

HENRY HOPPER ADAMS: A TE AROHA MINER WHO BECAME  
A MINE OWNER

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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## HENRY HOPPER ADAMS: A TE AROHA MINER WHO BECAME A MINE OWNER

**Abstract:** *This paper describes the rise and fall of a self-made mining magnate. After a poor education, Henry Hopper Adams first became involved with mining, at Thames, when almost 17, although he later gave an even younger age. He quickly learnt the basic skills of mining, and by 1875 was a mining company director and in the late 1870s erected and managed batteries in addition to erecting bridges and water races; although describing himself as an engineer, he was an untaught one.*

*Having participated in the Te Aroha rush, he supervised the erection of its battery and then erected the first one at Waihi. Neither were successful, the former because of the absence of payable gold and the latter because of insufficient water power. At Waihi he made the first of many modifications to the machinery used in treatment plants. At Waiorongomai he erected the battery, water races, and tramway, but as the Battery Company that employed him gained increasing control over this field he was subject to frequent criticism for decisions that were outside his control. As the field declined, he managed more and more mines on behalf of this company.*

*As a leading figure in the Waiorongomai community, he did his best to assist it and to improve the battery. A visit to America to investigate new techniques led to his facilitating the purchase of the battery and many of the mines by the Te Aroha Silver and Gold Company, for which he worked as general manager for a time. When this company abandoned the field, he acquired its property in 1890, being confident that the district would produce payable ore. As well as owning the Waiorongomai battery and most of the mines, he diversified by also owning a timber mill, flax mills, and farms.*

*Adams was the first man to trial the new cyanide process at Waiorongomai, starting with the tailings plant in mid-1892 and then the modified battery itself in that December. Despite the modifications he made subsequently, cyanide was not a success because of the presence of copper in the ore, and in 1894 the plant was moved to Karangahake. These unsuccessful ventures prompted him to seek financial assistance from the government.*

*After leaving Waiorongomai in mid-1895, he managed mines and erected and managed batteries throughout most of Hauraki, becoming one of its leading mining figures. By the early twentieth century his efforts were focused in particular on Broken Hills (near Tairua) and Thames, where he*

*tried to introduce large-scale developments, especially in its deep levels. He was assisted by a group of business associates, many of whom were friends, and who would not benefit by sticking with his increasingly unprofitable ventures. Having earlier accumulated considerable wealth, by the end of his life all his money had gone.*

## FAMILY BACKGROUND

Henry Hopper Adams<sup>1</sup> was born in Auckland in 1851, the fourth son of Henry Hopper Adams.<sup>2</sup> (In 1886 he became the father of yet another Henry Hopper Adams.)<sup>3</sup> His father (son of Leonard; Hopper was a great-grandfather) arrived in Auckland in March 1843, aged 21,<sup>4</sup> and in May 1845 married an Irishwoman, Johanna (sometimes recorded as Joanna, Hannah, and Anna) Kiley.<sup>5</sup> Between 1845 and 1864 nine boys and two girls were born, but the births of their first two children, Leonard, probably born in 1845, and John, born in 1847, were not registered.<sup>6</sup> Alfred, born in 1856,

<sup>1</sup> For c. 1900 photos of Adams and his wife, see Marion Spicer, *Moturoa: An island in the gulf: 1814-1968* (Auckland, 1993), pp. 78, 79; for photographs of his siblings and his wife and children, see J.S. Adams, *Adams Family of Cornwall, England* (Google).

<sup>2</sup> Birth Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams, 30 January 1851, 1851/3, BDM; *Evening Post*, 31 January 1923, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Birth Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams [no name recorded], 26 February 1886, 1886/5848, BDM; Baptism of Henry Hopper Adams, born 26 February 1886, Register of Katikati Baptisms 1879-1944, no. 106, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Hamilton; Death Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams, 20 April 1972, 1972/39380, BDM.

<sup>4</sup> J.S. Adams, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Their marriage, on 29 May 1845, was not registered: see J.S. Adams, *Adams Family of Cornwall*, p. 2; Birth Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams, 30 January 1851, 1851/1281; Death Certificate of Johanna Adams, 4 May 1874, 1874/26; Death Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams, 27 December 1898, 1898/4883, BDM; Marriage Certificate of Michael Kiley Adams, Marriage Register 1881-1893, no. 26, Congregational Church Archives, Thames; *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 May 1874, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Birth Certificates of William Adams, 1849/2093; Henry Hopper Adams, 30 January 1851, 1851/1281; Michael Kiley Adams, 1853/1439; Johanna Maria Adams, 1855/1783; Alfred Adams, 1856/3514; Alfred Adams, 1858/3326; Louisa Thomasina Adams, 1860/4707; Robert Adams, 1861/5357; George Adams, 1864/24439, BDM; Births of Leonard, c. 1845, and John, 14 July 1847, noted in J.S. Adams, pp. 4-6.

died 14 months later, but his death was not registered; a second Alfred was born two years later.<sup>7</sup>

When Adams' father arrived in Auckland, he was a builder, but he helped to cut down Shortland Street as a way of making money and for a while even sold eggs.<sup>8</sup> For 15 years he was a boot and shoemaker until retiring in August 1863, when he thanked his customers for their support.<sup>9</sup> From that year onwards he was the licensee of the Queen's Head Hotel in Upper Queen Street, as well as the owner of the Royal Oyster Parlour, also situated in Queen Street.<sup>10</sup> A month before he became bankrupt in 1867, he transferred the hotel to his son Leonard, who transferred it back after his discharge.<sup>11</sup> He 'acquired much property in Elliott Street and lost it'.<sup>12</sup> In April 1879, when sued for £120 18s, he was ordered to pay forthwith or to be imprisoned for three months; unable to pay, he filed as bankrupt once more.<sup>13</sup> His debts totaled £337, compared with assets estimated at £8 19s.<sup>14</sup> In 1881, he was granted the Shamrock Hotel, in 1882 his brother John transferred the Wynyard Arms to him, and in 1883 he gave up the license for the Old House at Home.<sup>15</sup> When he died in December 1898, aged 78,<sup>16</sup> he left no will; it is unlikely that either then or earlier he was able to assist his children financially. He was recalled as 'always full of fun and anecdote',<sup>17</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Birth Certificates of Alfred Adams, 1856/3514, 1858/3326, BDM; Death Notice, *Daily Southern Cross*, 4 December 1857, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Observer*, 5 December 1908, p. 5; Birth Certificate of William Adams, 1849/2093, BDM.

<sup>9</sup> Birth Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams, 30 January 1851, 1851/3, BDM; Electoral Roll for City of Auckland 1864-65, BADW 5989/21a, ANZ-A; advertisement, *Daily Southern Cross*, 17 August 1863, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, 31 July 1863, p. 127, 21 July 1865, p. 163; Edna M. Stephenson, *Centennial Street* (Auckland, 1971), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 March 1867, p. 3, 13 April 1867, p. 3, 4 May 1867, p. 11; *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, 11 April 1867, p. 111, 13 July 1867, p. 301, 15 August 1868, p. 283; *Province of Auckland Electoral Roll*, 1869, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Observer*, 22 June 1927, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Auckland District Court, Warrant Book 1868-1888, 1, 2/1879, BBAE 10487/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>14</sup> Return of all Bankruptcies and Assignments since the coming into operation of the Debtors and Creditors Amendment Act, 1878: Supreme Court, Auckland: Bankruptcies, Legislative Department, LE 1, 1883/106, ANZ-W.

<sup>15</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 June 1881, p. 20, 10 June 1882, p. 9, 10 March 1883, p. 19.

<sup>16</sup> Death Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams, 27 December 1898, 1898/4883, BDM.

<sup>17</sup> *Observer*, 22 June 1927, p. 5.

but not as being prosperous, and his son's mining successes therefore entitled him to the then much-admired title of 'self-made man'.

### FIRST INVOLVEMENT WITH THAMES MINING

According to a note written after his death, at the age of 14 Adams

was staying with a chum at Mercury Bay. One night a man came to the house and showed a bottle of very rich specimens, which he said he had taken from a reef he discovered away back in the hills. Next day the man left in a cutter for Auckland stating he was going for the purpose of claiming a reward offered for the discovery of a new goldfield. That cutter was lost with all hands near the Great Barrier Island so the location of that lode still remains a mystery. Years afterwards Mr Adams spent months trying to find the lost lode.<sup>18</sup>

This story has not been traced elsewhere, but some such event may well have sparked his interest in goldmining. 'A miner now well over 70 years of age', clearly Adams, shortly before his death described his arrival on the new Thames goldfield:

I was at Thames the year it was opened. I went to Shortland Creek when I was only 14 1/2 years of age. My swag was a suit of clothes, two blankets, and my capital when I landed was just half-a-crown [two shillings and sixpence]. I may say I have followed mining ever since. I found gold three days after I landed. It was in the Waiotahi Creek, but I did not make a fortune out of my discovery. I remember a little later, when I was a shareholder in a claim on the Moanataiari Creek, we wanted a road made. There were a lot of claims on Punga Flat then; in fact, the whole of the Moanataiari Creek was also pegged out. A lot of us holders of claims agreed to make a road up the creek. We also asked the holders of the claims on Punga Flat, at the head of Waiotahi Creek, to join in, as the road would benefit them, but they refused to help. Well, we made the road by half of each party going to work on it. We had hardly finished the construction of that road when one of the mine owners on Punga Flat started to drag a portable engine up it, although he had refused to help make that track. Jack Murphy, who had driven a spring-cart up the new road, brought the information that horses and men were dragging the portable engine up it.

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<sup>18</sup> Typescript note, anon and n.d., Mahara Royal Scrapbook, p. 26, MSC 22, Hamilton Public Library.

### Down Tools.

Well, we were not going to stand that, so it was a case of "down tools," and the whole lot of us went down in a body to stop our road being used by the men from Punga Flat. Some chaps took axes with them, others pick handles, and the rest had ugly-looking shillelaghs. When we came to the men and horses dragging that engine a roar went up, "The engine into the creek." There would certainly have been trouble but for the man who had acted as foreman in making the road. He got on top of the cutting and shouted, "Boys, don't. I have a proposition to make. It is that if they contribute £75 towards the cost of making this road we let them take the engine up." That was agreed to at once. Then another chap jumped up and said. "Boys, I have another proposition to make. It is that if the owners of the engine or the contractor will give us as much beer as we can drink we will undertake to deliver the boiler to Punga Flat." That proposition was [accepted...]<sup>19</sup> Men were sent back to the township for the beer and whisky, also some lemonade for the boys who were teetotallers (they were not called prohibitionists in those days).

Well, ropes were put on, and the lot of us set to work to drag the engine up to Punga Flat. Not all of us, for in less than half an hour there were fellows astraddle the boiler, one with a cornopean [cornet], another with a tambourine, still another with a concertina, and a fourth with a fiddle. They were the band to inspirit the men at the ropes.

We had just got the engine about where the Alburnia Company is now getting its gold, when a breathless messenger rushing up and shouted, "The drays with the beer have tipped over into the creek." Of course such dreadful intelligence to men who were by that time pretty hot caused a stampede back to save the liquor. Sure enough, we found that the news was only too true. Both drays had turned turtle over the bank, and the horses were on their backs, entangled in the harness.

"Save the beer," was the agonised cry that went up from the thirsty miners, and we were soon down that bank. Things were not so bad as they might have been. In making the road we had to cut away a lot of supple-jack and had pitched it over the bank of the creek. Now, those drays had most fortunately just gone over at that point, and therefore had something soft to fall on. It was not long before we had the horses out of the harness and the drays dragged back to the road again. The barrels of beer were, you may be sure, carefully recovered, also the whisky and lemonade. Then we loaded the drays again, but it was decided that such valuable freight should not be risked by horses again. We manhandled those drays right up to the engine. It was then a case of broaching cargo. As usual, there was a considerable

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<sup>19</sup> Some of print obliterated.

amount of fun when the beer began to talk, and as we resumed dragging the boiler up to Punga Flat there were a lot of dead marines [empty bottles] along the road. Eventually we got the engine to its position after dragging from 9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

#### **How to Make Friends.**

When I got back to my whare I found that my two mates had snavelled a couple of bottles of whisky and were in the talkative stage. Those chaps were always chewing the rag about something, so I said, "You fellows had better get outside on the [mullock] tip and have it out." They promptly agreed to my suggestion, and had a real ding-dong go, which ended by them clinching and then rolling down the tip to the bottom of the Moanataiari Creek. They scuttled back as quickly as they could, and ever afterwards were the best of friends.<sup>20</sup>

There is no reason to doubt this recollection of jolly times on the goldfields, with one exception: his age. In 1927 and 1928 it was reported that 'when the Thames was opened in 1867 he was only 14 1/2, but the sturdy youngster came down three months after the proclamation, procured his miner's right, and set to work'.<sup>21</sup> When in a deputation to the Prime Minister in 1920, Adams stated that 'he had been a miner since he was 14 years of age'.<sup>22</sup> The *Observer* obituary had an even younger age and more dramatic reason for coming to Thames. According to its version, at the age of 12 he was helping to shingle the roof of a building that his father was building. 'Young Harry resented his dad's grousing, suddenly dropped tools and cleared off the job, made for the wharves, stowed away, and got to the Thames then just opening'.<sup>23</sup> This story must have come from Adams, although it was presumably not his fault that his father's name was given as Len, his eldest brother's name. While possibly he had run away from home, the age at which he did so was not 12, 14, or 14 1/2, for he was born on 31 January 1851.<sup>24</sup> His miner's right was taken out on 7 December 1867,

<sup>20</sup> Unsourced press cutting, n.d., with handwritten inscription 'H H ADAMS', Mahara Royal Scrapbook, p. 7, MSC 22, Hamilton Public Library.

<sup>21</sup> Obituary of H.H. Adams, *Thames Star*, 15 May 1928, p. 2, reprinted from F.W. Weston, *Thames Goldfields: A history from pre-proclamation times to 1927: Diamond Jubilee Souvenir 1867-1927* (Thames, 1927), p. 182.

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of deputation to Prime Minister, 19 August 1920, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>23</sup> *Observer*, 23 May 1928, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Birth Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams, 30 January 1851, 1851/3, BDM.

when he was nearly 17.<sup>25</sup> (Leonard Adams took out the next miner's right issued that day;<sup>26</sup> Adams failed to recall that his brother was with him, preferring to portray himself as being on his own). Adams himself told an 1896 gathering that he had been mining since the age of 17.<sup>27</sup> For those enthralled with the romance of goldmining, the younger the miner the better, and in his last years Adams must have encouraged this picture of youthful adventures by lowering his age (and omitting his brother).

## MINING AT THAMES AND OHINEMURI

According to John Salmon's history of mining, in 1868 Adams and Frederick Packard owned the Caledonian, which they sold to Auckland interests, and that they both soon 'became wealthy men from the interest they retained in the new Caledonian Company'.<sup>28</sup> However, Fred Weston, who interviewed Adams and other early miners for his jubilee history of Thames mining, wrote that Adams and his mates first pegged out the Dublin. 'After twelve months he sold out, and went to Puriri, resisting the persuasion of one of his former mates, who was now a shareholder in the Caledonian, to take up an unallotted share in their party - this a few months before the great run of gold was struck'.<sup>29</sup> After Weston's book was in type, he received more information from Adams:

He says that when carrying his swag down the creek, on his way to Puriri, after having left his first claim, the Dublin, on Alburnia Hill, he passed the Caledonian shaft, then being sunk. At the windlass was a former claim-mate of his, Fred Packard, a Canadian, who had had his share in the Dublin "jumped" because he did not at the time hold a miner's right. Packard, now a shareholder in the Caledonian, tried to persuade the youthful Adams to take up a vacant share in the claim, pointing out that the Manukau patch, already struck, was dipping towards it. However, young Harry looked down the shaft, then not very deep, concluded that the ground there was "too hard," and therefore

<sup>25</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Register of Miners' Rights 1867-1868, no. 2642, BACL 14358/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>26</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Register of Miners' Rights 1867-1868, no. 2643, BACL 14358/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>27</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 April 1896, p. 21.

<sup>28</sup> J.H.M. Salmon, *A History of Gold-Mining in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1963), p. 188.

<sup>29</sup> Weston, p. 182; reprinted as Adams' obituary in *Thames Star*, 15 May 1928, p. 5.

turned his back on a fortune, and went on to Puriri, where there was none. There were, he says, six men in the Caledonian party.... Packard was reputed to have received £78,000 for his interest, and shortly afterwards he returned to Canada.<sup>30</sup>

As the great run in the Caledonian was first found on 16 January 1868 and the Dublin, of which Adams was one of the eight owners, was not registered until 4 June,<sup>31</sup> Adams had muddled the sequence: clearly he had left for Puriri in January, very soon after arriving in Thames, returning by June. He had sold all his interest in the Dublin by the end of that year.<sup>32</sup>

A story printed in 1904 stated that

Harry Adams was not always the expert in mining matters that he is to-day. Back in the early days of the Thames he and Dick Mitchelson<sup>33</sup> ... were mates in one of the thousands of little claims that then dotted the hills. One day they had gone into the bush to cut timber for their workings, and down among the roots of the tree at which Harry Adams was hewing he came across a "pocket" of rich yellow metal.

After they told others of their discovery, the area was quickly pegged out and their find dug up and 'escorted in triumph to the camp'. His brother Len, according to this story 'already an authority',<sup>34</sup> although he had no more training in mineralogy than his brother and would later become a publican,<sup>35</sup> 'scrutinized it carefully, and was sure that it was the genuine article. There were congratulations all round, till somebody thought of the fire-test. In great excitement the stuff was placed over the fire, and at once it vanished into thin air'. When Adams learnt more about minerals, he realized that 'the enticing stuff had been a mixture of lead and chrome, which look to the inexpert deceptively like gold. The incident was one of the biggest "sells" [deceptions]<sup>36</sup> ever known at the Thames'.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Weston, p. 154.

<sup>31</sup> Weston, p. 154; Thames Warden's Court, Claims Register 1868, folio 58, BACL 14397/1a; Register of Agreements 1868, folio 411, BACL 14417/a, ANZ-A.

<sup>32</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Claims Register 1868, folio 58, BACL 14397/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>33</sup> See below.

<sup>34</sup> *Observer*, 26 March 1904, p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> See *Observer*, 5 December 1908, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8 ed., edited by Paul Beale (London, 1984), p. 1033.

Adams left little mark in the records of early Thames, although his taking the Hand in Hand Company to court in April 1870 suggests that he worked in its mine.<sup>38</sup> He was then living at Moanataiari, and in 1871 John and Robert Adams also lived in Thames.<sup>39</sup> He may have been the Adams elected in 1870 to the provisional committee of the new and short-lived Miners' Mutual Protection League.<sup>40</sup> In May 1871, he was one of six owners of North Star, at Te Papa Gully, and in November one of three owners of Smiling Queen, at Waiokaraka Creek.<sup>41</sup> In 1872, he had shares in the Young Queen Company; within two months he was sued for not paying calls.<sup>42</sup>

According to a 1907 account, when aged 19 he was underground boss of the Bright Smile, on the Grahamstown flat. If he did hold such a responsible position at that young age, he would have been appointed in 1870. It described an experience when this mine was flooded:

He and Clarke, his mate, descended the air shaft, the body of water preventing exit along the drives from the main shaft. As they had orders to go through the levels, they assayed to do so, but their candles went out, and they were in a wet mine and total darkness. There was 9ft 6in of water on the flatsheets that had to be crossed to get to the main-shaft, which couldn't be seen, and the two men swam about 18 yards in the dark and went up the main shaft by the ladder-ways 350ft! They gave the waiting bosses at the top a shock!<sup>43</sup>

In July 1872 he was living on the Bright Smile at Karaka.<sup>44</sup> He was then one of the six owners of the Elfie, at Waiokaraka Creek, and when this was floated as the Hyde Park Company in October he was elected a

<sup>37</sup> *Observer*, 26 March 1904, p. 17.

<sup>38</sup> Thames Magistrate's Court, Plaintiff Book 1869-1871, 1018/1870, BACL 13737/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>39</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 18 August 1870, p. 2; *Province of Auckland Electoral Roll*, 1871, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 17 August 1870, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Shortland Claims Register 1871-1872, nos. 2525, 2632, BACL 14397/6a, ANZ-A.

<sup>42</sup> Thames Magistrate's Court, Plaintiff Book 1871-1875, 138/1873, BACL 13737/1b, ANZ-A; *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, 21 December 1872, p. 348.

<sup>43</sup> *Observer*, 27 April 1907, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Mining Registrar's Office, Address Book 1872-1878, entry for 9 July 1872, BACL 14456/1a, ANZ-A.

director,<sup>45</sup> aged only 21. The first surviving reference of his being a (not 'the') foreman in the Bright Smile was in February 1874;<sup>46</sup> Weston described him as 'an underground boss'.<sup>47</sup> In the same year he became a director of the Vanguard Company.<sup>48</sup>

With the opening of Ohinemuri to mining in 1875, Adams joined the rush and marked out claims at both Karangahake and Tairua. At the former, he was an owner of the All Nations, but sold his interest seven months later.<sup>49</sup> All his other interests were in the Tairua district, where a rival party threatened him with violence when he was helping a surveyor to cut lines.<sup>50</sup> He had shares in two of the companies formed in that year, the Britannia, of which he was a director, and the Ajax.<sup>51</sup> In the latter, his father had been a shareholder with him in the original claim, the only known time that they invested together.<sup>52</sup> He also had shares in two claims that were not floated as companies.<sup>53</sup>

In February 1876 his party bought the Lord Nelson, at Karaka Creek, Thames.<sup>54</sup> Adams was one of the shareholders who had bought this claim some years before, but although they had not found much gold, he retained 'some faith in the ground', although his crushings were not producing much gold.<sup>55</sup> In May 1878, his party forfeited this claim,<sup>56</sup> which had 'nearly

<sup>45</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Register of Claims 1872-1874, no.30, BACL 14397/8a, ANZ-A; *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, 29 October 1872, p. 314; *Thames Advertiser*, 7 October 1872, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 6 February 1874, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Weston, p. 182.

<sup>48</sup> Company Files, BBAE 10286/3q, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 27 May 1875, p. 375.

<sup>49</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Ohinemuri Claims 1875, folio 26, BBAV 11568/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>50</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 12 April 1875, p. 3, 15 April 1875, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 June 1875, p. 428, 22 July 1875, p. 500; *Thames Advertiser*, 25 May 1875, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Register of Claims 1875-1876, folio 39, BACL 14397/9a, ANZ-A.

<sup>53</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Register of Claims 1875-1876, folios 14, 33, BACL 14397/9a, ANZ-A.

<sup>54</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1872-1875, folio 186, BACL 14397/7a, ANZ-A.

<sup>55</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 29 January 1877, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 13 May 1878, p. 2.

ruined' one of his party, his friend John Benney,<sup>57</sup> and presumably brought Adams little if any profit. In August that year, he was a member of a tribute party in the Star of Te Papa.<sup>58</sup> Late the following year, he tributed in the Decide at Tairua; although handicapped by bad air, he obtained some payable returns.<sup>59</sup>

## BATTERY MANAGEMENT

Adams had gone to Tairua to take over the management of the battery.<sup>60</sup> It is not certain if he was the Adams who, in September 1872, had bought a tailings plant at Thames for £44,<sup>61</sup> but in 1876 he erected a battery and water race for the Ajax Company at Nevesville,<sup>62</sup> in the range behind Tairua. The *Thames Advertiser* praised him 'for the manner he fulfilled his duties as engineer', for he had 'carried out the work in a most creditable manner without the aid of any plan'.<sup>63</sup> In 1877, with a partner he took over a reduction works in Willoughby Street in Thames.<sup>64</sup> In 1878, Adams described himself on the birth certificate of one of his sons as 'machine owner'.<sup>65</sup> He was 27, and as self-taught in the science of battery construction and operation as he had been in mining. A School of Mines, to train 'practical men' such as Adams, would not be established at Thames until 1886.<sup>66</sup>

## CONTRACTOR

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<sup>57</sup> See *Thames Star*, 23 September 1880, p. 2; for their friendship, see below.

<sup>58</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 5 August 1878, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 27 October 1879, p. 3, 28 October 1879, p. 3, 25 November 1879, p. 3, 27 December 1879, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 24 September 1879, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 30 September 1872, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> Later, and incorrectly, spelled Neavesville, for John Neves discovered the gold; see *Thames Advertiser*, Warden's Court, 16 June 1875, p. 3, 19 June 1875, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 17 August 1876, p. 3, 2 September 1876, p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 25 January 1879, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> Birth Certificate of Albert Augustine Adams, 6 February 1878, 1878/652, BDM.

<sup>66</sup> See J.G. Black to Minister of Mines, 7 June 1886, *AJHR*, 1886, C-4B, p. 17.

By 1875 Adams was supplementing his mining with contracting. In March, he failed to win a contract for part of the Thames water race.<sup>67</sup> He may have won some contracts for private individuals and firms, but the next record of his tendering for the county council was his failure to obtain the contract to make a water race tunnel.<sup>68</sup> The following year he won several important contracts. In February, he was selected to make a bridge over the Ohinemuri River at Paeroa, which by early April was ‘making excellent progress’.<sup>69</sup> Completed late in June, when he and his men left Paeroa they were ‘loudly and cordially cheered by the residents’, their workmanship having ‘given every satisfaction’.<sup>70</sup> At the April council meeting, he stated that he had lost £40 in his contract for one of the trestle flumes for its water race,

and asked the Council to take his case into consideration.- The chairman said Mr Adams had completed his contract in the most satisfactory manner, notwithstanding that he saw soon after he began that he would lose on it, and he (the speaker) really thought that Mr Adams was entitled to some consideration at the hands of the Council.- Cr [Adam] Porter<sup>71</sup> said, as far as he could learn, the work had been carried out in a manner never before equalled since the Council was inaugurated.... It was the first time in the annals of the county that a contractor had carried out his contract faithfully and honestly, at a loss to himself.

After discussing whether a precedent was being set, the matter was referred to the water race committee,<sup>72</sup> whose decision was not reported. His unsuccessful tender to make the Shortland section of the proposed railway to Thames was the highest by nearly £5,000.<sup>73</sup> When a witness at the wedding of a friend in November that year he gave his occupation as a contractor, and was listed as such in the 1880 electoral roll.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 25 March 1875, p. 215.

<sup>68</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 8 November 1878, p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 24 February 1879, p. 3, *Ohinemuri Correspondent*, 10 April 1879, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 17 June 1879, p.3, 11 July 1879, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>72</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 4 April 1879, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 9 April 1879, p. 3; *New Zealand Gazette*, 10 April 1879, p. 473.

<sup>74</sup> Marriage Certificate of Finlay McLiver, 10 November 1879, 1879/2731, BDM; *Thames Electoral Roll*, 1880, p. 1.

In April 1880, the Orphanage Committee chose his design of a footbridge to cross the Kauaeanga River. Adams 'kindly made the Committee a present of the £5 which he obtained for his prize design'.<sup>75</sup> When completed, the 140-foot-long bridge was described as 'substantial although light'.<sup>76</sup> In May, his tenders to erect bridges over the Waitekauri and Ohinemuri rivers were declined.<sup>77</sup> His first contact with the Te Aroha district came in March, when he won two drainage contracts.<sup>78</sup> In July the following year, he was reported to be making 'excellent progress' in repairing the Karaka and Hape Creek sections of the Thames water race.<sup>79</sup> Early in August, his two tenders to clear up flood damage at Thames were declined,<sup>80</sup> but in the middle of the month his tenders were accepted for fluming and other work in Waiotahi Creek, repairing the Powder Magazine Wharf, and repairing the goods wharf.<sup>81</sup> In October, a letter from 'County Contracts' was critical of his construction of the Mission Bridge, unfairly in the view of 'An Unsuccessful Contractor', who considered that Adams had done a good job. As the first letter has been cut out of the only surviving issue of the newspaper, the precise nature of the criticism is unknown.<sup>82</sup> Also in October, he repaired the Waiotahi culvert, but his tender for a bridge at Waitekauri was declined.<sup>83</sup> In November, he was a 'material sufferer' when a flood in the Waiotahi Stream wrecked part of the upper portion of the fluming that he was repairing.<sup>84</sup> These were his last contracts, as from 1881 onwards he concentrated on mining, in particular constructing and managing mining batteries. That he owned freehold property in Thames and Thames County, with a total value of £705,<sup>85</sup> indicated that most of his contracts had been profitable.

<sup>75</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 21 April 1880, p. 2, 4 May 1880, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 7 July 1880, p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 15 May 1880, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> *Waikato Times*, 27 March 1880, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 1 April 1880, p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 27 July 1881, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 8 August 1881, p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> *Thames Star*, 17 August 1881, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 18 August 1881, p. 2.

<sup>82</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, letter from 'Country Contracts', 1 October 1881, p. 3, letter from 'An Unsuccessful Contractor', 3 October 1881, p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 21 October 1881, p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 25 November 1881, p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> *A Return of the Freeholders of New Zealand ...* (Wellington, 1884), p. A 3.

## FAMILY LIFE

On 29 January 1873, two days before his 23rd birthday, Adams married Eliza, aged 16, the daughter of John Andrew, another Thames miner.<sup>86</sup> His first child, Henry, died of convulsions on 29 July 1874 after only two days of life.<sup>87</sup> His second son, John Henry, was born on 12 February 1876, and his third, Albert Augustine, on 6 February 1878.<sup>88</sup> A stillborn and unnamed son was born in June 1879.<sup>89</sup> William Charles was born on 9 April 1880, to die three days later of malnutrition.<sup>90</sup> His first daughter, Rosina, named after one of Eliza's sisters,<sup>91</sup> was born in March 1881, to die eight days later of jaundice.<sup>92</sup> The impact on Adams and his wife of four children dying within eight years, either at birth or almost immediately afterwards, leaving only two surviving, can only be imagined, as there is no evidence about how they coped.

## FRIENDSHIPS

During the 1870s Adams made lifelong friendships. The witnesses at his wedding were John Benney, another early Thames miner,<sup>93</sup> and Richard

<sup>86</sup> Notices of Intentions to Marry, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM, 20/18, folio 181, ANZ-W; Marriage Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams, 29 January 1873, 1873/5641, BDM; *Thames Advertiser*, 1 February 1873, p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> Only the death was registered: Death Certificate of Henry Adams, 29 July 1874, 1874/11092, BDM; *Thames Advertiser*, 1 August 1874, p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> Birth Certificates of John Henry Adams, 12 February 1876, 1896/2246 [date as in index]; Albert Augustine Adams, 6 February 1878, 1878/652, BDM.

<sup>89</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 11 June 1879, p. 2.

<sup>90</sup> Birth Certificate of William Charles Adams, 9 April 1880, 1880/4603; Death Certificate of William Charles Adams, 11 April 1880, 1880/537, BDM.

<sup>91</sup> Notices of Intentions to Marry 1876-1880, Rosina Andrew, 28 February 1880, Thames BDM.

<sup>92</sup> Birth Certificate of Rosina Adams, 22 March 1881 [as recorded], 1881/17442; Death Certificate of Rosina Adams, 27 March 1881, 1881/1080, BDM.

<sup>93</sup> See Bank of New Zealand, Shortland Branch, Individual Accounts Ledger October 1868-March 1869, folio 61, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington; *Thames Advertiser*, 16 August 1877, p. 3, 22 July 1885, p. 2, 9 December 1892, p. 2, 12 July 1898, p. 1; *Thames Star*, 23 September 1880, p. 2, 4 September 1907, p. 2.

Kennan, a sharebroker.<sup>94</sup> He would be associated with Benney in several mines, notably the Elfie, Bright Smile and Lord Nelson at Thames and the Ajax at Neavesville.<sup>95</sup> When Benney left Waiorongomai in 1885 after managed mines there for some years, Adams chaired a supper held in his honour; it had been his idea, and 'he subscribed the handsome sum of £5'.<sup>96</sup> Continuing contact with Kennan, who was forced to leave Thames in 1881 because of fathering an illegitimate child,<sup>97</sup> cannot be traced, but in 1875 Adams assisted his brother, Thomas Gelling Kennan,<sup>98</sup> to survey a claim at Tairua.<sup>99</sup> In 1871 he was a witness at the wedding of Hugh McLiver,<sup>100</sup> and in 1879 at the wedding of Hugh's brother Finlay.<sup>101</sup> Adams and Hugh were joint owners of some Thames mines from 1868 onwards,<sup>102</sup> and later worked together at Waiorongomai. John Blennerhasset Beeche,<sup>103</sup> another

<sup>94</sup> Marriage Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams, 29 January 1873, 1873/5641, BDM.

<sup>95</sup> For example, Thames Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1872-1875, folio 186, BACL 14397/7a; Register of Claims 1875-1876, folio 29, BACL 14397/9a, ANZ-A; *Thames Guardian and Mining Record*, 15 December 1871, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 19 September 1872, 14 May 1873, p. 3, 26 August 1876, p. 2, 5 September 1876, p. 3, 13 May 1878, p. 2; for photo of Adams and Benney as part of gold escort, see Weston, p. 71.

<sup>96</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 25 July 1885, p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> *Thames Star*, 8 April 1881, p. 2, 11 April 1881, p. 2, 13 April 1881, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> See *Thames Advertiser*, 29 November 1875, p. 2, 14 August 1879, p. 2; Death Certificate of Ethel Laura Bliss Kennan, 14 January 1879, 1879/1230, BDM.

<sup>99</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 15 April 1875, p. 3,

<sup>100</sup> See Mines Department, MD 1, 87/491, ANZ-W; *Thames Advertiser*, 10 May 1875, p. 3, 27 December 1882, p. 2, 10 December 1883, p. 3, *Te Aroha Correspondent*, 29 October 1885, p. 2, 8 January 1889, p. 2, 17 April 1890, p. 2, 13 February 1891, p. 2, 13 October 1892, p. 2, 11 November 1892, p. 3, 2 December 1892, p. 3, Police Court, 24 January 1893, p. 3, Police Court, 27 January 1893, p. 3, 4 February 1893, p. 3, 15 February 1893, p. 2, 20 August 1895, p. 2, 30 July 1898, p. 2; *Thames Star*, Warden's Court, 7 July 1903, p. 3, 19 August 1903, p. 3.

<sup>101</sup> Marriage Certificates of Hugh McLiver, 12 July 1871, 1871/6765; Finlay McLiver, 10 November 1879, 1879/2731, BDM.

<sup>102</sup> For example, Thames Warden's Court, Claims Register 1868, folio 58, BACL 14397/1a; Shortland Claims Register 1871-1872, nos. 2525, 2632, BACL 14397/6a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 6 December 1880, p. 3.

<sup>103</sup> See *Thames Advertiser*, 13 March 1875, p. 3, 16 April 1875, p. 3, 3 May 1875, p. 3, Warden's Court, 16 June 1875, p. 3, 15 November 1875, p. 3, 11 December 1875, p. 3, 15

prominent miner, who had married Eliza Adams' sister Elizabeth Ann,<sup>104</sup> was joint owner of some claims with both him and his brother,<sup>105</sup> James McCutcheon Beeche.<sup>106</sup> Another mate in some of his claims was Richard Mitchelson, brother of Edwin.<sup>107</sup> William Burton, a hotelkeeper,<sup>108</sup> had started to invest in his mining ventures by 1880.<sup>109</sup> Burton and both Mitchelsons would invest in his mines for many years.

## INVOLVEMENT IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Adams' involvement in local government began in January 1875, when he received the lowest vote of those elected to the Thames Goldfields Hospital Committee: 55, compared with the highest candidate's 134.<sup>110</sup> In October 1877 he joined the Volunteers.<sup>111</sup> The following October, he won a shooting match.<sup>112</sup> He did not attain any prominence in the Volunteers apart from that one success, and dropped out after moving to Te Aroha.

