular mobility of young male colonists, who regularly left the district in search of work, to take up educational and professional opportunities, and to establish independent families, meant that the societies' memberships were in constant flux.[99] Societies worked hard to consolidate a base membership and develop habits of attendance. The GYM rules allowed any individual who missed two successive meetings without sufficient written explanation to be struck from the membership list.[100] A little more generously, the Gore Literary and Debating Club allowed members three consecutive absences before being struck off.[101] Gore's associational culture was nourished by a series of particularly energetic families and individuals who were invested in the district and involved in a wide range of groups.[102] These groups had larger numbers of members who were less committed or more transient, moving in and out of societies, and there was an undoubtedly a third group in the district who had limited investment in associational culture. Even though there were limits to the reach of these institutions, and other community-building practices could flourish with limited institutional support, reading and writing, talking

and listening, produced social connections as well as knowledge. If we take the histories of these practices and institutions together, it seems clear intellectual activity of various types was an important component of life in late-Victorian Gore and the life of the mind was a significant element of community formation.

Second, we must recognize that conflict was an integral element of the process of community formation. Fairburn has suggested that the construction of community depended upon a series of bonds and networks that 'maintained a high level of conformity and order'.[103] But conformity or absence of conflict are not necessarily indicators of community, especially in a relatively new society, nor is conflict necessarily an indicator of a lack of community, an argument that is foundational to Fairburn's broader claims about the atomized nature of colonial life.[104] Even the most successful institution in Gore witnessed conflicts over ideologies and priorities. In 1900, a debate over the importance of temperance work divided the GYM. When its committee voted to stress the primacy of mutual improvement, the society's president J.A. Forbes, a prominent printer and stationer, tendered his resignation, as did one other senior member. These were accepted, as the remainder of the committee voted in favour of maintaining a primary emphasis on mutual improvement.[105] At the next meeting, the committee also diluted the strength of the society's temperance platform, no longer requiring full members to be 'pledged' abstainers.[106] In response to the success of this motion, Forbes, who was elected a life member of the society after his resignation as president, promptly wrote to the society demanding that his name be removed from the list of life members.[107] This skirmish was relatively minor in comparison to the other clashes that captured the community's imagination in the preceding decade, including the schism that divided the local Presbyterian congregation, the rift between the Gore Domain Board and the Gore Borough Council, the conflicts over the construction of the Gore bridge, the disagreements over the enfranchisement of women, or the ongoing debates over the Salvation Army.[108] These disputes were fed by tense verbal exchanges in public spaces and received extensive newspaper coverage in both the *Standard* and the *Ensign*.[109]

At the heart of these clashes were competing visions of development, rival agendas for improvement, and divergent visions of where moral and political authority ultimately lay. The debates do not reveal the limits of community, but instead demonstrate that 'community' itself was produced out of contestation. Community in Gore was never complete: it was not produced out of ideological agreement and complete social cohesion; rather it was an effect of debate, dispute and the ability of protagonists to find accommodation and acceptance. Ultimately the conflict between the Gore Domain Board and the Gore Borough Council dissipated, the Salvation Army increasingly won acceptance as temperance came to enjoy cultural authority in the region by the early 1900s, inter-denominational ties developed between the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, and GYM grew larger and more dynamic after its re-invention. Debate was not necessarily an impediment to the articulation of community; it helped define broadly shared aims and values as communities calcified. Of course, all communities are by their very definition exclusionary and some groups — including larrikins, 'swagmen', itinerant workers and the local Chinese — were not part of the district's culture of sociability and were clearly beyond the boundary of community. The 'vortex of

the locality', to borrow W.H. Oliver's phrase, was strong but the centripetal pull of institutions and 'town' was never all-powerful.[110] Contestations became somewhat rarer within Gore's public life after 1900. An initial stage of intense contestation seems to have been an important precondition for the emergence of the 'tighter' bonds that may have characterized rural communities from the 1910s.[111]

