Waitakere National Park

with a

Short History of the Ranges

by E. EARLE VAILE

THE LORDLY KAURI
Monarch of New Zealand's Forests

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Waitakere
National Centennial Park

as the

Principal Memorial

Commemorating

the first

Centenary of Auckland

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DIGNIFIED

Useful to all the People all the Time

A Perpetual Source of Health and Enjoyment

ABSOLUTELY UNIQUE

Foreword

For more than fifty years an affectionate familiarity has existed between myself and the Waitakere Ranges. In my boyhood's days I and several others frequently walked to Big Muddy Creek, Piha, the Lakes and other favourite spots, usually starting from and returning to the city the same day.

The magnificence of the mountains, of the wild West Coast, of the mighty kauri, of the lordly tree fern, of the luxuriant mass of every kind of native vegetation, of the unforgettable fragrance of the forest fascinated me then and this enchantment remains with me to this day. Consequently it is a labour of love for me to do all that in me lies towards securing to my fellow-citizens the permanent possession of these wonderful ranges, choicest among the many favours which a beneficent Deity has showered upon Auckland, the well-beloved city beautiful.

As regards the historical part of this pamphlet I can guarantee accuracy. Not only have I personally interviewed all the remaining old identities, several of whom have remarkably vivid memories of the olden days, but on two occasions I have gathered them together so that they could correct one another and arrive at the real facts in all cases.

In this connection my thanks are due to many, but perhaps especially to Messrs. John Bethell and Marshall Laing.

E. EARLE VAILE.

17th January, 1939.

The Proposal

THE OBJECTIVE of myself and of those associated with me is the acquisition and dedication as a National Park of as much of the land on the Waitakere Ranges lying between the water supply reserves and the West Coast as can be bought with the funds available.

In the essential matter of finance: A sub-committee appointed by the City Council has estimated the cost at £30,000 and has recommended the Council to contribute £5,000; the Minister of Lands has promised £1,000 from the scenery preservation fund; the Centennial fund will provide £7,250, leaving £16,750 to be contributed by public subscription. Already £1,000 has been promised by folk outside the Province of Auckland: £500 has been promised by the Automobile Association for the provision of amenities within the Park and no less than 4,100 acres of land have been donated by various public-spirited citizens towards the achievement of this noble project. A list of these areas follows. These handsome gifts demonstrate the practical and substantial enthusiasm already aroused for our objective. All promises are upon the condition that the Park is officially adopted as the chief Centennial Memorial for Auckland.

The Area

"A land of hills and valleys and drinketh water of the rain of heaven".
—Deuteronomy, XI, ii.

A Bush Creek in the Waitakeres

BENEFICENT nature has placed the unrivalled attractions and advantages of the Waitakere Ranges within remarkably easy reach of our City and it remains only for the citizens to awake and secure this wonderful area for themselves and their children and their children's children for ever. It must be made an inalienable asset as a health and pleasure resort for all time.

There is a remarkable contrast between the two coasts of Auckland. The east coast is low lying, sheltered, sunny, placid, beautifully reminiscent of the loveliness of feminity. But the west coast is surging, stimulating, rugged, handsome, reminding us of the strength and vigour of masculinity. These circumstances combined with the benefit of the air of the mountain regions borne in by the westerly breezes from the limitless southern ocean and mixed with the fragrance of the forest are of especial value to the people of Auckland resident in the humid warmth of the low-lying eastern shores.

Surf Bathing on a Waitakere West Coast Beach

The beaches afford bathing of the most invigorating sort and opportunity for the contemplation and enjoyment of the never-ending pageant of the breakers; while on calm days the ocean glistens like a sea of glass and bears the colours of heaven upon its swelling bosom. Here peaks and rugged headlands rise sheer out of the sea immense, fantastic, beautiful. Here may be seen such wonders as the great blow-hole and the setting of the sun more than once in the same day! This latter may be thought impossible: but, having

seen the setting from the beach, the enterprising sun-worshipper may rapidly mount the cliffs, drag the orb of day from out the ocean, and see it set again—and so on.

A Bush Road through the Primeval Forest on the Waitakere Ranges

But perhaps the main attraction of this wonderland is the opportunity of studying and enjoying our unique New Zealand flora at its best. Botanists say that there is a greater variety of native vegetation in this area than anywhere else. Here the sub-tropical forms of our northern forests meet and mingle with those of the colder southern regions. The forest floor is carpeted with the evergreen mosses and multitudinous graceful ferns which extend also far up the trees whose trunks and branches are further richly

festooned with epiphytes and parasites and lianes while the glades are filled with noble tree ferns and specimens of our one native palm (the Nikau) and our numerous cordylines, and always the myriad variety of beautiful leaf forms everywhere delights the eye and lends an appearance of tropical luxuriance.

Much of the majestic bush which once clothed all the ranges has been destroyed by fire and by timber getters, and one of our main objectives is to put a stop to this wanton destruction. However, nature is even now busily healing the wounds; and, with the former destructive processes abolished, all the country will resume its handsome forest mantle. Already second growth kauris and other forest giants are assuming quite impressive dimensions: and, in the time to come, they will attain as great magnificence as in any period of the past.

In former times bird life abounded in the ranges. Pigeons and kakas were very numerous and rare birds such as the kokako were to be found. The kiwi, main feature on our national escutcheon, was common. With such protection as law and custom provide, our friends the birds are re-establishing themselves, and when proper rangers are appointed in the Park, and suitable berry-bearing trees planted to supply food, it is hoped that the far-famed rapturous morning chorus of the native birds may once more be heard close to our city of Auckland.

Waitakere constitutes a wonderful tourist attraction with its lakes and streams and waterfalls, its forests and its bold coastline—a very paradise not made by hands but given by the Gods and abounding with the primeval joys of nature.

