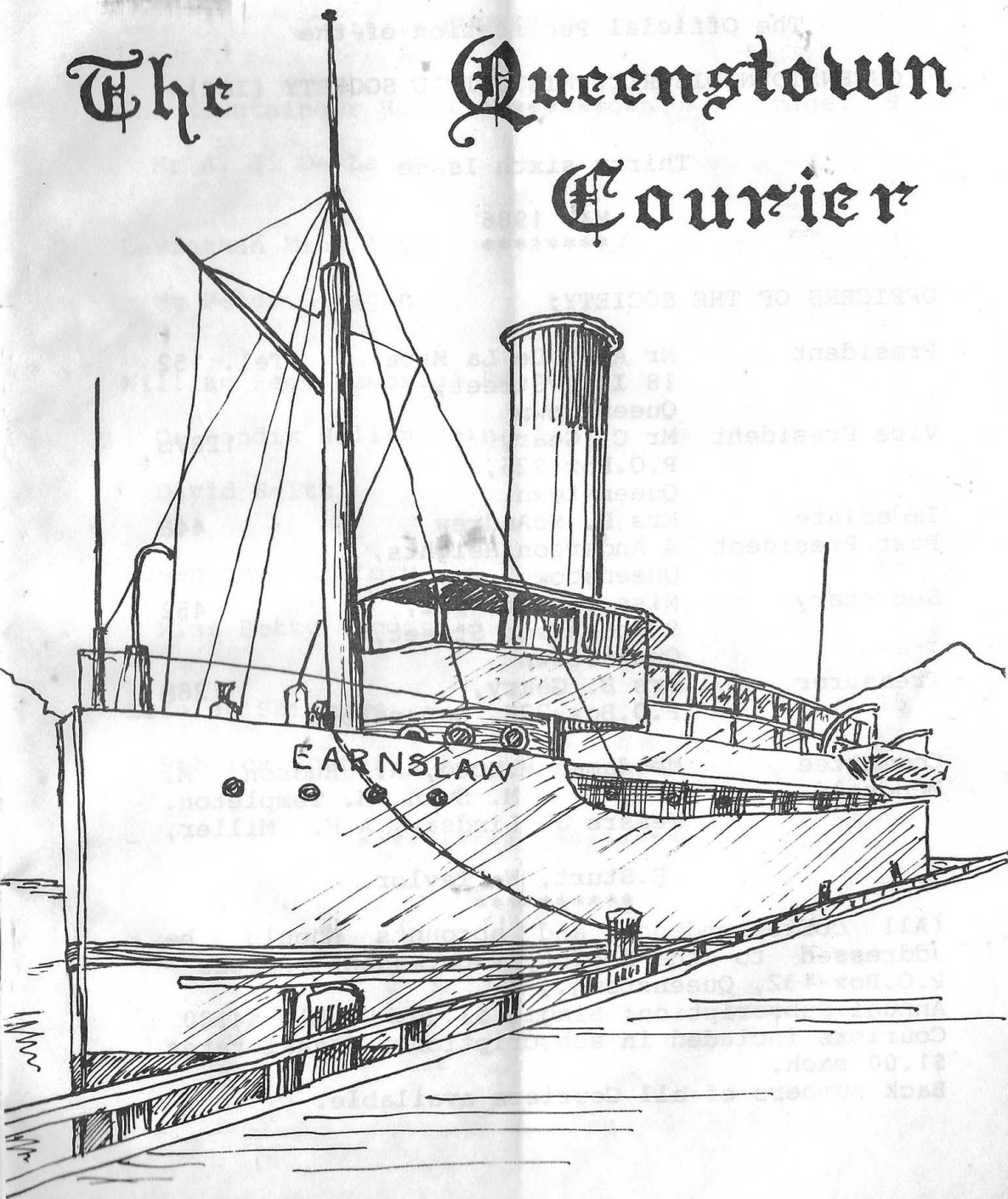


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Leviathan Mine 1896

The Leviathan Mine is in the area of the Crystal Mine which was inspected by some of the members who went on the Skippers trip in January last. The party was guided by Peter O'Hagen who is part owner of the Crystal Mine and author of the following history.

Situated on the south side of Sawyers Creek discovered by Messrs McPherson and Filipine and developed through the enterprise of Mrs A.D.Silk of the Leviathan Railway Temperance Hotel, High Street, Dunedin. The first step was the taking of sufficient stone to put the value of the reef to a definite test. From 15 tons of stone which they had crushed at the battery of the Gallant Tipperary they obtained a yield of 25 ozs of gold and from a further crushing some months later the returns totalled 1.5 ozs to the ton. Subsequently they drove numerous crosscuts and sank shafts which led to the discovery that the gold ran much deeper than they originally expected.

A battery was soon erected and running with some most satisfactory results to the owners of the property. The lease consisted of an area of 70 acres and measures were taken in London to convert the property into a company possessing the necessary capital for its developement on a large scale.

Two other lodes which proved to be payable were discovered in the vicinity of the Leviathan. They are known as the Fiery Cross and the Young American. Trial crushings of stone taken from these two gave respectively 15 dwts and 10 dwts to the ton (dwt = pennyweight: 20 dwts = one oz).

