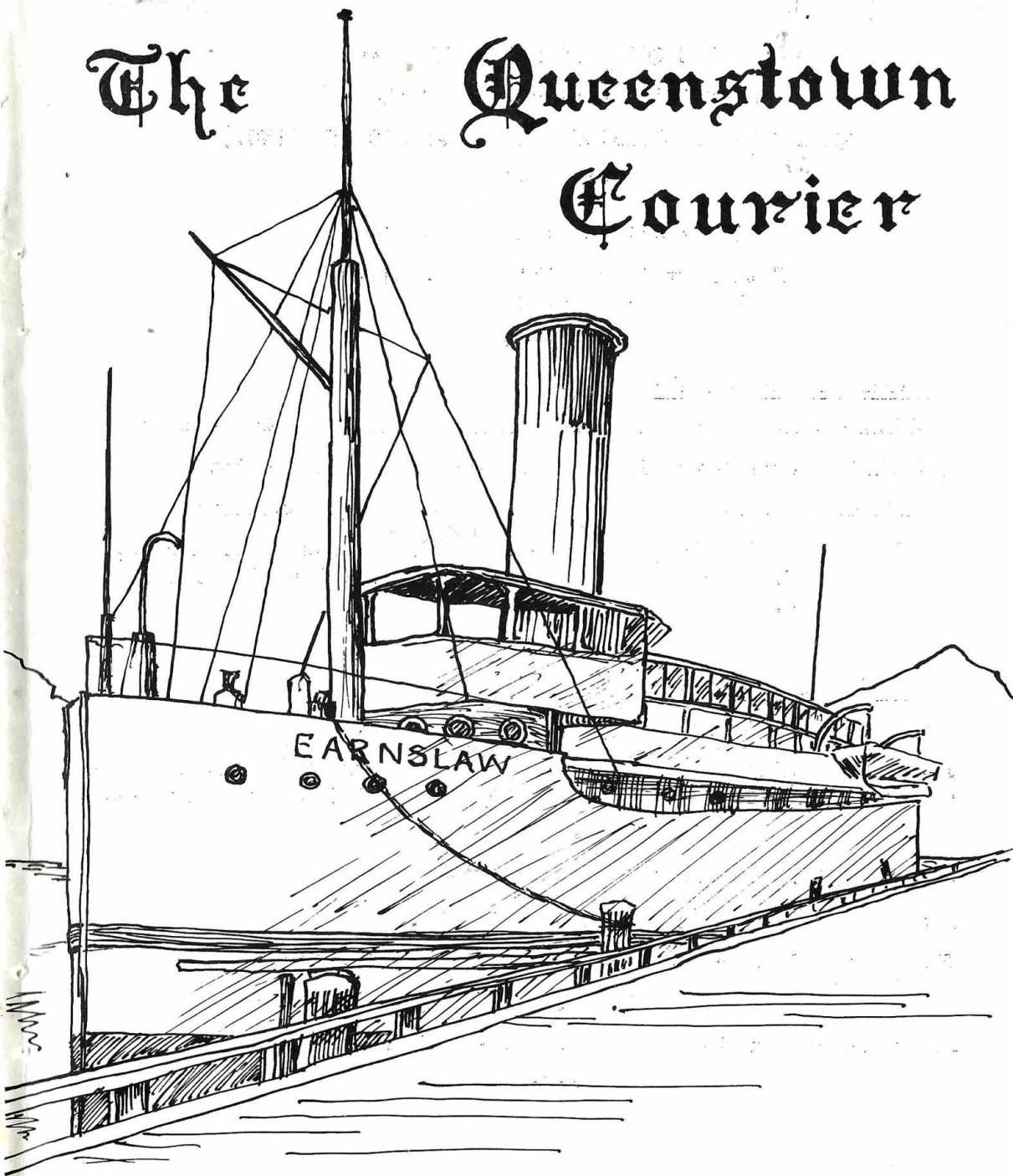


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For Index of Courier up to No. 26, see Courier No. 26.

We are again privileged to include a paper by Mr Neville Ritchie, archaeologist attached to the Clutha Valley Hydro Scheme. It deals with the research into the Chinese settlement at Cromwell and neighbouring areas. Readers will find interest in glass and ceramic items, coins, etc. recovered from Cromwell Chinatown which are on display in the Information Centre at Cromwell.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON NINETEENTH CENTURY
CHINESE SETTLEMENT IN THE CROMWELL AREA ...

by: Neville Ritchie
Archaeologist
Cromwell

This article is a revised version of an interim report on the Cromwell Chinatown excavation (Ritchie 1980). The main report is currently being compiled.

Introduction

Since 1978, a programme of archaeological research (directed by the NZ Historic Places Trust) has been underway in the areas affected by the Clutha Valley Development hydro-dam construction project. Amongst the threatened sites are numerous former Chinese habitations and workings, the legacy of the Chinese miners who worked in the area during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Archaeological study of these sites has considerable potential to expand our rather impoverished knowledge, developed from historical and archival research, of the lifestyle of the Chinese goldseekers.

Numerous books, papers and theses with reference to the nineteenth century NZ-Chinese population exist but these publications tend to have a sociological rather than historical orientation, e.g. The Don diaries; McNeur (1924), Hall (1927), Mathews (1934), Fyfe (1948), Fong (1959), Grief (1974). In the last decade some informative popular books and articles have been produced (e.g. Ng 1972a, 1972b, Butler 1977) but they present relatively little new information because their data is derived from the same limited range of sources which the earlier authors used.

Archaeological investigations and analysis, involving the detailed and systematic study of discarded refuse and structural remains, provides a virtually independent data source. This information, not only supports and enhances interpretations derived from

historical research but also provides additional insights into the day to day life of any studied group which are not available by any other means.

Background of Chinese Settlement in N.Z.

The history of Chinese settlement in N.Z. began in 1865 when the Otago Provincial Council and the Chamber of Commerce agreed to invite Chinese on the Victorian goldfields to rework the Otago goldfields. At the time Otago appeared to be on the verge of a mining slump following the departure of thousands of European miners for the newly discovered goldfields in Marlborough and on the West Coast. Thus the majority of the Chinese who came to N.Z. initially settled in Otago, although several hundred also settled in Nelson and Westland (Heinz 1977:35).

Almost without exception the Chinese immigrants originated from Kwanglung Province in S. China (Ng 1972:1), this area not only had the longest history of colonial contact, but also the worst social turmoil as a result of the Opium wars, rebellion, over-population, poverty, banditry, clan feuding, natural disasters and epidemics. So there were obviously many incentives to emigrate - gold provided the stimulus. The Cantonese gold seekers were merely one component of an immense population exodus from southern China throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. The migrants also went to SE Asia, islands in the Pacific and Indian oceans, the United States and Australia (Ng 1981:4).

Initially all the Chinese who landed in New Zealand came from the Australian state of Victoria, after the Otago Council's invitation had been circulated around the gold mining centres there. However, after a few years increasing numbers came directly from China, as word went back to relatives of the prospects on the New Zealand goldfields. The characteristic chain pattern of lineage migration developed. With rare exceptions the early New Zealand Chinese were descended from peasant farmers and rural artisans (Ng 1972:1).

Chinese settlement in N.Z. can be divided into three phases (this research is only concerned with the first one). It dates from the first arrivals in 1865 until about 1900. During this period the Chinese were overwhelmingly sojourner in outlook and goldmining was their chief occupation. They also tended to have minimal interaction with Europeans. The second phase was between 1900 and 1952 when the New Zealand-Chinese remained as aliens in the Land, despite

a growing desire for the settlement of their families here. In this phase they were principally established in market-gardens, fruit shops and laundries. The third and continuing phase, which dates from 1952, relates to their present assimilation and increasing absorption into the general New Zealand community. (Ng 1981:1).

