

**WDC District Plan Review – Built Heritage Assessment**

**Historic Overview – Te Kauwhata & District**



**HERITAGE  
CONSULTANCY  
SERVICES**

## West of the River

Although the area to the west of the Waikato River and Te Kauwhata was once within Raglan County, historically the lack of adequate roads meant that the focus of local residents was towards the river where they could travel up or downstream, or go across the river to the townships of Rangiriri, Ohinewai and Te Kauwhata.

The land form changes from flat wetlands dominated by Lakes Whangape, Rotongaro and Rotongaroiti closer to the Waikato River, to rolling and then steep hill country further west. A bridge across the Waikato River at Rangiriri gives access to the farming districts of Churchill, Opuatia, Glen Murray and Naikie on the western side. The lakes Rotongaro and Whangape and their associated wetlands, as with Waikare and the vast Whangamarino lake to the east, are known for duck shooting and trout fishing.



Figure 75: 'Sport in New Zealand, No. 3. The opening of the shooting season at Lake Waikare, Waikato, sketched by our special artist.' *Auckland Weekly News* 10 May 1901, p. 7. AWNS-19010510-7-2, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, Auckland.

As Maori land was leased or sold, European settlements on the west site of the Waikato River were established. Several large landholdings in the Glen Murray-Churchill-Opuatia area had been taken up and farmed by Europeans by 1893.<sup>1</sup> Principally, settlers were engaged in farming, but there were also several flax mills, perhaps as many as eight including Gibbs' Brothers mill and Walsh and Hogan's, along the river near Churchill. Siting the mills on the bank of the river facilitated easy freight movement. It also meant the mills suffered from repeated flooding, most notably the exceptional flood of 1907.

<sup>1</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 12 June 1893, p. 3.

## Churchill

For a few years Charles Marshall, the trader from Port Waikato, lived at Papataramu, on the bank of the Waikato River near Churchill. When Dr Johnson, the Colonial Surgeon, visited Marshall there in late December 1846, Marshall was growing wheat and rearing cattle. He established an inn, receiving a bush license in 1851.<sup>2</sup>

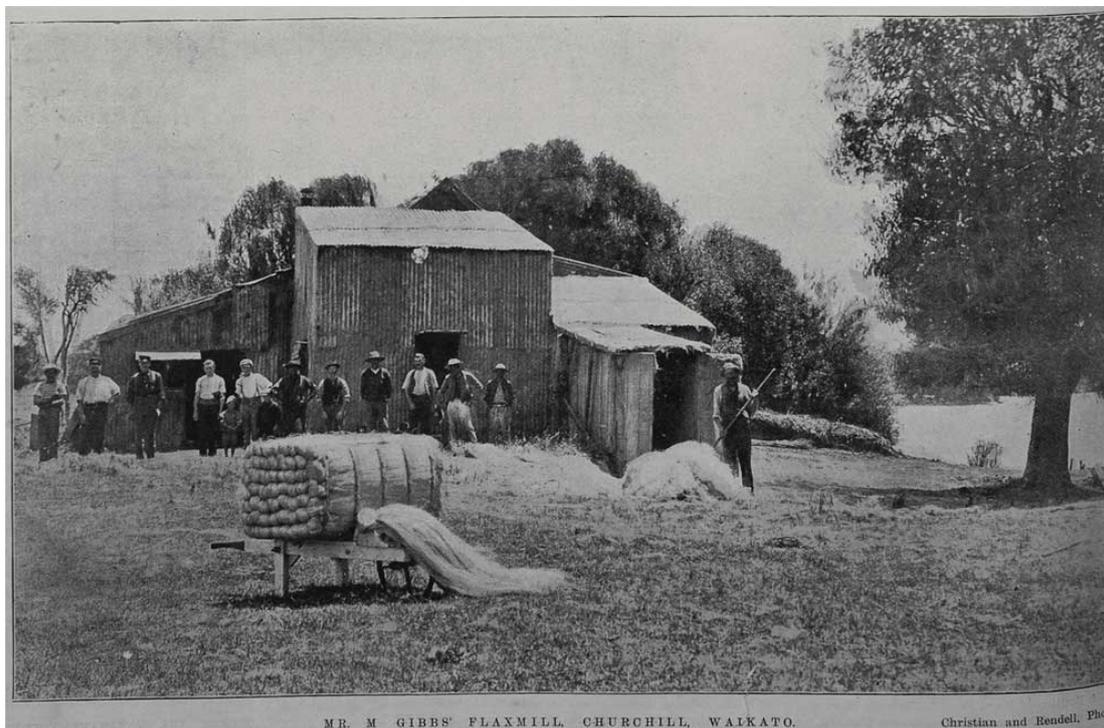


Figure 76: 'Mr M. Gibbs' flaxmill, Churchill'. *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 April 1900, p. 6. AWNS-19000413-6-3, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

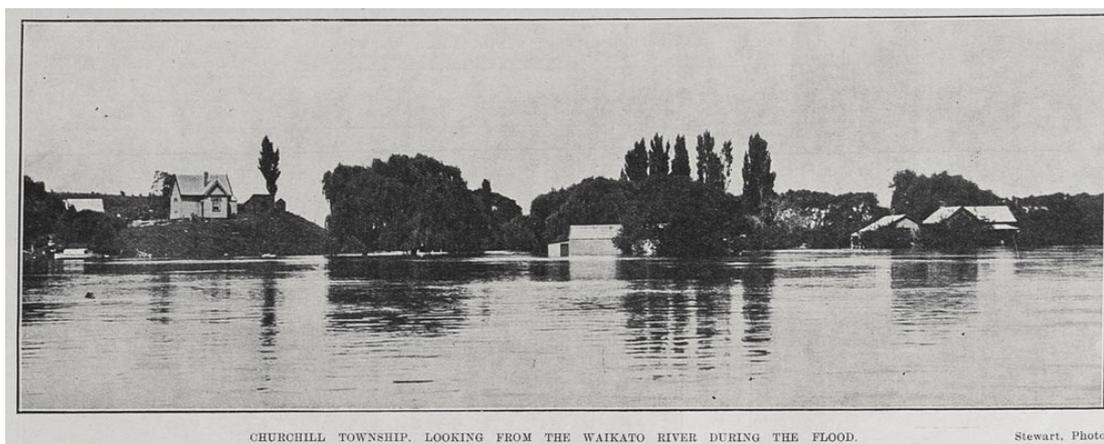


Figure 77: 'Churchill Township, looking from the Waikato River during the flood'. *Auckland Weekly News* 31 January 1907, p. 3. AWNS-19070131-3-2, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

Churchill's swampy environment and its proximity to the Waikato River made it ideal for the location of a flax mill. One was established in 1871 and employed about 50 people. At that time there was a general store, a butcher's shop, blacksmith's shop and a post office.<sup>3</sup> Two boarding houses also existed at the height of the milling period.<sup>4</sup> A school opened at Churchill in 1880, but closed in 1938.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Morris, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> Vennell and Williams, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> Kelly, p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> Kellaway, p. 56.