The lode in the reef runs east and west and

they proved it to a depth of 100 feet from the surface. It contained good gold all carrying downwards as far as they proved it. The average width of stone in the lode was about 2 feet and during one season they had crushed upwards of 250 tons which had given a yield of 150 ozs of gold. The concentrates were not treated but they proved to be very rich. One assay of pure pyrites gave 28 ozs to the ton but I think this would be far too high and it would be more like 14 ozs to the ton.

The battery consisted of 8 heads of stampers driven by a 3 foot pelton wheel, the gold saving appliances were two blanket tables and two quicksilver tables. They used only a small quantity of water and their race was only about 30 chain long.

One very important advantage in connection with working the mine was the good supply of timber close at hand for mine props. Another advantage was the ground being good and strong throughout thus not much timber was required.

The mine was worked under many disadvantages arising mostly from the absence of the necessary capital for an enterprise of this kind. Their working facilities were few and not up to the standard required for efficient working. They were deficient in tramways otherwise it would have been possible to have 800 feet of backs with 600 feet of adit tunnel. Had they had such facilities, it would have meant some year of work straight ahead of them.

Today very little remains of this venture. The remains of the stamping batters lie in the creek although four are in reasonable condition at the Crystal taken by Jack Tripp in 1932. Several hut sites and two drives still open remain.

William Rees Memorial Prize

The essay by David Smith of James Hargest High School, Invercargill, which was awarded the William Rees Memorial Prize follows:-

ON BENDIX HALLENSTEIN

Businessmen, or rather enterprising, energetic businessmen are one of the main supports of our country's financial soundness. Without them our economy would fall into a state of sluggish apathy, the keen competitiveness and vitality of private enterprise being replaced by the unstriving, dispirited approach adopted so often by the public business sector.

Bendix Hallenstein was one such vigorous businessman. He not only generously contributed to the expansion of private business, but also enlivened the circles of both local and central governments, and his name has become synonymous with the early growth and expansion of the Wakatipu area.

Born in Brunswick, Germany in 1835, Hallenstein was the youngest son of a Jewish family. Of course, being a Jew, he had a natural inbred flair for financial matters, and after soon realising these talents would be furthered in a somewhat limited fashion if he remained in Brunswick, he decided to develop them elsewhere and thus promptly left for England in 1852 with his two brothers Isaac and Michaelis. For five years the three brothers were employed by a Manchester Shipping company, learning to speak English while they were there, and becoming familiar with the often challenging yet exciting world of business.

During the late 1850's, the attraction of the goldfields lured the three Hallensteins further

abroad. Isaac was the first to leave, being tempted by the California goldrush then later by the new diggings discovered in Victoria, Australia. It was here that he was joined by his two brothers, Bendix now aged 22, and the three of them opened a general store at Daylesford, not far from Melbourne. Because the business employed most of their time and energy, they decided to hire a housekeeper. Their choice was a Mary Mountain who had sailed to Australia from England to visit her brother. Miss Mountain proved to be an extremely versatile woman and all three Hallenstein offspring consequently fell in love with her. She was obviously fascinated with younger men, choosing Bendix who was nine years younger than her as her husband-to-be.

After they were married, Bendix and the now Mary Hallenstein returned to Daylesford, where in 1862 the first of their four daughters was born. However, by now the boom period of the Victorian goldrush was over, and as mining gradually subsided so did business. Thus, faced with the prospect of an unprofitable future in Australia, Bendix and his family accompanied by Isaac and his wife travelled to New Zealand attracted once again by a goldfield. The Hallensteins were among the many traders ready to take advantage of the huge profits made from the discovery of gold in the Wakatipu district in 1863, arriving in Invercargill early that year and opening a general store.

Dismayed, however, by the seemingly constant wet weather, Isaac's wife refused to stay and they returned to Australia, leaving Bendix to run the store by himself. Within a year, Bendix and his family also left Invercargill, the store proving to be too far from the goldfields and running at a loss.

So it was that Bendix Hallenstein entered the Otago province, in which he was to be a prominent figure for many years.

After recognising the huge commercial potential of the Wakatipu are, Hallenstein opened a store in Queenstown, which according to him kept "nearly everything required by an up-country population". The business was quite prosperous and Hallenstein established himself as the foremost businessman in the district.

With things now moving along at a reasonably wealthy pace he decided to venture into a partnership with a Canadian, J.W. Robertson. The two obviously felt the need for some sort of fixed industry which would continue to assist the district after the goldrush had declined and so together they build a flourmill, the first inland in Otago. The mill, built by the Kawarau Falls, cost six thousand and seventy pounds to construct, and was named Brunswick Mill after the well-known coincidence that both owners' birthplaces were called Brunswick.

In a further attempt to further establish the mill, the two partners leased several hundred acres of Crown land for grain-growing. The lease was for twenty-one years, and as it was land the government was unable to sell the rent was therefore quite low. Farmers were then placed on the land and encouraged to grow wheat, with cash incentives being offered by Hallenstein and Robertson. The district subsequently became one of the main wheat producers in the colony but surprisingly, the Brunswick Mill never ran at a profit. Later two more mills were established in the area, the owners taking advantage of Hallenstein's and Robertson's original enterprise.

There is no evidence that suggests where Bendix

and his family may have lived during this time, but it must have been somewhere which was to his mind unsuitable, considering his position in the community. Thus, he went about building a house which matched his prominence.