December 1875, p. 2, 15 January 1876, p. 3, 19 January 1876, p. 3, 31 March 1876, p. 3, 14 December 1876, p. 3; *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 April 1895, p. 21.

<sup>104</sup> Marriage Certificate of John Blennerhasset Beeche, 7 October 1871, 1871/7143, BDM.

<sup>105</sup> See *Thames Advertiser*, 8 June 1874, p. 3, 17 March 1875, p. 2, Warden's Court, 16 June 1875, p. 3; *New Zealand Herald*, 9 March 1881, p. 6; *Te Aroha News*, 16 June 1883, p. 2, 20 September 1884, p. 2; Death Certificate of James McCutcheon Beeche, 17 May 1916, 1916/7694, New South Wales BDM.

<sup>106</sup> Birth Certificate of Margaret Rosina Beeche, 9 August 1872, 1872/1570, BDM; *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 October 1871, p. 13; for examples of their jointly owning claims, see Thames Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1872-1875, folio 186, BACL 14397/7a; Register of Claims 1872-1874, claim 30, BACL 14397/8a, ANZ-A.

<sup>107</sup> *Observer*, 26 March 1904, p. 17; for example, Richard Mitchelson was a shareholder with Adams in the Smiling Queen claim in 1872: Thames Warden's Court, Register of Claims 1872-1874, claim 49, BACL 14397/8a, ANZ-A; details of their careers are given below.

<sup>108</sup> See below.

<sup>109</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 6 December 1880, p. 3, 20 December 1880, p. 3.

<sup>110</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 21 January 1875, p. 3; *Thames Star*, 21 January 1875, p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> No. 3 Company, Hauraki Rifle Volunteers, Nominal Roll as at 31 March 1878, 1878/1s, ARM 41; Thames No. 2 Scottish Rifle Volunteers, Capitation Roll, May 1880, 1882/1n, ARM 41, ANZ-W.

<sup>112</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 7 October 1878, p. 3.

## THE TE AROHA RUSH

Adams was at Te Aroha on opening day,<sup>113</sup> but had shares (with McLiver and Burton amongst others) in only one claim, the Bright Smile,<sup>114</sup> the name of the mine in which he had been a foreman at Thames. He took two samples for testing at his Thames mill, supervising the treatment personally, but although one ounce to the ton was obtained, the claim was not a success and was abandoned early the following year.<sup>115</sup> Clearly intending to erect a battery, he unsuccessfully applied for a water race.<sup>116</sup> Early in January 1881, he was elected a provisional director of the Te Aroha Quartz Crushing Company, and confirmed as director a month later; he held 60 of the 2,922 shares sold.<sup>117</sup> Appointed to the three-man committee that drew up specifications and called tenders for the battery, he alone prepared the specifications and from March onwards lived in Te Aroha and supervised its erection.<sup>118</sup> At the banquet held in April to celebrate its opening, his health was drunk ‘and the Chairman in proposing the toast spoke very highly’ of his ‘ability, energy, and perseverance’. In reply, Adams said that ‘he had done all in his power to make the battery a success, and if it was not one it was not his fault’. Henry Ernest Whitaker, the legal manager,<sup>119</sup> said that ‘too much credit could not be given to Mr Adams. He was, in fact, a wonderful man, and a great financier’.<sup>120</sup> The machinery

<sup>113</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Miner’s Right no. 981, issued 25 November 1880, Miners’ Rights Butt Book 1880, BBAV 11533/1b, ANZ-A.

<sup>114</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 165, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>115</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 165, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 6 December 1880, p. 3, 20 December 1880, p. 3; *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 December 1890, p. 9.

<sup>116</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folio 1, no. 2, BBAV 11505/3a, ANZ-A; *Thames Star*, 1 December 1880, p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> *Thames Star*, 8 January 1881, p. 2, 7 February 1881, p. 2; *New Zealand Gazette*, 28 April 1881, p. 476.

<sup>118</sup> *Thames Star*, 8 January 1881, p. 2, 7 February 1881, p. 2, 22 March 1881, p. 2, 25 April 1881, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 24 March 1881, p. 3.

<sup>119</sup> See papers on the Battery Company and on Harry and Charles: Henry Ernest Whitaker and Charles Stanislaus Stafford.

<sup>120</sup> *Thames Star*, 25 April 1881, p. 2.

performed ‘to the thorough satisfaction of’ Adams and the directors.<sup>121</sup> Adams was in charge for its first month, and may have supervised it for longer.<sup>122</sup> In 1883, he would purchase the abandoned battery for £390.<sup>123</sup>

## WAIHI

In April 1881, Adams was reported to have erected machinery for the Thames Paint Company,<sup>124</sup> but after that date he concentrated on mining machinery. In 1927, he was quoted as being ‘proud to say that he took the first piece of machinery into Waihi, and cut the first piece of mining timber there’.<sup>125</sup> In September 1881 his tender of £2,740 to erect a battery and water race was accepted by the Waihi Gold Mining Company.<sup>126</sup> When felling kauri on a Ngati Hako reserve near Waihi, he was opposed by some of its members.<sup>127</sup> Prevented from taking a portable engine into the bush, the *Thames Advertiser* commented that this would ‘prove a serious matter to him’, as he had ‘gone to a great expense’ and was ‘bound down to time in a large amount to carry out the work’.<sup>128</sup> On 21 October, Adams returned to Thames,

he and his men having been compelled to desist from working owing to the threats of the natives to destroy their tools if they persisted. The natives numbered about 25, and appeared very determined to carry out their threats if the men had not desisted and returned to their huts. They assert that the land is theirs, and the miners ought to make arrangements with them, and not the Government.

The *Thames Advertiser* understood that the obstructionists had no claim to the land, having sold their interest, and called for prompt government action.<sup>129</sup> Three days later the Native Agent, George Thomas

<sup>121</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 30 April 1881, p. 3.

<sup>122</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 19 April 1881, p. 3, 1 June 1881, p. 3.

<sup>123</sup> *Thames Star*, 22 March 1883, p. 2.

<sup>124</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 2 April 1881, p. 3.

<sup>125</sup> Weston, p. 182.

<sup>126</sup> *Thames Star*, 22 September 1881, p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> *Thames Star*, 22 October 1881, p. 2.

<sup>128</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 21 October 1881, p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 22 October 1881, p. 3.

Wilkinson,<sup>130</sup> accompanied Adams to Waihi to talk to Ngati Hako.<sup>131</sup> Wilkinson at first ‘thought the matter would be settled amicably by their promises not to obstruct any man, and wait for a Land Court, Mr Adams to withdraw the summons. But as they afterwards got rather insolent’, five men were prosecuted for threatening behaviour.<sup>132</sup> When the case was heard on 2 November, Adams stated that,

having heard on the 20th October that his men were stopped from working, he went next day and saw four of the defendants in the Waihou bush. They wanted me to cease work till I had brought Mr G.T. Wilkinson. There were about 15 natives present. He refused to stop work, and they followed us and took the tools from his man Webb.... Believed if he had gone on with the work there would have been a breach of the peace.... He had paid above £90 for his right to cut 75 trees. Believed they intended to stop him by force.

One defendant gave evidence of asking asked Adams to stop his work:

Adams replied he would not, as he had bought the trees from the Government. Adams said, “We’ll go to the road, and you must prevent us yourselves.” We agreed to that, and he gave us breakfast. The men then went to work, and we followed them. Adams said, “Take the picks the men are using.” No bad words were spoken. We took the saw, and laid it on the ground. We did not threaten to use force. Adams said he would go to Grahamstown, and tell the Warden.

The other defendants argued that the land was part of a promised reserve, and Wilkinson confirmed that a reserve, with undetermined boundaries, did exist. The magistrate, Harry Kenrick,<sup>133</sup> stated that he had the right to authorize all activities within the goldfield and that the owners of the trees would obtain the revenue. After warning that he could impose a £10 fine or three month’s imprisonment, he asked if the defendants would continue their obstruction. After all answered in the negative, Kenrick said

<sup>130</sup> See paper on Merea Wikiriwhi and George Thomas Wilkinson.

<sup>131</sup> George Thomas Wilkinson, diaries, entry for 23 October 1881, University of Waikato Library.

<sup>132</sup> George Thomas Wilkinson, diaries, entry for 24 October 1881, University of Waikato Library.

<sup>133</sup> See paper on his life.

he would ask the land court to determine the boundaries and adjourned the case to the next court day. If there was no further interference, ‘the penalty (if any)’ would be ‘very light’, and they would get the money they were entitled to.<sup>134</sup> As there was no further obstruction, at the next sitting he imposed a nominal penalty of one shilling and costs.<sup>135</sup>

Thus ended a strangely low-key controversy (Adams giving the protestors breakfast before, on his prompting, they stopped his men working),<sup>136</sup> which was the only conflict between Adams and any Maori to be recorded. Although his attitude to Maori is unknown, at this time he employed a ‘Negro’ cook.<sup>137</sup> Could he be ‘John, a Kanaka’, whom he employed in an unspecified role in 1891 and sent to hospital after an accident?<sup>138</sup>

Adams experienced other complications over obtaining timber at Waihi, being charged by two Pakeha with taking some of their kauri trees. Instead of the £40 they claimed, he was ordered to pay £6 and costs.<sup>139</sup>

In October 1881, the Martha Company accepted his tender to construct a battery and water race for £1,238.<sup>140</sup> By February, the erection of both batteries was well underway, his sawmill providing timber for the Waihi Company’s water race.<sup>141</sup> In early April, he had almost finished the battery, water race, and tramway for the Martha Company, and only a few more weeks were needed to finish the Waihi Company’s water race.<sup>142</sup> The opening of the Martha battery, the first at Waihi, took place in late May, with the traditional banquet and speeches. A special correspondent described it:

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<sup>134</sup> Paeroa Magistrate’s Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 3 November 1881, p. 3.

<sup>135</sup> Paeroa Magistrate’s Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 1 December 1881, p. 3.

<sup>136</sup> Paeroa Magistrate’s Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 3 November 1881, p. 3.

<sup>137</sup> W.S.C. Nicholl, ‘The Discovery that led to the Development of the Waihi Gold Field’, *Ohinemuri Regional History Journal*, vol. 6 no. 1 (May 1969), p. 8.

<sup>138</sup> *Waikato Times*, 10 March 1891, p. 2.

<sup>139</sup> Paeroa Magistrate’s Court, Plaintiff Book 1881-1896, 31/1881, BACL 13745/1a, ANZ-A; Paeroa Magistrate’s Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 1 December 1881, p. 3; Paeroa Magistrate’s Court, *Thames Star*, 14 December 1881, p. 3.

<sup>140</sup> *Thames Star*, 27 October 1881, p. 3.

<sup>141</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 13 February 1882, p. 3.

<sup>142</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 7 April 1882, p. 3.

The mill is situated at the base of the eastern slope of the Pukewha hill [on which the Martha lode had been discovered], and within 200 yards of the mouth of the Martha low level, which is connected by a tramway, already completed. The contractor for its erection, Mr H.H. Adams, has carried out his work very creditably, and the substantial nature of the building and appurtenances elicited hearty encomiums ['high-flown praise']<sup>143</sup> from the visitors. The dimensions of the building are 52 feet by 46 feet. The best heart of kauri timber only has been used in the erection throughout.... The motor is a turbine, constructed on a principle invented by Mr Adams, the contractor for the battery, for which he has already attained notoriety, several similar engines having been erected by him at Reefton. It was manufactured by Messrs A. & G. Price, of Grahamstown, and is estimated to be capable of driving 40 head of stampers with the accompanying berdans, with the present pressure of water.

This was his first recorded invention (more correctly, an adaptation); it was not patented. At the banquet celebrating the opening, the chairman proposed the toast to Adams:

That gentleman had been engaged in public works for many years, and the undertaking to erect the two mills at Waihi within so short a time was no small one. Infinite credit was due to him for the masterly manner in which he had carried out his work. (Drunk with enthusiasm.)

Mr Adams rose to the occasion, and gave a resume of the work he had done. In the erection of the mill and race, he had consumed no less than 136,000 feet of timber. He had been told he had been very slow, but he did not think that was true. He thought he could flatter himself that he had done his duty; and whatever happened, he would rather build a battery than make a speech. (Laughter.) He would like to say more in responding to the toast, but did not feel equal to the occasion.<sup>144</sup>

Adams operated it for the first fortnight, as required by his contract,<sup>145</sup> and then completed the erection of the Waihi Company's battery. A correspondent observed its start:

The machinery and building are really a credit to the contractor, Mr H.H. Adams, who may well be proud of the splendid job he

<sup>143</sup> *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 5 ed., (Oxford, 1964), p. 399.

<sup>144</sup> Special Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 26 May 1882, p. 3.

<sup>145</sup> Special Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 26 May 1882, p. 3.

has made of it. The tramway and water race are grand pieces of work of their kind, the former over one mile long, and the latter two miles, and on trestle work up to 50 feet high, no timber being used but the best heart of kauri.... Everything in connection with the battery worked as smoothly as if going for years, there not being the slightest vibration, which is not to be wondered at, when one knows that the foundation for the bed log was blasted out of solid blue-rock. Mr Adams put the battery through its paces up to 100 blows per minute to make sure that there was no scarcity of water. In fact, there was a large overflow there, plenty, I believe, to drive another 20 stampers.... Leaving the battery going steadily at 70, all hands adjourned to the Waihi Hotel.<sup>146</sup>

Very shortly, problems with both batteries became obvious. In June, something was ‘radically wrong’ with the Martha battery turbine.<sup>147</sup> The discoverer of the Martha lode, Billy Nicholl,<sup>148</sup> later wrote that ‘all the speed that could be obtained from it was forty bumps a minute, which was almost useless’.<sup>149</sup> In August, the directors of the Waihi Company were worried because the machinery was not working well, and, as the water race was settling in the ground, little water reached it. They intended ‘to hold some one responsible’.<sup>150</sup> Adams was never publicly taken to task over either battery, the siting of which presumably had been decided by the directors, but he was criticized by implication in the *Thames Advertiser*: ‘the great drawbacks on the field’ were ‘the defective batteries’ with their unsatisfactory ‘motive power’.<sup>151</sup> After new turbines were ordered from America, the two batteries were amalgamated.<sup>152</sup> The mining inspector wrote in April 1883 that mining had

come to a complete stop, through the batteries not working properly, some mistake having been made either in the turbines or in the calculation of water-power. After running for some time

<sup>146</sup> Own Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 June 1882, p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 26 June 1882, p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>149</sup> *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 24 July 1901, p. 2.

<sup>150</sup> *Thames Star*, 31 August 1882, p. 2.

<sup>151</sup> ‘Mining News of the Month’, *Thames Advertiser*, 9 September 1882, p. 3.

<sup>152</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 2 December 1882, p. 3, 15 December 1882, p. 2.

it was found that not as much quartz could be passed through the stampers in one week as ought to go through in a day.<sup>153</sup>

Kenrick reported that ‘the year has been wasted, through some mistakes having been made in the levels of the water-race, and consequent loss of power to the turbine. The mistake has proved a costly one to the shareholders, who have been put to great expense in rectifying it’.<sup>154</sup>

In contrast, in February 1882 Adams bought a 15-head battery for £351 and re-erected it at Owharoa, where his turbine worked well.<sup>155</sup>

### FIRST INVOLVEMENT WITH WAIORONGOMAI MINING

When the Waiporongomai goldfield was first discovered, Adams became an owner of only one claim, the Waterfall. When this became part of the Canadian Company’s ground, he received 66 scrip shares in it.<sup>156</sup> In March 1882, he held 500 shares in the Premier Company,<sup>157</sup> and in August owned, with another miner, the Luck’s All.<sup>158</sup> His only other purchases of 1882, of half the shares in the Little Jimmy for £150, were transferred almost immediately to the Battery Company, presumably having been made on its behalf.<sup>159</sup>

In September 1882, Adams was working day and night to complete his water race contract for the Waiporongomai battery.<sup>160</sup> By the following February, he was both engineer and manager for the Battery Company,

<sup>153</sup> James M. McLaren (Inspector of Mines) to Under-Secretary, Gold Fields, 30 April 1883, *AJHR*, 1883, H-5, p. 23.

<sup>154</sup> Harry Kenrick (Warden) to Under-Secretary, Gold Fields, 17 May 1883, *AJHR*, 1883, H-5, p. 14.

<sup>155</sup> A. & G. Price, Journal 1881-1887, folio 52, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames; *Thames Advertiser*, 6 February 1882, p. 3.

<sup>156</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 38, BBAV 11500/9a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 14 September 1882, p. 1264.

<sup>157</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 23 March 1882, p. 490.

<sup>158</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 257, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>159</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 25, BBAV 11567/1a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, nos. 459, 460, 462, BBAV 11581/2a, ANZ-A.

<sup>160</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 27 September 1882, p. 3.

having won the contract to erect its battery.<sup>161</sup> In February 1883, when both water races were completed,<sup>162</sup> his skillful construction was universally praised. ‘A most creditable piece of work’, wrote the local newspaper.<sup>163</sup> A visiting journalist considered that their construction ‘entailed no small amount of engineering skill’, and the flumes over deep gorges reflected ‘the greatest credit on the constructor’.

Great praise is due to Mr H.H. Adams, who designed and constructed the whole of the races without the aid of an engineer, and whose work would be a credit to any professional man. The whole of the works in connection with the erection of the battery and construction of the races have been carried out under his personal supervision and direction.<sup>164</sup>

The Hamilton newspaper commented on the ‘excellent workmanship in every respect’ involved, which reflected ‘great credit on the very practical nature of his knowledge in these matters’.<sup>165</sup> In 1883 he held shares in the New Welcome Company as a personal investment,<sup>166</sup> but acquired shares in the Star and Vermont claims on behalf of the Battery Company.<sup>167</sup>

On 18 September 1882, Adams was granted a quarter acre residence site on the eastern side of the Waiorongomai Stream, opposite to the tailings site and the township. His wife was granted an adjoining quarter acre section.<sup>168</sup> As one way of celebrating their new home, their next baby, born in December, was named Richard Waiorongomai Adams.<sup>169</sup>

In April 1883, after James Stewart retired from supervising the construction of the tramway,<sup>170</sup> Adams won the contract for laying the rails

<sup>161</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 5 February 1883, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 14 February 1883, p. 2.

<sup>162</sup> For details of the water races, see paper on the Firth and Clark Battery.

<sup>163</sup> *Te Aroha Mail*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Advertiser*, 5 February 1883, p. 2.

<sup>164</sup> Own Correspondent, ‘Te Aroha Goldfield’, *New Zealand Herald*, 5 February 1883, p. 6.

<sup>165</sup> *Waikato Times*, 27 February 1883, p. 3.

<sup>166</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 20 September 1883, p. 1345.

<sup>167</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Applications 1883-1900, 90/1883, BBAV 11505/1a; Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folios 97, 153, BBAV 11500/9a; Certified Instruments 1883, nos. 339, 340, 512, 513, BBAV 11581/4a, ANZ-A.

<sup>168</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folio 213, no. 300, BBAV 11505/3a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, BBAV 11581/2a, ANZ-A.

<sup>169</sup> Birth Certificate of Richard Waiorongomai Adams, 22 December 1883, 1883/1337, BDM.

<sup>170</sup> See paper on the Piako County tramway at Waiorongomai.

and supplying the trucks and brake gear, and set out ‘to complete the work without delay’.<sup>171</sup> A month later, he was giving ‘universal satisfaction’, reporters commenting on his ‘energetic superintendence’ and his ‘doing all [a] man can do’ to finish it.<sup>172</sup> In July, the council’s tramway committee said the work had given it ‘the highest satisfaction’.<sup>173</sup> When completed, the council voted him a bonus of £100, one councillor, Josiah Clifton Firth,<sup>174</sup> referring to ‘the excellent way in which everything had been carried on’. He was appointed its supervisor for the modest salary of £50, which was topped up by the Battery Company.<sup>175</sup> Being both battery manager and tramway manager plus being paid both by the council and a private company soon lead to criticism. This may have already begun by November, for at a dinner he gave to the tramway and battery employees he replied to a toast by saying that he ‘not only felt assured of the success of the goldfield, but also hoped all minor differences were at an end’.<sup>176</sup>

Adams also designed the ore chute linking the New Find mine with the tramway, having it ‘fitted with false bottoms’ so that worn ones could be replaced.<sup>177</sup> According to a critic, this chute was his idea, erected against the wishes of the company’s engineer ‘and almost everyone else’.<sup>178</sup> A Te Aroha correspondent wrote, in January 1885, that ‘our “would-be-if-I-could,” after running the New Find into something like 7 or £800 for his patent iron shoot, now finds it too expensive for two men to be kept continually playing “My Grandfather’s Clock” on the bottom of said shoot to get the stuff to run’.<sup>179</sup> Clearly a lot of ore got stuck part way down it.

In July 1883, as a prelude to the battery starting, Adams sent five-pound parcels ‘from the principal mines’ to be tested in Wellington.<sup>180</sup> Then came the drama of the first crushing, when Adams, ‘in the most gentlemanly manner possible’, informed journalists that he was instructed

<sup>171</sup> *Waikato Times*, 10 April 1883, p. 2.

<sup>172</sup> *Waikato Times*, 5 May 1883, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 7 July 1883, p. 2, 18 August 1883, p. 2.

<sup>173</sup> *Waikato Times*, 24 July 1883, p. 2.

<sup>174</sup> See paper on the Battery Company.

<sup>175</sup> *Waikato Times*, 11 October 1883, p. 2.

<sup>176</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 10 November 1883, p. 2.

<sup>177</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 14 July 1883, p. 2.

<sup>178</sup> Letter from ‘Justice’, *Te Aroha News*, 31 May 1884, p. 7.

<sup>179</sup> ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 17 January 1885, p. 10.

<sup>180</sup> *Thames Star*, 13 July 1883, p. 3.

that they could not observe it.<sup>181</sup> He claimed that ‘nothing’ had given him ‘greater pleasure’ than ‘giving, as far as my duty will permit it, the fullest information in my power to all representatives of the Press’.<sup>182</sup> The ill feeling created by this secrecy was immediately heightened by the controversy over his squeezing the amalgam in cold water, which many saw as being part of a conspiracy to defraud investors who lacked inside information.<sup>183</sup> Adams denied all the charges, claiming it was a technical decision based on most of the amalgam being lost when Thames tailings were treated with hot water; and he had informed the managers that cold water would be used. Responding to charges of ‘having misled the public, and working the oracle [raising money deviously],<sup>184</sup> etc’, and of ‘gross mismanagement’, he assured his directors that his actions proved ‘the contrary’:

I am charged with working the oracle for certain purposes. I hold at the present time, and have held for some time, 546 Premier scrip, which have been saleable at 18s per scrip. I also purchased two days before the interim retorting a hundred New Find scrip at 14s each. This ought to be quite sufficient evidence that I fully believe in the result of the retorting.<sup>185</sup>

The *Te Aroha News* accepted his explanation, but considered that from his ‘long experience’ he should have known that not announcing the use of cold water would ‘prove highly misleading’. It disapproved of ‘improper motives’ being imputed, but his error of judgment meant that he deserved ‘some of the censure’ that had been ‘heaped upon him during the past week or two’.<sup>186</sup>

#### INVOLVEMENT WITH THE WAIORONGOMAI COMMUNITY

Reflecting his concern for the welfare of his workers, in 1883 Adams was elected to the committee of the Accident Relief Fund.<sup>187</sup> In the same

<sup>181</sup> *Thames Star*, 20 November 1883, p. 2.

<sup>182</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 15 December 1883, p. 3.

<sup>183</sup> See paper on the first crushings at Waiorongomai.

<sup>184</sup> Partridge, p. 1351.

<sup>185</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 15 December 1883, p. 3.

<sup>186</sup> Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 8 December 1883, p. 2.

<sup>187</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 23 June 1883, p. 2.

year he was elected to the committee of the new Te Aroha Jockey Club, to the Te Aroha Licensing Committee (unopposed), and to a committee to watch over the interests of Waiorongomai.<sup>188</sup> In January 1884, he was elected to the Te Aroha School Committee,<sup>189</sup> which provoked the first explicit claims that he was either a member of, or the pawn of, a clique seeking to control the district. According to one resident, Whitaker had arranged for everyone to have a vote so that they would vote for Adams,

as if he had not already more than he can conveniently carry thrust on him. As far as I can make the matter out, Mr Editor, the clique are at work. Mr Adams, they say, has undeservedly got a bad name. We placed him there; the Auckland shareholders are dissatisfied - shares are dull of sale; we must prove at any cost, by any means, that Mr Adams is the right man in the right place, and how can we do so better than by thimble-rigging [a 'sharpening trick' using three thimbles and a pea]<sup>190</sup> him into the first place in the school election? This is how the public are done down.<sup>191</sup>

Judging by the voting figures, the public was willing to be 'done down', for Adams topped the poll with 117 votes, the next successful candidate receiving 75.<sup>192</sup> That he was over-committed was true: it would be noted later in the year that for four months he had not attended committee meetings.<sup>193</sup>

When re-elected to the licensing committee the following year, a newspaper commented that Adams was not of 'the strict temperance school'.<sup>194</sup> This time there was competition: he received 64 votes whereas the man who headed the poll received 73.<sup>195</sup> In February, he was re-elected president of the Te Aroha Miners' Accident Fund, and two months later was elected president of the Waiorongomai Athletic Club.<sup>196</sup> In August, he was voted to the chair at a meeting to form a Waiorongomai Public Hall

<sup>188</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 12 February 1883, p. 2, 16 July 1883, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 22 February 1883, p. 2.

<sup>189</sup> *Waikato Times*, 12 January 1884, p. 2.

<sup>190</sup> Partridge, p. 1219.

<sup>191</sup> Letter from 'Observer', *Te Aroha News*, 2 February 1884, p. 2.

<sup>192</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 2 February 1884, p. 7.

<sup>193</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 29 November 1884, p. 2.

<sup>194</sup> *Waikato Times*, 28 February 1884, p. 3.

<sup>195</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 1 March 1884, p. 2.

<sup>196</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 16 February 1884, p. 2, 26 April 1884, p. 2.

Company, and elected a director; subsequently he became chairman of directors.<sup>197</sup> Three months later, 'Tailings' of Waiorongomai asked whether 'the energetic prime mover, and chairman of directors of the Waiorongomai Public Hall Company, has as yet paid the *first* call ... or signed the deed of transfer as the other directors have done?'<sup>198</sup> By implication, no; but no further criticism was printed. In January 1885, he was elected to the Waiorongomai School Committee.<sup>199</sup> When Kenrick died in 1886, he was on the committee of the memorial fund.<sup>200</sup> Elected to a new Waiorongomai Improvement Committee, he was later appointed to a committee to draw up a petition against the closure of the telegraph office.<sup>201</sup>

In a more social role, Adams was a steward at the Te Aroha Jockey Club meeting in February 1886.<sup>202</sup> In 1888, he was president of the Rinking Club, which arranged roller-skating, but declined to be president of the Waiorongomai Cricket Club because of being too busy.<sup>203</sup>

#### ADAMS AS AN EMPLOYER

In June 1883, he was sued for £23 19s by John O'Neill, a miner, 'for notice and alleged illegal dismissal, and wages due'.<sup>204</sup> O'Neill stated that he had been dismissed after working on the tramway for two months, during which time he had a week off work because of breaking a finger whilst shifting some rails. Adams 'was very kind when he was hurt, and gave him light work that he could do with the injured hand afterwards. He also paid the doctor'. Adams

utterly denied that there was any three months' engagement. He told plaintiff that the job might last three weeks or three months. He paid the doctor's bill whilst plaintiff was hurt, and gave him easy work that he could do with one hand, such as sorting bolts.

<sup>197</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 9 August 1884, p. 2, 15 November 1884, p. 2.

<sup>198</sup> Letter from 'Tailings', *Te Aroha News*, 28 February 1885, p. 2.

<sup>199</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 31 January 1885, p. 2.

<sup>200</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 25 August 1886, p. 2.

<sup>201</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 24 July 1886, p. 3, 11 December 1886, p. 2.

<sup>202</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 6 February 1886, p. 7.

<sup>203</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 5 May 1888, p. 2, 10 October 1888, p. 7.

<sup>204</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, 88/1883, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A.

Plaintiff was discharged because they were reducing hands, and never made any demand for compensation.

Verdict was given for £7 10s 9d, which Adams had paid into court already.<sup>205</sup> In October 1884, ‘Moses Neal, recently employed as horse man on the tramway, wrote a somewhat touching appeal to the Piako County Council’, complaining that Adams

had actually endeavoured to force him to desecrate the Sabbath by asking him to clean his (Mr Adams’) buggy harness on a Sunday morning, and because he would not comply he had been “sacked.” The Council, he thought, might reinstate him. One councillor thought that by complying with the applicant’s request they would not be improving matters, as it was evident that where master and servant were on such unenviable terms they had better sing “Apart.”

The matter was referred to the tramway committee.<sup>206</sup> Adams said that the ‘real facts’ were very different, Neal never being asked to work on Sunday. ‘It was only when requiring to use the harness on a Sunday afternoon, and finding it still uncleansed, although on three different occasions during the previous fortnight, I asked him to get it done, that I discharged him’. The ‘insolent manner in which he told me that he was not there to clean my harness’ combined with Neal’s claim that this was the first time that he had been asked to do this provoked his dismissal.<sup>207</sup> At the next council meeting, Denis Murphy,<sup>208</sup> a supporter of Adams,<sup>209</sup> informed his fellow councillors that Neal had told him that he ‘was very sorry’ for his actions. Neal had ‘admitted he had been wrongly advised and urged to do what he had done by personal enemies of Mr Adams, and regretted very much what had taken place. He further admitted that Mr Adams was fully justified in discharging him’. The chairman expressed pleasure at hearing this explanation, stating that ‘it was evident from the handwriting of Mr Neal’s letter of complaint that he never wrote it’.<sup>210</sup>

<sup>205</sup> Magistrate’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 23 June 1883, p. 2.

<sup>206</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 25 October 1884, p. 2.

<sup>207</sup> *Waikato Times*, 1 November 1884, p. 3.

<sup>208</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>209</sup> See *Te Aroha News*, 11 October 1884, p. 2, advertisement, 8 November 1884, p. 7, 6 February 1886, p. 2.

<sup>210</sup> Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 27 November 1884, p. 2.

The third occasion in which Adams' behaviour as an employer became public was in 1885, when Thomas England sued the Battery Company for wrongful dismissal. The £8 8s sought was four weeks' wages. England stated that, after working on contract until 21 April 1884, he worked in the tailings plant:

Mr Adams promised to find my brother and self work after we had finished our contract. No definite arrangement as to wages was made at the time. I worked up to the 16th March, this year. I understood I would be paid the ordinary wages, viz., 7s per day for 8 hours. No complaint was made about the work done. Reason for leaving - Payday was postponed from Saturday to Monday. On the Monday when Mr [Henry] Buttle,<sup>211</sup> Battery Clerk, had the cheques ready for us, I asked if he had got the money for the overtime, as Mr Adams had asked me to work Mr Buttle's shift whilst he was away. Was told by Adams to work Mr Buttle's shift. My mate, [George] Fugill,<sup>212</sup> also worked in same way. On the Friday before the 16th I spoke to Mr Buttle about the overtime. I gave Mr Buttle my time. Mr Adams came to me and asked, "What about this extra time," and said, "I shan't pay it," and that he expected us to work the twelve hours for the same pay as for eight hours. I replied, "I did not understand that." Well, he said, "I left you to understand it and you understand it from this time." When I asked if the extra time was included in the cheques Mr Buttle said no, and that he could not pay it. I replied I must have it. Mr Adams then turned to my mate Fugill, and asked him if he was of the same mind? He said, "Yes." Mr Adams then said, "Well, I shan't want you any more; make up their accounts, Mr Buttle." I received payment for the extra time on an extra cheque, and signed the receipt for it. Have not seen Mr Adams about it since, but wrote to him; got no reply. There was no cause for my dismissal, excepting my refusing to work 12 hours per day. I received no notice.

<sup>211</sup> Later a stockbroker; see *Te Aroha News*, advertisement, 8 September 1883, p. 3, 5 January 1884, p. 2, 12 July 1884, p. 2, Magistrate's Court, 4 April 1885, p. 7, 6 February 1886, p. 2, advertisement, 15 September 1888, p. 7; 'Voz', 'A Holiday at Te Aroha', *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 May 1886, p. 7; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 1, p. 102, vol. 3, p. 160.

<sup>212</sup> See Waiorongomai Sunday School Admission Book 1884-1889, entry for George Fugill, 1 June 1884, 3050/888, Methodist Archives, Auckland; Probate of George Fugill, Probates, BBAE 1570, 459/27, ANZ-A.

Under cross-examination, England revealed that, as he and his brother, William, had been told by Adams that one of them would have to lose their job because Buttle was to be taken on, William had agreed to leave to save his brother's position. England explained that when employed for a while as a watchman he was paid extra time, and when that job ceased had not claimed he should have received notice. William England stated that, before Buttle was employed, Adams told him, 'I shall want your place or your brother's for Mr Buttle'. When asked for notice, Adams replied, 'That's all the notice you'll get'. William 'left work and made no complaint, so that my brother should not be knocked off'.

George Fugill deposed that he had worked for the company 'since the tailings plant was started. Nothing was said to me as to wages when I was put on. Understood I would receive the ordinary wages'. He said that he and England had been dismissed for refusing in future to work 12 hours for seven shillings. Buttle then gave evidence that, when England asked for overtime, Adams asked him, 'Did he not understand that he would have to work the overtime for ordinary wages'. Adams then gave evidence:

The usual way of employing battery and tailings plant hands is at per day. Have been connected with batteries about 13 years. Never employed, or heard of such a thing as employing battery or tailings plant hands in any capacity at per month. If I don't want men at any time I tell them to go home. Never had a claim for notice served on me until this one.

When English asked for the extra money,

I said did you not understand clearly you were to work any extra time, in Mr Buttle's absence without extra pay. He replied "No," I said, well understand that you will have to do so in the future. Plaintiff said, "It was not good enough," and left. Paid the extra money demanded. I did not dismiss them. Mr W[illiam] T[hornton] Firth<sup>213</sup> was sitting in the office at the time, and said as they went out, "Never mind, there's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it." The first claim made on me for a month's notice was by letter. The amount of extra work they were asked to do might mean two shifts in a month, or equal to about eight and a-half hours a day if spread over the month.

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<sup>213</sup> See *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 August 1889, p. 21; *Te Aroha News*, 26 July 1935, p. 4.

Adams also said that when he recently stopped 30 head of stampers, he ‘discharged the men for the time’, and stated that ‘the men have the same privilege of leaving as I have of knocking them off’. He also claimed not to have dismissed the two men, taking England’s comment, ‘It was not good enough’, to mean that they were ‘dismissing themselves’. His friend John Benney, then a mine manager at Waiorongomai, supported Adams, stating that, when in charge of the Bright Smile battery at Thames, he himself had ‘frequently discharged men. Never gave any notice’. It was ‘usual in batteries to discharge a man at the end of a shift, or any part of a shift, by paying him for that shift. Men have the same liberty to go’.

Kenrick ruled that battery work ‘was irregular and uncertain’, and was convinced that England had been satisfied with the usual terms when taking the job. He

must have been aware of the usual custom at this battery (or in any battery) that men were quite liable to be thrown out of employment when there was lack of work to do. It would be unreasonable to expect battery companies to pay their employees when they had no work for them to do, and they (the companies) were themselves idle.

