

# The Papakura Sentinel



Number 70

## Contents:

Object of the month: Wendy Deeming..... p2  
 Aroha Cottage ..... p3

Famous people in Papakura, Alan Knowles p4  
 Papakura’s real pioneers, Neville Williams/ Rob. p5  
 In praise of local history ..... p13  
 Notices/ What’s on? ..... p12&17

### *Greetings/ Kia ora koutou to all our readers,*

This is the 70th issue of Sentinel, a newsletter established by Kara Oosterman for the Papakura and District Historical Society and Papakura Museum to share news and research into the story of the Papakura and the surrounding areas. Terry Carson and I co-edited it between 2015 and 2020, and I kept it going since then. It has depended on a large group of contributors, usually willing, and contributions are always welcome. Like just about everything else associated with the Society and Museum it depends on volunteer time and energy. Even staff contributions are done in their own time.

On top of all the other activities, and they are numerous. The backroom work of the Museum collating and caring for the collection, the work done on temporary exhibitions—come and see *Violet’s Scarf*, and displays, the updating of standing exhibitions like the Rings Redoubt and rest of the Military Gallery. Then there are the activities such as the Members’ meetings and trips, and the Museum Talks. And the work with schools, which continues to increase. A small group of researchers explores our past with dedication. The whole is done by a committed team, working together for our community.

And with our community. We acknowledge the support of the Local Board, and we recently hosted them for a morning tea to demonstrate our appreciation. A few of us work with the schools; we relish the collaboration of the staff and the responses of the children. We have been talking with Mana Whenua, a project which is enriching our understanding and which will create a more accurate representation of the past and present.

In this issue, we investigate pioneers, celebrities who didn’t know it, and pay tribute to local history.

*Sit back, relax, enjoy—Rob, Ed.*

### PAPAKURA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Monthly Members’ Meetings: 4th Thurs, 1pm – 3pm  
 Regular Saturday heritage Trips to places of interest

### PAPAKURA MUSEUM

**Open: Monday—Friday, 10am—4.30pm,  
 Wed open till 6 pm, Sat 10 am—3 pm**  
 Accent Point Building, 209 Great South Road  
 Ph.: (09) 298 2003 [www.papakuramuseum.org.nz](http://www.papakuramuseum.org.nz)

# Object of the month

Contributed by Wendy Deeming



Art nouveau Belgium **beaded ladies evening purse** circa 1914.

*Accession number 2308*

*Donated by Mrs Steenson,*

*March 1983*

Genus **Monotis Calvata (Maroimonotis) fossil** found on Arawi shell bed, Kiritehere Beach in the King Country. This fossil is believed to be 190,200 million years old and dates back to the Warepan stage, late Triassic period. Genus **Monotis Calvata (Maroimonotis)** is only found in New Zealand and New Caledonia. (This is a result of the fact that these are the remnants of the continent of Zealandia.)



(These items were selected for the previous two months.)

# Aroha Cottage was the Paymaster's House

Rob Finlay

The trip for March took us to Aroha Cottage on Jesmond Road at Drury, where 15 members were generously and hospitably received by the owners, Greg Smith and Kate de Courcy. Although no longer in Papakura it is the second oldest building from Papakura still standing (after the old Presbyterian church which was built a year earlier in 1859). It was built of pit-sawn kauri from the Papakura area.



Originally built as the Army Paymaster's House on the Great South Road just north of the Papakura village, and no longer required after the Waikato War, it was sold in 1869. Half of it was removed to McLennan's farm over the road (see photo page 7), and has since disappeared, while the other half remained on Young's farm by Don Street, and was called 'The Poplars'.

Several generations of the Young family lived in it. But when a granddaughter died in 1985, it was put up for sale and there was a fear that it would be demolished to make way for the Pioneer Motel that now occupies the site on 43 Great South Road. In November of that year Mrs Carmel Hare of Papakura bought it and it was removed to an acre at Jesmond Road at Drury where she set up a herb garden on a medieval model, based on one at Cloisters Museum at New York. Now known as Aroha Cottage, it was used for storing and selling herbs and arts and crafts, and as tea-rooms. The current owners bought it off Carmel Hare and work to preserve it as they value its heritage.



**Changing identities.** Top: The Paymaster's House, before 1869. Provenance unknown. Permission G Smith, K de Courcy. Left: 'The Poplars' on Great South Road. The caption on the Kura website says 'History under the hammer', 1985. Auckland City Libraries Footprints 00561. Right: 'Aroha Cottage' and herb garden. Permission G Smith, K de Courcy.

# Famous people that you didn't realise lived in Papakura

## A light-hearted look

Alan Knowles

Celebrities dominate the news (sometimes I don't understand why), but spare a thought for those unfortunates who happen to share the same name as a famous person. Imagine hearing the same bad joke or curious look every time you utter your name, or receiving abuse each time your name-twin does something unpopular.

Maybe these individuals have been your neighbours, work colleagues or friends. I was once gifted a cricket bat signed by Martin Crowe; well, it wasn't **the** Martin Crowe but my friend David Crowe's older brother.... Anyway, Papakura has had its share of famous namesake people that have resided in the area. In this short piece some names will be more familiar than others, but nonetheless all these people have resided in the area at some period during their lives. Thanks to Museum researcher Neville Williams for unearthing these names.

**James Bond** - Yes that's right, a resident who lived in Papakura shares his name with the famous fictional MI6 intelligence agent (code number 007). Having the opportunity to genuinely say, "Bond, James Bond" would have offset the constant sarky comments. Hopefully his job wasn't quite as dangerous but just as adventurous. [We'll see—see page 16]

**William Shakespeare** - Imagine sharing your name with this individual, the jokes would have been relentless, and he may not have had many friends in Secondary School English. On the other hand, I'm sure there would have been a tremendous amount of fun to be had with passport renewals, vehicle registrations and signing documents in general.

**George Foreman** - This would be a big name to live up to (both literally and figuratively), especially if your idea of sport isn't boxing but a nice relaxing game of chess. Although I'm sure the Papakura George Foreman would have welcomed the royalties from the "George Foreman Grill".

