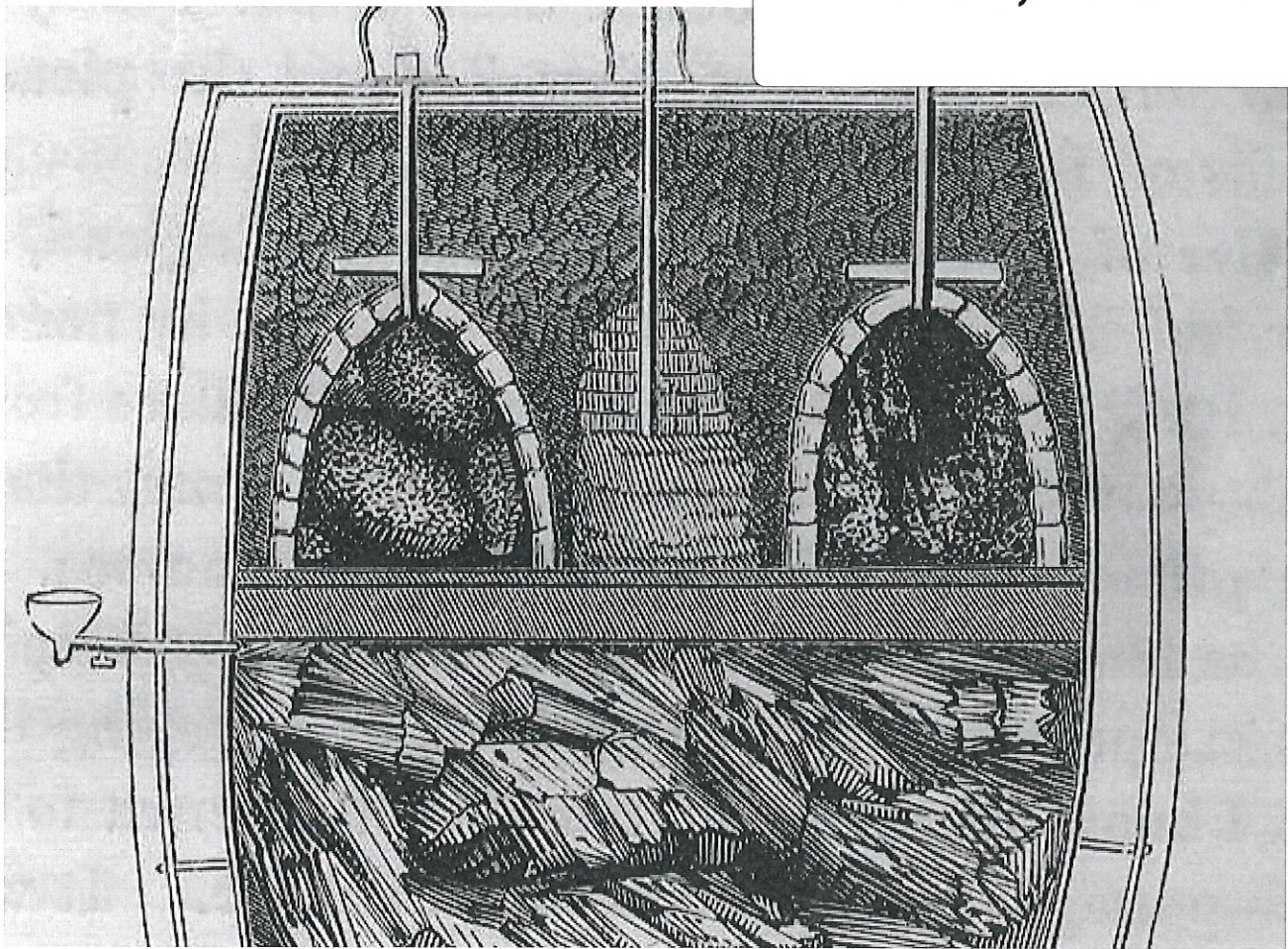


Honey bees brought to New Zealand

19 March 1839

1839
p.56

MCH, 2019e



Mary Bumby, the sister of a Methodist missionary, was probably the person who introduced honey bees to New Zealand. She brought two hives ashore when she landed at the Mangungu Mission Station at Hokianga in March 1839.

While New Zealand had two native species of bees, neither was suitable for producing honey. Reverend Richard Taylor, Eliza Hobson, James Busby and William Cotton were all early hive owners. In 1848 Cotton wrote a manual for New Zealand beekeepers, describing the basics of bee husbandry and production of honey.

The New Zealand bush proved a hospitable place for bees, and the number of wild colonies multiplied rapidly, especially in the Bay of Islands. Isaac Hopkins, regarded as the father of beekeeping in New Zealand, observed that by the 1860s bee nests in the bush were plentiful, and considerable quantities of honey were being sold by Māori – the country's first commercial beekeepers.

The commercial production of honey in New Zealand began during the late 1870s following the introduction of the Langstroth hive, the boxed-framed beehive model still used today.

External links

History of Beekeeping in New Zealand (The National Beekeepers Association of New Zealand)

Beekeeping (1966 encyclopaedia)

Beekeeping (Te Ara)

∨ How to cite this page

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