England was non-suited and required to pay costs of £1 9s. ‘The costs would have been considerably more, were it not that Messrs Adams, Firth and Buttle waived their right to costs and expenses’.<sup>214</sup> (England may have been the painter and glazier who was injured in an accident in Auckland nearly two years later, when aged about 21.)<sup>215</sup>

Adams’ waiving of the right to have his costs paid suggests that he did not bear a grudge. Another example was in February 1884, when James Rollinson, a bushman, was killed. He had, in September 1883, sued Adams for wages before settling out of court.<sup>216</sup> Despite this, Adams offered to pay the funeral expenses.<sup>217</sup>

#### BATTERY SUPERINTENDENT

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<sup>214</sup> Magistrate’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 4 April 1885, p. 7.

<sup>215</sup> *Auckland Star*, 7 January 1887, p. 3.

<sup>216</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, 137/1883, BCDG 11221/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>217</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 2 February 1884, p. 2.

Throughout the 1880s Adams sought to improve the battery, early in 1884 doing an ‘excellent’ job of erecting berdans.<sup>218</sup> When the tailings plant was completed, a correspondent noted that he deserved ‘much praise’ for the ‘skillful manner’ in which he had planned and carried out the construction.<sup>219</sup> There were no criticisms of his management, failure to save much of the gold being recognized as the fault of both machinery and process.<sup>220</sup> There was no more secrecy after the first crushing: in September 1885 a correspondent wrote that the battery was ‘always open for inspection, under the courteous guidance of its manager’.<sup>221</sup>

#### TRAMWAY MANAGER

Adams’ control of the tramway was subject to almost constant criticism. One critic, James Munro, a miner and blacksmith,<sup>222</sup> asked what claim he had ‘to the name of engineer, or even to that of tradesman? Was it his superior qualifications in either respect that entitled him to a gratuity of £100 of the ratepayers’ money?’<sup>223</sup> Adams indeed lacked formal training for all his occupations. One mine manager and director, Edward Kersey Cooper,<sup>224</sup> in criticizing his competence in constructing and running the tramway, claimed his ambitions were inflicting ‘injuries’ on the community:

To be raised from obscurity at a bound and become a battery manager, a controller of the goldfields’ tramway, a dictator of how the mines are to be managed, a member of the licensing

<sup>218</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 9 February 1884, p. 7.

<sup>219</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 19 April 1884, p. 17

<sup>220</sup> For example, George Wilson to Harry Kenrick, 8 April 1884, *AJHR*, 1884, H-9, p. 21; Harry Kenrick to Under-Secretary, Gold Fields, 19 April 1884, *AJHR*, H-9, p. 19; Harry Kenrick to Under-Secretary, Gold Fields, 20 April 1885, *AJHR*, 1885, C-2, p. 29; H.A. Gordon to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 8 June 1889, *AJHR*, 1889, C-2, p. 44.

<sup>221</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 8 September 1885, p. 3.

<sup>222</sup> See *Te Aroha News*, 27 April 1875, p. 3; *Waikato Times*, 6 December 1884, p. 2, 24 February 1885, p. 2, 10 November 1885, p. 2, 1 May 1886, p. 2, Piako County Council, 5 August 1886, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, editorial, 21 July 1888, p. 2, Warden’s Court, 6 February 1889, p. 2, Magistrate’s Court, 15 June 1889, p. 7, 24 July 1889, p. 2, 2 March 1895, p. 2.

<sup>223</sup> Letter from James Munro, *Te Aroha News*, 16 August 1884, p. 2.

<sup>224</sup> See paper on his life.

committee, a member of the school committee, a most active mover in the election of the councillor for the district,<sup>225</sup>

(a reference to Denis Murphy, who had contested a council election against Cooper the previous month),<sup>226</sup> was ‘too much joy; such distinctions heaped on any one, as it were, momentarily’, was ‘enough to make a man form a false opinion of his own capabilities’. Cooper claimed that there had been an attempt to boycott people who voted for candidates not on Adams’ ‘ticket’. It was ‘disgraceful’ for ‘a hotel to be told it will suffer, a storekeeper to be told you will get no more orders, a steam boat company to be told you will get no more freights from a certain party’.<sup>227</sup> This criticism of Adams’ links to the Battery Company ‘clique’ went unanswered.

That Adams had suggested in January 1884 that tenders be sought to work the tramway implied that he was not anxious to continue as its manager.<sup>228</sup> In August, in response to criticisms of the cost of its running and a motion to lease it, he resigned.<sup>229</sup> In a rebuff to his critics, four mine managers reported that it could not be run better or more cheaply and that ‘great credit’ was due to Adams. Two of the managers, Benney and Hugh McLiver,<sup>230</sup> had been friends of his for about 15 years, but that does not invalidate their judgment. Firth supported Adams against his critics, praising his high standards and integrity and claiming he had saved £2,000 in construction costs. The charges against him were ‘merely what the man in the street had said ... and beyond this there was nothing to go upon’.<sup>231</sup>

Despite his resignation being accepted, Adams continued to manage the tramway for the remainder of the year.<sup>232</sup> In December, after deciding to appoint the foreman as manager, councillors accepted Murphy’s suggestion that he be retained as consulting engineer. Murphy ‘felt thoroughly convinced’ that it would be a ‘great mistake’ to overlook Adams’ ‘vast experience’.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>225</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 27 September 1884, p. 7.

<sup>226</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 23 August 1884, p. 2, 30 August 1884, p. 2, 13 September 1884, p. 2.

<sup>227</sup> Letter from E.K. Cooper, *Te Aroha News*, 27 September 1884, p. 7.

<sup>228</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 26 January 1884, p. 2.

<sup>229</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 16 August 1884, p. 2.

<sup>230</sup> See paper on the New Find mine.

<sup>231</sup> Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 19 August 1884, p. 3.

<sup>232</sup> For example, *Waikato Times*, 27 September 1884, p. 3.

<sup>233</sup> Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 18 December 1884, p. 2.

Complaints continued. In January 1885, 'Busybody' asked the *Te Aroha News* 11 questions critical of both Firth and Adams. One asked whether Adams would 'now allow the tramway men to sharpen the tools belonging to the tramway on the Battery Company's grinding stone?'. The editor's reply was more critical of the company than of Adams:

We have heard so, but would wish to give the *late* tramway manager credit for showing a more friendly spirit towards his successor. Still, now that the *grinding* process appears to have become almost a "fine art" at the existing battery, it can hardly be expected that anything coming under that definition should be done gratis.

Asked whether Adams had said he would not allow trucks to be emptied that did not pass under a gauge he would erect, the editor believed this was correct, and could 'give no reason for so sudden a change'. The trucks were filled 'as formerly, and we never heard of the battery manager complaining in the past'. Both questioner and editor considered the county engineer competent to do any work required, thereby doubting the need for a consulting engineer. The editor did not know whether Adams was attempting to purchase the tramway locomotive for £1, nor if his £100 bonus had been paid. Both 'Busybody' and the editor agreed that the tunnel near the base of Butler's Spur was unnecessary and had wasted at least £1,550.<sup>234</sup> At a public meeting in February, James Munro claimed that, out of 50 navvies 'that might be consulted 49 would condemn that monument of incapacity, the tunnel'. Munro also blamed Adams for ordering the unnecessary locomotive, and when it was pointed out that this had been Firth's decision, he responded that 'there appeared to be such an affinity of soul between Messrs Adams and Firth, that you could scarcely tell which was which'.<sup>235</sup> The latter theme was continued by James Mills, a carpenter who would be the first mayor of Te Aroha,<sup>236</sup> who 'had heard it stated that contracts had been let by the chairman of the Tramway Committee', Firth, 'to his servant', Adams, 'who it was stated had made a very decent profit out of same. He could not say of his own knowledge if the report was true or not. If it was true, it was a very serious matter indeed'.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Letter from 'Busybody', with editor's response, *Te Aroha News*, 24 January 1885, p. 7.

<sup>235</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 28 February 1885, p. 2.

<sup>236</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>237</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 28 February 1885, p. 7.

Four months later, at another public meeting Mills was critical of Firth obtaining council approval to construct a track along the base of Buck Rock for the benefit of his mines. He claimed that Firth ‘seemed specially anxious’ for Adams, ‘that great and noted (?) engineer, to have the expenditure of the money’.<sup>238</sup> Unless an editorial insertion, the ‘(?)’ presumably was an attempt by the newspaper to convey his tone of voice. Mills informed the Minister of Mines that ‘much blundering had taken place’ when the tramway was built. ‘The manager of the battery had been entrusted with the work, and competent people said the tramway cost a great deal more than it ought to be in consequence of his inability. It was through Mr Firth’s influence that the manager had been entrusted with the work’,<sup>239</sup> another example of using Adams to attack Firth.

Neither Adams nor Firth deigned to respond. The only public comment by Adams about how the tramway was run by his successor was in a telegram to the council: ‘Would you kindly instruct [Edmund] Cookson<sup>240</sup> to work the tram, the present system greatly humbugging’. The chairman asked for clarification, but received none.<sup>241</sup> After 1885, presumably because he was no longer involved with its running, Adams was no longer criticized for its construction or management.

#### OWNER OF A TIMBER YARD

One criticism implying unfair financial gain by Adams was based on fact. In a second letter, in February 1885, ‘Busy Body’ asked whether Adams had built the trestlework connecting the tramway with the battery, whether it had been authorized by the council, and requested details of the cost. His final question was whether Adams had ‘a private timber yard at any time whilst he was manager for the Piako County Council, or did he supply any timber to the council?’ The editor did not know, and suggested either asking Adams or raising the point at a public meeting.<sup>242</sup> Nothing further was heard about this issue until, early the following year, Murphy sued Adams for £37 11s 4d for milk and butter supplied and for work in a

<sup>238</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 20 June 1885, p. 2.

<sup>239</sup> *Waikato Times*, 28 May 1885, p. 2.

<sup>240</sup> See paper on the Piako County tramway at Waiorongomai.

<sup>241</sup> Piako County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 22 August 1885, p. 2.

<sup>242</sup> Letter from ‘Busy Body’, and editor’s response, *Te Aroha News*, 21 February 1885, p. 7.

timber yard. When called to Adams' office to settle the amount due, £32, Murphy had given Adams credit for the £11 15s owing.

Just as I had done this Adams took the bill and said, the least I could do was to strike out the rest, as he had given me so much work for the Battery Company. I said I could not do this. He has never paid me any money since. I had written my name across the stamp on the bill, and was going to put either "by cash" or "by cheque" for the balance due to me, when defendant took the bill away from me. I have supplied items since; milk and other things.... I charged £12 for minding timber yard.... The timber yard was Adams', but he told me he did not want the County to know that, as he was supplying timber to them, so it was in William Burton's name. I had no agreement with either Burton or Adams that I was to be paid, but I did the work. I measured the timber, kept the books, received and delivered the timber, between 16th Jan. and 6th Oct., 1883. This £12 and £1 for carting two loads of timber to Te Aroha were not in the bill I gave Adams in Dec. 1884, as I thought Burton was to pay this, but he told me afterwards I must look to Adams for it. I have repeatedly asked defendant for it, and written him for it. I told him I would summon him. I sent my son once to ask for the money due. Adams said he would settle on the Saturday following, but he never did. Other carters removed timber from the timber yard for Adams. I had no agreement with him to mind the yard in consideration of cartage that would be given to me.

Adams denied the accuracy of this reported conversation but did not deny owning the yard, and confirmed that Burton was his partner. He was required to pay £25 11s 4d.<sup>243</sup> No comment appeared in the press after this case, which had proved that Murphy, who supported Adams and Firth in the council, benefited financially from their association (if he could get Adams to pay). As well, Adams was supplying timber from his own yard for council work and disguising this fact by not revealing his partnership with Burton, who, as a hotelkeeper in Thames, could have played little if any part in its management. No other records have survived giving any details of Adams' and Burton's timber yard, and work that Murphy did for the Battery Company was privately arranged and unreported in the press.

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<sup>243</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1884-1889, plaint dated 2 February 1886, BCDG 11221/1b; Register of Applications 1885-1892, folios 21-24, BBAV 11505/7c, ANZ-A; Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 6 February 1886, p. 2.

## MINE AND BATTERY MANAGER, AND INVENTOR

With the decline of the goldfield, the Battery Company took control of an increasing number of the mines,<sup>244</sup> appointing Adams its mine manager as well as its battery manager. In November 1885, work re-started in the Premier under his supervision,<sup>245</sup> and in December, presumably on behalf of the Battery Company, he offered to put in a low level in the May Queen ‘on condition that the company gave him the reserved and forfeited scrip’. This offer was declined, and not till early 1887 did the Battery Company take over this mine.<sup>246</sup> Adams also purchased, with McLiver, the Silver King in 1885, probably as a dummy for the Battery Company, for he sold two of his three shares to Firth’s wife and two of Firth’s sons.<sup>247</sup> Adams and McLiver were also shareholders in the Silver Queen.<sup>248</sup> He had to be sued to make him pay calls in the Canadian and Colonist companies,<sup>249</sup> and, like many another investor, may have preferred to forfeit his shares.

Adams continued to be interested in mining elsewhere, inspecting mines at Karangahake with James McCosh Clark, also of the Battery Company,<sup>250</sup> in February 1885.<sup>251</sup> Being a spokesman for the local industry, when the Minister of Mines visited Te Aroha, Adams unsuccessfully requested a good drill for the district.<sup>252</sup> In December, on Kenrick’s suggestion, he was made a local representative on the provisional committee of the Thames School of Mines.<sup>253</sup> He also experimented with ways to improve battery machinery. With Firth’s son Samuel Bateman Firth, he applied for a patent for ‘an Invention for Pulverizing Muller or Drag, with removable Shoe and adjustable Fastener, for use in berdans and other grinding pans, to be called the “Climax Muller Shoe and Fastening”’.

<sup>244</sup> See paper on the Battery Company.

<sup>245</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 2 November 1885, p. 3.

<sup>246</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 5 December 1885, p. 2; *AJHR*, 1887, C-5, p. 29.

<sup>247</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 328, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>248</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Applications 1883-1900, 29, 33/1885, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>249</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 17 May 1884, p. 7, 25 July 1885, p. 7, 1 August 1885, p. 7.

<sup>250</sup> See paper on the Battery Company.

<sup>251</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 17 February 1885, p. 3.

<sup>252</sup> *Waikato Times*, 28 May 1885, p. 2.

<sup>253</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 December 1885, p. 2.

In his application, he gave his occupation as ‘engineer’.<sup>254</sup> This ‘very useful invention’ was used in the battery, being described by a reporter as having ‘effected a great improvement to the drag in the berdans’, making

a considerable saving in the cost of working it. Hitherto, when the shoe of the drag was worn, the whole drag had to be taken out and a new one put in. Mr Adams, however, has made a detached shoe which fits into a groove cut round the centre of the drag. Therefore, when the shoe becomes worn, it is taken off the drag, and is replaced by a new one without the drag itself being changed.<sup>255</sup>

A visiting journalist wrote that Adams was ‘always ready to show the visitor over the workings, and to point out the mode of treatment, &c’,<sup>256</sup> thereby advertising his modifications. However, in that same year Adams revealed that he was not skilled in all aspects of mining. When shown specimens of quartz found at Maungakawa, near Cambridge, he ‘declared the stone to be equal to any found at Te Aroha or on the West Coast’ and was ‘quite willing to thoroughly prospect the locality’ with ‘some experienced miners’.<sup>257</sup> This prospecting did not take place, for either Adams or another miner discovered the negligible value of this stone.

#### TO AMERICA

In August 1886, when riding through the Rotokohu Gorge on the main road between Te Aroha and Paeroa, Adams experienced one of the most common colonial accidents: on a bridge his horse slipped and fell. He suffered a fractured arm and was ‘roughly shaken otherwise, but was able to ride back to Waiorongomai’ for medical assistance.<sup>258</sup> One month later, he was asked by Firth to accompany him to California to check the latest gold-saving machinery ‘with a view to their introduction’.<sup>259</sup> Having inspected all the processes for treating refractory ores, Adams returned in November and immediately supervised the erection of a new ‘testing furnace and assaying

<sup>254</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 8 April 1886, p. 455.

<sup>255</sup> *Waikato Times*, 11 May 1886, p. 2.

<sup>256</sup> ‘Voz’, ‘A Holiday at Te Aroha’, *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 May 1886, p. 7.

<sup>257</sup> *Waikato Times*, 13 March 1886, p. 2.

<sup>258</sup> *Waikato Times*, 12 August 1886, p. 3.

<sup>259</sup> *Waikato Times*, 14 September 1886, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 15 September 1886, p. 2.

laboratory of the most approved style'.<sup>260</sup> At the request of miners and other residents, he agreed to lecture on the treatment of American ores 'and the deductions drawn with reference to the methods principally' used in New Zealand, illustrated by diagrams and his samples of American ore. 'My recent Trip to the Mining Districts of America, and what I saw there', given in the Waiorongomai hall on 16 November,<sup>261</sup> was fully reported in the local newspaper. It quoted him as giving, in his 'own plain and simple way', information he hoped would 'prove both interesting and useful'. After describing his visit to seven plants in Nevada and California, he gave his conclusions about successful treatment of the ores of Waihi, Karangahake, Tui, and Waiorongomai:

First crush, and save all free milling gold by the ordinary battery process, save all tailings and roast them in a calcining furnace, after which they should be ground in either pans or berdans. Were the method of treatment I have just mentioned adopted I feel certain fully eighty-five per cent of all the gold and silver in the stone would be saved. The loss sustained by the mode of treatment at present generally used amongst us is in the form of tellurium; and in order to make tellurium amalgamate fire must be used; at least that is the opinion I have come to. A total cost of treating ore by the method I have just advocated need not exceed twenty shillings per ton. I believe sulphide of silver exists in payable quantities from here to Cape Colville. With respect to our berdans, I may say that I met with no one who appeared to know anything about them....

I would strongly recommend upon the miners of this peninsula to urge upon Government the necessity of constructing a small combination plant at which ores from the various reefs could be tested, and the best method of treating ores proved. Such a plant should include the following machinery: One small wet jacket galena smelter, one small stonebreaker, two stampers, one calcining furnace, and one small chlorination plant. Such a combination plant as the above would enable the best method of treatment for ores in the various districts to be proved.... It is my opinion this district contains vast quantities of both gold and silver in the form of tellurium. I do not believe that we now save more than 70 per cent of all the gold and silver, and the public do not suppose we save so much, but I think we do. I am of opinion that this district is not at present adapted for smelting, through lack of greater railway facilities, by means of which the various ores for fluxing could be brought to one centre at a low rate....

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<sup>260</sup> *Waikato Times*, 16 November 1886, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 27 November 1886, p. 2.

<sup>261</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 4 December 1886, p. 2, 11 December 1886, pp. 2, 7.

The lecture was most interesting throughout and listened to with great attention; and during his delivery Mr Adams simplified matters by frequently referring to a number of plans and diagrams of the various plants he had visited, and samples of ores, tailings, gratings, etc., and kindly volunteered to give any further information asked for.

Munro, previously so critical of Firth and Adams, moved ‘a hearty vote of thanks’ to the former for enabling Adams to visit the United States, and was authorized to convene a public meeting to follow up Adams’ suggestion that the government erect a ‘combination plant’.<sup>262</sup>

#### IMPROVING THE BATTERY

No doubt aware that the government would not provide a plant, Adams immediately began experimenting on ten tons of New Find quartz, treating half by the ordinary process and the other half ‘by the method suggested by him in his recent mining lecture, and calcined’.<sup>263</sup> A reporter who described the improvements to the battery in great detail in July also emphasized the success of the hardened shoe patented by Adams and Sam Firth. He declared he would be ‘guilty of a great omission’ if he ‘failed to state that the admirable plan on which the whole of these reducing works’ were erected under Adams’ ‘personal superintendence’. He also recounted a story about Adams’ response to the £4 charge to convey timber by rail for the framework of the rotary furnace, which was more than half the timber’s cost in Auckland. The drayman, ‘on taking the first half-load of timber from the station was informed that the second lot would not be delivered to him until he paid the £4 odd of freight on the lot’. When told this, Adams ‘quietly filled up a cheque for the amount, making it payable to “Railway Injustice!” It is said that, on the official receiving the cheque, being in a contemplative mood, he said to himself aloud, “Like his cheek,” but Mr Adams thinks that the “cheek” is on the other side’.<sup>264</sup>

Six weeks later, another newspaper, in describing the changes made, wrote that Adams believed his ‘adaption’ would prove ‘most suitable’ when worked in combination with a stamper mill. All the work had been ‘carried out according to the designs and under the supervision of Mr Adams, to

<sup>262</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 18 December 1886, p. 2.

<sup>263</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 1 January 1887, p. 2.

<sup>264</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 30 July 1887, p. 29.

whom the greatest praise' was due 'for the excellent finish of this important addition'.<sup>265</sup> When the revolving furnace, 'the first plant of the kind erected in New Zealand', was set in motion, 'everything worked splendidly from the very start, and without the slightest hitch of any kind, reflecting the greatest credit' on Adams.<sup>266</sup>

Adams also tested samples from discoveries in other districts.<sup>267</sup> In May 1887, after the Battery Company certified that he had been a good battery and mine manager, had built water races, and 'chiefly constructed and completed' the tramway, he was granted a certificate of competence.<sup>268</sup>

### FAMILY LIFE

During these years only very occasional references to his wife and family can be found. In 1884, John and Bert attended the Wesleyan Sunday School;<sup>269</sup> not because they were of that denomination, his children being baptized into the Church of England,<sup>270</sup> but because it provided a Sunday School. The following year, Adams was fined five shillings for not having had Richard Waiorongomai vaccinated within six months of his birth in December 1883. When agreeing to have this done, Adams explained that the child had been 'bad with whooping cough for the last nine months'.<sup>271</sup> Despite this worrying illness, he survived, and no more children died in infancy. In February 1886, Henry Hopper, was born, though when his birth was registered his name had not been chosen.<sup>272</sup> Robert Andrew was born in

<sup>265</sup> *Waikato Times*, 13 September 1887, p. 3.

<sup>266</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 3 September 1887, p. 2.

<sup>267</sup> *Waikato Times*, 12 April 1887, p. 3, 30 August 1887, p. 2.

<sup>268</sup> Mines Department, MD 1, 87/511, ANZ-W.

<sup>269</sup> Waiorongomai Sunday School, Admission Book 1884-1889, entry for 9 March 1884, 3050/888, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

<sup>270</sup> Register of Baptisms, Katikati 1879-1944, nos. 106, 107, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Hamilton.

<sup>271</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 10/1885, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A; Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 21 March 1885, p. 2.

<sup>272</sup> Birth Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams [no name registered], 26 February 1886, 1886/5848, BDM; Henry Hopper Adams, born 26 February 1886, Register of Baptisms, Katikati 1879-1944, no. 106, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Hamilton; Death Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams, 1972/39380, BDM.

April 1888.<sup>273</sup> A daughter, Aroha, was born in August 1889.<sup>274</sup> In January 1889 Richard was being ‘educated at home’,<sup>275</sup> presumably by his mother.

In July 1886, Eliza (referred to, as was normal, as ‘Mrs H.H. Adams’) was mentioned in a newspaper for the first time. At a concert, on behalf of the residents she presented a purse of sovereigns to Margaret Lawless, who, with her husband Thomas, a publican,<sup>276</sup> was leaving the district. Any speech she made went unreported.<sup>277</sup> The following March she supervised the food at the Sunday School Anniversary.<sup>278</sup> Later that year, George Reed, fatally injured in a mining explosion, was ‘put to bed’ at Adams’ house, where he received ‘every kindness and attention possible from Mr and Mrs Adams’.<sup>279</sup> One year later, she was honorary secretary for a Church of England concert, gave a recitation entitled ‘The Spanish Warrior’, and ‘took a very active part in the whole affair’, being ‘deserving of special mention’.<sup>280</sup>

#### WORKING FOR THE TE AROHA SILVER AND GOLD MINING COMPANY

When the Te Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Company was formed by William Robert Wilson early in 1888 to take over the battery and the main mines,<sup>281</sup> the *Te Aroha News* wrote that Adams deserved ‘great credit’ for being ‘largely instrumental in bringing negotiations to such a successful issue’, and hoped that he would be given a public banquet. The desire for some form of recognition

was first expressed by the shareholders in the Silver King claim, who intended privately to show their appreciation of Mr Adams’ successful efforts, but others wished to give honour where honour is due and many are of opinion that the recognition should take a

<sup>273</sup> Birth Certificate of Robert Andrew Adams, 2 April 1888, 1888/13413, BDM.

<sup>274</sup> Birth Certificate of Aroha Adams, 13 August 1889, 1889/12178, BDM.

<sup>275</sup> Waiorongomai Sunday School, Admission Book 1884-1889, entry for 13 January 1889, 3050/888, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

<sup>276</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>277</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 17 July 1886, p. 2.

<sup>278</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 19 March 1887, p. 2.

<sup>279</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 1 October 1887, p. 2.

<sup>280</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 31 October 1888, p. 2, 10 November 1888, p. 2.

<sup>281</sup> See paper on this company.

public form. On a like occasion, though one of much less importance, the admirers of Mr P[eter] Ferguson<sup>282</sup> entertained him at a public banquet. We are not aware that Mr Adams is at all desirous of a similar compliment, but some means ought to be devised to give effect to the wish that has been so generally expressed.<sup>283</sup>

The two settlements were canvassed for subscriptions for a banquet held in the Waiorongomai public hall.<sup>284</sup> It was attended by 120 people, including the members of the county council and representatives from Auckland, Thames, the Waikato, ‘and from all the surrounding districts’.<sup>285</sup> Whitaker was the chairman, and Mills, earlier a leading critic, was vice-chairman. In proposing the toast to ‘The Guest of the evening’, Whitaker said that Adams

was well known to most of those present. It was usual on such occasions to only say nice things of those being toasted, and to speak of them as though they were incapable of doing wrong. Now he did not intend saying he had never met a better man, or to make use of a lot of flattery, but this he could say, he had now known Mr Adams for a number of years, and believed him to be a thoroughly honest and straightforward man. No man could go through life without having his actions unpleasantly discussed, but he felt sure Mr Adams must feel very proud to seeing such a large and representative gathering present that night to do him honour. With respect to Mr Adams he would ask: Could they say he had ever done anything in connection with the position he held that he had not to do in carrying out his instructions? ... In conclusion, he would only add, in the face of so large and representative a gathering their guest must say to himself: How am I held in public estimation? He was glad to see so many come together that night to do honour to the Guest of the evening.

The implication that Adams had made mistakes was presumably a reference to his squeezing amalgam in cold water during the first crushing, the gathering being reminded that he was carrying out the orders of his superiors on this and other occasions. At the end of Whitaker’s speech,

<sup>282</sup> See paper on Peter Ferguson and his New Era.

<sup>283</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 24 March 1888, p. 2.

<sup>284</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 31 March 1888, p. 2.

<sup>285</sup> *Waikato Times*, 14 April 1888, p. 2, 17 April 1888, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 14 April 1888, p. 2.

'three cheers were given for Mr Adams, (all joining in singing, He's a jolly good fellow, etc,) and three more for Mrs Adams and family next'. Adams responded by thanking them 'most sincerely for the manner in which they had drunk his health (and that of Mrs Adams, etc) and was glad to know they appreciated his action in introducing Australian capital into the district'. A large amount of capital was required to develop the mines, and as 'no one system would suffice to treat the ore, a combination of systems would be necessary in order to obtain the best results, so much of the ore being of a very refractory character'. The community owed the Battery Company 'a debt of gratitude' for losing thousands of pounds in developing the mines. The Australians who had taken them over 'had got hold of a good thing, that would yield them good interest for their money, and the result of their coming would be that others would follow'. After describing how, when on the boat returning from the United States, he had interested Wilson in Waiorongomai, he concluded by stating that 'the Coromandel Peninsula was, in his opinion, the backbone of the Auckland province'. Later, when responding to the toast to the new owners, he stated that 'in the new company they had got the men and the money to do the needed work'. After 15 toasts had been drunk, with their attendant speeches and responses, interspersed with songs, 'the meeting broke up shortly before twelve, many remarking it was one of the pleasantest gatherings they had ever attended'.<sup>286</sup>

Adams continued to expect that new capital would mean successful mining. A month later, at a banquet in honour of another miner, Clem Cornes,<sup>287</sup> in response to a toast to the mining industry he predicted that within a few years 10,000 men would occupy the ranges between Karangahake and Te Aroha.<sup>288</sup> This would take five years, according to another version of his speech, and would be assisted by new processes provided by such men as Alexander Parkes, 'a king of inventors'.<sup>289</sup> He claimed that mining 'had been kicked down and kept down, and had not had fair play; and he further regretted to have to say that many of the leading men in Auckland had assisted to both kick it down and keep it down'.<sup>290</sup> Interviewed in October, he stated that Waiorongomai 'would be a goldfield

<sup>286</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 14 April 1888, p. 2.

<sup>287</sup> See paper on Clement Augustus Cornes.

<sup>288</sup> *Waikato Times*, 15 May 1888, p. 3.

<sup>289</sup> For Alexander Parkes, see paper on the Tui district.

<sup>290</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 May 1888, p. 7.

long after our children were dead', because 'the country, when thoroughly prospected', would yield 'steady payable stone'.<sup>291</sup>

In March, when negotiations to purchase the property were almost concluded, Wilson told a reporter that there was 'no intention of removing' Adams as manager.<sup>292</sup> The company's prospectus, issued in April, stated that his reports on the New Find and Silver King mines, which were included, should 'be taken as absolutely truthful in every respect'. Adams was 'in charge of the property as general manager, having declined exactly double the salary he is now receiving to come to Australia, thus showing his belief in the future of the mine'.<sup>293</sup> The *Thames Advertiser* referred to Adams as 'the popular manager'.<sup>294</sup> He assisted John Howell, the American expert brought in by Wilson,<sup>295</sup> in experiments to find the best process, and the battery was reconstructed 'in a very able and systematic manner' under his 'immediate direction and supervision'.<sup>296</sup> 'One novel feature' of his alterations was 'a double Pelton waterwheel (twenty-five horse-power)'.

This is the first *double* Pelton wheel we have ever seen, and was designed by Mr Adams, and made to his order by Messrs Price Bros. The wheel is fitted with governors (very similar in appearance to those that are used on steam engines, etc), which, acting on the nozzle pipe, will regulate the flow of water, and as a matter of course the speed, as required. Mr Adams has introduced this wheel in order that the speed may be as steady and regular as possible for driving the concentrators.<sup>297</sup>

One newspaper commented that, under Adams' 'able management', the reconstruction had 'progressed wonderfully'.<sup>298</sup>

When the new company took over, Adams was appointed as general manager for 12 months as from 24 March.<sup>299</sup> Early in November, there was a rumour that he would resign because the company had appointed an

<sup>291</sup> Special Reporter, *Waikato Times*, 11 October 1888, p. 3.

<sup>292</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 24 March 1888, p. 10.

<sup>293</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 25 April 1888, p. 3.

<sup>294</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 15 August 1888, p. 2.

<sup>295</sup> See paper on Te Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Company.

<sup>296</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 1 September 1888, p. 2; see also *Waikato Times*, 11 October 1888, p. 3.

<sup>297</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 13 October 1888, p. 2.

<sup>298</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 October 1888, p. 37.

<sup>299</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 8 December 1888, p. 2.

expert who would ‘supercede’ him in authority. ‘Though in receipt of a salary of £700 a year, Mr Adams prefers to relinquish his position rather than submit to the indignity’.<sup>300</sup> A Waiorongomai correspondent, in identifying this expert as Howell, commented that whatever Adams’ faults might be, ‘he must be credited with having proved himself to be a man of great energy, perseverance, and undoubted ability’.<sup>301</sup> The *Te Aroha News* learnt of the resignation ‘with regret’, and hoped that it would

not be accepted, and that the misunderstanding that had decided Mr Adams to resign his position will be satisfactorily explained. This district is greatly indebted to Mr Adams for having been instrumental to inducing Mr W.R. Wilson to come amongst us ... and the systematic and skillful manner in which Mr Adams has superintended the erection of the new plant is patent to all observers. His local knowledge, also, generally, should prove invaluable to the new Company. We hope Mr Adams will remain on with the new Company.<sup>302</sup>

His resignation was not withdrawn. The local newspaper understood that Adams would go

to Australia at an early date. Very great credit is due to him for the very able and systematic manner in which he has superintended the company’s new works in course of erection, and it is a matter of regret that one so long and intimately identified with the goldfield should decide to leave it just when its prospects appear so much improved. But there can be no doubt a man of Mr Adams’ ability will find many good openings in a new country, and we wish him every success.

Upon learning that Adams was resigning, McLiver also resigned, intending to accompany him to Australia.<sup>303</sup> At Waiorongomai, according to one correspondent, the general feeling was that Adams ‘acted somewhat impatiently in sending in his resignation, as billets [appointments] of £700 or £1,000 a year are not readily picked up in these times, and are usually well shepherded, even at the risk of having to play second fiddle’.<sup>304</sup>

<sup>300</sup> *Waikato Times*, 8 November 1888, p. 2.

<sup>301</sup> Waiorongomai Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 10 November 1888, p. 2.

<sup>302</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 7 November 1888, p. 2.

<sup>303</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 8 December 1888, p. 2.

<sup>304</sup> Waiorongomai Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 29 November 1888, p. 2.

## MINING AT WAIORONGOMAI ON HIS OWN BEHALF

Adams ceased to be battery superintendent on 1 December 1888.<sup>305</sup> Any intention of going to Australia was soon abandoned. He held very minor interests in Waiorongomai mines, in April having bought the Werahiko No. 2 for himself, not the Battery Company,<sup>306</sup> and being a shareholder in a mine at Stoney Creek, between Te Aroha and Waiorongomai.<sup>307</sup> Interests in his Werahiko, which he had acquired for £2 2s, were sold to Clark, McLiver, and Richard Mitchelson.<sup>308</sup> With Wilson, he owned the Grand Junction, but forfeited it for non-working.<sup>309</sup> He was the manager and an owner along with Firth, Clark, and Wilson of the Alameda, on the flat near Waiorongomai township;<sup>310</sup> it was forfeited for the same reason.<sup>311</sup> His Tower was sold for £20 to the new company.<sup>312</sup> With Sam Firth, he continued to experiment with battery machinery, in January 1889 the two men applying for a patent for 'an improvement in cylinders for rotary ore-roasting furnaces'.<sup>313</sup> Despite a rumour in January 1889 that Adams was to report on all the goldfields of the peninsula for an Auckland syndicate, the only time during that year that he was noted as inspecting mines was in September, when he visited Waitekauri with Howell.<sup>314</sup> Clearly either they had remained on good terms or any tensions had dissipated. He retained some interest in Thames mining, being nominated

<sup>305</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 4 December 1888, p. 2.

<sup>306</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 11 April 1888, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 14 April 1888, p. 2.

<sup>307</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1888, Application for Golden Crown Special Claim, 21 May 1888, BBAV 11582/3a, ANZ-A.

<sup>308</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Certified Instruments 1888, BBAV 11581/9a, ANZ-A; *Thames Star*, 3 May 1888, p. 2.

<sup>309</sup> Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 6 March 1889, p. 2.

<sup>310</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 9 January 1889, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 26 February 1889, p. 3.

<sup>311</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaintiff Book 1880-1898, 31/1889, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>312</sup> H.H. Adams to Te Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Company, 18 February 1889, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1889, BBAV 11289/12a, ANZ-A.

<sup>313</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 24 January 1889, p. 81.

