

The Papakura Sentinel



Number 61

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Landmark partings and celebrations

Let's begin by honouring two 96 year-olds, Her Majesty the Queen and our patron Theo Thomas. Queen Elizabeth II was on the throne for 70 years; many of us have no memory of King George VI. She was head of the devolving Commonwealth during the most prosperous and, for many, the most peaceful period the West has experienced, and she was a voice of calm and grace respected round the world. We get a sense of scale when we celebrate the 60 years of the Society and 50 years of the Papakura Museum. As we go on, we appreciate those years and hope that the future will be remembered equally fondly. King Charles III may face harder times and weakening ties, but he is also a friendly face for New Zealanders.

We will also honour Theo Thomas. Kara Oosterman has written a tribute to him in this issue of *Sentinel*.

The combined 60 years of PDHS and 50 years of the Museum have been celebrated in style with the afternoon occasion on 17 September. Thanks to all who contributed to the occasion, to Alan and Wendy for planning the exhibition, presentation and booklet, to the team who catered to their usual high standard, and to all our members, past and present, who turned up—great conversations. There were also many public friends, including local MP Judith Collins, Councillor Daniel Newman, Brent Catchpole and other members of the Local Board. We appreciate their very positive comments on the Museum and the event. It was a fitting occasion for all that 'history of us'. Alan has provided a report on the occasion, accompanied by photos provided by Wendy (pages 3-4).

The noticeboard on the outside of the Accent Point building was brought up to date in time for the occasion, and clearly proclaims what the Museum is about: 'Protecting our taonga: Honour, Preserve, Exhibit.'

Our Curator is doing a wonderful job networking to prepare a summer exhibition, Soaring, about the Auckland Gliding Club. It's going to be special. In the meantime, we are hosting a display by NZ Ukrainians.

We are also part of the Auckland Heritage Festival, with two advertised walks, on 1 and 8 October, and an over-

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flow walk on the 15th at 10am. Contact the Museum or Rob to register your interest. (Weather dealt to the first.)

There are two main articles in this Sentinel. Alan returns to the RNZAF in the Second World War; this time his subject is the airfield at Seagrove, Waiau Pa. Kirikiri continues too. I never thought when I began the Kirikiri line of research that the series would last as long as it has, but I am determined to finish the story with the December issue. So this issue looks at the cluster of Kirikiri families who were living closer to Pukekiwiriki, and families who ended up living outside the original Kirikiri 10 acre blocks, in Opaheke, Hunua and Ardmore. The December article will take the story of *Viola* and *Resolute* settlers and their children into the Twentieth Century, and wrap the series up. For the fuller story, I hear a book calling.

Enjoy. Rob (Editor)

Obituary—Theo Thomas

On Sunday, 7 August 2022, Theodore Weston Thomas quietly passed away just a few months shy of his 97th birthday. Known to staff, volunteers, and many, many others simply as Theo, Papakura & District Historical Society was honoured to have Theo as Patron over five years since 2017. This came about through Theo's generous contributions and assistance given to Papakura Museum on multiple occasions, particularly concerning anything to do with military matters — his help was invaluable.

More than that, Theo and his wife of Myrtle (who we lost 23 March 2021) became close friends of both staff and volunteers. They frequently called in on a Friday. Myrtle would be having her hair done and Theo would wait at the museum. Afterwards one of us would be lucky enough to have coffee with them in the foyer café. It was always a great pleasure to see them both and seeing them together (still very much in love after almost 75 years of marriage) would brighten the dullest of days.

Theo and Myrtle were not only totally committed to each other. They raised six children and gave countless hours to community work. In Theo's case an amazing record of service to St John's Ambulance stands out, and Myrtle gave many years of loyalty to the Papakura RSA Women's Division. It was a pleasure and a privilege to know them both. They are sorely missed.



Right: Theo and Myrtle, 70 years of marriage, 2016

Above: On the occasion of the centenary of the unveiling of the Papakura-Karaka War Memorial, Theo spoke of his father's service at Passchendaele during WWI.

Obituary provided by Kara Oosterman.

PDHS 60th Anniversary / Papakura Museum 50th Anniversary event

Alan Knowles, photos Wendy Deeming

The event marking the 60th anniversary of the Papakura & District Historical Society and the 50th Anniversary of the Papakura Museum took place on the 17th of September. Over 100 people packed into the Museum, including Papakura MP Judith Collins, Auckland Councillor Daniel Newman, Chair of the Papakura Local Board Brent Catchpole, representatives from various historical groups, families of notable identities and volunteers as well as staff from the Museum’s past.

