

of kelp which swung to and fro in the waves were believed to be the door through which the spirits passed to Hawaiki, or to some idealised counterpart thereof, and a projecting tree-root halfway down the cliff was highly venerated as a ladder which assisted them in their descent. Very pathetic was the fear expressed by the older Maoris lest the white man should cut away this frail support of their hope of a future life: "Let the young men go with you to your heaven, but leave us our ladder to the Reinga". The missionary left them their ladder, but he told them on his return to Kaitaia that, whereas a death had occurred there during his absence, he had seen no bunches of grass on the road, such as they believed to be left by the spirits while passing up the coast. The old superstitions were clearly shaken, and the better faith soon took a powerful hold upon the people of the north.

Though this first attempt at an extension of the work was encouraging, it meant but little for the rest of New Zealand. Until a real attack could be made upon the south, the work of the missionaries could hardly have been said to have begun in earnest. The land and the people were for the most part unknown, but a venture of faith must be made. This venture was begun in the October of 1833 under the leadership of Henry Williams, and constitutes one of the turning points in the history of New Zealand.

Besides the leader and the Rev. A. N. Brown, the expedition consisted of Messrs Fairburn and Morgan with a party of Maoris. They left the Bay of Islands in open boats on October 22nd. The nights were spent on various islands, all of which they found to be deserted, although the remains of fortifications and villages could be found. Where now many Aucklanders have their summer residences, the missionaries could find no living beings to share their morning devotions, save for the many native birds with their melodious songs. On the site of the Mokoia Pa, where Marsden had so often received the hospitality of Hinaki, there could be seen nothing but fern and fuchsia bushes, with here and there an axe-cloven skull.

Proceeding down the Hauraki Gulf, the same scenes presented themselves, until at last a little smoke was seen on the Coromandel coast. A fortnight's travel had brought them to Kopu at the head of the gulf—175 miles in a straight line from where they had started in the Bay of Islands. Here they entered the Thames or Waihou River, and were carried up it by the tide. On their left was a wooded range of hills, and on their right was a flat forest that extended as far as the eye could see.

Habitations were now becoming increasingly frequent, but the villages were all new, and among them appeared the remains of old pas which had been destroyed by Hongi. Strange stories were told to the visitors of a miserable remnant of the old inhabitants who still lingered on in the forests which lay to the right of the travellers. The whole of this country was submerged from time to time by the flooded rivers, and no one new or could conjecture how these people lived. The smoke of their fires was occasionally seen, but they never held any communication with the people who had come to occupy the river banks.

By the evening of the second day, the travellers arrived at a settlement that seemed to be of some importance. Now at last they had reached the heathen country that they had been seeking, and could now begin their missionary work in the south. Some 200 natives crowded around to see the visitors, those in the rear holding torches to increase the illumination. The missionaries began their Evensong with one of the Maori hymns which they were accustomed to singing at Paihia. Hardly had they sung a line when, to their intense surprise, the whole of the audience joined heartily in the tune. Trembling with excitement the reader began the Evening Prayer, and when he uttered the words, "O Lord, open Thou our lips", there came from a hundred manly voices the significant response, "And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise". So it continued throughout. Canticle and creed, prayer and hymn, were all known to these presumably heathen people. At the conclusion of the service the secret was discovered. Three of the boys had been taught at Paihia. Here was the first fruit of the mission schools.

So it was that a Mission was established at Puriri in 1833, but its history is a relatively short one, as in 1837 it was removed to Thames. It appears that the move from Puriri was made on account of "extremely unhealthy" weather conditions.



## Some Writings Of Those Early Missionaries

### William Fairburn—

22nd October, 1833: "Started with Messrs Williams, Brown and Morgan on a journey to the Thames for the purpose of looking for a suitable place for a mission station."