Fifteen-hundred acres of Crown Land were purchased at Speargrass flat, between Arrowtown and Queenstown, and a beautiful two-storeyed house was built on them. Hallenstein named his estate Thurlby Domain after his wife's family farm in Lincolnshire. Thurlby became the centre of social activities during the Hallenstein's residence there, with garden parties being held frequently. It was also a leader in farming, with top quality wheat and oats being grown as well as many varieties of fruit trees.

While in the Queenstown district, Hallenstein involved himself in both local and central politics. From 1869-1872 he served as Mayor of Queenstown during which time he suggested that trees be planted on the then rather unattractive, sandy peninsula enclosing Queenstown Bay. Hallenstein also represented the Wakatipu district on the Provincial Council, a position he held from 1872 until the provinces were abolished in 1876. As well, he was elected a Member of Parliament in 1872, but resigned after one term, as the travelling to and from Wellington began to have a damaging effect on his business.

By now, Hallenstein had stores in Arrowtown, Cromwell, Lawrence and of course, Queenstown. However, because most of the goods he sold were not locally made but imported, Hallenstein found it difficult to ensure a regular supply of what his customers wanted, especially in the area of men's clothing, for some reason. To overcome this he decided to build his own clothing factory in Dunedin.

So, the Hallensteins left Thurlby and the Wakatipu area, with Bendix once again furthering his career in commerce.

Hallenstein established his factory in 1874 and it became known as the New Zealand Clothing Factory. It was the beginning of the clothing industry in New Zealand, but many larger importing firms believed it would soon collapse, as their ability to supply more goods was sure to overwhelm Hallenstein's project. This was not to be, however, and after he had opened a clothing store in Dunedin, Hallenstein's company soon spread and became well-known throughout New Zealand. Bendix always worked closely with his brothers, keeping in regular contact with both of them throughout his life and the three of them again entered into a partnership. This ensured the ready availability of needed capital and therefore the rapid expansion of the company, known now as Hallenstein Brothers.

As always, Hallenstein became involved in many things outside his own business. He helped establish and became chairman of the Drapery and General Importing Company (better known as the D.I.C.) in 1884. He was also a director of Kempthorne Prosser Limited and the Westport Coal Company, as well as being appointed the German Consul in Dunedin.

Bendix Hallenstein was a businessman of enormous energy, actively involving himself in the establishment and expansion of several New Zealand businesses including one of his own making. He also advocated the rights of the hundreds of labourers who worked for those companies, being in favour of trade unions and regulated hours and wages. He was a man who took advantage of the many opportunities which came his way, risking failure, but usually reaping

huge profits.

At the age of 65 he left New Zealand for a lengthy visit to Germany. En route to his home country he visited Japan, the country which he rightly prophesied would become a major force in industry in later years. In 1903 Bendix Hallenstein returned to Dunedin where he lived until his death in 1905.

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C.R. Nicholson

Essay by: David Smith

James Hargest High School

Form Seven, 1985.

Queenstown History

We are grateful to Miss Betty Macdonald of Roxburgh for the following article about her family history and her early years in Queenstown.

The history that surrounds Lake Wakatipu has many facets, one of which is the part played by our own pioneer family.

Great grandfather James Kincaid of the firm of Kincaid, McQueen had their busy foundry 'The Vulcan' well established in Dunedin in the 1856's.

Kincaid was a pioneer engineer of some repute. The firm's activities included the building of steamships, bridges, dredges, etc. The Mountaineer was one example of their work, the coastal vessel 'Invercargill' another and the bridge of the railway area in Dunedin that was dismantled fairly recently was their creation. Sew Hoy bought two their steam dredges for their mining activities and so on.

Later James Kincaid's grand daughter Agnes J. Simon married Angus W. Macdonald in 1912 in Queenstown. Our mother's father John Simon was of the Dunedin firm of Simon Bros with their shops and factory for footwear. Advertisements in the Otago Witness late last century invited visitors to the city to view their extensive stocks ect.

Our father Angus Macdonald served his time as an engineer in McGregor's Foundry in Dunedin. This was the firm that build the Earnslaw, so my father became the first engineer at the time of its launching.

In 1914 he was serving on troopships and

did not see his twin daughters Betty and Molly (Lenore) until his discharge from service approximately five years later.

My twin sister and I were born in Wellington shortly after the transports stole out of the harbour in September 1914. Our brothers Ronald and Colin were both born in Queenstown.

After his discharge from the services our father was back at his job on the Earnslaw and there until the early twenties.

Many memories crowd in now when I view the Earnslaw with its fine engines still in service. The smells and sounds of the engine room met us as we peered below and saw the bright gleaming machinery and our father wiping oily hands on waste. How we shouted to draw his attention above the musical rhythm of the throbbing engines and watched his control over them.

Having made a tentative climb down the ladders we would retire when our father shouted at us then to run from end to end of the boat. Then up and down and later with two small brothers in tow would seek out the cook's galley where there might be a spare sand witch which the ducks and fish wouldn't get. We would sit on swivel chairs at the table and didn't we make them swivel.

At times from the shore we would watch the boats in the teeth of the storm come into the bay and wonder if they would make it round the buoy. My didn't the 'Old Ben' buck and take in wind swept waters. On the Earnslaw travellers went below or huddled on decks behind canvas protection.