The NZ-Chinese population reached a peak of just over 5,000 between 1878-81. Virtually all were men. The percentage of goldminers among their number ranged from 90% down to 45% (in 1901). Compare this with the 100,000 plus who fled Kwangtung and settled in California after 1848 and 50,000 who settled in Australia in the 1850's alone. Because they were late arrivals at the Californian rushes, the Chinese were normally obliged to rework old claims which had been abandoned by European miners. In New Zealand there seems to have been less compulsion to rework the old claims, but the Chinese frequently chose to do so. Generally, they were content to work for a small steady return rather than chase the elusive bonanza so anxiously sought by the European miners.

The early Chinese in New Zealand had to contend with considerable malevolent and bureaucratic racial discrimination but they experienced little direct violence compared with the inter-Chinese feuding that developed in the United States and the often violent treatment they received at the hands of white miners in Australia (Price 1974, Butler 1977:23, Ng 1972:5). The last writer, in particular, has striven to balance the historical record with regard to the shameful defamation, borne out of bigotry, political opportunism and fear of economic competition which the Chinese in N.Z. experienced last century. The outcome of the anti-Chinese agitation was the passing in 1881 of the first of a number of restrictive Immigration Acts (incidentally similar processes had occurred in the United States and Australia - refer Price 1974). By that date (i.e. 1881) the number of Chinese in N.Z. was already decreasing. By 1901 there were 2963 Chinese in N.Z. (almost all males), literally an aged, dispirited and declining group (Ng 1981:2).

Chinese Settlement in the Cromwell Area

The first Chinese arrived in the Cromwell area (via Dunedin) in the latter half of 1866, less than four years after the founding of the township. They originally set up camp in the vicinity of Gibraltar

Rock, a prominent rock face on the banks of the Clutha River some four kilometres below Cromwell (Parcell 1976:148). About 1870, some Chinese storekeepers had established themselves at the upper end of Cromwell's main street, where they formed the nucleus of a 'Chinatown'. Initially, few miners lived in the settlement, the majority preferring to establish themselves in rock shelters near the workings within the river gorges and side gullies (ibid:149).

Here they constructed shelters by walling up the front of rock overhangs or the open space under boulders with slabs of schist, of which detrital fragments are abundant in the local environment. In areas where there were no natural overhangs they built small stone huts, but the raw materials on hand were the chief determinants of construction techniques. Thus at Waipori and in the Nevis Nokomai they constructed mainly mud brick dwellings, at Round Hill in Southland they made huts of wooden shingles, whilst in Westland they utilised raupo, timber and stone. In some instances, for example, at Lawrence, they used boards, rice sacks and flattened kerosene tins (McGill 1980:31). Fortunately, for archaeologists they appear to have generally shunned tents.

The peak year for Chinese immigration to New Zealand was 1871, by which time there were over 200 Chinese residents in the Cromwell area, out of a total of 4000 Chinese miners spread throughout Otago. This compares with 7000 European miners (Ng 1972:3). The heyday of Chinese mining was in the 1870's and 1880's. After the eighties the easily worked gold had largely been won and it became the turn of the larger scale, generally European owned, sluicing and dredging companies. Many Chinese became involved in small sluice mining ventures, but with the notable exception of Sew Hoy, the Shotover dredging pioneer, they did not take up the new dredging technology. Gradually their numbers on the goldfields began to diminish as they moved to the cities, adopted other occupations, returned to China or died.

The Archaeological Approach

Given an almost complete lack of published details about Chinese sites in New Zealand, it was necessary to approach the investigation of the sites in the Cromwell area with a broadly defined set of objectives in mind.

These objectives were to:

1. Analyse the site distribution and its variability.
2. Determine how the sites fit into the overall pattern of historic settlement.
3. Examine the process of acculturation and changes through time.
- 4a. Examine the subsistence and social patterns.
 - b. Determine the origin of all artifacts found in the sites.
 - c. Examine the processes of manufacture and distribution of the products imported from China.
5. Record relevant information about the Chinese from surviving elderly informants.

The first excavations centred on the former Chinese rockshelters in the Cromwell Gorge (all will be eventually flooded by Lake Dunstan). Twenty-five were tested initially, with five being selected for total excavation (Ritchie 1979). From that work and associated research a picture developed of life in the rock shelters, particularly with regard to subsistence activities, but it also provided some insights into the social aspects of Chinese settlement.

The next logical step was to investigate a Chinese urban settlement, and the obvious choice of sites in the Cromwell area was the township's former 'Chinatown'. The site was excavated over January-February 1980.

The Chinese urban settlements in New Zealand (known variously as Chinese camps, cantons, or in Cromwell's case, Chinatown) differed considerably in size, from clusters of a few huts, to the likes of those at Lawrence and Round Hill, where 500 plus Chinese lived (Greif 1974:17, McGill 1980:36, 88). Although Cromwell's Chinatown has been described as containing "up to 200" (Marsh n.d.), Don's diaries (e.g. 1894:21 and Don quoted in Butler 1977:33) the physical size of the structures would suggest the main nucleus housed considerably less, in fact probably only about forty. The figure "200" quoted by Marsh probably included Chinese living in the immediate vicinity of Cromwell and having regular interaction with the citizens of Chinatown proper.

Fortuitously, Cromwell's Chinatown was the best preserved example of this type of site in Otago. It also appears to have had the greatest longevity. It existed as a recognised Chinese settlement for at least fifty years. Other major Chinese urban enclaves in

in Central Otago such as those at Lawrence, Roxburgh, Alexandra, and Queenstown have been virtually destroyed. In other areas of Central Otago where large numbers of Chinese congregated, for example, around Bannockburn, in the Shotover, Nokomai, Nevis and Cardrona Valleys, Conroys Gully and in the Roxburgh Gorge, they tended not to cluster into sizeable population units. The dispersed settlement patterns are attributable to the topography, the location of established European settlements and the distribution of the alluvial gold in these localities.

Cromwell's Chinatown appears to owe its origins to the arrival of Chinese storekeepers in Cromwell in the late 1860's, not long after the first influx of miners (Parcell 1976:150). They established a business area on the then undeveloped upper end of the main street of Cromwell and a residential area behind the shops, on the already mined-over terrace beside the Kawarau River. The two areas are separated by a steep forty metre high bank.

The location of the settlement was probably compelled upon the Chinese as much as chosen of their own volition. By the time they arrived in Cromwell, the surveyed sites had largely been occupied by Europeans. There is no record that the existing European population of Cromwell was violently antagonistic towards the "Chinese invasion" (although they were at neighbouring Bannockburn - Parcell 1976:150), however, the arrival of Chinese in any established European township was "seldom welcomed with open arms" (Butler 1977: 13). The Chinese probably deliberately established themselves on the "top terrace" because they would not be directly intruding or competing within the white part of Cromwell, thus lessening the possibility of antagonising the European citizens. They would have been aware of anti-Chinese sentiment in other Central Otago towns as they passed through them en route inland, for example, in 1867 the white citizens of Lawrence passed a by-law forbidding the Chinese to camp within the town's environs (McGill 1980:36). Undoubtedly, another incentive to settle where they did in Cromwell, was the fact that the area was unoccupied Crown Land, thus they were able to squat there gratis. If they held a miners right they were entitled to unoccupied ground measuring 24 x 48 feet for a hut or tent site. Other factors likely to have influenced the selection of the site were that it was central to the work areas (i.e., the nearby river banks), the tailings provided a ready source of construction materials, the existence of a reliable spring afforded

a good water supply and it was sheltered from the strong northerly winds which blow in the Cromwell area every summer.

The historical development of Chinatown is rather obscure. The Chinese business section was thriving in the mid 1880's, but to begin with there were few Chinese miners living in the settlement itself (Parcell 1976:150). The business sector included general stores, grog shops, gaming rooms (ibid:151) and at least one, albeit short lived, brothel (Cromwell Argus 1890). Across the street from the business area, a substantial Chinese market garden was also established. The services offered by the Chinese business community appear to have gradually attracted some miners to live in and around "the canton". The storekeepers, in particular, held considerable influence within the Chinese settlements, offering besides provisions, the services of a post office, interpreter, news outlet, a high-interest bank and a social centre (Greif 1974:18).