Current Museum curator Alan Knowles acted as MC, and speakers included former president of the PDHS Terry Carson and Local Board Chair Brent Catchpole. Terry very kindly stepped in as current president Brian Leonard had unfortunately contracted Covid. He spoke about the history of the Society, the evolution of the Museum, acknowledged the Papakura Local Board for their ongoing support and people over the years who have contributed to the Museum’s success. Special mention was made of Manager Kay Thomas, Curator Ione Channell, Researcher Kara Oosterman, and the team of volunteers including Wendy Deeming. Brent Catchpole reminded us how history is created every day and used the example of the recent passing of Queen Elizabeth II to illustrate the point. To finish formalities, new Museum Patron Annette Gunson cut the huge chocolate cake decorated with the special 50th anniversary logo. The amazing spread that was enjoyed by all was catered for in

house by Wendy Deeming, Coralie Hart, Annette Gunson, beautiful flower arrangements were installed by the Papakura Floral Group and the to be the first to see the new the establishment of the Historical Society, the evolution of the artefacts that rarely come of the Papakura Festival 1974 tained images past and present



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The success of the Society and Museum is testament to the hard work of countless dedicated individuals. It would be impossible to count the number of work hours that has gone into creating and maintaining such successful institutions, much-loved by locals and visitors alike. And of course, the Museum does not stand still, it continues to evolve, offering highly relevant experiences for the local community, making its collections more accessible and being inclusive for all. There is so much to look forward to as we face a bright future, and it will be exciting to watch as the Historical Society and Museum continue to grow and innovate for at least another 50 years.





50th Anniversary 60th
Celebrated 17 September 2022

RNZAF station Seagrove—the forgotten airfield

Alan Knowles



RNZAF station Seagrove, c1940s. Image courtesy of the Air Force Museum of New Zealand

RNZAF station Seagrove was established as a fighter station intended to operate in the defense of Auckland City, Auckland Harbour and the surrounding regions. Karaka Aerodrome was the original name, but owner Percy Clark, grandson of the original owner, asked that the name of the property not be lost due to its historical significance and family association. The farm they had named Seagrove was situated on the southern shores of the Manukau Harbour between the Waiuku River mouth, Clark's Beach and the Mokorau Estuary. Construction was authorized on 21st March 1942 and surveying took place in April 1942 by Reg Pringley of Mangere assisted by local identity Sam Bell, a farmer who lived at the top end of Seagrove Road. When construction was completed, it consisted of two established and sealed runways, one of 4500 feet in length while the other was 5100 feet. To lay these runways, the metal chip was sourced from Drury quarry, with every available truck operating in a continuous chain from dawn to dusk. Both runways were 150 feet wide and they were aligned northwest/southwest (the shorter), and east/west at an altitude of three feet above mean sea level. The ground, on both sides of each runway, was levelled out to a width of 150 feet and sown in a mixture of chewing fescue, brown top and several other varieties of grasses best suited to the conditions there. The land was swampy, so drains were dug, and a stop bank was erected along the shoreline perimeter. A canal was dug to a depth of about seven feet, and a seawall was erected for extra protection. RNZAF personnel moved in when accommodation became available in June 1942, but bad weather delayed the completion of the main housing and technical buildings. At first, accommodation was planned for 250 personnel, but a short time later, this was increased to 46 officers, 450 NCOs, airmen and

42 WAAFs, so extensions to the buildings were made accordingly. Six properties were requisitioned for the station with a total of 632 acres. A further 107 acres were subsequently added after deals were reached with landowners. Seagrove had a range of buildings spread over a wide area serving different functions, such as aircraft hangers, workshops, accommodation, mess halls, recreational buildings, kitchens and a hospital. The hangars were set back into the hills around the airfield and camouflaged with manuka trees and wire netting. Construction was completed at the end of 1942 at a total cost of £225,000, a considerable increase on the original £121,000 estimate.

The station was completed before it became operational. By March 1942, the first of the modern American P-40 Kittyhawks began to arrive in New Zealand. No 15 fighter squadron was formed at Ohakea in June and arrived at Seagrove in August 1942. The squadron flew in defense of the Auckland region for around two months before moving up to the Pacific, and the newly formed No 17 squadron (which also flew the P40) replaced them and remained until 1943. At this point a new element for the station was added when it was made available to the United States Navy. As a result, the U.S Marine Corps unit VMSB-14 was stationed there and operated two-seat Dauntless Dive Bombers which had a pilot in the front and a rear gunner. As well as the Dauntless squadron hundreds of other US aircrew members were stationed there whilst on rest and recreation following service in the Pacific. When the US Marines departed the station, they left behind their Dauntless aircraft and the RNZAF formed a new unit, No 25 (Dive Bomber) squadron.



Line up of No. 25 Squadron Dauntless aircraft at RNZAF Station Seagrove. Image courtesy of the Air Force Museum of New Zealand

The aircraft were left in their original U.S markings so initially many locals did not know that after July 1943 the aircraft were being flown by New Zealanders. The squadron was led by Squadron Leader Theo de Lange and consisted of 12 crews and a nucleus of maintenance staff. At the outset the squadron faced difficulties at Seagrove and lacked basics such as rations and furniture. Locals however, got involved and ensured that the squadron was provided for in those formative weeks until supplies were delivered from other RNZAF

stations. The condition of the Dauntless aircraft was found to be in poor condition, and much remedial maintenance was necessary before they could be brought up to an operational standard. In the first few weeks, 4 of the 9 aircraft would fly daily which created problems for training, so the squadron managed to acquire another 4 Dauntless aircraft. This improved things a bit, but it was still woefully inadequate for the operation of a squadron. As a result, another request was made for a further 14 aircraft which enabled the squadron to operate effectively. By now the aircraft were starting to be painted in standard RNZAF colour schemes, in some cases applied directly over the US markings. The pilots who trained on the Dauntless were from Army co-operation squadrons and their average age was 23. Their *type ratings* covered all the usual familiarisation aspects of mastering a new type of aircraft, including cockpit procedures, low flying, emergency procedures, crew tests, gyro-pilot flying and load testing. All up, the conversion was six hours dual, 16 hours solo and 10 hours instrument flying. To become operationally qualified on the type, the pilot needed at least 60 hours to become proficient in various forms of bombing, formation flying, gunnery and navigation.