In summer when we gladly kicked off well

made footwear we would watch excursion crowds come in from Invercargill. The lake was the chief means of access to Queenstown in our school days. How the people would crowd over to the gangway side as the boat neared the wharf. I thought sometimes she had such a list she looked as if she might turn over before she was safely berthed. But I was assured this wouldn't happen and it didn't. Many town people would go down each day to watch the boat come in and swing with its lovely lines round the curve of the Bay. Its arrival was always indicated by the whistle as it turned round the buoy.

I remember the first electricity and the gas works blowing up. I wasn't too far away either. I remember too placid waters and also storm tossed launches and epic journeys.

Now our families can record six generations that have loved the lake and its environs.

I took my great grand nieces and nephew along known paths. Ron's grand children reminded me of our own generation as we gathered cones, looked for rabbit-holes and listened to the bell birds. First two ducks appeared at the lake's edge and soon two dozen and so on. I was assured by young voices that I wasn't too old to paddle and thus I too became a small child again as the Earnslaw's whistle sounded in the Bay bringing again its quota of visitors.

May sheer glorious beauty of lake and mountain be neither spoiled or soiled where every prospect pleases and the clear voices of little children seem to have a music of their own. What will be the heritage ahead for their generation and other of the future.

Life at Skippers

This is the second instalment of the late Partick Cotter story of his early years first at Bullendale and later Skippers. We are grateful to Mr Cotter's daughter for making the story available and for Mrs Horn for her good services in obtaining the manuscript.

After Bullendale Mine closed down Father and Mother and their children shifted to Arrowtown and Cotter Bros had a store. Dad always reckoned Bullendale would go ahead again and it would produce enough gold to pay the national debt of New Zealand

My father bought a business in Skippers and the family shifted back to Skippers in 1904 - I remember the day it rained and snowed and very cold. Bullendale did start up again but I think it ceased altogether after 12 months. Cotter Bros still had the buildings at Bullendale also a great deal of fencing. Dad shifted these to Skippers made a good men's hut and other buildings. He fenced a block of land just behind the Cemetery; grew oats and cut chaff for the wagon horses and pack horses. He also fenced 50 or 60 acres about 2 mile up the river from where we lived. The land was steep but good soil, when it was fenced it looked like a map of Africa turned round. Dad had a great crop of oats all cut with the sythe. As a boy along with other men I helped to bind the sheaves tied the sheaves with the oaten straw called the Yankey Knott. This knott was used all over the country when the back-delivery was operating on the farms. Also grew potatoes just plowed the tussock in on top of the potatoes and there was a good crop. All the seed had to be packed up to this land and when the potatoes were dug had to pack the bagged potatoes to home. I remember one horse bucking his load off all the potatoes in

the gully. I wonder if they grew!

Dad had a butchery and bakery and everything had to be packed to the people living at Skippers and Sand Hills. The terrace claims at Skippers were still operating when we lived at Skippers. Aspinalls and Davis's Terraces Claims were very rich I believe. Dad with others put a steam dredge on the river at Maori Point but this dredge was not a success, when it was pulled to pieces I got a life belt from the dredge. A miner from Skippers hydrauliced this beach in later years and just where my Dad took the dredge to pieces this man in two years won 10,000 worth of gold and sold out for 15,000. I said to Dad years after how was it he did not get the gold, he said his ladder was not long enough. He said his father who was an old miner told him to put another 10 feet onto the ladder as all the terrace claims were operating at that time and the silt and gravel rose the bottom of the river and of course the gold further away.

Packing goods to the miners was a big job - a week - once the packer went as far up the river to the Branches with store for their miners. It took 3 pack horse loads and it was late when the packer got home.

Dad used to buy his sheep and cattle round the Arrow district and they had to be driven to Skippers. I drove sheep to Skippers and would be away from Coronet Peak Homestead at daylight and well up to Skippers before the heat of the day - same with the cattle. He used to buy a bullock often from an Irishman who would sell the bullock on the hoof, he would guess the weight and Dad would tell him sometimes his guess was only 3 or 4 lb out. The old Irishman thought he was himself a good judge. Dad always had men working at something. The Packer told me years after he started to work for Dad in 1905 at 5/-

a week. The Baker was Scotsman, head baker in Glasgow or Edinburgh but lost his job through booze. He came to Skippers goldmining. Dad gave him a job a Baker and he was with us 8-9 years and a great baker of bread. He used to get on the booze about every three months have a fair lash over the weekend. The hotel keepers would send him home she knew he had to get his sponge or what you call it ready for his bread. Dad often had to go and pick him up off the road and taper him off with a whisky or two. He used to say when he was feeling sorry for himself, "I'll no go near the old Butch anymore". However he would forget after a couple of months.

A big fall of snow in 1908 and it was hard getting the supply to the miners especially those living out of the way. However I don't think Dad let them down. Sometimes an old Miner would come along and Dad would set him with a week or more tucker to fossick for gold. I often took their tucker up to them. I don't suppose Dad got paid for the tucker. They would go up Sawyers Gully, Butchers Gully or Sainsbury. Gold in most places but not payable.