The business part of Chinatown extended some 150 metres along the south side of Melmore Terrace, the main street of Cromwell (the area is presently demarcated by Mangos' Furniture store and the houses opposite the Victoria Hotel). As far as can be ascertained the largely wooden Chinese stores and businesses were deserted by about the turn of the century. Around 1930 the then Public Works Department demolished and removed the remaining structures because they were considered a public health risk.

In the last fifteen years, substantial finds of Chinese artifacts have been made by some Cromwell residents, within and immediately behind their private properties in the area described above. Mr L. Mangos uncovered a large number of Chinese artifacts and bottles in 1967, when he was excavating for the foundations of his house, and he has added to his collection by subsequent excavations. Similarly Mr R. Thomson has amassed a large collection of Chinese ceramics from behind his property (Ritchie n.d.a., n.d.b.). As both collections are dominated by alcohol bottles (both European glass and Chinese ceramic) it seems likely that they had uncovered bottle dumps associated with the former Chinese "grog shops".

Undoubtedly the closure of the Chinese stores had a detrimental effect on the life of the remaining citizens in the residential (i.e., the lower) area of Chinatown. The predominantly stone dwellings were gradually abandoned as the old miners left or died, finally being deserted about 1920. Cemetery records indicated

that the last Chinese burial in the Cromwell area occurred in 1921 (CBC records), providing a reasonable terminus ad quem for the settlement. Incidentally, of 1300 deaths (as recorded on death certificates) registered at Cromwell between 1863 and 1938, 85 were those of Chinese; the last one in 1921 (R. Murray pers.comm).

After abandonment the buildings gradually decayed, hastened, no doubt by the removal of roofing iron from the structures not long after they were abandoned.

The shady south facing location of the Chinatown site favoured rapid vegetation growth and the area became overgrown within a few years of its desertion. Occasional fruit trees found within the bush near the site are a tangible reminder of some of the horticultural interests of its former inhabitants. The vegetation cover, which consisted of willow, sycamore and elderberry trees, clematis vines, briar and numerous scrubby plants had protected the site considerably from the ravages of fossickers. Some of the willow trees were possibly planted by the Chinese, the rest are adventitious introductions.

The Excavation

The site was initially examined in July 1978. This involved slashing tracks through the dense undergrowth in order to determine its extent, what remained, and the problems likely to be involved in clearing the area.

The excavation began in 7 January 1980, and lasted ten weeks; the first two being entirely taken up with clearing the site of vegetation. This involved an area of 200 x 50 square metres. The aim of the clearing operation was to leave the site in a "park-like" state; all standing trees being left, but all scrub, fallen trees and leaf litter were totally cleared.

After the vegetation had been removed, it was apparent that the settlement had been built on hummocky ground resulting from the working of the terrain prior to the arrival of the Chinese. Within the cleared area a total of twenty definite huts, six suspected hut sites, several sections of stone revetted terraces and tracks, a spring and two possible shafts were uncovered. No obvious middens (rubbish heaps were apparent, except for a lot of debris in the north east corner which appeared to have been dumped down the bank in more recent times (some of it resulting from fossicking in the upper part

of Chinatown). An ash dump located just beyond the western margin of the site was tested but proved to be a later European deposit.

The excavations were concentrated on the interiors and immediate surrounds of the various huts, with smaller sampling excavations being undertaken on the garden terraces and in and around other features such as the dumps. The surrounding bush was also extensively searched for at least 300 metres either side of the cleared area to ensure that the full extent of the site was determined. Within the site-area some 210 square metres were totally excavated as well as numerous test pits to determine the extent and nature of the cultural deposits.

The Structural Remains

Some consistencies of orientation and construction were readily apparent within the structures of the settlement. Several of the huts were located adjacent to the riverside track which must have been formed quite early in the historic era, probably by 1870. This track which passes through Chinatown was later used by lumbering wagon teams conveying coal to Cromwell from the coal pit upstream of the Chinese settlement (Parcell 1950:261). Ethno-historical records indicate that the Chinese deliberately orientated their huts at various angles to hinder the passage of evil spirits (Don quoted in Butler 1977:33), but the hummocky topography also imposed its own limitations. The Chinese seem to have taken advantage of the undulating ground within the site. In almost all cases at least two walls of each hut were built into the adjacent gravel or earth banks, which were retained by stone revetting.

Sixty five percent of the twenty well-defined structures in the settlement were single isolated units. The other seven were massed back to back, forming a central group clustered around a stone walled enclosure which probably originally housed pigs. As many of the adjoining walls were of "double thickness" very little energy or material was saved by building the various huts back to back. However, this aggregated type of construction is a feature of many villages in southern China.

The huts were constructed of cobbles of greywacke and slabs of schist derived from the tailing debris. Mud mortar was usually employed to bind the stones but in some instances a lime mortar was used. Lime mortar also served as a plaster inside one hut.

Although the huts were essentially surface features, some would have had a semi-subterranean appearance because they were built into the adjacent banks. The stone walls were surmounted by roofs consisting of corrugated iron sheeting supplemented by scrappy offcuts of zinc and iron sheeting and flattened kerosine-type tins. The roofs were supported by timber frames built upon the low stone walls. In the instances where post butts survived (the wood type has not been determined yet) they were found to be made of milled timber, although saplings and driftwood were probably also used for framing.

Some of the huts had flooring made up of interlocked slabs of schist, whilst in others the floors consisted of the compacted river terrace gravels. In nearly every instance the door was located on the left hand side of the stone fireplace and chimney at one end of the hut, the limited post butt evidence suggesting that the bed or sleeping platform was built across the opposite end wall. Some of the huts had wooden or stone steps and in many instances short pieces of metal standards were used to support the door jambs. Both the structural remains and photographic evidence indicate that windows and vents were entirely absent. Some concern over security was indicated by the finding of several old padlocks.

The huts varied in size but two size groupings stand out (3 x 2 and 4.5 x 2.5 square metres). It would be tempting to speculate that the size differences had social significance but the material remains do not support such contentions. The size variations probably reflect more functional reasons such as the nature of the ground, the availability of stone, the number of occupants and the whim and energy of the respective hut builders. It is readily apparent that the huts were built by different people, probably over a space of a few years, because of observable variations in the construction of the stone walls, despite the fact that they were all constructed of the same basic materials.

We know from immigration records and recorded observations, reinforced by the type of artifacts that were uncovered, that the settlement was a male domain. Even in 1901 the census records state that there were only fifteen Chinese wives in New Zealand (although it is known that many of the Chinese miners were married before they came to New Zealand - Ng 1972:3). The size and layout of the huts, supported by Don's observations, indicate that the huts were seldom occupied by more than two men.

The Material Remains

Interesting differences were evident within the artifactual assemblages associated with each hut. Those at the eastern end of the site were undoubtedly occupied by Chinese miners based on the assemblages found therein. However, some of the huts at the western end, although they may have been built by the Chinese, were later occupied and modified by "destitute" Europeans during the Depression years of the 1930's.

English currency (c.30) uncovered within the site ranged from 1870 until 1907, neatly spanning the main period of Chinese occupancy. The highest value coin found was one shilling. When the coins and other datable artifacts such as bottles, matchboxes, buttons and nails, are analysed in detail it will be possible to obtain a reasonably accurate idea of the period of occupancy of each dwelling.

Study of the assemblages associated with individual huts provides insights into their usage or specific activities, for example, hut 23 produced more evidence of opium smoking, in the form of opium tincture phials, opium heating lamps made from bottle necks, "funs" (trays for holding opium "deals") and fragmental pipe remains than any other. It seems likely that this hut served as a opium den.