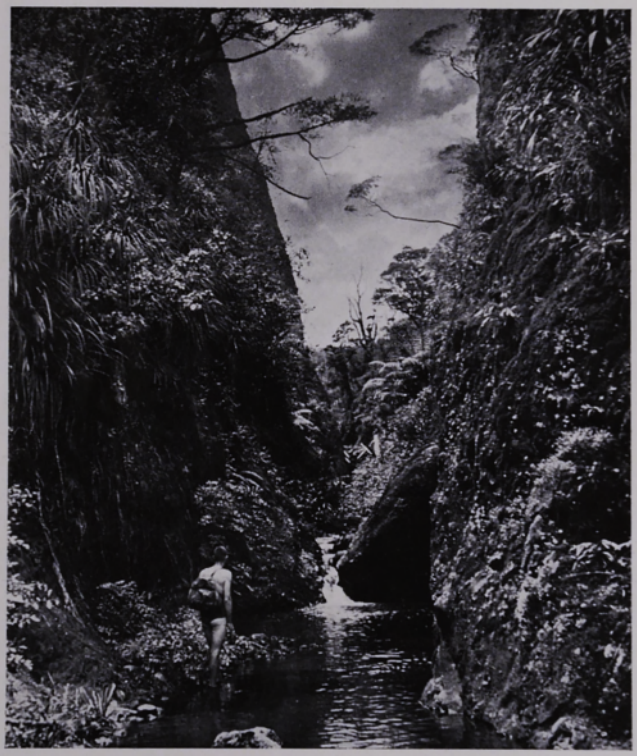
A very important factor is that in acquiring this park the public will gain a steadily-improving asset, while nothing is lost. Farming in these Ranges has never proved succesful: nor have minerals ever been discovered in payable quantities. Traces of gold have been found but nothing of value—so that production of wealth is not in any way prejudiced by the application of this land to its natural use—that of a great national playground approachable, usable and enjoyable by all citizens, rich and poor alike. It is situated within walking distance of the city, is handy to several railway stations, and is within half an hour's run

by motor-car. We envisage great opportunities for walking parties of young folk once rest houses and other conveniences are provided—as is done in other countries.

Moreover, we are confident that its attractions will be such as to bring large numbers of tourists to our shores.

If those in authority are given wisdom to adopt Waitakere Park as Auckland's Memorial they will thereby acquire an asset that cannot be duplicated or in any way rivalled, being Auckland's peculiar property.

Processions, games, feasts, festivities, speeches, though doubtless necessary, will quickly attain eternal oblivion; statues and stately columns would remind us of facts, achievements and triumphs of the past: Waitakere Park is for the living present and the everlasting future—a unique and a perpetual inheritance for the people of Auckland.



Piha Gorge

A Brief Summary

SHOWING the truly remarkable manner in which Waitakere Park fills all possible requirements for a worthy Auckland Memorial.

It is

1. Dignified.

2. Permanent.

3. Useful to all the people all the time.

4. An unrivalled tourist attraction and a means for the health and enjoyment of our own citizens.

5. A Preserve for our unique vegetation and bird life which is now being destroyed.

6. Of moderate cost — easily within Auckland's capacity and capable of being handed on unencumbered by any debt.

7. Adjustable to finance available. If funds should prove insufficient less land could be bought; if more than sufficient development works could be undertaken such as the continuation of the scenic drive down the West Coast and along the northern shore of the Manukau.