Dad learnt me to kill sheep and bullock and how to cut it up (all different cuts today) also to make sausages. My sister May and I used to mince the meat for the saugages and turning the mincer was hard work. We could splice the sausages just like you see them in a shop today. When my Uncle took sick Dad had to go a good bit to the Arrow business and I would have to cut up a bullock. I often did not know the right way but Mum would come to the rescue and help me out. We always had sausages for breakfast on a Saturday morning and Tom my brother would sing out, "Mum don't let all the mans eat all the sausages". We also had the mail contract to Upper Shotover but that is another story.

On a Saturday I would have to take a supply to the Chinamen up Skippers Creek. One time 5 or 6 hundred Chinamen were goldmining in Skippers Creek by now not so many. I remember some of their names - Oh Sing, O Chong, Ah Mee, Ah Poo, Wong Gong, Ah Tack and Jimmy 'Chanute' he was the Chinese interpreter for the Chows. When he went home to China the people of Skippers subscribed the money for his fare home and when he got to China he sent a photo of himself to all who helped to send him home. We had a photo of him but like the others got burnt when Mother was burnt out.

One Chow Ah Poo wanted Gun Powder which was off the market by then. He said no mattie 'Tin a Nie'. I could not make this out so he got a stone and lit a match under it and then threw it in the air and made a big noise and I said, "Dynamite?" and he said, "Hi Ya" - very pleased in Chinese I suppose.

Ah Mee came for his stores and as he lived a good way away Dad took him in for dinner. We had stew that day and it must have been too hot for his mouth so he put it in his hand put it in his pocket. This tickled use kids. He would pay his account with fine gold. Putting the gold very carefully with his finger and thumb on the gold scales. Some of the older men about used to tease these Chinamen and of course we boys would do so too and got a good tanning for it.

As the winters were severe provision had to be made to get fuel in early - kerosene, coal. The hard coal came from Kaitangata and from Queenstown was carted in the wagon and Dad always had to have a big stock for the winter. A lot of matagouri grew on the hills and Dad had men cutting it and when it dried out had it carted to Tika. A big stack of wood - most of it was used to fire the oven in the bake house.

Also pack loads of wood was carted from the bush just behind Mr Aurum Homestead. The length of the wood would be about 10 feet. In the winter the river was generally low and the miners were able to Wing Dam more easily and thus got better returns of gold. The biggest nugget I ever seen was 7 ozs got from the river below Monks Terrace which was very rich Terrace.

To get the tucker to some of the miners we had to cross in a chair over the river and then climb up a track to their camp. When Stoney Creek was in flood we would have to leave the horses on one side of the creek and carry the bread and meat up to Davis Terrace. Jack, my brother, had to have two trips once - once when the river was in flood, Dad told the packer not to take the short track but to go round by Skippers which was about 4 miles longer - the lad went the short way. The packhorse got across but minus the bread and meat, but a bag of rice about 50lbs stayed on top of the pack saddle. I think Dad sacked the packer for taking the short cut.

The road to Skippers was looked upon by some as dangerous but Dad's drivers were good men and could handle the Ribbons well. In winter the road was hard to keep open and the surface men did a great job keeping the life line open between Queenstown and Skippers. There were hydraulic Claims on the river and several had some big pipes and big valves to handle and Dad would have to pack these pipes or sleigh them to the Claims to different parts of the river.

At Skippers like all other places babies would come along. There were nursing homes in Queenstown and Arrowtown and the mothers to be would arrange to go there but some times their ready reckoner or computer would be out of alignment and of course my mother would be

contacted pretty quick and away riding side saddle and of course looked after the baby and mother. She was a bit late one time and when she got there a 17 year old girl had delivered the baby and mother said she could not have done more herself. This goes to show when these things crop up how people will rise to the occasion (true Pioneer spirit).

We used to have Mass about every three months Father O'Donnell and Irish Priest. He was a great man looked after his flock but by hell if you did not know your catechism look out. Also other Ministers Mr Welsh Presbyterian Minister. He would always have a cup of tea with Dad and Mum before going back to Arrow and would contact Mum's mother and tell her how well we all were.

The Mine Manager's wife's baby was constipated and they brought the baby to mum (walked about three miles) to give the child a teaspoon of castor oil. The baby gagged and Mum held its nose - the poor woman thought the baby was choking, however, all over in 10 seconds. I suppose the oil had the same effect on the baby as it did us children. Castor oil was given for all stomach ailments in our time.

There were not many children going to school when we went to Skippers. Mrs Barnett was teacher, her husband was surfaceman on the road. She was a splendid teacher. I remember she having a baby and we got about three weeks holiday and we were hoping she would have a baby every three weeks. We children at school all played together. Kick the tin and bye the door were the chief games. In summer we paddled in the Company's race which flowed at the back of the school and in winter skated on the Dam. In the workings also went tobogganing. When the snow fell we boys used to see who would have the fastest sley. My sley was third fastest but