The firm connections between knowledge-production, sociability and community formation in Gore around 1900 affirm Rollo Arnold's argument that '[e]ach significant New Zealand locality…became an arena for continuous debate, lobbying, decision and action'.[112] Political, cultural and intellectual life was embedded in the locality even though patterns of correspondence, reading and talk suggest the people of Gore and its surrounding settlements were deeply interested in developments in more distant parts of the colony as well as Australia, Britain, other parts of the empire and North America. Although the power of the nation-state grew in the wake of the abolition of the provinces and was further enhanced by the state's growing role as a dispenser of resources and public works funding to local communities, at the outbreak of World War One the immediate sites of sociability and connection in Gore were still essentially local: what Oliver and Thomson termed 'the nationalisation of regional life' proceeded slowly and unevenly.[113] Place had abiding significance in the development of colonial knowledge: rather than seeing the production and circulation of knowledge as the outcome of a set of rather abstract textual processes, we can find it generated by everyday practices, deeply embedded in the structures of local life. I have stressed the ways in which patterns of knowledge production were shaped by the timing of Gore's development, the particularities of the district's demography, and its specific histories of institution-building. These powerful local forces defined the venues in which knowledge could be shared and helped shape its distinctive features, especially the distant imprint of Maori, the persistent weight of the spoken word and the growing weight of the written word, and the centrality of churches, temperance and associational culture in Gore's intellectual life. Most importantly, this article has suggested that intellectual engagement was a key aspect of community-building. There is much to be learned from the close scrutiny of patterns of sociability, institutional development and cultural practice. It seems clear that our understandings about 'community', 'knowledge' and that key contemporary touchstone, 'identity', need to be much more attentive to questions of place and space, connection and conflict, and the abiding importance of the locality.

TONY BALLANTYNE

University of Otago

NOTES

1 One attempt to foreground the connections between locality, the region and transnational networks is Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney, 'Asia in Murihiku: Towards a Transnational History of Colonial Culture', in Brian Moloughney and Tony Ballantyne, eds, *Disputed Histories: Imagining New Zealand's Pasts*, Dunedin, 2006, pp.65-92. This article grows out of a larger project on knowledge and the colonization of Murihiku supported by the Royal Society of New Zealand's Marsden Fund. Scott Campbell provided invaluable research assistance during the preparation of this article. The author would like to acknowledge the valuable feedback on earlier versions of this article from Erik Olssen, Tom Brooking, John Stenhouse, Angela Wanhalla, Barbara Brookes, Angela McCarthy, Mark Seymour and Michael Stevens, as well as detailed responses from two anonymous referees.

2 For example, M.P.K. Sorrenson, *Maori Origins and Migrations: the Genesis of Some Pakeha Myths and Legends*, Auckland, 1979; Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity*, Wellington, 1986; Peter Gibbons, 'A Note on Writing, Identity, and Colonisation in Aotearoa', *Sites*, 13 (1986), pp.32–38 and Gibbons, 'Non-Fiction', in Terry Sturm, ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, Auckland, 1991, pp.25–104; James Belich, 'Myth, Race, and Identity in New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH), 31, 1 (1997), pp.9–21. Also see the articles exploring the connections between race, colonization, and nation in NZJH, 36, 1 (2002).

3 Two key works that forward the notion of 'placing' intellectual history are Michael O'Brien, *Placing the South*, Jackson, 2007; Charles W.J. Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically About the Age of Reason*, Chicago, 2007.

4 George Griffiths, 'New Zealand's "Little Lichfield"', *Friends of the Hocken Collections,* Bulletin 38, 2001, unpaginated.

5 An important assessment of the connections between local history, memory and identity is Fiona Hamilton's, 'Pioneering History: Negotiating Pakeha Collective Memory in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', NZJH, 36, 1 (2002), pp.66–81.

6 Most notably in Miles Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and its Enemies: the Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society, 1850–1900*, Auckland, 1989 and in the articles in NZJH, 25, 2 (1992).

7 Eugene F. Irschick, *Dialogue and History: Constructing South India, 1795–1895*, Berkeley, 1994. The literature on colonial knowledge is surveyed in Tony Ballantyne, 'Colonial Knowledge', in Sarah Stockwell, ed., *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives,* Oxford, 2008, pp.177–97.

8 Here I follow southern Kai Tahu usage.

9 Herries Beattie, *History of Gore and Surrounding Districts*, Gore, 1962, p.12.

10 James Alexander Robertson Menzies, 20 May and 18 July 1855, 'Diary and biographies', Misc-MS-0420, Hocken Library, Dunedin (HL); Beattie, *Gore*, 13-4; David A. Hamer, 'Towns in Nineteenth Century New Zealand', NZJH, 13, 1 (1979), pp.5–24.

11 Edward Aitken Webb, 'The Development of Municipal Government in Gore, 1871–1905', MA thesis, University of Otago, 1950, pp.5, 37.

12 *Stone's Otago and Southland Directory, 1891*, p.125.

13 Webb, 'Municipal Government in Gore', p.2.

14 'Gore', *Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Vol. 4: Otago and Southland Provincial Districts*, Christchurch, 1905, p.759.