In 1876 the only Pakeha resident at Churchill was Charles Bell; more Pakeha had arrived to settle there by 1887.<sup>6</sup> Churchill was the beginning point for a bridle road constructed into the rugged hinterland about 1881. People crossed the river by boat and cattle were swum across, until a punt was installed in 1882.<sup>7</sup>

A photograph published in January 1907 of the flood shows that Churchill at that time had at least two large houses plus other houses and buildings. In 1917 Churchill was described as a flax-milling and farming centre.<sup>8</sup>

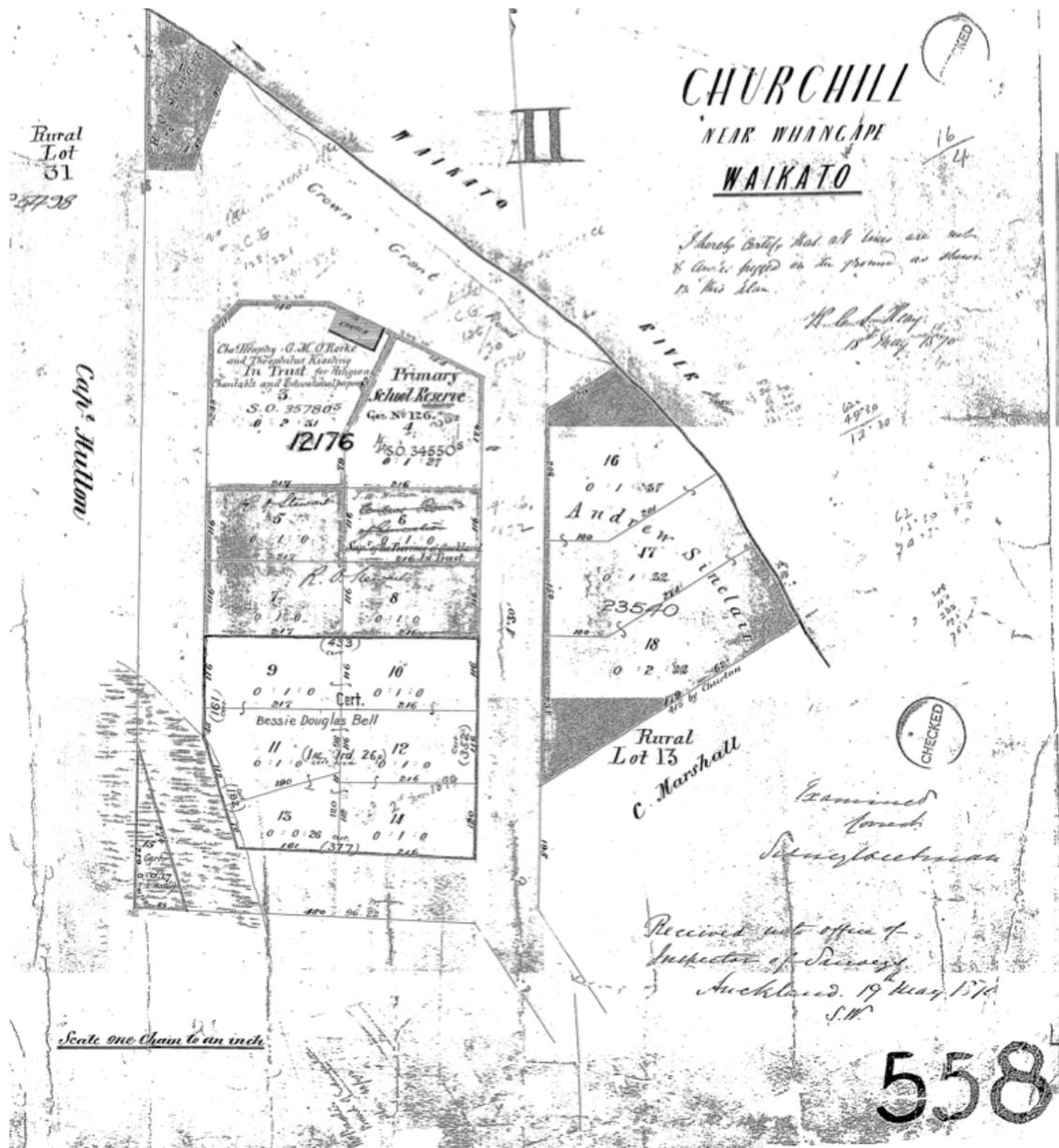


Figure 78: Survey map of Churchill drawn in 1870 shows a church (top centre) with land set aside for a school. SO 558 (part), QuickMap. Today the area shown drawn up into plots is simply pastureland.

<sup>6</sup> Vennell and Williams p. 112, 117.  
<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 131.  
<sup>8</sup> Bradbury 1917 p. 65.

## Opuatia

Opuatia is a dispersed farming community. It once had a school, which opened in 1917 and closed in 1973, that is now used as a community hall after the original hall was closed. The latter was erected by the settlers of the district and opened in 1928.<sup>9</sup> A roll of honour hangs in the present hall.<sup>10</sup>

## Glen Murray

By 1868 large parcels of land had been surveyed in the Glen Murray district, other areas being retained by Ngati Pou.<sup>11</sup> In 1881 a road was constructed from Churchill west to Glen Murray, and in 1882 a road south from Glen Murray towards Naikē was surveyed.<sup>12</sup> Settlers also received supplies by launch which came up the Opuatia Stream from the Waikato River; by 1926 supplies and mail were delivered twice a week.<sup>13</sup> In 1912 A Leach of Ngaruawahia erected Bothwell Sawmill at Glen Murray, felling totara, rimu, kahikatea and matai which was taken via the Awaroa landing to the Waikato River.<sup>14</sup>

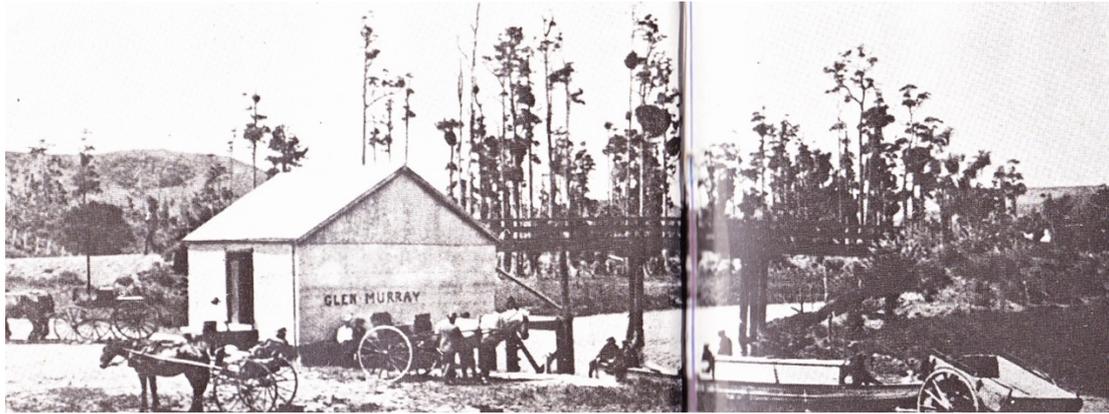


Figure 79: Glen Murray Landing in 1908. Reproduced from Vennell & Williams pp. 152-3.

In 1893 the Board of Education decided to establish an aided school at Glen Murray, in temporary premises.<sup>15</sup> By April of 1896 a schoolhouse was nearing completion.<sup>16</sup> The school closed in February 2002.<sup>17</sup>

Also in 1893 a post office was established in Glen Murray.<sup>18</sup> A telephone line was erected in 1905.<sup>19</sup> The Glen Murray Memorial Hall was opened in 1952 and has been extended and refurbished since.<sup>20</sup> Inside the hall is a framed brass memorial plaque commemorating the locality's war dead. Settlement in the district has remained dispersed and today there is just the war memorial hall and a garage serving the community.

<sup>9</sup> *Auckland Star* 2 November 1928, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/opuatia-roll-honour>

<sup>11</sup> SO 564 and 567.

<sup>12</sup> Vennell & Williams, p. 131; SO 2903.

<sup>13</sup> Vennell & Williams, pp. 153, 240.

<sup>14</sup> *Waikato Argus* 14 August 1912, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 22 February 1893, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 24 April 1896, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> [www.parliament.nz/.../e2c3743e1e9b263cb5bdfecb24af568e68757918](http://www.parliament.nz/.../e2c3743e1e9b263cb5bdfecb24af568e68757918)

<sup>18</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 29 May 1893, p. 5

<sup>19</sup> Vennell & Williams, p. 244.