Hut 26 was especially interesting. It had been gutted by fire as evidenced by charred timbers and burnt debris within the structure. The heat had been so intense in some parts that bottle glass had melted. The objects which survived the fire were largely undisturbed. It is conceivable that the hut's occupier had some experience in making or using gun powder (for use in Chinese fireworks?) or metal salvage, because several large globs of lead and over 200 pre World War One .303 calibre projectiles (not the cartridges) were found within the hut. The same hut also contained two deposits of Chinese coins numbering over 120 in total. Another fifty were found elsewhere in the settlement. Although Chinese coins were brought to New Zealand as currency, they had little cash value here and became increasingly used for gambling and talismanic purposes. Chinese coins also have little value for dating because they were retained in circulation for several centuries.

A large stone-walled enclosure (F15) built amidst the main cluster of huts appears to have been either a walled garden plot or a pen for pigs or chickens. Test excavations within the area provided few clues as to the area's use. However, analysis of soil samples

taken from this area may yield useful information.

Some smaller structures adjacent to the larger huts, appear to have served as storage sheds or "lean-to's". One contained two discrete layers of local Cromwell lignite indicating it served as a coal shed. Besides coal the Chinese are also known to have collected driftwood for fuel (Scott 1980 pers.comm).

Several thousand artifacts and bones were recovered during the Chinatown excavation. Analysis of the main artifact categories (glass-bottles, ceramics and tin containers) is still underway, a time consuming job involving the establishment and frequent referral to reference collections. Some of the specialised side-studies have been completed or nearly so, for example, opium smoking equipment (Ritchie and Harrison 1982), tobacco pipes (Foster 1983), the coins (Park and Ritchie, in prep.) and the matchboxes (Anson in press). The latter study has resulted in the development of a very useful new technique for dating historic sites.

Although the studies on the materials excavated at Chinatown have not been completed yet, some patterns are immediately evident -

1. A continuing reliance on food and other products imported from China. These products were initially imported by Chinese merchant-entrepreneurs in Dunedin (Sew Hoy being one of the most notable) and then retailed by Chinese storekeepers in Cromwell and in other goldfield settlements. The range of products imported from the Orient was extensive. It included the following foodstuffs: rice (in sacks), soya oil, preserved ginger, a range of dried vegetables and products such as dried cabbage, salted garlic, salted raddish, pickled lemon and shrimp sauce, all in ceramic containers. Ng Ka Py and Shao Hsing (saki) alcoholic beverages were also imported in distinctive ceramic containers. Other imported products included a wide variety of ceramic bowls, cups and spoons, brass and iron wok ladles, chop sticks, opium (in copper canisters), Chinese medicines (in glass phials), opium pipes (bamboo shafts with ceramic bowls (Ritchie and Harrison, 1982), cloth, gold scales (Li Ding type), pearl buttons, coins and gambling pieces such as counters and dominoes. Analysis of the manufacturing techniques of the various imported Chinese artifacts is an interesting field in its own right but is beyond the scope of this paper.

2. The Chinese also used many items of European (mainly English or New Zealand manufacture, many of which were obtained from stores run by their fellow countrymen. For example, one Kum Goon Wa advertised in the Cromwell Argus (17.05.1881) that he was a "Chinese Storekeeper and Fancy Goods Warehouseman". He stated that he had "On sale, at prices which will command a ready market, Teas, Sugars and General Groceries for English as well as Chinese customers, and of superior qualities to any hitherto introduced into the district".

Although the Chinese retained many of their own customs, they quickly adopted European miners' working clothing because of the cold. They also used, or made, similar tools to those used by the European miners such as picks, shovels, gold pans, and cradles. Other items of western manufacture which were frequently uncovered during the excavation of Chinese sites in the Cromwell area include clay and briar pipes, bone handled brushes, knives and combs, crocks and cutlery, enamelled and iron pots, alcohol bottles (particularly square case gin), aerated waters (mainly Cromwell, Dunedin and Alexandra manufacturers), numerous medicine and universal painkiller containers (glass and ceramic), condiment bottles (notably vinegar, sauces and pickles), ceramic toothpaste and ointment containers, many varieties of tinned products, (such as fish, jams, tea, matches and tobacco) and a wide range of nails, spikes and buttons. Buckets and kerosene tins were used for conveying and storing water.

3. The main faunal materials indicate consumption of cattle, pig and sheep meat, chickens, ducks, hen eggs and fish. Although the Chinese are reputed to have had a marked preference for pig meats, bovine and sheep bones are well represented in the faunal assemblages. The Chinese had their own pigs and chickens at Chinatown (McElligott 1980:pers.comm) and probably maintained active breeding populations. The fish bones, mainly vertebrae, vary considerably in size. Some appear to be derived from tinned fish, whilst other are those of eels caught in the Kawarau River.
4. The Chinese miners appear to have collected and re-used many discarded European items such as pieces of iron standards (used for fire bars and door stanchions), off-cuts of tin sheeting and kerosene-type tins for roofing and walling) and wire (from

which they made various small tools). These materials would have been readily available from either the numerous tips around river-banks of Cromwell or the European blacksmiths. They also re-used the imported ceramic dried vegetable containers for cooking, and several items, notably the opium deal (funs) trays, were produced from spent opium tins.

Early writers have painted a broad scenario of the Chinese as a frugal, adaptive people who retained many of their own customs. Archaeological investigations of Chinese sites support these impressions. However, all too often European accounts of the Chinese lean heavily towards an anecdotal rather than a factual and balanced record of their life style and activities. Controlled excavations of Chinese sites, coupled with thorough literary research can help redress this imbalance.

Chinese site investigations are continuing. Since the Chinatown excavation, another seven excavations have been completed within Chinese huts and rock shelters in the Upper Clutha Valley and Kawarau Gorge. In addition, collections and/or sites have been studied in other parts of Central Otago, the West Coast, Northern Queensland and the Western United States. The result of these studies is a growing knowledge of the diversity of the nineteenth century Chinese material culture. When this is coupled with an increasing ability to accurately date individual sites (or layers within sites), the scene is set to analyse in depth the changes which occurred in the way of life of the nineteenth century Chinese in Central Otago. This objective is currently being pursued as a Ph.D dissertation. Concurrently, the main report on Chinatown, a popular booklet on Chinatown and a guidebook on Chinese artifacts found in New Zealand are being produced.

Acknowledgements

This paper is intended as a background and 'state of the work report' on archaeological investigations on Chinese sites in the Cromwell area. The Clutha hydro project, which will eventually destroy many of the sites, provides the *raison d'être* for the research. I am indebted to everyone (now too numerous to name individually) who has materially assisted with the work.

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JOHN ASPINALL OF SKIPPERS ...

Contributed by A.J.D.

The story of the Aspinall hydraulic claim at the junction of Skippers Creek and the Shotover River is well known, how it was taken up by John Aspinall in 1867 and worked by the family continuously till 1922. During this time the entire river terrace was sluiced away to leave the Skippers Public Hall teetering on the edge of a long drop.

On one occasion John Aspinall was to get first hand experience on the power of his hydraulic gear. In May 1883 when working his claim he slipped and fell in front of the jet of water from the monitor he was using. The monitor had a five inch nozzle with 150 foot of pressure. He was thrown 30 feet, had several ribs and his pelvis broken and was generally battered about. He was extremely lucky not to be killed.

John Aspinall survived and was probably one of the early patients to use the Skippers Ambulance described elsewhere in this issue.

In the same year John Aspinall patented a grating ripple for gold saving. It was manufactured in the Vulcan Foundry, Invercargill, from 3 inch x 3/16 inch metal bars which after heating were run through a machine which corrugated them. Two of these put back to back and welded at the ends formed one unit which could be used in any convenient numbers to line the bottom of a tail race. With coconut matting below it formed a convenient and effective method of gold saving, much better than flat rocks which were usually used.

SKIPPERS AMBULANCE ...

Contributed by A.J.D.

Mining was a dangerous occupation and before the road to Skippers was completed in the late 1880's getting an injured or sick person to hospital was a major undertaking. Generally the whole male population turned out and the patient was carried in relays to the nearest road.

Early in 1883 Mr F. Evans described as a mining manager of Skippers decided that something should be done about the problem. He designed

a special wagon suitable for the narrow tracks and sought subscriptions to meet the cost.

