

# **RIWAKA MEMORIES**

By

**WAA (Albert) RYDER**



©

William Ryder of London was born on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1830, and was baptised at the Islington Church in the county of Middlesex on June 19<sup>th</sup> 1830, his father being a baker of Hornsey Row, his mother's name being Mary Ann. Apparently his father died early in life as his mother was later married to Warr and later again to Gould. I have no record of his emigrating to Australia to engage in gold mining, but it must have been about 1849. He followed the gold rushes at Ballarat and Bendigo.

I do not know if he had any success with mining but just prior to his return to England, he was a partner with another man in buying stock from graziers, and driving them to the diggings, and selling the meat to the miners. This venture was evidently successful as he was able to take a return passage to England. All travel in those days was by sailing ship and the captain decided to return via Rio de Janeiro. Gold was used as currency, and as the accommodation on the ship was crowded, the captain persuaded all the passengers to deposit their canvas bags of gold with him for safekeeping in his cabin. While taking on supplies of fresh water, whilst anchored in the bay, the whole of the bags went missing so William Ryder arrived back in London with only the gold which he carried in the pouches of a canvas belt which he wore around his waist. But he was not deterred from marrying the girl of his choice, the ceremony taking place in the Stepney Church on September 5<sup>th</sup> 1853.



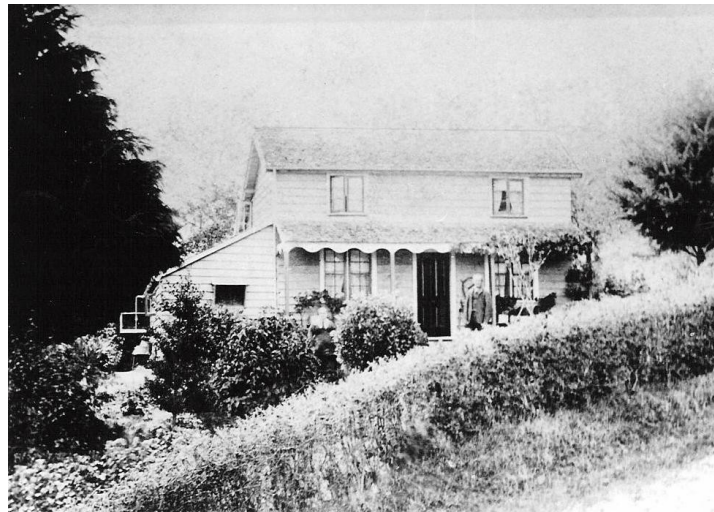
William Ryder, miner, aged 23 married Ann Elizabeth Cousins, 21, by R Carter Smith, the witnesses being Sophia Cousins and Thomas Ryder.

They decided to emigrate to New Zealand taking passenger on the ship 'Eagle' of 284 tons, Captain Looke from London, with 969 packages. Passengers Messrs Henryson, Lyon, Shaw, Lordington,

Delamain, Wallace, Guarin, Mr & Mrs Bland and 7 children, Mr & Mrs Keteren and 7 children, Mr Wakefield, (Mrs Looke and infant), Messrs McCabe, Robertson, Newman, Hill, Lissaman, Mr & Mrs Ryder, Mr & Mrs Hale, Misses Hase, Burns, Matthews, Wake and Fisher.

1853 MARRIAGE Solemnized at the Parish Church, in the Parish of Stepney, in the County of Middlesex.								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
	10th September	William Ryder	23	Bachelor	Miner	7 Queen Street	William Ryder	Baker
	5	Ann Elizabeth Cousins	21	Spinster	- - -	7 Globe Road	William Cousins	Green Grocer
<p>Married in the Parish Church, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <u>or after</u> <u>Banns</u> by me, <u>R Carter Smith</u></p> <p>This Marriage was Solemnized between us, <u>William Ryder</u> { in the Presence of us, <u>Ann Elizabeth Cousins</u> } <u>Thomas Ryder</u></p> <p>Extracted from the Register of Marriages this <u>5th</u> day of <u>September</u> 1853. By me, <u>A. J. Smith</u></p>								

They landed in Nelson early in 1854. He procured a cottage on the east side of Fiddle Alley (now Fiddle Lane) where the first child was born on June 25<sup>th</sup> 1854. His first employment was as a maltster, but shortly after the baby was born, he was employed by Mr Rochfort at a sawmill in the Riwaka Valley, situated across the river from where he took up land, and made his home calling it Fuchsia Hill Farm, on account of the many konini trees around.



The first home in Riwaka was situated on the east side of a road which was washed away in a big flood in the Motueka River in 1877, but after he had moved to the farm in the Riwaka Valley. He decided to develop a butchery business, but also leased from the Dehra Doon property, the land on the north side of the Riwaka River. He cleared the bush

from the river, and later took up two sections (79 & 80) on the ridge at the back of the Dehra Doon property.

His method of clearing the bush was to cut down the trees then trim all the branches off the trunk and pile them against the trunk to be burned later. When the burning was completed, the land between the stumps and logs was grubbed over with a mattock, and was usually sown first in wheat to provide flour for the home. The wheat was cut by hand with a sickle (a large sized reap hook with a serrated edge). When dry it would be thrashed with a flail, and after winnowing in the wind, it had to be carried to the local flourmill, a primitive affair consisting of two stone rollers cut from local stone and driven by waterpower. To get the wheat ground into flour (a very coarse wholemeal type) meant a walk of about six miles and crossing the Riwaka River twice without any bridge. The stone rollers of this early flour mill are now included in the memorial cairn to early settlers which is erected at the old Pah Point, just at the start of the coastal road to Kaiteriteri. The cairn also marks the spot where the settlers first landed in Riwaka.

He was a foundation member of the Riwaka Oldfellows Lodge and must have played cricket a little, as I well remember E. F. McNabb saying that he was a very safe fieldsman, especially at point. He certainly took a keen interest in cricket as after his retirement to Nelson he would regularly trudge down to Trafalgar Park from Van Dieman Street to watch cricket in spite of a lameness, which necessitated a walking stick. Another disability, which bothered him, was deafness, which was caused by a small beetle getting into his ear while burning rubbish on a clearing. He was very fond of a game of cribbage and in his latter years liked to have a game or two every night. He kept a good vegetable garden in Nelson, and was always neat and methodical. I remember him first when he used to return to Riwaka for a holiday, when he would ask for some willow trees to be felled and sawn into lengths so that he could get some exercise with splitting the wood to burn in the pig coppers.

The first bridge over the Riwaka River was a wooden footbridge, but stout enough for horses to be taken across as it was part of the old bridle track to Takaka. This bridge was about 150 years above the present bridge but was washed away in a big flood about 1895. The first traffic bridge erected shortly afterward was a wooden one about midway between the old one and the present concrete one. The first wharf for Riwaka was a landing from the Eddy Road, a short road leading from Lodders Lane to the Motueka River. The next wharf was

erected at the end of the Green Tree Road, the green tree was originally a ngaio but later was replaced by a blue gum which still stands. The next wharf was at the present site of the Riwaka wharf with a crossing usable up to about half tide only, leading from the Green Tree Road.

Although there was a bridge over the Motueka River from about 1880, produce and timber continued to be shipped from Riwaka chiefly by sailing coasters, and in the last stages by a small steamer named the 'Elsie'. The road down the Riwaka Valley past the hotel then turns right, this portion being known as Stony Road, as it was only an embankment formed by digging a wide ditch on either side. In my school days this road would be covered at high spring tide, except for the two bridges, the Middle Bridge and the White Bridge over the Little Sydney Creek.

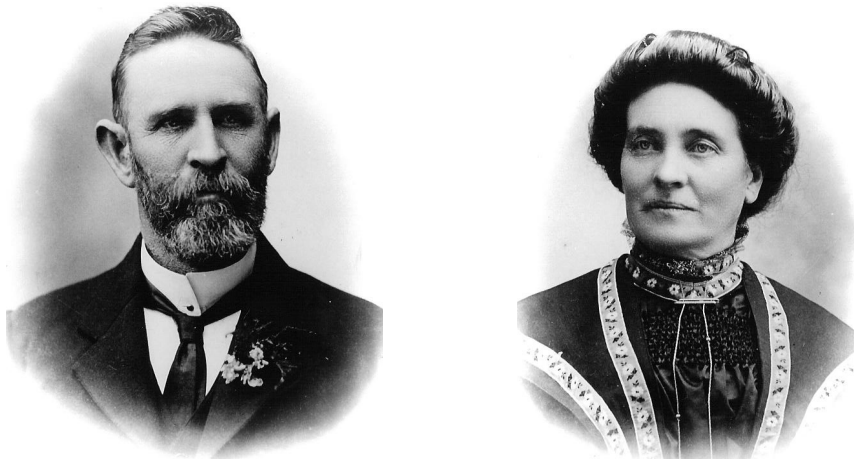
William Pattie who owned most of the land down to the Green Tree, built a stop bank and reclaimed many acres of good farm land. My first recollection of this property was when visiting Mrs Charles Pattie, an elderly widow who lived on a finger of land, jutting out into a maze of tidal channels during high spring tides. Mrs Pattie had a son living with her, who had a hunched back, and was always known as 'Little Charlie'. He had been trained in engineering and had a large workshop. He built a small iron steamer complete with engine.



John and Frederick Ryder went to the North Island seeking employment as there was little scope in the Nelson district at that time. They soon established a butchery business in Otaki, where some years later, they were joined by Henry and Walter. They all seemed to like to visit Riwaka for their holidays, although all had old school friends, which they would look up. Uncle Fred's first call would invariably be to see his old Sunday school teacher, Mrs Chas Pattie.

Although only a schoolboy, it was a source of wonder to me how he could manage to tone down his rather colourful language, so that it would prove acceptable to a Sunday school teacher. He would also visit his school mate Jack Inglis. Walter would always visit H.O. Drummond, but that could possibly be because he knew Mrs Drummond also, who as a girl (Annie Staines) worked for his mother in the home.

There were three pairs of the Ryder Bros who engaged in the butchery business – William and Edward at Riwaka, John and Fred at Otaki, where Walter worked with them for some time, and Henry and Herbert at Petone.



William Ryder Jr was first employed by a surveyor who set up all the trig stations in the area. Later he leased land in Queen Victoria Street, Motueka and engaged in hop growing. This was where he resided when he married Alice Hand McNabb in 1881. His three children were born there, the home being called Walton Lodge situated on the west side of Queen Victoria Street.



COPY OF REGISTER OF MARRIAGE.

1887. Marriages in the District of *Motueka*

No.	Where and When Married.	Names and Surnames of the Parties.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Condition of Parties: 1. Bachelor or Spinster (or as case may be). 2. Widower or Widow. 3. Date of Divorce of former Wife or Husband.	Birthplace.	Evidence: 1. Present. 2. Usual.	PARENTS.	
								Father's Name and Surname (1), and his Rank or Profession (2).	Mother's Name (1), and Maiden Surname (2).
67	1887 <i>June 1st</i> <i>Registrar's Office</i> <i>Motueka</i>	<i>William Ryder Junior</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>Farmer.</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Nelson</i>	1. <i>Motueka</i> 2. <i>Motueka</i>	1. <i>William Ryder.</i> 2. <i>Farmer.</i>	1. <i>Annie Ryder.</i> 2. <i>Consens.</i>
		<i>Alice Hand McTebb</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>Dressmaker</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>Riwaka</i>	1. <i>Riwaka</i> 2. <i>Riwaka</i>	1. <i>Edward Fitzgerald McTebb.</i> 2. <i>Carpenter</i>	1. <i>Alice Hand McTebb.</i> 2. <i>Woolf.</i>

MARRIED, after the delivery to me of the Certificate required by "The Marriage Act, 1880," by  
*(sd) Joseph Wood Wilson* Officiating Minister [or Registrar.]

This Marriage was solemnized between us,  
 (sd) *W. Ryder Junior*  
 (sd) *A. H. McTebb*

In the presence of us,  
 (sd) *R. L. McTebb Motueka Carpenter*  
 (sd) *Annie Elizabeth Ryder Riwaka*

I CERTIFY that the above is a true copy of the entry in the Register-Book of Marriages kept by me,  
*Joseph Wood Wilson* Officiating Minister [or Registrar.]

In 1886 he moved to his father's home in Riwaka, taking over the butchery business in partnership with his brother Edward. This was continued until the death of Edward in 1903, when the business was sold to Reay Bros. Ryder Bros had opened a shop in Motueka, first where McCullough's grocery now stands, but later moving to the corner of High and Tudor Streets, where he built a home in 1898. The site of the butchers shop was taken for the widening of Tudor Street. He bought the section from Machirus, a bootmaker.



He was a member of the Motueka Borough Council when it became a borough in 1900, and served continuously until about two years before his death in 1912. He was very fond of music and used to play an English concertina, often playing for any local dances. He bought Sec 51 in the Riwaka Valley from John Duncan, who had

received the Crown grant as one of the early settlers. Later he purchased three sections adjoining, all being in heavy bush. He had about 200 acres felled, the balance being felled by W.A.A. Ryder who erected most of the boundary and subdivision fences. William Ryder Jr also bought 150 acres where the Canaan track leaves the main highway to Takaka. A strip along the frontage was felled and grassed, chiefly to provide access to the telegraph line. It was never stocked, and was used to provide cocksfoot seed for the clearings in the Riwaka Valley and also for totara house blocks, which were commonly used as piles under houses before concrete foundations were available.

The only education received by W Ryder Jr was by attending a night school near the Memorial corner. This was after chopping bush all day and meant a walk of over six miles, twice fording the Riwaka River. His wife (Alice Hand McNabb) was born in Sandy Bay but later her parents moved to Riwaka, the home being built on the right hand side of School Road just before it crosses the tidal creek. She spent some years in Christchurch living with an aunt (Mrs Plank) who kept a hotel at the city end of Papanui Road. While in Christchurch she engaged in dressmaking, but returned to Riwaka when her mother became ill. She married shortly before her mother died, when she took charge of her youngest sister Helen, who afterward married Felix Baigent, who managed a sawmill at Marahau.