**Sandra Bullock** - Yes, the star of "While You Were Sleeping", "Speed" and "Miss Congeniality" has a namesake that lives in Papakura. Imagine the table you'd get at restaurants when making a booking over the phone.

**Helen Hunt** - Another movie and TV star whose namesake must have felt very popular during the 1990s with hits such as the TV show "Mad About You" and movies like "Twister" as well as "As Good as It Gets".

**John Mclean** - No doubt one of the coolest people to share your name with is the main character from the classic action movie "Die Hard". Although, I doubt anyone could deliver catchphrases such as "Yippee Ki-Yay" as well as Bruce Willis.

**Ronald MacDonald** - Yes, the famous clown and face of the multi-billion-dollar fast food conglomerate shares a name with a Papakura resident, although the spelling is slightly different. Whatever ribbing this individual may have gotten for being associated with the famous clown would have



been preferable to being associated with Stephen King's horror clown "Pennywise".

**Rob Brydon** - This Papakura resident must feel proud to share his name with the Welsh TV personality, actor, impressionist and singer. Although, it might get annoying getting asked to do impressions of Ronnie Corbett all the time.

**Harold Wilson** - How prestigious to share your name with the former Prime Minister of Great Britain. One thinks this individual must have been respected, had doors open and had active listeners when he spoke.

## ***Early Papakura identities***

### **Neville Williams (research) and Rob Finlay (writing)**

In the previous article, we told the story of three men, Chisholm, Hay and Hart, who bought large areas of land, only to find that their ownership was subject to political change and legal challenge. Only one of the three ended up living in this area, although two are remembered in place names.

This second article continues to make use of the information carefully exposed by Neville relentlessly poring over land records, maps, rate books and other sources of information.

For those who would like more information on these people and their families, Elsdon Craig writes about them in his book *Breakwater against the tide*, particularly pages 32-50, and Michelle Anne Smith's *Open all hours: main street Papakura* also recounts their stories. However Neville's research provides new insights.

## **The village is born – the real founding fathers and mothers**

Pakeha settlement in Papakura and Drury had a false start in the 1840s (previous article), but it also had its real beginning in that decade. After the waiver of pre-emption that Governor Fitzroy had allowed, the Government was also buying up land and parcelling it out into lots.

The first purchasers of South Auckland land, before the Treaty of Waitangi, were J R Clendon (at Wiri and Manurewa), and the missionary W T Fairburn, who bought up 40,000 acres of South Auckland, as far south as Papakura, with the encouragement of local iwi who wished to protect the land from rival iwi. (A good indication that Māori did not see sale of land as a permanent alienation, but rather as conveying a right to make use of land for a period of time.) In the investigations following the Treaty, Fairburn lost all but 2500 acres of this land (and so did the iwi). Following this the first definite sale of government land to colonists in the Papakura District was in 1843. (See *Craig 22-24*.)

Many of those who bought were merely speculative land-bankers, part of a breed that, then as now, contributed nothing to either Government, Māori sellers or the local settlers. After the purchase money had changed hands, they were often elusive rate-payers. Māori sellers who had expected to gain neighbours with whom they could do business had nothing. The local settler community and economy was held back by large unproductive tracts scattered among their holdings. At best they might be leased for grazing or logging. There are names on old maps, such as Thatcher (shown on the map as Fletcher), which were of this order. But three families who bought and settled in the 1840s are remembered as the founding families of Papakura village.

This is the story of those families. The three founding families represented the component countries of the UK of Great Britain and Ireland (as it was then). The husbands were from Wales, England and Scotland, and all three wives were from Ulster. They played a large part in founding service, retail and farming industries, transport, the

first three churches and public education, and were even involved in an informal way with health services and welfare. All three families stayed in the district for several generations, and also played a role in local (and even national) government. (Chisholm, Hay and possibly Hart could have been among them but for the vagaries of the law, but William Hay did settle and contribute during subsequent decades.)

The founding families were George and Martha Cole, Robert and Jane Willis, and Duncan and Ann McLennan. Martha Cole and Jane Willis were the Menary sisters from Armagh. Cole was Welsh, Willis English and McLennan Scots. They have left their names in a variety of places: Coles Crescent, Willis Road and Willis Bush, McLennan Park and Fernaig Road (the name McLennans gave their farm), and Menary Road.

They were not alone, but they were the ones who had the resources and independence to develop a future for themselves and employ others. Census records for 1848 reveal 23 Europeans living in 'the vicinity of Papakura', 16 males – 7 farmers, 5 farm servants or labourers and 4 boatmen – and seven females. The fact that there were only three children at the time indicates the youth of the married couples. There were five weatherboard houses and ten raupo huts in the Papakura district. (Craig p43)

The focus of this article is on new details of land ownership, business, and other details that have been recently unearthed, especially through Neville's patient sifting of the records.

**McLennans**

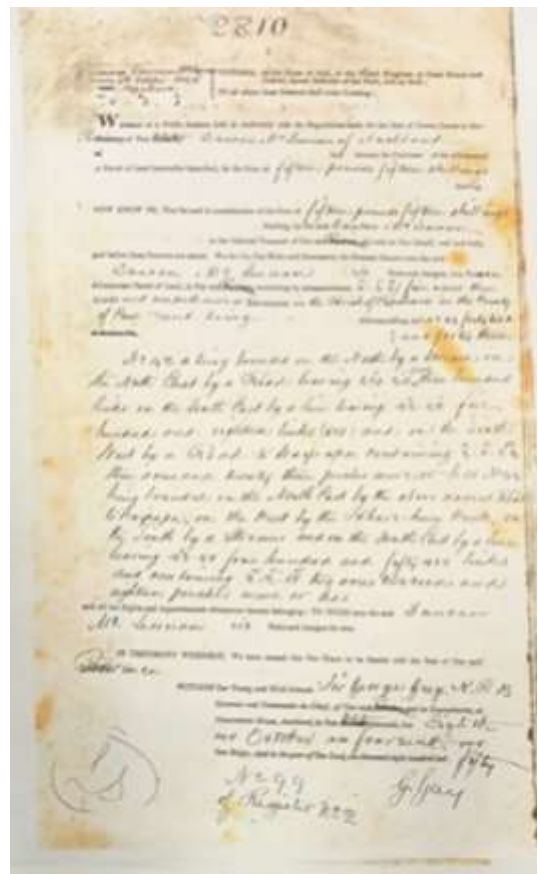
Gaelic-speaking and illiterate, Duncan McLennan came to New Zealand from the Scottish Highlands with two brothers. First Ewen, and then Donald died, and Duncan found himself heir to his brothers' assets. Donald had bought Section 41 Papakura and in 1849, a year after marrying 16-year old Belfast-born Ann Walker, Duncan bought the neighbouring Section 42, giving him a farm of 440 acres.