Monday, 11th November, 1833: "After, went on to Turua, but found all the natives gone on to their plantations at a place called Puriri. It lay in our way and we called upon them and slept there. We found a very fine assemblage of natives of 150 in number remarkably civil and very pressing to have some of us to live as teachers among them. This place seems to possess all the advantages required for a mission station, (namely) central in regard to its situation, with land for cultivation, wood and water . . .

"When assembled for prayers we were much gratified to find a number of natives join in the singing as well as repeat in the responses at evening prayers, having evidently received instruction from those native lads who had been living in the schools. (i.e. those of the Wesleyan Mission at Hokianga). We felt thankful that we were thus providentially led among this people."

The party moved on from Puriri, but returned there on the 19th November, "When our native friends came to see us with their fern torch light in their hands, which had a very imposing effect, I conversed with them upon our one great object until 10 o'clock."

Wednesday, 20th November, 1833: "This morning we went to examine the extent of the land which was to form the mission settlement. It seems to answer our expectations and we have given directions to the natives to put up three native houses to be ready for three of the mission family expected to arrive there in the summer . . ."

### James Preece—

Puriri, 10th February, 1834: ". . . I must now advert to the cause of my removal from Waimate in consequence of the great cry that was from the southward for missionaries. The committee felt desirous of forming a station there, but that not a sufficient number of individuals who were acquainted with the language to be spared. I had long felt a desire to be engaged in the southward mission. I therefore offered myself, and the

committee sanctioned my removal. We landed here on the 26th December and were gladly received by about 300 people, and although their desire for missionaries may proceed from a view of obtaining temporal things, yet I rejoice that an opportunity is given us of speaking to them the words of eternal life . . . I hope soon to be joined by our other brethren who are appointed here."

John Morgan, who arrived with Preece in December, 1833, describes the first days of the mission station as follows:

Puriri, 10th February, 1833: ". . . our friends will also have informed you of Mr. and Mrs Preece and myself having left the Bay of Islands in the 'Fortitude' under Capt. Wood, on December 19th for the purpose of forming this station. We anchored in the Thames, on the 23rd, inst., Messrs Fairburn and Wilson arrived here on the 28th in the boat. Our services have been regularly conducted, and we have no reason to complain of the attendance of the natives, on the means of grace. The natives of this place, as well as those lower down on the river, have behaved very well since our arrival, and up to the present hour, the Lord has suffered no evil to come nigh us, or our dwellings. But how long the present state of things may continue, we cannot say, as we fear the natives inland are jealous of our settlement. On the 20th January we commenced a male school. Our dear Christian friends in Europe would have been much interested, could they have witnessed the opening of this school, and seen such a goodly number of the poor natives of the dark corner of the earth, assembled together for the first time, in the daily school to learn to read those 'scriptures which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus'. The school is going on well . . . We expect that our brethren who have been appointed to this station will join us in about a fortnight."

One of these brethren, John A. Wilson, described his first impressions of the Puriri in a letter dated July 25th, 1834:

"You have doubtless heard of our removal to the station at Puriri in the Thames before this. We left the Bay of Islands in the 'Fortitude', on Saturday the 19th April, and arrived at Puriri in five days. Since our residence at this place, I have been engaged in a variety of ways, I have done carpentering, building chimneys, superintending the cutting of roads, rendering swamps passable for our horses, fencing in land for my house and garden, and assisting Mr. Morgan in the school. Our station here is well situated, many powerful tribes may be visited from it, and Christian instruction given to numbers."



Writing to the C.M.S. in July, 1834, James Preece was particularly optimistic about the progress of the mission:

" . . . Never did our missionary field present a more pleasing picture—truly 'the fields are white already with the harvest', the land is open before us. I have been employed much the same as when I last wrote. I have completed a weatherboard store, and am preparing a frame for a weatherboard chapel. I also attend in my turn to the spiritual duties of the settlement and visit the natives for some miles around us to present them the uncountable (?) riches of Christ. I feel very much encouraged in my work; many of the natives that are residing with me are in a very pleasing state of mind—two of them chiefs of some note . . . . "

William Fairburn, writing in May 1836, describes the school:

"A few weeks ago we had our Puriri school examination, the first since we have been here. The Rev. Messrs Brown and Maunsell were present. The infant school has made good progress. The average of late has been about 30, ten of which can read the translation fluently.