Alice Hand McNabb used to play a flutina, somewhat like a piano accordion with mother of pearl keyboard. Her sister Helen (Aunt Nell) who became Mrs Baigent, lived with W. Ryder Jr until she married, and she used to play an accordion. She seemed to know all Dankey's Hymns, and used to delight in getting any children, and adults too, to sing for her.





During my earliest recollections of the old homestead at Riwaka it was used chiefly in connection with the butchery business, a paddock to keep the sheep for mutton and another to graze a couple of hacks for riding. The heavy horses and the house cows were grazed across the road and they could wander across or up and down the riverbed. Unless they were in sight when wanted, one had to take a hack from the paddock and go and search for them. During very heavy rains, it was a case of getting the cows on the home side of the river before it rose too high. Ditches had been dug to take the water from the numerous small streams from the hills, but these in general, followed any depression or some torturous old watercourse. The earth from these ditches had been used to plant hawthorn hedges, though on the drier ground near the river, gorse hedges had been planted.

The river has changed its course several times in my recollection; in fact river gravel can be found right across the floor of the valley. I must make a rough sketch in an endeavor to show the changes in the river course, and the ditches and hedges around the homestead.

When I went to Riwaka about 1903, the farm had been rather neglected, the ditches had not been thoroughly cleaned for years, causing the hawthorn hedges to be drowned in the damper places. Instead of trying to patch up the gaps, I decided to take them all out,

and erect new wire fences, generally on a new line. The hedges were dug out by hand, with the aid of a horse. There was plenty of fencing material available up the Riwaka Valley, or on the Canaan section if I wished to use totara.



In 1907 I decided to break up a small paddock in front of the old house, and establish a home orchard. I set out a full range of fruits, including the following – London Pippin Sturmer, Jonathan, Cox's orange, Delicious and King David apples, several kinds of pears, Burbank plums, greengages medlar, quince, fig, two lemons, Poorman orange, early midseason and late peaches, early and late apricots, several nectarines, almond, prunes, plums, as well as raspberries, gooseberries and both black and red currants. Also there were several wild cherry trees along the bank of the creek, and black and white passion fruit on an old summer house.

I had two varieties of raspberries at first, one a very early variety, with no thorns on the canes, from which I have had ripe berries on November 5<sup>th</sup>, the other variety, being Red Antwerp, the only variety in the district grown commercially at that time. I did not attempt the growing of raspberries commercially until 1918, when I planted two acres across the road. These were either buried or flooded out by a landslip, which came right through the patch of native bush. Some idea of the extent of the slip can be formed, as, included in the debris deposited on the flats was a complete white pine tree, over four feet in diameter. When the land dried out, this was taken to the sawmill and sold for case timber. The road was blocked for a couple of weeks, but I took the opportunity to straighten some of the

fences and ditches, and even arranged to have some bends taken out of the road. When this area of raspberries was replanted, and had come into bearing, I found that the fruit factories were not requiring supplies so I was faced with the problem of finding private sales. At that time all motor spirits came in four gallon tins, so I set about cutting down tins and making hand fruit buckets. With fitting a strip of wood around the top, to enable a wooden lid to be fastened, then painting the outside and giving the inside two coats of shellac, I found these tins make excellent containers, but need close attention each time they are returned. Then, with care to avoid any overripe fruit, I found that there was a ready market for fresh fruit. I gradually increased the acreage, disposing of most of the crop privately, one year selling six tons of raspberries at the gate.

When I first went to Riwaka, the river had a very tortuous course and as there was no Catchment Board, I incurred heavy expense each year with river protection. The flats across the road were subject to heavy flooding, sudden storms often causing losses of sheep, or a hurried trip in the middle of the night to shift them on to higher ground, no easy task with flood waters and in the dark. During the big flood in 1895, a draught horse was washed down the river about a mile, and it was over a day later before she could be rescued from a bank in mid-stream. Horses were the only means of transport at first, and, over the years no less than six horses were lost by accident or sickness, generally at most inconvenient times. Distemper in dogs was another source of worry, and, at one time, I was reduced to having only one pup on the farm.

About 1931 the horses took off with the drill, and I was thrown off, receiving injuries to my back, and a broken collar bone. The Second World War followed shortly afterward with its labour problems and many other restrictions. However I was able to cope with the six acres of raspberries, two acres of black currants, twelve acres of tobacco, with the drying done by hand stoking, and my run cattle, and my flock of sheep, which I had been forced to reduce considerably. I had been forced also to curtail my activities of taking part in local affairs, notably the Federated Farmers of which I have been Provincial President for a couple of years, and the Waimea Electric Power Board of which I was a member when it was first formed. I had taken a leading part in the setting up of the Riwaka Scenic Reserve, the Brooklyn Domain and the Cook Recreation Ground and served on these boards until I retired to Motueka in 1947. I derive great satisfaction from having played a leading part in getting these three reserves established.

The price for the two properties in 1910 was 2000 pounds plus two bonds, each of 500 pounds, one each in favour of my sisters, but payable on demand with a years notice by my father. He died before that notice was given, so I was expected to pay the 1000 pounds into his estate, my mother to derive the interest during her life. As I had effected many improvements on the farms (chiefly a house, and over 200 acres of bush felled and grassed), I was able to change my mortgage to one for 3000 pounds, which was continued until my mother's death in 1943, when all assets were apportioned between my surviving sister and I, in accordance with the terms of my father's will. In 1899 my father purchased 41 acres of land on the Moutere Plain in my name, thus giving me status as a ratepayer when the Motueka Borough was formed in 1900. I continued as a ratepayer until I moved to Stoke in 1964.

This Moutere Plain property was in a rather sorry state, no buildings, and no fences other than gorse hedges, which had been neglected until they were about two chains wide. Thos Starnes was engaged to deal with the gorse with a heavy swamp plough. Some roots were too strong, as when burning, the smaller roots were piled on any missed, and they were grubbed later by hand. Eventually eight wired fences were erected, as it was too far from home to be troubled by having sheep straying. The land was used chiefly for the growing of turnips or other winter crops for the sheep, although I always grew 14 acres or more, to provide chaff for my horses. I grew blue lupins to build up the humus content of the soil, and for some years allowed one paddock to ripen for seed, yielding up to 50 bushels per acre. It was excellent land for turnips, and being well drained, the sheep were rarely troubled with foot rot. The Motueka Borough had installed a stone crusher in a gravel pit across the road and I was able to dispose of most of the larger stones at 1/9 per cubic yard, which about covered the cost of the two horse drays required to keep the team of stone pickers busy. Removing the large stones made a wonderful difference with the cultivation, especially with cutting the corn.

My first fruit pickers in 1920, were three girls from the Wellington Training College, and were very satisfactory. However one had to return home owing to illness in the family. Their report of picking conditions was evidently satisfactory, as from then onwards, I received sufficient applications to fill my requirements of pickers, chiefly from University or Training College girls, and over the years they proved a very satisfactory type. In addition to the hut, I used to provide firewood, milk, vegetables, this latter including peas, beans,

potatoes and lettuce of which I always made special sowings. Then too, apples, pears, plums, peaches, apricots, nectarines etc, were always available in season, as I did not market those, and usually had a surplus, and if my monthly fishing excursion was successful, there was often fish to distribute. However during the war years, I had to forego my monthly excursions down to Big Rock or spearing flounder, and the pickers during later years, did not receive quite so many perks.

When I went to Riwaka the paddock beyond the sheds was divided at the foot of the bank by a patch of impassable swamp. Some idea of its depth may be formed, as I can remember a fat steer jumping out of the stockyard, only to get bogged when trying to cross the swampy part. The steer was shot, and the carcass hauled out with block and tackle. I set myself the task of draining this swamp using field tiles. The main outlet was of four inch tiles, which used to run nearly half full right through the summer. Another job I undertook was to clear and break up the terrace at the foot of the hill. This was very stony and we used to dig out the stones when the flats were too wet for working. At that time I used to keep records of the time spent on the various jobs, and when the terrace was cleared and ploughed. I found that it had cost me 10 pound per acre to clear. This included taking out all stone showing and sledging them off and dumping them over the edge of the terrace. Then I had two boys following the plough with picks to take out any stones showing and when the ploughing was completed, these also were sledged off. Some stones were too large to handle, and had to be broken up with gelignite and a stone hammer. The next paddock also had some large stones which had to be dealt with in the same manner. This estimate of cost was worked out on the basis of 1 shilling per hour for all the time spend by both the boys and myself, but no charge included for the use of the horses, or for broken plough points or gelignite.

I may say that prior to purchasing the two properties, I had in partnership with my father (who felt that he should do all that he could to help his brother's widow) taken a lease of the property on the Takaka Hill, known as "Ryder's Dip". It derived the name, not from any sheep dip, but solely because the old bridle track to Takaka took a sharp dip at that point.

At that time the homestead property (65 acres) was fenced except for the portion of Sec 76, but the fences on the Dip property were in poor shape, and fencing materials were getting very scarce. Of the North Branch property about 250 acres had been felled and grassed and about a mile and a half of fencing erected. All the



neighbours were anxious to clear their sections, so I was faced with the task of felling and grassing the remainder right away and then proceeding with subdivision as soon as I was able. I had set out without any money and very little equipment, but my father was very tolerant, knowing that I had been faced with a lot of extra expense. I often wonder how I was able to afford all the improvements, as wool was only 10 pence to 1 shilling per lb, fat sheep rarely 1 pound, and fat cattle 5 pounds. To add to my problems, I was planning to get married, which meant removing the old house, to make way for the new one. My father gave me permission to cut logs from his Canaan section, so I was able to arrange to get the logs delivered to a mill quite handy for 4 shillings per 100 sup. ft, and the milling was done for 5 shillings per 100 ft. The majority of timber cut was either totara or matai, though there was a little rimu and miro. I arranged for the carting of the timber, but the man had trouble with his tyres owing to the heat caused by the brake shoes, on the long continuous slope. That meant another job for me, getting brakes put on the old wagon, and doing the carting myself. These were long days, getting up early to feed the horses, and then greasing the wagon wheels while they had their feed.

The mill was situated in a deep hollow, with a steep pull out on to the road, this necessitating taking part of the load out on to the road, and then along until I could get a convenient place to unload. Then I would go back for the balance of the load as I could bring a fairly full load when once on the main road. On arrival at home I had to sort out the load and put strips so that it would dry out. Those days generally meant from 3am to 9pm and even then the job was not completed as when seasoned, it had to be carted a further six miles to Motueka to be machine dressed then home again and stacked with strips.

To help with the building of the house, I borrowed 600 pounds from my eldest sister, but I managed to pay that back before she died in 1913. Shortly afterward I had the opportunity to purchase 203 acres of hill country adjoining the homestead. As that would give me a decent sized unit near the home. I decided to buy it for 800 pounds, arranging finance by way of overdraft with the Bank of New Zealand. That was an obstacle I was not able to liquidate for many years because we ran into the 1914-1918 war, with its commandeering of wool and many other difficulties followed by a slump at the end of it. There were a few fairly prosperous years about 1925, when wool reached my record price of 24 ½ pence. But these prices were not quite sufficient to liquidate the backlog of arrears, before we ran into the great

depression from 1929 well into the 1930s, when the overdraft piled up once more.

I may say here that I found it necessary to buy a great deal of machinery: a moving machine, a hay rake, Vaughan and Graveley tractors, a big springtime cultivator, a set of discs and heavy harrows, a plough with steel mouldboard and points, a hillside plough, and a six ton stump jack to help remove the stumps which were chiefly dug out by hand.

Then too Hubert Pattie and I decided to lease the section along the North Branch and build a woolshed and yards to serve us both. However Pattie would not assist with the building of the suspension bridge, which meant another job for me. I arranged with Charles Thomas for an option on the land on my side of the river, but on his death that seemed to be lost sight of. I wanted to buy my side of the river, but they wanted 16 pounds per acre, which I considered too high. However the Dehra Doon folk also seemed to be having troubles, and the portion of the section was sold for less than I had offered, and without me knowing that it was for sale. During these years my family had grown and without the aid of social security, or free doctors which apply now. Perhaps the worst feature was that Rose became ill, and after years of abortive treatment, she had to go to Nelson for a goiter operation. The doctor's fee was 60 guineas, plus several weeks at the Manuka Street private hospital. Then too, the children were reaching the age when secondary education was necessary. Then we really felt the force of the depression, soon to be followed by the Second World War, with its labour shortage and other drastic restrictions.

About 1918 I had planted about two acres of raspberries, only to have more than half of them buried by a landslip. The road was blocked for a couple of weeks, but I took the opportunity to straighten some of the fence lines, and even arranged to have some of the bends taken out of the road. However with the poor prices of wool and stock, I was determined to persevere, only to find when the raspberries came into bearing, that the factories were oversupplied. Instead of ploughing them out, I set about building up private sales, and before many years, had passed I had six acres of raspberries in bearing and two acres of black currants. I procured some cuttings of Black Goliath black currants from Tasmania, which proved far superior to the varieties grown hitherto.



When my two sons returned from active service overseas I decided to sell the farms to them and retire to a section of five acres I was holding in Motueka, planting it with the new variety of black currants, with about half an acre of raspberries and a couple of rows of green gooseberries. In Riwaka the currants had cropped at the rate of four tons per acre, but my best yield in Motueka was a little under three tons per acre. We built on the section, a home which I had designed myself, and we were very comfortable. With the exception of some help with spraying and the initial cultivation in the spring, I was able to cope with the pruning, cultivation and harvesting, except of course, the actual picking. Pickers were no problem in Motueka, as no accommodation was needed, and I had more offers than I could cope with. However with the health of both Rose and myself deteriorating, I tried to sell the block of currants, and when that failed, I pulled them out. I worked the patch for the last season, hoping that a buyer would come along, as I was very loath to pull them out just when they had reached full bearing. I finished my fruit growing on a high note, as my final days picking of black currants, yielded just two tons, and my cash return for fruit for that season was just over 1200 pounds. After that I leased the land for growing peas for canning and for tobacco growing then finally selling both home and land and moving to Stoke. There was a ready demand from all over New Zealand for cuttings of the Black Goliath currants, and each year I could for several days make 10 pound per day taking cuttings from the prunings before they were burnt.