In 1850, Duncan also purchased by grant an additional 5 acres down to Waipapa on the Pahurehure inlet, as shown in the map attached to the document signed by Governor Grey. He onsold this land to George Cole soon after.



WHEREOF, We have caused this Our Grant to be Sealed with the Seal of Our said  
**WITNESS** Our Treaty and Well-beloved *Sir George Grey K. P. B.*  
Governor and Commander-in-Chief, of Our said Colonies, and in Deputation, of  
Government House, Auckland, in New Zealand, this *Eighth*  
day of *October*, in the *fourth* year of  
Our Reign, And in the year of Our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and *fifty*  
*No 99*  
*of Register No 2*  
*G. Grey*

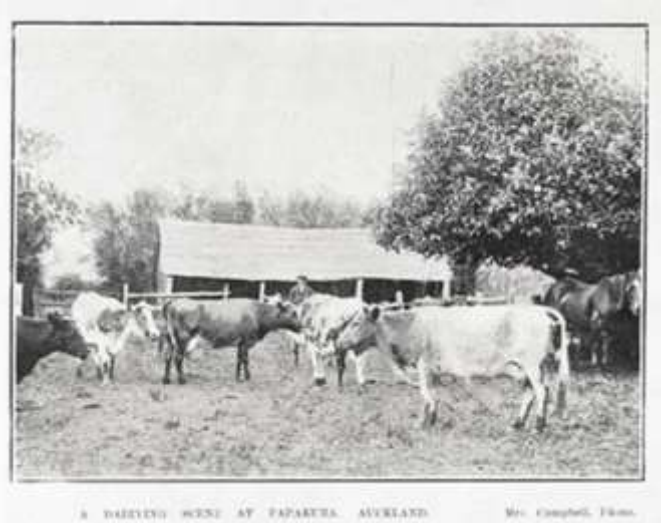
Deed of grant to Duncan McLennan of Sections 42A and 43 between Great South Road and Pahurehure inlet at Waipapa, later sold to George Cole.



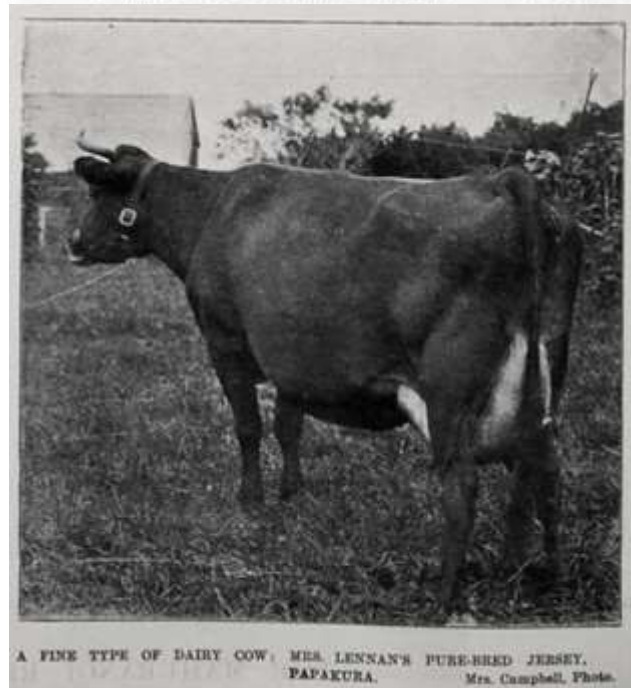


Top: McLennan family outside their home, previously half of the Paymaster's Cottage. Permission Papakura Museum

Right/top: A dairying scene at Papakura Auckland. Campbell, Photo. Probably McLennan's farm. *Supplement to the Auckland Weekly News*, 29 June 1905. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections AWNS-19050629-14-2. Accessed Digital NZ (NLNZ)



Right/centre: A fine type of dairy cow: Mrs Lennan's (properly McLennan's) pure-bred Jersey, Papakura. Photo: Mrs Campbell. *Supplement to the Auckland Weekly News*, 5 April 1901. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections AWNS-19010405-6-5. Accessed Digital NZ (NLNZ)



Below: *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 March 1911 Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections AWNS-19110323-13-02

In 1869, the McLennans bought half of the Paymaster's Cottage, which they shifted over the road. It remained their home for many years. It was an improvement on their previous raupo whare and then a very basic wooden house.

Apart from a few years in the 1860s when they withdrew from the district following the Waikato War, McLennans focused on clearing the dense bush and farming their land, which they called Fernaig. They built up a prize dairy herd of Jerseys.

The first Presbyterian services were held in the McLennan house, until the church, still standing, was built in 1859 over the Great South Road at the top of the hill with generous support from them. The family remained stalwarts of the church.

Duncan became a senior member of the community, and for many years served as a Justice of the Peace.

As the image right shows, Duncan McLennan maintained an interest in new ideas. He is the elderly white-bearded gentleman photographed at the top right on the famous occasion when Walsh brothers' Manurewa No 1 visited Papakura in 1911. The first Papakura Golf Club, set up after the First World War, was on Fernaig, with its club house near Great South Road. This would





The second generation: Right: Duncan McLennan, his oldest son. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections AWNS-19280705-43-05 . Below: Ewen (E D) , J.P and MP. Auckland Libraries Heritage Collec-

indicate that part of the land was primarily grazed by sheep cropping the grass short and maintaining a more even surface than under cattle hooves.