8. Last, but not least, it is absolutely unique, not being made by hands but the gift of the Gods—a very paradise.

Give it Your Support

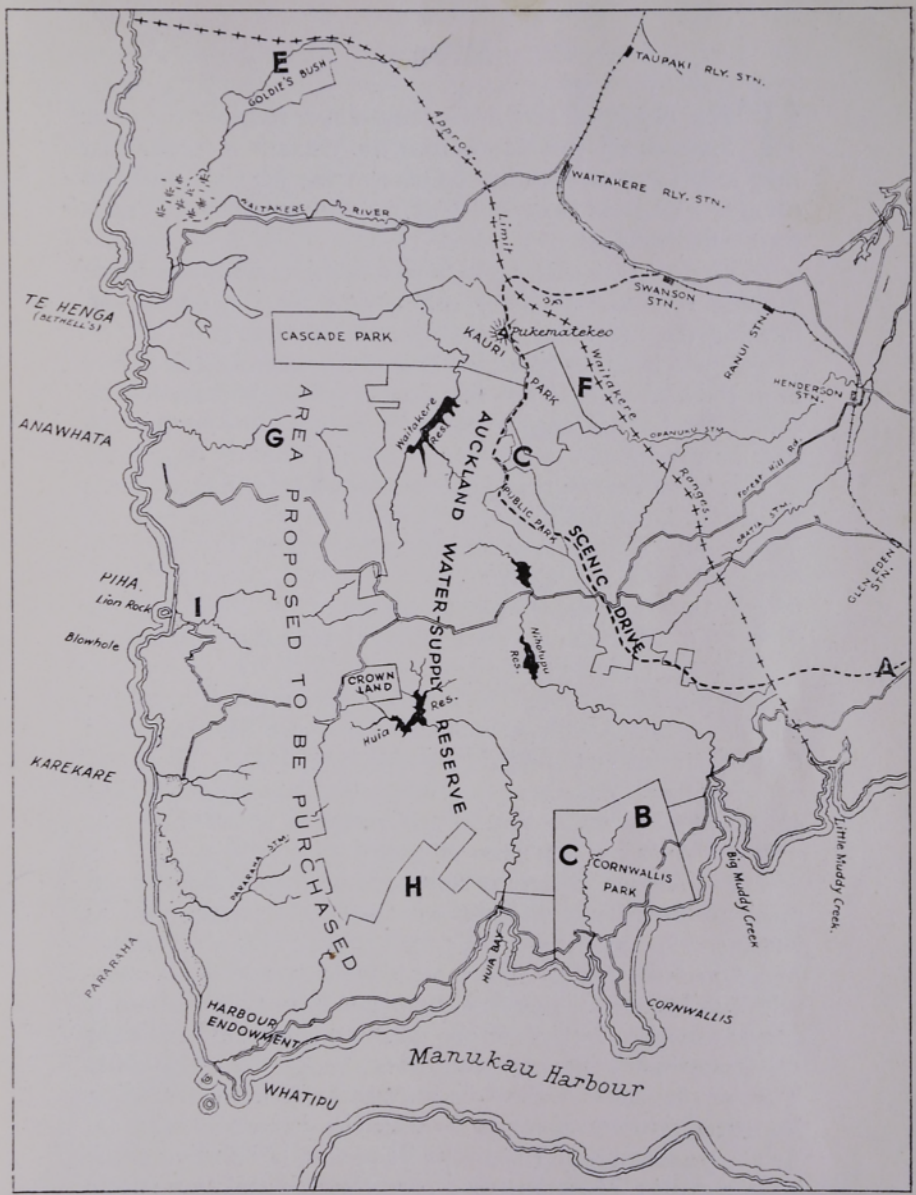
LIST OF LANDS DONATED TO AUCKLAND CITY COUNCIL FOR THE PURPOSES OF A PARK

Reference in Map	Names of Donors	Dates	AREAS A.	R.	P.
A	Atkinson, H.	1902-1925 4 gifts in all	49	1	22
B	McLachlan Est., late J. M.	23rd Oct., 1909	1,865	3	1
	Spragg, Wesley	1919-1928 3 gifts in all	812	3	17
C	Cochran, Alex.	1/12/25	—	—	38
E	Goldie, David	2/8/26	475	—	—
F	Vaile, Saml. & Sons	7/10/26	44	3	30
G	Alexander, John	14/11/33	48	—	—
H	*Vaile, E. Earle	November, 1937	700	—	—
I	Thomas, Sir Algernon	December, 1937	104	—	—
			4,100	—	28

And a further area of 175 acres with a good house and some splendid kauri trees is offered by Mr. William Goodfellow as a free gift upon conditions which will be satisfied if Waitakere Park is chosen as Auckland's principal Centennial Memorial.

* Presented subject to the express condition (and so accepted by the Mayor) that the Auckland City Council "Shall take an active interest in promoting the acquisition and preservation of the Waitakere Ranges as a National Park for the use of the People of New Zealand for all time".

Besides the areas above set out there is a fine piece of bush comprising about 10 acres presented to and vested in the Crown by the late Mr. W. F. Judson: and there are extensive reserves in the Ranges—park lands (such as Kauri Park and Cascade Park), endowments, Crown lands, etc.



Map showing area proposed to be purchased and location of present gifts and reserves.

It is not intended to dispossess those in beneficial occupation of their holdings.

Rivals

THE object of this little pamphlet is to place the main features of the case before the citizens in order that they may form an accurate opinion in the matter—and also come to a decision as to which of the schemes they will allot their subscriptions!

We feel that such opinion and decision cannot be made without reference to other competitors for the honour of forming the memorial of Auckland's Centenary.

It had been supposed that schemes for consideration had been reduced to four but the Centennial authorities having called for further suggestions it is impossible to tell what may be produced.

It is, of course, practicable to discuss only those schemes which are known. They are

A. Waitakere Park.
B. An Art Centre.
C. A Park in Hobson Bay.
D. A Chair of Old Colonial History at Auckland University College.

With all of these we have sympathy but it has been laid down that Auckland must have only one Memorial and that of an adequate and dignified nature.

We therefore venture a few observations which we have endeavoured to make quite dispassionate as follows:

A. Has already been discussed.

B. An art centre to comprise a conservatorium of music: a community theatre and an art gallery, as well as housing the collections of the present Old Colonists' Museum—all worthy objects with which we have no quarrel. Two essential particulars have not been disclosed—cost and location. As to cost: if the building is to be of sufficient dignity to justify its object this cannot be less than £250,000. That was the cost of the Museum, and expense of building has advanced very substantially since the date of its erection. At the present time £250,000 will provide a building much inferior to the Museum. At a recent meeting of supporters the question of plans and costs were avoided and no possible site was indicated, except that it was repeatedly stressed that

the building must be in the centre of the city. Such a site must be extensive and its cost a heavy addition to that of the building. Further, if such a building were provided there would be nothing distinctive about it. Another might be erected anywhere and at any time and perhaps outshine it. In Auckland it would tend to duplicate existing facilities—the Chair of Music at the Auckland University College, the Museum, the Elam School of Art, the Auckland Society of Arts, etc. The chief objection, however, is that its appeal and its use will be for the few—musicians, artists, etc. The finance necessary cannot be achieved without borrowing; and it would appear unhandsome to pass on to future generations payment for that which should be our gift. This feature also—and quite properly so—places it outside the benefit of the Government Centennial funds.

C. The reclamation and laying out of Hobson Bay at an estimated cost of £467,000. This huge sum places the acceptance of this scheme completely outside practical politics. Moreover, Auckland is already well supplied with such parks. Planted with exotic trees it will possess no great distinction. Another vital consideration is that this level land (so rare in our city) may be required for other purposes.

D. A Chair of Old Colonial History at the University. If needed, this should be provided from the Education grant. The main objections to it as a Centennial Memorial are, however:

(1) Being without physical existence it could not be pointed out with pride as Auckland's Memorial.

(2) The scope for its studies would be too small and its use would be confined to an infinitesimal section of the community. The cost is not stated but it cannot be low.

Our Centennial is now very close at hand and the time has arrived when a definite decision about our memorial must be made, finance arranged, and steps taken to have everything in readiness at the appropriate time.

It would appear that the final word in this matter rests with the Centennial Committee. However, the memorial is for the community and the citizens will have to pay for it.

Let Your Voices be Heard

A Short History of the Ranges

IN the earliest times of which we have any dependable record the great Ngatiwhatua tribe was in possession of the Waitakere Ranges and surrounding country. These folk claim to have formerly held land at Muriwhenua in the far north, and gradually conquered and absorbed all tribes until they reached the shores of Waitemata and Tamaki. These conquests were greatly facilitated by the possession of a legendary warrior named Kawharu, who stood 24 feet in height and measured six feet in girth—so that, after all, he was elegantly slender! This formidable gentleman drove all before him and sacked pas at the rate of two a day. He was finally captured most treacherously while on a visit to his sister, and cruelly murdered. Finally a valiant *taua* of Ngatiwhatua defeated the resident Kawerau and confirmed their own title to Waitakere. In this war the Ngatiwhatua inflicted a crushing defeat on the great chief Kiwi Tomaki, of the Waiohua branch of Ngaiwi, at the spot between Little and Big Muddy Creeks now known as Laingholm.