Perhaps the most well-known and certainly most spectacular exercise was dive bombing (certainly from the gunner's view as they rode backwards down in a vertical dive!) The longitudinal axis of the aircraft was vertical but due to various effects such as the wind effect, the angle of the dive was in fact closer to 75 degrees. The dive commenced by positioning the aircraft marginally to one side of the target at a height of 10,000 feet, 'pushing over' the vertical and rolling the aircraft onto the target. The dive brakes were then opened when the aircraft attained a speed of between 250-280 knots, whereupon the bomb was released at 2,500 feet and the pull-out was initiated quickly after. Other aircraft following behind would perform the same manoeuvre at 400-yard intervals. The dives were practiced on a large white circle painted on the runway, where the instructor would stand with a radio giving feedback to each pilot. Later, training was carried out with water-filled and live bombs on moving targets. These exercises were to become so common that the locals (including live-stock) all became used to it!



Line up of No. 25 Squadron Dauntless aircraft at RNZAF Station Seagrove. Image courtesy of the Air Force Museum of New Zealand

Over the course of the training there were the normal minor incidents such as scrapes, bent props and various damages but there was one fatal accident. Dauntless NZ 2011 flown by Pilot Officer William David McJannet with Sergeant Douglas Martin James Cairns as his air gunner crashed on September 13th 1943 over Waiuku. At 11.45am Police Constable E Buckley observed the aircraft flying over the centre of Waiuku. It passed over the station and then flew in the direction of the school, flying over Victoria Ave when it entered a vertical climb, rolled on its back and hurtled towards the ground. The officer arrived at the scene of the crash shortly after and found the aircraft engulfed in flames with no hope for the two crew. An Air Force crash crew from Seagrove arrived in due course later and after bringing the flames under control, recovered the bodies from the wreckage.



Dauntless "nose over" taxiing accident. Seagrove, 1943. Image courtesy of the Air Force Museum of New Zealand

After 25 Squadron had finished their training, they were ready to depart for Espiritu Santo located in the forward area of the Pacific theatre. On January 6th 1944, the squadron of 18 aircraft flew a V-formation over Auckland, the largest formation ever seen in New Zealand skies up to that point. The squadron departed Seagrove for Santo on the 20th January 1944 aboard an RNZAF DC-3.

No 25 Squadron occupies a unique place in the history of the RNZAF. It was formed specifically to fly one type of aircraft, (the Dauntless) and, as part of the US 5th Air Force, only carried out one operational tour against one major target - the Japanese base at Rabaul on the island of New Britain in the Bismarck Sea.

The Squadron's aircraft remained at Seagrove and the next Squadron, No 26 was now formed. This Squadron started to undertake dive bomber training also, but as the war situation started to change, the RNZAF made the decision to scrap its plans to train dive bomber squadrons. No 26 squadron had only been training for a period of 6 weeks on Dauntless aircraft before they were disbanded and relocated to Ardmore Airfield flying Corsair fighters. As Seagrove was essentially vacant, squadrons from Ardmore used the sea just off Seagrove as a firing range, but this was short-lived. Seagrove also served for a time as the location for initial RNZAF training where new recruits would learn the basics of Air Force life before moving into their specialist areas.

Post-war, the station slowly reverted to farmland, although a radio research station was located there for a number of years. The sealed runways which were each a mile long, remained for a considerable time after the war and were used by the Northern Sportscar Club and Auckland Motorcycle Club for their meets well into the

1950s. Many well-known names in New Zealand motorsport competed at Seagrove during these years and the events were the highlight of the racing calendar. Over time the seal began to break up and the sportscar club made the decision to move to Ardmore. Today, Seagrove is again private farmland but remnants remain everywhere, such as evidence of the two tarseal runways, although they have been overgrown by grass and weeds, retaining walls built into the hillside, various bullets and building foundations etc. A permanent memorial plaque was placed there in 1993 to commemorate 50 years since World War 2 and serves as a reminder of this all but forgotten RNZAF station.



Seagrove, 2011. The location of the runways is very evident. Image courtesy of Peter Lewis

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Pukekiwiriki neighbours

Kirikiri farms and community

Rob Finlay

When 100 families and single men were each granted 10 acres of Kirikiri land in 1865, confiscated from Te Akitai in the previous year, how many of them knew they would live out the rest of their lives in the valley or the surrounding slopes? But that is what happened for several families. Most were Lowland Scots, but a group of Irish Scots from Antrim and County Down in Ulster —the Clark Smiths, Croskerys, McMurrays, Neillies and McKinstry—were neighbours occupying a good part of the centre of Kirikiri, or like the Nicols, just outside the original limits.