The boys' school is advancing—some among them write a good hand and are getting on in their tables and arithmetic. Most of them know all the catechism. A few prizes were given such as slates, pencils, catechisms and tracts; the little native children are very interesting."

While their families remained at Puriri for the majority of the mission station's short life, the missionaries themselves were constantly on the move throughout the area. From 1835 onwards, it becomes increasingly apparent from their correspondence that both they and their families had been beset by continual ill-health, indeed to such a degree that their missionary activities were seriously curtailed.

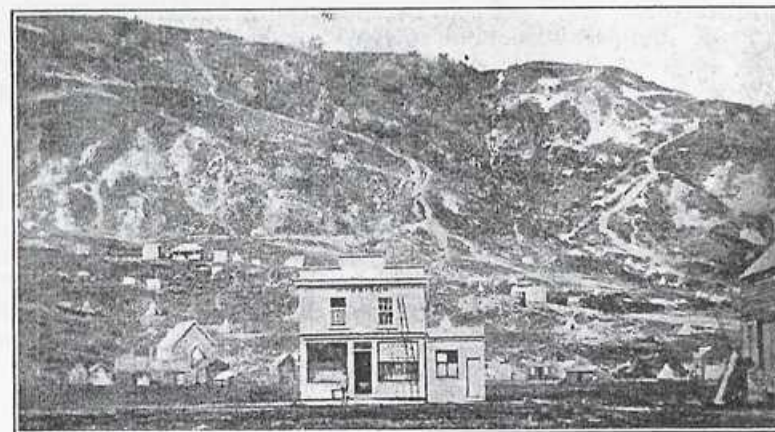
James Preece, writing in October 1835, states:

"You will perhaps be surprised at the proposed removal of this station to Hauraki, but it has not been done without mature deliberation and prayer to our Heavenly Father for his direction and guidance. We have been induced to recommend the

removal of this station on account of its unhealthiness. The Puriri has every sign of an unhealthy place; the land is very low and entirely surrounded by swamp which extends for many miles and comes close to the settlement. The vapour which arises therefrom during the whole of the summer have been the cause of our being affected both with fever and ague which nearly proved fatal to Mr. Wilson, his two children and Mrs Brown's little boy last summer. Those of us who were not so severely attacked were so weak and languid, that it was with difficulty that we could attend to the duties of the settlement.

The Missionary Register of May 1839, quotes the following extract from a report of James Preece:

"The Committee having sanctioned the removal of our station from Puriri to Hauraki, I commenced by erecting the frame of a house, weatherboarding and shingling the same. On the 3rd February I removed my family from Puriri to Hauraki." The exact site of the new station was at 'Kawaranga', (or more properly spelt Kauaeranga), eleven miles from Puriri.



This view was taken from Pollen Street close where the Bank of N.S.W. now stands. The building in Pollen Street is not identified, but old St. George's appears further back in Rolleston Street.



## Pre-Goldfields Days

### HOW THE GOLD WAS DISCOVERED AND OPENED UP

Prior to the proclamation of the goldfield in 1867, the Thames district was a bush wilderness, over which the native owners watched jealously against the intrusion of the wealth-seeking pakeha. True, there had been goldmining on a moderate scale at Coromandel, further north on the peninsula, after the discovery of gold there by Charles Ring in 1852, and in November of that year, Colonel Wynyard, then Lieutenant-Governor, entered into an arrangement with the Maori owners under which they were to permit search for gold between Cape Colville and the Kauaeranga River. At that period, however, but little attention was given to the Thames end of the promontory.