The money was soon found and the American Carriage Factory of Dee Street, Invercargill was commissioned to construct it. It was three feet wide to suit the tracks which were four feet wide and adapted to pulling by a horse but with an undercarriage which could be quickly detached and the bed portion carried manually. Adjustments could be made to raise or lower the patients head to keep the body level in any terrain. The wagon had a powerful (sic) brake and a detachable awning to protect the patient. The whole machine was light and strong and could be carried by one man.

In May the wagon was driven up to Skippers being the first four-wheeled vehicle to pass over the tracks.

It would be nice to complete the story by reporting how many times the wagon was used to bring an injured person out to the hospital but unfortunately the use and final fate of the ambulance is not known.

WALTER PEAK STATION ...

The McKenzies' owned and operated Walter Peak Station from 1880 for almost 80 years. Miss Jessie McKenzie who lives in Cromwell and spent most of her life at Walter Peak has put into manuscript form the history of the station and has kindly made it available for inclusion in the Courier. As the history is too long for inclusion in one issue and Walter Peak Station included Mt Nicholas and Fernhill Stations the history will be included in instalments commencing with Mt Nicholas. Miss McKenzie would be grateful for any corrections or additions readers may care to submit.

Mt Nicholas Station-Run 324

According to history the first European to see Lake Wakatipu from the Western side was David McKellar, who at that time was the owner of Longridge Station, near Balfour in Southland. The McKellars were pioneer farmers of the Waimea Plains.

History tells us it was from McKellars Station, Longridge that John Chubbin, two brothers John and Colin Morrison with Malcolm MacFarlane set out to try to reach the great lake described to him by a Maori named Reko who while they sat and talked, drew a map in the sand of the route.

These men were the first white men to reach the foot of Lake Wakatipu at the Kingston end. The year was 1856. In December 1857, McKellar himself set out to see the lake and visited Kingston Bay where he built a Moki intending to sail up the lake and do some exploring but winds lasting days caused him to abandon the attempt.

Following this he decided to try to find a way to the lake by a different route which took him along the Oreti to its source. Crossing the Oreti river and keeping Bald Hill on his left he came to the big tussock flat which bears his name, McKellars Flat. The journey must have been an extremely difficult one, covering trackless virgin country with many rivers and streams to cross. However he struggled on until he came to a branch of the Von River. He climbed Home Hill, or Pasture Hill where he is said to have stood on a small saddle and viewed the lake for the first time. It was December 1858. David McKellar considered the country too high and rough to depasture sheep and cattle so he did not apply for any of it himself. He met two Australians named John and Francis (or Frank) Hamilton who were looking for grazing land and told them of his find. They immediately applied for Mt Nicholas.

The Whites --

At the time all the sunny faces of Walter Peak down to McKinleys Creek were part of Nicholas. John and Francis Hamilton did not stock it. Nicholas Run and held it only a few months before selling it to John and Taylor White who had come from Canterbury. The year was 1859. When asked why they chose Mt Nicholas the Whites replied that 'it was high and dry, while down country appeared to be one big bog'. The Run was No. 324.

Here I would like to say something about the Whites background.

Thos. Woollaston White and his brothers John and Taylor White, their sisters Lititia, Mary White and Elizabeth White came from a long line of landed gentry in England going back to the year 1275. Their full history is too long to write here but from a book lent to a relative, written in 1866 for private circulation by Miss M.H. Lowry White,

entitled 'Some Account of the Family of Whites of Tuxford and Wallingwells' also 'Memoirs of the House of Whites of Wallingwells and Colateral Branches' one finds it is from the fourth branch of the family the Whites of Mt Nicholas descend.

They were the Whites of Collingham and Tuxford whose names were mentioned in the lists of landed gentry drawn up in 1433 by King Henry VI of France who was Commissioner of Nottinghamshire. He was Johannes White de Colynham who owned much land in Collingham and is buried there. His son John White, during the reign of Henry VIII in 1545-47, purchased land in Tuxford Parish. He died in 1567. His son Thomas became a great land owner his principal seat being the Manor of Tuxford. He rallied troops and fought for Queen Mary in 1533 for which he received grants for courage and loyalty. He died on the 26th of October 1580 and was buried at Tuxford, the burial place for all the heads of the House of White since that date being St Nicholas Church Tuxford, Nottinghamshire.

Thomas White's heir, John was knighted on June 9th 1619 by James I at Greenwich. He married the Lady Dorothy Harpeur in 1623 and was made High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire.

From the fifteenth century onwards the Whites of Tuxford held high positions in the political life of Nottinghamshire and became powerful land owners, Knights of Nottinghamshire, High Sheriffs and were in all public affairs. They went to town in a coach and six, and when they returned the bells of St Nicholas Church rang out a welcome!

One of the White's descendants married the heiress to Wallingwells and when her father died the Estate of Wallingwells passed into the hands of the family of White of Tuxford. Great style was kept up at Wallingwells and in later years the King made the Head of the House of White of Tuxford and Wallingwells a Baronet. When the first baronet held office he rode out to meet the Assize Judges with Javeline men, all his own people. Attired in green and silver livery of Wallingwells the trumpeters carried silk banners painted with the baronets coat of arms of 28 quarter kings. He himself mounted on a skewbald horse caparisoned in crimson velvet and gold trappings of the great Duke of Marlborough with his coach and four following to bring in the Judges. Such was the splendour in which the ancestors of the White of Mt Nicholas lived.

Over the centuries the Whites had many honours bestowed on them. In

1802 George III bestowed on another White a Baronetacy for clothing and arming a regiment of Volunteers to help fight the French when the invasion of England seemed evident. So in later times we come to the Great Grandfather of the Whites of Mt Nicholas.

The Whites of Mt Nicholas -

One, Taylor White Junior, succeeded his father now being Taylor White of Tuxford and Wallingwells. When 22 years of age he married an heiress Sarah Woollaston, elder daughter and co heiress of Sir Isaac Woollaston, Bart. of Lowesby Hall, Leicestershire and St Ives Huntingdon. He was succeeded by his son Thomas Woollaston White who when only 23 took over this vast Estate.

The fourth child of the first Baronet was Taylor White who was educated at Rugby and Sandhurst then took his B.A. degree at Emanuel College, Cambridge in 1827. In 1841 he entered Holy Orders and was presented to the Vicarage Chuckney. He preached on May 24th 1853 at Worksop and a few days later died. In August 1828 he married Dorothea Letitia, sister of Colonel Kirke of Markham Hall, Nottinghamshire. Taylor White's son Thomas Woollaston White married Charlotte Letitia, daughter of the Rev. Arthur Jackson, Vicar of Riccal, Yorkshire. From 'The Early Canterbury Run' by L.G.D. Acland we learn that in 1855 Major Thomas Woollaston White bought 'The Warren' Run 35; Canterbury from Sanderson and Brayshaw and he with his brothers Taylor and John started this place as a station with 700 sheep and a year later they had 1800 sheep. Major White also owned Mt White, which he had named, and Sherwood Station. It is possible he took up Mt White a little before or in 1860, where he built a new homestead at Lake Letitia, which he named after his wife. Major White lived at 'The Warren' and his brothers Taylor and John were at Mt White. When Major White lost his Stations and his money he went to live in Fiji but he was deported for raising a riot, he became a stock inspector in Hawkes Bay but quarrelled with his superiors. It can be readily seen he had a violent temper. He ended his days at Mt Nicholas Run. He had quite a varied career having been in the 48th Bengal Native Infantry Regiment and afterwards at the Australian diggings. He commanded the Militia or Volunteers in Canterbury from 1861 till 1867. John and Taylor White left their brothers property and settled on Mt Nicholas run, Lake Wakatipu.