don't remember a bronze medal. There was a wounded Billy goat up Johnstons so we four boys thought we would catch it and bring it to school. We caught it alright and started off for school but not much progress so another boy and I took off our belts from our Norfolk coats and put them round the goat's neck, however, before we go to school one boys mother sent him away to school and another mother sent her sons away. I was left with the Billy. I tried to cut his throat but the knife was blunt so I walked off to school. In school after awhile the rest of the children kept getting further away from us lads. The teacher put up the window opened the door wide and at last said, "You boys go home!" We got a holiday. This episode goes to prove the Billy Goat scent pollution was stronger than the fresh air in Skippers School. I tied my belt to the Skippers Bridge until it was purified! The School Committee would give the older children a subscription list to collect money from the Miners and we would get up to 25 I think. Them Miners were generous also the old chaps on the pension would dub in. The Chinamen and all hands would go to the picnic. I remember one miner who Nellie asked and she said, "What name?" He said, "Mata Mata Harry Kekee". He was called this name as long as he lived. He liked the races and this was a horse's name I believe. At one picnic the lads got an Irishman and a Chinaman to race and of course said they dead heated and they had to race over again and again at last neither could get up, how they never had a heart attack I don't know. One story which stands out in my mind was driving three pigs to Queenstown. J. Hamilton, his stepfather and I left Skippers one morning to drive the pigs - thought it would take three days. We got to Lewis Hotel at 12.30am put pigs in the stable for four hours and off again, got to Arthurs Point at 8p.m. and Queenstown 12 o'clock at night. The pigs never left the road. Mrs Simpson, my Aunty, gave me a

quid I took it home to Mum.

They had a Cricket Team at Skippers mostly Miners. Queenstown Cricketers would come up also Arrow Cricketers and the Skippers Team could hold their own with these teams. C. Lewis Mine Host of Welcome Hotel, Long Gully was the main stay of the cricketers. This would be understood he came from Adelaide in Australia.

When we went to Skippers the Nugget Quartz Mine was working. The mine was one mile underground and the men worked three shifts 8am-4pm this was the dog shift then from 4pm-12pm I forget now what this shift was called however the shift from 12pm-8am was called the Back shift. The air to the miners working underground was pumped into the mine with a fan driven by water also the battery of 10 stampers was driven with water. The Mine Manager took me underground one day. What a thrill like all other miners. The Nugget petered out later on. Also the "Crystal" mine was opened up when we were at Skippers. This Mine had I think two stampers and one was driven on benzine - I remember Dad packing the benzine in on pack horses. The day it was opened all from Skippers went along. I don't think this mine was a success but different people worked it from time to time in later years. When the Terrace Claims operated the miners brought the water from high up in the mountains and although these races are over grown today they still stand as a great monument to the Miners. I don't think they had had a theodolite, only a triangle and Plum-Bob was their level and what a great ingenious job fluming round the precipitous rocky faces and siphoning over the deep gullys. They used pack horses to take their pipes in also sleighed the pipes and then had to carry the pipes on their backs in some places. I think they must have hung on with their toe nails.

A new hall was built at Skippers not long after we went there and to pay it off they held dances as we grew older we were allowed to go and of course learn to dance. The MC would sing out the dances and the sets. I remember the square dances, first set, lancer, Irish quadrilles. The music was 2 violins and I used to enjoy waltzing to the music. There were some very good singers amongst these miners. I remember Aunt Annie coming from Arrow one time to sing at a ball at Skippers our home was an open house to everybody. People going to the Branches would call and have a cup of tea and Mum and Dad always were ready to help anyone in trouble. At Christmas time they not only had their own children but other would come and stay during the school holidays. We had lots of fun.

When the gooseberries were ready for jam making some of us, May, myself, Tan and Milley who helped Mum in the house would be told to go down to Gooseberries Gully at Maori Points and pick the berries. We would pick 2 or more sugar bags by the time the cart came from Arrow and we would come home. We took out lunch and boiled the billy when on this job. When the raspberries were ripe at Davis Terrace we would ride to there and pick a bucket or two of raspberries which were growing wild round Davis Dam. We had the horses on a Sunday to ride. Mum would come sometimes ride side saddle on Topsy or Lynchy or Duke. I don't think we lost any coming home. Old Duke was a great horse he knew every home at Skippers and Branches and would go from one place to the other on his own. He dropped dead pulling pipes up from the river just where the signpost "Shotover Grand Canyon" is now. We were all sorry when Duke died. I remember one time Dad sent me to look for a bullock which was missing from the herd. I rode up Maori Point saddle and round the old pack track and here in a shaft was the bullock. He had been there a few

days however we dug him out, luckily it was easy digging and he was none the worse for his confinement.

The Keas used to come down in the winter and hens would soon let you know if an enemy was about. The hens had open range. I remember one day a sparrow hawk flew on to a rock and I got one of the men's rifles and stalked this sparrow hawk, took a bead on him and pulled the trigger - shot him - and walked down to out place. I was very pleased this bird was the first thing I had ever shot. I think I thought I had won the "Jemmison" Belt.

Two things we children were proud about at Skippers - we had the highest suspension bridge (300ft) in New Zealand and underneath the richest gold bearing river (Shotover) flowed its way. We were able to skate about these. Like other children I suppose we had our share of accidents. Nellie fell over the track going to school just near the Bridal Veil and cried, how ever she was not killed I do not know. However we dusted her down and away off to school no delayed action that I know of. Grace fell going home from school and cut her knee very bad, a miner came along and picked her up and carried her home a big carry from the bridge right up the hill to our place. He washed this cut and then sucked it like a cat or dog till it was clean and put sticking plaster on it. I think Grace still carries this scar today. And we boys could ride. Some people said we would walk one mile to catch a horse to ride half a mile. We would race one another on what flat ground we had, got a good few spills but apart from a few bruises were alright. I got a couple of frights in the river, crossing at the Branches one day, the river was dirty and I thought I was above a hole I knew of, however, I rode right into it, washed off my horse but managed to grab a

tussock and got out. The horse got out on the same side as he came in so I had to walk up the river 300 yards to get a wider crossing, even then it was up to my naval. I was lucky that day.