Not until James Mackay, then a Government Land Purchase Officer, came to realise the potentialities of the Thames, were arrangements made for the coming of miners in any numbers.

To the foresight and negotiations of Mr. Mackay, who afterwards became Government Commissioner for the opening of the field, and first Warden, belongs the principal credit for the advent of civilisation and enterprise to the Thames proper. His were the negotiations with the native owners—his the early administration of organised government, his the regulation of the first "rush".

#### Early Days of Coromandel

For a proper understanding of the history of the goldfield, it is first necessary to sketch occurrences at Coromandel that led up to the opening of Thames itself to the pick of the miner. Fortunately, we have these events outlined in Mr. Mackay's own records. It was, he says, in October, 1852, that Mr. Ring discovered auriferous quartz and some fine gold in the Kapanga stream.

A number of people were consequently attracted to the district, and in November of the same year Colonel Wynyard made his arrangement with the natives. Miners commenced operations, but owing to various causes the field was very soon nearly abandoned. Among these causes may be mentioned counter-attractions to diggers in the opening of the Collingwood goldfield in 1857, the Buller River finds in 1859-60, and Gabriel Reid's discovery at Tuapeka in 1861.

However, in November, 1861, Coromandel again became the scene of active mining, and it is recorded that the number of miners in the neighbourhood when that goldfield was proclaimed in June, 1862, was about 300. The commencement of hostilities in the Waikato in the middle of 1863 caused Coromandel to be again deserted by its mining population. It has been stated that in two years of sluicing about £11,000 worth of gold was recovered.

#### Thames Natives in the Waikato War

About one-third of the Thames Natives joined the Kingite party, but after the fall of Rangiriri in November, 1863, they returned to their homes. Early in 1864, Mr. Mackay was holding an appointment as Native Assistant Secretary, his proper station being in the South Island. Government business, however, caused him to visit the Thames district, and he ascertained that the natives who had been in rebellion against the Queen's authority wished to surrender.

Under Government instructions, he came to the district to take steps to facilitate their desire. While here he received information from a Maori whom he had known as a miner at Collingwood, that he had found alluvial gold at Ohinemuri. Besides, Hanauru Taipari—whom early Thamesites afterwards knew as Wirope Hoterene (Willoughby Shortland) Taipari, the stalwart captain of a fine corps of Native Volunteers—informed him that gold had been obtained near Kauaeranga, the name given by the natives to the area which we all know as Shortland.

Acting upon this data, Mr. Mackay made a recommendation to the Colonial Secretary—remember that the seat of Government was then in Auckland—that if a Magistrate were appointed for the district, one of his duties should be to endeavour to bring about an arrangement for the working of the Thames as a goldfield. So matters stood until May, 1864, when Mr. Mackay was himself appointed to be Civil Commissioner for the Waihou, or Hauraki, district.

#### Taipari's First Prospectors

At numerous political meetings held at the Thames in 1864 and 1865, Mr. Mackay endeavoured to point out to the natives the advantages that would accrue to them from leasing their auriferous lands, but was invariably met with opposition from what was known as the Maori Land League Party.



The only person who showed real anxiety to open the land was Hanauru Taipari. For a long time he contended against virtually the whole of the Ngaitmaru tribe, of which his father was the principal chief. At length, under the influence of his powerful pressure, the tribe agreed to allow him to employ Europeans in prospecting for gold on his own land.

At Taipari's request, Mr. Mackay engaged Walter Williamson and James Smallman, who worked for some months with little success. They were vigilantly watched by the whole tribe, and brought back whenever they trespassed beyond the Karaka stream on the north, or the Hape on the south.

Te Moananui, another chief, allowed them to search on his own land—at which time they received some little aid from the Provincial Government—but here, again, the results were nil. Discouraged, the two prospectors soon left the district.