<sup>314</sup> Waiorongomai Correspondent, *Te Aroha News*, 20 January 1889, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 7 September 1889, p. 3.

but not elected as a director of the New Moanataiari Company.<sup>315</sup> There was a false rumour that he had been appointed its mine manager.<sup>316</sup>

Adams remained manager for the Colonist, in January 1889 sending 100 tons to be crushed.<sup>317</sup> In May, he had tailings and slimes tested at the Thames School of Mines, along with Werahiko tailings,<sup>318</sup> and took a 20-ton parcel to be treated by a Thames battery.<sup>319</sup> This latter decision provoked disapproval, not reported in the local newspaper, which for some years had been supportive of Adams, but in the *Waikato Times*, normally supportive also. It recorded that 'dissatisfaction, amounting almost to disgust', was expressed at a meeting of four local Colonist shareholders, who objected to his sending ore to Thames instead of letting the Te Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Company have the 'opportunity to test and purchase it'. Fourteen questions were sent to the directors about the cost, the terms offered, and Adams' 'terms of engagement'. According to the newspaper's correspondent, 'it looked somewhat as if the fat had got on the fire. Although the number of shareholders present was small, a large number of proxies were in their hands, showing that the shareholders at this end desired to be loyal to the place, as they were emphatic in language condemnatory of the action of the manager'.<sup>320</sup> As the returns from the Thames test were 'unsatisfactory', the next parcels were tested locally.<sup>321</sup> By December, as tributaries were working the mine,<sup>322</sup> Adams was no longer needed as manager.

The suspicion that Adams was motivated by spite against the Te Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Company had arisen in February, when McLiver opposed its being granted a water right to Army Creek because residents required the water. The warden and others present at the hearing believed McLiver was trying to obstruct the company, the warden commenting that while he and Adams 'were running the concern a right to this water was granted' but now it was out of their hands they raised objections. Adams immediately obtained permission 'to say a few words':

<sup>315</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 6 December 1888, p. 3.

<sup>316</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 5 January 1889, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 7 January 1889, p. 2.

<sup>317</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 9 January 1889, p. 2.

<sup>318</sup> Thames School of Mines, Assay Book 1887-1889, entry for 5 May 1889, School of Mines Archives, Thames.

<sup>319</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 4 May 1889, p. 4.

<sup>320</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 18 May 1889, p. 2.

<sup>321</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 16 May 1889, p. 2, 27 July 1889, p. 2, 4 December 1889, p. 2.

<sup>322</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 11 December 1889, p. 2.

In your remarks just now, with which you couple my name, might lead the public to suppose I and Mr McLiver were in league to cause obstruction to the big Company. I object to this for such is not the case, in proof of which I may state that it was I who went and told Mr [Henry] Crump [a surveyor]<sup>323</sup> of the right the Company already had to this creek; and previous to my doing so they were not aware they had any such right.<sup>324</sup>

#### FARMER

In May 1886, Adams bought three blocks of land totalling 183 acres,<sup>325</sup> and a month later started to clear and fence his Komata land, near Paeroa, on which he intended to plant a large orchard. ‘This ground being sheltered by a large belt of kahikatea timber’, it was ‘admirably suited for fruit growing purposes’.<sup>326</sup> At this stage his agricultural interests were a minor hobby, most of his time being taken up with battery management. Once that ceased, he could concentrate on his farms. In March 1888, he was sued for the value of 13 cows that he had purchased,<sup>327</sup> and in December he participated in a successful cattle and horse sale at Paeroa.<sup>328</sup> Whilst battery manager, Adams employed others to work his land, as was revealed in April 1889 when he was sued by John Brien for £45 12s 6d, being wages for 140 days work on the Komata farm for 8s a day, less a credit of £11 4s. Adams deposed that, after Brien had worked for six weeks, he told him that he could afford to pay him only 7s. At an adjourned hearing, Adams admitted owing £14 12s 6d, which he was ordered to pay.<sup>329</sup>

#### FLAXMILLER

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<sup>323</sup> See advertisements, *Te Aroha Mail*, 10 June 1882, p. 1, *Te Aroha News*, 9 June 1883, p. 1; ‘Thames Gossip’, *Observer*, 1 September 1894, p. 23.

<sup>324</sup> Warden’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 20 February 1889, p. 2.

<sup>325</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 29 May 1886, p. 2.

<sup>326</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 26 June 1886, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 17 July 1886, p. 2.

<sup>327</sup> Hamilton Magistrate’s Court, Civil Record Book 1884-1888, folio 120, BCDG 11256/2a, ANZ-A.

<sup>328</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 1 December 1888, p. 2.

<sup>329</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Civil Record Book 1884-1889, 46/1889, BCDG 11221/1b, ANZ-A; Magistrate’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 3 April 1889, p. 2, 17 April 1889, p. 2.

In January 1889, Adams paid £500 for Thomas William Carr's house.<sup>330</sup> It had either 16 or 18 rooms, was situated half way between Te Aroha and Waiorongomai on 'about 90 acres of the best land in the district', and the lease had 14 or 15 years to run. 'As the house itself cost about £2,000', Adams had 'got a good bargain'.<sup>331</sup> It had a viney on both sides and hot and cold running water; the land was all fenced and 'more or less' improved.<sup>332</sup> The land court recorded the area as 75 acres.<sup>333</sup> In another account, 'some' of the land was a flax swamp and the house contained 17 rooms. It had 'two fine conservatories, one on the north and another on the south side', and was 'such a residence as one would only expect to see in Remuera, or some equally fashionable suburb of Auckland'.<sup>334</sup>

Immediately after taking possession, at the end of January, Adams started clearing the swamp, taking the flax to the Te Aroha mill.<sup>335</sup> In March, he obtained permission to build a water race from Stoney Creek for a mill.<sup>336</sup> In March he also leased 85 acres in the High School Endowment at Waiorongomai,<sup>337</sup> which probably contained more flax swamp. A tender of £40 was accepted to erect a building near Stoney Creek for his mill.<sup>338</sup> The water race, to drive a Pelton wheel, was completed by May,<sup>339</sup> and machinery was purchased for £26 17s 6d.<sup>340</sup> As his tender of £31 to cut flax along the banks of the Waihou River was the lowest, it was declined in

<sup>330</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>331</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 22 January 1889, p. 3.

<sup>332</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 23 January 1889, p. 2.

<sup>333</sup> Aroha Block 1X, Section 14, H979, Maori Land Court, Hamilton.

<sup>334</sup> Special Reporter, *Waikato Times*, 11 October 1888, p. 3.

<sup>335</sup> *Te Aroha News*, Waiorongomai Correspondent, 20 January 1889, p. 2, 6 February 1889, p. 2.

<sup>336</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1883-1900, 12/1889, BBAV 11505/1a; Application for Water Race, Applications 1889, BBAV 11591/1a, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, Warden's Court, 20 February 1889, p. 2, Warden's Court, 6 March 1889, p. 2, 23 March 1889, p. 2.

<sup>337</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 20 March 1889, p. 7.

<sup>338</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 6 April 1880, p. 2, 10 April 1889, p. 2, 13 April 1889, p. 2.

<sup>339</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 8 May 1889, p. 2.

<sup>340</sup> John Watson to H.H. Adams, 22 May 1899, Letterbook 1888-1889, p. 547, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

favour of one of £104 10s.<sup>341</sup> Using flax from his own land, his mill started in July. A Waiorongomai correspondent was informed that ‘there was a fortune in it, taking at a rough estimate the cost of preparing the flax for market at £10 per ton including freight, Auckland price £20, 3 tons a week, £60; profit £30. Big thing for a local industry. I wish him all the success he deserves’.<sup>342</sup>

In July, the Maori-owned Hori More Block, 300 acres on both sides of the Te Aroha to Waiorongomai road, was acquired by Adams and Thomas Gavin,<sup>343</sup> his neighbour, a fellow mine manager, and also a part-time farmer.<sup>344</sup> Most of the land was fenced, and by August ‘the upper side’ was ‘pretty well covered with flax spread out to dry’.<sup>345</sup> In November, another 300 acres was acquired.<sup>346</sup> In mid-August, when he sent 50 bales to Auckland, he had 25 acres covered with drying flax.<sup>347</sup> His mill worked day and night, using Price Bros’ improved stripper.<sup>348</sup> He received top price for his first lot, being complimented on its ‘very superior quality’.<sup>349</sup> The mill was kept going to ‘its fullest capacity’, and for the remainder of the year large consignments were sent to Auckland.<sup>350</sup> In October, he successfully tendered to cut 400 acres of flax at Ruakaka.<sup>351</sup> Work was disrupted three months later when an accident destroyed the main driving pulley.<sup>352</sup> In April 1890, he took over the contract held by the closed Wairakau flax mill ‘for the supply of raw material’.<sup>353</sup> When a ship was scuttled in Auckland

<sup>341</sup> Piako County Council, Minutes of Meeting of 8 June 1889, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>342</sup> Waiorongomai Correspondent, *Te Aroha News*, 10 July 1889, p. 2.

<sup>343</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>344</sup> Memorandum by C.J. Dearle for J.M. Hickson, n.d. [1894?], Te Aroha Warden’s Court, General Correspondence, undated, BBAV 11584/7f, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, 20 July 1889, p. 2.

<sup>345</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 28 August 1889, p. 2.

<sup>346</sup> Aroha Block 1X Section 14, H797, Maori Land Court, Hamilton; *Waikato Times*, 30 November 1889, p. 2.

<sup>347</sup> *Waikato Times*, 20 August 1889, p. 2.

<sup>348</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 17 August 1889, p. 2.

<sup>349</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 24 August 1889, p. 2.

<sup>350</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 24 August 1889, p. 2, 31 August 1889, p. 2, 16 October 1889, p. 2.

<sup>351</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 30 October 1889, p. 2.

<sup>352</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 29 January 1890, p. 2.

<sup>353</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 19 April 1890, p. 2.

harbour in early 1891, Adams purchased 500 tons of damaged flax, which was re-dressed in this mill.<sup>354</sup> It worked ‘all day and night’, and it was believed that he should make ‘a good profit’.<sup>355</sup>

Richard Mitchelson was Adams’ partner in erecting a flax mill on his land at Komata in December 1889. They ‘secured a small lot of flax at Rotokohu’, near Karangahake, but a local correspondent doubted that there was sufficient to keep their mill going, for there were other mills near Paeroa.<sup>356</sup> This mill was ready to start by early February 1890.<sup>357</sup> In March, he tendered to cut flax on the road and river reserves in the Ohinemuri County; as he had tendered either £80 or £88, and the other tender was for £7 4s, his was ‘eagerly snapped up’.<sup>358</sup> In the same month as he expensively won that contract, there was a ‘serious decline in the price of hemp’.<sup>359</sup> Perhaps this was the reason why he did not reply when asked whether he would take up the contract,<sup>360</sup> but he did start cutting in July. During that month, two strippers were constantly at work.<sup>361</sup> To obtain more flax, he obtained a lease for £20 per annum for the Thames borough endowment, a swamp on the western side of the Waihou River between Te Aroha and Paeroa.<sup>362</sup> In October, Alfred Price, of Price Bros, met him at Komata to work out what was ‘wrong with your wheel’;<sup>363</sup> no other information is available on problems with his machinery.

Coupled with the decline in the flax price, Adams was in financial difficulties with his mining investments at Waiorongomai, as shown below, and was anxious to find new ways of raising money. In July, he ‘made an offer to the Ohinemuri County Council to run a stonebreaker in connection with his mill power, to break metal for them at about sixpence per yard’,<sup>364</sup>

<sup>354</sup> *Waikato Times*, 12 February 1891, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 13 February 1891, p. 3.

<sup>355</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 7 March 1891, p. 6.

<sup>356</sup> Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 5 December 1889, p. 2.

<sup>357</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 1 February 1890, p. 2.

<sup>358</sup> Ohinemuri County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 5 March 1890, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 11 March 1890, p. 2.

<sup>359</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 March 1890, p. 2.

<sup>360</sup> *Te Aroha News*, Ohinemuri County Council, 2 April 1890, p. 2, 14 May 1890, p. 2.

<sup>361</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 July 1890, p. 2.

<sup>362</sup> Thames Borough Council, *Thames Star*, 8 August 1890, p. 4, 19 September 1890, p. 2.

<sup>363</sup> John Watson to H.H. Adams, 29 September 1890, Letterbook 1889-1891, p. 579, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>364</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 July 1890, p. 2.

but nothing came of this. In May 1891 he mortgaged his flax mills to a mining investor for £4,300 at nine per cent interest.<sup>365</sup> In February 1893, he mortgaged his three mills to a Thames lawyer for £1,200 at eight per cent.<sup>366</sup> In May, he bought the Komata water race from Mitchelson and mortgaged it to the same lawyer,<sup>367</sup> to whom in the following January he mortgaged 'flax mills and plant, also assay office, blacksmith's shop and machinery' for £850 at eight per cent interest.<sup>368</sup> These mortgages were paid off in 1894 and 1895.<sup>369</sup>

Adams continued to obtain flax for his Te Aroha mill.<sup>370</sup> By 1893 it had been leased to John Aylward, a young flaxmiller,<sup>371</sup> 'for some considerable time', who turned out flax 'of excellent quality' until October, when Aylward's lease expired and the mill closed. The *Te Aroha News* was told that Adams had 'some idea of running it himself, but this, in the face of the fall in the price of flax to £14' was 'not likely to be true'.<sup>372</sup> He did not work it, telling the Thames Borough Council in May the following year that he could not pay the rent on their endowment 'at present', for he had not received any return. 'I sold the mill about 12 months ago, and the men who bought it were to pay the rent, which they did not do, and I have had the mill thrown on my hands, thus making a loss. Would you kindly give me a few months to pay'. He was granted one month to pay the £40 owing.<sup>373</sup> The last reference to his involvement in flaxmilling was in December 1899, when his 'old flax mill at Komata' was repaired ready to start work, under a new owner.<sup>374</sup>

#### MINE AND BATTERY OWNER

<sup>365</sup> *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette*, 4 June 1891, p. 154.

<sup>366</sup> *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette*, 23 February 1893, p. 55.

<sup>367</sup> Paeroa Warden's Court, Mining Register 1881-1892, folio 88, ZAAP 13296/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>368</sup> *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette*, 22 February 1894, p. 77.

<sup>369</sup> *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette*, 22 February 1894, p. 77, 28 August 1895, p. 467.

<sup>370</sup> County Clerk to H.H. Adams, 6 September 1893, Piako County Council Letterbook 1893-1899, p. 24, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>371</sup> See Birth Certificate of Nathaniel Aylward, 31 July 1893, 1893/10161, BDM; *Te Aroha News*, 1 December 1888, p. 2.

<sup>372</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Advertiser*, 6 October 1893, p. 2.

<sup>373</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 26 May 1894, p. 2.

<sup>374</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 16 December 1899, p. 2.

The decline in the profitability of the flax industry came at the same time as the Te Aroha Silver and Gold Company abandoned Waiorongomai. In December 1890, with ‘another gentleman’, Adams purchased most of the battery and all the company’s mines for £3,500.<sup>375</sup> His partner was Henry Christian Wick, until 1874 Christian Heinrich Wick,<sup>376</sup> a German who had mined in Australia and New Zealand before becoming a battery owner at Thames and Waitekauri and then a farmer at Ohinemuri.<sup>377</sup> Adams had a two-fifths interest and Wick the remainder in their Te Aroha Battery Syndicate.<sup>378</sup> Adams was its manager, and the *Te Aroha News* wrote that his ‘enterprise and perseverance’ deserved ‘the heartiest support and an encouragement from everyone’ to ensure success. He had ‘shown in the past what he is able to do at Waiorongomai, and it is earnestly to be hoped that he may prove eminently successful in his present enterprise’.<sup>379</sup>

The syndicate ‘resolved to make a vigorous start’, and early in January called for tenders to drive on two levels in the New Find, which was expected to require ‘a large number of men’. McLiver, who had joined the syndicate, spoke ‘very hopefully of the prospects’.<sup>380</sup> Tributes were let, and it was announced that they were ‘willing to crush and treat the ore at very low rates, so as to give the tributers every chance of testing the reef’.<sup>381</sup> Men were ‘hard at work’ fixing the battery, and the ‘good number of men’ employed in the mine under McLiver’s management had ‘opened up a splendid leader, carrying good gold’.<sup>382</sup> At the beginning of February, work was ‘steadily progressing’ and ore was being crushed.<sup>383</sup> ‘Thorough prospecting’ was underway, and they were ‘satisfied’ they could ‘make the

<sup>375</sup> *Waikato Times*, 9 December 1890, p. 2.

<sup>376</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 22 October 1874, p. 708.

<sup>377</sup> *Cyclopaedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 442; *Thames Advertiser*, 8 July 1874, p. 2, 6 July 1876, p. 3, 11 August 1876, p. 3, 29 August 1876, p. 2, 23 September 1879, p. 3, Ohinemuri County Council, 13 August 1887, p. 2; Ohinemuri County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 18 April 1888, p. 2.

<sup>378</sup> H.C. Wick, memorandum of 16 February 1891, Hesketh and Richmond Papers, Box 136, MS 440, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>379</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Waikato Times*, 20 December 1890, p. 2.

<sup>380</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 8 January 1891, p. 2; see tenders called on p. 3.

<sup>381</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 24 January 1891, p. 21.

<sup>382</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 24 January 1891, p. 3.

<sup>383</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 5 February 1891, p. 2.

mines pay'.<sup>384</sup> But because of a difficulty over transferring control of the tramway to Adams, he ordered McLiver to discharge all the miners, about 30. McLiver hoped the stoppage would be brief, and in the meantime crushing continued on 'some good stone' recently extracted.<sup>385</sup> Later in February, a correspondent understood that 'a split in the camp' meant the mines remained closed because 'one or two in the syndicate' were 'not feeling disposed to work the mines further at present'. There were 'all sorts of rumours being circulated about the cause', but 'nothing definite' was known.<sup>386</sup> One rumour was the possibility of selling the property: in early January it was believed that Thomas Henry Russell, of the Waihi Company,<sup>387</sup> had offered £3,500, but the syndicate was 'holding for a rise'.<sup>388</sup> If there was any truth in this rumour, nothing came of this plan.

One reason for the sudden closing of the mines was the break-up of the original syndicate. On 16 February, Wick agreed to sell his three-fifths interest to McLiver for £1,720, who paid a deposit of £50 five days later,<sup>389</sup> and engaged three separate lawyers to prepare the necessary deeds. Wick believed this was 'a ruse' to gain time, and decided to have nothing further to do with him and to cancel the contract.<sup>390</sup> Not till April did McLiver tell Wick 'that the agreement was off and that he would not complete'.<sup>391</sup> At the end of February a brief report was published: 'Te Aroha Syndicate dissolving partnership. Highland blood roused'.<sup>392</sup> The meaning of this cryptic comment became clearer when McLiver sued Adams for £68 17s 6d, comprising wages and expenses, mostly relating to his assistance with the Te Aroha flax mill. Concerning the expenses, Adams' solicitor successfully argued that there was 'a dispute as to partnership accounts, and therefore

<sup>384</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 14 February 1891, p. 15.

<sup>385</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 12 February 1891, p. 2; *Te Aroha Correspondent, Thames Advertiser*, 12 February 1891, p. 2.

<sup>386</sup> *Te Aroha Correspondent, New Zealand Herald*, 25 February 1891, p. 6.

<sup>387</sup> See paper on Billy Nicholl.

<sup>388</sup> Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 10 January 1891, p. 2.

<sup>389</sup> H.C. Wick, memoranda of 16 February 1891, 21 February 1891, Hesketh and Richmond Papers, Box 136, MS 440, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>390</sup> James A. Miller to Hesketh and Richmond, 11 March 1891, Hesketh and Richmond Papers, Box 136, MS 440, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>391</sup> Devore and Cooper to Hesketh and Richmond, 7 April 1891, Hesketh and Richmond Papers, Box 136, MS 440, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>392</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 28 February 1891, p. 15.

the Court had no jurisdiction'. Both sides were willing to leave the question of how much McLiver was owed 'to be settled from the books' that had been kept by Richard Mitchelson, which resulted in his receiving £30 1s 6d.<sup>393</sup> McLiver ceased to have any further involvement either with the syndicate or with Adams; the cause of their falling-out is not known.

A correspondent in early March wrote that 'the mining trouble' was 'still in a very unsettled state', without providing any explanation.<sup>394</sup> Mining ceased for two months while the syndicate resolved its internal difficulties.<sup>395</sup> Officially, the shutdown was caused by the tramway not being transferred to them, but 'Obadiah' suspected that a 'leading wind' was the cause.<sup>396</sup> This obscure phrase referred to Adams' purchase of flax from a sunken ship named 'Leading Wind',<sup>397</sup> and hinted at differences between the partners; in addition, there were financial arrangements to resolve. Adams did not have the capital needed to purchase the mining property, and had to mortgage 'machinery, &c', to the Te Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Company on 11 December 1890 for £1,700, at six per cent interest.<sup>398</sup> A mortgage on the property dated 26 January had been arranged by Adams, but 'default having been made in payment of certain of the moneys', all the plant and mining leases were advertised for sale by auction, 'by order of the mortgagees', on 6 April.<sup>399</sup> The *Waikato Times* was puzzled, as 'it was generally supposed' that Adams had bought this property 'some time ago'.<sup>400</sup> At the auction, Wick bought it for £2,350.<sup>401</sup> On 25 May, Adams purchased it from him for a notional £100, and on the same day mortgaged it to him for £4,300, with interest at nine per cent.<sup>402</sup> His flax

<sup>393</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1884-1889, 13, 14/1891, BCDG 11221/1b, ANZ-A.

<sup>394</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 7 March 1891, p. 6.

<sup>395</sup> *Thames Star*, 20 April 1891, p. 2.

<sup>396</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 21 February 1891, p. 18.

<sup>397</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 7 March 1891, p. 6.

<sup>398</sup> *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette*, 24 December 1890, p. 402.

<sup>399</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Assignments 1891, Mortgage dated 26 January 1891, BBAV 11581/12a, ANZ-A; Magistrate's Court, *Thames Star*, 16 April 1891, p. 2; advertisement, *New Zealand Herald*, 6 April 1891, p. 8.

<sup>400</sup> *Waikato Times*, 31 March 1891, p. 2.

<sup>401</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 7 April 1891, p. 2.

<sup>402</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Assignment dated 25 May 1891, Assignments 1891, BBAV 11581/12a, ANZ-A; Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 4 February 1892, p. 2.

mills were also mortgaged to Wick on the same conditions.<sup>403</sup> Adams then formed a 'local company or syndicate';<sup>404</sup> its membership comprised Adams, Richard and Edwin Mitchelson, and Edwin's wife Sarah.<sup>405</sup> 'Obadiah' commented that at Te Aroha

the Radical System of One Man One Mine is now in thorough working operation. Harry is now sole owner and occupier. Having been in the district from the opening, and having been manager for all the syndicates, he ought to know the run, dip, and strike of every reef. At the same time, it strikes me that he has a larger contract on hand than when he drew a screw. £500 a year after paying all expenses is not a bad property, friend Harry.<sup>406</sup>

Reports implied that Adams personally prospected his claims. In May he announced having found gold as good as any yet found at Waiorongomai in a four-foot reef in the Diamond Gully portion of the New Find, which had been traced for 60 feet, showing gold all the way.<sup>407</sup> In 1893, he was elected to a committee of the new Waiorongomai Prospecting Association that was to draw up a scheme of prospecting (towards the cost of which he contributed £10),<sup>408</sup> indicating that he was believed to know suitable areas to prospect.

At the start of 1891, 'several tributes' were let 'on several parts of the property'. The syndicate was 'willing to crush and treat the ore at very low rates, so as to give the tributers every chance of testing the reefs and working them profitably'.<sup>409</sup> At a public meeting held in May to consider the 'unsatisfactory state of mining', at the request of the chairman Adams explained 'the present state of the field and tramway. In regard to the large areas of ground locked up, he stated that if anyone wanted ground and applied to him, he would transfer any portion of the mines except the New

<sup>403</sup> *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette*, 4 June 1891, p. 154.

<sup>404</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 8 June 1893, *AJHR*, 1893, C-3, p. 72.

<sup>405</sup> Piako County Council, Letterbook 1893-1899, p. 91, letter dated 8 December 1893, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha; John Watson to Edwin Mitchelson, 20 April 1893, Letterbook 1891-1893, p. 628, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames; Edwin Mitchelson to Minister of Mines, 4 July 1895, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/816, ANZ-W.

<sup>406</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 25 July 1891, p. 7.

<sup>407</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 25 May 1891, p. 4.

<sup>408</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 January 1893, p. 18.

<sup>409</sup> Own Reporter, 'A Tour of the Goldfields', *New Zealand Herald*, 17 January 1891, p. 6.

Find and Silver King, for the asking'.<sup>410</sup> There were no applications. Having decided to give up 'the larger portion' of the ground, retaining only what he intended to work,<sup>411</sup> in July he abandoned all his claims apart from the Werahiko, Silver King, Warrior, and New Find.<sup>412</sup> Giving up this ground gave 'great satisfaction', as many men wanted to go prospecting.<sup>413</sup>

Some encouraging discoveries continued to entice Adams, and others. At the end of June, the local newspaper sent a reporter to check on a report of 'a rich find having been discovered at the old Hero claim'. Adams told him

that an entirely new reef, which had never been touched before, had been discovered some 60ft in height, from which samples of the stone had been taken. These were shown to our reporter, and were undoubtedly very rich specimens, gold being very freely seen throughout the stone. These were taken from the surface of the reef, and if the same kind of stone is found to any depth it will prove a very valuable discovery, both to its owner and the district.

Adams intended to bring down several truckloads for testing. 'Those who have seen the stone, men who are fully able to speak as to its character, assured our reporter that it was the richest that has ever yet been found in the district'. Adams had a specimen 'about a foot and a half square, and gold could be seen freely all over it. The find has caused considerable sensation, and the result of the crushing will be awaited with great interest'.<sup>414</sup>

He obtained 12 ounces from ten truckloads taken from this find; when the tailings were treated he expected to get one and a half ounces to the truck. The battery worked '20 head of stamps by day shift on this ore', which was 'easily obtainable'.<sup>415</sup> Late in the month he took about 80lb of stone from the 'new reef recently opened' to Auckland and displayed it in a company secretary's office. The stone resembled 'surface quartz' and was taken from a reef that varied in width from two to ten feet and contained 'nice streaks of gold in the blue veins' permeating the quartz. The 'show'

<sup>410</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 6 May 1891, p. 6.

<sup>411</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 27 May 1891, p. 2.

<sup>412</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1883-1900, 9-11/1891, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>413</sup> Waiorongomai Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 30 May 1891, p. 2.

<sup>414</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 27 June 1891, reprinted in *Thames Star*, 29 June 1891, p. 2.

<sup>415</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 6 July 1891, p. 2.

was ‘decidedly encouraging so far’.<sup>416</sup> The *Thames Advertiser* wrote that Adams seemed likely to ‘cause a revival in mining’.

Since his discovery of the Hero Reef, which he found cropping out on the hillside, he has had men continually employed in blasting out the face, and we understand that the stone, quarried, on being put through the mill, shapes for a good payable return.... This is encouraging news indeed, not only for Mr Adams, who has expended a good deal of money in the concern, but to the whole district.

Adams started to stope out the lode where unpayable work had stopped in previous years. He also started driving on the reef to get underneath where the best gold had been discovered recently, and was ‘sparing nothing to infuse new energy into the district’. The newspaper considered he was ‘well deserving of the success’ which seemed ‘to be within his grasp’.<sup>417</sup> His arrival in Auckland after this new outcrop was found was described by ‘Obadiah’: ‘The owner of the Te Aroha Quartz Crushing and Bullion Producing Company (to be registered) has arrived from his headquarters, and brought a sackful of his rock with him, to show that the district has not yet suffered out. He says the old Hero will pay, if the New Era don’t’.<sup>418</sup> These samples were taken to Auckland to interest potential investors. During the latter part of 1891, encouraging reports were published, as in early August: he had obtained 113oz 5dwt from one month’s crushing, ‘which, considering the temporary stoppage of the tramway’, was ‘very satisfactory’.<sup>419</sup> At the beginning of September, because he was doing so well William Burton engaged eight more Thames miners to work for him.<sup>420</sup> The *Te Aroha News* reported that the battery had been working two shifts daily for the past three weeks, mostly on Hero ore.

We were shown the stone which is being treated from the Hero mine, and good gold was showing in every piece which we saw. Mr Adams says that he is certain it will go over 1oz to the truck. There are now 20 men in all that work for Mr Adams, including four on the tramway, and so satisfied is he with his prospects that

<sup>416</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 29 July 1891, p. 6.

<sup>417</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 30 July 1891, p. 2.

<sup>418</sup> ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 1 August 1891, p. 7.

<sup>419</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 10 August 1891, p. 2.

<sup>420</sup> *Thames Star*, 4 September 1891, p. 2.

he telegraphed yesterday to the Thames for ten more experienced miners so as to double the amount of work he has doing. He has 34 berdans treating the old tailings, of which there are some 5000 tons.<sup>421</sup>

Late in September, 'Obadiah' wrote that 'Adam with the "S" seems to be making things pay, as he has staked his last dollar on the concern'.<sup>422</sup>

As an additional way of getting a higher return on his personal investment, Adams wrote in 1891 (from the 'Superintendent's Office, Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Syndicate') to Edwin Mitchelson, now on the Opposition benches, to ask whether the government would give a bonus for the production of regulus. (Regulus was the 'purer or metallic part of mineral separated by sinking to bottom in crucible, impure metallic product of smelting various ores'.)<sup>423</sup> In a letter whose spelling revealed his limited education, he explained that this was produced by smelting 'rebelious ores. The regulass would retain all the coper gold and silver in the ore and has a ready sale in London.... I have the nessary furnices to preduce the regulass'.<sup>424</sup> Henry Andrew Gordon, the Inspecting Engineer for the Mines Department, told his minister that 'it might be advantageous to the colony to encourage the production of regulus, as it is a step towards dealing successfully with refractory ores. A bonus of £500 might be offered for the production of the first 1000 tons'.<sup>425</sup> When Cabinet considered this suggestion, it decided to take 'no action'.<sup>426</sup>

When Adams took over the battery, he immediately made alterations for treating low-grade ores profitably. ' "The Boss" or continuous grinding plant will be worked on tailings, of which there is a very large quantity of hand'. The plant 'never worked satisfactorily under the late management, although it has proved a success in many parts of America, and it is hoped that the new method about to be adopted' would 'make it as successful here'.

<sup>421</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Advertiser*, 8 September 1891, p. 2; see also 14 September 1891, p. 2, 12 December 1892, p. 2.

<sup>422</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 26 September 1891, p. 7.

<sup>423</sup> *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 5 ed., p. 1045.

<sup>424</sup> H.H. Adams to Edwin Mitchelson, 24 August 1891, Mines Department, MD 1, 91/840, ANZ-W.

<sup>425</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 4 September 1891, Mines Department, MD 1, 91/840, ANZ-W.

<sup>426</sup> Memorandum of 26 September 1891, Mines Department, MD 1, 91/840, ANZ-W.

A ‘good deal of the plant, including the vanners and concentrators’, was ‘being dismantled for removal to Ballarat’,<sup>427</sup> a reference to machinery not included in the sale to Adams.<sup>428</sup> In May 1892, after criticism of unsatisfactory treatment, Adams ordered finer gratings fitted.<sup>429</sup> Five months later, he was making ‘active preparations’ to convert the plant to the cyanide process, ‘and as soon as the various parcels of quartz now being operated on are completed the work will commence’.<sup>430</sup> The modified battery contained one rock breaker, 20 stamps, two mortars, four retorts, and a furnace for gold smelting and another for silver smelting.<sup>431</sup> There had been either 30 or 34 berdans, but these had been removed and sold,<sup>432</sup> not being needed for the new cyanide process. By late June 1893 the kiln for the dry process was completed and ready to ‘be charged and fired’ to treat ore.<sup>433</sup>

James Napier,<sup>434</sup> appointed to operate the battery in 1890,<sup>435</sup> remained after Adams purchased it, and in the first half of 1891 reportedly had considerable success in treating the complex ores of Waiorongomai and other fields.<sup>436</sup> Stone that formerly would have been ‘thrown over the tip, or used to fill in the stopes’, could now be treated for ‘a good margin’, a local correspondent understood; he hoped Adams would ‘be remunerated handsomely for his enterprise’.<sup>437</sup> Napier’s skills would have been of great value to Adams, but in July 1891 he was appointed metallurgical chemist to the Waihi Company.<sup>438</sup> However, he did return a year later ‘to start experimental assay operations’ using cyanide.<sup>439</sup> How long he remained is not known, but by December he was in Thames preparing to erect an

<sup>427</sup> Own Reporter, ‘A Tour of the Goldfields’, *New Zealand Herald*, 17 January 1891, p. 6.

<sup>428</sup> *Thames Star*, 4 December 1890, p. 2.

<sup>429</sup> *Thames Star*, 30 May 1892, p. 4.

<sup>430</sup> *Thames Star*, 13 October 1892, p. 4.

<sup>431</sup> *AJHR*, 1893, C-3, p. 75.

<sup>432</sup> *AJHR*, 1892, C-3, p. 49; C-3A, p. 62; *AJHR*, 1893, C-3, Appendix 1, p. xv.

<sup>433</sup> *Thames Star*, 22 June 1893, p. 2.

<sup>434</sup> See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 492-493.

<sup>435</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 13 March 1890, p. 2.

<sup>436</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, Waiorongomai Correspondent, 27 May 1891, p. 2, 1 June 1891, p. 2, 10 July 1891, p. 2.

<sup>437</sup> Waiorongomai Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 30 May 1891, p. 2.

<sup>438</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 27 July 1891, p. 2.

<sup>439</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 7 July 1892, p. 2.

experimental cyanide plant there.<sup>440</sup> It was later stated that he was employed by Adams to work the cyanide plant during 1893.<sup>441</sup>

After 1891, details on Adams' first experience of being a mine owner have been lost owing to the destruction of the local newspaper and because other newspapers rarely reported his activities. In February 1892, his receiving a mine manager's service certificate was gazetted.<sup>442</sup> By the end of March, the only portions of his 26 acres 2 roods and 32 perches being worked were the New Find and Warrior (formerly Colonist) mines. Employing an average of ten men, by this date he had obtained 333oz 8dwt from 640 tons.<sup>443</sup> He had treated 1,125 tons of tailings, producing 308oz 5dwt; the value of the gold sold was given as £3.<sup>444</sup> At the end of May, the *Te Aroha News* reported complaints about the state of the battery. 'We understand that Mr Adams, or his manager, after completing a crushing of refuse, etc, lying about the battery, in which were various scraps of zinc, iron, nails, lead, &c, did not clean out the stamper boxes (as is done in other batteries) before going on with another crushing'. Consequently, a party of miners got a very poor result because their ore was treated in dirty boxes. Adams briefly returned from erecting a battery for the Owera Company at Cabbage Bay [now Colville] before going back to run it for its first week of operating, leaving instructions 'to have the stamper boxes cleaned out at once' and ordering fine gratings to prevent fine gold ending up in the tailings.<sup>445</sup> In early July, quartz that had been burnt in the kiln was being treated. 'The whole of the first kiln has gone through the stonebreaker, and will probably be all treated before another kiln is ready to draw, as there are only as yet 10 truck loads of quartz ready for the second filling'. Until the next batch was treated, the battery was closed. 'All the men working on the hill have been discharged, pending the result of the treatment of the first kiln of ore', apart from John Benney, who was sampling the New Find reef. One member of his syndicate, Richard Mitchelson, arrived to observe the treatment.<sup>446</sup> Later in July, he announced increased battery charges, and that those providing quartz would now have to pay for the mercury lost

<sup>440</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 20 December 1892, p. 2.

<sup>441</sup> *New Zealand Mining Handbook*, ed. Percy Galvin (Wellington, 1906), p. 27.

<sup>442</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 11 February 1892, p. 298.

<sup>443</sup> *AJHR*, 1892, C-3A, p. 15.

<sup>444</sup> *AJHR*, 1892, C-3, p. 48.