In this issue we look at those who lived further from Papakura Village, many of them outside the Papakura District Board boundaries established in 1882 along Dominion Road (then known as the Boundary Road), and some outside Kirikiri. I will establish how close-knit they were as a community, Presbyterians in the first generation, often linked by marriage, business and social ties, involved in each others' wills, while also part of the wider life of Papakura and surrounding areas.

The neighbours of the Croskerys (who featured in the last issue) on Croskery Road were Gavin and Mary Jane **McMurray**. Gavin was a labourer from Antrim in Ulster, though Mary Jane was born in Glasgow, and they were in their early 20s and childless when they arrived in NZ on the *Viola*. Two daughters were born in Kirikiri, Elizabeth McCambridge (or McKimbridge) Thompson in 1867, and Mary Jane in 1873.

Gavin was in Thames in 1870, but they kept their Kirikiri land (where the Red Hill Community Centre is today) and enlarged it: on Electoral Rolls he was usually recorded with 'Lot 48 etc'. The 'etc' is amplified in Rates records: Allotments 42,43,48 from 1887 and 45 in 1895/1900. He also owned 53 (the older Thomas Neillie's) in 1888, but had relinquished it to Clark Smith by 1895. In addition he leased or bought several 1/4 acre village sections adjoining his own. He regularly contracted with the Papakura Board for work on roads and bridges in Kirikiri. In 1885 one payment from the Board totalled £50.13.4. In 1887, McMurray took a case against the Town Board for £25. Twelve years before at his own expense, he had constructed and maintained a wooden culvert to drain the swamp in his place which collected water from the slopes of Pukekiwiriki above it, but it had been useless as it was stopped up with an annual growth of raupo. The problem was examined by peers and neighbours – J McLennan, Alexander McNeil, James Walker senior and junior.

Gavin McMurray was sued for damages in 1895 when he drove into another waggon in Newmarket at night. There was a dispute about whether he had lit his light – he said he had, but he may have been on the wrong side of the road. In 1911 he met a young man at the saleyards who sold him two cows for £10, sight unseen, and £5.2.6 paid on the spot. The case ended in court when the cows never appeared.

Gavin was deeply involved in the community. For some years he organised an annual treat for the children, he was elected to the Papakura School Committee in 1888 (and was Treasurer in 1887), and to the Presbyterian church committee, he was a founder of the Papakura Temperance Society and appointed to the licensing committee in 1888. He was also elected to the Highway Board, Papakura District Board, Papakura Fruitgrowers Association, the bowling club, and was one of the organisers for *Viola* reunions.

He was a very active member of the Orange Lodge, which was dominated by Ulstermen, and with his forthright opinions it appeared he might have been hard to work with. He was the last remaining Trustee.

Mary Jane married Robert Henry Bates in 1899. In 1900 they were paying rents on Allot 42 (owned by Gavin), but the couple later lived in Eastburn St, Hastings, and then in Auckland. Her sister married Matthew Gill

Hutchinson (born in 1870) in 1908, and the couple remained in Papakura.

Mary Jane died in 1905, but Gavin lived till 1930. In later years he lived on his quarter acre section in Onslow Road. Both daughters were alive when their father died. He left his property to them, house and furniture, and sections 25, 29, 31 on Onslow Road to Mary Jane Bates of Auckland, and house and furniture on 32 Victoria St (Settlement Rd west of the railway tracks) to Elizabeth McKimbridge Hutchinson.

The McMurrays were close to the Fultons who lived for some time just over Dominion Road outside the Town District. The will of William Fulton was witnessed by Gavin McMurray, his daughter Elizabeth Hutchinson, and Fulton's daughter Marion Baxter. The two families were rather similar, Fultons having one daughter and the McMurrays two of about the same age, and both wives died in the 1900s.

Gavin McMurray was one of the last of the first generation to survive; his executors were a neighbour in Marne Road and a businessman (Beame) in Papakura.

William Fulton was a single 25-year old labourer when he arrived on the *Viola* in 1865, but he married ship-mate Marion (or Mary) McNeill that same year.

He was from Kilwinning near Stevenston, Ayrshire, and had joined the Royal Navy in his teens. He appears to have been at the Crimea and was in China at the time of the taking of the Baku forts, for which he received a medal; he was a stoker on HMS *Snap* in 1861. When he took his discharge he came to New Zealand, somewhere further south, and then briefly returned to Scotland in 1863, just in time to join the *Viola*. His obituary from which some of the above is taken, says that he came out with a brother, but he was the only Fulton on the list. It is possible it refers to his future brother in law. He went mining in Thames in 1868 and sold his allotment to Clarkson, but returned to buy allotment 27 on Dominion Road. Old soldiers McLeod and Hamilton sold him their allotments in 1827 (and Hamilton his town section.) William and Marion had one daughter, Marion McNeil, born 1872. He was active in the Papakura Fruitgrowers Association and in 1892 when he was President, he lamented the damage due to codlin moth (then spreading through the country) in his opening speech at the Annual Show, and showed a range of apples, quinces and lemons. (Others of our settlers at that gathering were Robert McCrae of Hunua, John McLennan who exhibited 20 varieties of apples, Mrs McLean and Alexander McNeil.