Taipari, however, was still sanguine. He next arranged with Paratene Whakautu, who had had experience with gold in Nelson, and Hamiora te Nana of Ngatipaoa, another of the tribes of the district, to continue the exploration of his own Karaka-Hape land. They succeeded in obtaining a small quantity of gold from the south bank of the Karaka. This was the gold of which history credits with being taken to Auckland by Judge Rogan, of the Native Land Court, and shown to Dr. Pollen, Deputy-Superintendent of the Province, and Mr. Mackay.

### Pressure from Auckland

At this time Auckland City was in a parlous condition. What Mr. Mackay says on this subject is to the point: "The withdrawal of the Imperial troops and the removal of the seat of Government to Wellington had caused a stagnation of business, and commercial failures were of frequent occurrence. Numbers of labouring men were starving for want of employment.

"The news of the discovery of gold at Kauaeranga, afterwards called Shortland, caused immediate excitement, and the offices of Dr. Pollen and myself were besieged with applicants for permission to go to the Thames.

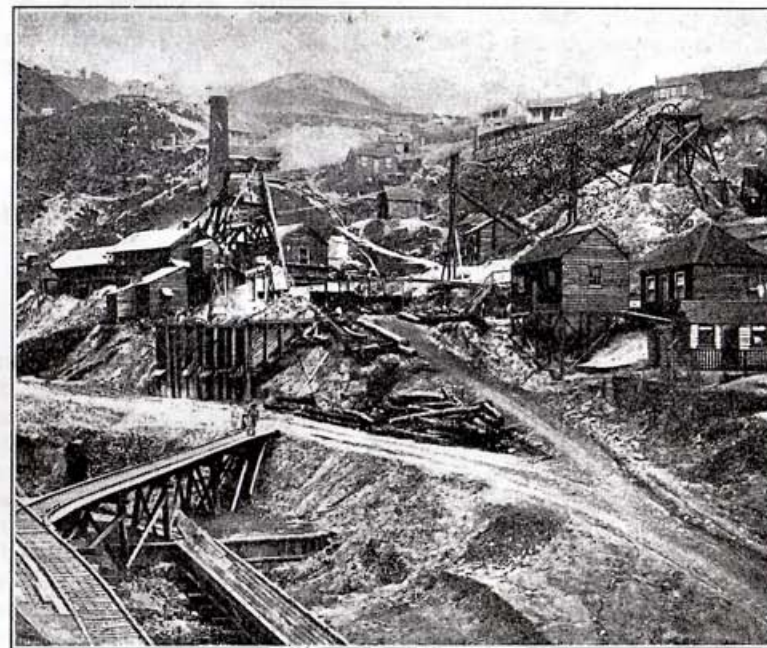
"These we were compelled to refuse, but the danger of the district being rushed, and a quarrel ensuing with the natives, were so imminent, that after consulting together on the subject we agreed to proceed at once to Kauaeranga, and endeavour to make an arrangement with the natives for the leasing of their lands to the Crown for gold-mining purposes.

### The Original Goldfield

"On arrival there we first inspected the ground whence gold had been procured, and, having satisfied ourselves of its presence there, we convened a meeting with the natives.

We found the majority of them objected to any lease being executed, but after pretty lengthened arguments we succeeded, on the 27th July, 1867, in making an agreement with Hoterene Taipari, Raika Whakarongotai, and Rapana Maunganoa to allow mining over their lands, bounded on the north by the Kurunui stream, and on the south by the Kakaramata, on the east by the summit of the seaward line of hills, and west by the sea and certain survey pegs.

"A large portion of the Moanataiari, and the whole of the Waiohahi, were excluded by this arrangement by the opposing portion of the Ngatimarū."



The famous Caledonian Mine in the Moanataiari Creek.



### Official Proclamation

Without loss of time, the Deputy-Superintendent issued the following proclamation:—

#### Proclamation

By Daniel Pollen, Esq., Deputy-Superintendent of Province of Auckland, in Colony of New Zealand.