But it was not very long before the dread Ngapuhi with their firearms descended on the defenceless Ngatiwhatua and, about the year 1823, overwhelmed them at the fatal fight of Te-Ika-a-Ranga-nui. Consequently, at the time of European occupation the Waitakere country lay desolate and uninhabited except by small and miserable parties of Ngatiwhatua wandering about and dwelling in caves, afraid even to light a fire lest the smoke should reveal their whereabouts to the bloodthirsty Ngapuhi. These last, however, did not settle in the district, but contented themselves with raiding and persecuting the residents.

The Maori names for Waitakere Ranges were Titirangi and Hikurangi. The former is still in use but the latter seems now forgotten. The name Waitakere is derived from and old Maori chief who was murdered on an islet off the mouth of the Waitakere River. His body was removed for culinary purposes but his head was left on the islet just to encourage his relatives. From this circumstance the chief's name became attached to the islet and gradually spread over the surrounding land.

The history of our predecessors in title to New Zealand is always of interest: but, after all, the main object of this little treatise is to place on record both for the present and for the future the names and achievements and mode of life of the earliest settlers in this Waitakere region. Such are worthy of our remembrance and respect and the present occasion seems an excellent opportunity of effecting this purpose.

In the earliest European times the road from Auckland commenced at Surrey Hills (now called Grey Lynn), crossed the Newton gully, followed roughly the course of the present New North Road and then headed the Whau Creek *via* Blockhouse Bay.

This blockhouse (and a similar one at Freeman's Bay, Auckland City) was erected about 1862, to check possible advance of Maori war parties on the infant Auckland and to overlook Manukau and Waitemata Harbours for the purpose of reporting any movements of Maori canoes. These blockhouses were manned by local volunteers but were never attacked. They were built of stout timber, and loopholed. The timber from the old Whau blockhouse was subsequently used in the construction of the road bridges.

Later, there were three main lines of approach to the Ranges—the Titirangi Road *via* New Lynn, the West Coast road *via* Waikomiti, and the Valley road *via* Henderson, and after the building of the railway one's journey could be started from these stations and so shortened. The traveller had his choice by horse or on foot. The latter was the more usual. It is wonderful where a man can get to by alternately putting one foot in front of the other. By this time-honoured means he goes a long way in a long time.

To illustrate the difficulties of those days I may mention the case of the wife of a Titirangi settler who had gone in to New Lynn for her confinement. Mother rode back to her home on horseback while father, on foot, carried the baby.

Goods transport in summer was by bullock teams. In winter the so-called roads were impassable.

Let us now follow this Titirangi Road. Prior to 1890 the country between the railway and the ranges was almost completely unoccupied. At the top of the hills before enter-

ing the bush the traveller found a hotel kept by Messrs. Rigby and Carroll (the same Carroll who had been schoolmaster). Mt. Atkinson was then known as Henry's Hill and was always something of a show-place.

Near by was a famous well owned by a Mr. McIsaacs.

Not far inside the bush one came to the farm of the Bishops. These well-known settlers, to this day remaining in possession of their country, had made their home at Kororareka but had been driven away when Heke sacked the place. Their holding at Titirangi comprised 350 acres and was known as "Dunvegan". On the road they had a rather conspicuous gate which made quite a landmark and was called Bishopsgate—just to remind one of the little street in London. And there were people near by named Gobbert who sold out to the Armstrongs. Another resident was Mr. William Pugh, the first chairman of the first local body—a Road Board whose district boundaries extended from the Whau to Big Muddy Creek. Other old residents who should not be forgotten were Mr. McPike and Mr. Ralph (one of the well-known Huntly family), and not far off was the homestead of Mr. Hibernia Smyth — a real tough "Old Colonial Hand". The original Hibernia Smyth had left Liverpool with his wife and son (the Hibernia of our time) in 1837. Their destination was Adelaide. Thence they journeyed to Mangonui, and in 1841 took up their residence in Waitakere Ranges. Our Hibernia used to bring his loads of posts, shingles, firewood, etc., right into Karangahape Road with bullock teams. Near Mt. Atkinson Miss Kitty Douane was born in 1850—the first white baby in the district, and No. 739 on the Auckland register. She is now Mrs. J. S. Johnstone and is 88 years of age. Mr. Johnstone is 96.

The first school in the district was privately conducted by Miss Green at 1/- per week per pupil. Next came Mr. Patterson and, later, Mr. Ben Carroll, who was the first officially-appointed teacher. The school was built of pit-sawn timber about 1869 and continuously served its purpose until destroyed by fire on 2nd January, 1930. There were a good many Maoris living at Paturoa Bay, now called Titirangi Beach, and their children attended the school.

The times were not without their excitements. Two girls were in the bush one day when they perceived a man

approaching them. They fled to home and mother and the man after them. Arrived at the Bishop homestead the man explained that he was lost and the only means he saw of finding his way out of the bush was to follow the girls. During the Maori war there were the usual scares. In 1891 an earthquake was of sufficient intensity to damage a couple of chimneys.

At first, proximity to Auckland gave this area a considerable advantage. Access was certainly very poor but transport to more distant districts simply did not exist. Besides the bush industries a fair amount of farming was carried on. As many as twelve men would be employed at one time scything the crops and the hay on Mr. Bishop's farm. He also had good grass paddocks, and crops of turnips and pumpkins besides a good garden and orchard. Mr. Pugh's farm also was a credit to the district.

At that time Titirangi supported a more numerous and more active population than at present, but in 1867 there was an exodus to the Thames gold fields.