So now we find John White coming down to Southland to look for land in the year 1859 and deciding to purchase the Mt Nicholas end of the Hamiltons Run for £1,000. He returned to Canterbury, because having secured his Run he had to stock it within six months otherwise it could be declared abandoned and he would lose his deposit of £20. So it was in 1859 Taylor and John White and a hired man drove 300 head of cattle down to Mt Nicholas to stock their Run. At first they stocked only cattle but later we find they were carrying a large mob of sheep as well. Their trip into their Run was by the route taken by David McKellar up the Oreti, crossing the new river and branches of the Von, plus numerous other creeks, Bullock Creek and Gorge Creek, South Von, through trackless wastes, matagouri and tussocks, until they reached the Gorge Hill which falls away very steeply over 1,000 ft to the valley of the Von below. They had two bullock waggons loaded with their goods and supplies, tents and many other necessities and getting them down the hill presented difficulties. The Whites were undaunted and having unhitched the bullocks and led them down the hill to the valley below they let the waggons down inch by inch on ropes and tackle until they too reached the valley floor. They then continued on their journey to the site they had chosen to settle and build their house and homesteading.

Apparently they first lived in a log thatched hut they built because George Hamilton said in his book the 'History of Northern Southland' that when David McKellar and George Gun were on a quest to look for grazing land in the Western part of Southland they stayed a night with the Whites in their log and thatch hut. They give the date as 1861. He says until 1861 Mt Nicholas was stocked with only cattle but it was that year that sheep were bought in as well. The sheep did well and multiplied in spite of Keas and heavy snowfalls. In 1871 the Whites were running 12,300 sheep on 70,000 acres.

When the Whites arrived at their homestead site they set about building suitable accommodation. They had their two sisters with them Letitia and Elizabeth White. The first building, apart from the Sod hut, is still standing at Old Nicholas. They called it 'the Galley'. It is 30ft long by 13ft wide with a chimney at either end. It is divided in two. A Kitchen and Store room, and a bedroom for the staff. The exact date of this stone building is not known but must be one of the first, if not the very first building of permanent materials to be erected in the Wakatipu

district. It has thick stone walls beautifully built with an iron roof, doors and windows were of Cedar. I remember the Cedar table in that hut in my own time. The building is now roughly 122 years old. Surely it should be preserved as an historic building.

The Whites then set about building a ten roomed house which stood in front of the 'old galley'. The house had two passageways and wide verandahs round two sides. It was demolished by my family in 1909 but the spot is marked by some oaks and other fine trees. Some of the timber for this house was pit sown out of bush near-by but much of the building materials were imported Baltic pine and cedar. The stones came from somewhere nearby but we could not find the place. They set out beautiful park-like gardens there with beautiful trees - oaks, elms, cedars, aspens, lime trees, Canadian maples, chestnuts, a large orchard, cherries, nuts, and a hazel grove in about two or three acres of land. There were cobbled paths and an artificial lily pond, stone walls, and even a cork oak.

Incidentally a tragedy took place at Old Nicholas, for one morning the body of Elizabeth White was found drowned in the Lily pond. Legend has it she was just a young girl but my research finds that she was born in England on September 15th 1831. Evidently this unhappy event took place after the Whites left Mt Nicholas and about the time of her sister Letitia's marriage to Henry Kirke Hodge (her cousin). Therefore Elizabeth White, at the time of her death would have been in her mid forties.

The White brothers made a track to the lake and built their woolshed and drafting yards there; materials had to be brought in by bullock waggon from Southland. The waggons would be brought to the top of the Gorge Hill and unloaded and goods sledged down to the Valley below where another waggon would be waiting, loaded and taken to the homestead. Later when Rees had a boat on the lake, goods went in and out by water to Queenstown and Kingston.

When gold was discovered on the otherside of the lake, Rees bought beef from the Whites who also supplied the miners at Twelve Mile and Twenty Five Mile with meat. A fire would be lit on what we called Rats Point (now called Rats Point) opposite Mt Nicholas at Whites Bay. The White brothers would then kill a couple of beasts and row or sail a boat over to what was known as Whites Point, a bit further up than Rats Point and unload the carcasses there. They were away often out on their run attending sheep and cattle on acres on the

goldfields and no doubt delayed by the gales on the lake which can be extremely rough on that arm.

The two sisters must have been extremely lonely at times although quite a large domestic staff was kept, even a common gardener was employed. Even so, the Whites seemed to have plenty of visitors. Their cousins the Hodges, the first to occupy the Eglinton Run, later known as Te Anau Downs Station, often visited and on another occasion another cousin Louisa Caroline White came out from England for a holiday and stayed at Mt Nicholas. It was probably during this visit that she and John White became engaged because after the Whites left Mt Nicholas John White returned to England and married her. Her sister Isobella Pringle White married her cousin and became the second wife of John Ambrose Hodge who followed the Whites as part owner of Mt Nicholas (and later changed his name to Kirke to please his wife. Kirke being the maiden name of her mother.

During the Whites occupation of Mt Nicholas Run unfortunately a dispute broke out over a boundary between the McKellar brothers who had bought the Mavora end from the Hamiltons. The Hamiltons are said to have loosely defined the boundary as 'the Tops of the Snowey Mountains' so no one seemed to know exactly where the separate flocks should be grazing. Hostile meetings took place between the McKellars and White and finally the Whites took the matter to Court charging the McKellars with trespass and loss of profits. It was thought the Whites lost the case and went out penniless, but this was not so. Litigation went on for six years at considerable cost to both parties, Mr W.G. Rees being the Whites arbitrator and Guthbert Cowan acting for the McKellars. The following appeared in the Lake Wakatip Mail. 'November 5th 1873 White v McKellar. On November 19th Messrs White Bros. have entered a further action against Messrs McKellar for loss since the commencement of the last action. The damages are laid at £20,000. In this claim the Lake Wakatip Mail of 19th November, 1873 records that the plaintiffs (the Whites) were awarded £8,711.16.4. The Whites sold Mt Nicholas to their cousin John Ambrose Hodge and a man named J.O. McArdeall in 1874.

Rabbits had begun to infest the country, plus the dreaded scab which had broken out in the sheep at Fernhill, and no doubt the law suit had decided the Whites to sell out. They did not go out penniless. All they lost were profits. Taylor White went to

Hawkes Bay where he bought Glengarry Station, near Napier and ran pedigree stock and wrote articles for Scientific Journals. He never married. He died there in 1913.

John White returned to England, married his cousin who had with her sister inherited a large fortune from a great aunt and they had a large family of nine daughters and three sons and lived in every evidence of wealth and prosperity.

The McKellar Bros., with whom the Whites had the dispute, were not David McKellar and Peter McKellar but Malcolm and John McKellar, relations of David McKellar after whom McKellar's Flat is named. They were cousins of David and Peter McKellar.

And so the Whites left Mt Nicholas in 1873. For many centuries their ancestors and heads of the House of White of Tuxford and Wallingwells were buried in the Vaults of St Nicholas Church, Tuxford Nottinghamshire. It would not be surprising to find that they actually named their Run 'Nicholas' after St Nicholas and their family church of St Nicholas Tuxford. They were the first occupants of Run 324 and were bound to have named the Run as was the custom so to do. It is an interesting thought. There is also a section on Mt Nicholas called 'Woollaston', was this named after their brother Thomas Woollaston White? L.G. Acland says 'He ended his days on Mt Nicholas Run, Lake Wakatipu'. Where was he buried if this is the case?

I also wonder where Elizabeth White was buried as I am told her grave is not in the Queenstown Cemetery. Someone who has gone more deeply into this history may be able to answer my question.

It seems when John White returned to England and married his cousin Louisa Caroline White, Taylor White bought another property at Wimbledon, Hawkes Bay and died in 1913. His brother died in England in 1911.

LITIGATION IN THE WAKATIPU ...

Contributed by A.J.D.

There has always been rivalry and jealousy between newspapers in the same or neighbouring towns. In this respect the Wakatipu was no different and the Wakatipu Mail of Queenstown and the Lake County Press of Arrowtown vied with one another.

The owner and editor of the Lake County Press, J.T.M. Hornsby gave a public address in Arrowtown entitled Ireland, to raise funds for the Catholic school. Mr Hornsby was a member of the Irish Land League and his address took the side of the Irish tenants against the oppression of the English landlords. The position in the whole of Ireland one hundred years ago was very similar to the situation in Northern Ireland today with hatred and oppression on all sides.