He died in 1898, and Ann in 1905. Three of their sons and a daughter continued to contribute to life in the district. His oldest son Duncan (pictured) was a Justice of the Peace. Another son Ewen Donald, often known as E D, succeeded his father in more ways than one, as a leading



cattle man, and then as a leading member of the Town Board. When the Reform Prime Minister and Franklin representative Bill Massey died in 1925. Ewen won the seat for Reform and held it for one term until Jack Massey took it in 1928. He died in Howick in 1948.

Fernaig remained in the family's hands until it was acquired by the Army before the Second World War.

## Coles

George Loverson Cole, whose father was a Baptist pastor in a mining district of Wales, arrived in New Zealand in 1841 on *Anne of Arbroath*, and was employed by the Government Survey Office. He was the most adaptable of these pioneers, skilled as an engineer, a saddler by trade, engaged in milling ventures and farming. He called himself a miner, and retained an interest in prospecting. He bought Section 40 (which encompasses Young's farm and north to the intersection of Walter's Road and Porchester Road (but not Longford Park), in the 1840s with Augustus Abraham, who had widespread holdings. He would have known that the Valley Road (we now know as Porchester Road) between Sections 40 and 41 would soon involve the subdivision of Section 40 as the surveyors stayed with him in his inn.

In the early 1850s he bought Sections 42A and 43, which Duncan McLennan had acquired in 1850 (see page 6) and on it he built the Mill which for some years was the centre of Papakura, and attracted



Painting by Ernie Clark, based on research, showing Coles Mill at Waipapa. The painting is held by the Papakura Museum.



Māori and settlers from round the Manukau harbour. This was a major project, a three-storey building accessible by land and water, with millstones for wheat and corn, a overshot water-wheel fed by a leet beginning at a weir on what is now Roselands, but was then known as the 'morass'. To deliver the expensive and heavy millstone for milling wheat, he constructed the bridge shown in the painting, and the crossing effectively made the stretch of road shown at the bottom of Coles Crescent the route of the Great South Road. It was after this bridge burned down that the road took its present course through 'the morass'.



Detail from Map of the Auckland District, circa 1850. Note location of 'Coles Inn' in two locations, one in 41 (McLennan's adjacent to McLennan's house, the accuracy of the other is suspect), also location of Section 40.

Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections Map 4296.

He was also farming, with cattle running at large like others of the early settlers, a practice that continued after 1863, and annoyed the small 10-acre settlers. On one occasion at least it led to a fight, when one of the Cole boys found a Stewart lad sitting on a strayed horse. His land holdings were not limited to the environs of what, in 1852, became

the village. Between 1854 and 1857, Neville has tracked eight separate land purchases totalling 1113 acres in Ardmore, Papakura Valley, and Hunua Gorge. Probably, like Willis, he was land-banking. In 1860, he transferred 44 acres in the Hunua Gorge to his wife's nephew William Menary.

The Coles also kept inns at different times, as shown in the map. In January of 1852 he bought an inn license. It was renewed in the following year and then sold to James McDermott in December of that year. The Coles continued to provide accommodation. In 1855 and 1856, George G Walter, formerly steward on HMS *Pandora*, advertised in the *New Zealander* that he had bought George Cole's Papakura Hotel and offered comfort and satisfaction. His land was around Don Street, then known as Walters Road.

George Cole built the first church for the village in 1854, the Wesleyan chapel at 'the mound' on what became Broadway (site of Crossroads Methodist Church today), with a proviso that it be used as a school. Military boots and activity during the Waikato War left the church unusable.

During the Waikato War, despite good relations with local Maori, George Cole acted as guide to the Imperial Forces. The Coles continued to live in Papakura, as did many of their children.

George Loverson Cole burned to death in his house in January 1903 at the age of 89. A son, Edward, who spoke at the Inquest before Duncan McLennan, JP, lived only a minute away.

### **Willises**

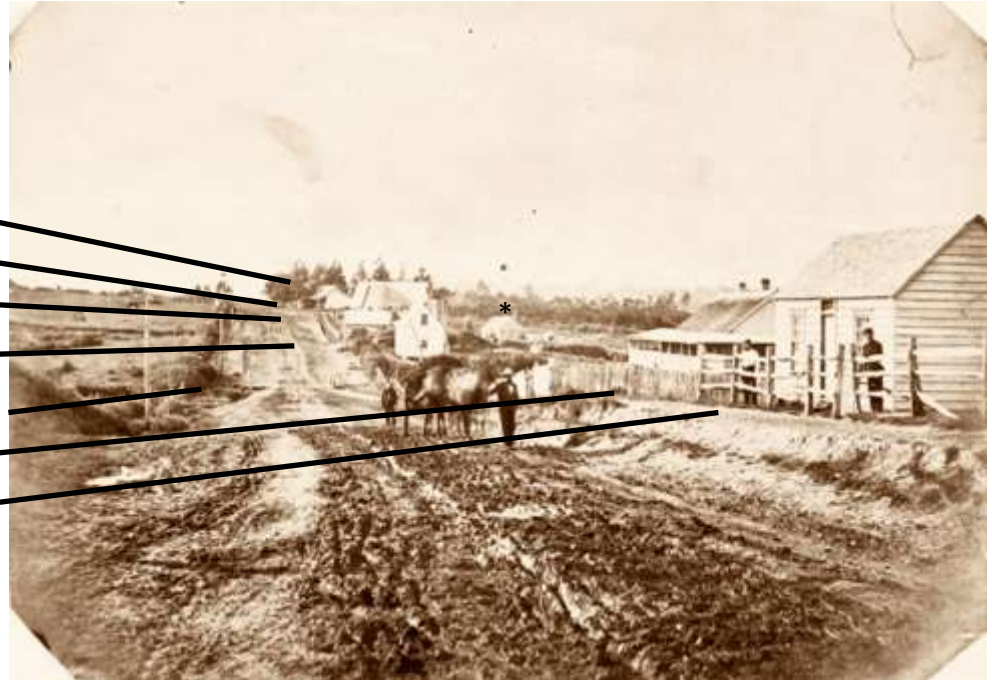
The third family to dominate the early Pakeha history of Papakura was that of Robert and Jane Willis. While they also ran cattle and bought land, they set up stores and dominated retail for the first 80 years of the Papakura village.