The first settler in the valley of the little Muddy Creek was named Brimner. He and his family arrived in the *Jane Gifford* in 1842. They bred good sheep and owned the first horse and cart in the district. Mr. Brimner's grand-daughter, Miss Head, married Mr. Yorke, who was there in comparatively recent times. Mr. de Brabandiere also bought a portion of this farm. Other residents here were Messrs. Dobson and Matheson.

Rising the hills again, one came in the olden days to the homes of Dr. Woods and Mr. James Casey.

Between the Little Muddy and Big Muddy Creeks on the shores of the Manukau Harbour lay the holding of one of the best known of the original settlers, Mr. George Laing. It was then called "Roseneath", but afterwards renamed "Laingholm". At the time of European occupation there were many kits of bones hanging up in the trees maturing for final burial, in accordance with Maori custom.

In the valley of the Big Muddy Creek the first settler was Mr. J. J. Jones, father of Mr. W. S. Jones who, many years ago, was the competitor of the Wisemans in the saddlery trade in Queen Street. About fifty years ago he sold out to Mr. Mackie. On the eastern bank of the creek further

down lay the section belonging to Mrs. Symonds (after whose folk Symonds Street was named), whereon was a deposit of stone which she considered of great value. Across the creek from Mr. Jones' property was the farm owned by Messrs. Marshall and Duff Laing, sons of the Mr. George Laing already mentioned. Mr. Marshall Laing was a member of the Waitemata County Council for 21 years and chairman for three years. Nearer the mouth of the creek was the holding of the Rev. Dr. Purchas, but he did not stay there long. On the very first day disaster overtook him. In the evening the eldest boy could not be found, but dawn revealed his remains. The child had wandered out on the mud, got bogged, and the incoming tide had drowned him. Another settler was named Smithers. Here existed in very early days a public-house for the refreshment of the bush and mill workers. It was owned and conducted by Mr. Leithart. Messrs. Lowrie and Stokes and Caven were also settled here for a while.

Subsequently Big Muddy Creek was named Brooklyn after the celebrated suburb of New York. There is a bridge at each of these places!

Next the road led past the Puponga whereon was the site of the city of Cornwallis, projected as a rival to Auckland. The emigrants arrived by the ship *Brilliant*, on 28th November, 1841, but ere long abandoned the country, which was ultimately bought by the late Mr. John McLachlan (who was born aboard the *Brilliant* on the voyage), and by him bequeathed to the City of Auckland as a park. Adjacent is another park given by the late Mr. Wesley Spragg in memory of his son, killed in the Great War. For a while Mr. Matthew Roe had a sawmill at the Kakamatua Creek. Subsequently this mill was removed to Onehunga.

At "Mill Bay" Mr. George Baker split palings and shingles.

Proceeding, we arrive at Huia Bay in which locality the names of Kilgour, Higham, Bryan and Angell come to mind. Here were resident several escapees from the wreck (in February, 1863) of H.M.S. *Orpheus*—men who preferred working in the bush to reporting for further service in the Royal Navy. Many dead bodies were also washed ashore. One supposed to be that of the Commodore was

buried with full ceremonial and honours in Symonds Street cemetery. Subsequently, however, the real remains of that officer were found and buried above high water mark at Waitakere Beach.

It is interesting to note that the disaster to the *Orpheus* was ascribed by the Maoris to the cutting down by a sacrilegious *Pakeha* of the sacred tree, Purakau, which grew on Puketutu Island, inside Manukau Harbour. This was one of those peculiarly sacred phallic trees to which Maori women desirous of child-bearing resorted. Certain it is that the wreck occurred within a few hours after the felling of the tree: and the Maoris followed most respectable and ancient precedent in deciding (in their own language, of course) *post hoc ergo propter hoc.*

Mr. Ebenezer Gibbons had the first sawmill here and some folk claim that it was the first sawmill in New Zealand. The machinery was brought by Mr. Gibbons from Newfoundland, and it was driven by water power from the Huia River.

Other settlers here were the Barr and Fletcher families and we must not forget "Old Uncle Strawbuck" (whose real name was Adolphus Steinman) at Little Huia, a German and a great "character". Near here lies the 700 acres which I recently bought from Messrs. Barr and presented to the City Council as a portion of the Great Park.

In its primeval state Huia Bay presented a scene of remarkable beauty, with the high hills at the back (from which Mt. Egmont can be seen on a fine day, looking like an island rising out of the ocean), and the giant forest trees, kauris, puriris, ratas, etc., etc., extending right down to the water's edge. Later on, with two mills working to capacity, the Bay was busy and gay with barques, schooners, ketches, etc., taking the timber to Sydney, Melbourne, and other ports.

Access was by no means perfect. For many years the only communication with the outside world was by water. Next a track was cut enabling the running of a mail once a week (which was inaugurated towards the end of 1886) and then, with the aid of a Government subsidy a road was made, and wheeled vehicles could enter the area in summer. This work was carried out by Mr. Pugh. Mr. Higham

was the first postmaster, and Mr. Armstrong the first mail carrier.

In 1892 a school was built out of local heart of kauri to accommodate 60 pupils. This building is still in use.

Amusements in those days were not many. The hotel bar and wild pig and cattle hunts for the men: Sunday School and Band of Hope meetings for the young, with an occasional dance. The Maoris used to assemble every summer for catching and drying sharks which lent a full flavour to the air, overpowering the local ozone compounded from Stockholm tar and decaying seaweed. On one occasion a dead whale 85 feet long was towed ashore. This is the same size as the famous Okareta whale in the Christchurch Museum—the largest animal ever known in the history of the earth, ancient or modern.

Another monster of the deep taken in this bay was a shark 14ft. 6in. in length. It was captured with considerable courage and skill by Capt. Schnauer, of the cutter *Florence*, and his mate, and dragged ashore.

Among the Maoris John Kaue was a good friend to all. He had fought against the Pakeha, but afterwards became very friendly.

On beyond at Whatipu, Mr. Robert Gibbons started another sawmill, and sold out to Mr. J. W. Waller, subsequently the first chairman of the Waitemata County Council, which was constituted in 1876. Mr. Waller sold to Messrs. Guthrie and Larnach, who extended their operations as far as Karekare.