The report in the Wakatipu Mail was scathing and suggested that as Mr Hornsby came from Tasmania he probably had a convict background. Mr Hornsby sued for libel, claiming damages of £1,000 and the case was heard by Mr Justice Williams and a jury of 12, in the Invercargill Supreme Court in September 1883. Two senior counsel from Dunedin represented the litigants and several witnesses from the Wakatipu were heard.

The jury found for Mr Hornsby and awarded damages of £50 and court costs amounted to £97.18.0.

Such a costly mistake would no doubt have persuaded Mr Warren the owner of the Mail to be a little more careful what he said about his opposition in his publication in the future.

MACETOWN ...

Contributed by A.J.D.

In 1882 mining activity at Macetown was at a high level and we are indebted to the correspondent of the Southland Times for a full report on the various mines operating at that time. When the reefs were first mined about 1876 very good returns were received and good dividends paid. However as the easily-won stone was exhausted and the investment of greater capital was necessary to

obtain payable stone enthusiasm waned and some mines ceased to operate and generally activity was at a low level. A year or two passed and then interest quickened when it was proved a moderate amount of prospecting could show what returns could be expected.

Two matters affecting the operations were weather, which limited the season and the lack of a good access road. As an example of the high cost of transport, the Tipperary Company had spent £4,000 on mining timber which cost £1,000 to deliver to Arrowtown from the Head-of-the Lake. The cost of carting from Arrowtown to Macetown was £3,000.

Some 12,000 ozs of gold have been obtained to date and about 200 men were employed.

Homeward Bound

The oldest mine in the field, the stone being conveyed by a self-acting tramway 2000 feet in length to a 10-head stamper operated by water power. Problems were experienced with good stone being in sections divided by mullock and worthless rubble. The mine is opened by four levels which are connected by six passes. The levels are 200 to 300 feet long and are entered from the surface at elevations of 68 to 90 feet above one another.

Ladye Fayre

Adjoins the Homeward Bound. Has been prospected at various times without much success. In 1880 work was started in earnest and a fine paying reef discovered. The reef is 18 inches to 4 feet in width and has been opened by a low level pass 300 feet in length from which two passes rise to the surface. Stone is conveyed from the mine by a flat tramway 300 feet in length and then down a self-acting tramway 500 feet in length, to the bottom of Sawyers Gully into a self-delivering paddock. From here drays are filled manually for cartage to the Public Crushing Company's mill.

Gladstone

Has produced the best dividends to date. Is fortunate in its situation as no tramway is required. The first cake obtained averaged 3 ozs per ton, the best yield in the field. A low level tunnel has been excavated 200 feet and is expected to strike the reef in another 60 to 70 feet. A winze which is a shaft from one

level to another, has been sunk from the abandoned workings higher up for 63 feet and it will be joined by a pass from the new level which will be 70 feet long. Ventilation is by air blast and is working well. The mine manager is John Williams.

Premier

Adjoins the Gladstone. Have abandoned their shaft and are busy driving a low level tunnel in to the reef.

Maryborough

For several years claim was allowed to remain idle but under manager Thomas Harvey good stone is now being brought out. Main level is in 250 feet from which two passes, one 50 feet and one 115 feet rise to the surface at a distance of 100 feet apart. At the end of the main level a winze has been put down 38 feet proving the reef is profitable. Crushing machinery is a 5-head battery driven by an overshot wheel and a second battery is planned with the water wheel being replaced by a turbine. Crushing machinery is in Sawyers Gully, and their water right is the only available one. Stone is conveyed to a 220 foot chute from which it is lowered by a self-acting tramway, the first 924 feet in length the second 1188 feet long, to a self-delivering paddock. The paddock is built of stone like a fortification which measures 8 feet at the bottom.

All Nations

Has had varying success. Much work has been done on the mine but the cost of carting stone to the mill at Bush Creek swallowed up most of the proceeds. A low level tunnel has been taken in 200 feet and the reef shows promise. A tramway is being constructed.

Garibaldi

This mine has been idle for 2-3 years and has now been reactivated. It is possible to trace a fine reef 400 feet along the surface of the claim. A shaft 49 feet deep proved the reef to be 4 to 6 feet wide. A low level tunnel is being entered and is 120 feet in.

Victor Emmanuel

This mine has had its ups and downs and was recently rescued out of the hands of the bailiff by Cleave of Invercargill and L. Resta of Macetown. The mine possesses a splendid machinery site in Bush Creek and a first class water right. Has returned 1 oz to the ton in the past and shows promise under its new owners.

Tipperary

This mine is first in the field for size of its operation and yield of gold. A first class operation with plant and shafts showing signs of heavy capital investment, Main level is in 576 feet. As reef is wet and is 5-13 feet in width much timbering is required. About 50 men are employed and 15-20 horses are used in carting stone to the crusher. Main level is connected with the surface by four passes which communicate with three different levels. Mine shows great promise.

Other claims being prospected are Mountain Maid, Defiance and The Sisters. A trial crushing for the Mountain Maid gave results of 16 ozs from 8 tons of stone. This claim situated on Advance Peak was formally known as the Catherine. The Sisters which was discovered by Roberts and Clarke gave 2 ozs for 2 ton of stone in a trial crushing.

Returns for the Early Part of 1882 -

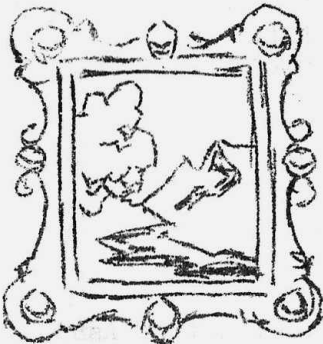
January	Gladstone	78 ozs	
	Tipperary	501 ozs	
	Homeward Bound	232 ozs	
	Maryborough	720 ozs	250 tons
March	Ladye Fayre	338 ozs	200 tons
	Homeward Bound	178 ozs	240 tons
	Tipperary	294 ozs	
April	Maryborough	1230 ozs	300 tons

The Maryborough returns were good enough to justify a dividend of one shilling per share.

In mid-winter it was reported that the Tipperary was getting good stone from a deep level shaft started a year ago, but not worked on during the summer. The operation was being watched with interest as it would prove whether deep level mining could be profitable. Shares in the mine selling at £10 each.

Later in the year two mines reported good results. In November the Gladstone produced a cake of 200 ozs for 2 weeks crushing, giving a total of 600 ozs for the season to date. In December the Tipperary had a cake of 678 ozs for six weeks work.

Queenstown Art Gallery



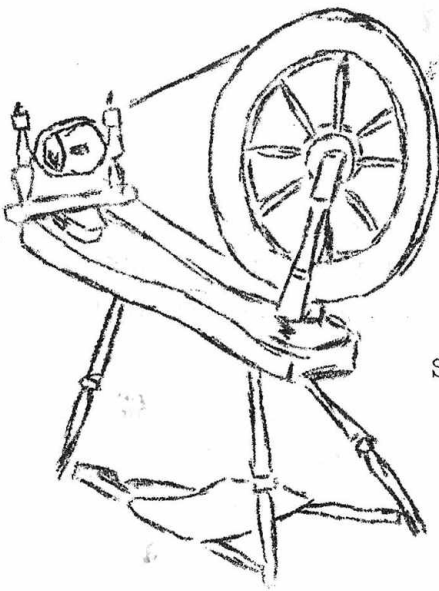
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Alpine Artifacts

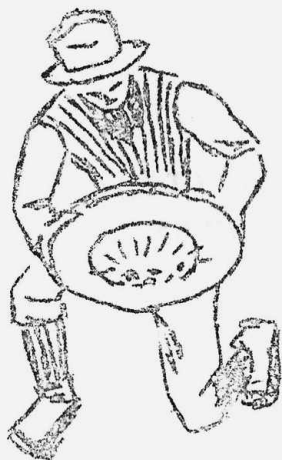
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# The Gold Nugget