15 *Otago Witness* [OW], 2 April 1902, p.32; for other instances of this usage see: OW, 5 February 1891, p.6 and 20 July 1893, p.32.

16 ibid., 20 March 1907, p.88.

17 For example, Alister Evans, *Waikaka Saga: the History of Waikaka, Greenvale, Wendon Valley and the Waikaka Gold Field*, Timaru, 1962, pp.198–9; G. A. Hamilton, *History of Northern Southland*, Invercargill, 1952, pp.152–3.

18 *Gore Public School Jubilee Souvenir*, Gore, 1929, p.3; 'Gore,' *Cyclopedia*, p.762.

19 Helen Bruce, *The Meeting of the Waters: a History of the Gore Catholic Parish, 1882–1982*, Gore, 1983, pp.30–32.

20 For example, Herries Beattie, 12 April 1895, 'A Boy's Diary [IV]', MS-582/L/4, HL.

21 Erik Olssen, *Building the New World: Work, Politics and Society in Caversham 1880s–1920s*, Auckland, 1995, p.166; Dorothy Page, Howard Lee and Tom Brooking, 'Schooling for a Gendered Future: Gender, Education and Opportunity,' in Barbara Brookes, Annabel Cooper, and Robin Law, eds, *Sites of Gender: Women, Men and Modernity in Southern Dunedin, 1890–1939*, Auckland, 2003, pp.102–3.

22 J.F. McArthur, *From the Kirk on the Hill, 1881–1981: a History of the Presbyterian Church in Gore*, Gore, 1981, pp.18–19.

23 'Gore', *Cyclopedia*, p.763; L.H. Greenfield, *Centennial, Holy Trinity Church Gore 1881–1981*, Gore, 1981.

24 Hamer, 'Towns,' p.8.

25 On the social function of church see Alison Clarke, '"Tinged with Christian Sentiment": Popular Religion and the Otago Colonists, 1850–1900', in John Stenhouse and G. A. Wood, eds, *Christianity, Modernity and Culture*, Adelaide, 2005, p.111. In a similar vein, see Rollo Arnold, *Settler Kaponga, 1881–1914: a frontier fragment of the western world*, Wellington, 1997, p.169.

26 Clarke, '"Tinged with Christian Sentiment"', pp.129–30.

27 *Census*, April 1891, table xvi, p.18 and tables xxxvii and xxxviii, appendix, pp.xl-xli. Although the census data was not broken down to give accurate figures for each specific locale, we can infer a high rate of church attendance for Gore; in 1891, the national rate of regular attendance averaged 28.25 % but the census points to a substantially higher rate across Southland's counties, averaging 45%.

28 Olssen, 'Towards A New Society,' in W.H. Oliver, ed., *Oxford History of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1981, p.260; David Stuart Keen, 'Feeding the Lambs: the Influence of Sunday Schools in the Socialization of Children in Otago and Southland, 1848–1901', PhD thesis, University of Otago, 1999, pp.113–120; *Proceedings of the Presbyterian Synod of Otago and Southland, 1896,* appendix, pp.51–52; 'Knapdale Christian Endeavour Society, Minutes 1896–9', Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand Archives (PCANZA), AN2/1; 'North Chatton Christian Endeavour Society, Minutes 1896–1904', PCANZA, AN1/5.

29 Keen, 'Feeding the Lambs', pp.136, 151.

30 ibid., 54; McArthur, *Kirk on the Hill*, p.25.

31 Keen, 'Feeding the Lambs', p.52.

32 Rosemarie Smith, *The Ladies Are At It Again!: Gore Debates the Women's Franchise,* Wellington, 1993, p.84.

33 Clarke, '"Tinged with Christian Sentiment"', p.107.

34 OW, 18 February 1882, p.12; Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, New Haven, 2001, p.62

35 OW, 31 July 1880, p.23 and 4 September 1880, p.14.

36 *Proceedings of the Synod of Otago and Southland, 1891*, appendix, pp.61-2; ibid., 1892, appendix, p.59. Pukerau was the only Presbyterian Sunday school in the Gore region that did not have a library by 1892.

37 ibid., 1879, appendix, p.8, and ibid., 1883, appendix p. 8; *Southern Standard* (SS), 24 January 1893, p.3.

38 *Proceedings of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland 1893*, appendix, p.67.

39 *Mataura Ensign* (ME), 2 June 1893, p.7.

40 Beattie, *Gore*, p.49.

41 ibid., pp.87–9.