WHEREAS by an Act of the General Assembly of New Zealand, intituled the Goldfields Act, 1866, it is enacted that it shall be lawful for the Governor, from time to time, by Proclamation, to constitute and appoint any portion of the Colony to be a Goldfield, and whereas under the provisions of the said Act the power of the Governor having been duly delegated to the Superintendent of the Province of Auckland, now therefore, in pursuance of the said power, authority and delegation, I do hereby constitute and appoint all that block of land hereinafter described to be a Goldfield under the provisions of the said Act, that is to say:—

All that block of land commencing on the sea-coast at the mouth of the river Kauwaeranga, thence by that river to the junction of the Kaka-ramata Stream, thence by that stream to its source on the ridge of the hills, thence along the said ridge to the sources of Hape, Karaka, Waio-tahi, Moanataiari, and Kurunui streams, thence turning down the Kurunui Stream to the sea-coast, thence by the sea-coast to the mouth of the Moanataiari Stream, thence inland to the base of the hills, thence crossing the Waiotahi Stream and by the base of the hills to the Parereka spur, thence ascending the said spur, thence descending a spur to the Karaka Stream, thence by that stream to the sea-coast, thence by the sea-coast to the point of commencement.

Given under my hand this 30th day of July, 1867.

Daniel Pollen,  
Deputy Superintendent.

It will be observed that the boundaries thus defined excluded from the original goldfield the area which has since produced such great mines as the Caledonian, Golden Crown, Manukau, Cure, Nonpareil, and most of Moanataiari and Cambria.

### The Meeting That Began It All . . .

Although Christian Services had been held in the Thames district since 1833, when the early missionaries established a Mission Station at Puriri, on the banks of the Waihou River, it was not until January of 1868, just a few short months after Thames had been declared a Goldfield, that a meeting was held by local residents with the aim of either providing a hall or a Church as a place of worship. The Church of England (Thames) minute book has that meeting recorded thus . . . "At a meeting held in Capt. Butt's Hotel, Shortland, on the 20th January 1868, The Ven. Archdeacon Lloyd in the chair, resolved that a committee be appointed for the purpose of devising measures for the erection of a Church of England place of worship, and for carrying them into execution. The committee to consist of the following gentlemen with power to add to the number, Messrs J. Mackay, A. Baillie, Rev. G. Maunsell, C. F. Mitchell, W. H. Taipari, D. Eyre, W. Goodall, Dr. Hooper, H. Beere, J. Petschlie, W. Copland, and R. Hunt. Resolved that Mr. Mackay act as treasurer, and that the Rev. G. Maunsell act as convenor to the committee.

"Votes of thanks were then passed to W. H. Taipari for his gift of a site for the church, and to the Ven. Archdeacon Lloyd, Chairman.