The old orchard across the road planted by my grandfather (but now all taken out) in the late 1860s comprised the following trees – four walnuts, two peaches, one yellow Christmas plum, one yellow egg plum, two blue Orlean plums, one fig, one quince, one Codlin apple, two greengages, one Alfriston apple (Glory of the South), one sugar pear, one Munroe apple, one Bishop's Thumb pear, one bergamot pear, two Doyen du Commice pears, one Blue Diamond plum, one very early pear (ripe at Christmas), one Emperor Alexander apple, one Aromatic Russet apple, two Pear Pip apples, two Quarrendon apples. Near the homestead there were a Damson plum, a quince, a lemon, one Emperor Alexander apple, one large green cooking apple, and five wild cherry trees along the bank of the creek, as well as two elderberry trees. There were also black and red currants, gooseberries, and a large clump of raspberries.



Ann Elizabeth Ryder was very fond of flowers, and the garden was bordered with a well trimmed box hedge and daisies. Adjoining the garden was a summer house covered with ivy, banksia rose, honeysuckle, jasmine, and two kinds of passion fruit. The garden had several flowering shrubs, including oleander, a syunga, a deutsia, several roses including a Cloth of Gold which spread on to the summer house, a myrtle bush, a snowball, a Moss rose, and several fuchsias and geraniums. Wisteria was training along the front veranda, and grapes at the end of the house. There were many pot plants on the verandah, including two large tins of a pink flowered cactus, and always a pot or two of musk, with very sweet smelling yellow flowers. Even when the couple went to Nelson to live in retirement, William always kept a neat and tidy vegetable garden, and Ann Elizabeth was still keen on her flowers. One end of the front verandah was partly

glassed in, and had a shelf for pot plants, and some seemed to be always in bloom, cyclamen, primula, begonia and such like plants.

The younger members of the family each claimed a konini tree as their own, and each was given a small plot of ground for a garden on the brow of the spur just above the homestead. Each had a dessert type gooseberry bush, and the spur became known as gooseberry hill.

Very little cropping was done, but always potatoes for the home supply, oats for chaff, pumpkins, maize and peas for the pigs. In the shed were three stalls for horses, and four for the cows, all stone cobbled. The little knob at the top of the plantation was always called 'kaka knob' because a shelter was built there, from which a tame kaka would call down any kakas flying overhead in the early evening, when they would be snared by the feet.

Wekas were plentiful at times, and would clean up any duck or hen eggs lying around. Native pigeons were always present in the patch of native bush, feeding on miro and white pine berries and also supple jack berries. There were also kiwis in the bush up till about 1920, their call in the evening being quite distinct from that of the weka, though somewhat similar. Tuis frequently nested in the tops of the two tall scotch firs close to the house, their nest being rather a flat affair built of fine twigs of manuka, with very little lining. Other native birds which used to be fairly common, were the mocker, fantail, (both pied and black) tomtit, grey robin, sparrow hawk, bittern, shining and long tailed cuckoo, and native bats were commonly on the wing at dusk.

Fish are very much as formerly, except that the pokororo seems extinct and other varieties less plentiful. I have speared a couple of flounder in the river, on the eastern boundary of Sec 75, evidently encouraged up stream by some exceptionally high tide. Eels were always available in the river, and are a rich tasty fish when taken from a clean gravelly river.

Henry York first built his home on Sec 73, where Arthur Heywood's house now stands. It was he who planted gorse on the spur to prevent sheep from straying beyond the ridge. He later took up Sections 76 & 77 and built the two storied house at the foot of the Takaka Hill, with the intention of running an accommodation house or hotel when the road was widened for wheel traffic. He married Dinah Cook and had a family of five daughters, Dinah, Lily, Mary, Dora and Mona.



The house on Sec 73 was bought by Toby Glasgow, a cousin of Lord Glasgow, who was a Governor of New Zealand. Toby was keen on racehorses, and would walk up the hill in a heavy overcoat, in an endeavour to keep his weight down for riding his horses in races. He built an elaborate stable with two loose boxes, six ordinary stalls, a harness room, matchlined and with a fireplace, also sleeping quarters for the groom in charge. When Glasgow left the home, he engaged a married couple, Mr & Mrs Richard Kenning, and Mrs Kenning, who later lived in Nelson, always remembered Mrs Ryder's kindness to a young bride.

Other men placed in charge were Roberts, who had three children, Clem, Alma and Alex, and Castle, who also had three children, two girls and one boy, Charlie.

The next homestead down the valley on part of Sec 73, was owned by William Lewis. It was a two storied house, with a slate roof, and like most of the early homes, was built facing east, as there were no roads at first. I have no knowledge of Mrs Lewis, as she had died before my time, but a niece, Annie Clark, afterwards Mrs Cecil Tutbury, kept house for Mr Lewis and his youngest son, Frank, who was engaged in hop growing chiefly. He used to play a violin and was often called upon to supply music for any local dances, which were often held in hop kilns. I infer that William Lewis had at least one daughter, who became Mrs Clark, the mother of Annie Clark. He also had an elder son Joe, who later married a Mrs Donald, who was left with a farm near the mouth of the Marahau River. She had one son Arthur Donald. When Frank Lewis died at about 50 years of age, shortly after the death of his father, Joe with his wife and two daughters, moved to the old farm. Then Joe died and the farm was sold to Dennis Snowdon from the Waimeas. They had three daughters Laura, Daisy and Elsie, and a young son George. Later again Francis Painter took over the farm, growing small fruits as well as the hops, and milking about five cows. With failing health he moved to Motueka, the farm being sold to Ian Fraser in the early 1940's.

Sec 72 (Maori lease) I first remember as being leased by Thos Macmahon, who owned the land on the opposite side of the river, and had his home on the Dehra Doon Road. He used the flats for hop-growing, but there was a buck lined kiln for burning lime near the outcrop of limestone, now the site of the Riwaka Lime Works. The only source of lime, before crushing was undertaken, was the quicklime. For agriculture the quicklime would be tipped from the

bags in heaps on the ground, and when slaked, it would be spread with a shovel on the soil. The quicklime was also used in making mortar for bricklaying, and for limewash to coat the walls of sheds or houses.

Where Trevor Goodall now lives, there was a house owned by Edgan Dodson, who married Jane Tutbury. They had no family, but Aunt Jane, as she was known by all in the valley, used to run a Sunday school for the valley children. They had charge of a young girl, Louisa Burch, who was some relation I think, and who afterward married Charles Goodall and lived on the same property. Trevor Goodall is the youngest son of Charles Goodall.

The founder of the Cook family in Riwaka, one George Cook, had his home where Lance Cook now lives, beside the Atna Creek. He was a keen gardener, and when retired from farming, he used to grow bulbs and other flowers for Henry Budden, who had a nursery where Loddors Lane joins the main Motueka highway. His half acre garden was visited by many local people, especially on Sunday afternoons. The family name of Cook seems verging on extinction. James had two sons, but only one married, and he had only one daughter. John had a son and a daughter, but the son has only one daughter. Thomas had two sons, but one died childless and the other went to the West Coast. Of the remainder of the family, Nason, Mary, Fred and Dan never married, Laura married very late in life. The youngest girl Flo had a family of five, two sons and three daughters, one of the latter being the wife of K. J. Holyoake, our present Prime Minister.

Alex Inglis owned the property owned by Hickmott, and nearer the sea was Thomas Tutbury, with John Tutbury across the road. William Hailstone I first remember him when living in a small two roomed cottage, which he built on a disused corner of the land on the section of land owned by Thos Macmahon (Sec 72) near Ian Fraser's home. He had the cottage built when we were going to school (about 1895). He had never married, and had been employed by Edward Askew of Sandy Bay. He grew onions, carrots and parsnips for sale on the piece of land of about one acre, and he did occasional work for the settlers around, chiefly with gardening and harvesting. I have heard that he was an expert tracker of the wild cattle which roamed over the bush country from Riwaka to Separation Point.

Joseph Mundy was another English bachelor, who was given permission to erect his shack on a disused road leading from the Blue Gate, which was the entrance to the Dehra Doon property, down to

the Riwaka River. Joe was very fond of his beer, and lost few opportunities of visiting the Riwaka Hotel. He walked with a limp, as one foot was either deformed, or injured. He too used to grow some vegetables for sale, and did odd jobs for the settlers around, chiefly hoeing swedes, mangolds, haymaking and such like. He had a few trips to the Nelson Hospital, chiefly due to his own neglect, and eventually was sent to the Alexandra Home in Richmond, where he died later. He was Riwaka's number one object of charity, as people used to employ him, not for his ability as a worker, but more to keep him from hanging round the hotel, waiting for someone to ask him to have a drink with them.

George Lanceley I first knew of him living in Thorp Street, Motueka with three brothers, John, Charles, and Edward Smith, all bachelors. Edward Smith afterward moved to Auckland, being over 100 years old when he died. I do not know if Lanceley had married a sister of the Smiths, but he was a widower when I first knew him, and his two daughters used to keep house for the four men. One daughter afterwards married W. Quayle of Motueka. Lanceley later married Mrs Holmwood, a widow with several sons and two daughters. After selling the butchery business to Reay Bros, my father engaged Lanceley to look after the pigs at the slaughter house at Riwaka, and lived in the old homestead. He had had some lung complaint early in life, which had collapsed his right lung, so that you could feel his heart beating under his right arm. He came from one of the lower English mid counties, and spoke a strange dialect. I well remember one of his quaint idioms, which he used quite frequently. He would say "*that be wi-out wi-all*" or "*be that wi-out wi-all*", the words probably being shortened from without and withall.

William Widdowson was a returned soldier from World War I who went away as a farmer, his trade in Canterbury before enlisting. He took up sections 14 and 22, which had been abandoned by Bradley Bros (Harold and Ashley) though formerly chopped by Goodall Bros (Len and Jack). He was somewhat of a hermit and spent a lot of time trapping opossums. He also improved the track through my property in the valley, to sledge out birch hop posts, and totara fencing posts. A widowed sister from Christchurch used to visit him occasionally, generally stopping with Harry Drummond. He did not enjoy good health, as he had had several serious operations for his stomach while overseas, and later in New Zealand. At first he lived in a hut up the South Branch, and worked singlehanded on some hill sections which had been abandoned by their owners when they became sadly reverted. Later he secured a corner of the section up the North

Branch, and built a hut on it, as the electric supply passed nearby. He had wonderful strength in his hands, as, with one hand only, he could double up a metal bottle top. As some indication of just what he would tackle single handed, he cut down an eight foot totara on a rather steep slope, sawed it into lengths with a seven foot saw and split it into posts. In later years his health deteriorated and he eventually died in the Nelson Hospital.

I got my first Lloyd George raspberry canes from the Whakarewa Orphanage, the previous manager having procured them from the North Island. They did remarkably well in Riwaka and fruit inspectors often brought any visitors interested in small fruits, along to see them. One such visitor was Professor Hudson from one of Britain's leading research stations, who was doing a world tour. First the United States then New Zealand and intended doing Australia and South Africa. He was greatly struck by the robust growth of the Lloyd George, particularly as the variety had been practically wiped out in England, with some virus disease. He spent considerable time looking over my patch, but could find no trace of the disease. I remember him asking if he could pick a leaf, which he carefully pressed in a book. He adopted that course, because he felt sure a bold statement of the measurement would be discredited, whereas the pressed leaf would be proof positive. On his return to England, he sent a request to the fruit inspectors at Nelson, for a few canes of this variety. The Nelson office procured some from a grower who had secured some canes from me for a trial plot. The canes in England proved to be immune from the virus disease, and when the horticultural station was established at Levin, plants of this Lloyd George variety were included in the range of fruits tested. When visiting the station in 1950, the manager told me that they were flying to England root cuttings from this stock, to build up virus free plants for distribution in England, and he informed me that they were known as Ryder's Lloyd George.

I was also able to secure some of the best variety of green gooseberry. When planting my five acre section in Motueka, I planted two rows of this variety and they certainly cropped well. Although the bushes were only small, in my final year, one bush yielded 24lb of fruit, and one red currant bush, which I had to cover with wire netting to protect it from the birds, yielded 28lb.

One day in Riwaka I had a fairly large order for raspberries to go to Collingwood, and the truck would be calling about 10am. I started the pickers about 7am and deputed a picker (Muri McDowell) to weigh the fruit in the garden and bring it into the shed so that I would be

free to get the buckets ready for despatch. I had completed the order, and as they had made an early start, the morning tea was brought along earlier than usual. As they were all near the sheds, they were called in for their cup of tea. One party of three pickers, all Teachers Training College students from New Plymouth, came in with the others, one of them asking me to weigh her bucket for her. I asked how she had missed out being weighed up out in the garden, but she assured me that she was one of the first to be weighted, and since then had picked only one bush. I looked rather incredulously at the bucket, but her mates assured me that only one bush had been picked. It weighed at 6 ½ lb from one bush, but the girl admitted that it had not been picked cleanly in the middle of the bush previously. Later when picking punnets from the patch in Motueka, they would average 3lb per bush per week.