At some stage he sold his land adjacent to Dominion Road. In the Drury Rates Book of 1913-14, he was paying rates only on Allot 138 Kirikiri, of 37 acres. This made him neighbour to the Rhinds at the top of the Pukekiwiriki loop, outside of the area of 10 acre grants.

In 1890 the Fultons hosted the marriage of Marion McNeil Fulton to James McLaren Baxter, 32 year old stud groom of Otahuhu. Mary Jane McMurray, neighbour, was a witness.

Mary Fulton died in 1908. William married again, to Rachael McPherson, half-sister to Mary nee Sheridan, wife of John McCrae, a one-time neighbour. Rachael had also been a passenger on the *Viola* with her husband Robert, a baker, and had settled in Wairoa with the same number of children she had left Scotland with: a son had died and a daughter was born on the *Viola*. Both her daughter and a subsequent child had died by the time she lost her second husband. She may have been living over his back fence with the McCraes before she married. She died on 4 October 1920, five days before William on the ninth. He had been healthy almost to the end. All their property went to Marion Baxter, then living in Hamilton. William's property was valued at £2750, and Rachel's at less than £900.

Beyond the McMurrays on Dominion Road and the Walkers on Hunua Road on were 30 acres belonging to **John and Jane McLennan**. In the 1861 census of Scotland, John McLennan, aged 21 was recorded as the Glasgow-born head of a household consisting of an older sister and two younger brothers living in 245 High Street, St Pauls, Glasgow. He was an apprentice plumber. By 1865, married to Jane Harlet (sp?) and with 11

month old Jane, they arrived on the *Resolute*; he was listed as a plumber. Their original allotment grant (on the corner of Boundary and Hunua Road) was bought out by George Clarkson. There is no evidence that John McLennan went to Thames. In 1887 they also held Allotments 50-51 (between Hunua, Dominion and Croskery roads) that were later part of the farm of Clark Smith.

John had a strong sense of fair play and was active in public life, on the Papakura Town Board between 1882 and 1884, and regularly involved in Annual Meetings. He was also engaged in political issues. He argued for the abolition of Auckland Province at a public meeting in 1874. The Province's funding issues had been in part responsible for the struggles the settlers had faced in 1865; in the aftermath of a war, it was unable to raise finances that only Central Government could access. In 1889 he accused the Papakura District Board of favouring the Village over Kirikiri. And in 1907, he wrote a letter to the *Auckland Star*, arguing for a Land Bill in a voice that was forthright, eloquent, Scottish and Christian. Against those, including Clevedon settlers who, he felt, had tried to silence him at a political meeting, he argued that preserving leasehold kept the land in the hands of the people, while transferring it to freehold would merely make it easier to sell so that it would end up benefitting only the rich. Leasehold vs freehold was a big issue of the time. The Liberal government of the 1890s had worked hard to enable would-be farmers to access land, through alienation from Maori land-holders and breaking up the big estates, among other means. Minister of Agriculture the Highlander Jock McKenzie had been foremost in this enterprise. Some of this land was on long-term lease. Many Liberal supporters believed that any increase in land value should belong to the state because the increase was created by the community through their taxes. But the conservative opposition, Farmers Unions and the Political Reform League had drummed up a wave of support for the end of leasehold, and Prime Minister Joseph Ward was wavering against their vehemence in 1909. In McLennan's letter we can hear the voice of this old settler reflecting on his experience:

'I have lived in Papakura forty-two years. My old wife and me have reared a big family. New Zealand is their home, they know no other; and good government and fair play in this glorious wee country of ours means as much to us as to most other people... Give the freehold, and gold hath the sway, we all obey.'

Ironically, for someone who had a strong sense of fair play, his will, witnessed by James McKinstry and his son Alexander Lee McKinstry, led to division within the family by dividing his property—half to his wife with the other half shared between his oldest child Jane Hastie, Kingsland, wife of William Hastie warder at the Mental Hospital, and his youngest, Kenneth, railway employee, in equal shares; and he named them both his executors. Although he died in 1911, the will was not applied for until 1919. There were other children, and there was resentment. An affidavit explained that the will had been held by their mother until early 1919, when she handed it to Kenneth, because some siblings had been aggrieved. 'I applied for the will soon after my father's death but there was such a family quarrel over it that I thought it best to wait.'

The other siblings in 1919 were: John W McLennan, farmer, Onetea; Peter, engine driver, Penrose, Miss Margaret in Papakura, Hugh, then a bushman in Onetea 'via John', and Mrs Annie Birch, Mt Eden. An earlier list provided by Jane had included Robert, 'now at the front in active service' - who would not return, and named two others, Thomas who died aged 35 in 25/11/1905 at his parents' residence, and William who had died aged 14 in 1886 in a tragic accident at Coulthards' mill.

Hugh would return to Papakura, and marry the widow of Alexander Lee McKinstry.

Above the Fultons on what is now Redcrest road was the McCrae farm. Its road frontage may have been a nominal track at the time.