<sup>445</sup> *Thames Star*, 30 May 1892, p. 4.

<sup>446</sup> *Thames Star*, 10 July 1893, p. 2.

during treatment.<sup>447</sup> At the end of the month, the battery was ‘only working about half-time’, and all the miners were dismissed for what was expected to be about a fortnight, ‘probably’ because eight or nine men could ‘break more dirt than the battery can treat, as they cannot crush by the dry process more than half the amount they can by the wet, and then again there is the delay in percolation’. Because of ‘the extreme fineness of the dry crushed ore’, it would not ‘percolate freely, and in consequence they are mixing some of the coarser tailings with it’.<sup>448</sup>

In August, his mines received four months’ protection.<sup>449</sup> In that month, he forfeited an extension to the Wairakau water race because it was not being constructed ‘with all reasonable diligence’.<sup>450</sup> In late 1892, Adams obtained ‘rich ore from a small vein’ in the New Find, ‘picked assays from which have given up as high as 800oz of bullion, equal to £224 a ton’;<sup>451</sup> another false dawn. In December, ‘ten miners arrived from Thames and elsewhere to work for the Syndicate’, and were put to work in the old Hero and the ‘silver lode’ in the New Find, while another two men were breaking out ore in the Silver King.<sup>452</sup> He sent eight and a half tons of tailings to the Maryborough Smelting Works in Queensland, receiving a return of £5 15s a ton on tailings previously seen as valueless, making a profit of £48 17s 6d despite paying £3 5s a ton for treatment.<sup>453</sup> Gordon commented that, ‘after deducting all expenses in connection with the transit and smelting, it would not leave sufficient to work the lodes at a profit’.<sup>454</sup>

In his report on the year to 31 March 1893, Gordon wrote Adams was only working the Silver King and New Find mines; clearly the profitable section of the Hero lode in the Warrior had been worked out. Eighteen men were working in the New Find, taking out payable ore on each side of the original stope. Four men in the Silver King were ‘getting some very fair ore,

<sup>447</sup> *Thames Star*, 25 July 1892, p. 2.

<sup>448</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 31 July 1893, p. 3.

<sup>449</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Applications 1883-1900, 17/1892, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>450</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Notice of Forfeiture dated 30 August 1892, Applications 1892, BBAV 11582/3a, ANZ-A.

<sup>451</sup> *Thames Star*, 5 December 1892, p. 4.

<sup>452</sup> *Thames Star*, 15 December 1892, p. 4.

<sup>453</sup> *AJHR*, 1893, C-2, p. 6; see also *Thames Advertiser*, 17 July 1893, p. 2.

<sup>454</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 24 July 1894, *AJHR*, 1894, C-3, p. 48.

containing about 1oz of gold and 20oz of silver'.<sup>455</sup> 853 tons had been crushed for 540oz, and 1,650 tons of tailings treated for 297oz 14dwt.<sup>456</sup> From 260 trucks treated in the four weeks ending 15 April, 374oz bullion was obtained, with a value of £390 2s.<sup>457</sup> As the payable ore was soon extracted, by July only eight to ten men were working in the New Find and the Silver King had been abandoned.<sup>458</sup>

In early February 1894, Adams was crushing 'a large quantity of quartz from the Diamond Gully section of his property', for a payable return. Four men were 'employed on the reef in order to open up a block of ground for stoping'.<sup>459</sup> Gordon's report for the year to 31 March 1894 described Adams' success as 'not ... very great'. He was 'carrying on from year to year with the hope that another rich patch of auriferous ore will be struck, which will repay him yet for all his labour'. In December 1893, he had found an apparently payable run on stone in the No. 2 reef in the New Find but with only 30 feet of backs. He felt 'confident of finding another shot of gold-bearing stone if he had the means to prospect the ground'.<sup>460</sup> From his two mines, 1,284 tons had been crushed and 592 tons of tailings treated for a total of 2,001 ounces of bullion.<sup>461</sup>

In March 1894, a correspondent reported that Adams wanted a company formed to take over his battery; he was 'willing to give exceptionally good terms in the sale of the plant, and the figure mentioned', but unstated, was 'considered very reasonable'.<sup>462</sup> There were no takers. In May he continued 'to deal with the large stock of tailings', and the following month had 'a number of miners at work', expecting 'shortly to have a considerable output of payable ore'.<sup>463</sup> He decided to spend about £260 in rising 150 feet in the New Find, which would 'keep a few men employed for the next few months'.<sup>464</sup> As so often he was 'very sanguine of getting good

<sup>455</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 8 June 1893, *AJHR*, 1893, C-3, pp. 71-72.

<sup>456</sup> *AJHR*, 1893, C-3, Appendix 1, p. xv.

<sup>457</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 24 April 1893, p. 2.

<sup>458</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 17 July 1893, p. 2.

<sup>459</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 8 February 1894, p. 3.

<sup>460</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 24 July 1894, *AJHR*, 1894, C-3, p. 47-48.

<sup>461</sup> *AJHR*, 1894, C-3A, p. 13.

<sup>462</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 7 March 1894, p. 6.

<sup>463</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 18 May 1894, Supplement, p. 2, 16 June 1894, Supplement, p. 2.

<sup>464</sup> *Thames Star*, 31 May 1894, p. 4.

gold out of the rise, which will be commenced as soon as the drive is cleared of fallen earth'.<sup>465</sup>

## CYANIDE

Adams was the first man to use cyanide to treat Waiorongomai ore. Writing in 1911, John McCombie explained Adams' role in experimenting with the new method:

As depth was attained in the mines the ore became more refractory, resulting in a high percentage of soluble sulphates being formed in the drying furnaces or kilns, and the consumption of cyanide became a serious item in the cost of treatment. Then mill after mill went in for wet crushing, and the first man to give the new departure a practical test, with 20 stamps, was H.H. Adams, at Waiorongomai.<sup>466</sup>

In mid-July 1892, Napier had commenced 'testing the tailings by the Cassel process'. Shortly before, when the attorney for the Cassel Company was in Te Aroha he told the local newspaper 'that this would be the first thing' that Napier would try, 'and if the result was satisfactory, it was possible that a plant would be put up to treat the large deposit of tailings belonging to Mr Adams near the battery'.<sup>467</sup> Napier also tested ore from Thames and Kuaotunu.<sup>468</sup> In mid-September, the *Te Aroha News* reported that 'for some time' Adams had been considering using cyanide, and had successfully concluded negotiations with the Auckland agent of the Cassel Company. On 19 September, he would 'commence to erect and make the necessary alterations in the battery' and would 'put on twenty head of stampers. We trust that his enterprise will be rewarded by the success it deserves, and which is so greatly needed to give us all a little encouragement'.<sup>469</sup> The new process was expected to be cheaper and more effective.<sup>470</sup> Adams announced that from the end of September he would not

<sup>465</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 7 June 1894, p. 4.

<sup>466</sup> John McCombie, 'Beginnings of Cyanidation', *Mining Magazine*, vol. 5 (June 1911), p. 456.

<sup>467</sup> *Thames Star*, 18 July 1892, p. 4.

<sup>468</sup> *Thames Star*, 15 September 1892, p. 2.

<sup>469</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 20 September 1892, p. 4.

<sup>470</sup> *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 24 September 1892, p. 5.

accept any ore for treatment by the old method but instead would treat it with cyanide, ‘paying them the assay value less expenses’.<sup>471</sup> By early October, ‘active preparations’ for the conversion were being made, and construction of the timber tanks had begun. ‘An aerial tram has been constructed from the tailing heap to the large hopper for the conveyance of tailings to be passed through the stampers before being treated by the leaching process’. Adams estimated he had ‘about 4000 tons’ of tailings on hand.<sup>472</sup> By early December the cyanide plant was ready to be used. It was ‘a very complete’ plant, ‘the materials and workmanship being of the very best, and every arrangement provided for giving the process a thorough test’.<sup>473</sup> The first treatment was in early December, on Silver King ore.<sup>474</sup> The *Te Aroha News* reported that ‘everything’ appeared to be ‘in good working order’ and that the result was ‘anxiously looked forward to’, as on the success of Adams’ experiment depended ‘in a large measure the prosperity of the field’.<sup>475</sup> There was one doubter, the county engineer, who believed that the process ‘would cause some of the miners to be considerable losers’;<sup>476</sup> the reason for this view was not given.

In a report written in June 1893, Gordon described the changes in some detail. Nine cyanide leaching vats, four solution tanks, and zinc precipitating boxes had been constructed. Apparently on his own initiative and without assistance, Adams had experimented with the process and made modifications:

The ore as it comes from the mine is dumped on to a grizzly, and what will not pass through the bars of the grizzly goes into a rock-breaker, and is reduced to a maximum of 2in in diameter, when it falls into a hopper which feeds four Challenge ore-feeders. The screens used are made of charcoal-iron, and punched, but the holes are as fine as a 40-mesh grating. The pulverised material on coming through the gratings flows over copper-plates coated with mercury for a distance of 4ft, and then flows into vats, which are used for leaching with a solution of cyanide of potassium, each vat being 10ft by 10ft by 5ft. There is a filter-bottom made on a false bottom of the vat, on the top of which is placed a coarse

<sup>471</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 1 October 1892, p. 3.

<sup>472</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 13 October 1892, p. 4.

<sup>473</sup> *Thames Star*, 5 December 1892, p. 4.

<sup>474</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 12 December 1892, p. 2.

<sup>475</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Advertiser*, 12 December 1892, p. 2.

<sup>476</sup> *Waikato Times*, 26 November 1892, p. 2.

cloth, and Mr Adams found by conducting this process that better results were obtained by placing a layer of coarse quartz-sand on the top of the cloth, as that prevented the slimes from getting down, and tended to make the cloth pervious to filtration. He runs the tailings into the vat to a depth of about 20in, and allows the water to filter through previous to putting in any cyanide solution. As soon as the water has filtered out of the tailings he digs the sand over, as though he were digging ground, for the purpose of loosening it and also of mixing the slimes thoroughly through the pulverised sand. He then closes the taps of the pipe below the false bottom, and puts on a sixth-tenth cyanogen solution to a depth of 6in all over the vat, and allows it to saturate for, say, sixteen hours; after which he opens the tap in the pipe below and allows the liquor to filter through the sand and through boxes containing zinc shavings. This liquor runs into a tank, and is again pumped up into the vat and leached through the sand a second time, after which the sand is washed with water, so as to get the whole of the cyanogen solution out of it. Mr Adams states that the first solution, containing 0.6 per cent of potassium-cyanide, after it is leached out, contains about 0.35 per cent of this chemical; and the strength of the second solution is only perceptibly affected by the second leaching, inasmuch that it brings with it a portion of the cyanogen left in the ore after the first leaching.

The value of the material he is leaching varies from 8dwt of gold and 2oz of silver to the ton to a considerably less quantity of bullion, and the percentage of bullion saved varies considerably. Mr Adams cannot account satisfactorily for this, but thinks a great deal is due to sufficient care not being taken in conducting the operations. The actual cost of leaching, he states, is about 6s per ton. The quantity of solution used is one ton and a half to about seven and eight tons of ore. When he first started this process of treatment he used to have a much greater depth of pulverised material in the vats; but he found that this did not leach satisfactorily, owing to the quantity of slimes, and therefore reduced the depth of sand to 20in, which, he states, gives good results.

Gordon commented on the loss of cyanogen during the process, which was 'only yet in its infancy, and no doubt will be considerably improved on yet as regards the method of application'.<sup>477</sup> The warden very succinctly commented that he was 'informed on good authority' that the process was

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<sup>477</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 8 June 1893, *AJHR*, 1893, C-3, pp. 72-73.

'not suitable for this class of ore'.<sup>478</sup> In April, Adams reported that cyanide produced an average saving of gold of 90 per cent and of silver 97 per cent.<sup>479</sup> This boasting prompted a harsh response:

Rumour with her many tongues saith that cyanide process has not been a success in this locality. How could it be when its user knoweth more than all creation? Not only of this but of every other process under the sun. Nowhere is the same amount of talent to be found under one skin and that not a large one, than there is at Waiorongomai. Ministers and millers go down and worship him and yet it loseth bullion like other bodies.<sup>480</sup>

'Obadiah' noted that, despite the patentees of the new method promising complete success, all the batteries at Waihi, Waitekauri, and Waiorongomai were unsuccessful in saving gold.<sup>481</sup> Adams was facing all the problems of pioneering a new process.

In June, 'Obadiah' commented that 'yet another conversion has taken place under the guidance of Preacher Harry'. (The significance of this nickname, only used this once, is obscure, but, coupled with the earlier comment about his claiming expertise, suggests that he had been laying down the law to other battery managers about what process to use.) Dry crushing was 'to be the order of the day, all other systems having failed to save only a small portion of the bullion contained in the rock and tailings. The Preacher in this instance plonks down his own dollars'.<sup>482</sup> In that month, a kiln to enable a change from the wet to the dry process was completed.<sup>483</sup> It was '16ft 6in in diameter at the top, 7ft at bottom, and 22ft deep'. After further modifications, including replacing the old stampers, the new method started at the beginning of July. Silver King and New Find ore was the first to be roasted in preparation for crushing.

It will be hauled from the kiln up to a hopper, from which it will go through the stonebreaker, thence to the stampers, down to the elevator box, from which it will be raised by the elevator into a

<sup>478</sup> H.W. Northcroft to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 19 May 1893, *AJHR*, 1893, C-3, Appendix 1, p. v.

<sup>479</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 24 April 1893, p. 2.

<sup>480</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 8 April 1893, p. 13.

<sup>481</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 29 April 1893, p. 13.

<sup>482</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 10 June 1893, p. 18.

<sup>483</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 15 June 1893, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 22 June 1893, p. 2.

bin, thence by trucks into the cyanide leaching bats. The leached liquor will then pass into boxes filled with finely divided zinc, where the bullion is deposited.

Under the arrangement with the Cassel Company, in late June Napier came to Waiorongomai ‘for one month to superintend the starting of the dry process and give it a fair start’. Until the roasted ore was ready for crushing, he was ‘operating on the tailings’, with an assistant.<sup>484</sup> Richard Mitchelson also arrived to observe developments, and all the miners were ‘discharged, pending the result of the treatment of the first kiln of ore’, with the exception of Benney, who was taking samples from the New Find reef.<sup>485</sup> The lessee of the tramway complained that Adams had ‘without authority sunk and made a kiln for drying Quartz on the Platform close to the Tramway Shop and that there might be danger by fire’.<sup>486</sup> He claimed that when he told Adams that he had no leave from the council, Adams said ‘to H--l with the Council’ and went on with the work.<sup>487</sup> No record survives about how this squabble was resolved.

By mid-July, having erected a new hopper and both a ground and an aerial tramway, Adams was about to treat all the accumulated tailings with cyanide.<sup>488</sup> One month later, ten head of stampers were ‘again converted into the ordinary wet process, the only difference being that the stuff will be first roasted, and not put through as usual in the ordinary raw state’. Only New Find ore was being sent down.<sup>489</sup> At the beginning of September, ‘Obadiah’ reported that mining was

about at a standstill. The expert of the Waiorongomai has again fallen back on the wet process, having been unsuccessful in all his dry crushing attempts at bullion-saving. This is to be regretted, as the plucky successors of the once powerful company have spent a fair amount of cash for a very small return. But will the wet crushing get over the difficulty? Doubtful. A little more bullion in the rock would be preferable and lead to better results.<sup>490</sup>

<sup>484</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 3 July 1893, p. 4.

<sup>485</sup> *Thames Star*, 10 July 1893, p. 2.

<sup>486</sup> Piako County Council, Minutes of Meeting of 4 July 1893, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>487</sup> Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 6 July 1893, p. 2.

<sup>488</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 17 July 1893, p. 2.

<sup>489</sup> *Thames Star*, 21 August 1893, p. 3.

<sup>490</sup> ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 2 September 1893, p. 7.

After investigating the plant during his 1894 visit, Gordon reported that 20-head of American stamps had replaced the original ones, and that once they were installed

dry-crushing was adopted, and the pulverised material treated by the Cassel process; but it was found, after working for about two months, that there was too large a percentage of copper in the ore for it to be economically treated with cyanide solutions. The Cassel process was then abandoned, and wet-crushing again resorted to, the gold being saved in the ordinary way. When the tailings were found to have gold in them to the value of £1 per ton, they were treated in the vats with a cyanide solution.

Adams informed him that although wear and tear was four times more with the wet crushing, one-third more stone was put through. After the rock breaker reduced the ore to the smaller maximum of one and a half inches in diameter, it was fed from the hoppers by Challenge ore-feeders into a stamp mortar, Adams estimating that these feeders increased crushing capacity by nearly a fifth.<sup>491</sup> Because of the public interest in his experiments, a guidebook for tourists reported that 'the battery may be inspected on application to Mr Adams, the courteous owner and manager'.<sup>492</sup>

In April 1894, Adams was 'still at work putting the tailings through the cyanide process'.<sup>493</sup> The following month, he was still treating 'the large stock of tailings'.<sup>494</sup> Then, in July, John McCombie<sup>495</sup> of the Woodstock Company purchased the complete cyanide plant and ten head of stamps, which Adams would re-erect at Karangahake.<sup>496</sup> He shifted the stamps before Christmas.<sup>497</sup> Afterwards, a Thames newspaper commented that, while he deserved 'great credit for sticking to the place as long as he was probably able', his arrangements to treat ore were 'by no means satisfactory. Terms are being constantly altered from crushing to crushing,

<sup>491</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 24 July 1894, *AJHR*, 1894, C-3, p. 48.

<sup>492</sup> George Frederic Allen, *Willis' Guide Book of New Route for Tourists* (Wanganui, 1894), p. 15.

<sup>493</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 26 April 1894, p. 2.

<sup>494</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 18 May 1894, Supplement, p. 2.

<sup>495</sup> See paper on Billy Nicholl.

<sup>496</sup> *Thames Star*, 23 July 1894, p. 3; *Thames Advertiser*, 13 October 1894, p. 2.

<sup>497</sup> *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 22 November 1894, p. 4.

whereas in all business matters one of the main essentials to success is a reasonable prospect of calculating expenses on a steady basis'.<sup>498</sup>

From both ore and tailings, cyanide had extracted 1,981 ounces of bullion, valued at 4,595 American dollars.<sup>499</sup> After abandoning this process, Adams' plant consisted of eight crushing machines, 20 stamp heads, two water wheels, and five berdans, with a total value of £2,000.<sup>500</sup> In 1906, the *New Zealand Mining Handbook* stated that 'the percentage of copper-sulphides in the ore was too great to permit it to be treated economically by the cyanide process, and the consumption of cyanide was too great. Possibly, the cyanide process of treatment was not then sufficiently understood to apply it in the proper manner'.<sup>501</sup> 'Cyanicido', writing in 1897, recorded that Adams had been the first person to attempt wet crushing on such a big scale, and after an employee of the Crown Mines, at Karangahake, inspected his battery this company had tried wet instead of dry crushing.<sup>502</sup> This statement cannot be confirmed from official reports, although there was a brief and unsuccessful trial of wet crushing by Crown Mines in the year to June 1893.<sup>503</sup>

## FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Whatever capital the Te Aroha Syndicate possessed had came from its few members, and Adams himself paid for changes to his battery as he attempted to find the right process. He started 1890 with £258 0s 6d of 'good' book debts to Price Bros., the Thames engineering firm.<sup>504</sup> In April 1891, when his debt was £282 2s 5d, he was urged to pay promptly.<sup>505</sup> Some of this debt was met by selling old iron, and in September he was able to

<sup>498</sup> *Thames Star*, 25 February 1895, p. 2.

<sup>499</sup> A. Scheidel, *The Cyanide Process: Its practical application and economical results* (Sacramento, 1894), p. 80.

<sup>500</sup> *AJHR*, 1894, C-3A, p. 64.

<sup>501</sup> *New Zealand Mining Handbook*, p. 27.

<sup>502</sup> Letter from 'Cyanicido', *Auckland Weekly News*, 24 April 1897, p. 15.

<sup>503</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 8 June 1893, *AJHR*, 1893, C-3, pp. 63-67.

<sup>504</sup> Book Debts as at 1 January 1890, Letterbook 1889-1891, folio 980, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>505</sup> John Watson to H.H. Adams, 21 April 1891, Letterbook 1889-1891, folio 863, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

send £117.<sup>506</sup> It was possibly an indication of the state of his finances that early in 1891 he was sued for wages owing of £1 12s, £10 10s, and £6, all of which he paid into court.<sup>507</sup> The Ohinemuri County Council also had to sue him to obtain payment of £60 for ‘goods’ and £5 10s for rates.<sup>508</sup> A timber merchant sued for £11 11s 1d, and a solicitor for £57 16s 9d, which he was ordered to pay.<sup>509</sup> In May, he mortgaged the land that he, Gavin, and Wick leased, for an unknown sum.<sup>510</sup> In December, he sold tramway horses and tramway equipment, but still owed £35 5s for freight.<sup>511</sup>

From 1 January to 25 February 1892, Adams bought machinery from Price Bros costing £1,055 11s 8d, usually paid for in cash but sometimes in scrap metal.<sup>512</sup> In February, a promissory note to meet a debt to an ironmongery firm of £11 0s 1d was dishonoured.<sup>513</sup> The following month, he requested the council to stand over the £43 owing for tramway haulage until the end of the month,<sup>514</sup> and then arranged to sell more scrap metal, mainly from a water race he was dismantling.<sup>515</sup> He failed to make as much money as he could have done in June, when the Ohinemuri County Council purchased ‘that valuable gravel reserve in the bend of the Komata creek’ from him ‘for the very low sum of £37 10s’.<sup>516</sup> He also acquired the redundant Eureka wire tramway, once he had paid the rent owing, to

<sup>506</sup> A. & G. Price, Ledgers 1890-1896, folio 74; John Watson to H.H. Adams, 3 September 1891, Letterbook 1891-1893, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>507</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Civil Record Book 1889-1896, 2, 36, 37/1891, BCDG 11221/1c, ANZ-A.

<sup>508</sup> Paeroa Magistrate’s Court, Plaintiff Book 1881-1896, 22, 33/1891, BACL 13745/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>509</sup> Thames Magistrate’s Court, Plaintiff Book 1890-1895, entries for 26 May 1891, 28 November 1891, BACL 13737/2a; Thames Magistrate’s Court, Civil Record Book 1890-1895, folio 104, BACL 13735/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>510</sup> Aroha Block 1X Section 14, H 979, Maori Land Court, Hamilton.

<sup>511</sup> Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 24 December 1891, p. 2.

<sup>512</sup> A. & G. Price, Ledgers 1890-1896, folio 67, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>513</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Civil Record Book 1889-1896, 8/1892, BCDG 11221/1c, ANZ-A.

<sup>514</sup> *Waikato Times*, 3 March 1892, p. 2.

<sup>515</sup> John Watson to H.H. Adams, 31 March 1892, Letterbook 1891-1893, p. 254, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>516</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 27 June 1892, p. 2.

demolish and sell.<sup>517</sup> Despite these attempts to make money, in August he was threatened by Price Bros. with legal proceedings because his promissory note for £282 2s 5d had been dishonoured. He also owed money on his current account. After he suggested two methods of payment which were rejected, he was able to sell the firm his Pelton wheels and other flax and mining machinery and was granted an extended period to pay.<sup>518</sup> He was also sued for small amounts for goods supplied by an ironmonger and for transporting freight.<sup>519</sup>

In February 1893, he mortgaged his flax mills and machinery for £1,200 at 8 per cent interest,<sup>520</sup> which assisted him to partially satisfy his indebtedness to Wick.<sup>521</sup> His debt to Price Bros. had declined to £182 5s 6d by March, for he had sold them more machinery from Waiorongomai; his Aroha Mining Syndicate owed £3 14s 6d of 'good' debts.<sup>522</sup> His finances remained fragile, and he was threatened with legal action to force him to pay tramway charges and rates.<sup>523</sup> In August, his syndicate bought machinery costing £540 by selling old plant from the battery, and in September sold more of this along with pipes from the water race to pay for a hoist, berdan liners, and some of Adams' account.<sup>524</sup> The following month,

<sup>517</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1891-1899, 22/1892, BBAV 11505/4a; Register of Applications 1883-1900, 22/1892, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>518</sup> John Watson to H.H. Adams, 15 August 1892, 2 September 1892, 21 September 1892, 23 September 1892, 29 September 1892, Letterbook 1891-1893, folios 374, 382, 401, 404, 409, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>519</sup> Thames Magistrate's Court, Plaintiff Book 1890-1895, entries for 13 October 1892, 15 November 1892, BACL 13737/2a, ANZ-A.

<sup>520</sup> *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette*, 23 February 1893, p. 55.

<sup>521</sup> *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette*, 9 March 1893, p. 70.

<sup>522</sup> A. & G. Price, Letterbook 1891-1893, Debt List 1 March 1893, p. 719, Assets, p. 730, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>523</sup> County Clerk to H.H. Adams, 6 April 1894, Piako County Council Letterbook 1893-1899, p. 171; Piako County Council, Minutes of Meeting of 9 May 1893, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha; Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1889-1896, 10/1893, BCDG 11221/1c, ANZ-A.

<sup>524</sup> A. & G. Price, Ledgers 1890-1896, folio 219; note also folio 205; John Watson to E. Mitchelson & Co., 20 April 1893, 26 April 1893, Letterbook 1891-1893, pp. 628, 635; John Watson to H.H. Adams, 16 August 1893, 25 August 1893, 7 September 1893, 8 September 1893, 16 September 1893, 25 September 1893, 9 October 1893, 13 November 1893, 16

Price Bros' accountant informed him that, 'although we have no wish to unduly push you' regarding payment, 'we cannot promise to allow it to stand for twelve months as you request - You should pay us off first show you have'.<sup>525</sup> The bill then got larger because the firm repaired his flax machines.<sup>526</sup> Also at the end of the year, the council had to threaten legal action to get payment of £7 12s for a crane his syndicate had bought.<sup>527</sup> His finances did not improve in 1894, as indicated by his owing of £86 9s (a 'good' debt) to Price Bros.,<sup>528</sup> by his being sued for rent,<sup>529</sup> and by his mortgaging his leased land in the Hori More Block at Te Aroha.<sup>530</sup> After more prompting, the £273 2s he owed Price Bros. was finally paid on 1 February 1895.<sup>531</sup>

### SEEKING ASSISTANCE

In November 1893, Adams asked the government to lend him the estimated £3,000 needed to drive a 1,200-foot low level crosscut to test the New Find 800 feet below the surface. He believed that the reefs below the present levels would 'be of a much richer quality and in an easier class of country', which would make mining 'much cheaper'. Continuing an existing adit driven about 100 feet in the old Galena claim,<sup>532</sup> this crosscut would begin in Diamond Gully, where water power would drive the drills. The loan

November 1893, Letterbook 1893-1895, pp. 35, 46, 52, 55, 69, 77, 99, 143-144, 149, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames

<sup>525</sup> John Watson to H.H. Adams, 25 September 1893, Letterbook 1893-1895, p. 77, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>526</sup> John Watson to H.H. Adams, 13 November 1893, 16 November 1893, Letterbook 1893-1895, pp. 144-145, 149-150, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>527</sup> Piako County Council, Minutes of Meetings of 1 August 1893, 22 November 1893; Letterbook 1893-1899, pp. 30, 40, 54, 124-125, 128, 129, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>528</sup> A. & G. Price, Book Debts 1894, Letterbook 1893-1895, folio 987, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>529</sup> Paeroa Magistrate's Court, Plaintiff Book 1881-1896, 12, 13, 92/1894, BACL 13745/1a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 26 May 1894, p. 2.

<sup>530</sup> Aroha Block 1X Section 14, H 979, Maori Land Court, Hamilton.

<sup>531</sup> A. & G. Price, Ledger 1890-1896, folio 330, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>532</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 24 July 1894, *AJHR*, 1894, C-3, p. 48.

would be repaid, with interest, from the gold extracted.<sup>533</sup> Gordon inspected the site, reported ‘a fair probability’ that gold would be struck, and estimated the cost to be much lower, £1,900. Adams had explained to him that he would give security for repayment by a mortgage over his machinery and plant, which Gordon discovered was already mortgaged to guarantee repayment of a loan of £700. While he was afraid that, if Adams stopped work and sold the only crushing plant in the district, it would be many years before another would be erected, his terms were not possible.<sup>534</sup> Adams was told that the Act did not permit the government to meet all the cost.<sup>535</sup>

Two and a half months after this rebuff, Adams asked for about £250 to meet the cost of a rise to connect the lowest level with the reefs being worked. ‘By giving This Lone or grant you will save owre field if I can not get this I will have to take up all rails and plant and Leave the Claims bee forfeited. This I am Louth to Do’.<sup>536</sup> The minister, Alfred Jerome Cadman, wanted to help, but could only give a £ for £ subsidy to the extent of £125.<sup>537</sup> Gordon investigated, and recommended the subsidy be paid. The rise was ‘but a small thing but from what I could gather when in the district that Mr Adams has not the means of doing any dead work’.<sup>538</sup> Cadman considered the decision ‘an important matter for the whole district’, and obtained Cabinet approval.<sup>539</sup> Adams then informed Cadman ‘I cannot possibly find £125 can you see your way to vote £200 I will find £50 and give my own

<sup>533</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 21 November 1893, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/248, ANZ-W.

<sup>534</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 29 January 1894, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/248, ANZ-W.

<sup>535</sup> Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to H.H. Adams, 30 January 1894, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/248, ANZ-W.

<sup>536</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 16 April 1894, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/248, ANZ-W.

<sup>537</sup> Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to H.H. Adams, 2 May 1894, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/248, ANZ-W.

<sup>538</sup> H.A. Gordon to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 25 April 1894, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/248, ANZ-W.

<sup>539</sup> Memoranda by Minister of Mines, 27 April 1894, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/248, ANZ-W.

labor free.... Please wire reply as I am quoting sale of plant to be removed'.<sup>540</sup> Cadman replied immediately:

The Government have no power to advance any money on loan for this work. Your application was considered as being for the benefit of the district rather than personal hence the offer of £125 ... subsidy which was virtually a free gift. In making this grant the Govt. have exceeded anything previously done in the way of aid to prospecting and I can only regret your inability to take advantage of it.<sup>541</sup>

Adams thereupon accepted the grant, but spent only £92 2s 6d (half of which was provided by the subsidy) on rising as well as clearing and retimbering a drive and providing air pipes before the work was abandoned at the end of the year.<sup>542</sup> Clearly, well before this time the other members of his small syndicate had ceased to provide funds. Gordon reported in July 1895 that lack of capital prevented prospecting.<sup>543</sup>

#### LEAVING WAIORONGOMAI

In July 1895, Gordon reported that Adams had sold 'the greater part of the plant' for removal. Only ten 'heads of stamps' remained, and the mining population was now 'very limited'.<sup>544</sup> Early in 1894, the plant had comprised eight crushing machines, 20 head of stamps, two water wheels, and five berdans; by early the following year there was only one crushing machine, ten head of stamps, one water wheel, and three berdans, although the value of the battery had mysteriously risen from £2,000 to £15,000.<sup>545</sup> 'Old Miner' later recalled how Adams stripped the whole of the Wairakau water race

<sup>540</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 8 May 1894 (telegram), Mines Department, MD 1, 95/248, ANZ-W.

<sup>541</sup> Minister of Mines to H.H. Adams, 8 May 1894 (telegram), Mines Department, MD 1, 95/248, ANZ-W.

<sup>542</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 12 May 1894 (telegram); memoranda of 30 July 1894, 14 December 1894, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/248, ANZ-W; *AJHR*, 1895, C-3, p. 276; *AJHR*, 1896, C-3, p. 266.

<sup>543</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 24 July 1895, *AJHR*, 1895, C-3, p. 66.

<sup>544</sup> H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 24 July 1895, *AJHR*, 1895, C-3, p. 66; for the number of stamps, see *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 22 November 1894, p. 4.

<sup>545</sup> *AJHR*, 1894, C-3A, p. 54, 1895, C-3A, p. 60.

and sold all timber and iron, and also pulled down all chimney stacks, dismantled the furnaces, reduced the number of stamps to twenty,<sup>546</sup> and sent the greater part of the machinery to the Ohinemuri field. Of the heavy timber, portion went to Te Aroha West for gate posts, and thousands of feet were sent away from the district altogether. It was like dismantling a small village. The miners' cottages erected by the Te Aroha Company were also sold, and some of these as well went to Te Aroha West as outhouses for the settlers.<sup>547</sup>

When a new syndicate announced, early in 1895, that it would erect a new battery, the *Te Aroha News* was pleased. Whilst 'no doubt' Adams deserved 'great credit for sticking to the place as long as he probably was able', his arrangements for treating ore for others were unsatisfactory, as the terms constantly changed.<sup>548</sup> In March, in a clear case of collusion, William Burton sued Adams' syndicate for not working the New Find Amalgamated and Warrior Licensed Holdings, which resulted, as no doubt intended, in them being granted to him as Adams' dummy.<sup>549</sup> On the day that the warden made this decision, Burton applied for the New Find ground as the New Find Nos. 1 and 2 and then was granted protection because negotiations for their sale were underway.<sup>550</sup> In April, it was rumoured that Adams had sold the battery, but both price and purchaser were unknown.<sup>551</sup> The price was known in June, when the battery and the New Find claims were on offer for £4,000; the Fleming brothers accepted this price in August.<sup>552</sup> The property was subsequently sold to the New Zealand Exploration Company.<sup>553</sup> While these arrangements were being made, in mid-1895 Adams left the district without paying the rents on his mining leases.<sup>554</sup>

<sup>546</sup> In fact, he reduced them to ten when he abandoned the field.

<sup>547</sup> Letter from 'Old Miner', *Te Aroha News*, 4 February 1911, p. 1.

<sup>548</sup> Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 23 February 1895, p. 2.

<sup>549</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaintiff Book 1880-1898, 15-16/1895, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>550</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Applications 1895, 7, 8/1895, BBAV 11582/4a, ANZ-A; Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 1 July 1895, p. 3.

<sup>551</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 10 April 1895, p. 2.

<sup>552</sup> Piako County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 15 June 1895, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 21 August 1895, p. 6, 28 August 1895, p. 6.

<sup>553</sup> See paper on this company.

<sup>554</sup> Piako County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 15 June 1895, p. 2, 19 October 1895, p. 2

He would have no further involvement with Waiorongomai. Fearing the Maori landowners would not renew the lease on his Hori More Block section, he removed his house to Takapuna.<sup>555</sup>

### MINE AND BATTERY MANAGER

In 1895, Adams made a fresh start, no longer as a mine owner but as a mine and especially a battery manager, working for various companies, mostly in Ohinemuri. Even while controlling the Waiorongomai goldfield he had been involved with other goldfields, in a small way. In 1888, for example, he sought election as a director of the New Moanataiari Company, but only received 1,300 votes; the last man to be elected received 2,086, and the highest polling candidate 4,243.<sup>556</sup> In February 1892, he left Waiorongomai for a time to supervise the erection of a battery at Whangapoua.<sup>557</sup> In May, he was erecting a battery at Cabbage Bay.<sup>558</sup> In October 1894, he won the contract to erect the Woodstock battery at Karangahake.<sup>559</sup> He became a director of the Talisman Company, also at Karangahake,<sup>560</sup> and early in 1895 erected machinery for it.<sup>561</sup> In May, he applied for a certificate enabling him to manage a battery with cyanide plant attached, informing the board of examiners that he had operated one for 18 months before the passage of the Act requiring managers to have certificates.<sup>562</sup> Edwin Mitchelson vouched for his competent management at Waiorongomai, and he was granted a battery superintendent's certificate.<sup>563</sup>

At the beginning of March 1895, the directors unanimously appointed him mine manager of the Waihi Silverton Extended Company, with

<sup>555</sup> Gilbert Mair (Land Purchase Officer) to Patrick Sheridan, 14 April 1900, Maori Affairs Department, MA-MLP 1, 1899/234, ANZ-W.