“Have you noticed the time for high water on New Year’s Day?” That seems a strange question from one busy housewife to another, on a bright sunny afternoon early in September. But then you must remember that New Year’s Day was the day for the Riwaka Community picnic at ‘Tapu’ and to get there meant the crossing of 1 ½ miles of sandy beaches and mudflats, which are covered at high tide. There were no telephones to utilise for the necessary arrangements, so it was essential to make an early start, or it might so happen that there would be four or five hams and no turkeys, with the possibility that some may not care for turkey. Then too there were not motor cars or motor boats. Cars would have been useless as there were three or four tidal creeks and several muddy or soft spots. The general method of transport was by a spring cart, with a staunch half draught horse, one used to the water if possible. Perhaps the choice of the seaside as the site of the community picnic was because it passed the small beach where the first settlers landed so they proceeded to a beach further on, which had more scope, but still accessible by horse transport. Everyone would ride until the mudflats were reached, when all the children would discard their shoes, and paddle across the creeks and sandy stretches, and so lighten the load in the cart, as it was heavy going in many places. One tricky part was over the rocks at Wood Point. This would have been impossible in its natural state, so some of the settlers had blasted a channel through the soft granite rocks, just wide enough for wheel traffic. The ruts worn in this soft granite seemed to accumulate black mud, so if you were late to negotiate this part with the tide rising, the traffic would stir up the mud, and discolour the water, making it difficult to locate the track. As parts of the rock alongside the track were two feet high, it could well mean disaster. This was the chief reason for taking particular



note of the tides. With a tide range of twelve feet, there were other portions where water could be too deep, and any running late on the tide, would have to wait two or three hours for the tide to recede.

The picnic area was about two and a half acres of a rather sandy flat on the southern side of a long spur, which juts out to sea between Tapu and Steven's Bay, ending in a rocky promontory with an isolated patch of rock off the end of it known locally as Big Rock. This spur is only about 100 yards wide, fairly flat on top, but with cliff faces 50 to 60 feet down to the sea level on each side. It had been used as a Maori pah or fort, as there were two deep trenches across the spur, about 100 yards apart, the ends of each trench extending from some inaccessible part of the cliff.

On arrival at the picnic site, the elder boys would be sent to collect driftwood, while the men prepared fireplaces and spread two or three white duck rick covers, on which the long linen table cloths would be placed. After the initial preparations were completed, the boy would proceed to the end of the sandspit for a swim. Bathing togs in those days would be of the neck to knee type, but were conspicuous by their absence. The few girls who fancied a dip in the briny, generally favoured a secluded nook at the far end of the beach, beyond the Archway Rock, where a sentinel would be posted to ensure privacy. Some adults would organise games for the smaller children, such as baseball, rounders, teazel, drop handkerchief, and the like. I have mentioned no motor boats, but there were usually two or three small sailing boats, and the same number of dinghys. These were always popular with the children, and the owners were kept quite busy.

A shout would announce when the big kettles were boiling, and all would hasten to the dining site. The linen cloths had been spread, and each family brought along their contribution. When all were seated either the village parson or some other head of family would briefly offer thanks for the food. Each person brought their own cup, plates and cutlery and sometimes large boilers of new potatoes and green peas were cooked. Another item on the menu was plum pudding and the children soon discovered which ones had been favoured with a generous addition of three penny and six penny pieces.

After any remnants of the food had been safely stowed away, the men would perhaps have a game of cricket, married versus single. The pitch was rather sandy with poor turf so no big scores were

recorded. A few keen fishermen would take off to try their luck fishing off the reefs, while others would make for the cockle or pipi beds. These succulent shell fish one of the chief foods of the old time Maori, were usually cooked on return home, as the shells strewn along some driveway, where wheel traffic and the trampling of horses could crush them, provide useful grit for the poultry.

The adolescents would perhaps wander in groups over the low hills toward Kaiteriteri but with the march of time, gorse has been allowed to take charge, and the young people of today are denied the pleasure of the lovely vistas which were available from many vantage points.

On the sandspit I have mentioned, there was a rather rare type of grass growing, spiny rolling grass (*Spinifex hirsutis*). The seed heads of this grass resemble a ball about 8 or 10 inches in diameter, with long spines protruding from the seeds. When the tide was out, and the wind favourable, these seed heads would blow along the beach faster than any children would run, and the children would have competitions as to which seed head would reach a certain point first. It is a pity that this old time favourite picnic spot with its sandy flats have been completely eroded by the sea. But perhaps providence ordained it, so that we should be compelled to share our blessings as we were forced to construct good motor roads to Stevens Bay and Kaiteriteri. These bays have become so popular with visitors from all over New Zealand, that we are again compelled to raise our sights, and the eventual goal must be the formation of a good road near the coast, which will give access to the many bays of equal beauty, which extent right to Totaranui and thence to Takaka. Much of this road would pass through Tasman Park and together with the existing tracks and the genial climate of this area, would open up a veritable paradise for trampers, fishermen, and the general public of New Zealand, who are such ardent lovers of the open spaces and the unspoilt beauty of our country.

The old community spirit of the pioneers of Riwaka is not dead, and the residents still emanate friendship and goodwill which is best exemplified by the fact that they still devote themselves chiefly to the growing of hops and tobacco, which when manufactured into beer and cigarettes, certainly gives pleasure to the vast majority of our citizens, and a great boost to the revenue of this country.

Another popular item with the boys was the making of small toy boats from the dry stems of the native flax (*phormium tenax*). There

was a fair patch of flax handy, and each boy usually had a pocket knife. A flat stone or a piece of tin would serve for a keel, and also as ballast to counter the action of the wind on the sails, which were only thin slivers cut from the stem, thus forming the semblance of a deck. The slivers are pointed at one end, and are inserted in the spongy centre of the deck. It is not necessary that the toys must always sail in the direction of the wind, as by varying the angle at which the sails are placed, and also the set of the keel, if made of tin, and sometimes there would be a competition as to whose toy would sail the closest to the wind. I can well remember a lady who was so intrigued by the toy boats that she wanted one made so that she could send it to England for a small nephew. She was still more enthusiastic when I showed her that a couple of pennies serve as the keel.

I remember only one puketea tree growing in Riwaka, and that was a large one growing on Sec 51 Block 7 Kaiteriteri about the middle of the section. Another native tree which was rather rare, is the stinging nettle. I know of only two localities where they were found. One was in the head of the gully, about the centre of Sec 20 Block 10 and the other near the foot of the limestone bluff about the centre of Sec 13 Block 7. Both cases were only a few scattered bushes. Another rare plant, really only a low shrub, with a small white flower, again only an isolated patch, grew in the head of a gully about half way down on the Sandy Bay side of the road leading to Sandy Bay (Sec 8 Block 8). I was told of this by S. Street, the Riwaka school teacher who was rather a keen naturalist and married a daughter of Hale, who kept a nursery near Hale's corner in Waimea Road. Street was friendly with Mr Knapp, a Nelson school teacher, who had made a study of the plants described by the French naturalist attached to the expedition sent out by the French government, under D'Urville, to search for another French navigator, La Perouse. D'Urville spent some time in Torrent Bay and a naturalist attached to the expedition described and illustrated very fully the native plants, several of which had not been located by the English naturalists later. From access to his work Mr Knapp located this isolated patch and passed on the knowledge to Street. I tried to get some to grow at my home at Riwaka but evidently the soil was not suitable. With reference to D'Urville's stay in the locality, he mapped much of the local coastline, which present day names still testify. Frenchman's Bay, Adele Island, Astrolabe, Fisherman's Island (he gave the French name) Croixelles French Pass, D'Urville Island, and some which have been dropped. I can well remember my grandfather E. F. McNabb saying that the Maoris in this locality always called white people 'wee wee', evidently from the French word 'oui' meaning yes. Another rare plant was found

when the Shaggery Road was formed. This was given some protection, as it was on the edge of the road, but I have not been that way for many years, so cannot say if it is still growing.

The mountain rata growing at the top of the Takaka Hill does not blossom profusely each year, but I recall one season when the bush along the top was a glowing red, like a brilliant sunset. Yet another plant which claimed by attention was a clematis with a small rather deep cream flower which have two of the petals longer than the others, which makes it look somewhat like a pansy. I have seen this only in Foley's Bush, near the road leading to Arundels but the notable thing about it is its aroma. This is not noticeable during the day, but is very pronounced about dusk. I managed to get one growing in my native shrubbery in Riwaka, but it was cut down by some boys who were told to tidy up the garden. I was very sorry about that, as I consider the perfume to be the best of any flowers.

When Sec 23 Block 7 Kaiteriteri S.D. was first surveyed, the surveyor was so impressed with its scenic potential which coupled with its total unsuitability from a farming aspect, induced him to pencil in on his plan of the section the word 'reserve'. However it was only a suggestion, and no action was taken about it although the word reserve continued to be included in all succeeding plans, and it was always looked upon as a reserve by the local population, and became a recognised scenic spot to which visitors would be taken, especially the younger ones, and more active ones, as the only access was by using the boulders in the river as stepping stones when crossing the stream to enter the reserve.

One day in the 1920's I was taking a line of cattle to the paddock near the head of the river and was taking them right down to the creek at the bottom, as I wished them to clean up the rough feed down there before winter. While engaged on this task, I noticed three men walking about the flats and into the bush though not near the source itself. On my way home I had to pass quite near them, so I stopped to ask if they were looking for anything special, as I knew the locality fairly well. They informed me that they had called on the Commissioner of Lands at Nelson, to get particulars of any blocks of Crown land which were available for milling purposes. This section was included in the list, and although it was marked 'reserve' on the plan, the Commissioner, who had only recently been appointed to Nelson, pointed out that it had never been gazetted as such and so was just Crown land. I was fairly friendly with R. P. Hudson, who was our M.P. at the time, so I got in touch with him, pointing out that the

local residents would deeply resent this scenic spot being spoilt. He undertook to ring the Minister of Lands, to remove it from the list of Crown lands. That viewpoint was kept before the Commissioner during a succession of M.P's but it was not until K. J. Holyoake was returned as a Member for the district, that the first definite steps were taken to create a Scenic Board.

At the first meeting of the board, the preliminary steps were lost sight of, all being satisfied that this scenic gem was now comparatively secure. The board formed a working bee to open up a track to avoid crossing the river, thus making access much easier for elderly folk. The board had difficulty in getting the Waimea County Council to improve the access which had really been provided by the adjoining landowners, and it was not until the second visitors book, which had been provided at the Reserve, was forwarded to the Council together with the application for improvement to the road, that any help was approved. The Council evidently had the idea that, as it was a dead end, very few people used the road. But the visitors book with well over 1000 names in slightly over a year, was convincing proof and some work was approved. A reporter at the meeting made the following comment in local and general:

#### A Peak Attraction

The Riwaka Reserve, a pretty bush clad glade surrounding the source of the river where it wells out from the foot of a high face of rock clothed in ferns and mosses, is a popular spot.

The visitors' book, with its thousands of signatures each year, well illustrates this. Few have paid so unstinting a compliment to the charm of the area, however, as two different couples who recently entered in the remarks column of the book "the greatest experience of our honeymoon". The board members have extended walking tracks, so that some fine trees may be inspected, and have removed any dead trees which could have been a menace with fire from the neighbouring properties.

#### Pelorus Jack

When the 'Penguin' was wrecked in Cook Strait, the Union Co diverted the 'Pateena' from the Melbourne Launceston run, to keep the schedule going. She was sent over with her full crew, but a captain with local knowledge was put in command.

Some time after her arrival, I was a passenger, and with my youthful curiosity, wandered down into the engine room. There I got into conversation with one of the engineers, who told me that when



the ship was diverted to this run, many of their nautical acquaintances joking said that they would then be able to see '*Pelorus Jack*' who was viewed among sailors in other ports as a carefully nurtured hoax. The crew were surprised to see the rush of passengers to the forecastle to see him and were amazed at what they thought to be their gullibility. The deck hands were also amazed to see '*Pelorus Jack*' gambolling towards the ship, and of course told the crew below decks to come up and have a look. They were not to be sold the hoax, or so they thought, and it was not until their duties had allowed them on deck to view 'Jack' for themselves, that he was generally accepted as a fact, and no fiction, and that was not until several weeks had passed.

On leaving the engine room, the engineer told me that the engine was running at seventy revolutions per minute, so when passing through the Smoking Room where my hockey mates had gathered, I was pressed to join in a sweepstake which they had staged. It was to estimate the duration of one minute. I told them to leave me out, as I was a certain winner, but they would have me join in. After winning the sweepstake, I told them how simple it was, but everyone was happy when I told them to put the stake money towards refreshments for the gang.

I may say that I was privileged to see '*Pelorus Jack*' on ten or twelve occasions, chiefly from the 'Nikau', where the forecastle was so low that you could almost touch '*Pelorus Jack*'.

The surging current with its swirling eddies through the narrow Pass, will always remain an attraction, but 'Jack' disappeared many years ago. A Norwegian whaler was operating in the locality at the time, and, of course, a general inference connects the two.

It was often stated that '*Pelorus Jack*' piloted ships through the Pass, but his special location was off Admiralty Bay.

#### The Owen River Fire-Eater

In 1901 I took a cycling trip down the West Coast to Westport and through to Karamea. At that time passengers travelled by the horse coaches, and all stores went by the six horse covered wagons, with many swift rivers to cross by fords. The Buller was a tourist route, and all roads were maintained by the Government. The practice was to allocate short sections to men who had to patrol them daily, but the work was chiefly keeping the watertables open, and so preventing any undue scouring. Many old gold prospectors had engaged in this work, as if the weather was fine for a considerable time, the river would be low and they could get down to some of the lower levels in the hope of finding some encouraging pockets of gold. When it was wet, they would have to devote more time to their roadwork. These prospectors

would often have a hut by the roadside, but one, with perhaps an eye for extra comfort, had become installed at the Owen River Hotel, where I had decided to spend the first night of my journey. It so happened that the owner of the hotel was away to replenish his stock of liquor, and his general stores. It was a cold wintry night, but there was a roaring fire in a large fireplace, which nearly filled one wall of the sitting room, and from time to time the fire would be replenished by a log, which was just about the capacity of one man to carry in. Sitting around this fireside during the evening, time passed quickly, with tales of early prospecting days. When it was time to retire, and the fire had been reduced to a mass of glowing coals, the old chap asked if I had ever seen a fire-eater. I confessed that I had not, so he turned down the kerosene lamp until it was only a flicker of light, and then began to sort out a glowing coal about as large as a walnut. After getting it away from the fire proper, he tossed it from hand to hand, and then opened his mouth and popped it in. There was a distinct hiss as the glowing ember landed on the saliva on his tongue but it was only momentary as he quickly pushed it forward to be gripped by his teeth, when he began blowing out a steam of sparks with each exhalation of breath. It took several breaths before the coal was exhausted, when it was replaced by another glowing coal. I must say that I was rather apprehensive as being left in charge while the owner was away, he had been imbibing rather freely at the brandy bottles, his breath being so impregnated with the fumes of the brandy, that I thought there was a real danger that his breath may be really inflammable. However all was well, and I retired to my little room in the attic, where it was freezing cold after the roaring fireside.