<sup>20</sup> 'Glen Murray War Memorial Hall', URL: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/glen-murray-war-memorial-hall>



Naike School opened in 1921, with nine pupils.<sup>25</sup> More classrooms were added in 1949. In 1953 the school shifted to a different site, the old building being towed by tractor.<sup>26</sup> Matira School was incorporated with Naike School prior to 1988. Other schools also functioned at one time in the district: Maiho between 1910 and 1915 and Woodleigh or Kaawa in 1924 with 16 pupils in a local hall. Maiho School opened again in January 1926.<sup>27</sup>

Church services were held intermittently in the school and later in the hall from the 1920s through to the 1940s. The hall opened in 1939 and was the scene of many social occasions and meetings. It burnt down in 1963 and was rebuilt in 1966. During the 1930s residents went to Te Kauwhata to the movies.<sup>28</sup>

The roads through the district remained unmetalled until the Depression, when men working under special work schemes carted and spread road metal. The Public Works Department set up camps between Naike and Woodleigh.<sup>29</sup>

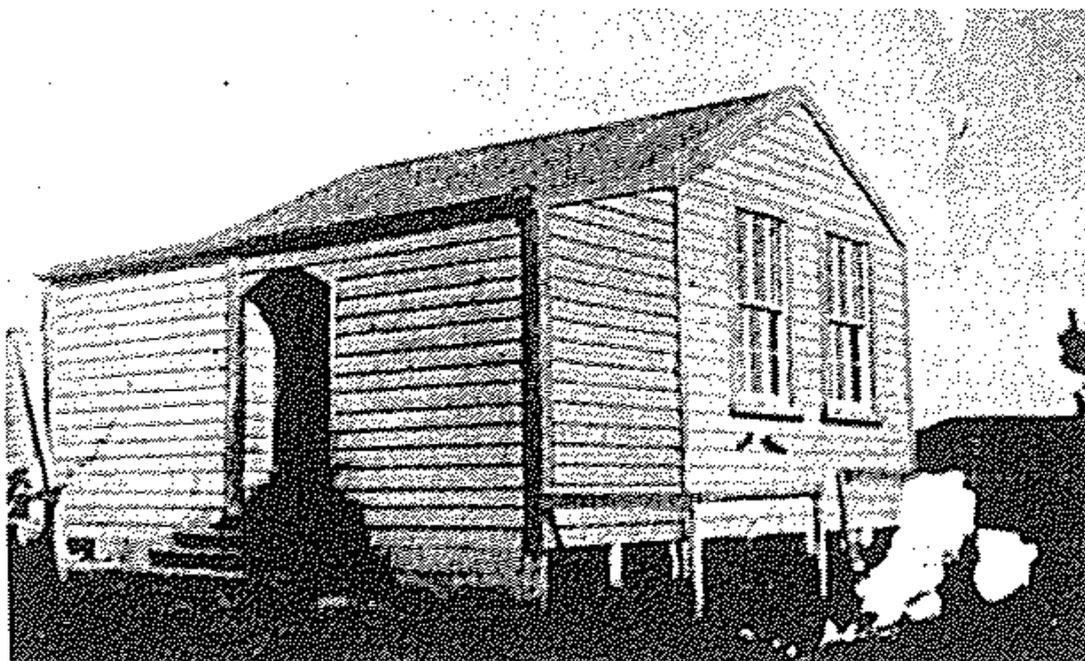


Figure 81: Naike School 1921. Reproduced from *Naike*, p. 20.

In the early days of Naike settlement, residents relied on the Awaroa Stream to transport stores in and take cream out. From the landing on the shore of Lake Whangape a launch, run for several years by Caesar Roose and others, went across the lake and then from the lake outlet to the Waikato River near Churchill and Rangiriri.<sup>30</sup> Most groceries and meat came from Te Kauwhata and Rangiriri. A large corrugated iron building at the landing for storing goods was also used as a dance hall.<sup>31</sup> Milled logs were also taken out via the lake and streams; up to the mid 1930s Roose Shipping Co. rafted logs down the Waikato River to their mill at Mercer.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Naike*, p. 19; Kellaway, p. 167.

<sup>26</sup> *Naike*, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 42.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. 37.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 35.

## Te Kauwhata (Wairangi)

Te Kauwhata was once known as Wairangi. Close by, to the south, is the large Lake Waikare, with a smaller lake, Kopuera, to the south-west; to the north are the extensive Whangamarino wetlands. Te Kauwhata is on flat to gently rolling land only slightly elevated above the lake and wetlands. Drainage schemes that lowered the level of water in the lake and reduced the area of the wetlands made more land available for pasture. A main road passes through Te Kauwhata from SH1/Wayside Road to Waerenga and Okaeria en route to Maramarua and Mangatarata. North of Te Kauwhata is the Hampton Downs motor racing venue. In 2013 Te Kauwhata's population was 1,473.



Figure 82: Bert McIndoe at Waitangi Railway Station, about 1900. Te Kauwhata Museum photo reproduced in *Kahikatea, Cabbage Trees & Koromiko*, plate XI.

The NIMT reached Wairangi in 1877, spurring the development of the small settlement. A platform with a shelter shed was erected; there was also a siding that could accommodate 61 wagons.<sup>33</sup> In 1879 the Railways Department called for tenders for erecting station buildings at Wairangi.<sup>34</sup> Cattle yards and a loading platform were erected in 1886, and in 1894 a goods shed was brought from Otorohanga and erected on the opposite side of the line to the platform. A further improvement was made in 1913 when the old station from Pukekohe was brought in and added to the station building to serve as the ladies' waiting room.<sup>35</sup> None of that infrastructure remains today. The name of the station was changed from Wairangi to Waerenga in 1897.<sup>36</sup>

The area around Whangamarino was deemed unsuitable for farming and in 1886 it was designated forestry reserve and planted in eucalyptus for railway sleepers and wattle for tanning purposes.<sup>37</sup> In 1887 the State Forest department reported 'vigorous operations' were being carried out planting red gum, wattle, jarrah and oaks.<sup>38</sup> In c. 1885-7, a Glasgow man, William Young, had purchased 20,000 acres at Wairangi and planted some of it in black wattle to sell it for tanning purposes.<sup>39</sup> Major MacLean

<sup>33</sup> *Vintage Memories of Te Kauwhata* p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 15 March 1879, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Vintage Memories* p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> *Auckland Star* 24 May 1897, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Vintage Memories* p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 17 October 1887, p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> *Auckland Star* 26 October 1887, p. 8.

established wattle plantations near Mercer as well, and by 1892 the wattle bark was being harvested and dried ready for shipment to Glasgow.<sup>40</sup>