The McCraes, Robert, a 48-year old labourer, and Martha, 46, were among the older families on the *Viola*. They came from Stevenston in Ayrshire, so it is possible that William Fulton may have known them in his

youth, although Robert had been born in nearby Saltcoats, and older son John in West Kilbride near Glasgow. In 1851 he was a mason and dairy keeper and ten years later he was a gardener in the Main Street. He had married Martha Caldwell in July 1841. With them on the *Viola* were two daughters Margaret, 22 and Jane, 7, and two sons. The older son John 18 (a farm labourer), qualified to receive a grant, allotment 25, next to his parents. They lived first in a nikau whare, then a sawn timber house, later updated. John and either his father or younger brother Robert were in Thames in 1869, although they returned to Papakura.

Robert wrote a will (or more correctly had it written for him by Charles Williams 'at his dictation, he being illiterate') in September 1877. The witnesses were his neighbours Williams and Alexander McNeil. He died in September in 1878 aged 62, leaving everything to his wife Martha, and on her death, the real estate to John, £20 to Jane, and personal property to be divided equally between the three surviving children. The oldest, Margaret had married neighbour and former shipmate Robert English, a woodcutter, but had died in 1875, aged 32 at the birth of her son Robert, who also died at 8 months. Her husband also disappears from the record, and in 1913 and 1919 John was farming and paying rates on three allotments, his and his father's original grants 22 and 25, which he owned, and his brother-in-law's estate, allotment 26. Martha died on 11/9/1886, aged 67.

Older son John McCrae wrote an affidavit in 1888, giving some insight into their lives. He had been living at home, but getting up early and returning late working on the Auckland-Drury railway, and his father was then an invalid. Then, 'about a year before my mother died I was told by her that my father had signed a paper by which I was to pay my sister Jane twenty pounds and my sister being then about to marry one William Hall I at my mother's request paid to my sister a sum of eight pounds, that for many years my father and mother and my sister were entirely dependent on me for support.' He hadn't realised that the paper was a will but after his mother died was prompted to search some papers in drawers, and found the will, which was duly carried out. The affidavit was signed in the presence of an English neighbour Matthew Watkinson.

After working at Thames, at some stage John had worked in the bush at Tuakau, splitting posts, shingles and palings. He broke a leg while at this work. Then he had worked on the construction of the Auckland-Mercer railway in the mid 1870s.

John married Mary Sheridan in 1887 at the home of her sister Mrs Rachael McPherson at Clevedon, and they had four children including two unnamed and presumably stillborn children in 1888, and a daughter Mary in 1889 who died in infancy. His wife died in 1934 aged 76 and John outlived her by two years and died at the age of 90. His funeral service, as it was for most of our Presbyterians, was at the graveside, and taken by Rev Yule. Their property was assessed at under £3860 in 1929. John's 1935 will left Robert's son Joseph McCrae of Hunua, and niece Rachel Hall of Cambridge as his executors, and all his real property went to his sister Jane Hall and her daughter Rachel, with other bequests to nieces. (Jane had married William Hall jnr in 1885: his sister Anne, who became one of Papakura's pioneer photographers, was married to Thomas Duncan Campbell, *Viola* immigrant. Both siblings lost a son during World War 1.)

The younger brother, Robert McCrae, bought lot 9 in Hunua in 1878, and married Elizabeth Middlemas from an established Drury family in 1882. He predeceased his brother. His son Joseph farmed the land after him, and inherited from his uncle. McCraes owned land in Hunua until 1950, and there were children in the Ramarama school in the 1940s.

On the corner of Dominion and the Settlement Roads, and neighbours of the Fultons, was the farm of Alexander and Isabella **McNeil**. Alexander and Isabella were both 39 years old, and he described himself as a labourer, when they travelled on the *Resolute* with three sons and two daughters. They appear to have lost another daughter in Scotland. Alexander had been a cotton spinner and handloom weaver in Renfrew. They and their oldest son Alexander jnr were granted two farm allotments (70/71), which were both sold to George

Clarkson (although Electoral Rolls do not remove their listing for some years). Kuranui house was probably built on one of those allotments.

Two Presbyterian marriages took place in their home. Janet, a 24 year old housemaid, married Thomas Galbraith McClymont, farmer, of Maungatawhiri Valley (witnessed by the bride's sister Margaret McNeil, housemaid and Frederick McClymont, farmer) in October 1879; and Margaret, then aged 19, married 23 year old James McKinstry, farmer, witnessed by her older brother George McNeil, miner of Coromandel, and Martha Nicol. Both brothers were miners.

The McNeils appear to have farmed just outside the Town District on the corner of Settlement and Dominion Road. In 1896 Alexander McNeil identified himself as a farmer, and during the 1880s effort went into improving the road between McNeils and McMurrays and removing a hill just before their place. They moved into the town lots 73 and 74 (Onslow and King Edward), over the road from Pitts' block of sections by 1887, when they were in their sixties.

They were active in the Presbyterian church. At the 1876 annual meeting of the united district congregations, a 'table was provided by the settlers of Kirikiri, at which Mrs McNeil presided.' Alexander was on the board of management in 1881. He died in 1897, his will signed by William Richardson, whose wife was a McLean, and John McLennan, both described as Papakura farmers. The sole executor was George McNeil of Kuaotunu, their oldest son. Isabella McNeil died at her home in 1900, aged 75.