Geo Atkins, who owned the neighbouring farm for one season arranged with Otto Kelling to do the hop drying, and Kelling pitched a tent up the hill under some trees so that he could get a quiet sleep in cool conditions when the opportunity offered. While there, he noticed wild pigeons in my bush. When the drying was finished he had arranged for his son Theo to drive out with a spring trap to take home his tent and stretcher, and he decided to borrow a gun from G. Atkins hoping to secure some birds to take home. It was quite legal at that time to shoot pigeons, provided it was not the closed season, which was every third year. When I took over the farm, my father had undertaken to graze some young horses until they were ready for handling, the grazing fee being 1 shilling each per week. Two men from the Moutere called in at home one morning wishing to collect their horses. My hack was grazing on the hill and on this particular morning was as far away as he could get. I had heard a shot in the bush before the men arrived, and when leading my hack down near

the edge of the bush, there was another shot when I noticed a pigeon with outstretched wings gliding to the bottom of the gully, and finished up in among the pungas. I had often noticed that pigeons, when shot, would take off from the tree, and glide some distance with outstretched wings before death finally claimed them. As I was not aware who was shooting, I called out and said that I expected people to ask permission before shooting on my property. What I took for a girls voice answered, but I found out some time later that it must have been the son Theo, who would be about ten or twelve years of age. When crossing the small creek at the bottom of the bush, I hitched up my hack to see if I could find the pigeon which I had seen gliding into the punga as I had noted where it fell, and I was fairly certain that the man would not have been able to see where it went. On going up the gully, I noticed some feathers clinging to the punga leaves, so I followed the trail of that one also, and finished up by having two pigeons, which I stowed away until my return from up the valley. I felt sure that the man was unaware that he had really bagged the two birds, and was probably thinking that the shots had only scared them away.

After catching up to the two men who were leading an old mare, which was to act as a decoy or lead for the young horses, on the way to the Moutere, we proceeded up the valley and after mustering the mob of horses in to the yard so that we could cut out the two needed, we left them in the yard with the old mare to get them more used to her ready for the journey. I hunted the balance of the mob well away, so as to leave the way clear to start off down the track and then set about boiling the billy, which at the time was done in an open air fireplace. When bringing the horses to the yards, I had heard several coo-ees from up near the Takaka road, and again while the billy was boiling. This was mentioned while we were having lunch and I said if I heard it again I had better investigate as it was unusual for anyone to keep calling for so long. After the two men were started down the road with the young horses, I took off across the river and through the clearings toward the Takaka road. I have forgotten the time I took to reach the Takaka road near the Ngarua lime works, but I think it would be near record time. However I was forestalled in reading the scene of the accident, as one of the plumbers who had gone up on the ridge to make some adjustments in connection with the water supply for the Kairuru homestead, which was in the process of being built, heard the calls also, and had gone to investigate. It turned out to be Dr Deck who was returning on his motor bike from attending a patient in Takaka, and whose bike had skidded in some coarse broken metal, which had been spread on the portion of the road just above the

entrance to the Ngarua lime works. This section of the road through a very rough patch of limestone, had been blinded with a generous coat of hand cracked metal, which may account for its very rough state. There was a narrow strip on the outer edge and the doctor was endeavouring to negotiate that narrow track, when a loose stone skidded his bike off the road on to the rough jagged limestone, breaking his leg.

As a sequel to the pigeon anecdote, some few years later, Mr Fred Starnes, who was cutting chaff for me on the Moutere plain, and who used to engage the men necessary for the job, had engaged Otto Kelling, who lived nearby. After lunch Otto was spinning some yarns about shooting so I asked if he would mind me telling about another of his shooting experiences. He said that he well remembered the incident, and was not aware of having killed the pigeons, and had returned the gun to Geo Atkins telling him that he had missed with three shots. I do not know what happened to the third, but I had two birds, which I collected on my way home. The unusual feature of the incident was that I was not aware who was shooting, and he was not aware that I had the birds. Geo Atkins told me a few days later about Kelling borrowing his gun.

The rata tree growing in the shrubbery by the creek, was brought from Karamea on the first trip there shortly after 1900, and the karaka tree was grown from seed I brought from Awapuni, near Palmerston North a few years later.

Ned's Hole at the northern end of the big island at Astrolabe was named after my grandfather Edward Fitzgerald McNabb who used to fish there, especially if a strong south westerly wind was blowing.

W. Ryder first procured that part of Sec 75 which lies on the north side of the Riwaka river. Later he wished to secure some more land adjoining, but took up only half of Sec 76, as the flat on the western side of the section, he considered too swampy, so he had that part surveyed off. Actually there were three wet places on that side of Sec 76. Close to the foot of the hill, it was very swampy until ditches were dug, then there was an old watercourse which was partly filled up, and was growing bulrushes, which I can remember till about 1912, while near the river was another waterhole partly filled with bulrush, which was known as the eel pond.

My favourite diversion, it was more for replenishing the larder than as a sport, was shooting wild pigeons, which was quite legal until

about 1920 during the season, but once every three years there was a closed season. I very seldom shot pigeons in the patch of bush at home, my favourite location being the mill gully near the source of the North Branch of the Riwaka river. There I had a favourite miro tree at the foot of the limestone bluff, and my plan was to reach there soon after sunrise, as the birds would then be coming in for their breakfast in the warm sunshine. There was no road beyond the sawmill which was sited near where J. Ryder's bridge crosses the river. I preferred a 22 pea rifle, as not so likely to scare birds away. I was usually content with a couple of birds, unless I wished to give another pair to a friend, and it was always possible to be home in time for breakfast. A pigeon stew with a few doughboys (dumplings) is a meal to remember, as the flesh has a special flavour, derived, I would say, from its almost exclusive diet of miro berries.

That reminds me of another of my favourites, laurel berry jam, which also has a special flavour, somewhat like vanilla, which, I would say, is derived from the kernels of the stones, which are cooked with the fruit when making the jam, but are removed by working the jam through a collander. Yet another favourite is medlar jelly, which turns out surprisingly clear, seeing the dark brown mess from which it is made.

When the homestead block Sec 75 was first taken up, practically the whole of it was in bush, except for some of the ridges on the eastern side, which were covered with bracken, probably as a result of fires spreading from the coast. The stream by the homestead was the limit of the continuous solid bush, beyond that it was heavy scrub in the gullies, with a few larger trees in some of the damper parts. I can remember the bush being felled to clear the line, so that a fence could be erected on the western boundary, through Sec 76. It was first chopped only as far as the first creek over the ridge. The balance of the section was chopped when Fred Holder wished to chop Section 35 Block 8 which was predominantly in black birch (really beech) with a few large white pines near the bottom of the gully. That would be about 1908. Fred Holder had made a trip to North Auckland, as was greatly impressed by the growth of *paspalum*, so he bought some seed which he sowed near the bank of the river where it thrived well. He always wore a waistcoat and as the *paspalum* seed does not ripen uniformly, he used to strip off any ripe seed and put it in his waistcoat pocket, and he would scatter a few seeds when mustering on his hill country.

When I bought his hill country and was shearing up the valley, I had missed a few sheep on Sec 35, probably straying on Sec 81 at mustering time, and as the grass had grown rather rank over the shearing period, I decided to bring down a line of steers to deal with the rank growth. I took them over the ridge and the first creek, where there was lush growth of grass and white clover, and I thought that they would not need to wander far for at least a week. It was then that I noticed the few stray sheep. The next day I decided to muster them in, and I walked straight up the hill behind the homestead, so as to get around behind the stray sheep. I was amazed to find that the steers had travelled to the very top of the section, and had eaten down every scattered patch of paspalum which Holden had sown, evidently preferring it to the lush English grasses and white clover.

Though we never attended the Riwaka Presbyterian Sunday school, we usually attended the annual picnics, in fact nearly everyone went, young and old alike. The first picnic I remember attending was in Theo Macmahon's paddock, down by the river, near a line of large willow trees. Later when Mr Alex Drummond, who was leader in most of the church activities, was leasing the Dehra Doon estate, the picnic was held in a sloping field which had a clump of large English trees at the foot of the slope behind the homestead. Several rope swings had been placed in the tall trees, and it was quite a thrill to swing out so high in the air. Later again the annual picnic was held near Mr Alex Drummond's homestead. There was not so much scope for races and games, but had other attractions, such as climbing the hill at the back to get a birds eye view of the whole district, or exploring a cave which had been excavated in the hillside near the house, to act as a cool store for keeping apples, and such like items. Perhaps the most popular was a number of boards with a foot rest and a piece of rope to hold on to. These would be carried up a fairly steep slope, and the dry grass would make a good take off to give you momentum to take you well out on the field at the foot of the slope. Of course there were many capsizes and collisions, but no serious accidents that I am aware of.

The public schools also had an annual picnic which the schools closed for the Christmas vacation. This was always known as the school tea party, and was held in the Oddfellows Hall. I may say here that the Brooklyn school was at that time only a branch of the Riwaka school, being served by the one committee. The children would have races and games in Robert Pattie's paddock across the road. Later the children would have their tea, the men indulging in a game of cricket. Later still the adults would have their meal and after that the children

would be taken home. But the festivities were not over, as the adolescents would be wending their way along, to join many adults who were able to stay for the dance, which would continue until early morning.

Most of the bush on the flats and near the homestead had been cleared long before my day, but there were a few ake ake trees near the old orchard across the road, the sole remains of what the older generation of the Ryder family termed the ake ake bush. A small patch of the river flats near the old orchard, had been a Maori garden. There were two large titoki trees on the bank of the river, but these were undermined by the stream and were removed.

From what I have heard of early Riwaka, the first survey showed a straight road running westward from the sea (near the Old Pah Point, the start of the coastal road to Kaiteriteri) to the western boundary of Sec 75, with only one crossing of the Riwaka river, somewhere in Heywood's farm. When a road was formed, the river had changed its course in several places, and completely eroded the surveyed road. From the sea, the first place was by Cook's woolshed, and then by Francois' farm, and again in Heywood's farm. When the road was formed, the river had again changed its course and the road was formed around the curve of the erosion near Cook's woolshed. This realigned to its present route about 1950. The river still takes a sharp turn near Francois' farm, but about that, all trace of the road seems to have been lost.

When the plan of the original road was sent home to England, and with the consequent demand for sections, they planned several cross roads, running east and west. Not having any knowledge of the contour of the country, some parts of these roads were impossible, even as a stock track. A few were formed in places, but most were only roads on paper, and were gradually closed. One of these was on the western boundary of Sec 75, but is now closed, and is known as 76A.

My first visit to Marahau would be about 1893 when F. Baigent was manager of the sawmill formerly owned by the Drummond family. This was powered by a waterwheel a lead being taken from the Marahau river. It was a marvellous valley for timber, but was ruined by a big flood. I stayed with my Aunt Nell (Mrs Baigent) who lived in the old homestead, which had several wild cherry trees near. On a Sunday morning some of the mill hands were amusing themselves shooting blackbirds in the cherry trees. As they had a good collection,

somebody remembered the nursery rhyme, and jokingly suggested a pie. My aunt offered to make the pie if the birds were plucked and cleaned for her. This was done, and all enjoyed the pie. So a blackbird pie does not exist only in the nursery rhyme.

Another story of the Drummond family at Marahau, which I have heard Bob Pattie relate to different groups of men, could possibly be true, though I would not vouch for its authenticity, refers to a pig hunting excursion by a number of Nelson businessmen. They had arranged the trip and a sheep had been killed as it was intended they would be staying for at least one night. They arrived aboard one of the coastal sailing boats, and were gathered around the fireside and large dining table on the evening of their arrival. As was common in the early days, the main room of the house was large with a huge fireplace, really a combination of porch, kitchen, dining room etc, with even provision for a generous supply of firewood, as well as guns, saddlery and harness. Apparently dogs were not even barred in the home, and a couple had settled under the table for the warmth. They had been gorged with the tripe of the sheep, and one emitted a smell which was rather nauseating. One of the visitors remarked about the smell, when Tommy, the youngest brother of the family, ten years old, pipes up with the remark "*that's Jess the bitch, I know her stink*". Jess (afterwards Mrs D. Hall) was also in the room, being in her early twenties, and was naturally embarrassed by the remark, though I guess many of the men present had a better idea of the origin of the smell.

I can remember the road being formed up the Riwaka Valley, from where it leaves the Takaka highway. Prior to that there was only the wagon track, mostly along the river bed, as it crossed the river nine times before reaching Baigent's sawmill at the junction of the North and South Branches of the river. Slips caused a great deal of interruption for quite a few years, and the road was often impassable for weeks. A big slip on the near side of Foley's Creek was not reformed for wheel traffic for well over a year, but a narrow track for stock was opened up by the settlers for their own convenience. H. Byrne of the Riwaka Hotel took a contract to form the road from the forks of the North and South Branches of the river, up as far as Currin's Mill, near the side of J Ryder's access bridge. The Road Board wished Currin to take a greater share in the upkeep of the Valley road as the timber wagon but it up badly, especially during the winter months. Currin did a certain amount, but he always neglected the portion from the top of the Goose Island towards Riwaka.