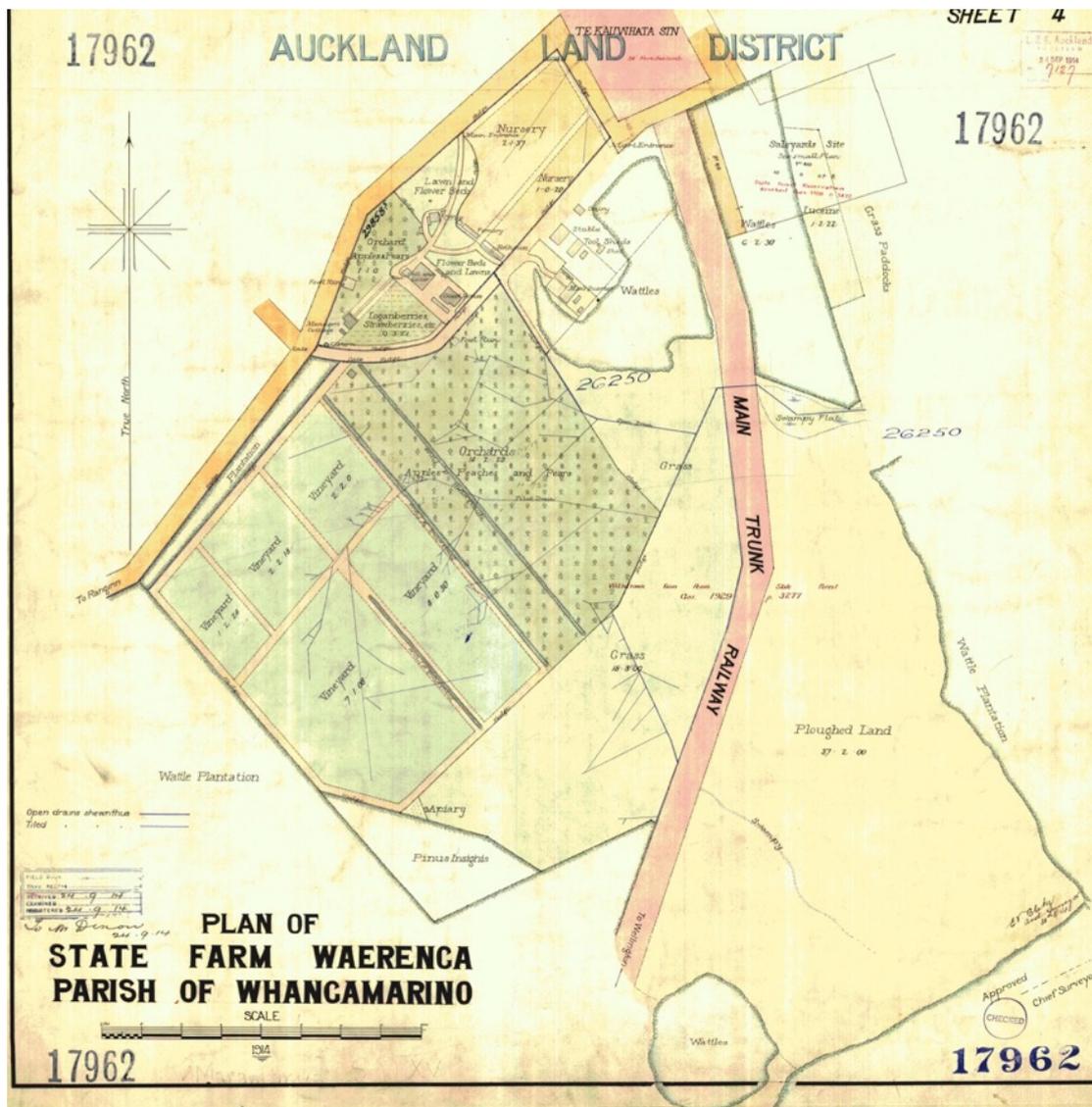


Figure 83: 'Plan of State Farm Waerenga' 1914 shows a number of buildings (still and cellar, guest house, office, fernery, hothouse and fowl run, men's quarters, stables, tool sheds and dairy), lawns and flowerbeds, five vineyards, an apiary (lower left), *Pinus insignis* (lower left), areas of grass and ploughed land, a 14-acre orchard of apples, peaches and pears, another acre of apples and pears, plots of loganberries, strawberries etc, three acres of nurseries, tiled drains throughout and two areas of wattles. At top is a cart entrance; the railway station and railway line are coloured pink. SO 17962, QuickMap.

In 1886 a small area close to the railway station was set aside as an experimental station, initially for wattle but in 1893 the Ministry of Agriculture established an experimental farm on the site in 1893, with the purpose of testing crops for their suitability to the clay soils of the Waikato. Grapes were first planted in 1897 and the first crush for wine took place in 1902.<sup>41</sup> Romeo Bragato was appointed viticulturist in the Horticultural Division of the Department of Agriculture in the same year.<sup>42</sup> In 1903 the first buildings of what became a large successful research station were built under Bragato's supervision.<sup>43</sup> The research station site was operated by Rongopai Wines from the early 1930s until

<sup>40</sup> *Waikato Times* 17 September 1892, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Vintage Memories* p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 31 January 1902, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> *Vintage Memories* p. 10.

2007. Celebrity television host Graham Norton is an ambassador for the Invivo Wines that has operated from the former Te Kauwhata Viticultural Research Station since 2015.

Cooks New Zealand Wine Company began planting a 61-hectare vineyard near Te Kauwhata in 1969 and began producing wine there in 1972.<sup>44</sup> The company merged with McWilliams in 1985, then with Corbans Wines in 1987 but closed in 1994 and the site became a storage centre.<sup>45</sup> In 2000 the buildings became Cooks Landing Winery and Restaurant.<sup>46</sup>



Figure 84: Waerenga Research Station n.d. 1/2-000181-G, WA Price Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

In 1911 ten farms ranging from 21 to 48 acres, all with fruit trees, were offered for sale, and from 1919 through the 1920s further parcels of the experimental station were sold.<sup>47</sup> Te Kauwhata was constituted a town district in 1929, with a population of about 400. Waerenga Experimental Farm, later known as the State Horticultural Station, was established prior to 1917 and planted extensive areas of the gum land and clay slopes with fruit trees; some of this land was subsequently sold off once the orchards were established.<sup>48</sup>

For many years the Education Board felt that local children could attend Rangiriri or Waerenga Schools, but finally after years of petitions a school was opened on 1 February 1911 with 15 pupils, using a building owned by William Gill. The two-storey building had the classroom above and stabling for horses below.<sup>49</sup> A further 26 children enrolled in the first year. A purpose-built, two-roomed school was ready for the new school year in 1921.<sup>50</sup> Additional rooms were added in the 1950s. Te Kauwhata District High School opened in September 1953 for Forms 3 to 6. In 1970 it ceased to exist and the secondary school became Te Kauwhata College for Forms 1 to 6. Island Block School closed at this time and pupils bussed to Te Kauwhata. Waikare and Whangamarino Schools also merged with Te Kauwhata Primary.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> More, p. 131.

<sup>45</sup> *Vintage Memories* pp. 113-4.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 114.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11; SO 16174.

<sup>48</sup> Bradbury, 1951, p. 44.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid* *Vintage Memories* p. 14.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.



THE GRAPE-HARVEST IN NEW ZEALAND: WITH THE PICKERS AT TE KAUWHATA, NORTH ISLAND.  
 Abundant crops of grapes are being taken from the various vineyards at Te Kauwhata, in the Waikato district. The picture on the left shows how the well-formed bunches cluster on the vines. Girl pickers bringing in the grapes are seen on the right.  
 —J. F. Loudon

Figure 85: 'The grape-harvest in New Zealand: with the pickers at Te Kauwhata, North Island' *Auckland Weekly News* 21 March 1929, p. 36. AWNS-19290321-36-3, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

The first general store in Te Kauwhata was opened by Martin and McCauley in about 1905 as a branch of their Taniwha store. The business was sold in 1910 to Bert and Roy Pulham and Fred Begbie who ran the two stores between them, the Taniwha store being the larger. Further stores were acquired by the firm, which built a large new brick store on the west side of the main street in c.1929. Local businesses included a butcher, a barber, drapery and bulk store, and a pharmacy. A trucking business was established by HJF Harris to deliver supplies around the district. The first bakery was built by the Dowset family in 1924; this was later sold to Pulham & Begbie who built a modern bakery beside their general store. The earlier bakery became a garage and workshop. In 1945 Te Kauwhata Plumbers and Drainlayers was established.<sup>52</sup>

Buildings shown on a 1913 survey plan (Fig. 86) include a large building on the Cannery Reserve, buildings marked with names Andrews, Pulham, Dimond, Smith, Muir, Perris, Parker, Glass, Gill and the school. William Gill was a contractor who owned a boarding house. A post office opened in 1909 in Pulham & Begbie's store; a new building housing the post office and telephone exchange opened in May 1926.<sup>53</sup> By the 1950s a wider range of businesses operated in the village, including some in a block of shops built in 1956 that later became a veterinary clinic.<sup>54</sup>

The Te Kauwhata War Memorial Hall was built in 1922 and it became the venue for socials, meetings, dances and films. The hall was sold in 1980 and demolished, and the various clubs that had been associated with it used other venues; including the Masonic Lodge Rooms and Hall (1951), the Presbyterian Youth Centre (1957), the RSA Hall (1961), the Anglican Church Hall (1964), the Te Kauwhata Bowling Club pavilion (1967), Waikare Golf Club clubrooms (1967), and Simmons Hall (1985) in the Aparangi Retirement Village.<sup>55</sup>

The town has been home to a wide range of sports, social and hobby clubs. Annual Te Kauwhata A&P shows have been held at the domain since 1956, additional venues being required as the range of events increased over subsequent years.<sup>56</sup> Farmers once congregated at the saleyards run by GW Vercoe & Co. on land opposite the railway stockyards (est. 1928). By the 1960s Te Kauwhata was recognised as one of the major selling centres in the Waikato with fortnightly sales.<sup>57</sup> The yards were closed in 1996 and the yards demolished in 2002.