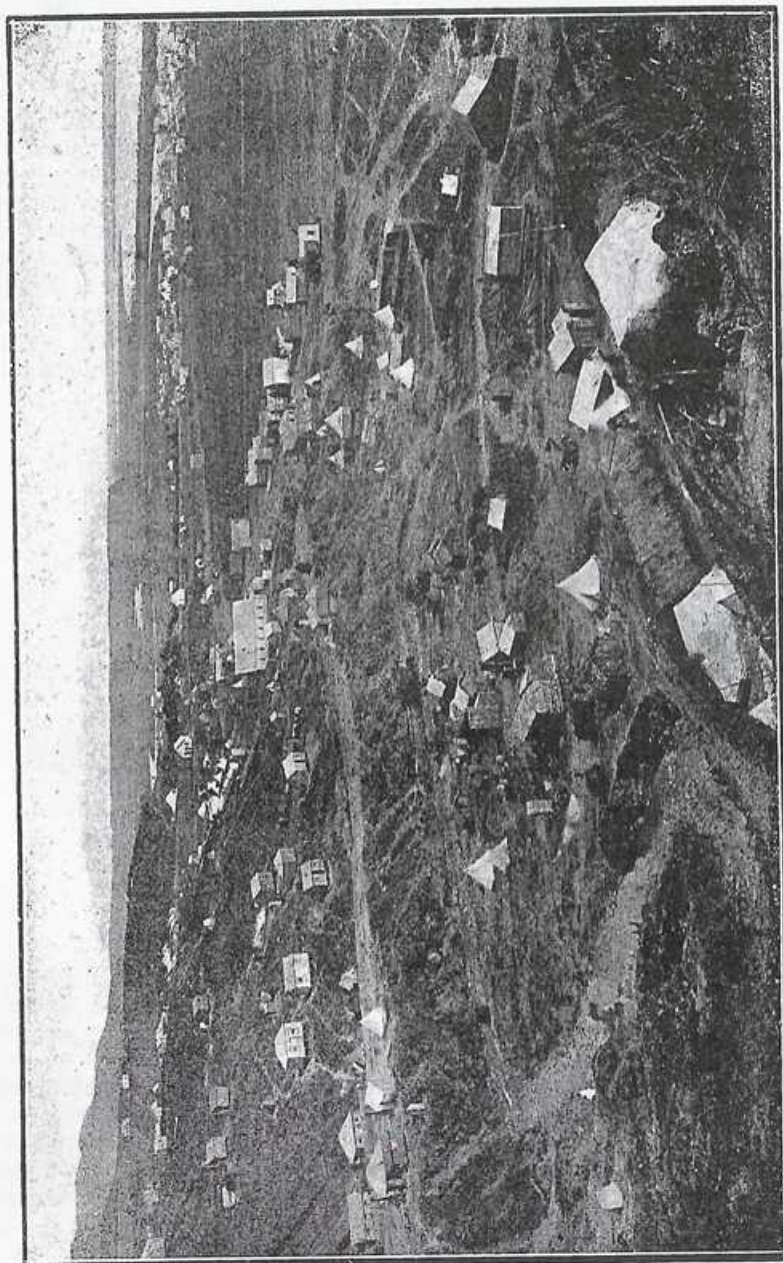
"The meeting then adjourned until Wednesday the 29th inst. at 8 p.m. at the store of Mr. Morton Jones.

(Signed) G. Maunsell,  
Convenor.

So read the minutes of the first meeting, although it is of some interest to note that in connection with Chief Taipari's gift, the following minute of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of New Zealand held at Auckland in February 1868 states . . . "That the Ven. Archdeacon Lloyd reported that the Native Chief Taipari had granted a site for a Church at Thames, and that Mr. Mackay had promised to get it passed through the Native Land Court. The Ven. Archdeacon applied on behalf of the people of Thames for a grant toward a Church. The Standing Committee, on a motion of Mr. R. B. Lusk, seconded by Mr. S. W. Hill, granted the sum of £20 to be given when the site is secured and the building erected."

At the meeting held at Mr. Morton Jones' store on the 29th January, 1868, the following names were added to the committee, Dr. Sam, Dr. Lethbridge, Messrs G. Gilhard, W. Wilkinson, E. Hewitt, J. Schultz, Capt. Butt, J. Gibbons, A. Young,





Looking towards Shortland from Irishtown. The foot of the Karaka in the foreground. The tents indicate the date. The original St. George's Church in Rolleston Street is the prominent building.

Capt. Best, H. Sheen, J. W. Hall, R. Menzies, J. Gwynne, C. Richards, T. Sands, G. Spencer and M. Jones. Mr. A. Hogg was appointed secretary, and each member of the committee was supplied with a subscription list, the list having been opened at the meeting when £62/8/- was subscribed. The first expenditure was also authorised at this meeting when the sum of 2/6 was made available for the purchase of a minute book.