Their first store was a raupo whare built in 1853 on McLennan's land at the corner of the Old Wairoa Road. Effectively this was the centre of the settlement in these early years with Coles' inn close by. In the 1860s Robert Willis advertised a van in which he travelled regularly to Auckland for supplies.

They built a new single storey wooden store on the corner of Queen St in 1856, and this is shown in the photo of the Great South Road which portrays the core of the village in the mid 1860s. (See below) This was replaced by a double-storey store and home on same site.

**Great South Road, c 1866.** Photographer unknown, Permission Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand.

Willis house  
 Christ Church  
 Blacks' house  
 Coles' house  
 Bridge, water to Coles Mill  
 Papakura Hotel (Wells)  
 Police station



\* (To right of Coles) Wilsons' became Elva Cole's, now in Howick Village.

The Presbyterian church is just behind the camera on the right, and McLennans and Old Wairoa Road corner to the left.

Jane Willis especially, and her sister Martha, provided support and medicine to both Māori and Pakeha in the early years.

The Willis family were energetic and compassionate at a time when many settlers were truly struggling. At the protest meeting organised by immigrants from the Waikato Settlement Scheme at Drury in December 1865 John Watson praised the Willises because it was 'Mr Willis (who). . . was keeping the immigrants, and not the Government, some as much as £12 in his debt'. The Willises employed settlers, accepted debt, and frequently fed hungry neighbours.

If Coles were associated with building the Wesleyan church and McLennans with the Presbyterian church, Willises were the stalwarts of the early Church of England community, hosting services in early years, often taken by Rev Vicesimus Lush, and then providing the land, money and effort to build the little Anglican church opened by Bishop Selwyn, and known as a Selwyn chapel.

Robert Willis died in 1886, but the family were well-established by then. In addition to the shop and the land around the intersection of Queen St and Great South Road, they had become major landholders.

When George Chisholm had put his village quarter-acre sections on the market in 1865, a large proportion of them ended in Willis hands. Most of the sections between Elliott St, East Rd/ Great South Road and South Street were owned by them, some occupied by various members of the family. (Map page 12) Clearly they were being land-banked. In 1920 there were still 41 unsold sections in the village between Elliott and South Streets. Willis Bush is a reminder of this era.



The third and fourth Willis stores: Left, the double storied store burnt down in 1898. Right, the new store built on the corner of Broadway, later sold to Farmers'. Photos Permission of Papakura Museum.

When the double-storey house and shop burned down in 1898, a family home was rebuilt on the site, but a new shop was built on another block of land owned by the family on the other side of the Great South Road, straddling the railway tracks and adjacent to McLennans'. This store was, effectively, the commercial heart of Papakura for the next 20 years, employing quite a few of the townspeople (Neville's father and Ernie Clarke included).

When the store was sold to Farmers in 1920, the Willises had closed a door on Papakura's retail story. Their focus was now on farming.

The Kirikiri Settlement also attracted their attention, especially the quarter-acre sections east of the railway. Alpha Street was formerly known as Willis Road. As their Kirikiri neighbours, the McClymonts and then the Brydons and Stewarts left or sold out, they gradually expanded their holdings to occupy the whole block, and another 20 acres beyond. This was farmed by Henry Willis, most likely to supply the store at first.

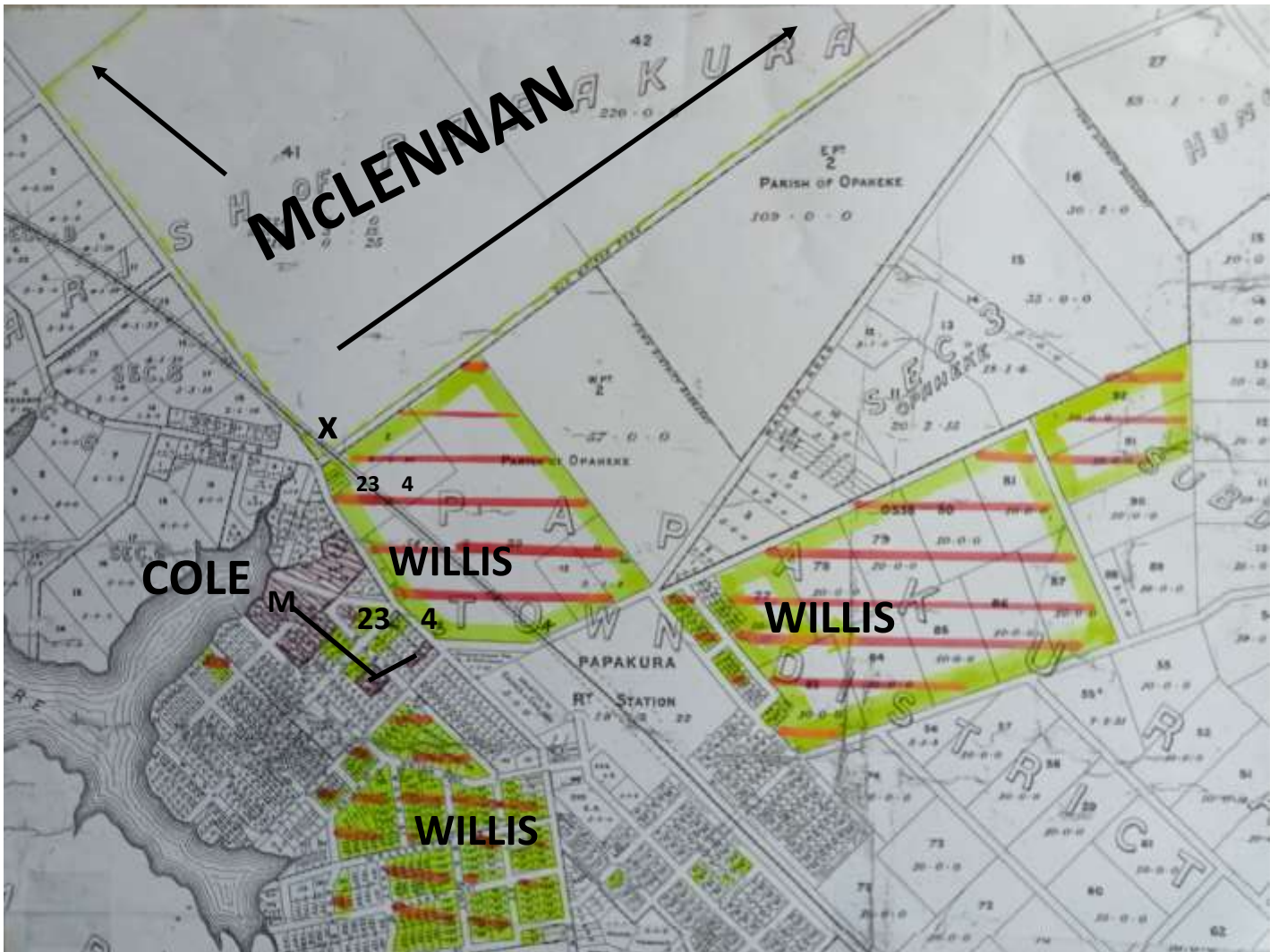
Robert J Willis's home by the railway bridge is now the Birthing Unit, and a piece of land at the corner of South Street which had been part of Alf Willis's, is now known as Willis Bush.