<sup>52</sup> *Vintage Memories* p. 17.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, p. 26.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p. 20.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 58- 61.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p. 69.



Figure 86: 'Plan of Takauwhata [altered to Te Kauwhata] Township, Feb. 1913. SO 17103A. (NB Adjoins Sheet B below.) QuickMap Enterprise.

Until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, all denominations held their church services in various halls around the district. On 10 April 1938 St Margaret's Anglican Church was consecrated and a vicarage was built on the adjacent property in 1950.<sup>58</sup> The foundation stone for a parish hall was laid in December 1964. The Catholic church, Our Lady Queen of Peace opened in August 1941.<sup>59</sup> St Andrew's Presbyterian Church opened on 27 February 1954.<sup>60</sup>

In 1975 ground preparations were begun for the Aparangi Retirement Centre and the first residents moved in in November 1976. By 2000 there were 65 own-your-own homes with 90 residents, 23 rented units and 50 rooms available in the Care Central building.<sup>61</sup>

A branch library has operated at Te Kauwhata for many years and demand for better facilities finally saw the opening of a purpose-built library building in 2011. Te Kauwhata also has a museum, run by the Te Kauwhata & Districts Historical Society in the farmhouse built in c.1887 by William Young on his wattle farm.<sup>62</sup>

The Waerenga Fruit Farms land extended west to Great South Road (now Wayside Road) and buildings stood near the end of what was then Orchard Road, now Travers Road. From at least the 1950s a fruit and vegetable shop on Wayside Road did good trade selling fresh produce to travellers as well as locals.

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<sup>58</sup> *Vintage Memories* p. 76.  
<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 77.  
<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p. 78.  
<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 81-83.  
<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.

## Waerenga, Taniwha, Matahuru and Okaeria

The area east, north-east and south-east of Lake Waikare was surveyed after the Waikato War; typically, into 50-acre allotments to be granted to members of the Third Waikato Regiment. Most of this regiment's land was in the vicinity of Cambridge and Hautapu. Other tracts were surveyed as Maori grants and 'Small Grazing Runs'.<sup>63</sup> European settlement and farming began in the Waerenga district in the late 1860s. Settlement has remained dispersed, with schools and community halls at intervals and a golf club at Waiterimu.



Figure 87: '50 Acre Lots at Matahuru' showing land between Whangamarino Stream (top left) and Waikiekie Stream (towards right) divided into about 60 50-acre allotments to be granted to militiamen of the Third Waikato Regiment, also 300 acres to Wiremu Te Wheoro and Ngatinaho. Waikiekie Mill is marked beside the stream. SO 592, 1866. QuickMap. NB north is towards lower left.

In 1880 the Waerenga Settlement, about 14 km from the Wairangi Station [i.e. Te Kauwhata] was an area of scattered farms, some of which had been established for some 14 years. Three of the earliest settlers, Messrs Bruce, Johnson and Saunders, had made a bridle track from Rangiriri, another access route being a track to Lake Waikare which was then crossed by boat. With the construction of the railway in the late 1870s, fresh settlers arrived in the district and were further helped by the construction of a road from Wairangi Station in 1880.<sup>64</sup>

Around 1900 the Taniwha estate, owned by Dr Tremaine, was surveyed into smaller farms, bringing more people to the district on already-developed land. By 1917 Taniwha was a rich dairying and agricultural district. In the 1902-03 season, the Taniwha Creamery established by Ambury and English was in operation, with a store alongside; Waerenga also had a creamery, established before 1902.<sup>65</sup> Other industries in the district included flax mills and quarries for road metal. Polwart's quarry opened around 1900 and as Couper's quarry it was worked until the 1940s, by which time competition from the Taniwha quarry, opened in 1936, brought about its demise.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> E.g. SO 404, 592, 597, 5277

<sup>64</sup> *Auckland Star* 15 June 1880, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> *Kahikatea, Cabbage Trees & Koromiko* p. 81.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 144-5.



Figure 88: McRae's flax mill, Taniwha. Reproduced in *Kahikatea, Cabbage Trees & Koromiko* plate X.

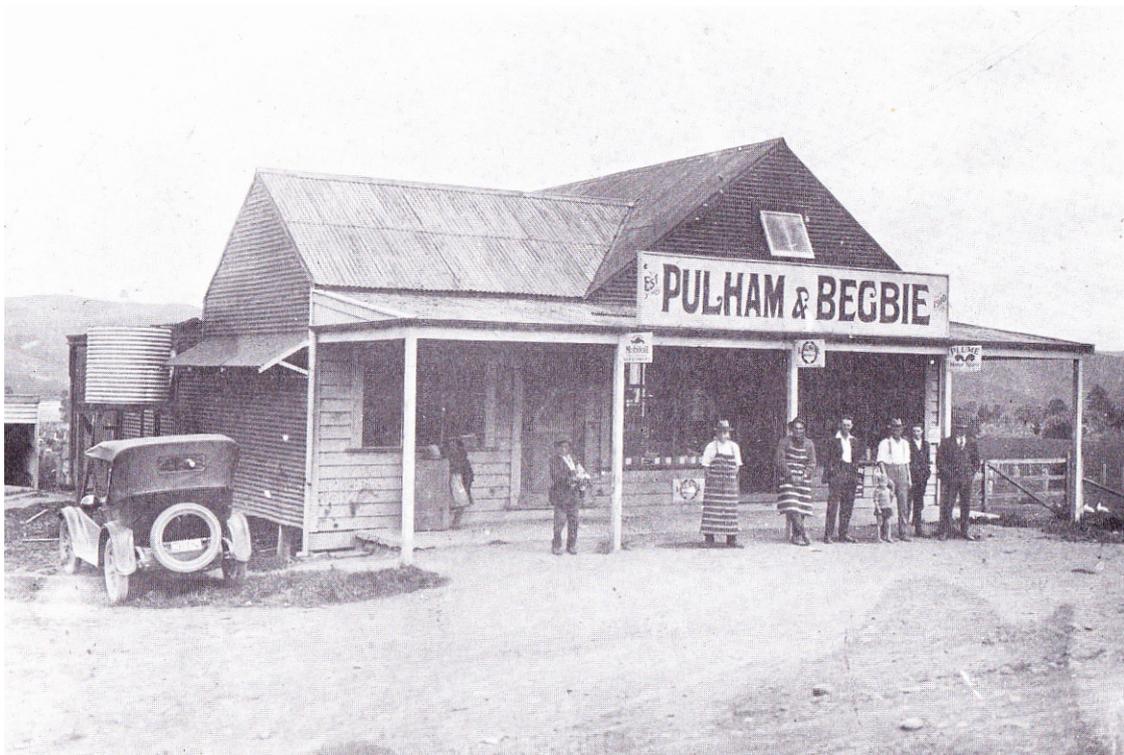


Figure 89: Pulham & Begbie's store at Taniwha, 1920s. *Kahikatea, Cabbage Trees & Koromiko* plate XXVII.