<sup>556</sup> *Thames Star*, 5 December 1888, p. 2.

<sup>557</sup> 'Waiorongomai', *Observer*, 20 February 1892, p. 18.

<sup>558</sup> *Thames Star*, 30 May 1892, p. 4.

<sup>559</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 13 October 1894, p. 2.

<sup>560</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 68 no. 467, ANZ-A.

<sup>561</sup> A. & G. Price, Letterbook 1893-1895, pp. 787, 807, 808, 835, 850, 715, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>562</sup> H.H. Adams to Board of Examiners, 10 May 1895, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/816, ANZ-W.

<sup>563</sup> Edwin Mitchelson to Minister of Mines, 4 July 1895; memorandum of 9 July 1895, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/816, ANZ-W; *Te Aroha News*, 18 July 1895, p. 2.

instructions to report immediately to the English directors on its future working.<sup>564</sup> After they cabled: 'Go ahead with the development in accordance with Mr Adams' report' recommending developments costing £10,000, he settled his family in Waihi.<sup>565</sup> (The family had increased with the birth of Leonard in November 1891,<sup>566</sup> Francis Victor in May 1893,<sup>567</sup> and, in December 1895, his last child, a daughter, Elizabeth Sylvia.)<sup>568</sup> A correspondent who inspected this mine wrote that Adams 'thoroughly' understood 'both practical and theoretical mining'.<sup>569</sup> Later that month this view was confirmed by 'Obadiah': 'Harry Adams was very clever in cutting his reef within an inch or two of his estimate'.<sup>570</sup> In November, new machinery was being 'splendidly fitted up' under his supervision.<sup>571</sup> Late in 1895, he became involved in Owharoa mining, being a director of two of its main mines.<sup>572</sup> His interest in new inventions and his desire to profit from them led to his offer to provide electric light for Paeroa on condition that he received the exclusive right for 21 years to supply power and make connections to the houses. As this was not possible without a special Act, his proposal was stillborn.<sup>573</sup>

Adams was becoming one of the most prominent men in the Hauraki mining industry, supervising or erecting for his own or other companies 'twelve batteries of note'.<sup>574</sup> In April, the opening of the Waihi Silverton battery, which used cyanide, was marked by publicity about it and Adams. The old plant 'had first to be removed, and at the commencement of last winter the erection of the new mill on the old battery site was undertaken. The terrible state of the roads between Paeroa and Waihi made the work of

<sup>564</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 2 March 1895, p. 3, 5 March 1895, p. 3; *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 April 1896, p. 20.

<sup>565</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 2 April 1895, p. 2, 24 April 1895, p. 3.

<sup>566</sup> Birth Certificate of Leonard Adams, 23 November 1891, 1892/1279, BDM.

<sup>567</sup> Birth Certificate of Francis Victor Adams, 24 May 1893, 1893/10160, BDM.

<sup>568</sup> Birth Certificate of Elizabeth Sylvia Adams, 18 December 1895, 1896/1796, BDM.

<sup>569</sup> Own Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 3 August 1895, p. 3.

<sup>570</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 24 August 1895, p. 16.

<sup>571</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 23 November 1895, p. 9.

<sup>572</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 69 no. 478, box 90 no. 593, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 10 October 1895, p. 1601, 17 October 1895, p. 1645, 24 October 1895, p. 1703, 31 October 1895, p. 1735; see also *Observer*, 15 April 1916, p. 17.

<sup>573</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 June 1895, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 7 December 1895, p. 2.

<sup>574</sup> Weston, p. 182.

construction prolonged and arduous', considerably retarding the delivery of the machinery. 'However, it seemed impossible to exhaust the patience' of Adams and others, who, 'making the best of the situation ... persistently kept matters progressing as rapidly as circumstances would permit'. Waihi now had 'one of the most efficient plants of its kind in the southern hemisphere – an opinion held by numbers of our leading mining authorities'. At the luncheon to celebrate the opening, the managing director, James Alexander Pond,<sup>575</sup> praised the mine, the battery, and Adams. 'Of the many difficulties' the directors had to 'surmount' the greatest was the choice of manager. 'It was only after much thought and considerable anxiety that they arrived unanimously at the choice of the present manager'. His skill had brought the battery 'to a state of great perfection'. A toast was proposed to Adams by a director who had known him 'for twenty years and had always found him to be the right man in the right place'. He 'enjoyed the entire confidence of the Board, and as a result of the latitude given him, they that day stood in a battery that was a memorial to his skill and unquestionably one of the finest batteries in the southern hemisphere'. In reply, Adams referred to the assistance from the directors: 'a better board he never had to deal with'. And the workers 'deserved as much praise as he did, for they all worked hard'.<sup>576</sup>

The opening prompted the first of what would be many complimentary sketches of Adams, both verbal and artistic, to be published in the *Observer*. The battery was erected because of 'the rare energy and resourceful skill of *That Prince of Mine Managers*, Mr H.H. Adams, whose peer' was 'not to be found in the Australasian colonies'. The creation of his 'inventive talent', the battery marked 'the furthest advance of engineering skill in the winning of gold from refractory ores', as he had kept himself up to date with the latest American and European devices. The sketch referred to his 'characteristic modesty', a trait not apparent from other sources.<sup>577</sup> The *Thames Advertiser* reported that the new machinery 'from end to end' won 'the admiration of everyone', reflecting 'the highest credit' on him because he had 'produced certainly the finest mill' in New Zealand.<sup>578</sup>

'One great object' Adams sought was minimizing 'the dust evil', and his idea of placing suction fans over the stamper boxes had 'been put into

<sup>575</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>576</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 17 April 1896, Supplement, p. 2.

<sup>577</sup> *Observer*, 11 April 1896, p. 9; see sketch on p. 12.

<sup>578</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 6 April 1896, p. 2.

practice which will act as an experiment'. This 'highly commended' development 'was the first step of its kind taken in connection with dry crushing plants'.<sup>579</sup> The fans may not have been Adams' invention but an unacknowledged borrowing of an idea from his former employer, Firth, who had written to the Auckland press in January that year on the lethal effects of dust. Based on his 'long experience in dust collecting in connection with flour-mills', he suggested that in dry crushing mills at Waihi 'each box of stampers be furnished with a sheet-iron hood with holes for the stamper-shafts to pass through, and each of these hoods be fitted with a small exhaust fan to discharge into a general dust chamber'.<sup>580</sup> This sounds very similar to Adams' system, installed shortly afterwards. Alternatively, Adams may have thought of the idea and discussed it with Firth, who was the first to mention it publicly. Firth was constantly writing to the press to publicise his latest ideas,<sup>581</sup> unlike Adams, who never pushed himself forward in that way. Firth's ideas were not always as original as he pretended: a rival Auckland flour mill proprietor pointed out that it had provided one of its dust collectors to the Waihi Company to experiment with before Firth wrote his letter;<sup>582</sup> perhaps Adams knew of this and developed the concept.

Adams' concern for the welfare of his workers and their families was again shown after a man was killed in the mine; he gave the widow £30 'from his private purse'.<sup>583</sup> When he left this mine, 'a very pleasing ceremony took place' at which the workers presented him with a 'valuable' gold watch 'as a token of esteem and respect', as its inscription read. After the spokesman said that Adams had 'their best wishes', his health was 'drunk enthusiastically'. In response, Adams stated that 'if the mine had been as good as the men who had worked under him, it would be among the foremost of bullion producers'.<sup>584</sup> In another indication of his concern, at least in part, for his employees, in 1898 he was quoted as opposing Sunday

<sup>579</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 April 1896, p. 20.

<sup>580</sup> Letter from J.C. Firth, *New Zealand Herald*, 10 January 1896, p. 3.

<sup>581</sup> For example, see letters from J.C. Firth, *New Zealand Herald*, 11 July 1872, p. 3, 11 September 1875, Supplement, p. 2, 1 August 1881, p. 3, 31 October 1881, p. 6, 16 June 1882, p. 3, 17 June 1882, p. 6, 19 December 1883, p. 3, 22 December 1883, p. 3.

<sup>582</sup> Letter from A. McCorquodale, *New Zealand Herald*, 18 January 1896, p. 3.

<sup>583</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 2 November 1896, p. 3.

<sup>584</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 11 January 1897, p. 1; *Observer*, 16 January 1897, p. 18.

work in batteries, because it was bad for the men as well as for the machinery.<sup>585</sup>

At the opening ceremony for the Silverton battery, one director, a former Thames miner who had known Adams for 20 years,<sup>586</sup> proposed a toast. He said Adams had ‘the entire confidence of the Board, and as a result of the latitude given him, they that day stood in a battery which was a memorial of his skill and unquestionably one of the finest batteries in the southern hemisphere’. In responding, Adams rejected claims that there was insufficient ore to keep the mill going. ‘He was not now speaking in a boasting manner, but his practical knowledge gave him the power to assert that the bullion yields would be all that could be desired’.<sup>587</sup> This was not to be: when leaving the mine in January 1897 he regretted that it ‘had not up to the present proved itself a greater gold producer’.<sup>588</sup> Although in 1898 it produced 1,000 tons a month, the yield was not payable, and it closed in 1901.<sup>589</sup> As the costs of operating the battery were low, it was expected to be able to treat ‘very inferior grade ore’.<sup>590</sup> This was Adams’ intention, for he treated all the ore, unsorted, believing selecting ore was ‘not mining’ but ‘merely working a mine on a tributer’s system’.<sup>591</sup>

Adams’ status in the mining community was reflected in his election to the committee that formed the Waihi School of Mines.<sup>592</sup> He sought increased recognition in 1897, when he wrote an abrupt letter to the Minister of Mines: ‘I will feel obliged to you if you will have me put on the board’.<sup>593</sup> Because there were no vacancies on the board of examiners, which

<sup>585</sup> *Observer*, 29 January 1898, p. 2.

<sup>586</sup> *Cyclopaedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 116-117.

<sup>587</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 April 1896, p. 21.

<sup>588</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 11 January 1897, p. 1.

<sup>589</sup> See J.H. Curle, *The Gold Mines of the World* (London, 1899), p. 251; *Observer*, 27 February 1926, p. 4; for its working and output until its closure, see J.B. McAra, *Gold Mining at Waihi 1878-1952*, rev. ed., (Waihi, 1988), pp. 51, 105, 109, 111, 114, 118, 122.

<sup>590</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 12 May 1896, p. 3.

<sup>591</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 16 October 1896, p. 3.

<sup>592</sup> *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 1 July 1896, p. 2.

<sup>593</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 3 April 1897, Mines Department, MD 1, 97/802, ANZ-W.

certified mine and battery managers, he was not appointed;<sup>594</sup> his lack of formal training in engineering and mining may have been a factor as well.

As the same time as he supervised the Silverton mine and battery, he inspected mines elsewhere, as at Te Puke in August.<sup>595</sup> Later in the year he reported on a mine at Mataura, near Waihi, in which he had become a shareholder and which he incorrectly made out to be ‘one of the most valuable mines in the country’.<sup>596</sup> As in earlier instances of his expressing opinions on the value of ore, his skills as a geologist were limited. In November, he was appointed to supervise the construction of a battery at Komata Reefs, near Paeroa.<sup>597</sup> The following month, he accepted the position of mine manager there, his appointment at Waihi ending on 1 January.<sup>598</sup> The Silverton company had ‘lost a good man’, commented ‘Obadiah’.<sup>599</sup> At Komata he worked with his old friend John Benney.<sup>600</sup>

In May 1897, ‘Obadiah’ wrote that the Woodstock mill was proving to be ‘the boss battery of the colony’ and Adams deserved ‘much credit’, for he had ‘designed and constructed it. By the way, he had three other large batteries under way or to build’.<sup>601</sup> One of these, for Komata Reefs, had its first trial in September.<sup>602</sup> By then Adams was living at Thames, where he continued to experiment with mining machinery, applying for a patent for ‘improvements in stamps and stamper-dies for the reduction of ores in quartz mills or batteries’.<sup>603</sup> In 1898 he applied for a patent for an ‘improved automatic wet method of continuously treating ore or quartz crushed by an ordinary crushing battery, and also for supplementary treatment by cyanide or other solutions’.<sup>604</sup> At the Woodstock battery, which he managed at that

<sup>594</sup> Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to H.H. Adams, 12 April 1897, Mines Department, MD 1, 97/802, ANZ-W.

<sup>595</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 28 August 1896, p. 2.

<sup>596</sup> ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 3 October 1896, p. 13; see also *New Zealand Gazette*, 16 July 1896, p. 1130.

<sup>597</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 4 November 1896, p. 2.

<sup>598</sup> *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 12 December 1896, p. 4.

<sup>599</sup> ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 12 December 1896, p. 9.

<sup>600</sup> *Thames Star*, 16 August 1898, p. 2.

<sup>601</sup> ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 22 May 1897, p. 9.

<sup>602</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 14 September 1897, p. 3.

<sup>603</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 2 September 1897, p. 1608.

<sup>604</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 14 April 1898, p. 640.

time, he ran five head of stamps using this process.<sup>605</sup> That this invention was regarded favourably by his peers was indicated when John McCombie, questioned about the problem of slimes being formed in wet crushing, stating that this had been solved at the wet crushing plant at Komata Reefs through the use of ‘a very simple contrivance’ devised by Adams.<sup>606</sup> This was a distributor made by Price Bros. ‘to instructions from’ Adams, who was ‘anxious to see as many at work as possible’ in other batteries.<sup>607</sup>

In March 1898, it was reported that Adams would construct a new battery at Tararu Creek, to his own design;<sup>608</sup> in May that he was about to erect another 20 stamps at Komata Reefs;<sup>609</sup> in September that he was to superintend alterations in the Puru Consolidated plant;<sup>610</sup> in February 1899 that he would supervise the building of a battery for the Alpha company at Waitekauri;<sup>611</sup> and in 1900 that he was supervising the erection of a new plant at Maratoto.<sup>612</sup> When he learnt that the government was planning to erect four public crushing mills, he wrote to Cadman: ‘As you are aware, I am well up in that CLASS of Work, having erected the Greater Part of the Mills in this district, and Knowing the Class of MILLS required, I will be most happy to Undertake the Providing of Plans and Specifications and Supervising the Erection of MILLS’.<sup>613</sup> Instead, the mining inspector was allotted these tasks.<sup>614</sup>

His intense involvement in mining meant Adams abandoned farming. In May 1898, he advertised for sale or lease his farm near Te Aroha,<sup>615</sup> and in January 1899 the one at Komata (which by then had an orchard of 2,000

<sup>605</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 13 May 1898, p. 1; *Te Aroha News*, 12 May 1898, p. 2.

<sup>606</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 July 1898, p. 21.

<sup>607</sup> John Watson to Manager, New Zealand Jubilee Gold Mining Company, Waitekauri, 2 June 1898, Letterbook 1897-1898, p. 810, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

<sup>608</sup> ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 26 March 1898, p. 9; *Thames Advertiser*, 7 September 1898, p. 1.

<sup>609</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 3 May 1898, p. 4.

<sup>610</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 30 September 1898, p. 4, 26 October 1898, p. 4.

<sup>611</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 23 February 1899, p. 3.

<sup>612</sup> *Thames Star*, 5 February 1900, p. 4.

<sup>613</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 3 August 1898, Mines Department, MD 1A, 8/50, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>614</sup> Mines Department, MD 1A, 8/50, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>615</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 31 May 1898, p. 2.

trees) was leased.<sup>616</sup> By the end of the following year he had sold 219 acres at Komata for £1,100 and another 75 acres adjoining the flax mill there for £570.<sup>617</sup>

His reputation in mining circles was reflected in the increasing number of directorships he acquired: in 1896 the Talisman at Karangahake and the Rising Son at Owharoa,<sup>618</sup> the Maratoto Company in 1898,<sup>619</sup> in 1899 the Khartoum at Maratoto,<sup>620</sup> the Moana at Thames, of which he was managing director,<sup>621</sup> the Bullion at Tapu,<sup>622</sup> and, in 1900, the Welcome Jack at Whitianga.<sup>623</sup>

From 1899 onwards, Adams was also a director of the mines owned by his syndicate. In April 1899 he bought the Sheridan mine and the only battery at Tapu for £306, £100 more than the local residents expected, and planned to form a company.<sup>624</sup> In June he sold the mine to the Bullion Company for £200, in which he became a director.<sup>625</sup> On behalf of his syndicate, at an auction in July Adams and McCombie bought the Broken Hills Company's mine and plant near Tairua for £3,500.<sup>626</sup> They produced a lengthy report on how the mine should be developed and formed a company with Adams as its managing director.<sup>627</sup> John Benney supervised the work.<sup>628</sup> Although reportedly Adams resigned in October 1900 as director to enable him 'to reside at the mines and carry out the duties of manager of

<sup>616</sup> *Waikato Argus*, 12 January 1899, p. 2.

<sup>617</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary May 1900-December 1901, p. 72, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>618</sup> George Edwin Alderton, *Auckland Goldfields Maps and Investors' Guide* (Auckland, 1896), p. 2.

<sup>619</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 148 no. 950, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Herald*, 1 November 1898, p. 6.

<sup>620</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 154 no. 977, ANZ-A.

<sup>621</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 154 no. 976, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 31 October 1899, p. 3.

<sup>622</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 153 no. 971, ANZ-A.

<sup>623</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 157 no. 990, ANZ-A; *Thames Star*, 17 July 1900, p. 1.

<sup>624</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 11 April 1899, p. 2, 29 April 1899, p. 4.

<sup>625</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Registrations 1899, 208/1899, AAAE 11343/10a; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 153 no. 971, ANZ-A.

<sup>626</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 6 July 1899, p. 6; *Thames Advertiser*, 6 July 1899, p. 2.

<sup>627</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 12 July 1899, p. 3, 14 July 1899, pp. 3, 4.

<sup>628</sup> *Thames Star*, 29 August 1899, p. 2.

the mine and battery', in December he was still referred to as managing director.<sup>629</sup>

During the early twentieth century, Adams was involved with mining in most parts of the Hauraki Peninsula, excepting Waihi, Karangahake, and Waiorongomai. His first success was at Broken Hills.<sup>630</sup> An English firm had 'badly planned and conducted' this mine, and under Adams' direction 'initial operations were unsuccessful, but in 1901 payable ore was located at the lowest adit'. In 1899 and 1900, 2,818 tons produced 1,537 ounces, worth £1,744.<sup>631</sup> By October 1902, five dividends had been paid,<sup>632</sup> and December's annual report made 'pleasant reading':

The profit for the past year equals close on 95% of the paid-up capital of the company for practically only nine months' work, and the mine is said to be only in its infancy. The net profit for the year was £13,689 3s 5d, and out of this £8947 11s 11d had been paid away in dividends. These satisfactory results are due mainly to the splendid management of Mr H.H. Adams, who had courageously maintained in face of strong and determined opposition that the property was a good one and would be a dividend payer. At great personal inconvenience and only by coming to the rescue when the financial aid was required, has he been able to continue his labour.<sup>633</sup>

His hard work was rewarding financially, his bank manager noting in October that 'with sale of Tairua Broken Hill shares and dividends on same [he] is left with 20,000 free of cost'.<sup>634</sup> The following February, the *Observer*

<sup>629</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 19 October 1900, p. 4; *Auckland Weekly News*, 7 December 1900, p. 34.

<sup>630</sup> For some details of the finances of his Tairua Broken Hills Gold Mining Company, see Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary May 1900-December 1901, pp. 145 (17 June 1901), 154 (6 July 1901), 162 (13 August 1901), 195 (5 December 1901), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>631</sup> James Mackintosh Bell and Colin Fraser, *The Geology of the Waihi-Tairua Subdivision, Hauraki Division*, (Geological Survey Bulletin No. 15 (New Series), Wellington, 1912), p. 77.

<sup>632</sup> *Observer*, 11 October 1902, p. 7; for description of the mine, see 3 May 1902, p. 10.

<sup>633</sup> *Thames Star*, 11 December 1902, p. 2.

<sup>634</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary January 1902-June 1903, p. 91 (6 October 1902), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

used this mine to illustrate its argument about the ill-effects of British capital:

It was handed over to the British company as a most promising property, but after £40,000 had been spent upon or in connection with it, the mine was abandoned as worthless. Then Mr H.H. Adams, who stands out prominently as one of the most enterprising and capable mine managers the field has seen, took an interest in the property. Where others had failed, he was satisfied he could succeed.

Forming a local company, with an available capital of something like £12,000, he proceeded with the development of the property on vigorous and practical lines. Certainly there were grave obstacles to overcome, but being a man of indomitable determination, Mr Adams overcame them. Indeed, when the exchequer of the local company was low, he did not hesitate to finance it with his own money. And he succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations of his friends. In less than twelve months, the Tairua Broken Hills has produced something like £25,000 worth of gold, out of which it has repaid the whole of the subscribed capital of £12,000 or £13,000 in dividends.

This is a record for our goldfields in recent years. It is a result that Mr Adams has reason to be proud of. He has had the advantage of no adventitious aid in his undertaking. Indeed, these results have been achieved in the face of misrepresentation and bitter hostility from a large section of the mining community which had much to gain by his success. On the Exchange, the stock in the Tairua Broken Hills has been persistently depreciated by wretched stories designed to frighten investors and shake public confidence. But nothing speaks like bullion.<sup>635</sup>

In August, Adams explained that the mine was 'being opened up systematically, the quartz coming to hand remains of the same average quality, the battery is kept going, the monthly output varies very little, the dividends are being paid regularly, and the development work is well ahead of the requirements'.<sup>636</sup> In November 1903 a Broken Hills correspondent wrote that Adams had 'forsaken us',<sup>637</sup> indicating that he was concentrating on other areas at that time. One was further up the Tairua Valley, at the Golden Belt mine near Neavesville, where he supervised the prospecting and development 'in a systematic manner', the outcome exceeding 'the

<sup>635</sup> *Observer*, 7 February 1903, p. 3.

<sup>636</sup> Broken Hills Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 7 August 1903, p. 3.

<sup>637</sup> Tairua Broken Hills Special Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 11 November 1903, p. 3.

expectations of all concerned'.<sup>638</sup> At Coromandel he was supervisor of the Royal Oak, which he had purchased along with the Hauraki ground before floating them as companies.<sup>639</sup> But, as shown below, from 1903 onwards his attention had mainly turned to Thames.<sup>640</sup>

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

His success as a miner may have assisted him in local government elections. In 1890, he had failed to be elected for the Paeroa Riding of the Ohinemuri County Council, winning only 20 votes, those successful obtaining over 30 more.<sup>641</sup> In 1902, when he stood for the Totara Riding of the Thames County Council, the *Thames Star* wrote that he was 'a man of experience' who had a 'progressive' policy and 'a just regard to an even distribution of the money at the disposal of the Council. His advent to the Council should be a decided advantage'.<sup>642</sup> Even with this support, his 83 votes made him equal last of those elected, the other successful candidates obtaining 99 and 94 votes.<sup>643</sup>

## MINING AT THAMES

In June 1903, he bought the Eclipse mine and battery at Tararu Creek, on the northern edge of Thames, where mining was 'practically a dead letter'.<sup>644</sup> Later that month, the *Observer* suggested that 'the Thames people will have to erect a monument to perpetuate the memory of Harry Hopper Adams if he continues to galvanize new life into the mining industry at the rate he is doing'.<sup>645</sup> In July he purchased the Moanataiari mine, which meant the amalgamation of the Alburnia and Moanataiari properties and permitted him to extend the Moanataiari tunnel to test and

<sup>638</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 172 no. 1062, ANZ-A; 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 22 August 1903, p. 20; *New Zealand Mines Record*, 16 September 1903, p. 55.

<sup>639</sup> *Thames Star*, 27 July 1904, p. 2; Weston, p. 184.

<sup>640</sup> Because of the loss of the *Thames Star* from January to June 1903, details are available only for the second half of this year.

<sup>641</sup> *Thames Star*, 13 November 1890, p. 2.

<sup>642</sup> *Thames Star*, 31 October 1902, p. 2.

<sup>643</sup> *Thames Star*, 13 November 1902, p. 1.

<sup>644</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 6 June 1903, p. 20.

<sup>645</sup> *Observer*, 13 June 1903, p. 7.

hopefully work the lower levels, which would ‘prove beneficial to adjacent mines’.<sup>646</sup> Once again he appealed to the government for financial assistance, as his company’s capital was limited, and the future of Thames depended ‘greatly on this work being carried out speedily’.<sup>647</sup> At the end of August, he requested a £ for £ subsidy to assist his Old Alburnia Company to drive this tunnel another 2,500 feet over two years, at a cost of £6,000. If granted, it would ‘make the tunnel a public highway’, which would ‘be of great public benefit’ as other companies could use it. There was a large tonnage of low-grade ore at Punga Flat which was not payable because of the high cost of transit; his proposal would solve this problem and create work. He insisted that he did not wish to monopolize this portion of the field, but, by testing the low levels there, in his opinion, ‘endorsed by fully 90% of the old miners of the District’, he would ‘take the old Thames out of its present depressed state’.<sup>648</sup> James Coutts, the mining inspector, considered that the only point in the tunnel’s favour was that others could use it. Adams had not mentioned that in the past the ore had been transported by aerial tramway, and the tunnel would be more expensive. Some Alburnia shareholders shared Coutts’ expectation that nothing payable would be found, selling shares taken up ‘on the chance of a rise’. He did not recommend the subsidy because ‘it would only give an opportunity to rise the shares on the market’ at ‘the general public’s expense’.<sup>649</sup> Cabinet resolved that the matter ‘stand over for three months’, and one year later it was shelved permanently.<sup>650</sup>

Also in August, Adams floated the May Queen with ‘substantial capital’.<sup>651</sup> He tried to purchase the Thames Hauraki pumping plant to work the May Queen and the Queen of Beauty, particularly to find if there was gold in the Vanguard reef, a lode he had found 30 years previously. When refused the pump, he responded that the government must do

<sup>646</sup> *Thames Star*, 22 July 1903, p. 4; *New Zealand Herald*, 29 July 1903, Supplement, p. 2.

<sup>647</sup> *Thames Star*, 5 August 1903, p. 2, including editorial.

<sup>648</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 29 August 1903, Mines Department, MD 1, 03/928, ANZ-W.

<sup>649</sup> James Coutts (Inspector of Mines) to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 3 September 1903, Mines Department, MD 1, 03/928, ANZ-W.

<sup>650</sup> Memoranda of 12 September 1903, 21 December 1903, 10 August 1904, Mines Department, MD 1, 03/928, ANZ-W.

<sup>651</sup> ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 22 August 1903, p. 20.

something ‘or there would soon be no Thames’.<sup>652</sup> The *Thames Star* appreciated Adams’ involvement, for he had

proved that he is not a man who adopts the dog in the manger policy, he has already proved that he does not take over mines merely for the sake of speculating with them without working, nor does he while omitting to work properties himself, apply for protection after protection, thus preventing others from securing and working these mines.

If he found he could not work a mine, ‘he says candidly that it is of no value to him and those who come along and can do better are welcome to it’.<sup>653</sup> He did not ‘believe in letting the grass grow under his feet’, all his undertakings being characterized by ‘promptness’.<sup>654</sup>

In December, accompanied by four members of his syndicate, all directors of the Old Alburnia Company, inspected the latest discovery in the Moanataiari tunnel. All agreed that the newly intersected reef ‘was of the greatest importance and opened up possibilities difficult to estimate’. The company would concentrate on opening up this new reef.<sup>655</sup> For years he urged the development of the low levels. For example, in 1907 he was certain that there would be ‘a very pronounced success in the deep level working’. His opinion was ‘based on a fairly accurate knowledge of the conditions and material awaiting them in the work’, which would create ‘an appreciable revivifying’ of Thames mining.<sup>656</sup>

#### NEGOTIATING WITH THE UNION

As a leading mine owner, Adams was one of the three employers’ representatives at negotiations with the Thames Miners’ Union in 1903 over pay and conditions.<sup>657</sup> A later comment about a new Mining Bill gave a clear indication about his attitude to managerial prerogatives: ‘Harry

<sup>652</sup> ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 29 August 1903, p. 20; *Thames Star*, 29 August 1903, p. 2.

<sup>653</sup> Editorial, *Thames Star*, 24 August 1903, p. 2.

<sup>654</sup> *Thames Star*, 24 August 1903, p. 2.

<sup>655</sup> *Thames Star*, 19 December 1903, p. 2.

<sup>656</sup> Waihi Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 26 April 1907, p. 2.

<sup>657</sup> *Thames Star*, 4 November 1903, p. 2.

doesn't want any trades union inspectors poaching on his own preserves'.<sup>658</sup> But when he was one of the employers' representatives at a conference with the union in 1908, he was willing to concede an increase in wages from 8s to 8s 6d a day because he considered that Thames miners 'were fully entitled to as high wages as was paid in the up-country districts, on account of the conditions under which they worked. The conditions were much worse than existed in any of the out district mines, both as regards health and the wear and tear of clothes and boots'.<sup>659</sup>

Adams represented all Thames owners at a 1912 meeting with the union that determined the agreement for the following year.<sup>660</sup> Also in that year, when a meeting of representatives of the main companies formed the New Zealand Goldmine Owners' Association, he was one of seven men appointed to frame the rules and regulations.<sup>661</sup> The following year, he was elected to its committee of management.<sup>662</sup> In 1916, when the union sought a ten per cent increase in wages because of the increased cost of living, he agreed, and declared that in addition he would allow his men a monthly bonus of 33 per cent on all profits.<sup>663</sup> As shown below, he was not likely to have to fulfill this pledge, but the gesture may have been sincere, as he was always expecting to make a profit.

#### HIS SYNDICATE

In mid-1903 Adams was referred to as 'the business head' of his syndicate's mines.<sup>664</sup> Contractors worked them,<sup>665</sup> under his general supervision; he made regular tours of inspection.<sup>666</sup> To assist him, McCombie by September was his 'first lieutenant';<sup>667</sup> it is not known how

<sup>658</sup> *Observer*, 12 September 1908, p. 9.

<sup>659</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 April 1908, p. 32.

<sup>660</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 2 May 1912, p. 36.

<sup>661</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 2 May 1912, p. 36.

<sup>662</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 24 July 1913, p. 56.

<sup>663</sup> Press cutting from *New Zealand Herald*, 5 June 1916, Labour Department, L 3, 2/203, ANZ-W.

<sup>664</sup> *Thames Star*, 22 July 1903, p. 1.

<sup>665</sup> For example, *Thames Star*, 3 October 1903, p. 2.

<sup>666</sup> For example, *Thames Star*, 23 September 1903, p. 2.

<sup>667</sup> *Thames Star*, 19 September 1903, p. 1.

long he had this role. In the first decade of the twentieth century, three of Adams' sons assisted him with several mines and batteries.<sup>668</sup>

Members of his syndicate members often accompanied him on his inspections. For example, in July 1903 Richard Mitchelson and James Smith inspected the 'various properties' in the Thames district and Coromandel in which they were 'interested'.<sup>669</sup> Two weeks later, 'Adams and party' were inspecting his properties at Tapu, Broken Hills, and Neavesville.<sup>670</sup> Some of these tours became social occasions; for instance, when going to Great Barrier Island in October 1904 to inspect one of his properties, he caught a hapuka weighing 44 pounds, 'which was distributed amongst the Thames excursionists'.<sup>671</sup> This trip was presumably on his steam launch, owned since at least November 1888, 'Liza Jane'.<sup>672</sup> Later visits to Great Barrier Island put aside time for fishing.<sup>673</sup>

By 1904, Adams not only had new interests on Great Barrier Island, but also at Coromandel,<sup>674</sup> Waiomu,<sup>675</sup> and Maratoto, where he was battery superintendent for the New Maratoto Company.<sup>676</sup> The *Observer* noted that goldfield newspapers were 'well aware of the importance of live men. They chronicle Harry Adams' movements with as much detail as those of a prince'.<sup>677</sup> One month later, it published a cartoon showing Adams standing in front of a poster stating, 'Floating Mines: Admiral Togo successfully floated one in Port Arthur: Great Jubilation'. The caption was 'Not Such a Great Feat After All: H.H. Adams (the Thames Ore King): Pooh! That is nothing to blow about. Floating mines, eh? Why, I floated ten mines

<sup>668</sup> For example, John: *Thames Star*, 5 July 1905, p. 2; *Observer*, 38 July 1923, p. 4; Bert: *New Zealand Mines Record*, 16 July 1903, p. 509; Dick: Memorandum of Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 1 August 1922, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>669</sup> *Thames Star*, 22 July 1903, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>670</sup> *Thames Star*, 5 August 1903, p. 2.

<sup>671</sup> *Thames Star*, 7 October 1904, p. 2, 12 October 1904, p. 2.

<sup>672</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 28 November 1888, p. 2, 9 January 1889, p. 2.

<sup>673</sup> *Thames Star*, 1 July 1905, p. 2 [the spelling at that time was Waiomo].

<sup>674</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 February 1904, p. 41, 10 November 1904, p. 32.

<sup>675</sup> *Thames Star*, 9 September 1904, p. 4, 3 October 1904, p. 3.

<sup>676</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 19 May 1904, p. 41; *New Zealand Mines Record*, 16 November 1904, p. 170; *Thames Star*, 2 December 1904, p. 2.

<sup>677</sup> *Observer*, 5 March 1904, p. 7.

successfully right in the heart of a slump'.<sup>678</sup> In July, it wrote that the 'latest partnership' was of 'the local millionaires, Adams and J.J. Craig. 'It is operating in the quartz-crushing mills of liquidated mining companies, mostly the bad bargains of British capitalists, and buying up costly batteries at a price averaging something like 6d in the £ on this original cost'.<sup>679</sup> The Old New Whau mine at Thames was bought for £25.<sup>680</sup> On the last day of the year, the *Thames Star* wrote that,

In connection with the improved prospects of the Thames field, and the hopeful feeling that exists throughout the community, there is a general consensus of opinion that a good deal of praise is due to Mr H.H. Adams, who is superintendent of several of our most important mines. He has done valuable work, and gives promise of carrying out interesting and important operations (which have a direct bearing upon the future of the field) during the coming year.<sup>681</sup>

#### 1905: A BUSY YEAR

In this year Adams became director of the Charleston Beach Sluicing Company, on the West Coast,<sup>682</sup> the only time that he invested in mining outside the North Island. At the other end of New Zealand, he had interests in coal mines near Whangarei.<sup>683</sup> He acquired mines at Whangamata,<sup>684</sup> and was praised for a return of £2,450 from 518 tons extracted from a mine which had failed when operated by a British company. By the end of the year he had taken out a total of £63,318 from the Tairua Broken Hills since acquiring it in 1902.<sup>685</sup> In October he bought the Waitekauri Extended mine

<sup>678</sup> Cartoon, *Observer*, 23 April 1904, p. 16.

<sup>679</sup> *Observer*, 2 July 1904, p. 4; that nominal purchase prices were paid for liquidated properties was confirmed by 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 16 July 1904, p. 20.

<sup>680</sup> *Observer*, 8 October 1904, p. 12.

<sup>681</sup> *Thames Star*, 31 December 1904, p. 2.

<sup>682</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 175 no. 1083, ANZ-A.

<sup>683</sup> *Thames Star*, 25 November 1905, p. 2.

<sup>684</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 April 1905, p. 26; *Thames Star*, 22 September 1905, p. 2.