We had to watch out for quick sand when crossing at the Branches. Dad always said, "Pick a place to cross just above where there is a rapid current in the river" and we did. Dad would get a bullock or two from the Branches and he took me sometimes to bring these bullocks to Tika. We would get away early in the morning and I thought it was great getting after the cattle. We did not have a telephone when we went to Skippers. Mum took ill once and Dad put me on a horse at 2am and I rode to Arrow for the Doctor. Got to Arrow at 5am I don't think I was more than 11 years. After that Dad put the telephone in and of course had to change the name from "Packer Point" and the telephone had to have a Maori name so Dad called it (Tika). He said easy to spell.

One old man fell over into the claim near his hut and was two days before he was found. He attracted someone by hitting two stones together. They took the old chap to Frankton hospital but he did not get over the fall and exposure and died. Another chap went after fish up Skippers Creek and he blew one hand off and the fingers off the other. This man got over this accident and lived for many years after. There were a good many fish in the river and creek in our time. I remember the Acclimatization Society. Packing the fish on packhorses to the Branches and other creeks. The water had to be changed every half hour of course that was no trouble as there were plenty creeks on the road. We used to go fishing up Skippers Creek. Jack my bother caught a good few fish with the rod and Bob the dog would go with

him and when he caught a fish and it was jumping around this dog would put its paw on the fish and hold it till Jack got it. I did not have much luck at catching fish.

I remember one morning a lad came over home to pay their account and wanted change so Dad fixed the account put the money (change) in an envelope and the lad put this in his blouse pocket. On the road home he climbed the bridge wires to throw a stone over I suppose however, the envelope fell out of his pocket and flutted away down and landed about two inches from the river. This lad went back and told his trouble to Dad (and I suppose it would have been trouble for him). Dad got on 'Mareno' and rode down just this side of the bridge and up the river and redeemed the envelope and money. I knew this boy and he said what a relief to see Dad get his money.

Another instant when a Chinaman was supposed to rob a tail race. He would go down in the night and have a good go. He left his job and when he got to Queenstown or Dunedin and went to the bank with this amount of gold the Banker was suspicious and sent word to the Claim owner that he wanted to see him, but the owner did not go down for a few days, but when the claim owner went down the Chow was away I suppose to China. This is an isolated case of dishonesty with Chinamen for they were a very honest lot of yellow men and I did have a lot of respect for them and still have. When I left home I got a job at Mt Aurum Station 12/6 a week. I remember going away with my swag in front of Me and Mum and Dad wishing me goodbye and Dad saying, "Always play the game, son". I guess I fell by the wayside at times but have no regrets. I liked the job at Mt Aurum. When mustering breakfast at 1.30 and riding up to Bullendale left hand branch Butchers and bringing the

horses back to the station. Mustering was a busy time at Mt Aurum. This station was well out of the way and the owner had to make arrangements to get shepherds and shearers to come from other parts. I think sheering was 15/- a hundred, mustering about 2/10 a week. Practically all walking and it took a fair while to get your beat after leaving the horses. Mostly Merino and half-bred sheep and these sheep generally running high up Mt Aurum it was about 7,300 ft. I thought it was great when asked to go out mustering. The first day carried the tucker on your back after that there was one day mustering and back to camp. After shearing the owner scoured his wool that was a big job. A lot of wood to be brought from the bush and a 400 gal tank (iron) boiled up to get the water so many degrees to scald the wool and then the wool was put in cold water till it was clean. My job was to cart it out in a basket and teased on to scrim sheets. It did not take long to dry if you got wind. We had a big job picking wool up often off the fences. It was a great job and I still like Mt Aurum although it is well out of the way.

I went back mustering on Mt Aurum in 1916 after it was sold. I liked Mr Lambie the owner in my time. There were a lot of goats on Mt Aurum. I know the owner let a contract for shooting the goats he gave it for a pair of ears I think one winter or it may have been two winters. These contractors shot 3,000 goats. Winter was the best time to get at the goats. They came down to the lower country and the men would drive them up into the snow and when they could not get any further they would cut the nanny goat's throat and then shoot the billy.

I remember one Fall Mr Lambie sold at Burnside 200 whethers off Mt Aurum he told me he got 10/- per head. We trucked these sheep at Frankton wharf Dad had the wool to cart away from the

station it had to be transhipped at the Blue Slip one bale on a sledge and carted across. The wool was all carted. Having the wool scoured at the station reduced the weight and I suppose this would reduce the cost of cartage. I remember one year we baled 700 goats skins and Mr Lambie sent these home to England but they only paid their way. There were some old stinking billy skins in that bale too. One thing that lives in my memory is these High Mountain races which the miners brought in to feed the dams for sluicing. No doubt you will find these High Mountain races all over the mining towns in Central but living at Skippers seen more of them.