In 1881 Waerenga School was established in a vacant house, but towards the end of 1882 a schoolhouse was built to accommodate 20 pupils.<sup>67</sup> The school was resited in 1928 and the 1882 schoolhouse was duly moved 400m from its original site. In 1980 the building was converted for use as the school library.<sup>68</sup>

Taniwha School, which was initially known as Tangoao School, opened in 1905; the building still survives but is not in use.<sup>69</sup> A half-time school had functioned in the small settlement since 1902 and the community shared a teacher with Waerenga School from 1902-05.<sup>70</sup>

Waiterimu School, built in 1903 on Waiu Road, was first known as Matahuru No. 2 School.<sup>71</sup> A new open-air block was built in 1937.<sup>72</sup> A small school was built at Matahuru in 1901 but is now closed.<sup>73</sup> At Okaeria classes were held a small shed until plans were made in 1918 for a school to be built.<sup>74</sup> In 1920, two teachers shared a classroom, unsatisfactorily, and in 1923 the senior class moved into the hall across the road.<sup>75</sup>



Figure 90: Waerenga School, 1926. *A History of the Waerenga, Taniwha, Okaeria and Waipuna Schools* p. 3.

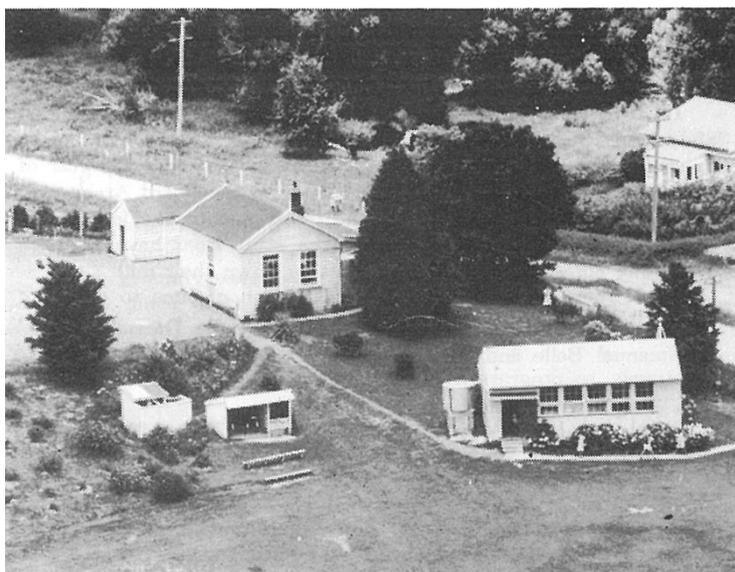


Figure 91: Taniwha School, 1956. *A History of the Waerenga, Taniwha, Okaeria and Waipuna Schools* p. 14.

<sup>67</sup> *A History of the Waerenga, Taniwha, Okaeria and Waipuna Schools* p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Kellaway, p. 59.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123, 124

<sup>70</sup> *A History of the Waerenga, Taniwha, Okaeria and Waipuna Schools* p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Kellaway, p. 123.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 118-9; More, p. 160.

<sup>74</sup> *Waikato Times* 12 September 1918, p. 6.

<sup>75</sup> *A History of the Waerenga, Taniwha, Okaeria and Waipuna Schools* p. 4.

A hall was built at Taniwha in 1902; it burnt down in 1964.<sup>76</sup> Matahuru has a public hall at the crossroads of Waiterimu, Matahuru, Taniwha and Storey Roads. Known as the Matahuru and Waiterimu Hall, it was built in 1919. There is a hall in Settlers Road and the Waerenga Recreation Centre, a weatherboard building, is on the corner of Taniwha and Goodin Roads.

The big flood of 1907 took out the Matahuru Bridge which had to be rebuilt a few metres west of the old one.<sup>77</sup> From 1916 the government was planning re-settlement of returned servicemen and a large parcel of land was bought as the Taniwha Soldiers' Settlement, surveyed into ten farms of 52 to 73 acres.<sup>78</sup> This brought a new influx of families to the district. The Waerenga and Taniwha Undenominational War Memorial Church opened in December 1928 on land donated by a local settler; thanks to local fundraising efforts and volunteer labour it was debt-free.<sup>79</sup>



Figure 92: Waerenga and Taniwha Undenominational War Memorial Church. <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz>

<sup>76</sup> Kahikatea, *Cabbage Trees & Koromiko* p. 81; *A History of the Waerenga, Taniwha, Okaeria and Waipuna Schools* p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> More, pp. 72, 79.

<sup>78</sup> Kahikatea, *Cabbage Trees & Koromiko* p. 134.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, p. 153.

## Rangiriri

By November 1863 an Anglican Maori church had been built at Rangiriri. It was made of thatched raupo and overlooked a landing place and small settlement, Paetai, as well as the pa to the north. The clerics were Maori, under the direction of Rev Maunsell, who ran the mission station at Waikato Heads.



Figure 93: Rangiriri before the war, looking across the Onetea Stream with an eel weir in the foreground. Taken during the Government Scientific Exploring Expedition conducted by Dr Ferdinand Hochstetter in 1859. 1012-48, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

On 20 November 1863 imperial troops engaged with Maori defenders of the pa built between the river and Lake Kopuera to block the British advance. At least 47 Maori and 47 British died during the battle or later from their wounds. Some of the Maori buried on the battle site were exhumed later and taken to Taupiri for re-burial, some of the European troops were buried in a graveyard beside the church but others, mostly officers, were taken to Auckland for burial. Te Wheoro's Redoubt was built at Rangiriri as a military supply depot after the battle.



Figure 94: The Maori church at Rangiriri, photographed in 1864 by Daniel Manders Beere, with the cemetery in the foreground. 1/2-096093-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

When Rev JF Mandeno visited Rangiriri in 1866 he found it ‘a dreary spot’.<sup>80</sup> By July 1867 the church and its graveyard were in disrepair.<sup>81</sup> A white marble column monument was erected in 1889 bearing the inscription ‘Sacred to the memory of the officers and men who fell at the battle’ and listing the names of the British servicemen. In 1910 the Department of Internal Affairs assumed responsibility for the cemetery and began making improvements.<sup>82</sup> During 1926 a major project saw the cemetery tidied up by the monumental masons McNab and Mason of Auckland.<sup>83</sup> A memorial gateway was erected at the cemetery in 1927 and in November 2012 the carved gateway Te Tohu Maumahara at the Rangiriri battle site was unveiled.<sup>84</sup> It stands as a reminder to visitors that they are entering a sacred site where many men, women and children died on 20-21 November 1863.

With the Kingite followers’ retreat south after the battle, the construction of Great South Road proceeded and it was envisaged that Rangiriri would develop as a well-laid out settlement with blocks of small residential sections separated by a grid of parallel roads. An 1883 version of the town’s survey plan shows only seven houses, a store, hotel and the cemetery. Of the planned streets, only four remain in addition to the former Great South Road which angles across the top left of the map. Confirming the small scale of development by this time, the names of only 16 local land owners are listed on the 1880 Rangiriri Roll Plan, some such as Wiremu Te Wheoro owning several lots.<sup>85</sup>

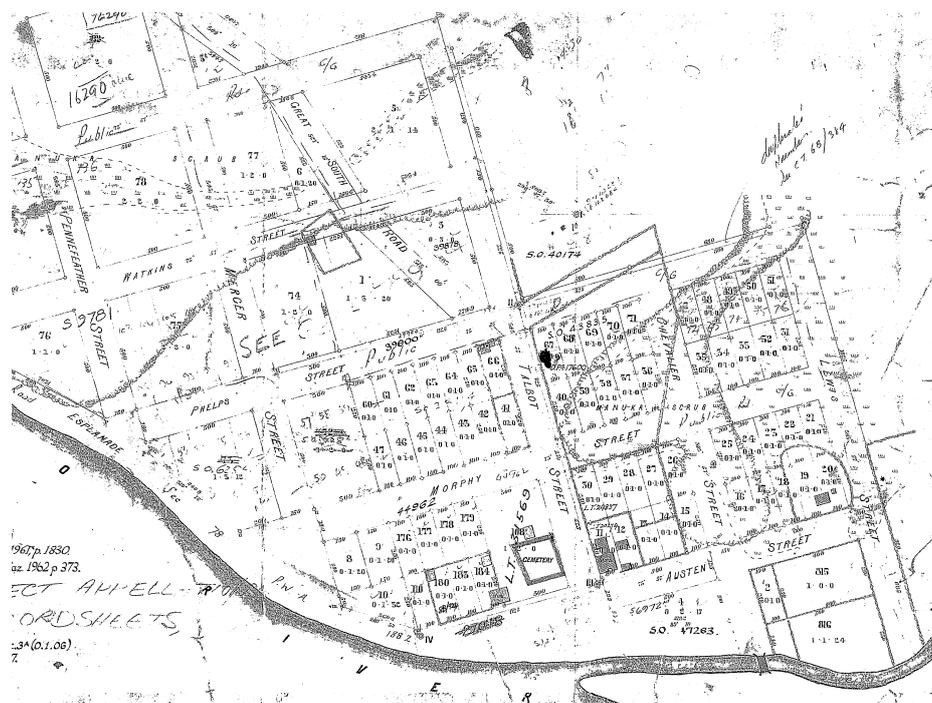


Figure 95: Rangiriri as drawn in 1883 showing only a few buildings, including the store and hotel (lower middle).