The family continued to purchase land outside of the village, including land north of Selwyn Oaks on the Great South Road and 1492 acres in the Ness Valley, for which the rates in 1892 were a whole 25 shillings. (\$2.50).



The founding families remained influential figures in Papakura for several generations. The picture (left) shows local dignitaries - Edward Solva Cole and DM McLennan, Justices of the Peace (rear), with Constable Lannigan and James Walker (front) (Papakura Museum)





Location of land owned by McLennans, Coles and Willis families between the late 1840s and early twentieth Century.  
 Drawn on 1886 map of Papakura and environs.

X marks original centre of village on corner of McLennan land—Cole inn, Willis store, McLennan home

M—Cole's Mill at Waipapa

S – Willis Stores (Queen St corner #2 and 3; Broadway Corner #4)

## NOTICES: Monthly Members' Meeting, Anzac Day and Matariki

In line with the *Sentinel's* Object of the Month section, there will be a **Show and Tell** section at Members Meetings. It will be an opportunity for members to bring and speak briefly about an object of special personal significance or interest. Mary Ann France is coordinating this.

**ANZAC DAY is on Thursday 25 April.** For this reason the monthly meeting was held on the previous Thursday, 18 April, at the usual time of 1 pm. Alan Knowles spoke about Ring's/ Kirikiri Redoubt.

**ON ANZAC DAY the Papakura Museum remained open this year between 10am and 3 pm.** There were a lot of visitors during the morning. There were activities for children. A good time to visit *Violet's Scarf*.

**MATARIKI:** The Matariki exhibition this year will be provided by Ngati Tamaoho and the artist Jean Yearn. It will be in the central exhibition space between mid-June and mid-July.

# In praise of local history

## Your editor

Local history is discovering stories of the world in microcosm with ordinary people centre-stage.

Each locality is unique. But each reveals universal realities because of our shared humanity.

Local history is an intersection of Time and Place, of History and Geography; it is where all the elements come together: culture, geology, meteorology, biology, zoology, economics, politics, biography, literature, religion, the world of imagination, the arts. Exercising our imagination, we find love, faith and hope, intellect and emotion. We learn to observe, to grieve and rejoice. To care and appreciate those who cared in the past. To suspect grand systems imposed from the top.

An inconsequential local field, a weedy stream culverted under metalled roads, a cottage sitting on the remnant of its section, a line of urban trees concealing numerous microbiomes (even as the logic of towns is to destroy life), birds' nests in those trees, an old group photo where some names are unknown, a street sign memorialising past residents. Forgotten detail, almost embarrassing in its quaintness, seeming awkward because different, yet anchored in time and place. Rooted. Shabby perhaps, but real.

Memories remain in our minds. Here is how Elsie Morton 'remembered' the scene from Pukekiwiriki/ Red Hill, as told her by a *Viola* pioneer who was a child when he came to this district in 1865:

"What a glorious picture Papakura must have been in those early days viewed from the crest of the hills! All the noble sweep of foreground, stretching from the foot of Kerikeri (sic) Pa and the Red Hill of to-day out to the shores of the blue Manukau, one vast, billowing sweep of native bush, golden bracken and manuka! Far up on the northward horizon, faintly blue, rises One Tree Hill; far down in the south the beautiful slope of Pukekohe Hill . . . a clear vista of forty miles and more, with the blue dip of the Manukau Heads beyond the sparkling westward seas and the dark, forest-clad ranges of Hunua making a barrier for the rising sun."

Much has changed; the mundane cover of buildings and asphalt, the geometric rigour of roads, power pylons and field boundaries, Sky Tower behind One Tree Hill, a lot less forest (and vegetation), but the scene still evokes recognition and a response— a sense of what it might have been not so long ago, when most of it was farmland, and further back again.

When we research a half-forgotten community or a drastically degraded landscape, we are discovering universal truths. We are looking below the varnish or the tarnished surface. We are searching our own souls with questions such as:

How would I have treated the environment, soils, creatures, vegetation, waterways, my family and neighbours, and people of different cultures?

What would I have regarded as important?

How well would I have lived—and survived?