Dangers were not wanting in those early days. On 10th July, 1873, the Rev. David Hamilton, in making his way to conduct services in this wild area missed the track in the dark and fell over a steep bank into a deep hole in Destruction Gully. Ten days later his body was found and carried all the way to Karekare and thence taken by sledge to Avondale where he was buried.

A somewhat similar accident had befallen a young man named Dobson. At that time, in order to avoid the cost of bridges, stepping stones were laid down. Over such a track which crossed the Huia, young Dobson was carrying "a hundred of flour" strapped on to his back *pikau* fashion. He slipped and fell face downward into the mud, the weight

of his load preventing his rising. Thus he was suffocated.

At the very end of the road—if the track could be dignified by that name—rose Paratutae, the great Manukau North Head bluff, which was the site of the first flagstaff. After the Maoris had twice cut it down it was removed to the South Head. At Paratutae was a jetty, and a tramway ran up the length of the sand strip along the West Coast for the getting out of timber. This tramway suffered much from the elements but a party of Swedes made a fair job of putting it in order. Subsequently Dr. Rayner and the Railway Department put in a good tramway for getting out the timber.

Captain William Foote, who had married a Miss Gibbons, started a flax-mill at Pararaha. He used to haul out his dressed fibre with a bull called "Sanko". Later he changed over to timber-milling.

These hardy pioneers along the northern shores of the Manukau and, indeed, throughout the Ranges, wrung a somewhat scanty living from a rather reluctant soil per medium of timber and kauri gum. The earliest trade was in kauri timber pit-sawn into planks and split into palings and shingles, also in posts, rails and firewood cut out of puriri, rata and manuka. It may be necessary nowadays to explain the meaning of these almost forgotten terms.

Pit sawing was carried out as follows:—A hole of convenient depth was dug in the ground and the log to be cut up placed over it. A long saw called a drag was worked by two men. One stood on top and guided the saw and took the weight of it: the other worked in the pit and received the full benefit of the sawdust. It is surprising that timber so cut was much cheaper than milled timber is to-day. Shingles then constituted the universal roofing material: and, as nearly all drinking water in those days was collected by the roofs of houses, it may be remarked that new kauri shingles gave the water a peculiarly obnoxious flavour. Another drawback was their encouragement to the spread of fires. Curled up by the sun in hot dry weather they afforded ready lodgment to any flying sparks, and provided tinder for the incipient flames. When roofing iron was first introduced, insurance companies granted a specially-reduced premium to buildings so covered. The shingles measured about 18 x 7

This Shows the Method of Cutting up the Huge Logs and Gives Some Idea of the Great Labour Involved

inches, and were split by hand with incredible rapidity by expert men with a special kind of chopper. This process looked as easy as peeling potatoes but amateurs did well to tally their fingers from time to time to make sure they still had a full muster. The shingles were affixed to roofs with a special shingling hammer. Palings measured 5 to 6 feet long and 7 to 8 inches wide. Nearly all town fences were then constructed of posts about ten feet apart with two rails and palings. Superior palings known as "Hobart" palings were imported from Australia.

The rising generation seems hardly to realise the conditions obtaining in a country untouched by the hand of civilized man, and overlook the fact that no beneficient deity had placed saw-mills in New Zealand. This pit-sawing was

a temporary expedient of the earliest settlers to provide comfortable dwellings out of nature's gift of noble trees.

This Shows Seven Yolk of Bullocks Hauling a Heavy Log out of the Bush. Distance from the Camera Reduces the Apparent Size of the Log

Later on the kauri logs were skidded down the steep slopes into the creeks and thence water driven or bullock hauled to the salt water where they were made into rafts and towed to Rowe & Shalder's mill at Onehunga. This mill ceased operations about the year 1864 and after that the timber was milled on the spot.

The Latest Method of Transport

The hauling of heavy logs made an indescribable mess of the roads. Everywhere they were badly cut up, but in the dips the effect was truly awful. Before the log descending the slope could take the opposite rise it had scooped a great quantity of earth out of the bottom. Subsequent logs dug deeper and deeper and so on, until the condition described in the following well-known anecdote (attributed to Mr. Wasley) was arrived at.

A bullocky personally conducting his log and urging his team with the usual energetic eloquence of those strong days saw a good hat in a hollow. Halting his team, he picked up the hat and was astonished to find a man underneath. Having rescued this unfortunate he enquired how he had avoided complete engulfment, when the saved one remarked that he had been standing on his horse. Would his rescuer kindly haul the horse out that he might retrieve his new saddle? This tradition of the olden time is known to many but I venture to recount it here in order that all may realise the condition of the roads in now forgotten times.

Here I may remark that practically the whole of New Zealand has been at the very beginning developed with bullock traction. It is true that bullocks are slow but they are very steady, and for "a long pull and a strong pull and a pull all together" they cannot be beaten. Moreover, for cheapness of feeding—especially in the wilderness, they stand unrivalled. Only kauri timber was sawn—all other timber (except that used for posts, rails and firewood) was wasted.

Starting again from Waikomiti (afterwards spelled Waikumete and now called Glen Eden) it may be of interest to know that about 1895 the land fronting the main road immediately opposite the railway station gates was sold in sections at £5 per acre, and the back sections at £2/10/- per acre. Terms, nothing down and ten years in which to pay.

Fronting the Great North Road just before coming to what is now the cemetery stood the Waikomiti Hotel, kept by James Johnson: and further opportunity for refreshment was afforded at Howard's Hotel—a primitive structure built of slabs and thatched with "cutty grass", situated near the old church at Oratia.

Hill's flax-mill stood on the land now used as Glen Eden bowling green. Other old institutions were Parr's and also Sharpe's nurseries.

Following the main West Coast road the traveller passed Andrew Kelly's and then John Hueston's (now Capt. Theet's). The next settler was Robert English, who joined Von Tempsky's Forest Rangers against Titikowaru and was killed and eaten. Then came Evans, "Darkie" Sanders, schoolmaster Brabazon and Mr. Moffat Byles. At the top of Potter's Hill there stood an ancient rata tree with the roadway passing right through it.