What Rangiriri did become was a coach stop and two hotels were established in the late 1860s offering accommodation and refreshments for travellers. The Travellers’ Rest Hotel, built by HMD Walker, was open by August 1866 and later run by Edmund Bell. The hotel was reportedly offering ‘good accommodation’ in 1875 but it burnt down in January 1877, having been unoccupied for some time.<sup>86</sup> By 1869 James Sherley (aka Shirley) was the proprietor of the Royal Mail Hotel, also known as Sherley’s Hotel. In 1883 fire also struck the Royal Mail, by this time known as the Rangiriri Hotel; it was rebuilt in 1884.<sup>87</sup> Although the proprietor ET Bain called tenders for a new hotel in December 1905 there was no reportage of a new hotel opening at this time.

<sup>80</sup> Drummond p. 34 citing Mandeno.

<sup>81</sup> *Daily Southern Cross* 5 July 1867, p. 4.

<sup>82</sup> *Auckland Star* 9 January 1911, p. 7.

<sup>83</sup> *Auckland Star* 8 October 1926, p. 13.

<sup>84</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 6 April 1927, p. 13.

<sup>85</sup> Kelly, p. 11.

<sup>86</sup> *Waikato Times* 14 August 1875, p. 1; *Waikato Times* 27 January 1877, p. 2; Kelly, p. 9.

<sup>87</sup> Kelly, pp. 102-3.



Figure 96: Rangiriri in 1869 with a few scattered house and buildings by the Waikato River. Ref: 1/2-091190-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Early storekeeper James Gerrand is believed to have run his business from an abandoned army quartermaster's store from 1873.<sup>88</sup> Gerrand was the postmaster for a wide district and ran his shop until about 1908; it was then run by his son for a period. In 1917 the business was bought by Pulham and Begbie, who also had interests in Taniwha and Te Kauwhata.<sup>89</sup> By 1901 there were several stores as well as the hotel.<sup>90</sup> Other businesses through the 20<sup>th</sup> century included a tearoom, butchery, garage, service station and a craft workshop and shop.

The NIMT railway line skirted past Rangiriri in c.1876. A flag station was built about two km south-east of the township. Rangiriri School opened in 1877, but with no official building; through the 1880s it was a part-time school sharing a teacher with Waerenga and, in 1888, Churchill across the river.<sup>91</sup> A school room was built in 1885 with additions in 1934 and later.<sup>92</sup> Rangiriri School is now housed in a modern building north of the village centre.

In 1916-17 a bridge was built across the river to connect with Glen Murray Road and settlements on the west. It was thought that the township, which 'had not made a great deal of progress in past years', would now go ahead with the improved communication with the western settlers.<sup>93</sup> There was no formal opening of the bridge because of war-time restrictions, but in March 1918 residents held a regatta on the river to celebrate the new structure.<sup>94</sup> The main road was not metalled at Rangiriri until 1925, another cause for celebration after years of motorists trying to cope with thick mud.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Kelly, p. 17.

<sup>89</sup> Kelly, p. 18.

<sup>90</sup> *Cyclopedia* p. 705.

<sup>91</sup> More, p. 168; Kellaway, p. 43; Kelly, p. 107.

<sup>92</sup> Kellaway, pp. 64, 187.

<sup>93</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 20 September 1915, p. 4.

<sup>94</sup> *Pukekohe & Waiuku Times* 1 March 1918, p. 1.

<sup>95</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 4 May 1925, p. 10.



Figure 97: The Rangiriri Hotel at the time of the 1907 flood. supplement to the *Auckland Weekly News* 24 January 1907 p. 8. AWNS-19070124-8-4, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

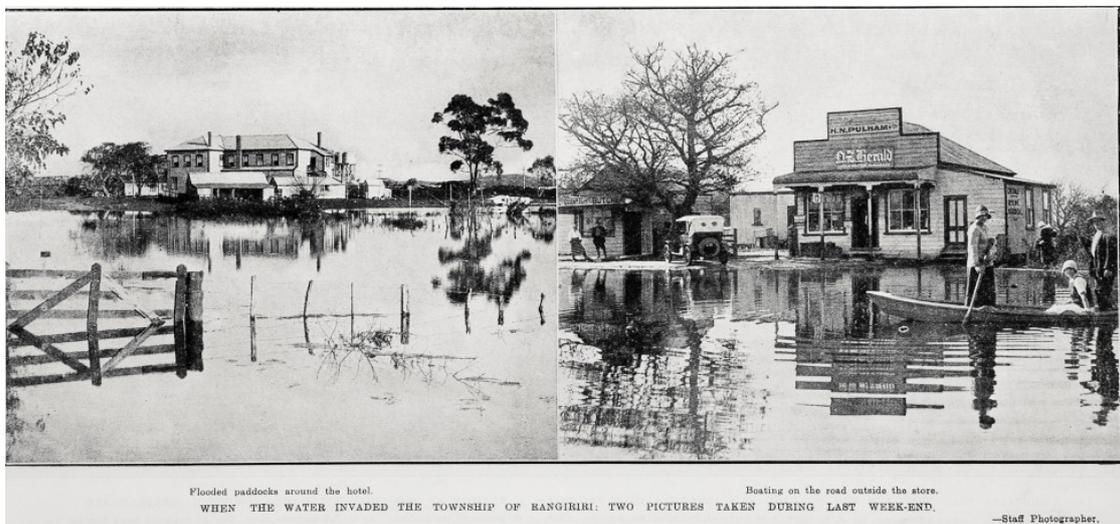


Figure 98: Two views of the 1926 flood, Rangiriri Hotel (left) and Pulman's store at right. *Auckland Weekly News* 3 June 1926 p. 43.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century stock sales were held by NZ Loan and Mercantile Co. at Rangiriri.<sup>96</sup> The yards had been built by a Hamilton company in c. 1890-91 and auctions sold herds of cattle that had to be swum across the river before the bridge was built. The yards were used well in to the 1960s.<sup>97</sup>

From 1925 Firth's had a concrete works south-east of Rangiriri, close to the railway station, on the bank of the Te Onetea Stream.<sup>98</sup> The company made concrete products, such as water troughs, concrete posts and pipes, and washing coppers, at Rangiriri until it relocated to Frankton in 1934.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>96</sup> E.g. *Waikato Times* 15 January 1918, p. 8.

<sup>97</sup> Kelly, p. 97.

<sup>98</sup> *Cyclopedia* p. 705.

<sup>99</sup> Kelly, p. 95.



Figure 99: Rangiriri in the 1930s, with tearooms and the hotel on the right. Te Wheoro's redoubt is in the distance. Ref: 1/2-004476-F, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

In 1965 the main highway was diverted around Rangiriri, an improvement for motorists but with the effect of reducing the amount of retail business in the settlement. A further improvement was in the construction of the new Rangiriri Bridge in 1969. The bridge's designers, Murray North Partners, received a Gold Award from the Association of Consulting Engineers NZ in 1973 as it was said to be the first pre-stressed concrete bridge in New Zealand.<sup>100</sup> The Waikato Expressway is currently under construction bringing the route of SH 1 closer towards the river.