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... GIFTS

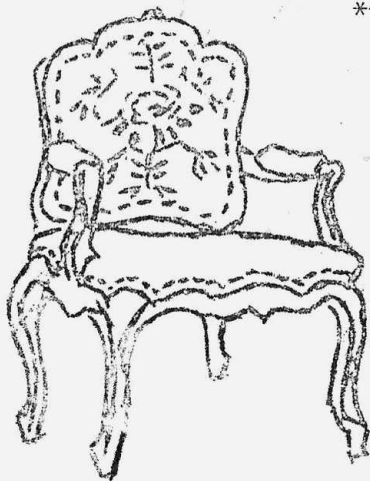
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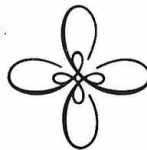
**QUEENSTOWN & DISTRICT  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY (INC.)**

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*Queenstown*

*Aims of the Society . . . . .*

- (1.) *That we use our power to advise, concerning the saving of historical aspects of the district.*
- (2.) *Preservation of and education in all aspects of historical research and interest.*



**Cover by ROMA McANDREW**

## THE QUEENSTOWN COURIER

Supplement to issue No. 29 - May 1983

Mr Ted Sturt, the owner of Tutuila has been engaged for some time in restoration of this fine old building. The restoration work has been done meticulously and is a credit to Ted Sturt's ability and dedication. As the building will soon be operating again providing accommodation and meals it seemed appropriate to include this history as a supplement to the current issue of the Courier rather than hold it over to a later issue.

### HULBERT HOUSE ...

HULBERT HOUSE perhaps better known as TUTUILA is the large villa that sits so well at the top of upper Ballarat Street, Queenstown. Flanked by two large Lime (Linden) trees it commands excellent views across the town, lake and mountains beyond.

It is regarded as a unique example of a Victorian Villa typical of that built for the upper middle class and the only one remaining in the area. For this reason it is registered as a Historic Building under the District Planning Scheme, and is to be classified by the Historic Places Trust on their next formal visit later this year.

This large 17 room villa was built in 1889 for Horatio Nelson FIRTH, who was Clerk to the Court of the Resident Magistrate and Receiver of Gold Revenue over the period 1884-1910.

H.N. Firth was born at Market Drayton in Shropshire in 1842, the youngest son in a family of 13 children, whose lineage from the 16th century is recorded in Burkes Dictionary of the Landed Gentry under Firth of Hartford Lodge. Obviously a man of means he arrived in the colony in 1862 and spent his early years in the Marlborough Province.

Believed to be the first Freemason in the Nelson area, by 1867 he had courted and married a most handsome Irish lady, Catherine Mary O'Sullivan, whose forbears were as distinguished as his own.

It is not yet known how the Firths spent their earlier years but in 1878 he was first recorded as Clerk to the Court in Havelock Nelson, and assumed his official duties in Queenstown in 1884. He also became most active in the affairs of St Peter's Anglican Church, both as a Lay Reader and Vicars Warden.

H.N. Firth very quickly acquired four acres of land on the Eastern Terrace and for his house site purchased Sections 1 - 6 in Block XX just above the town. These sections are most desirable and were granted by the Crown in 1871 to Messrs Mallaghan, Pascoe, Crofts and Richards for the princely sum of £3.10 each.

In 1888, H.N. Firth instructed Mason and Wales Architects of Dunedin to design a villa residence "fit for a gentleman" and an agreement was entered into on 29th November 1888 with John Salmond, Master Builder, to build the present villa residence. By good fortune the original sketches and drawings of the house we've on file in the architects office and kindly provided by them to the present owner. From the first sketch plan it does suggest an earlier stone walled building on the site but this is something for future research.

The villa is most soundly constructed and built on stone piers and foundations, then framed up with Red Beech and Red Pine, milled at the head of Lake Wakatipu. John Salmond assisted by Thomas Luckie, a Ships carpenter, built extremely well, the 6' x 2" studs being morticed and tenoned in the 6' x 4" bottom plates, with all framed intersections being cross bolted. These two craftsmen have left their mark for all time together with an 1886 Victorian 'Bun' Penny deliberately placed behind a dado moulding in the wall panelling.

The joinery and finishing work were first class, with imported marble fireplaces - the walls and ceilings finished in Lath and Plaster, and fine plaster cornices

and centre pieces. Much of the joinery had panels of glass with Gold Leaf work and in the Entrance Foyer still stands the glass screen, acid etched with the family crests of the Firth and O'Sullivan families, complete with motto "Deus Incrementum Dedit".

God had certainly given increase because by now the Firths were blessed with issue, Maud, Oliver, Ethel, Kate, Scipio and Vida, and lived and entertained with their family in a very grand manner. We hear that when little Annie Mulholland worked in the kitchen Kate Firth married a Mr Raymond and a red carpet was laid from the front steps to the gate entrance in Ballarat St. Vida Firth married a lawyer named Thompson who suffered from amnesia - one day he didn't return home and was never seen or heard of again.

At the turn of the century the families good fortune seems to have changed. H.N. Firth was not listed in Wises Post Office Directory for 1902 and from 1901 Catherine Mary Firth was advertising Hulbert House as a guest house. She was said "to provide accommodation of the first order in Queens-town and to be most attentive to the requirements of her visitors." Mrs Firth continued to provide accommodation, in the best tradition of her families reputation for hospitality, until the family sold the property and left for Wellington in 1910. It was owned briefly by William Royston Ambler and sold immediately to Patrick McCarthy the well known proprietor of the Mountaineer Establishment, who lived here for a while with his wife and daughter - Patrick McCarthy is known to have acquired a great deal of the Firth family silver, and he finished his days working in a Billiard Saloon until his decease in 1924 - His Trustees sold the property to Elizabeth McFarlane, who at first operated a Private Nursing Home, but later continued to take paying guests.

Mrs McFarlane had a great love of Robert Louis Stevenson and she renamed the house TUTUILA after the island in the American Samoas - according to Samoan mythology, Tagaloa the Creator made the island of Tutulia as a "Place of rest for the Gods" and this is the meaning of the name, which is not inappropriate for such a guest house.

In 1928 she remarried and became Mrs Thompson, William Thompson better known as 'Mulga Bill' from his Australian origins, is well remembered in town, for his great repertoire of recitations of wide choice and richness.

In 1937 Mrs Thompson sold the property to Miss Mary Salmond, the daughter of John Salmond, the original builder, and Sarah nee Cockburn of Arthurs Point, who produced a most distinguished family. Miss Salmond who had spent 30 years as a missionary in India at first used the property as a holiday home letting rooms with kitchen facilities.

In 1942 The Archerfield Girls School of Dunedin leased the house during the Japanese scare. Headed by Miss Black, cooked for by Miss Beard and Head Girlled by Pat Shand, the 26 girls concerned, from preparatory to 6th form, remember the stay with great affection. With lessons in the morning most afternoons were free to walk the town in groups of three. After the war the house was leased for a period as a maternity home to the Southland Hospital Board, confinements were very short since the delivery room was the servants bedroom - the coldest room in the house - the nursery being the first bedroom on the left of the hall.

In 1948 Mary Salmond sold the property to Mrs Hazel Grant who operated a guest house until 1964 when taken over by the Salvation Army, it continued to run as a guest house with strong Christian emphasis. From 1968 Mr Harry Ashurst owned the property which he renamed Lake View Lodge and it changed hands again in 1971 to Alec Arnott of Queenstown.

O'Connells Hotel later the Vacation Hotel Group, acquired the property in 1972 and used it as a staff hostel until the sale of the property to the present owner in 1981. Since that date the interior has undergone extensive restoration, and it will again be open for guests by mid 1983. Later in the year the dining room, which seats 26, will be open to visitors for dinner, and restoration of the exterior, garden and gated entrances is planned for next spring. A Heritage Covenant being entered into by the owner and the Historic Places Trust will ensure the preservation of this historic landmark for all time.