The London Derry Company intake was up the left hand branch of Skippers Creek and was piped across Skippers Creek to join the race taken from Skippers Creek. This must have been a big job (before my time). Piped or siphoned over Sainsbury Gully and then the same at Fergusons, big pipes some 2 feet in diameter, open race round about the Skippers Hotel then siphoned down and up Johnstons creek or Sawyers Creek as it was sometimes called, open race above the school to across the London Derry Creek then open race to Pleasant Point Terrace. These races and fluming are a monument to these miners. They were made before my time but the pipes had to be packed on horses and sleigh and then in many places carried on their backs. When we were lads we walked round the races after goats. On Davis Terrace there were two big dams they were built before my time and I suppose by pick and shovel and wheelbarrow, and another on Pleasant Creek also one after the Terrace. Claims ceased. This water was used for the Hydraulic Claims in the river. There was Aspinall's Dam, water from Sawyers Creek, London Derry water from Pleasant Creek also from Skippers Creek and Davis water from Stoney Creek. I don't know where the intake

for the Davis Dams was from but I think the intake was from Mount Gilbert.

When everybody left Bullendale the hall piano was still there. I don't think anybody owned it, Dad was on Hall Committee, I think the last left, so he brought the piano to Tika. They sleighed it down, put the piano on a stretcher and when they crossed the creek (50 times) the men carried the stretcher with the piano on it across the stream and back on the sleigh again. We had lots of evenings on the piano. My sister May could play Rememberance and a girl who worked for Mum could also play so we had some good sing songs. With one finger I would play 'Can you wash a sailors shirt?'.

The Hall Committee had a good library of leather bound books, they had these libraries in most mining towns. They had some good books (I liked the Indian stories The Death of Custee Sitting Bull). I had to take two pack loads to upper Shotover and I had a bag of chaff on each side of Paddy and two long handled shovels, going down an incline Paddy stumbled and over he went sliding down the hill. I ran back to the top of the hill and sung out on Mum and May who came up with a rope. By this time Paddy had slipped further down near a drop of 40 feet or more. Mum rode to the Sand Hill to get Uncle Pat but by the time they got back Paddy had got quite near the drop and sat up with his hind legs over the precipice and just like a bear looking for buns at a zoo he swung round on his behind and on his knees worked liked hell to get out of this trouble and he did while Mum and I looked on helpless. You would have to have seen it to believe it. I think the two shovels stopped the horse from going too fast, however, we put his load on again and away to where it was going. I can see May yet riding like hell on Tobey to get Uncle Pat. There were other incidents I suppose

but I forget just nor - going to school in the snow was cold but had a good fire and we all got round it and I don't think we were any the worse for the frosty weather.

My father had the mail contract to Upper Shotover. We would meet the mail man Julis Bordeau at the Blue Slip about a mile from our place. The time 3 o'clock but it was more often 6 o'clock and the mail was taken to Mrs McLeod who had the Post Office. The Post Office was her kitchen floor all stone flagged. The Post Office counter was her kitchen table and the mail bag was emptied on to the floor. The old lady would take the letters and stamp them with Upper Shotover on the envelope if Upper Shotover did not show on every letter she would stamp the letter till it did. I have hear it said she would pick up a letter and say that is from Mrs So and So's niece in Napier or a bill from DIC Mrs So and So said she was getting a new coat. I don't know what truth is in these statements. The mail consisted of canvas bag I suppose as big as 3 bushel sack and I think everybody took the Otago Witness which was printed once a week at that time. The old miners came for the mail which was the Witness and when they got their Witness away they would go back to their camp and I suppose read it from cover to cover. The Witness was the only mail some of these old chaps got and I am sure they got a great deal of pleasure from reading it. The mail bags would come back on Thursday and I would have to take the mail bag on my shoulder to the Post Office at Skippers on a Friday morning before school. There was never much in it. One time one of Dad's men refused to take the mail as it was that late and he took it on Sunday morning to Mrs McLeod's. She reprimanded him for not bringing it on Saturday night. She said His Majesty's mail must come rain or snow and this chap said, "I don't give a damn for His Majesty

or you!" so the poor old lady had to accept this. She went to her home when she was married and never left the place till she died - was over 30 years. She called her husband "Himself" and they had a horse about 30 years. She would say sometimes Himself is away to Skippers riding the "Colt". She was very kind to us children and always had a lolly or date to give us children and say, "God Bless You". She had no children of her own and I suppose she took a big interest in other children. Uncle Alex used to say just fancy kissing an old lady like that. She had no teeth and not very pretty but my mother used to say "None of God's Creatures are ugly". We were not game to refuse to kiss the old lady for if we did the kiss with the strap on your bum was worse than kissing the old lady. We would carry the mail back and deliver it to people on the road back, this was not in the contract but it saved a good few people from walking a fair way for their mail.

I think I have written enough about Skippers. Although I am an old man now and my memory is dimmed I still love Skippers and feel very honoured that I have had the privilege of growing up with such people as the fathers and mothers of my school play mates what kindness they all showed to all us and I will conclude with what I think was their "Motto" - Anyones trouble was everybodys trouble.

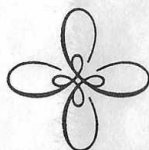
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