Half way up Red Hill road were Charles and Sarah Williams, 31 and 32 years old when they travelled out on the *Resolute*. He was described as a mason. There is no indication that they had any children. It is unfortunate for researcher that there were several Charles Williams in the Auckland province, more than one of them married to Sarah, but this is only one of the questions that have puzzled me. Another was the location of their original Allotment. Allotment 101 was up Red Hill Road, and here they presumably lived, but lists also link them with 55A on the corner of the Settlement and Hunua roads next to Carmichaels.

Charles wrote up the will of neighbour Robert McCrae at his dictation, and on his death in 1878 provided an affidavit. In various Electoral Roll records his presence in Kirikiri is established throughout the 1870s and 1880s. Up to 1877 they are on Lot 101, in 1882 he is described as a dairyman on 'Lot 1 etc', and in 1887 as a farmer. He had added lots 52 and 53. He also bought up several town lots. And then he disappears. The rates book for 1887 indicates that his village sections (41-48, 27, 28, 39, 50) were owned by the Town Board, and in the 1889-1890 year were sold to Thomas Kenzie. It was probably then that Clark Smith bought allotments 52 and 53.

So there is a mystery around the Williams. It appears that he was someone of ability and drive who was engaged in Kirikiri life, and bought both town sections and rural blocks. What happened in 1887? Did they emigrate? There are no death records than or later that can clearly be established as theirs.

Between the McCraes and Settlement Road Thomas Paton owned 20 acres by 1913. Though not an original Kirikiri settler, Thomas had lived in Otau, Wairoa Valley since he was an 11 year old when the family arrived on the *Viola*. His father John, a miner, had been working in Valparaiso in Chile when he was born, but the family had returned to Scotland for some years before emigrating on the *Viola*. After working on the Waikato railway he had taken up a farm in Ness Valley before moving to Papakura in 1912. A son, also Thomas, was living on Settlement Road when he died in 1940.

Lee and Jane (Law) **McKinstry** were originally from County Antrim in Ireland, where he was working as a grocer and spirit dealer at the age of 21. They married in 1850 and moved to Scotland, living with relations in Ayr, where he worked as an agricultural labourer. They came out on the *Viola* with five children. William was 14, James 11, Mary 10, Robert 7 and Lee was only one. Their last son, Andrew, was born in Kirikiri in 1867. In Oc-

tober that year Lee was recorded taking out a Miner's Right in Karaka, Thames, and he renewed it a year later, and also bought shares in the Southern Cross mining company in 1869. Their original allotment had been 12, just beyond two Clarkson brothers, on Dominion Road. It was to Lee's house that the injured John Clarkson repaired in tears after he had been attacked one night leaving the Travellers Rest.

Lee and his son William were both recorded as farmers of Papakura in 1880 and 1890. By 1887 (and up till at least 1900) they also held Allot 11, which had been John Clarkson's. (There has been confusion with another McKinstry family, a businessman William, based in Ponsonby, but with land in Opaheke parish, and a James McKinstry who also had land Hunua land in the 1870s and 1880s, maybe connected to this William.)

Lee was active in the Orange Lodge. He died in 1891, 26 years before Jane in 1920, She was also sadly pre-deceased by at least four grandsons during World War 1, three of them due to illness. Her obituary notice stated that she left 5 living sons and 1 daughter, and was a faithful Presbyterian – and respected other creeds.

Of their children, William became a coachman on the North Shore and married late in life, Mary set a precedent when she married Frederick Cossey who farmed in Opaheke before becoming a bootmaker in Auckland, Robert married Alison Tullis, a *Resolute* settler, and the couple lived in Auckland, where he built houses, gardened and was a horse-racing enthusiast; Lee, a baby when the family arrived in the country, became a builder and married Milly Blake from Pukekohe in Ponsonby in 1890, and bought and trained racehorses; while New Zealand-born Andrew emigrated to Australia and disappeared. Horses and building featured large among the sons.

This left the second son James in Papakura; in 1881 he married Margaret McNeil, second daughter of Alexander McNeil, who had come out on the *Resolute*. Their children continued a marital connection begun by James' sister. There were 6 McKinstry-Cossey marriages in their generation. Like their neighbours the Walkers and McLeans, the McKinstrys bought land (Lot 4, part Lot 6 of Sec 52) that had previously been owned by the Hay family outside the 10-acre Kirikiri grants on the other, south side of Hunua Road. (In the Drury Rate Book of 1913-14 and in various advertisements, this Lot 6 property was described as Whitiki, which may have been the name for the area. When someone put up a poultry farm for sale in 1914, there was a post office in the farm house.) They also owned Sec 40 in Hunua Parish.

James' oldest son Alexander Lee McKinstry, farmer, married Harriet Cossey in 1907 They had 5 children. According to the 1913-14 Drury Rates Book Alex McKinstry (of Whitiki) owned Allotments 17,23,24—30 Kirikiri acres, some of it formerly owned by William Fulton and Alexander McNeil, on the county side of Dominion Road. He died in 1915 aged 33, leaving all his land to Harriet. In 1919, Mrs Harriet McKinstry had 20 acres along Dominion Road. (She then married another Kirikiri second generation settler, neighbour Hugh McLennan in 1919. They had 4 still born births spread across the 1920s, but the family records name one live daughter Bonny Jean who became Mrs Marsh but herself had no children.) Harriet McLennan was still described as a farmer in 1930. But by 1936, Lots 23,24—20 acres—were described as the Estate of Mrs Harriett McKinstry per Eric Neale McKinstry, Hunua Rd, Papakura. The third 10 acre block passed to her husband: in 1936 – Hugh McLennan was paying rates on Lot 17, 10 acres.