42 ME, 15 June 1883, p.2; 24 August 1883, p.5; 2 June 1893, p.7; 30 May 1893, p.5.

43 OW, 1 October 1881, p.13 and 22 October 1881, p.12.

44 ME, 15 June 1883, p.2.

45 *The Gore Athenaeum and Public Library: Rules and Bye-Laws*, Gore, 1887, p.2.

46 *Catalogue of Books in the Gore Athenaeum,* Gore, 1889.

47 Beattie, 4 January 1894, 'A Boy's Diary [III],' MS-582/L/3, HL.

48 ibid.

49 Janet Soler, 'An Historical Perspective. Literacy for the Cultured Individual, 1900–1930', in Janet Soler and John Smith, eds, *Literacy in New Zealand: practices, politics and policy since 1900*, Auckland, 2000, pp.2–3.

50 ME, 2 June 1893, p.7

51 SS, 20 June 1893, p.3 and 23 June 1893, p.3.

52 SS, 13 June 1893, p.3 and 8 September 1893, p.2.

53 On a similar observation see Rollo Arnold, *New Zealand's Burning: the Settlers' World in the Mid 1880s*, Wellington, 1994, pp.221–3.

54 ME, 1 June 1888, p.2.

55 'Gore', *Cyclopedia*, p.764; also see the prospectus in SS, 19 August 1887. In 1906, the SS converted into a morning daily, the *Gore Standard* struggled against the *Southland Times* and *Otago Daily Times*, before being absorbed by the *Mataura Ensign* in 1908 and finally folding in 1910. 'Newspapers Sprouted Like Mushrooms in Early Days', *The Ensign, 1878–1978*, Gore, 1978, p.19.

56 'Post and Telegraph Links Have Served Ensign Well', ibid., p.21.

57 Arnold, *New Zealand's Burning*, pp.220–34.

58 These are at the heart of Smith, *The Ladies Are At It*.

59 SS, 2 June 1893, p.2. Also see the ethnographic article, 'Where the Women Propose', with its implicit links to suffrage debates in ME, 9 June 1893, p.2: this story was sourced from *The Million*.

60 Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and its Enemies*, p.202.

61 This pattern – mixing local preoccupations with an intense interest in the development of the nearest city – can be discerned in most small-town newspapers throughout New Zealand.

62 For example, ME, 1 June 1888, p.4 and 7 September 1888, p.4.

63 ME, 24 August 1883, p.5.

64 Arnold, *New Zealand's Burning*, p.299.

65 Beattie, 7 July 1893, 'A Boy's Diary 2', MS-582/L/2 and 11 July 1893, 'A Boy's Diary [III],' MS-582/L/3, HL.

66 25 July 1893, 'A Boy's Diary [III]'.

67 28 June 1893, 'A Boy's Diary 2' and 4 September 1894, 'A Boy's Diary [IV],' MS-582/L/4, HL.

68 ibid., 12 April 1895, 'A Boy's Diary [IV]'.

69 These were given to her by her day and Sabbath schools and included gifts from friends and family, and a volume from a 'devoted admirer'. 'Notes on the Beattie, Thomson and Herries Families', MS-582/L/31, HL.

70 For example, Beattie, 12 July 1894 and 1 October 1894, 'A Boy's Diary [III]', MS-582/L/3, HL.

71 Mary Cranstoun Diary, 13 August 1906, 92-062, HL; Nina Andrew to Miss Elliot, 23 February 1904, 'Scrapbook, Mostly Containing Papers of Matilda Jane Quertier', MS-3001/066, HL.

72 Rose, *Intellectual History*, p.85. See, for example, 25 July 1893, 'A Boy's Diary [III]'.

73 *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, Taken for the Night of the 3rd of April, 1881,* p.136; *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand Taken for the Night of the 31st March, 1901,* p.280. Illiteracy was largely confined to a diminishing group of older settlers, those who had not finished primary schooling, and a very small group of illiterate adults of working age.

74 Joyce McCredie, 'Mary Inglis Cranstoun, 1885–1950,' 92-062, HL; Angela McCarthy, *Irish Migrants in New Zealand, 1840–1937: 'the desired haven',* Woodbridge and Rochester, 2005, pp.166–89.