Near the top of the slope there is a small creek, generally dry in summer, but which carries a fair flow of water during heavy rains. When the road was formed a nine inch culvert was installed which was not nearly large enough and the water would flow down the slope scouring all the road metal etc right down to the boulders of the hill formation at that point. The road became more like a broad ditch, but being down grade, the wagonner did not mind much, but it was a nightmare for the settlers wishing to take in grass seed or fencing wire, and worse still as a stock route. I developed the habit of taking any sheep across the fern covered hills on the upper side. Down this grade of the road, the mud would be up to the horses bellies, and when the mud was drying out, the forecarriage of the wagon would smooth the surface like a trowel, leaving lines where the bolts around the axle had scored the sticky mud. Eventually the Road Board had to repair this section, and to give some foundation for the coat of gravel, a layer of manuka fully a foot thick, was placed across the road. With a good coat of river gravel, a fairly dry road was formed, but the small culvert was not altered so constant trouble persisted until a larger culvert was installed.

Writing of the Goose Island reminds me of my first recollections of that locality. It was covered with bracken, and about the centre was a tall tree stump, with the skull of a bull stuck on the top. I have mentioned that W. Ryder leased the north side of the Riwaka river from the Dehra Doon estate, and the cows would wander up or down the riverbed, at times going as far as the Goose Island. My father was getting the cows one afternoon, when he found a wild bull from the Canaan area running with them. He went back home for the muzzle loader, and shot the bull, so that he could take the cows home, and later the skull was stuck on top of the stump, a relic of the incident. The scrub along the stream I have mentioned at the top of the slope by the Goose Island, was always a blaze of white when the clematis was in bloom.

Another sticky part of the valley road for quite some years, was at the near end of the cutting which goes over the first stony spur. A hole had developed in the middle of the road, which gradually became worse and deeper, but the road was too narrow to avoid putting at least one wheel into it, and the horses always tried to avoid it, as they have a natural aversion to soft or boggy conditions. The first creek up the valley road, (called either saw pit or cascade creek) used to have an open fordway, and heavy rains would often leave it strewn with fair sized boulders. When going to cart firewood, I decided to do a bit of road repair, so I filled the body of the dray (about 1 ¼ cubic yards)

and with two horses in the lead of the dray, I managed to manoeuvre the load so that it would be tipped about the centre of the mudhole. It may sound rather far fetched, but my load of boulders simply disappeared in the hole, with the exception of about half a dozen which lodged on the firm ground around the edge. The next morning I repeated the performance, with a full load of river gravel to cover the boulders, and the road has been fairly firm ever since. Yet another spot of the road which gave trouble with my task of getting firewood, was the crossing of the North Branch near the source of the river. When the ford was first cleared, we had to use crowbars to remove the larger boulders. When the ford was required for the following season, we found that the floods during the year had washed away all the finer stones, exposing another layer of boulders. We overcame this difficulty by tipping a few loads of river gravel over the boulders each year. I may say that getting into the river to repair the ford was always an unpleasant task as the river is always icy cold, winter or summer. One year I had to light a fire to thaw out Harry Rowntree, who had gone blue with the cold, and could not stop shivering.

In my past letter to you re memories I mentioned that my grandfather made the first hill country clearing on the slopes of Taylors Knob. His method of clearing was different from what became standard practice in later years. He chopped trees down and straight away loped all the branches off and piled them against the trunk to be burned later. The land between the stumps and trunks was then grubbed over by hand with a mattock and was usually sown first in wheat. This was cut with a sickle (an enlarged reap hook) and when dry enough was thrashed with a flail. The grain he then carried on his back to the local flour mill which was situated just above the Umukuri School opposite where the Shaggery Road branches to the left. Of course the trip called for fording the Riwaka River and then down past the Riwaka P.O. and straight along past the packing shed corner to near the bank of the Motueka River where the road turned right and continued in a straight line past the Umukuri School. The lower end of this road was washed away in the big flood in the Motueka River in 1877 and the Brooklyn Stream now flows along it from the southern end of Factory Road. The existing main road to Umukuri running west from the packing shed corner, and also the Factory Road which intersects it, both traversed an impassable swamp. This portion of the road now part of the course of the Brooklyn Stream was one of the main roads of Riwaka in the early days. My grandfather lived on it when he first came to Riwaka and walked to work at Rochforts Sawmill which was situated just across the river from where he made his home later. It is probable that being handy to his work was an inducement

for taking up that particular section. He later took up half of the adjoining section, but was not interested in the other half of the section as the flat portion near the river was largely swampy.

Rochforts Sawmill was driven by water drawn from the Riwaka River, but the channel which was dug to bring in the water is mostly now filled in. The mill took only the best trees, and they were all roughly squared with axes before being taken to the mill by bullock team. The first sawmill that I remember was owned by Baigents and was located at the junction of the North and South Branches of the Riwaka river, and there was no road up the Riwaka valley beyond the boundary of the Dehra Doon property. The timber wagons had to cross the river some times before reaching this road. Shipped from Riwaka wharf I have mentioned wheat being taken to the local flour mill which was owned by Mr Mickell. His first essay at flour milling was by utilising a small waterfall on a branch of the Atua Creek which crosses the road where Lance Cook lives. This was by an overshot wheel, but I think the volume of water proved inadequate. The stone grinding wheels were cut from local stone by Mr Mickell and are now part of the memorial to the early settlers which stands on the roadside at Old Pah Point where the road to Kaiteriteri starts along the coastline. The mill was next tried with an undershot wheel near the Riwaka Library. Water supply was again unsatisfactory so it was eventually moved to Umukuri, water being drawn from the Brooklyn stream. Then the mill was eventually abandoned and before being included in the memorial cairn the millstones served for some years as part of the stone work in the approach to the first traffic bridge over the Riwaka river.

The first bridge over the river was a footbridge but substantial enough to enable horses to be taken across as it was part of the bridle track to Takaka. This bridge was situated about 40 yards above the present ferro concrete bridge, but after serving many years was carried away in a big flood about 1895. The wooden traffic bridge spanned the river between the footbridge and the present structure and was built of local timber, the girders being squared by hand. The mill at the forks of the Riwaka Valley was managed by Fran Baigent and Felix Baigent was in charge of the tram lines and bush work. I can remember viewing on a wagon load of timber three or four planks cut for a special order for counter tops for some Nelson firm. They were heart of matai two inches thick and 36 inches wide. The stump and roots are now being utilised for firewood after a lapse of nearly seventy years. Felix Baigent later took charge of a sawmill at Marahau. This sawmill was driven by an overshot water wheel, and the timber sent by sailing vessel to Nelson. This mill was originally owned by a

family named Drummond, and many of that name in the Riwaka area, are descendents of that family. Another family of Drummonds, not related to the Marahau family also settled in Riwaka so the name is fairly common there now.

The Marahau Valley was later ruined by a severe flood, which changed the course of the river and covered much good soil with stones and gravel. The same cloudburst played havoc with one of the three valleys in Sandy Bay, known as Edward Askew's Valley. The next of the valleys was known as Holyoake's Valley and was a continuation of the main chain through Kairuru. The other branch of the Sandy Bay stream was known as Woolf's Valley. Writing of cloudbursts reminds me of an occasion when I was working on the boundary fence on the east of Kairuru. About 4pm one day we noticed some very black and heavy looking clouds coming across from the direction of Astrolabe. We decided to call it a day and make for shelter. I was camping in a lean-to attached to the wool shed which was near the old bridle track immediately above the Kairuru homestead. The cloudburst reached there shortly after we arrived and the deluge and noise was terrific. The corrugations of the iron roof were quite inadequate to cope with the flow of water, which for a few minutes poured off the roof like a waterfall and made the gullies appear like rivers.

In my first notes I mentioned gangs camped on the Takaka road widening it from the bridle track to wheel traffic standard. I remember going with an uncle of mine (H.E. Ryder of Petone who died there last year aged 95) to deliver some meat to a camp situated on a spur on the lower side of the road just above where there is a drinking trough a short distance below Ryder's Dip. You will know the spot quite well I guess. Kakas were very plentiful in those days and used to fly fairly high in droves, never singly. My uncle decided to take a single barrel muzzle loader and on the way back a flock of kakas flew overhead and my uncle (a good mimic) whistled them down to some dry birch trees. The first shot broke the wing only and as kakas are very curious birds the noise it made when we were securing it attracted the others around again. My job was to annoy the wounded bird so that his cries would attract the flock back again, as they flew off each time the gun was discharged. We had 5 or 6 kakas in the butchers basket for the homeward journey. In the early days many of the homes used to keep a kaka with a very light chain fastened around one leg and the other attached to a ring which could slip along a long manuka pole. These birds were used to call down any kakas which were flying over and were sometimes taken to some prominent ridge where a kaka

whare would be built of a few poles covered with manuka branches, much after the lines of a duck shooting mia mia. The idea of building these on a ridge was that the call bird would be much nearer to any flock which might be flying high overhead. Snares only were used in these kaka whares so as not to scare the rest away, as the cries the birds made when caught in the snare and when being released only served to arouse the curiosity of their mates.

I have given you a few anecdotes on the Ryder side who arrived in Nelson in 1854 so perhaps a few of my maternal grandfather may not go amiss. He was Edward Fitzgerald McNabb and was one of the first batch of settlers to come to Riwaka in 1842. He was a carpenter and boat builder chiefly but traded in small sailing boats for many years. He and a brother built a ketch at Sandy Bay and loaded it with potatoes, sailed to Melbourne to supply the gold miners of Victoria. After their return to New Zealand they were taking a further load to the West Coast gold diggings when their ship was wrecked on the Hokitika bar.

In the nineties tramps were quite common on the roads and as children we were rather nervous of these 'swaggers'. One day we reported to mother that one was coming down the road from Takaka and she came down to the sheds to see if he should want anything. Imagine our surprise when she rushed up to him and kissed him as we had never seen our grandfather before. He had lost his wife about the time of my mother's marriage and had been staying with the eldest son at Karamea. He had walked solo from there via the Heaphy Track and Collingwood. From then on he spend most of his time at Riwaka. He was soon building a boat for himself and I was called upon to crawl into the awkward corners to help with the riveting of copper nails and painting. Then I had many fishing excursions over the years down as far as Separation Point. I have often regretted that I did not write down some of the anecdotes of his early travels and he would reel off tales about every little bay as we were sailing by. One of his favourite fishing spots close inshore at the northern end of Adele Island is still known locally as Ned's Hole. Naturally I have very vivid memories of the first groper that I caught. That was taken several miles out in the bay from Bark Bay reef. I had to have assistance to get it aboard the boat as we found when weighed at home it went 84 pound. I could give you a few more true fishing experiences, but in view of the usual reluctance or reservations or allowance for exaggeration which is commonly attached to fish stories, and in view of their probability under present day fishing conditions, it is possibly better not to tax the credulity of any readers overmuch.

With your background of farm experience, you may have observed a tendency among farmers to indulge in a certain degree of profanity. While it is not an accomplishment one should boast about, I seemed in my youth to have acquired rather a reputation locally for my proficiency in this respect. About 1908 I had working with me an English chap Jack Le Mottee who had spent several years in the British Navy. He was a first class hockey player having playing in Navy games and for United Services against an England team. He schooled the Motueka team to the degree that four members of the team were included in a Nelson rep team to play Auckland for the shield. Our visit to Auckland coincided with the visit of the American fleet, and there were four British war ships also in the harbour and Jack found one of his old shipmates as a Lieutenant on HMS Powerful. He duly invited the four Motueka members to dine aboard. Jack was an excellent raconteur and when introducing us to the company, referred to me in words as follow. *"When I told a friend in Riwaka that I was going to work for Albert Ryder, the reply was that he will teach you how to swear. With my knowledge of naval boatswains I very much doubted if he could teach me much. After working for several months, I formed the opinion that my friend must have been mistaken on having a joke with me. However at the end of a hot and tiring day mustering sheep for shearing an excellent dog of his missed by a split second in making a long tread to retrieve some sheep which were breaking back while we had been dealing with an awkward corner. That split second meant that we had an extra hours work to collect the few which had managed to cross over a track across the head of a gully. That slight lapse on the part of the dog lifted the lid off and I was treated to a display I had never thought possible. He kept going for a full ten minutes without stopping to draw breath and he never repeated himself once. You can take it from me that the naval boatswain is not even a beginner at the game."* The last remark brought doubting murmurs from many in the assembly and several clamoured for a demonstration. I had to excuse myself by saying that Jack was very prone to exaggeration and in any case high performance could only be expected in a special atmosphere, and these conditions were entirely lacking in such a festive gathering.

Another anecdote touching upon the same topic, either of which may serve as a slight diversion at a stag party if ever you indulge in such functions, relates to another introduction which took place near Matata while on a motor tour of the North Island we made in 1951. We spent one night at Ohope Beach and as I wished to advise some friends near Tauranga of our movements, I visited a telephone box.

While scanning through the directory, I chanced upon the name of Jack Pattie. As a boy he had live in Riwaka for several years with an uncle, Robert Pattie, whom I used to assist with his mustering. Jack when introducing me to his wife added that this is the chap who taught me to swear. Her reply given with a smile was "*Well he certainly made a good job of it.*"

I was pleased to hear that your mother is still cheerful and alert, but sorry to hear that her eyes were troubling a bit. That is a common failing but a great pity as reading seems such a comfort to old people when the health begins to fail. Please give her my kind regards and tell her that I am sorry that I missed seeing her when she was visiting Ron recently. I only heard of the visit a few days after she had left Motueka.

Seeing that I am dabbling with memories, perhaps it will not cause much concern now if I refer to your sister Joan. She was a lovely girl and I was often intrigued with the thought that could it be possible that she could also inherit the cheerful nature and other pleasing attributes with which your mother was so richly endowed. If so she would be a \_\_\_ \_\_\_ woman!! My command of adjectives or superlatives I find are quite inadequate so I trust that the exclamation marks will be more expressive. Seeing it is a showery day, I am passing the time and amusing myself by penning these few rambling notes. If you find them too dull and uninteresting, well I guess that you keep a waste paper basket handy.