Now we arrived at the Nihotupu stream and by following it up for about half a mile we came to the home of Mr. William Wasley. Here, the traveller was always welcomed, but the fact that payment must be made for board was never disguised. And here stayed for long Andreas Reischek, the noted Austrian naturalist, busily engaged collecting skins of the then numerous native birds for exhibition in Vienna. Mr. Wasley and Mr. Hueston owned between them, a wonderful kauri bush which was estimated to contain 15,000,000 feet. This bush was distinguished by the unusual dimen-

KAURI GROVE
The New Zealand Druids' Cathedral, "Casting a Dim Religious Light"

sions of the trees. Some yielded as much as 40,000 feet to the tree. A section 13ft. 6in. in diameter was sawn out of one tree and sent up to Auckland, but the recipients had no more sense than to cut it up into butchers' blocks and sell it. I well remember this magnificent bush with its great columnar trunks, standing close together and rising the greater part of 100 feet without a branch, thence spreading out like the handsome fan tracery of some colossal cathedral.

A striking commentary on the value then put on timber was the fact that Mr. Wasley had a practice of setting fire to the exuded gum with the object of killing the tree. This timber was cut out by Mr. Frank Mander (sometime M.P. for Marsden) with conspicuous courage, and reasonable profit would have resulted but for the damage caused by two disastrous fires. The kauri alone was handled. The sawn timber was loaded into trucks and taken over a most precarious and exciting tramway into the Henderson Valley: then hauled by tractor to tide water and there loaded on to vessels and delivered in Auckland. The old bush tramway has now been improved and made into a road.

What a wonderful park we should have had, and what loss would have been avoided, had a policy of masterly inactivity been pursued towards this magnificent bush.

Rejoining the West Coast road one passed the wreck of a house ancient fifty years ago, and so on to Piha then owned by Dr. Stockwell. Mr. Ussher adjoined the Piha Estate on the south and Mr. McElwain on the north.

The first, and probably the only boat (except the new Piha surf boat), launched between Manukau and Kaipara was taken out through the breakers by two venturesome youths, Nicholas Gibbons and Henry Roe. They came back safely with a good haul of fish, but no one seemed anxious to emulate their exploit and the boat was put on Bethell's lake.

Later an attempt was made to export timber through the breakers by means of a steam tow-boat but this also ended in failure.

Going from Piha to Karekare there was a settler named Lovett on the hill and at Karekare were Messrs. John and Cyrus Shaw. They had bought from Mr. Seaman, who had done a little work on the land. This Mr. Seaman was sub-

sequently collector of the poll tax at that time imposed for the support of the schools. The Messrs. Shaw sold out to Messrs. Guthrie and Larnach, who had a manager named Murdoch. Ultimately this property became Farley's. Many descendants of the Shaws are still resident around Waikomiti.

Making a fresh start from Henderson it may reward us for a moment to recall the comparative importance of this place.

Here used to stand a large mill belonging to the Hon. Thomas Henderson, of the well-known firm of Henderson and Macfarlane. It was located at the head of navigation, about 10 chains down-stream from the road. Communication with Auckland was then by water. Supplies of timber were drawn from as far away as the top of the Ranges. The mill had dams on three streams, and these were tripped simultaneously to flush the logs out. One of these streams is still called Canty's after an old resident. As there were then only tracks and no bridges, stores were packed to the camps on a donkey. Mr. Henderson owned between 26,000 and 27,000 acres. The mill was built in 1849, and was capable of cutting 10,000 feet a day.

Mr. Henderson's bush manager was John McLeod, who afterwards started a mill of his own on the Kaipara Harbour and called the place Helensville after his wife Helen.

The Hon. William Swanson, in his younger days, was also engaged in the timber industry in the area now bearing his name.

The Henderson Town Hall was built as late as about 1898 with first-class heart kauri delivered on the spot at 9/- per 100ft. super by Messrs. Mander and Bradley. The price of similar timber to-day is 75/- at the mill.

The first storekeeper at Henderson was John McLeod, followed by Poppleton and Stebbing, and Mrs. Hepburn (after whose family Hepburn Street in Auckland was named) had a small store on the Auckland road. Later—say 50 years ago—the La Trobe family were supreme in this region. Mr. La Trobe was the storekeeper and universal creditor while Mrs. La Trobe was the school-teacher and universal instructress.

A little further out than this the notorious "Don Buck's Camp" was located—a curious settlement wherein dwelt the dregs of society. In those days offenders of the meaner sort were ordered by the magistrate to "leave the city within twelve hours". This really meant "go to Don Buck's camp to complete your education in evil ways". It is said that this extraordinary character, whose real name was Emmanuel Figuero, would start any person with a spade and a spear and a day's provisions. But, if the "digger" did not turn up in the evening with Don's tools and his supply of gum, let us hope that the Lord would have mercy on his soul—for Don Buck would have none on his body. He would track him down more successfully than a detective: and, when he came up with his quarry, his quality of mercy was by no means strained.

At this time Macfarlane's Estate still owned most of the land in that locality. To show what land values were in those days I may relate that this land was sub-divided and sold for 25/- per acre. The late Mr. Justice Gillies owned 1,100 acres close to the township fronting on to the Great North Road, and coming down as far as Hepburn's store. After Judge Gillies' death this land was put up to auction. The best bid was 10/- per acre. Probably 15/- would have been accepted. Eventually the land was cut up and the Great North Road sections sold at 50/- and the back lots at 25/- per acre.

The sale and subsequent enclosure of these large areas as well as of much Crown land entirely destroyed the "goodwill" of Mr. Don Buck's business. His clients had no convenient country to dig over and he had to close down.

It may not be out of place here to give a short account of the dying industry of gum-digging which played so important a part in the development of early Auckland. At its best it was conducted by settlers who were thereby enabled to bring their land into cultivation practically without cost. Had the gum been secured to the owner of the land enough wealth would have been won to make the province —even as far south as Hamilton—blossom like the rose. As things were, however, the country was over-run with predatory diggers, a motley gang of all sorts: "Duke's son, cook's son", and down-and-outs of every kind and degree.