75 Early colonists were not enthusiastic users of the post: in 1853, the post office handled just 2.3 letters per person per annum. But by 1875, colonists in southern New Zealand received 11.96 letters per capita per annum and sent 14.43, by 1880 there had been a substantial increase in correspondence with southern colonists on average each receiving 22.03 letters and sending 23.18. By 1885, there was further growth with 33.52 letters received per capita per annum and 27.75 sent. *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Wellington Provincial District*, Wellington, 1897, p.156; *Statistics New Zealand*, 1875, pp.15, 177; 1880, pp.17, 167; 1890, pp.19, 235; 1895, p.394.

76 Rose, *Intellectual History*, p.66.

77 Beattie, 7 June 1893, 'A Boy's Diary'.

78 SS, 23 June 1893, p.3.

79 'Rules', *Gore Young Men's Temperance Mutual Society, Session 1899*; this liberalization of the rules passed in 1898: Minutes of Annual Meeting, 15 February 1888, Gore Young Men's Temperance Mutual Improvement Society, Roll and Minute Book, Go 78/1858, 1A, Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore (HHC).

80 'Syllabus, Session 1899', *Gore Young Men's Temperance Mutual Society, Session 1899*.

81 *Gore Literary & Debating Society*, Reminder Card [undated], Beattie Scrapbook 1, HHC.

82 'Syllabus', *Course of Lectures*, Gore Young Men's Society, 78/158, Series 5, Inwards Syllabus, HHC. Caroline Freeman was the first female graduate of Otago University, in 1885.

83 Secy, GYM to J.W. Poynton, 3 March 1899, GO 78/158, Series 3: Correspondence: Inwards and Outwards, HHC.

84 *Course of Lectures*, Gore Young Men's Society, 78/158, Series 5, Inwards Syllabus, HHC.

85 'The Journal', 30 April 1895, Gore Young Men's Temperance Mutual Improvement Society, GO 78/58, Series 2A, HHC.

86 For example, 'Syllabus, Session 1899', *Gore Young Men's Temperance Mutual Improvement Society, Session 1899*.

87 Bettina Kaiser, 'Collegiate debating societies in New Zealand: the role of discourse in an intercolonial setting, 1878–1902', PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 2008.

88 SS, 12 July 1895, p.6.

89 ibid., 16 June 1893, p.2; 23 June 1893, p.3; 1 September 1893, p.3.

90 Gore Girls' Literary Club, Syllabi 1904 and 1909, Beattie Scrapbook 1, HHC.

91 SS, 16 June 1893, p.2.

92 Smith, *The Ladies Are At It,* especially pp.37–9, 69–73.

93 Fairburn, *Ideal Society*, p.250.

94 ibid., pp.187, 253.

95 Olssen, 'Towards A New Society', p.257.

96 Derek Drinkwater, '"A Living Part of People's Lives": Literary and Debating Societies, Self-Improvement and Federation', *New Federalist*, 4 (1999), pp.90–95.

97 SS*, 14 March 1899, p.2

98 Rose, *Intellectual History*, p.59.

99 Roll of Attendance, Gore Young Men's Temperance Mutual Improvement Society, Roll and Minute Book, Go 78/1858, 1A, HHC.

100 'Rules', *Gore Young Men's Temperance Mutual Society, Session 1899*.

101 'Rules', Gore Literary and Debating Society, Beattie Scrapbook 1, HHC.

102 ME, 2 June 1893, p.4.

103 Fairburn, 'Local Community or Atomised Society?', NZJH, 16, 2 (1982), p.148.

104 Fairburn, *Ideal Society*, pp.146–8, 217–29.

105 Minutes of Annual Meeting, 15 March 1900, Gore Young Men's Temperance Mutual Improvement Society, Roll and Minute Book, Go 78/1858, 1A, HHC.

106 Minutes of Meeting, 29 March 1900, ibid.

107 Minutes of Meeting, 9 May 1900, ibid.

108 Webb, 'Municipal Government in Gore', pp.49, 50–1.

109 Reid has noted that colonial papers were deeply invested in controversy. Francis Reid, 'Newspapers as Objects of Natural History?', *ENNZ: Environment and Nature in New Zealand*, 1, 3 (2006), p.11.

110 W.H. Oliver, 'The Loss of Colonial Innocence', in 'New Zealand About 1900: The Macmillan Brown Lectures 1972', p.12.

111 Hugh Somerset, for instance, saw tight associational bonds as characteristic of Littledene in the 1930s. H.C.D. Somerset, *Littledene*: *a New Zealand rural community*, Wellington, 1938.

112 Arnold, *New Zealand's Burning*, p.119.

113 W.H. Oliver and Jane M. Thomson, *Challenge and Response: a Study of the Development of the Gisborne East Coast Region*, Gisborne, 1971, p.181.