Donations were also received from Bishop Selwyn and the grant from the Standing Committee were also added to the amount already on hand. The meeting of 13th February 1868 saw a building committee appointed, and this was made up of the following, Messrs Mackay, Mitchell, Beere, and Gilhard, power being given to them to invite tenders prepared by Mr. Beere. Nine tenders were received, the one of Mr. Craig, for the sum of £165 being the one that was accepted. The Church was soon erected on a site in Rolleston Street, and was used as a Church until 1872, when the present St. George's Church was built on the corner of Mary and Mackay Streets. The original building, is the present Parish Hall.

### "Music Hath Charm . . ."

Not everything in those early days of St. George's went without a hitch, for example it appears as though some people were not all that taken by the manner in which things were being handled generally, and the way in which the finances were being used. The newspaper of the day, "The Advertiser and Miners' News", reported a meeting of the 24th September, 1868 as follows:—

#### "ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, SHORTLAND PUBLIC MEETING

"A public meeting, convened by advertisement in these columns, was held at the Court-house last evening, to discuss the affairs of the church. There was a large attendance of members and the public.

Mr. C. F. Mitchell was called to the chair, and Dr. Lethbridge, secretary.

#### Minutes of the Last Meeting

Some discussion arose as to the desirability of reading the minutes of the last meeting on this occasion. On the motion of Mr D. Eyre, seconded by Mr Hogg; it was resolved that the minutes should be read and confirmed.



## Visit To St. George's By His Lordship Bishop Selwyn, August 1868

The 'Advertiser and Miners' News', on August 8th, 1868, carried the following report of the visit to Thames of Bishop Selwyn. This was to be the last time that the Bishop would be in Thames, as he left New Zealand shortly afterwards to travel to England and become Bishop of Lichfield.

"His Lordship the Bishop of New Zealand and Lichfield, paid a visit to the Church of St. George's, recently established in the district, and held two farewell services yesterday, which were largely attended. His Lordship's visit had been looked forward to, with considerable interest by the church and congregation of St. George's, and notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, which rendered the roads very unfit to be traversed, the church was crowded morning and evening with attentive listeners to His Lordship's farewell discourses. In the morning the sermon was founded upon the 44th verse of the 14th chapter of Ezekiel, the 10th, 11th and 12th verses, which served as the basis of two very powerful and impressive addresses, in which the sublime truths of our holy religion were brought prominently before his hearers, and an appeal made on behalf of the same to their hearts and conscience, which will not soon be forgotten by those present. His Lordship, in the course of his address, exhibited all that zeal and earnestness which have characterized his ministrations during a long residence amongst us as the head of the church in this colony.

"Collections were made at the close of each service in aid of the organ fund, amounting in the morning to £8/2/9, and in the evening £8/7/1."

### The Bishop's Departure

His Lordship, Bishop Selwyn, took his departure next day, being accompanied to the wharf by the Committee of Management and a large number of personal friends and admirers.

Prior to his departure, a farewell address was presented to him by Mr. James Mackay, who expressed the pleasure he felt in carrying out the wishes of the Church Management Committee and apologised for the hasty manner in which it had been got up. He remarked that although His Lordship was about to take his departure from amongst them, he was sure that they would not be forgotten by them.

His Lordship expressed the pleasure he felt in accepting the address, which needed no apology on their part. It was a fact in natural history, that the birds of the gayest plumage had not always the most melodious notes, and although the address had been hurriedly got up, it was not the less acceptable on that account. Although he was leaving for England, he should always continue to take a warm interest in the spiritual welfare of this country; he should never be backward in its interests whether in procuring a clergyman, or in any other way he



BISHOP SELWYN—First Bishop of New Zealand.

might be of service to them. As far as funds were concerned, however, he thought the place ought to be able to provide sufficient for the maintenance of a resident clergyman amongst them. After a few parting words the deputation withdrew.

His Lordship left for Auckland by the steamer "Royal Alfred" at 2 p.m., and was conveyed on board in a whaleboat, rowed by members of the Church Committee.