Anyhow, these folk had to battle for a living which was highly speculative. Sometimes the rewards were rich, but oftener very poor, maintaining men only on the very edge of existence. What money was made usually found its way into the treasuries of a particularly disreputable class of hotels. A digger's outfit cost next to nothing. He erected his camp from materials collected on the spot and lined his dwelling with old sacks. The chimney was built of sods and often capped with a kerosene tin from which top and bottom had been removed. For the land upon which his camp was placed he paid no rent. Although there were no garages he had free air and free water. The country over which he roamed, and largely destroyed, was free to all. All the plant he needed was a spear, a spade, a knife and a kit. After securing any "loafers" (lumps of gum protruding from the soil) with the spear (like a fencing rapier, but longer) he probed the ground and experience taught him knowledge of the feel of gum, which he then dug up.

Gum-diggers at Work in the Early Days

Later the use of the spear diminished, and "paddocking" was followed. This meant that the whole of the ground was dug in a face which was highly beneficial to the land provided the top soil was put back on the top. This was done, however, only under efficient supervision. More often great holes like small mines were left for the land owner to fill in. Later still, swamps were drained and washing machinery employed. Sometimes short drives were put in and the land undermined. Besides that dug from the soil gum was obtained out of the forks of trees. To reach this special methods were employed. Either a fishing line with weight attached was slung over a branch and a strong rope pulled over. Up this the agile go-getter of gum climbed. Or a band was placed round the tree inside which the "digger" placed himself, leaning well back and literally walking up the tree with his sharply-spiked boots. Later a "technique" was developed of bleeding the living trees.

Proceeding once more—after this rather lengthy digression—towards our Ranges *via* the Henderson Valley Road, we found the earliest settlers were the Woodwards: then came Alexander Lamb and the Baxters (folk of Mr. Fred Baxter, so long on the literary staff of the *Star*) and Colebrooks. Another old settler, who formerly had a farm on the top of the hills, had also moved down into the valley. He had an entertaining trick of disputing with the parson during service. One Sunday the young bloods hid his saddle. After that he used to put it on a form and sit on it, displaying one side of his countenance to the parson and the other to the congregation. On the top of the range, but not in the earliest times—lived a good old Irish soul, Mrs. Gleeson. In the Waitakere valley was a house long deserted but formerly occupied by Mr. Cantwell. This was the first house on the Ranges constructed of sawn timber. This land was first cleared by a man named Foxhall. Rising the hills across the river, one came to settlers named Russell (celebrated for never burning a match—they kept the same fire alight for 21 years), and could thence bear off to the valley of the Anawhata where formerly dwelt Francis Bethell, White, and "Digger" Smith. They moved to Te Henga about 1883, since when Anawhata has lain uninhabited. The Anawhata track led on to the lakes. At one lake dwelt a

real old hard-baked frontiersman named Haughton, living in a hut furnished with a genuine old-time chimney where the great log burned all day and all night and was hauled through as it became consumed. Right inside the chimney were benches where several persons could sit or sleep or do both. Near the other lake was our friend Mr. Bethell. In former times there existed near this lake (named Kawaupaku) a great Maori burial ground.

In the Waitakere Valley, just below the falls, there were settled from time immemorial two old gentlmen named George who occupied an area extending from the banks of the river to the slopes of Pukematekao. They were an outstanding example of the attractions of an independent living and the possibility of achieving it without demeaning themselves by the acceptance of "relief". There together with their two sisters they existed year after year on the produce of about 200 sheep. Lower down were the holdings of Messrs. Sisam, Meikle, Snell, Kelly and O'Neill. Then came the flax-mill worked by Burton and Foster, who took over from a Mr. Fraser. Another flax-mill was erected by Mr. Brissington about 1870. The machinery was carried in on the heads of Kanaka labourers. This mill did not operate for long. At first the Rev. Mr. Dudley (of St. Sepulchre's) used to go in there to conduct services. In these arduous duties he was succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Haselden. The last habitations in the Waitakere Valley were those of a Maori kainga at the mouth of the river.

To close the story and to illustrate the happenings of more than fifty years ago I may, perhaps, venture to give an account of an expedition to the Ranges. I was about sixteen years of age and, with a friend somewhat older, a start was made from Auckland at 2.30 a.m. Arrived at the head of Henderson Valley about daybreak we encountered our religious disputant already mentioned, who enquired our whence. Being informed that we had just walked from Auckland he challenged our veracity in the plainest language but invited us to sample his strawberries. While engaged without restraint in this pleasurable occupation our host further entertained us with a sermon, taking as his text, "As the tree falleth so it lieth" (in which he did not quite correctly quote Ecc. XI, iii). When he seized an axe to

emphasise his argument I decided on a defence policy and kept one eye on him, and the other on a long manuka rail. As he rushed at my friend I received him forcefully with the rail in the part politely but inaccurately called the stomach. The axe fell out of his hands and we possessed it and deposited it a fair distance along the road. This poor demented old man was apprehended a few days later for threatening folk on Queen Street with a revolver. Going through the Waitakere Valley I heard the song of a strange bird in the top of a tree. With my trusty catapult I brought it down. Arrived at the Russells I tethered it to the leg of a chair. We then headed off through the Anawhata Valley to the lakes. Near the first lake stood a small dwelling. When we reached it and walked round to the front we found ourselves in the power of a robber gang sharpening knives and cleaning guns. My heart sank within me and I wondered when mother would learn my fate. However, the desperados, headed by Mr. Haughton, were only preparing for a wild cattle hunt. So we stripped off and employed a happy half hour in rolling down the hot sand into the cool lake. Returning we picked up our bird and arrived home about 10 p.m., having spent nothing and gained blisters on the soles of our feet. My poor bird died on the way in. I took it to good Mr. Cheeseman, who declared it a rarity, and requested it for the Museum, where it still stands—my first contribution to that great institution.

Not a bad day as things went then!

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Waitakere national park with a short history of the ranges

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