When in Nelson yesterday I secured a plan of the Kaiteriteri Survey District which shows the old bridle track to Takaka. I will mark some of the spots I have mentioned, which should tend to clarify things for you. On my arrival home I received your request re some notes on fencing.

When the average New Zealander is motoring through the open country of New Zealand, I am afraid that many are rather apt to take the fences along the roadside for granted, and regard them as part of the landscape, and almost as if they grew there of their own accord. The millions of miles of fences which have been erected during the past 100 years must make a staggering total. To make even a brief reference to the various types of fence with which I have been acquainted really requires that one must visualise the state of the countryside when the first settlers arrived. They were dumped down in an environment entirely different from the English landscape where various types of farming had been practised for hundreds of years. In

the Riwaka area of the Nelson Province with which I will refer to chiefly and with which I have the more intimate knowledge there were very few acres of open country, the balance being either in swamp or covered with dense bush and vegetation.

To clear the ground ready for cropping was no easy task, as there were no mechanical contrivances such as we have at the present day, which make light work of such jobs. The bush came to be regarded as a bothersome encombrance, and was ruthlessly slaughtered to make way for the varied types of farming. After the land was cleared, they were faced with the problem of enclosing the crops and it is not surprising that they followed the English custom of planting hawthorn and gorse hedges. To establish these it was usual to dig a trench, and plant the seeds on the mound of earth which was excavated. In the case of the hawthorn, it was quite a specialists job to layer the hedge. When the seedlings were about 8 foot high some were cut off about four feet from the ground spaced at intervals of three to four feet. The remaining seedlings were cut about half way through at ground level so that they could be bent over without breaking them off completely, and then woven basket fashion around those which were left upright but topped. In this way a fairly secure type of fence was made especially after a year or two of trimming. The gorse was usually planted on lighter types of soil, the seeds being planted on a mound of earth in much the same way as with hawthorn. Barberry was another type which was planted and all these have tended to become noxious weeds.

The first fence that I have any knowledge of as being built solely of New Zealand material was round a pig pen and kitchen garden. The pioneers had soon found that the grass grew more profusely at the base of the slope of the hills, which was usually densely studded with magnificent tree ferns. As these were of no use as firewood, and would not burn, they were utilised for the first fence. A trench was dug about two feet deep, and lengths from the trunks of the three ferns were placed upright and touching each other in the trench and the earth then packed around them. The right type of tree fern are of good lasting quality in the ground, as this fence served for nearly fifty years.

The next type of fence was of post and rails for a stockyard. These were usually of totara as they are more lasting because if a post should rot it is rather awkward to replace. The posts were placed three feet in the ground and the portion above ground (usually about five feet) was roughly squared to about eight to ten inches wide and



four or five inches thick. Having decided on the spacing of the rails, the posts are marked accordingly and you set to work with a two inch auger and chisel to cut two inch by four inch slots right through the posts on the marked spaces. The rails were usually eight feet long and split from heart timber of beech or rimu. It is not possible to split logs into square rails as if sawn, they would be equal to approximately six inches by two inches. The two ends of each rail were trimmed to slightly less than two inches thick so that they will fit snugly into the slots in the posts. The rails next have a portion of the trimmed ends bevelled off to a forty five degree angle, the top side on one end and the bottom of the other end, the aim being that the rail from the next panel will fit snugly on top of the previous set of rails and completely fill the slots in the posts. Rails are always placed with the narrow edge uppermost, as the timber is then less affected by the weather. When starting or finishing a fence you omit to bevel one end of each rail, and the hole is not put right through the end posts. Thus the rails are held more firmly. With plenty of timber available, no outlay is required for this type of fence except that the labour outlay is very heavy.

It must have been well into the eighties before wire was imported and used to any extent, and it was many years later before the galvanised wire was available. The fire fences with wire were what is termed paling fences. These, when soundly erected, make a very stock proof fence, and are very suitable for permanent sheep pens as even small lambs are unable to get out. Posts were put in at six to eight feet intervals and then four wires were run out along the line, one pair stapled temporarily about a foot above the ground, and the other pair about two feet six inches higher. The palings were split from rimu or beech or some free splitting and lasting timber, and the size was approximately three inches by one inch thick and four feet long. Each pair of wires was stapled one on each side of short blocks of wood about three inches by two inches, these blocks being used to twist the wires and to hold the wires apart while the palings are inserted. The wires are fastened permanently at the end of the fence where you intend to start and the other end is left with several yards to spare, and attached to a small log or balk of timber which by being dragged along acts as regulator of the tension on the wires as they are twisted and the palings inserted. The twisting of the wires is done to a set method six or eight turns to the right and then the same number of the left, and the wires are twisted tightly as each post and stapled securely. A solid wooden club was used to knock the palings tightly together.

For the large sheep stations on the natural grassy plains in the South Island, the rivers and streams were utilised as the boundary

fences. When sub division became necessary and due to the lack of fencing material, gorse hedges were planted in Canterbury, while in Marlborough it is still possible to find traces of a sod wall, this fence being constructed by cutting square blocks of turf and building them up as a wall.

Another type of fence occasionally used in the early days was a stone wall. When clearing a block of land for cultivation it was necessary to remove the boulders and stones, and to dispose of them, it was often found convenient to utilise them as a fence or retaining wall. If well built they make a secure and permanent fence, but with the disadvantage that weeds and noxious plants often became established and are difficult to deal with. Near Auckland I have seen fences built of scoria in this way. With the advent of refrigerated shipping to convey frozen produce to the British markets, the pastoral industries received a tremendous boost, and the clearing of the hills became necessary to graze the expanding flocks. It was fortunate that fencing wire became more readily available about the same time. Some idea of the importance of fencing in New Zealand can be gauged from the fact that it was found necessary to pass a Fencing Act, which sets out types of legal fences and procedure in the settling of any disputes. The seven wire fence became almost the universal standard, and was readily adaptable to hilly or broken country. The foundation of a good fence of this type is to have good sound straining posts placed in the ground about four feet and securely braced or stayed against the strain of the wires. These straining posts were usually spaced at intervals of 5 to 10 chains if the fence is to be one continuous line, and if possible on a ridge or other firm ground where it is convenient to deliver the coils of wire.

The first step in the construction of a wire fence is to clean the line of tree trunks and any other obstructions, and it is helpful to have light sticks to place in the ground as a guide. If any of the timber to be cleared is suitable as fencing materials, it is sawn into the required lengths. After the straining posts are planted securely, a coil of wire is placed on the reel or spinner as it is sometimes called, and a wire is run out and fastened to each strainer to act as a guide wire. Then along this line posts must be inserted on all the main rises and dips. The posts in the dips must have a foot or some device to secure them so that they will not lift out of the ground when the wires are strained tightly. To have all dips secure is an essential, and is the hallmark of a good fencer. The posts are usually placed two feet in the ground but the spacing is optional, and may vary according to the availability of suitable fencing material. Spaces between the main dips and rises

may thus be adjusted so as to conform to the general pattern decided upon, which may be from 3 to 5 posts per chain. The bottom wire is used as a guide wire as it is more out of the way when digging the intervening post holes and this wire is generally stapled about five inches above ground level. Having decided on the spacings for the wires, a gauge stick is marked accordingly, and each post is marked with a scratch for each succeeding wire by placing the gauge stick on the bottom wire. When running out the succeeding wires the person running it out takes a hammer and sufficient staples to fit it on each of the main dips or rises on his return to run any further wires. When all the wires are strained tightly, the droppers, which are split to approximately two inches square, are stapled at spaces varying from two to three feet apart.

As the Riwaka hills have many limestone and other rocky patches it was found to be easier to trim the posts to a point and drive them into the ground after having made a hole in the ground with a bar. As many of the farmers in the district were hop growers they possessed a steel dibble for making holes in the ground near the hop plants for inserting the poles which were then commonly used for the hop vines to climb upon. These dibbles were found to be more suitable for making the holes, as with the tapered enlargement on the end, the holes could be made much larger in which to insert the posts; which lessened considerably the number of blows by the 18lb post hammer which would be required to set the post firmly in the ground. These pointed posts require a somewhat different technique to secure the posts in any dips. A pointed stake is driven into the ground near the base of the post and as near as possible at right angle to the post and a wire secures the post to the stake. For a very acute dip it is better to use several yards of wire and take a complete turn around the post near the top. Then each end of the wire can be attached to somewhat longer stakes which are driven into the ground a yard or more on each side of the post. The wire must be securely stapled to the post and both the stakes. The stakes are driven into the ground so that this stay wire is quite tight, and so that neither the wire or stakes will interfere with the wires of the fence.

It was my misfortune to inherit one of these steel dibbles built specially for this type of fencing. It was an excellent implement when erecting a fence, but it was rather a different story when included in the range of tools necessary to carry along when doing repairs. This particular dibble weighed 22lb and the head of the post hammer weighed 18lb. If you add to these a spade, an axe, a wire strainer, several yards of fencing wire, fencing pliers, a claw hammer and two

bags with the two grades of staples, one for posts and the other for droppers, you begin to wonder if it is worth while taking your lunch and a billy in case you should get thirsty on the job.

I always consider that one of the best days I have spent on fencing though far from being the hardest, was a day putting up a subdivision fence across some stony stubble on the Moutere Plain. I had Jack Le Mottee as a mate, and we loaded up all our fencing materials and gear on to two spring carts at Riwaka at about 7am. We estimated the drive of eight miles would take approximately an hour. Before we could start we had to use the chain measure so that the fence would be parallel with a road fence. Then to sink the holes for the straining posts it was necessary to loosen the gravel with a crowbar all the way. It must have been after 10am before the strainers were fixed. We had decided to erect this fence in one strain although it was only a few yards short of twenty chains. We had just set up the reel for the fencing wire and had attached the wire loosely to the back of a spring cart, so that the horse could do the heavy work, when an old farmer, Staines, pulled up on his way into town with his horse and sulky. Like many of the old school, any labour saving devices are condemned as due to sheer laziness on the part of the younger generation. I was tending to the reel as these do not always run freely, and it is very annoying to have the wire twist up when you are within a yard or so of the straining post, and have to walk right back and fasten the wire correctly on the straining post. I told this old farmer, who was really a peculiar old chap, and who used to get rather thirsty with the strain of shopping, that he should think of the time my mate would save, as he could trot over the stubble on his way back. The posts on this fence were placed about 18 feet apart and had already been pointed, and we used the spring cart as a platform to stand on to drive them. It so happened that I was again standing near the road when the old farmer returned. He was going to drive by, so I could not resist the temptation to hail him to ask if he considered we had been loafing while he had been doing the town. As we had practically completed the 20 chains of fence, he was forced to admit that we had done a good days work.

Fencing at the present time is with either iron standards or concrete posts and with some woven type of netting, and for break feeding the dairy herds, the single wire temporary electric fence is almost universal.

I am enclosing some recollections of fencing as requested by you sometime ago. You mentioned tricks of the trade and laughs! I am afraid I have not been able to conjure up any laughs for you, or I have

been too dense or absorbed to notice any amusing sidelights. You are aware of my fruit growing and my pickers were chiefly university or training college students. It may amuse you too if I give a gag or two with which I would sometimes pester them. I would ask if I gave them a plain straightforward and sensible sentence, could they write it down so that it would make sense. All would feel quite confident they could do so. I would then quote them "There are three ways of spelling two". Having to particularise on one of the methods of spelling simply makes nonsense of it. The other gag refers to algebra. Let  $x = 1$ , multiply each side of the equation by  $x$ .  $x^2 = x$ . take 1 from each side.  $x^2 - 1 = x - 1$ . Resolve into factors  $(x + 1)(x - 1) = x - 1$ . Cancel  $(x - 1)$  clause from each  $(x + 1) = 1$ . Therefore two is equal to one. Actually all that you have proved is that algebra cannot be relied on as an infallible guide when  $x = 1$ .

### Some of the forgotten arts

#### Pitsawing

Where no sawmill was available the early settlers used to cut their requirements of timber by hand using a saw with a somewhat longer blade than the usual cross-cut saw (8 to 10 feet in length) with the teeth of the blade all pointing in one direction. Much as an ordinary hand saw only much more widely spaced. The handles at each end were fitted at right angles to the blade of the saw, with a hand grip on each side of the blade. A pit is dug about seven feet deep and about three feet wide. Three or four saplings or other stout pieces of timber are placed across the pit, and the log which is to be sawn is rolled on to these cross beams. One man stands on top of the log, and the other man in the pit. The saw is always worked in a vertical position and the cutting is done with the downward stroke only. The top sawyer does practically all the guiding, the lower one working in the pit, and out of any breeze, would not be able to follow any guide marks owing to lack of light and the falling sawdust. In building a home any timber required to be dressed was planed by hand even to the flooring. After planing the boards, a plane called a plough was used to cut grooves in both edges of the floor boards and a small strip was cut to fit the grooves of the two boards in contact. I may mention that old time nails were cut from sheet iron about  $1/8$  inch thick with no point and a lug protruding on one side about  $1/8$  inch, the nails being slightly tapered. The timber was always bored to insert the nails.

While not many of the early settlers homes were thatched, a few were, and I know of one built by Mr Stephens on a slight elevation on the Dehra Doon property. This was a two storied house and I have heard that the staircase was a wonderful example of the art, by an expert carpenter. A spark from the chimney setting fire to the thatch caused this dwelling to be burned down. Corn and haystacks were always thatched with their rushes or toi-toi grass in the early days but one rarely sees a stack thatched now, nor a thatched shed.