If, on the other hand, we start our history on the grand scale of nations or peoples, we are dealing with mere generalities, recitations of headlines held together with dates. We end up celebrating dry facts and public statues, fuel for ideologies. 'Great men' is the stuff of dictators and colonisers. Dates are significant events as determined by convention. (Don't misunderstand me, as a history teacher I value the importance of dates, as points in a timeline, 'choathanger rails' for the line-up of events.)

But when we start local, bottom-up, the wide landscape gets meaning. Humans love stories: the setting gives life, the characters and their circumstances drive the plot. As stories intertwine, communities emerge, and with them a richness of life that we envy in our dispersed top-down world.

This is why the parochial and local should be honoured. It is not shameful to be a NIMBY, we can be

proud that we understand and value the world that one-dimensional predators from outside and 'above' with large pockets seek to destroy with heavy machinery, power tools and building gravel spread indiscriminately over other peoples' soil. Sneerwords (eg. NIMBY, 'PC', 'Greenie', 'Woke') seek to belittle. But a NIMBY is a caretaker, a kaitiaki, of what is valuable, human and real, which has enriched and fed us, mind and body, and has meaning. When communities are destroyed by developers and land-bankers, the world is impoverished even as some bank accounts are grossly inflated

Recently a friend lent me a book, *Landmarks*, by Robert McFarlane. In it the author praises the parochial, quoting an Irish poet, Patrick Kavanagh: 'The parish was not a perimeter but an aperture: a space through which the world can be seen. "Parochialism is universal," he wrote. "It deals with the fundamentals."'

Kavanagh continues:

'To know fully even one field or one land is a lifetime's experience. In the world of poetic experience it is depth that counts, not width. A gap in a hedge, a smooth rock surfacing a narrow land, a view of a woody meadow, the stream at the junction of four small fields – these are as much as a man can fully experience.'

Sensitive travellers want a deep understanding of a different place. We feel shut out of the real world we see as we go by in our hired car or tour bus. (I suppose it's the same instinct that keeps people riveted to what is happening on social media—a need for connection, to understand, to be involved, not to miss out on what is happening.) Even as we sense how different other people's places are (especially one where our own ancestors might have lived), we want to know our own homes with the greater intimacy we imagine the locals have for theirs.

Study the documents, pore over the faded photographs, read the names of long-dead children in old school rolls. Shut your eyes and hear their voices, imagine their classroom and crowded home and lumpy mattresses shared with siblings. (Most were poor.) What came of them, how are we their legacy?

We don't need to agree with what they thought or did, but we come to honour their humanity. It is dangerous and foolish to deny our ancestors their faults. It means we are likely to repeat them and to jettison our own sense of right and wrong. They were in their time and place, right **and** wrong, but we can at least try to understand them.

What does local history give us?

We can **learn empathy**. 'They' were us, but not us, in a strangely different world in a setting we know, but don't know. We can experience our world now and imagine it then. There are other ways of learning empathy, through literature, faith, art, mixing with people who are different, doing things together. But knowing people's stories, through their eyes, not only enriches our understanding of the world. It makes us more whole. It is dangerous to neglect the other person's experience and opinions. There are narratives of New Zealand history, which some see as orthodox, which used to be taught in schools, which are based entirely on one perspective, that of the settler.

They are a **way of locating ourselves**, fixing our place, understanding ourselves, whether or not we are genetically descended from those people there and then.

We can learn to **understand change and continuity**. What's different, what stays the same.

There's a drama in their lives and in the interregnum between them and us, and that's **cathartic**, like being drawn into a play. We learn to understand aspiration and loss, joy and pain.



We learn to **appreciate** our lives today, **to feel gratitude and humility**. We learn to love the world they loved even as, almost inevitably, they helped to destroy parts of it. There is the tragedy of misspent energy, seeking paths that led to our degraded environment because they thought it would be an improvement. And we do the same. They probably felt they had no choice either. Mind, they also created new beauty.

This helps us to **mature and learn from the past**. These stories have personal meaning for us.

It helps us understand the **poetry** of ordinary lives.

And so...

When we move into a new area we are drawn to a local museum as one way of putting down roots. Transplanted we can learn to belong among the artefacts, the photographs and the documents of those who lived here before us..

As a relative newcomer to Papakura (of 36 years), I feel privileged to have been able to explore human stories. To unravel the stories of the people living in the Kirikiri valley over centuries. I understand the satisfaction of the rich life of mana whenua, and then their loss as they are rounded up and taken from their land which is given to others; I share the hopes and frustrations of new settlers who re-imagine that same environment and grow old and are succeeded by their children or strangers with their ever-different tools, imaginations and interpretations of inherited stories.

Opportunities to enrich young lives are provided by the new Aotearoa New Zealand History Curriculum. The local emphasis in the Curriculum, and the encouragement to learn through the GLAM world (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) is inspired. It is exciting to see the fascination in young faces as they hear of the cows that grazed in the paddock next to Edmund Hillary School and broke in and ate the trees that the principal, Jim Kelly, had planted around their new classrooms; as others discover that a hedge between farms marked the line of Tasman Drive where they daily walk to Opaheke School, which was part of the Knoll farm where young Jack Wright used to ride his horse, and of his classmate who burst into the classroom with eyes as wide as saucers to announce that a cart had passed by without a horse in front.

One of the themes is immigration. For some a sense of connection comes from being told that Marama, one of the wives of Hoturoa on the Tainui waka which came from Eastern Polynesia in one of the early migrations, actually stayed at Paretaiuru/ Pukekiwiriki/ Red Hill. And to see a chest which was brought to our shores with an early Pakeha settler family.

I applaud the new History Curriculum. What an inspiring start to learning about our world, a world to be valued and tended and enjoyed, because it didn't begin yesterday, it can be touched physically and not just on a screen. It is real, used and new. It has meaning, from one generation to another. It needs to be cared for.

When we understand that things are real, then we are hopefully less controlled by gaming fantasies and virtual realities, which lead to disengagement and an inability to judge what is illusion from what is real. Hopefully we learn that the real world demands attention, participation. We will follow the news, and recognise the difference between real news and fake news. We are less likely to be drawn into parallel worlds of conspiracy theories, and more likely to grow to be citizens.