Figure 100: The original Rangiriri school residence and school building, with shelter shed between. Lumsden facing p. 8.

<sup>100</sup> More, p. 275; Vennell & Williams, p. 185.

## Ohinewai

In the early 1850s James Armitage, one of the earliest Pakeha settlers in the Waikato, had 196 acres of land on the east side of the Waikato River at Rawhiti on the northern side of Ohinewai.<sup>101</sup> The Ngatinaho village of Putakauere [Putakawere] was on the opposite bank; the iwi were granted 150 acres in 1867.<sup>102</sup> Armitage, a Resident Magistrate, arrived in New Zealand in 1850 and was later killed in the engagement at Camerontown.<sup>103</sup> After the confiscations, the riverside strip between what are now Ohinewai and Huntly was surveyed into 50-acre parcels for grants to militiamen of the Fourth Waikato Regiment. Other sections were set aside as reserves, particularly the swamp areas around Ohinewai Lake, although some land parcels were also swampy.<sup>104</sup> The area to the north and west of Ohinewai Lake was gazetted as Ohinewai Domain in 1942.<sup>105</sup>

A classroom opened at Ohinewai in April 1882 in a building provided by Robert Muir. Muir then offered two acres of land for a permanent building and the Education Board proceeded with erecting a school building in 1885. A teacher's residence was built in 1890 on the school site.<sup>106</sup> An additional room and porch were added in 1923, another classroom in 1946-47 and a new block in 1965.<sup>107</sup> Ohinewai School is now a six-teacher school with a roll of about 120 for primary and intermediate students.<sup>108</sup> The original building has been removed from the site.

In 1893 the *New Zealand Herald* reported that a new and important industry on the Rangiriri side of Ohinewai had been started by Firth: 'a factory for the drying and preparation of pumice sand to be used as a substitute for charcoal in refrigerating works, cool chambers on board ship etc'. The infrastructure included machinery from Auckland, timber, and 'several thousands of ordinary and fire bricks supplied from the Hamilton yards'.<sup>109</sup> In 1899 the factory was making a good output but in 1903 it had to close for a few months.<sup>110</sup> In 1901 the mill employed about 20 people.<sup>111</sup> In 1913 Firth Pumice Company had the largest pumice quarrying business on the river.<sup>112</sup> The factory burnt down in 1917, although the machinery was saved; a smaller plant on site was able to continue with the processing.<sup>113</sup> Firths had dredges and barges on the river. The company was in liquidation in 1926, however the factory was in operation again in 1932.<sup>114</sup> In 1936 Foster Bros were advertising sand and shingle from a base at Ohinewai.<sup>115</sup> In 1938 it was referred to as 'the old works'.<sup>116</sup>

In 1901 Ohinewai had a flag-station on the railway line, a school but no church. Services were led locally by ministers from Huntly. Two years later, on the Waikare swamp a few kilometres from Ohinewai, Foot and Moody purchased Tulloch's flaxmill and plant that had been working there for some time.<sup>117</sup> A landing with road access, and a punt operated across the river at this point. George Silvester lived by the river and ran the post office from his house.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> SO 587.

<sup>102</sup> SO 550, SO 13102.

<sup>103</sup> *Daily Southern Cross* 5 October 1863, p. 7.

<sup>104</sup> SO 400.

<sup>105</sup> SO 4554.

<sup>106</sup> Lumsden, p. 5.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 8, 9.

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.ohinewai.school.nz/>

<sup>109</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 5 October 1893, p. 6.

<sup>110</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 14 September 1899, Page 3; *Waikato Times* 26 November 1903, p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> *Cyclopedia* p. 699.

<sup>112</sup> *Waikato Argus* 7 October 1913, p. 2.

<sup>113</sup> *Waikato Times* 4 October 1917, p. 4.

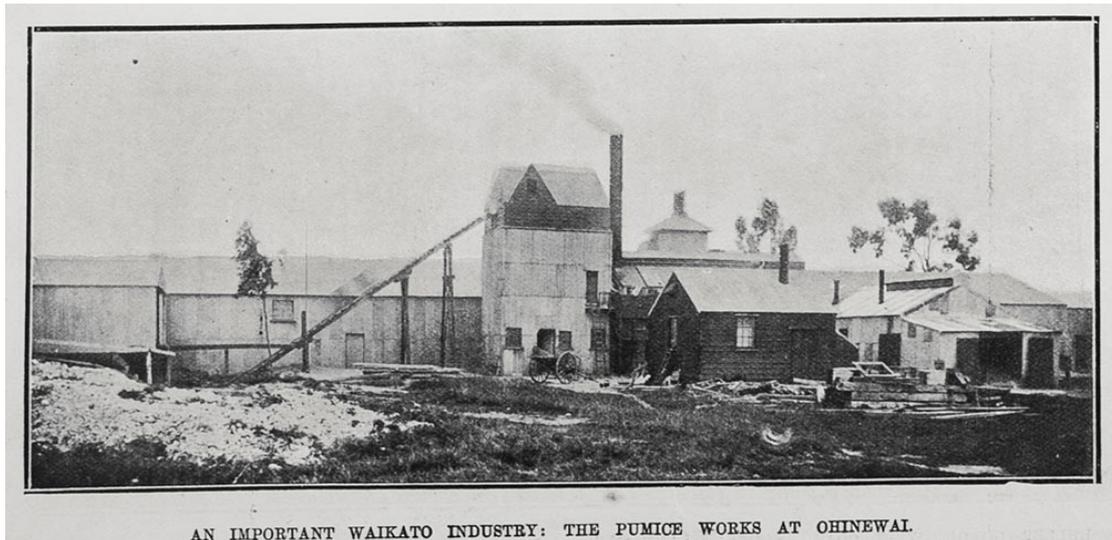
<sup>114</sup> *Auckland Star* 17 November 1926, p. 8; *Auckland Star* 14 June 1932, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> *New Zealand Herald* 5 March 1936, p. 6.

<sup>116</sup> *Auckland Star* 10 February 1938, p. 6.

<sup>117</sup> *Waikato Times* 26 November 1903, p. 2.

<sup>118</sup> *Cyclopedia* p. 699.



AN IMPORTANT WAIKATO INDUSTRY: THE PUMICE WORKS AT OHINEWAI.

Figure 101: 'An important Waikato industry; the pumice works at Ohinewai. *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 August 1904. Sir George Grey Special Collections, AWNS-19040811-11-6, Auckland Libraries.

In 1911 JJ Craig owned the Waikare Estate of 1374 acres on the north side of Ohinewai.<sup>119</sup> In 1917 a triangular parcel between the NIMT and Lumsden Road, just to the north of the railway station, was subdivided into ½-acre sections for housing.<sup>120</sup> In 1921 seven two-acre sections were subdivided between the Great South Road and the river.<sup>121</sup> A further ten residential sections were surveyed in 1958 on Great South Road and Tahuna Road (now Lilley Lane). Several houses and commercial premises were built but the settlement remained small.

In 1951 Rangiriri was described as a small farming district with a post office, school, public hall, garage and store.<sup>122</sup> Other industries and businesses in the area included McMillan's Nurseries from 1965; Waikato Wool Scourers on Firth's pumice mill site from 1965; Speyside Poultry Farm and Hatchery on the old saleyards site from 1968; Udys' Sawmill, a truck dismantling yard, a welding works and transport business.<sup>123</sup>

Being situated on the Great South Road, later SH1, at the junction of Tahuna Road, a lot of traffic went through the town and many travellers frequented the local store, cafes and restaurant. In c.2012 SH1 was diverted around Ohinewai and the wayside businesses subsequently closed. The road through the settlement is now Ohinewai North and South Roads. A community hall stands on the corner of Lilley Lane, with tennis courts.

<sup>119</sup> DP 5093

<sup>120</sup> Deed 87.

<sup>121</sup> DP 15727.

<sup>122</sup> Bradbury, 1951, p. 45.

<sup>123</sup> Lumsden, pp. 30-31.