The short-lived place-name Whitiki illustrates the expansion of the *Viola* and *Resolute* farming families living beyond and around the original Kirikiri grants. McKinstrys, McLeans and James Walker junior, living just opposite his parents, were neighbours south of Hunua Road. In addition, Rhinds and Fultons ended up holding land beyond the loop road round Pukekiwiriki. We have previously referred to the McCrae family and the Thomas Stewarts who bought and cleared land in the Hunuas. Just to the north, the

Neillies (see below), Samuel Smith (Clark's older son), Frank Eddington (who had returned to Scotland but came back again), the Nicols and the Brisbanes owned Ardmore farms. Returning back along the Wairoa (Clevedon) Road, Thomas and Anne Campbell had a small block. To the West of the Kirikiri settlement the Clark Smith family owned a farm, the run-off stretching towards Pahurehure inlet, and at the end of Beach Road, Frederick McClymont had his farm. A few families like the Pitts and McLeods had moved earlier to the village, and others joined them there in retirement, especially in and near Onslow Road.



Top: Among these veterans of different conflicts photographed by Mrs Anne Campbell in Papakura in 1903 are (top left) Andrew McLean, second row standing McClymont (left, either Frederick or Thomas Galbraith), William Fulton (right). Anne Campbell was married to TD Campbell, who came on the *Viola*.

Lower: Photographed the following year by A Richardson, whose mother arrived on the *Viola*, Fulton is again shown (second left at the back), and in the same row, second and third from the right, are James Walker junior and senior. Also bottom right is James Rhind. Rev Thomas Norrie is fourth from the left.



William Fulton and James Rhind were among the speakers at the November meeting.

Some identities are unknown.

Can anyone identify them from family photos?

Permission Papakura Museum

The Neillies/ Nealies of Ardmore. Old Thomas had bought Allotment 173, 170 acres, before 1877 when he was killed by a falling tawa branch while searching for cattle. His son Thomas inherited it, but it seems to have been his wife, Mary Jane, who looked after the cattle. She featured in an interesting case where Nicol neighbours (I'm not sure if our John Nicol) unsuccessfully sued her for causing the death of two cows after her dogs had chased them off her land. The case turned on diagnosis of tutu poisoning. William Fulton was one of those providing expert advice. Both farms were in bush and separated only by a road.

In 1883 the incapacitated Thomas transferred ownership to Mary Jane, and he died in 1886. In 1885 she sold the right to cut timber on her land for three years to the Coulthard brothers, renewed in 1887, before selling it in 1888. Only her sister in law, the widowed Mary (nee Rhind) and her children remained in Kirikiri.

In the next and last article, we will follow the surviving families in the Twentieth Century, and what remains of their legacy today when even the name Kirikiri has been, by and large, forgotten.

Correction to previous article, *Sentinel* Number 60, p 15: Photo of marriage of Isabella Clarkson and Thomas Bennett, not 'Becket' as given. Apologies.

[Citations provided on request.]

NOTICES **[Reminder subs are due: \$25]**

MEETINGS: (held in the Papakura Library meeting room):

October meeting, Thursday 27 October at 1 pm. Dr Iain Wakefield: 'From the ends of the Earth to Drury'

November Meeting, Thursday 24 November at 1 pm. Mrs Rhys Bean: 'A radiographer looks back: the inside story on x-rays'. Highs and lows on the job, and how procedures have changed.

MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS:

10 Oct—14 Nov.: Display of art and artefacts from people of Ukraine

December—April: Soaring—Auckland Gliding Club. Learn all about gliding.

March—June: Anne Frank exhibition with school focus.

TRIPS: The committee will be meeting this month.

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Library Meeting Rooms opposite the Museum, starting with the talk at 1 pm, continuing with business and afternoon tea (for a **\$2 gold coin** minimum). All are welcome. Phil Sai-Louie arranges our interesting speakers.

Events are advertised here, on the screen in the Museum window and on our blog and Facebook pages. Please check for updates and Museum news.

Trips are usually held on the fourth Saturday of each month two days after the meetings. The bus leaves from East Street behind the Access Point building at 10 am, unless otherwise stated. Cost is \$5 more for non-members, but anyone is welcome on a first come first aboard basis. Please register early and advise if unable to attend as numbers are limited.

To register for trips, please ring Dave at (09) 2984507

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The Papakura Sentinel is a bimonthly magazine of the Papakura & Districts Historical Society. Your contributions are welcomed. Please send directly to Terry or Rob by email: pdhs@papakuramuseum.org.nz



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Papakura Heritage Walk—will be part of Auckland Heritage Festival in October, with walks on 1st October 10am—1pm and 8th October 12.30 pm –3.30 pm. Bookings required—.

Contact Rob at pdhs@papakuramuseum.org.nz if interested in a group tour, to be arranged.

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