One closing story. I alluded to it recently, but when I came across this gravestone (over) in the Papakura Cemetery, it highlighted its impact.

Mary (or Marion) Fulton was buried in the Presbyterian cemetery by her husband. Another facet of the stone has his name.

Mary had travelled across the world, from the small island of Barra, the 'island that the Reformation never reached', remote in the Southern Hebrides between the Scottish mainland and Ireland. She was brought up speaking Gaelic, and remained Roman Catholic.

The book I referred to earlier begins by describing the author's flight, overhearing fellow-passengers commenting on the view below, of 'several hundred square miles of bog, hag, crag, heather, loch and lochan' that make up the interior of another Hebridean island. 'We're about to land on nothing!' The book was written partly as an act of countering this 'desecration of place'.



There had been desecration of another sort in Barra. In 1851 many of the islanders had been conned into a gathering that ended with their land being taken and their deportation, one of the last of the Clearances. Years later, as a young woman, Mary took her own voyage on the *Viola* from Glasgow, and four months later, ended in the fern, manuka and bush wasteland that Elsie Morton described at the beginning of this article. Here she married her much-travelled husband, William (or Bill?), and they worked on the land, raised a daughter, moved to a farm overlooking Kirikiri, and made their home.



Caolas Bhatarsaigh (Vatersay Sound) and the Causeway, Barra, Hebrides, Scotland Wikipedia commons. Fulton grave photo R Finlay.

### ***Editor reflects on Famous people that you didn't realise lived in Papakura (page 4)***

Here's some background to bring one character alive and introduce another.

**James Bond** had been in the militia, where no doubt he had developed an aura of invincibility. Or maybe just a *sense* of invincibility. In any case he had learned to swear and drink. He was fined 10 shillings in local courts on several occasions for foul language or drunkenness. He took up one of the Kirikiri 10-acre blocks in 1865 after the grantee relinquished title. We also know that he had a dog and liked hunting. In August 1866, he was one of a party of five young men who, armed with pistols and dogs, set out on a hunting expedition into the Hunuas. They were setting up a bivouac when the dogs set upon a calf belonging to Mr Hill, pioneer landowner, and savaged it so it had to be destroyed. He was named in the case for compensation. Whether he remained calm and imper-turbable in court is not told. Neither are we told how he replied when asked his name. (Apparently Ian Fleming hadn't heard of our James Bond; he just chose 'the most boring name', according to that source of all information, the Chase.)

One of his companions from Kirikiri was **John Brown**, who in fairness should be added to the list of celebrities. John Brown, armed, with a dog and horse, had had no part in an anti-slavery attack on Harper's Ferry in the USA a few years earlier in 1859. One of the challenges for this researcher has been to distinguish him from several John Browns who died in Auckland or the Thames at the time. But he was definitely not hung in Virginia.

Perhaps both weighed up whether 'to be or not to be' present at the Court sitting (to quote another of Alan's celebrities), but we hear of no high-speed chases or *femmes fatales*. Just a dead calf.

Perhaps both young men were more careful after their expensive hunting expedition.

# NOTICES

## MEETINGS: (held in the Papakura Library Meeting Room):

April 18 (note earlier date), Thursday, at 1 pm: Alan Knowles, on Rings Redoubt.

May 23, Thursday at 1 pm: Mark Beale, The Bible and the History of Israel and the Middle East.

## MUSEUM TALKS bimonthly series in the Museum:

April 20, Saturday at 12.30 pm: Colleen Brown, author, on *Violet's Scarf*, and the exhibition

## MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS:

*Violet's scarf* based on picture book by Colleen Brown— April to May

*Ring's Redoubt* and general reorganisation in the Military Gallery.

*Her Story*: on women of Papakura district—May to June

**TRIPS:** see note below: April meeting to be notified. Winter recess after May .

**May, Saturday 30 May at 1 pm, we will visit the Westpac Helicopter site at Ardmore** – a long awaited trip. Meet at East Street Parking Building beforehand in the usual fashion for transport.

**Meetings** held on the fourth Thursday of each month in the Library Meeting Rooms opposite the Museum, the talk first at 1 pm, then business and afternoon tea provided by PDHS members (for \$2 gold coin). Phil Sai-Louie & PDHS arrange interesting speakers.

**Museum Talks** bi-monthly on a Saturday, 12.30pm.

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

**Trips** are usually held on the fourth Saturday of the month. Watch notices for transport arrangements and cost. Cost is \$5 more for non-members, but anyone is welcome on a first come first aboard basis. Please register early and advise if unable to attend as numbers are limited.

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

### Visit Papakura Museum on

Website: [www.papakuramuseum.org.nz](http://www.papakuramuseum.org.nz)

Our blog: <https://papakuramuseumblog.wordpress.com>

Facebook : [www.facebook.com/PapakuraMuseum/](http://www.facebook.com/PapakuraMuseum/)

**The Papakura Sentinel is a bimonthly magazine of the Papakura & District Historical Society. Your contributions are welcomed. Please send directly to Rob by email: [pdhs@papakuramuseum.org.nz](mailto:pdhs@papakuramuseum.org.nz)**



The Papakura Museum & Sentinel are supported by







**Ad-space**

**Papakura Heritage Walk**

To register interest contact Rob at [pdhs@papakuramuseum.org.nz](mailto:pdhs@papakuramuseum.org.nz) or leave your name at the Museum desk, and we will get back to you.

**Would you like to advertise to our readers? \$10 or donation for this space / \$5 or donation for half space**

**Become a member of the Papakura & District Historical Society**

Please complete the following

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Subscriptions \$25 (1st July - 30th June: Free for those 90 years and over)**

Are you Interested in daytime/evening speakers? Daytime \_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_

Are you interested in volunteering? (We **love** volunteers!) \_\_\_

Are you interested in joining our bus trips? \_\_\_

You will receive bi-monthly *Sentinels*.

Please pay at meetings, by direct banking or online— **ASB 12-3031-0166218-03**. Payment slips available.