Another lost art is that of burning charcoal. To dry their hops the early settlers had no coke or other smokeless fuel, as they set to work and made charcoal for the firing. A site with some good turf was usually selected for the charcoal pit. The turf was cut into neat blocks and placed handy to the pit which would be about 8 feet square. A trench about 18 inches wide and 18 inches deep was dug from one side of the hut to a bit beyond the centre. This was filled with kindling and then small pieces of dry wood was built over it so that a really good fire could be established before closing the pit. Before lighting the fire the heap of wood to be made into charcoal was so stacked in the pit that the fire could spread through the whole heap of wood about four or five feet in height. The blocks of turf were piled neatly like bricks to form a wall all around the heap of wood, leaving sufficient turf to cover the top also. When this is completed the pit is fired, and it must be burning strongly before any attempt is made to close any of the smoking chinks in the turf by smoldering them with loose earth. The charcoal burner would pitch his tent quite handy as the pit requires almost constant attention, as with some of the wood burning away, the blocks of turf are apt to sag causing too much draught which would burn the wood clean away instead of charring it. A pit of charcoal would take four or five days to reduce the wood to charcoal and the fire was damped out by throwing some water on the heap, thus dousing the fire with steam. When the fire was definitely out the pit would be opened up and the charcoal bagged into sacks. It was found that matai was one of the best woods for charcoal, but it was a good pit which yielded fifty per cent of charcoal from the pile of wood.

Another use for charcoal was for heating the charcoal iron. The top of the iron was hinged so more fuel could be inserted, and there was a hole in the heel of the iron with a regulator to control the intake of air and so govern the heat required. These irons were very bulky affairs, and it was always a source of wonder to me how the housewife could manipulate them around all the frills and flounces which adorned the dresses of the day. As if these fills etc were not enough, petticoats

were built to match the crinoline skirts and were a mass of tucks embroidery and insertion. How they managed to keep all these free from spots with a charcoal iron is beyond my comprehension. I marvel too at the variety of tasks undertaken by these pioneer women. Apart from cooking the meals, often with a camp oven, they baked their own bread after making the yeast for themselves, they made their own butter and cheese, often salting butter in crocks for the winter months. They made tallow candles for the household by rendering the fat from any sheep killed and pouring it into moulds specially built for that purpose to which soft cotton wicks had to be adjusted and fastened. Apart from all these chores they generally did all the sewing and mending, often without the aid of a sewing machine, and yet had the time to raise a family of ten or twelve.

### Cobblestones

With the advent of cement we no longer see any yards or stables paved with cobblestones. To cobble any area it was first excavated about six or eight inches deep and then a layer of several inches of clean but coarse sand spread over the area. In most rivers the stones are worn fairly smooth and inclined to be flat. It was possible to select a quantity of stones about an even length of eight to ten inches. These were stood on end in the area to be paved, great care being taken to ensure that the outside was secured either by some lasting timber or by ringing the area with larger stones firmly bedded in the ground. The cobblestones are set into the sand with the narrower end, if any, uppermost. Then after firming them in the sand with a wooden mallet so that the upper surface is fairly uniform or level, sand is spread over the stones to fill up the crevices. A very similar method was sometimes used in crossings of streams, especially where floods were liable to cause deep holes in the bed of the stream which could not be seen if the water was discoloured. This method was called pitching, and great care had to be taken to ensure the lower edge was secure from damage by scouring. It was usual to have extra large boulders that floods could not move or else a log to secure the lower edge. The stones were placed much after the style of cobblestones except that greater care had to be taken to fit them snugly together and all the stones had a pitch or lean down stream. The stones would be slightly longer than with cobbling and the stream would soon fill the crevices with sand or gravel.

When W. Ryder Snr took up Section 75 Kaiteriteri S.D. he was working at Rochforts sawmill on the part of the section across the river. The mill was driven by water power, the lead from the Riwaka river starting near what is known at the "ruins" was the site of the

homestead of Mr Stephens (Stephens Bay is named after him). It was a two storied home with thatched roof. I have heard that the staircase was the work of an expert carpenter. Unfortunately a spark from a chimney set fire to the thatch and all was lost. I can well remember the cobble-stoned floor of the stables and yard on the flat below the house and near the river. There were some plum trees on the bank of the river below the stables, an oval purple plum somewhat like a miniature blue diamond only with a very pleasant flavour especially when ripe. Some of the same variety were planted in the hawthorn hedge where the Takaka road starts up the hill.

The homestead on Sec 75 was first named Fuchsia Hill Farm because there were many konini trees along the stream where the homestead was built. At first all water had to be carried from this creek, and I think I could still find some flat stones which were used as steps. When the family were growing up each claimed the berries from a konini tree which they claimed as their own. A small spur the nearest to the home was called gooseberry hill, and each member of the family had their own gooseberry bush and a small patch of garden. There is a small spring at the foot of gooseberry hill which provides excellent drinking water, and which is always cold, and so became the source of supply for cool water for butter making in the summertime. The road at that time followed the river, more a right of way than a road, and since the early days the river has changed its course many times, and also the road has been changed too. In the early days no cultivation was done near the river owing to the periodic flooding, although there had been some small Maori gardens on a slightly elevated bank. The trees on this portion were chiefly ake-ake although there were three titoki trees on the bank of the river just below where a suspension bridge was built about 1895. Just below the suspension bridge there was an overflow channel and the piece of land was always known as the "little island". Immediately below this the river had two channels, the portion between, (mostly gravel) being known as the "middle beach".

An orchard was planted near the ake-ake bush which had the following trees, procured I believe from Chapman who had his homestead and nursery some distance up the Shaggery creek. I understand that a cloudburst ruined their farm so they transferred to near the Motueka river where the Chapmans are still located. The trees procured were five walnut trees, three blue orlean plums, one yellow Christmas plum (very similar to a Merry plum) two winter nelis pears, one Bishops thumb pear, one sugar pear, one round pear late a (name unknown) one very early pear (ripe at New Year) one egg plum (like a Blue Diamond for size, only yellow) three Quarrendon apples,



one Emperor Alexander apple, one Alfriston apple, two greengage plums, two Pear pip apples, one aromatic russet apple, one Codlin apple, one fig tree. At the home there was a damson plum, two large greet cooking apples and one Emperor Alexander apple, one clump of raspberries, one red currant and several black currants. Near the south east corner of the house there was a cypress tree and lower down were two Scotch firs, and right by the small garden gate was a double pink flowering hawthorn. There was also a quince tree near the north east corner of the house and a wisteria climbed along the front of the verandah. There were a couple of holly trees near the cypress one of which had berries and the other white flowers only. There were also a rose of Sharon bush and oleander, a syrmga, and a shrub with white berries. The flower gardens were all edged with box hedges which were kept trimmed. A summer house stood on the edge of the bank and it was covered with banksia roses, honeysuckle, jasmine and ivy. Cloth of red roses grew near, also a deutsia bush. A clump of lilac grew near the bridge over the creek leading to the sheds also a snowball tree and two elderberries and four wild cherries grew along the bank of the creek. Other things near the creek were a bunch of flax, a dog rose, a myrtle bush, a sloe tree, a lemon tree, orange ball tree and a rose bush (a small pink buttonhole type) and a moss rose. W. Ryder Snr leased for some years the portion of Dehra Doon estate on the north side of the river, there was no road up the valley at that time. The first three creeks when going up the valley road were called the sawpit creek (so called because rimu trees near it were pit sawn to build the house and sheds), Lewis's creek and Foley's creek (named after Captain Foley whose house stood just over the creek, though the creek now has a different course). A strip was filled and grassed over the years, to beyond Foley's Creek, a French walnut and an apple tree were planted near the sawpit creek and two or three acres were stumped and ploughed, a ditch being dug to keep off surface water. This grew wonderful crops of potatoes as there was no potato blight at that time. The blight first came to New Zealand soon after 1900.

In the early days, and before the wooden traffic bridge was built over the Motueka River (about 1878) the Riwaka wharf was the chief port for the district sailing cutters and ketches used it regularly taking timber, hops, fruit and produce. When going to the Riwaka school we could tell from their rig, which boat was at the wharf. The only names I can recall now are the cutters Maid of Italy and Anatuero (the Maori name for Sandy Bay) and the ketches Transit and Calyx. After spending some years on a bank just below where the Motueka rubbish tip is now situated a Thomas Reeves undertook to sail the Transit to Nelson for a refit, but before embarking he caulked all the gaping seams with bars of soap. Unfortunately a strong wind sprang up when

about half way across, with the result it filled and he and his waterlogged craft had to be towed into Nelson. An enquiry was held, but the only result that I remember was that the caulking was used as an advertisement for Burns A1 soap.

A small steamer (Elsie) later started a regular service to Riwaka and the agent was Fred Batchelor who built a house and shop combined near the old school. The venture was evidently not a success, as it was discontinued after a few years. The building was taken over by a blacksmith, and in the 1890's he had Joe Hart (later of Upper Moutere) as an apprentice. The buildings were later taken over by Newman Bros, being the starting point of their daily run to and from Nelson. They had changing stage post just at the foot of the Moutere Hill on the Nelson side. A fresh team of horses would then be used for the journey into Nelson, and the horses would be changed there on the return journey in the afternoon. The only drivers I can recall are a Schwass and Jack Leahy, the latter being the first driver when they switched from horses to motors.

The first landing place used by the Riwaka settlers was along the Eddy creek, a small creek leading into the Motueka River about halfway along Loddors Lane. There is a public road leading along the north bank of this creek. The next landing place was on the tongue of land called the Green Tree Road, so called because a large ngaio tree grew there. However a gale blew this tree over and an adjoining land holder planted a blue gum tree. A small wharf was erected at this point, but later a wharf was built where the present Riwaka wharf now stands. In the early 1890's when my mother's father came to live with us, he built a 22ft cutter which he called the Spray, and he used the piles of the old Green Tree wharf to moor the boat.

Notes:

These memories were written by WAA Ryder in his retirement – about 1960-61 They were typed in 2007 then converted to .pdf format

They are partly written (last part) for Jim Henderson, and the article on fencing was published by him on one of his "Open Country" books

Many of the survey reference numbers are now no longer used, despite searches of present day survey records, and LINZ records.

The memoirs were originally written in longhand in exercise books. ALL of the spelling appears to be correct, and the only crossing out appears to be for repetition.

Pictures included are from records originally compiled by Albert Ryder. They (and some more) are available on <http://ryder.gen.nz> website

Additional material has been obtained from Ann Everett [aeverett@beingabout.co.nz](mailto:aeverett@beingabout.co.nz) about William and Ann Elizabeth (Cousins)

**William RYDER (Senior)** His bride was Ann Elizabeth Cousins. Their witnesses were Sophia Cousins and Thomas Ryder. William's occupation on the Marriage Certificate was "miner".

They decided to emigrate to New Zealand, travelling in a ship called "Eagle" in Cabin No. 2, landing in Nelson in 1854. There were very few houses available and he procured a two-roomed cottage on Fiddle Alley (now called Fiddle Lane), No. 3, where their first child, William, was born. The cottage leaked when it rained and they had to put an umbrella up over the baby's cradle.

William's first employment was as a maltster, but he later worked at a sawmill in the Riwaka Valley. His first home in Riwaka was below the Umakuri School on a road which was washed away by a flood in the Motueka River. After this he moved to another farm called "Fuschia Hill Farm". He decided to develop a butchery business, a calling which was followed by seven of his sons at some period of their lives.

William and Ann Ryder had twelve children, nine sons and three daughters. Their second son, Thomas Cousins, was killed by a falling branch while working at Takaka on 6 September 1878. He was 22 years old. About 1888, sons John, Fred and Walter went to Otaki in the North Island where they went bushfelling up to Gorge there. In 1890, John and Walter moved to Levin where Walter was a butcher before taking up farming. John drove a coach and farmed later. There are now many Ryders living in the lower North Island. Some were involved in the horse racing industry.

The eldest son William, continued farming on the family farm in Riwaka, as did his son Albert. The eldest daughter Ann Elizabeth (Annie) married Robert McNabb. Son William had married Alice McNabb, who might well have been related to Robert. The youngest daughter Fanny married a wealthy man but had no children. It appears she took a great interest in nephews and nieces, and was held in awe by them, especially when she arrived in a chauffeur driven car. John's daughter Lillian (fondly known as Auntie Lil) was a beautiful and gracious lady who lived to 99 years. She and her husband Dick Bluett, and daughter Joyce Linnell were good friends to several members of the Everett family for many years.

Reports passed down suggest that William Ryder was quite a character. His grandson, Percy Everett, remembered him as looking like a caricature of John Bull, as he featured in the English satirical magazine "Punch". The story goes that at the marriage of Louis Everett to his daughter "Cassie", he refused to dress up and can be seen in the photo (at back, left) looking rather rakish. In his later years in the house next to the Butchery (see photo of Butchery) with one of his sons, and annoyed the family constantly banging with his walking stick on the floor. He died at Motueka on 5 May 1911 at the age of 80 years.

### **Ann Elizabeth Ryder (nee Cousins)**

Ann Elizabeth was born in Sussex on 31 March 1832, being the daughter of William Cousins, a greengrocer of 7 Globe Rd, London. Her mother was Jane Marchant. She married William Ryder on 5 September 1853, at the age of 21 years.

Before she married she had worked as a Ladies' Maid in a big home in London. Through having had this experience she was very particular with her children, regarding their demeanour, manners and table manners. Photographs show them to be well dressed and groomed and Elizabeth looked very smart.

The best tribute that can be given her is the epitaph on the tombstone where she and William are buried at the Motueka Cemetery:

Ann Elizabeth Ryder  
Born March 1832 Died March 1905  
A Loving Wife and Mother

William Ryder  
Husband of above  
Born June 1830 Died May 1911

A death notice in "The Colonist" says RYDER – On 17 March 1905, Annie Elizabeth, wife of William Ryder, aged 73 years.

### **Sources**

Albert Ryder, Motueka  
Eileen Ryder, Levin  
Janet Potham, Whangarei  
Percy Everett, Auckland  
Lyla Campbell (nee Everett), Auckland  
Nancye Everett, Stoke  
Dawn Riordan (nee Everett), Pukekohe