<sup>685</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 30 December 1905, p. 20.

and battery.<sup>686</sup> He also bought portions of the Thames field that he had not been previously worked.<sup>687</sup>

In January, he was elected to the Thames Drainage Board,<sup>688</sup> which oversaw the draining of the mines. His attempts to de-water the lower levels and to sink even deeper to enable further prospecting met government opposition and did not eventuate, even though he insisted that he did not want to monopolize the Thames Hauraki pump. He told the minister that ‘if any of our leading mining men’ could ‘propound a better scheme’ he was ‘quite willing to give them all the assistance’ possible.<sup>689</sup> ‘With his usual enterprise’ he devised other schemes for developing his mines.<sup>690</sup> The plan to extend the Moanataiari tunnel had been devised by others years previously, but he was praised for the ‘energy and progressiveness’ that meant this important work was, finally, being carried out.<sup>691</sup> He purchased the Fame and Fortune and Nonpareil mines to combine them and ‘form a strong company to work them from the Alburnia main tunnel’. A crosscut would ‘cut the main reefs running through the ground at a depth of several hundred feet below any previous workings’.<sup>692</sup>

In September, the *Thames Star* gave an example of a tour of inspection to show how he

puts in a busy time, and moves about very quickly. On Wednesday morning, in company with Mr R. Mitchelson, he left at six o'clock for Whangamata, and after putting in three and a half hours inspection of the mine, etc, he returned and arrived back at Thames at nine o'clock at night. On Thursday he attended the meeting of the Thames Drainage Board, paid a visit to the Waiotahi mine, and also to some of the mines at Thames in which he is interested. This morning he proceeds to Neavesville and Tairua, where he will inspect the Golden Belt and Broken Hill

<sup>686</sup> *Thames Star*, 20 October 1905, p. 4.

<sup>687</sup> *Thames Star*, 19 September 1905, p. 1, 12 October 1905, p. 2.

<sup>688</sup> *Thames Star*, 27 January 1905, p. 4.

<sup>689</sup> *Thames Star*, 18 January 1905, p. 1; see also editorial, 19 January 1905, p. 2, 3 February 1905, p. 4, 7 February 1905, p. 2, 9 February 1905, p. 2, editorial, 10 February 1905, p. 2.

<sup>690</sup> *Thames Star*, 24 January 1905, p. 3, 19 September 1905, p. 1, 12 October 1905, p. 2.

<sup>691</sup> *Thames Star*, 13 October 1905, p. 2.

<sup>692</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 25 October 1905, Supplement, p. 2.

Mines, and will probably be back on Saturday in time to catch one of the steamers for Auckland.<sup>693</sup>

New developments in Broken Hills showed ‘every prospect of good results’.<sup>694</sup> His visits there were now few and brief. ‘His range of inspection takes in the greater part, and by far the roughest parts of the Peninsula. With so much rough living and travelling he manages to put on a little extra avoirdupois’.<sup>695</sup> Praised for having ‘done so much to restore prosperity to the goldfields’,<sup>696</sup> he was sketched as ‘Harry Mining Magnate Adams’. Pictured driving his car at speed, he exclaimed, ‘By Golly, if I could only make the mining industry move along at this rate, we’d see some dividends’.<sup>697</sup> He also described himself as one of those who had ‘made’ Waihi, then booming.<sup>698</sup> Not all of his investments were profitable: in December he mentioned to his bank manager that he held 1,150 shares in the Waiotahi Company ‘which stand him in nothing’.<sup>699</sup>

#### FURTHER INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Late in 1905, Adams stood for re-election for the Totara Riding of the Thames County Council. The *Thames Star* wrote that he had ‘attended most regularly and attentively to his duties’ and had done ‘valuable work’. He had ‘given close attention to the requirements of the riding, while also acting in the interests of the whole district’.<sup>700</sup> His advertisement was simple: ‘I beg to announce that I am again a Candidate ... and if you do me the honor of electing me, I will endeavor to do my duty as I have done in the past’.<sup>701</sup> He was re-elected with 93 votes, the third highest vote in his riding; the highest was 116.<sup>702</sup> The *Observer* described what happened next:

<sup>693</sup> *Thames Star*, 22 September 1905, p. 4.

<sup>694</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 25 October 1905, Supplement, p. 2.

<sup>695</sup> Tairua Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 22 November 1905, p. 1.

<sup>696</sup> ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 30 December 1905, p. 20.

<sup>697</sup> Cartoon, *Observer*, Christmas Annual, 1905, p. 7.

<sup>698</sup> *Observer*, 18 November 1905, p. 16.

<sup>699</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager’s Diary August 1905–October 1907, p. 30 (28 December 1905), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>700</sup> *Thames Star*, 26 October 1905, p. 2.

<sup>701</sup> Editorial, *Thames Star*, 4 November 1905, p. 4.

<sup>702</sup> *Thames Star*, 9 November 1905, p. 3.

Harry Adams might at this moment have been Chairman of the Thames County Council had he so chosen. Probably it was his modesty that made him forego the honour; either that or he feels that he already wields sufficient power and responsibility on the peninsula as the boss of so many of its principal gold mines. At any rate, he drew back when the position was practically his for the taking.

In voting for the chairman, three candidates got three votes each. As Adams and Richard Wellington Bagnall, of Turua,<sup>703</sup> represented the same riding, it was agreed that one should withdraw. ‘The toss of a penny resulted in Mr Adams’ favour. Then he generously decided to waive his luck, seeing that his colleague had been longer in the Council than himself. The *Observer* believed he would have become chairman otherwise.<sup>704</sup> In July 1906, he was elected unopposed to a vacancy on the Thames Harbour Board as the representatives of the shipowners and those who paid port dues.<sup>705</sup> He would be re-elected, unopposed, in 1909.<sup>706</sup>

#### LIVING IN TAKAPUNA

In the 1890s, he moved his family to Takapuna, dismantling his house near Te Aroha and taking it in sections to be re-erected there.<sup>707</sup> He had first acquired land there in July 1886, five acres that he sold in April 1894.<sup>708</sup> In March 1897 he acquired 19 acres two roods and 35 perches between the main road and Lake Pupuke.<sup>709</sup> In July he acquired adjoining land, making a total of 24 acres two roods 36 perches;<sup>710</sup> with his sons he

<sup>703</sup> *Ohinemuri Electoral Roll, 1899*, p. 5.

<sup>704</sup> *Observer*, 2 December 1905, p. 4; this was a variant of *Thames Advertiser*, 22 November 1905, p. 2.

<sup>705</sup> *Thames Star*, 27 July 1906, p. 2.

<sup>706</sup> *Thames Star*, 1 February 1909, p. 3.

<sup>707</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Securities 1889-1903, folio 420; Auckland Securities Register No. 1, folio 476; Ohinemuri Balance Book to 30 September 1899: Report on Advances, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington; *Te Aroha News*, 18 June 1898, p. 2, 18 February 1911, p. 3.

<sup>708</sup> Certificates of Title, vol. 46, folio 190, Land Information New Zealand, Auckland.

<sup>709</sup> Certificates of Title, vol. 7, folio 149, Land Information New Zealand, Auckland.

<sup>710</sup> Certificates of Title, vol. 83 folio 283, Land Information New Zealand, Auckland.

worked this estate 'for years'.<sup>711</sup> This purchase cost him £1,500: the following day he refused an offer of £2,000.<sup>712</sup> By late 1900, his finances were in a very healthy state, and the Bank of New Zealand was willing to permit an overdraft limit of £1,000 for mining investment. He had mortgaged his house and property at Takapuna, valued at £870, to raise £350, owned land at Takapuna, Waitoa, Paeroa, and Waipakukahu with an unimproved value of £2,265, and had mortgages totalling £1,970 owing to him.<sup>713</sup> In August 1901, he told his bank manager that two houses had been built on his Takapuna land recently; he lived in the one costing £900, and rented the one costing £800. He had bought another 42 acres on the North Shore for £1,000 and spent £300 in clearing it.<sup>714</sup> In November he reported that, as one acre adjacent to his 25 acres at Takapuna had sold for £150, he considered his land 'readily realisable @ £100 per acre'.<sup>715</sup> His land, which became known as Tahoroto Park, had 'commanding views across to Rangitoto Island as well as across Lake Pupuke. In 1912 he bought the adjoining property and the family moved into Greydene, an impressive massively verandahed house which had been built in 1860'. His property stretched to the edge of Lake Pupuke.<sup>716</sup> Part of his property was leased from the Catholic Church, which in turn held the land in a disputed lease from Maori; in 1916, wanting to develop the Awataha block (in the Shoal Bay area), he charged two rangatira with trespass, leading to years of legal and political challenges, resulting in the eventual ejection of the Maori claimants.<sup>717</sup>

In 1906 and 1907 he was the leading member of a syndicate that established the Takapuna Tramways and Ferry Company, and became a

<sup>711</sup> *Observer*, 23 May 1928, p. 15.

<sup>712</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary May 1900-December 1901, p. 186 (8 November 1901), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>713</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary May 1900-December 1901, p. 72 (14 November 1900), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>714</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary May 1900-December 1901, p. 165 (24 August 1901), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>715</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary May 1900-December 1901, p. 186 (8 November 1901), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>716</sup> Spicer, p. 83.

<sup>717</sup> David Verran, *The North Shore – An illustrated history* (Auckland, 2010), pp. 24-25.

director.<sup>718</sup> One historian of the North Shore described this venture as a ‘classic problem of just enough people on the Shore at the time to make his speculative schemes work. The tram company made a profit on the ferry rides but not on the tram rides – not enough customers’.<sup>719</sup> ‘From 1907 to 1908 he was one of eight owners of the steam ship *Claymore* which did regular runs north from Auckland, and in 1911 became one of four shareholders in *Pupuke*, a new steam ferry’ designed to operate between Auckland and the North Shore.<sup>720</sup> He started a quarry on the edge of Lake Pupuke, but when the lake flooded it he found a new quarry site at Takapuna, which was operated by the next two generations of his family. ‘In about 1912’ Adams and his sons started milling kauri and other timber at Barry’s Point.<sup>721</sup>

He was elected unopposed for a vacancy on the Takapuna Riding of the Waitemata County Council in May 1905, and re-elected unopposed in November.<sup>722</sup> He was to serve for 18 years on this council.<sup>723</sup> In 1914, he joined the Takapuna Borough Council.<sup>724</sup> First elected to the Auckland Harbour Board in 1911, he remained a member ‘until his age and duties compelled him to resign’.<sup>725</sup>

Her descendants believed that Eliza had at least 15 pregnancies,<sup>726</sup> although only nine survived, leaving little time in her earlier years as a mother to be involved in many activities outside the home. Shortly after moving to Takapuna, in July 1899 her youngest child and second daughter, aged three years and seven months, played with matches, her clothes

<sup>718</sup> *Observer*, 23 June 1906, p. 7, 7 July 1906, p. 7, 10 August 1907, p. 17, advertisement, 24 August 1907, p. 9, 23 May 1928, p. 15; *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 December 1906, p. 23, 10 February 1910, Supplement, p. 14; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1313, ANZ-A; Jean Bartlett, ‘The Businessmen’, in *Takapuna: People and places*, ed. Bartlett (Auckland, 1989), p. 44; Spicer, p. 83.

<sup>719</sup> David Verran to Philip Hart, 21 November 2011, email.

<sup>720</sup> Spicer, p. 83.

<sup>721</sup> Spicer, pp. 83-84.

<sup>722</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 25 May 1905, p. 22; *Thames Star*, 4 November 1905, p. 2.

<sup>723</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 16 May 1928, p. 12.

<sup>724</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 May 1914, p. 25; see *Observer*, 13 July 1912, p. 5.

<sup>725</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 February 1912, p. 23; *Observer*, 20 May 1911, p. 5, 23 May 1928, p. 15.

<sup>726</sup> Spicer, p. 79.

caught fire, and she died of burns.<sup>727</sup> Eliza did acquire an occupation later, being recorded in 1908 in a list of shareholders of one of Adams' mines as a 'poultry expert'.<sup>728</sup> In 1920, when she was a shareholder in one of her husband's companies either in her own right or as his dummy, she was recorded as a farmer.<sup>729</sup> Adjoining their house Greydene was a small farmlet which she farmed as a hobby once her children had grown up. It included 'an orchard and a large kitchen garden and Eliza kept cows for milk, butter and clotted cream and had turkeys, muscovy ducks and chickens'.<sup>730</sup> During good financial times, 'having 30 or more to their dinner or house parties was not unusual for the family'. A granddaughter clearly recalled the 'huge dining table' being crowded, with 'Eliza, who was a superb cook, and her assistants' producing 'steaming roast turkeys and ducks, and great bowls of vegetables, fruit and clotted cream'.<sup>731</sup> Although an obituary stated that Adams and his sons worked the land at Takapuna,<sup>732</sup> clearly Eliza had an active role, probably more active than Adams because of his multitudinous mining activities; in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries he spent only the weekends at his home.<sup>733</sup>

She had an interest in one other of Adams' companies, as did her son Bert.<sup>734</sup> Adams applied for one claim named after her, the Eliza on Great Barrier Island, but then withdrew the application.<sup>735</sup> At the Auckland reunion of Thames pioneers in 1927, she provided a 'huge birthday cake of four tiers', decorated with 'icing-sugar shovels and picks and a neat miner's cottage. On it was placed 60 candles, and the whole was surmounted by a diamond-shaped tier from which were suspended golden-coloured bells'. During the festivities, she gave a recitation of 'The Miner's Daughter'.<sup>736</sup>

## SOCIAL LIFE

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<sup>727</sup> *Waikato Argus*, 25 July 1899, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 July 1899, p. 1.

<sup>728</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 214 no. 1276, ANZ-A.

<sup>729</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 374 no. 2086, ANZ-A.

<sup>730</sup> Spicer, p. 83.

<sup>731</sup> Spicer, pp. 82-83.

<sup>732</sup> *Observer*, 23 May 1938, p. 15.

<sup>733</sup> Spicer, p. 79.

<sup>734</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 158 no. 1005, ANZ-A.

<sup>735</sup> Warden's Court, *Thames Star*, 18 January 1907, p. 2.

<sup>736</sup> *Thames Star*, 8 August 1927, p. 5.

In 1907, he bought Moturoa Island, situated half a mile offshore near the mouth of the Kerikeri River in the Bay of Islands. Just over 363 acres, it cost him £900, and was, his bank manager recorded, ‘apparently a good purchase’.<sup>737</sup> According to family records, the price was £1,20, and he had bought it as a ‘holiday resort’. For the following nine years his family divided their summer ‘between the island and cruising around the Bay of Islands’ on a succession of steam launches: ‘Arita’, ‘Eliza’, and ‘Kumi’.<sup>738</sup> Descendants recalled that the previous owner had erected ‘a comfortable homestead’ and there was ‘an established orchard, flower and vegetable gardens, and an old cottage’, plus large trees and a windmill. The family ‘arrived every summer to shelves full of preserved fruit, supplies of smoked fish, and bottles of home-made wine, as well as fresh milk, cream, butter and vegetables, thanks to the excellent long-term housekeeper they employed on the island’, whose name was possibly Robinson and whose ‘culinary feats remain in family legend’.

Her parsnip wine was legendary, and all visitors to the island accepted, without too much fuss, a glassful or more, poured from an enormous earthenware jug.

Once, during a relaxing session with visitors over a jug of house wine, a family member, during a routine refill, caught a brief sight of a mouse floating on a wave of wine, and being swept precariously close to the lip of the upturned jug before disappearing into the depth. Mrs Robinson, who was an economical woman, with dexterous hand movements continued dispensing wine with a look that silenced the astonished observer. The mouse disappeared during a routine topping-up of the jug in the kitchen, but the story has stayed with the family for three generations.<sup>739</sup>

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<sup>737</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 7 folio 224, Land Information New Zealand, Auckland; Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager’s Diary August 1905–October 1907, p. 180 (11 June 1907), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington; High Court, Auckland, Appeals 1893–1920, 12/241, Justice Department, BBAE 5528/1, ANZ-A.

<sup>738</sup> Spicer, p. 79; for photographs, c. 1910, on the family and friends on the steps and verandah of the homestead and picnicking in front of the vegetable garden at Homestead Beach, see pp. 80, 81.

<sup>739</sup> Spicer, pp. 79–80.

On their annual voyages to the island, the family ‘was usually accompanied by other boats and the journey would often turn into a coastal race. On arrival the other vessels would anchor off Moturoa with their occupants picnicking and partying with the Adams on shore’. The ‘well-dressed and well-fed guests’ were photographed, part of the ‘excellent documentary of his adventurous life’ recorded by Adams and retained by his family.<sup>740</sup> Eliza Adams and her unmarried daughter Aroha and the latter’s friends assisted in the kitchen, producing a ‘long procession of plates containing mouth-watering food’.<sup>741</sup>

In January 1909, his ‘handsome oil launch Eliza arrived in Thames’ after a ‘fast passage’ from Auckland of four and a half hours. A ‘well built vessel’ 40 feet long, it was fitted by his son John with a 25 horsepower engine, and could cover about nine miles in an hour.<sup>742</sup> After ‘various experiments’ by John had the boat in ‘real ocean-going trim’, his father challenged another motorboat owner to a race with the intention of reversing his defeat in a previous race.<sup>743</sup> A 1932 obituary of his friend Ted McLeod recalled it:

Captain McLeod had the distinction of steering the winning vessel in the longest motor-boat race held in New Zealand waters. The race took place in January, 1909, between the Eliza, owned by Mr H.H. Adams, and the Seabird, owned by Mr Reid. The course was from Auckland to Russell and back, and the stake £50 a side. Captain McLeod was in the Eliza. The vessels left Auckland at eight o’clock on a Saturday morning, and encountered a stiff north-east breeze throughout the northern run. They arrived back in Auckland about mid-day on the following day, the Eliza crossing the line first.<sup>744</sup>

It had led all the way in a race lasting 30 hours 35 minutes.<sup>745</sup> The victory prompted a comic verse in the *Observer*.<sup>746</sup> This journal was amused in 1911, when Adams returned home in the dark from an unsuccessful duck shooting trip, fell off his launch ‘Dreadnought’, and imagining himself to be

<sup>740</sup> Spicer, p. 81.

<sup>741</sup> Spicer, p. 83.

<sup>742</sup> *Thames Star*, 4 January 1909, p. 2.

<sup>743</sup> *Thames Star*, 1 February 1909, p. 2.

<sup>744</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 15 February 1932, p. 9.

<sup>745</sup> *Thames Star*, 1 February 1909, p. 2.

<sup>746</sup> *Observer*, 6 February 1909, p. 23; note also p. 11; see also 18 February 1932, p. 9.

drowning - in three feet of water.<sup>747</sup> Adams invited 23 people, one of them his mining associate John McCombie, to spend their 1911 Christmas holidays with him on his island.<sup>748</sup>

As the guarantor of his son John's contract to construct the main sewer for Brisbane, when John lost both the contract and all his money Adams was forced to raise money by selling his island to a farmer in May 1916 for £2,500, a good profit.<sup>749</sup>

## NATIONAL POLITICS?

In 1886, Adams signed the address presented to Sir George Grey on his 74th birthday,<sup>750</sup> which implied but did not prove that he supported Grey and the Liberal Party. In July 1905, Coromandel newspapers suggested that he would stand for Thames at the next election.<sup>751</sup> The *Observer* considered that, although he had political ambitions and felt 'strongly the neglect of the Thames and Coromandel districts by the Government', he was so busy controlling most of the mining at Thames that there was 'no likelihood of his neglecting his legitimate business for politics just yet'.<sup>752</sup> In 1908, it commented that James McGowan, the local Member of Parliament and Minister of Mines in the Liberal government, had the safest seat in New Zealand. No man dared 'chance his overthrow' apart from Adams, who was 'too busy reconstructing his supervising coffers to attend to politics. Otherwise he would win hands down. Anyhow, Harry says so, and he knows it if nobody else does'.<sup>753</sup> In 1909, Adams was once more asked to stand against McGowan,<sup>754</sup> but declined. Although there was a suggestion in 1904

<sup>747</sup> *Observer*, 20 May 1911, p. 5, and cartoon on p. 12.

<sup>748</sup> John McCombie, 'The Bay of Islands', *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 February 1912, p. 17; High Court, Auckland, Appeals 1893-1920, 12/241, Department of Justice, BBAE 5528/1, ANZ-A.

<sup>749</sup> Certificate of Title, vol. 37, folio 224, Land Information New Zealand, Auckland; Spicer, p. 85.

<sup>750</sup> 'Addresses Presented to Sir George Grey on his 74th Birthday, 14 April 1886, by European and Maori Residents of the Province of Auckland', p. 132, Grey New Zealand MS 275, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>751</sup> *Thames Star*, 27 July 1905, p. 2.

<sup>752</sup> *Observer*, 2 September 1905, p. 18.

<sup>753</sup> *Observer*, 11 July 1908, p. 11.

<sup>754</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 14 January 1909, p. 2.

that he might establish a newspaper at Thames that would support Seddon,<sup>755</sup> in fact he was a consistent opponent of Seddon and his party.<sup>756</sup>

### MINING MAGNATE

In 1906, James Coutts, the mining inspector, described Adams as 'supervisor of most of the mines' in the Thames district'.<sup>757</sup> That year saw continued expansion of his mining empire, with new developments at Coromandel,<sup>758</sup> and the erection under his supervision of a new battery at the Sunbeam mine on Great Barrier Island.<sup>759</sup> It was reported 'that Sunbeam (Great Barrier), Auckland (Whangamata), and Golden Belt (Neavesville) batteries' were 'working splendidly', reflecting 'the highest credit' on Adams, the 'general superintendent', and Frederick Capel Brown, 'the engineer responsible for the erection of the major portion'.<sup>760</sup> In May, it was announced that he would erect a large plant on the Thames foreshore to deal with the tailings deposited there since the opening of the goldfield.<sup>761</sup> Two years later, he formed the Thames Foreshore Dredging Company, a private company with only ten shareholders. The three directors were Adams and two leading members of his syndicate, James Smith, a master mariner, and Henry Thomson Gorrie, then a commission agent. Adams held the largest shareholding, 4,000 of the 10,000 shares. By 1914 the treatment of tailings was unprofitable, and Adams took over the company, after meeting its liabilities.<sup>762</sup> He was recalled as raking 'the Thames foreshore with an old dredge'.<sup>763</sup>

One indication of successful mining was his payment into one bank in 1906 of £766, obtained from 'investment in mining properties'.<sup>764</sup> A public

<sup>755</sup> *Observer*, 10 September 1904, p. 7.

<sup>756</sup> *Observer*, 23 May 1928, p. 15.

<sup>757</sup> James Coutts to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 31 May 1906, Inspector of Mines, Thames, Letterbook 1903-1906, pp. 679, 681, YZAB 1240/3, ANZ-A.

<sup>758</sup> For example, *Thames Star*, 30 June 1906, p. 2.

<sup>759</sup> *Thames Star*, 19 April 1906, p. 2.

<sup>760</sup> *Thames Star*, 16 May 1906, p. 2.

<sup>761</sup> *Thames Star*, 16 May 1906, p. 2; see also 7 November 1906, p. 4.

<sup>762</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 228 no. 1342, ANZ-A.

<sup>763</sup> *Thames Star*, 18 August 1932, p. 13.

<sup>764</sup> Bank of New South Wales, Inspector's Half-Yearly Report to 31 March 1906: Thames, p. 94, Acc. No. 102, box 34, Westpac Archives, Wellington.

display of his wealth was his motor car, which he drove from Napier to Rotorua and on to Thames in January 1906, creating newspaper interest.<sup>765</sup> He also wore

a virgin gold nugget tie-pin, and the only watch-chain of its kind on the round earth. It is a pale-looking watch-chain, with a red-gold watch on it, but the chain is gold, all the same. Ten flat bars of metal, an inch long, each joined up with rings of gold. Each flat bar is from a different mine, and is the metal as it comes from the mine. Some is as pale as a shilling, and some a faint yellow colour.<sup>766</sup>

When he took members of his syndicate on an Easter tour of his mines in 1906, he chartered a ship.<sup>767</sup> Another indication of his financial resources, according to the *Observer*, was that when Craig or Adams started bidding at city property sales, others felt ‘inclined to fold up their cheque-books and go home’.<sup>768</sup> In December, ‘the Adams group of mines’ comprised ‘nearly the whole of the mining share list’ on the Auckland Stock Exchange; about 20 mines were listed.<sup>769</sup> However, ‘Obadiah’ had noted in September that only one of these, the Monowai, attracted investors.<sup>770</sup> The following month he wrote that ‘the Adams group’ was ‘dead, for the time being’, its only activity being ‘in the form of calls’.<sup>771</sup>

Adams’ name carried such weight that it was used in a notable share market fraud in 1906. In May, a man claiming to be Adams dictated over the telephone a telegram to the Auckland Stock Exchange reporting the striking of good gold in the Monowai. After this information was published, shares rose from 4d to 1s. Adams, who was at Thames, had not sent the telegram, considered the report was false, and, after promptly checking with the legal manager, repudiated it.<sup>772</sup> While the stock exchange tried to discover who had been the first to sell large quantities of shares, Adams offered a reward of £100 to anyone who could provide information leading to

<sup>765</sup> *Thames Star*, 5 January 1906, p. 2, 8 January 1906, p. 2.

<sup>766</sup> *New Zealand Free Lance*, 20 April 1907, p. 4.

<sup>767</sup> *Thames Star*, 31 March 1906, p. 2.

<sup>768</sup> *Observer*, 4 August 1906, p. 7.

<sup>769</sup> *Observer*, 29 December 1906, p. 2.

<sup>770</sup> ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 29 September 1906, p. 18.

<sup>771</sup> ‘Obadiah’, ‘Shares and Mining’, *Observer*, 27 October 1906, p. 20.

<sup>772</sup> *Thames Star*, 29 May 1906, p. 2, 30 May 1906, p. 2, including editorial.

the discovery of those responsible.<sup>773</sup> The stock exchange authorities claimed not to be able to unmask the perpetrator, which it assured a cynical public was not a sharebroker; although the evidence of a broker's clerk was 'contradictory and unsatisfactory' and he admitted having lied to the investigators, no action was taken against him.<sup>774</sup>

As examples of Adams diversifying his financial interests, he purchased more land and in 1907 acquired a one-eighth interest in a passenger steamer. He informed his bank manager that 'outside his mining interests' he was 'worth about £30,000'.<sup>775</sup> As an example of an imaginative way to make money, he assured the Royal Commission into the silting of the Ohinemuri and Waihou rivers that he could reclaim 90 per cent of future slimes at a cost of one penny per ton in a plant costing from £20,000 to £25,000. 'He would need a week to reduce the scheme to practical form'. The commission was not impressed with this latest inspiration, for it was 'not based upon the rate of disposition of silt calculated upon throughout the inquiry'.<sup>776</sup>

## DECLINING FORTUNES

In 1907, Adams supervised 'half the active mines' in Hauraki and was 'the main spring of the Thames deep level operations'.<sup>777</sup> During that year, he gained sufficient support from shareholders in Thames mining companies to enable his scheme to test the low levels to be implemented.<sup>778</sup>

<sup>773</sup> *Thames Star*, 31 May 1906, p. 2.

<sup>774</sup> *Observer*, 9 June 1906, p. 2, 23 June 1906, p. 3, 21 July 1906, p. 17, 28 July 1906, p. 2, 11 August 1906, p. 16; *Thames Star*, 14 December 1906, p. 1.

<sup>775</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary August 1905-October 1907, p. 180 (11 June 1907), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>776</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 June 1910, p. 23.

<sup>777</sup> *Observer*, 27 April 1907, p. 5.

<sup>778</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary October 1907-May 1911, p. 427 (17 May 1911), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington; *Observer*, 19 January 1907, p. 7, 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', 13 April 1907, p. 20; *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 June 1907, p. 43; Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1907, 282/1907, BACL 14350/55a, ANZ-A.

He also acquired, for the first time, mines at Omaha, south of Thames.<sup>779</sup> Adams and his syndicate by no means had total control of Thames mining; for example, a rival group of directors outvoted them to have their own men appointed as directors to the Saxon Company, forcing Adams to resign as superintendent of its mine.<sup>780</sup> Disagreements with the owners of the Saxon and with other mine managers over his proposed route for a low level tunnel delayed its driving.<sup>781</sup>

By 1908, some of his mines were financially burdensome. He informed the warden that the only way to treat ore from the Sunbeam mine on Great Barrier Island was not to use the battery he had erected but to ship it to Australia; but to do that was so expensive that it was unpayable.<sup>782</sup> By mid-1908, he and his wife had sold all their shares in another mine on that island, the Ngatiawa.<sup>783</sup> Late in 1909, these two companies merged, the shareholders contributing another £10,000. Adams, appointed managing director, informed the warden that he was having difficulty obtaining miners, might need to erect a plant costing £25,000, and that the Ngatiawa ore was unpayable because of a fall in the price of silver.<sup>784</sup> At Neavesville, his Golden Belt Company had spent over £30,000 by 1908, but the returns had 'not paid'. More capital was needed, and they were making calls 'as fast as the law will permit' to enable the repayment of capital advanced by himself and other directors. Almost all the money spent had come from calls, and 'whatever gold has been won from this claim has been put into the workings'.<sup>785</sup> This mine closed shortly afterwards. At Whangamata, the upper levels of his Eureka mine were worked out by 1908, and he had to

<sup>779</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1907, 134/07, 246/1907, BACL 14350/55a; Instruments 1907, no. 3171, BACL 11343/12a; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 230 no. 1351, ANZ-A; 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 5 October 1907, p. 20.

<sup>780</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 16 March 1907, p. 20; *Thames Star*, 22 March 1907, p. 2.

<sup>781</sup> Pamphlet on Thames Deep Levels, Mahara Royal Scrapbook, p. 37, MSC 22, Hamilton Public Library; 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 18 July 1908, p. 20, 5 December 1908, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 23 December 1908, p. 2.

<sup>782</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1908, 1931/1908, BACL 14350/57a, ANZ-A.

<sup>783</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 214 no. 1276, ANZ-A.

<sup>784</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1909, 209, 210, 211/1909, BACL 14350/61, ANZ-A.

<sup>785</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1908, 166, 368/1908, BACL 14350/58a; Applications 1909, 138/1909, BACL 14350/59a, ANZ-A.

drive a low level crosscut 1,800 feet over an 18-month period.<sup>786</sup> At Omahu, where he owned all the mines, he had 12 men prospecting and developing them. He told the warden that his syndicate did ‘not wish to place the property on the market until we have proved that it is payable. We are spending about £120 a month for the last three months. I am sanguine that the property will be payable. We have secured machinery in the event of it being required’.<sup>787</sup> This area would never repay the money he spent on it; nor would he discover a gold mine near Russell, despite reporting after a visit that the samples he was shown were of high value and that the country ‘appeared to him to be mineralised’.<sup>788</sup>

During the first decade of the twentieth century, the Broken Hills mine was his most successful. Between 1901-1909, 27,804 tons had produced 49,025 ounces, worth £84,469, giving a total output since 1899 of £88,213 and a total dividend payment of £24,710. Early in 1911, as the adits opened up were ‘nearly exhausted’, his company was reconstructed to provide capital for lower level explorations.<sup>789</sup> After ten years’ working there, his syndicate had ‘nearly exhausted’ its funds, all its capital having been called up.<sup>790</sup> As this capital amounted to £14,000,<sup>791</sup> the return was excellent. By 1914, it was unprofitable. He bought some adjacent mines from the liquidator of another company in 1914 but told the warden that he needed £10,000 to develop the property. Although he would attempt to repair the water race and start mining again if he could raise £5,000 during the next six months, if unable to raise this capital he would ‘have to realize on the plant and machinery’, which meant their removal, ‘a great misfortune to mining in that district’.<sup>792</sup> At the end of 1915, he had only one claim at work there, four men being employed. He had done all he could ‘to get capital to work properties’, and had given an option to float a company. ‘One half of what I am to get for property is to come out of proceeds of venture. If no profits I lose half value of property’.<sup>793</sup> This flotation did not eventuate, and in 1918, although he had extracted a small amount of gold,

<sup>786</sup> Thames Warden’s Court, Applications 1908, 327/1908, BACL 14350/58a, ANZ-A.

<sup>787</sup> Thames Warden’s Court, Applications 1908, 109/1908, BACL 14350/57a, ANZ-A.

<sup>788</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 May 1908, p. 37.

<sup>789</sup> Bell and Fraser, p. 77.

<sup>790</sup> Thames Warden’s Court, Applications 1908, 362/1908, BACL 14350/58a, ANZ-A.

<sup>791</sup> Weston, p. 184.

<sup>792</sup> Thames Warden’s Court, Applications 1914, 31, 107/1914, BACL 14350/3a, ANZ-A.

<sup>793</sup> Thames Warden’s Court, Applications 1915, 117/1915, BACL 14350/3a, ANZ-A.

this was 'not payable owing to the high price of materials resulting from war conditions'. The crushing plant could not be worked because of the high price of cyanide. As he could not work the mine profitably, he was not making calls. Plenty of low-grade ore remained, and he had 'erected at Thames an experimental plant for dealing with ores by the oil flotation process' and was testing its 'adaptability' to the ore.<sup>794</sup> Although he tried to keep this mine working,<sup>795</sup> it was exhausted. Under his management it had produced gold to the value of about £80,000, £30,000 being paid out in dividends 'on a called-up capital of £14,000'.<sup>796</sup>

Despite Adams' optimism and financial assistance from his syndicate and other investors, the same trend of steady decline was repeated in all future mining ventures. In 1912, he had gone to England with 'a tin box full of plans', especially concerning the Monowai and Standard mining companies and the Takapuna Tram and Ferry Company. According to the *Observer*, whose owner and principal cartoonist William Blomfield had close personal and financial relations with Adams,<sup>797</sup> he came back with £80,000 'for various ventures'.<sup>798</sup> The future careers of his companies showed that this figure was exaggerated, for he was under-capitalised, whatever assistance he received soon being expended, usually unproductively. He formed a private company to work the abandoned Luck at Last mine, near Whangamata, but after spending £3,000 still required another £2,500 to cut the reef; because it was hard to get in calls, he wanted English capital.<sup>799</sup> This mine had to be abandoned, after doomed efforts to raise local finance.<sup>800</sup> In 1915, he bought the Komata Reefs mine and battery and during 1917 was able to bank regular amounts of gold.<sup>801</sup> He worked this

<sup>794</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1918, 46/1918, BACL 14350/4a, ANZ-A.

<sup>795</sup> For example, Thames Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1919, 27/1919, BACL 14350/4a, ANZ-A.

<sup>796</sup> Weston, p. 184.

<sup>797</sup> William Blomfield to Minister of Mines, 10 April 1927, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>798</sup> *Observer*, 14 December 1912, p. 5; for Adams' account of how he foiled thieves on a train, see *Observer*, 18 January 1913, p. 5.

<sup>799</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 158 no. 1005; Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1912-1913, 127/1912, 116/1913, BACL 14350/3a, ANZ-A.

<sup>800</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1915, 22/1915, BACL 14350/3a, ANZ-A.

<sup>801</sup> *Thames Star*, 8 December 1915, p. 4; Bank of New Zealand, Daily Gold Purchases 1916 to 1954 by Thames Branch, entries for 1917, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

'until even his optimism drooped, and he sold the plant and still owned most of the land as pasturing'.<sup>802</sup> During the war he obtained some gold from his Thames and Coromandel foreshore dredges and from cleaning up the Komata and Silverton batteries.<sup>803</sup>

From 1909 to 1919 Adams made a particular effort to make a success of the Monowai mine at Waiomu. Despite knowing that the Ferguson Smelting Company had spent all its working capital of £7,500 for no return, he formed a new company and contemplated spending £12,000 on a cyanide plant.<sup>804</sup> In 1911, he employed 30 men, and to attract more pay above the award rate. Within a few months, he had spent over £10,000.<sup>805</sup> By June 1912, over £20,000 had been spent, but despite continual prospecting nothing payable was found; which was no doubt why English investors would not finance a low level tunnel.<sup>806</sup> During the following ten months, over £14,000 was spent, and shareholders no longer paid calls. Adams claimed that the results fully justified this expenditure, and still hoped to attract English capital, but later that year admitted he was not getting payable ore.<sup>807</sup> When the company was liquidated, he bought its property, and planned to spend £10,000 developing the low levels, a sum he had to admit in January 1919 was impossible to obtain.<sup>808</sup>

During the First World War, he had dredges operating at Tapu and Coromandel.<sup>809</sup> As part of his contribution to the war effort, he offered to assist the Prime Minister with the export of zinc, lead and copper concentrates from the Hauraki district to help 'dispense with the Cold

<sup>802</sup> *Observer*, 23 May 1928, p. 15.

<sup>803</sup> For example, Bank of New Zealand, Thames Branch, Gold Purchase Register 1899-1932, entries for 4 December 1914, 12 December 1914, 21 August 1915, 30 August 1915, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>804</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1909, 144/1909, BACL 14350/59a; Applications 1909, 231A/1909, BACL 14350/61, ANZ-A.

<sup>805</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1911, 114, 115/1911, BACL 14350/63, ANZ-A.

<sup>806</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1912, 46, 126/1912, BACL 14350/64, ANZ-A.

<sup>807</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1913, 27, 99/1913, BACL 14350/2a, ANZ-A; see statement of Richard Waiorongomai Adams, Warden's Court, *Thames Star*, 6 December 1933, p. 2.

<sup>808</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1918, 96/1918, BACL 14350/4a, ANZ-A.

<sup>809</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Coromandel Applications 1914, 22/1914, BACL 14391/8a, ANZ-A; *Observer*, 20 March 1915, p. 7; Thames Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1918, 26/1918, BACL 14350/4a, ANZ-A.

Blooded Enemy'.<sup>810</sup> He also invented a device which, he claimed, would 'successfully combat torpedo attacks';<sup>811</sup> he did not patent it. This was another of his many inventions: during the previous decade he had patented a device to prevent 'racing' of marine propellers, an auxiliary propeller, a 'ferro-concrete former', a 'grubber and land cultivator', and an amalgamating machine.<sup>812</sup> At the end of the war, he purchased the New Waitaia mine and battery at Kuaotunu, but was unable to do much, largely, he claimed, through inability to get men to work in a place without accommodation.<sup>813</sup>

Quite apart from the fading of the goldfields and, hence, his finances,

late in 1915 his son Dick, who had been working in Sydney with the eldest son Jack, arrived with catastrophic news for the family. Jack had run a successful engineering business in Auckland and had built a sewer from Stanley Street to Westmere in Auckland. He had won the contract for building the main sewer in Brisbane. It was to be built alongside the Brisbane River and Jack had encountered difficulties with the excavations. In the end he had lost not only the contract but also all his money.

Adams, 'who had signed as his guarantor, had to repay the debt', hence his sale of Moturoa Island.<sup>814</sup>

### THE THAMES DEEP LEVELS

Despite owning so many mines scattered around the peninsula from Komata Reefs northwards, his main focus remained Thames. In particular, he promoted his own scheme for opening up the low levels. As a member of the Thames Deep Levels Board of Management, he complained that government involvement impeded action, and urged his colleagues,

<sup>810</sup> H.H. Adams to William Massey, 4 October 1915, Mines Department, MD 1, 15/1082, ANZ-W.

<sup>811</sup> *King Country Chronicle*, 30 May 1917, p. 4.

<sup>812</sup> Karen Stevenson (Intellectual Property Office of New Zealand) to Philip Hart, 30 July 1998.

<sup>813</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Coromandel Instruments 1916-1920, no. 139, AAAE 15201/3a; Coromandel Instruments 1921, 1/1921, BACL 14391/12a; Coromandel Instruments 1924, 28/1924, BACL 14391/13a, ANZ-A.

<sup>814</sup> Spicer, pp. 84-85.

unsuccessfully, to spend their own money without waiting for its assistance.<sup>815</sup> As managing director of the Moanataiari Company, by June 1912 he had spent £15,000 on a crosscut at the 1,000-foot level.<sup>816</sup>

The main concern amongst miners was that if the Moanataiari slide was struck, water would flood the low levels. At a meeting of the Thames Drainage Board in January 1913 there was a worried discussion about water that had flowed strongly into Adams' crosscut from a bore drilled in the previous month. Adams insisted that, 'in spite of assertions to the contrary, the crosscut would be continued, and there would be no occasion to divert it. It was just as likely that the water came from a watercourse and not as the result of a slide'. Another member responded that 'if they had not taken Mr Adams' advice as to the direction the crosscut should take the Board would not have found itself in its present predicament'. Adams 'strenuously' denied this, and the meeting had to be called to order.<sup>817</sup>

Arguments continued, Adams still denying that the diamond drill had hit the Moanataiari slide.<sup>818</sup> After a deviation crosscut was driven, on 30 September 1913 the *Thames Star* reported that 'a big flow of water' had 'been struck in the face and so rapid was the flow that all work had to be suspended and the men withdrawn'. It recalled an earlier occasion when a large amount of water at 'considerable pressure' and accompanied by gas had entered the level and taken several days to be pumped out, the belief being expressed then that the Moanataiari slide had been intersected, a view 'contradicted in some quarters'.<sup>819</sup> The newspaper was convinced that the crosscut had been made in the wrong place.<sup>820</sup> A meeting of the Deep Levels Board was told in mid-October that the work had become dangerous because of gas. Adams said that 'he did not believe it was the Moanataiari fault. It was either a reef or a gigantic watercourse'.<sup>821</sup> 'He had always contended that a new reef would be found in the vicinity, and nothing had so far transpired to shake that contention'.<sup>822</sup> In October 1914, the mining

<sup>815</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 February 1910, p. 36, 14 April 1910, p. 36, 28 April 1910, p. 32, 7 July 1910, p. 36.

<sup>816</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1912, 47/1912, BACL 14350/3a, ANZ-A.

<sup>817</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 January 1913, p. 36.

<sup>818</sup> *Thames Star*, 12 March 1913, p. 4.

<sup>819</sup> *Thames Star*, 30 September 1913, p. 4.

<sup>820</sup> Editorial, *Thames Star*, 1 October 1913, p. 4.

<sup>821</sup> *Thames Star*, 21 October 1913, p. 4.

<sup>822</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 October 1913, p. 56.

inspector stopped the deep level crosscut because of gas, clearly rejecting Adams' views:

Through the cutting into the Moanataiari slide by a bore hole in the main crosscut, in December, 1912, and the bursting into the deviation crosscut drive in September 1913, a dangerous quantity of carbon dioxide gas and water continued to come into the drives.... No doubt, the gas was coming from the Moanataiari slide through the broken rock intervening between the drive and the slide.

At the same time, the drainage board discontinued pumping because companies would no longer contribute to the cost. When the Deep Levels Board received this news, Adams said that it would be 'a very serious thing for Thames if the pumping were stopped. It would be a mistake to close down mines from which millions had been won. If the Government did its duty, it would keep the pumps going'. He still wanted the crosscut 'to get through the big slide, as the other side was the only place where another goldfield was likely to exist. It was the Cambria reef, and not the slide, that had been met with in the low level'. He wanted the creation of 'one strong company, embracing all the Thames drainage areas'. Nobody at this meeting pointed out that he was wrong and that it was his fault that the slide had been struck in 1912. His advice was ignored, and because companies no longer provided finance, the Big Pump ceased working on 29 October 1914, and the lower levels were flooded. By that date, about £42,000 had been spent on the deep levels, and no gold found apart from one small return in the May Queen.<sup>823</sup>

Adams had based his expectations of revitalizing mining on finding gold at the deep levels, and was willing to spend as much money as was necessary to find it, despite all indications of failure. In 1911, on behalf of the Alburnia Company, he told the warden that this company had raised capital several times, and spent it all. 'First Coy's capital was ten thousand pounds - After that another ten thousand was raised and spent and during all that time we have had no return. We have extended the Moanataiari tunnel 3000 feet and rose 600 to 700 feet'. After testing the Sons of Freedom reef for a year, he had decided the 'stone had no prospects whatever'. He intended to raise more capital 'to continue the same work in the hope of

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<sup>823</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 October 1914, p. 54.

meeting with success eventually'.<sup>824</sup> In 1913, he said that he had spent £15,000 in the same mine, had no more capital, could not get in calls, and needed protection while he tried to raise more funds.<sup>825</sup> He had extended the Moanataiari tunnel

to a total distance of 7,700 feet from its mouth, right across the reef system of the Alburnia Hill to the Sons of Freedom reef, upon which he then rose until he holed through to the bottom of the Alburnia shaft, sunk by an English company from the crown of the hill. For the full height of this rise, and also for a great length of driving,

Adams claimed in 1927, 'the reef was not even broken into, the directors resisting his proposals to cut into it, in their haste to reach gold that had been reported to have been left in the bottom of the shaft - a delusive hope, as matters turned out'.<sup>826</sup>

After pumping ceased, he continued to argue that the 'only solution' was 'to amalgamate and to form a big scheme to drain the field'.<sup>827</sup> When the Moanataiari Company was forced into liquidation by the end of pumping,<sup>828</sup> Adams took over its mine and battery. He told the warden in August 1916 that he had been 'a large shareholder in the late Moanataiari Company. That Company spent large sums on the low level but they failed to make mine pay and the Company went into liquidation'. Adams made a much higher offer for it than anyone else, and with three others formed a syndicate to try the ground beyond the Moanataiari Slide once they had raised the 'considerable capital' required:

I have always advocated working on the other side of the "slide".... I consider that quite a feasible proposition and I consider it has a very reasonable prospect of success. It is the best thing that can be done for the claim and for the Thames District generally. I am prepared to spend money on this undertaking. Our operations may open up new prospect for mining at Thames.<sup>829</sup>

<sup>824</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1911, 96/1911, BACL 14350/62, ANZ-A.

<sup>825</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1913, 13, 87/1913, BACL 1350/2a, ANZ-A.

<sup>826</sup> Weston, p. 184.

<sup>827</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1915, 53/1915, BACL 14350/3a, ANZ-A.

<sup>828</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1915, 132/1915, BACL 14350/3a, ANZ-A.

<sup>829</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1916, 59/1916, BACL 14350/3a, ANZ-A.

But neither he nor anyone else found gold beyond the slide.

### LAST VENTURES AT THAMES

In 1918, Adams established a new treatment method, the oil flotation process, which had ‘not previously been tested on a commercial basis in this district’.<sup>830</sup> By that time he had abandoned hope for the deep levels, and demolished the Big Pump to sell its materials.<sup>831</sup> After the war, he attempted, and failed, to float several of his Thames mines in England.<sup>832</sup>

When the Anglo-Continental Syndicate, which had owned all the important mines of the Thames, was wound up, Mr Adams bought its holdings, and divided them up among new companies. These were the Moanataiari, Saxon, and May Queen. When work ceased at the 1,000 ft level, the Moanataiari and May Queen came back into his hands. He surrendered the May Queen, but held the Moanataiari, and, securing from the English company the Kuranui, formed the present Moanataiari-Caledonian-Kuranui Company.<sup>833</sup>

In 1920 he received £500 for selling these 140 acres to the new Caledonian Kuranui Moanataiari Company.<sup>834</sup>

Much money and effort went into developing the Sylvia mine at Tararu during the 1920s,<sup>835</sup> again without any success.<sup>836</sup> He had purchased this after the Sylvia Company had ‘ceased operations after the failure of its experiments with German methods’.<sup>837</sup> When he sought financial assistance

<sup>830</sup> Thames Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1918, 86/1918, BACL 14350/4a, ANZ-A; *AJHR*, 1919, C-2, p. 29.

<sup>831</sup> *Thames Star*, 12 April 1918, p. 2.

<sup>832</sup> Thames Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1919, 64/1919, BACL 14350/5a, ANZ-A.

<sup>833</sup> Weston, p. 184.

<sup>834</sup> *Thames Star*, 22 June 1920, p. 2.

<sup>835</sup> For the geology of the Sylvia, see Colin Fraser, *The Geology of the Thames Subdivision, Hauraki, Auckland* (Geological Survey Bulletin, No. 10 (New Series), Wellington, 1910), pp. 75-77.

<sup>836</sup> See Thames Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1920, 52/1920, BACL 14350/5a, ANZ-A; Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1; MD 1, 12/221, ANZ-W; J.F. Downey, *Gold-Mines of the Hauraki District, New Zealand* (Wellington, 1935), p. 149.

<sup>837</sup> *Thames Star*, 15 May 1928, p. 5.

the Mines Department considered that he was exaggerating the value of the ore, and prevented him claiming for money spent before applying for a loan and for his salary as supervisor.<sup>838</sup> Despite their doubts about the prospects, they were encouraged to assist him because, in the words of the under-secretary, Adams ‘has been, and is still doing more than any other person to stimulate and revive mining in the Hauraki Mining District’, spending a large amount of his own and his friends’ capital.<sup>839</sup> Adams’ claims that the Sylvia had ‘several hundred thousand tons of highly payable ore’ and was the best mine he had ever owned were highly exaggerated, as proved by the School of Mines tests on samples taken by the mining inspector, Matthew Paul. Adams thereupon challenged their accuracy ‘in fairness to the mining industry and my self’, but refused to watch the tests. Paul implied that his son Richard had provided unrepresentatively valuable samples.<sup>840</sup> That Adams believed in the mine was reflected by his being ‘out of pocket in connection with this venture fully £15,000’ by August 1924.<sup>841</sup> Edwin Mitchelson wrote, after Adams’ death, that he ‘had a great belief in the Sylvia prospects but the ore being a refractory one it could not be treated to pay’.<sup>842</sup> By 1927, gold worth £3,704 was extracted, but after Adams died mining ended and the battery was dismantled.<sup>843</sup>

According to George White, a mine manager, in 1925 an Australian syndicate asked him to prospect near Thames, but when he sought a lease he was told that the unworked ground was held by Adams. The large areas held were ‘totally outside the chances of present day capital, for prospecting or working. “HH won’t stand in your way,” said the Warden’s clerk, “if you took him in your scheme.” As that was no good to me or my syndicate, I

<sup>838</sup> Sylvia Reefs file, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>839</sup> Memorandum by Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 1 August 1922, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>840</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 23 September 1922; Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 13 October 1922; H.H. Adams to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 1 November 1922; Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 29 November 1922; note also Edwin Mitchelson to Minister of Mines, 26 July 1928, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Parts 1, 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>841</sup> H.H. Adams to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>842</sup> Edwin Mitchelson to Minister of Mines, 26 June 1928, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>843</sup> Alistair Isdale, *History of “The River Thames,” New Zealand* (Thames, 1967), p. 69.

abandoned the scheme'.<sup>844</sup> By 1926, Adams was described as 'the grandfather of Thames mining':<sup>845</sup>

At one time Harry Hopper Adams controlled a regular cordon of mines from Coromandel to Waihi. They are all asleep now, and their backers dead or gone, but Old Harry is still vigorous.... Harry has bought and sold nearly every old battery on the goldfields, has hawked new ideas in crushing and reducing ores, and at present is still bucking along with the old Sylvia full of hope, and not knocked out by the "base metals" and now reckons that with a strong backing he can make millionaires of his believers out of the antimony of the Moanataiari. May old H.H. come home again. He deserves it!<sup>846</sup>

The following year, the *Observer* anticipated that he would 'no doubt be the big noise at the forthcoming Thames Jubilee Celebrations'. Describing him as 'full of schemes and optimism', he was

bucking in to prove the Thames is not a "duffer," mainly through the Moanataiari, and Thames people still have faith in him, in spite of the fact that many have fallen by the wayside. Yes, H.H. will come away from his native modesty, and will have a deal to say about himself and his doings, and what he will do and invite all and sundry to come in under his optimistic wing, and he will make their fortunes, but who will nurse the baby?<sup>847</sup>

The same question, hinting at bearing the financial burden, occurred to some whom he enticed into his schemes, as a short article, written in his honour in April 1928, revealed:

T-H.H.A-mes. That's how old Thames will be spelt in the near future if the memory of Henry Hopper Adams is to be kept green and perpetuated, for a long life and life long struggle to keep "Quartzopolis" on top.... The old Moanataiari Hill and the "Slide" is his specialty, and he could go through levels and stopes blindfolded, and can trace his country by smell.

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<sup>844</sup> *Observer*, 27 June 1925, p. 5.

<sup>845</sup> *Observer*, 27 June 1925, p. 5, 27 February 1926, p. 4.

<sup>846</sup> *Observer*, 27 February 1926, p. 4.

<sup>847</sup> *Observer*, 22 June 1927, p. 5.

He had rarely been involved in ‘seeking for gold on the stock exchange’. When he got capital to re-start the Moanataiari, ‘ever optimistic, he visualised rich ore veins’ and was appointed supervisor by the enthusiastic investors. ‘Harry would accept no payment whatever for his personal benefit’, only his expenses for travelling from Takapuna to Thames. He never left the mine ‘unless his henchman and first lieutenant, mine-manager Johnny Benney was on shift’. But recently the directors of the Caledonia-Kuranui-Moanataiari Company, on the motion and the casting vote of the chairman, Peter Watson,<sup>848</sup> sacked Benney, and in the same manner dismissed Adams as supervisor. ‘New blood, and a first-class ticket’ was given as the reason, ‘but “will Harry give up the ghost?”’<sup>849</sup> A later comment was that Adams, ‘the Thames mining Napoleon, met his Waterloo at the Battle of Moanataiari. General Peter Watson beat him on the proxies’.<sup>850</sup> The next reference to Adams in the same journal dropped this jocular tone, for Adams died on 14 May 1928 at the age of 77 from a combination of heart disease, from which he had suffered for six years, diabetes, and low blood pressure which had caused him to have fainting spells during the past three years.<sup>851</sup> ‘“We’re getting on to it, I know we are,” was his last report on the Moanataiari, just before the directors decided that they would dispense with the man who got the mine re-working. Right or wrong that decision broke his heart’.<sup>852</sup>

#### FINANCIAL DECLINE

Before the First World War, Adams was regarded as a ‘great financial magnate’.<sup>853</sup> Not all his investments were a success: the *Observer* described his Takapuna stone crusher as a ‘white elephant’.<sup>854</sup> In 1911, his financial resources were sufficient for the bank to agree to allow him sufficient credit to take up debentures in the Takapuna Tramway Company for about £2,200 and to purchase 34 acres adjoining his home for £7,500. There was ‘a good house on the property also a gravel pit’; the council paid him a royalty to

<sup>848</sup> Son of John Watson of A. & G. Price?: See *Thames Star*, 10 July 1918, p. 2.

<sup>849</sup> *Observer*, 24 April 1928, p. 4.

<sup>850</sup> *Observer*, 2 May 1928, p. 7.

<sup>851</sup> Death Certificate of Henry Hopper Adams, 14 May 1928, 1928/988, BDM.

<sup>852</sup> *Observer*, 23 May 1928, p. 15.

<sup>853</sup> *Observer*, 18 January 1913, p. 5.

<sup>854</sup> *Observer*, 8 February 1908, p. 7.

obtain gravel, and he planned to subdivide the land, expecting to ‘double his money’.<sup>855</sup> This was the Taharoto Estate, a well-known early Takapuna farm.<sup>856</sup> In 1912, H.H. Adams and Sons built a sawmill close to the old wharf at Barry’s Point.<sup>857</sup>

By the 1920s, he was in increasing difficulties. In 1922 the Auckland branch of the Bank of New Zealand assured the Thames branch that it considered the latter could cash cheques up to £80 or £100 for Adams for wages in the New Waiotahi mine. Adams had ‘an overdraft limit here of £4750 against Security valued @ £7700’.<sup>858</sup> The Sylvia mine produced rewards for him in the following year: in March melted gold to the value of about £320 was banked, and in August another £134 10s 7d.<sup>859</sup> At the end of the year, the Thames manager met Adams in the street:

He asked me if I would pay his cheques up to £350 for wages, will lodge a bar of bullion on Monday before 3 p.m. worth approx £600 to cover. I told him that I would have to get in touch with our Auckland Manager – he rather resented this and said that the gold will be lodged with us before 3 p.m. on Monday 24th inst.<sup>860</sup>

Two days later, Adams did lodge for safe custody bullion valued at about £700, and stated there was ‘about £500 to come’.<sup>861</sup> In January 1924 he banked melted gold obtained from the Sylvia worth £851 10s 9d.<sup>862</sup> His

<sup>855</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager’s Diary October 1907-May 1911, p. 427 (17 May 1911), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington; H.H. Adams to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 22 January 1925, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W; Auckland Scrapbook, August 1960 onwards, p. 56, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>856</sup> Auckland Scrapbooks, August 1960 onwards, p. 56; October 1968 onwards, p. 77; January 1972 onwards, p. 212, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>857</sup> Auckland Scrapbooks, October 1968 onwards, p. 77; January 1972 onwards, p. 212.

<sup>858</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Thames Branch, Manager’s Minute Book 1922-1924, entry for 26 October 1922, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>859</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Thames Branch, Gold Dealer’s Book 1913-1932, 62/29 (13 March 1923), 62/53 (31 August 1923), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>860</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Thames Manager’s Minute Book 1922-1924, entry for 22 December 1923, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>861</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Thames Manager’s Minute Book 1922-1924, entry for 24 December 1923, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>862</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Thames Branch, Gold Dealers’ Book 1913-1932, 63/9 (28 January 1924), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

finances then went into steady decline. In March he sold one property for £850.<sup>863</sup> One month later, the under-secretary recorded that Adams had spent ‘a very large sum of money in recent years in mining ventures’, was ‘very short of funds at present’, and had ‘recently sold some of his freehold properties at the Thames’.<sup>864</sup> A few months later he sold timber from his Komata Reefs battery for £625.<sup>865</sup> The last melted gold from the Sylvia was sold in September, for £135 17s 6d.<sup>866</sup> At the beginning of February 1925 he told his Thames bank manager that ‘his account at Auckland was practically closed – but upon pressing the point’ the manager got him to admit that his overdrawn one there ‘was not operative’. He had some promissory notes ‘for moneys due on certain transactions’, and concluded their discussion by asking for their return, ‘saying that he would get same cashed in Auckland (not the B.N.Z.)’.<sup>867</sup> The last time he sold melted gold, for £56 14s, was in November 1925, from ‘Clean Up Old Batteries’.<sup>868</sup>

Lacking sufficient capital, he sought subsidies. In September 1924 he wrote to George James Anderson, the Minister of Mines, in response to a newspaper report ‘that your Government is coming out of their shell, and realizing that this country requires gold’. Komata Reefs would become profitable if he could spend about £3,000 erecting a Ross Mill, and both the Tairua Broken Hills and Waitaia mines and plants would pay if £1,500 were spent on each. If no assistance was given, he would ‘have to dismantle and sell, but as a man who should be capable of judging I think this action would be suicidal to the industry and to the country’. Asking for a loan, he promised that if he could not mine profitably he would give these mines to the government. If he succeeded, repaying the loan would be the first call on

<sup>863</sup> Bank of New Zealand Archives, Thames Manager’s Minute Book 1922-1924, entry for 18 March 1924, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>864</sup> Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to Minister of Mines, 10 April 1924, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>865</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Thames Manager’s Minute Book 1924-1926, entry for 13 September 1924, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>866</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Thames Branch, Gold Dealers’ Book 1913-1932, 63/36 (12 September 1924), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>867</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Thames Manager’s Minute Book 1924-1926, entry for 1 February 1925, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>868</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Thames Branch, Gold Dealers’ Book 1913-1932, 65/6 (5 November 1925), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

the profits, and he offered to pay interest of five per cent.<sup>869</sup> He was asked for full details of the proposed work, and told that only £ for £ grants were possible.<sup>870</sup> As Adams could not find his half, he unsuccessfully requested that if the government guaranteed its half he would float three small companies so that the public would provide his portion.<sup>871</sup>

A year later, the under-secretary reported that, after paying hundreds of pounds rent for years at a time when Thames mining was at a very low ebb, Adams was finding it hard 'to make ends meet'.<sup>872</sup> In 1926 and 1927 his crushings continued to be unsatisfactory, and he had difficulty in paying rent even after this was reduced to 2s 6d per acre. He had men prospecting some of his mines, but others were unworked. The old levels had been worked out, and now required testing at lower levels, requiring costly pumping. As Paul noted, Adams had 'spent fortunes in mining' but because in recent years no payable ore had been discovered he lacked the funds to implement his plans.<sup>873</sup> In February 1927, the receiver of gold revenue was certain that Adams had no 'cash available to pay anything on account of rents', although he still had 'assets in the way of mining machinery etc'.<sup>874</sup> Six months later, Adams admitted that his failure to pay rents was 'serious'.

Their is only one way, taking my financial position into Consideration, and that is for me to Start and dismantle all Machinery, - take up all rails, and remove mining plants, sell same and turn it into Cash. Of course this action will be serious to the Mining industry in the future. I am not holding on to these

<sup>869</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 24 September 1924, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>870</sup> Minister of Mines to H.H. Adams, 7 October 1924, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>871</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 12 October 1924; Minister of Mines to H.H. Adams, 15 October 1924, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>872</sup> Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to Minister of Mines, 23 September 1925, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>873</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 15 November 1926; memorandum of March 1927; Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 6 May 1927, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>874</sup> Receiver of Gold Revenue, Thames, to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 9 February 1927, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 2, ANZ-W.

properties trying to Create a monopoly, I am quite prepared to sell them as they now stand or let them on tribute.<sup>875</sup>

Such pleas resulted in his rents being reduced once more.<sup>876</sup> For the past 12 years he had paid about £300 for his Thames properties, but in the last two years these had fallen into arrears; threatened with a summons, he was not in a position to pay.<sup>877</sup> The only mining was in the Sylvia; elsewhere, although he had ‘tried again and again to induce mining speculators to find the money required to reopen them, every attempt ended in failure’.<sup>878</sup>

Describing Adams as ‘a born engineer, full of schemes and optimism’, the *Observer* in June 1927 wrote that ‘many of his ventures reached financial success for a period, but have faded into the dim past’. Thames residents retained their faith in him, and he was still attempting to work the Moanataiari to find the gold he was certain was there.<sup>879</sup> When Anderson visited Thames in 1927, Adams told him about his latest scheme, ‘to successfully work the Kawarau’ River in the South Island.<sup>880</sup>

After his death, the administrators of his ‘complicated’ estate discovered that ‘considerable investigation’ taking ‘some little time’ was required before they could produce full details.<sup>881</sup> First valued at under £5,000, its net value turned out to be nil.<sup>882</sup> His widow informed the warden that when he died he owned ‘many mining privileges at Thames Paeroa and Coromandel and during his lifetime spent enormous sums of money in working and developing’ these. He had ‘left practically no ready money nor

<sup>875</sup> H.H. Adams to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 1 July 1927, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>876</sup> For example, Mining Registrar, Thames, to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 11 February 1928, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>877</sup> H.H. Adams to Town Clerk, Thames, 12 December 1927, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>878</sup> Matthew Paul to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 13 July 1928, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/21, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>879</sup> *Observer*, 22 June 1927, p. 5.

<sup>880</sup> H.H. Adams to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 27 August 1927, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/21, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>881</sup> Stewart Johnston Hough and Campbell to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/21, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>882</sup> Probate of H.H. Adams, BBAE 1570, 297/28, ANZ-A.

any assets readily convertible into money'. The solvency of the estate depended upon whether she could sell these properties profitably.<sup>883</sup> In asking that half the rents be written off as unrecoverable, her solicitor wrote that Adams 'sunk the whole of his fortune in mining' and his estate was insolvent unless the mines could be 'sold to advantage'.<sup>884</sup> Edwin Mitchelson informed Anderson that Adams' finances were 'in a very bad way there is no Equity in the Estate.... Mrs Adams will have a very hard struggle', being 'absolutely left without anything fortunately She has good sons who will be able to Provide a home for her'. Although realizing that selling all the mining rights meant nothing would be left for her, she wanted to clear the debts.<sup>885</sup> In August 1928 Mitchelson was 'very sorry to say that without careful nursing' the estate would not realize 10 shillings in the pound for the creditors.<sup>886</sup> As the *Observer* later commented, Adams was 'a man who made fortunes and lost them'.<sup>887</sup>

#### THE MEMBERS OF ADAMS' SYNDICATE

By the start of the twentieth century, Adams had acquired a number of business acquaintances and friends who were part of his syndicate for the remainder of his career. In 1901, Mitchelson & Co., meaning Richard and Edwin, invested in his Broken Hills mine,<sup>888</sup> as did James Smith.<sup>889</sup> In 1903, when the Mahara Royal Company was formed by its parent company, Adams' Broken Hills Company, the directors in the former company were all members of his syndicate with the exception of Dennis Gilmour MacDonnell, secretary of many mining companies.<sup>890</sup> The others were both

<sup>883</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Applications 1928, 28/1928, BACL 14391/14a, ANZ-A.

<sup>884</sup> Miller and Son and Poulgrain to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 18 December 1928, Mines Department, MD 1, 10/7/42, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>885</sup> Edwin Mitchelson to Minister of Mines, 26 July 1928, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>886</sup> Edwin Mitchelson to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 27 August 1928, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>887</sup> *Observer*, 18 August 1932, p. 13.

<sup>888</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary No. 1, entry for 5 January 1901, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>889</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary No. 1, entry for 5 December 1901, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>890</sup> See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 464; *Thames Star*, 2 November 1908, p. 2.

of the Mitchelsons, Smith, Ewen William Alison, William Blomfield, and Henry Thomson Gorrie.<sup>891</sup> John Frater, a stockbroker who also had little involvement with Adams,<sup>892</sup> and William Burton were amongst those who sought to take over the Thames Hauraki pumping plant in 1903,<sup>893</sup> to enable Adams to implement his scheme for developing the Thames lower levels.

Members of his syndicate expected to profit from his mining skills, as illustrated by a comment about Edwin Mitchelson in 1907: 'By all accounts, he is going to become a millionaire out of some of H.H. Adams' gold mines when they begin to pay dividends. They are always going to begin, which is more reassuring to the speculator than leaving off'.<sup>894</sup> Not all his mines were or could remain profitable for the syndicate and the investing public generally. In June 1907, 'with Golden Belt shares at 3d', 'Obadiah' expected it would 'have to be interred in the H.H. Adams cemetery'.<sup>895</sup>

During the first decade of the twentieth century, in general syndicate members profited by their involvement. In July 1903, 'Obadiah' reported that Adams had 'brought off another coup for his followers', for the New Moanataiari Company had been sold to the May Queen, whose supervisor was Adams, for £125 and 25,000 shares.<sup>896</sup> Joseph James Craig and Charles Cookman MacMillan, the latter a leading merchant with little involvement with Adams,<sup>897</sup> had purchased the May Queen so that the two properties could be worked under Adams' direction.<sup>898</sup> The New Moanataiari was reputed to be worthless:

If it is a worthless venture, then the May Queen suffers badly, and perhaps it is the knowledge of this trade coming off that has kept the Queen's so low priced. And being low priced, more shares no doubt were drawn from the May Queen in payment than would otherwise would have been the case. Moreover the parties

<sup>891</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 18 June 1903, p. 38.

<sup>892</sup> See *Thames Star*, 22 September 1927, p. 5.

<sup>893</sup> *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 26 August 1903, p. 2.

<sup>894</sup> *Observer*, Christmas Annual, 1907, p. 12.

<sup>895</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 15 June 1907, p. 20.

<sup>896</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 4 July 1903, p. 20.

<sup>897</sup> See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 435; *New Zealand Herald*, 11 February 1928, p. 12.

<sup>898</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Thames Applications 1903, 181/1903, BACL 14350/49, ANZ-A.

having a knowledge of the deal got a great pull over the outside shareholders. H.H. Adams has another scalp.<sup>899</sup>

The point about parties with 'a knowledge of the deal' referred to the fact that the directors of both companies, being virtually the same, could profit by insider trading.

The *Observer* obituary stated that Adams' 'optimism gave him a kind of mesmeric charm that induced many to risk their finances time and again, to help along his ventures'. As well as his great 'magnetism', when developing his Ohinemuri mines he had the assistance of Charles Rhodes, manager of the Paeroa branch of the Bank of New Zealand. His 'followers', listed as the Mitchelsons, Smith, Gorrie, Burton, Alison, and Craig, for years 'followed and financed' him, 'winning big stakes and eventually losing'.<sup>900</sup>

A non-mining investment involving Adams, both Mitchelsons, and Smith was the acquisition of over 90 acres at Takapuna in 1908, adjoining Shoal Bay: all had equal shares. Later the land was subdivided amongst the owners; Adams had not sold any of his six lots before his death.<sup>901</sup> According to the *Observer*, 'it was intended to induce the Auckland Harbour Board to dredge a channel to Barry's Point and cut up all the foreshore properties, but the scheme failed'.<sup>902</sup>

#### SYNDICATE MEMBERS WITH NO CONNECTIONS WITH TE AROHA MINING

The careers of the members of his informal syndicate with no connection with Te Aroha have not been traced in detail. Edward McLeod, who captained many ships for the Northern Steamship Company,<sup>903</sup> had 'two ruling passions - a mania for betting on horses ... and a craze for mining investment'. A 'bosom friend' of Adams, 'he went in with him on many a quartz-mining venture'.<sup>904</sup> In August 1908 over two acres at

<sup>899</sup> 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', *Observer*, 4 July 1903, p. 20.

<sup>900</sup> *Observer*, 23 May 1928, p. 5.

<sup>901</sup> Certificates of Title, vol. 118, folio 50, vol. 155, folio 61, Land Information New Zealand, Auckland.

<sup>902</sup> *Observer*, 20 June 1928, p. 5.

<sup>903</sup> For a list of these, see *New Zealand Herald*, 15 February 1932, p. 9.

<sup>904</sup> *Observer*, 18 February 1932, p. 9.

Takapuna that Adams had bought in March was transferred to him and his brother, and mortgaged to Adams.<sup>905</sup> Two years later he became a director of Adams' Luck at Last Company.<sup>906</sup> In 1920 he was elected one of the first directors of the Caledonian Kuranui Moanataiari Company.<sup>907</sup> He retired to Takapuna in 1926,<sup>908</sup> and on his death in 1932 left an estate valued at £2,210 7s 9d.<sup>909</sup>

Gorrie was senior partner and managing director of a stock and auctioneering firm, 'prominently connected with mining enterprises', and director of many companies.<sup>910</sup> In 1906 he assisted Adams to acquire a mortgage over 50 acres of mineral-bearing land.<sup>911</sup> He invested in two oil exploration companies.<sup>912</sup> Upon his death in 1922 his estate was valued at £70,000,<sup>913</sup> suggesting that his involvement with Adams had not damaged his finances significantly.

Blomfield's childhood was spent at Thames, a time he later 'used to revel in recalling'; a founder of the Old Thames Boys' Association, he was its president for many years. 'He was full of stories about the old mining days, tales of rich strikes, great practical jokes, picturesque brawls, colossal swindles and all the other romantic and sordid episodes'.<sup>914</sup> He not only owned the *Observer* of Auckland but also founded the Christchurch *Spectator*, the Wellington *Free Lance*, and the *Waihi Daily Telegraph*. A director of 'many mining and commercial enterprises', he was appointed a director of Adams' Luck at Last Company in 1909.<sup>915</sup> An original member of the Takapuna Borough Council, he was the second mayor, holding this post

<sup>905</sup> Certificates of Title, vol. 148 folio 279, Land Information New Zealand, Auckland.

<sup>906</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 158 no. 1005, ANZ-A.

<sup>907</sup> *Thames Star*, 22 June 1920, p. 2.

<sup>908</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 15 February 1932, p. 9.

<sup>909</sup> Probate of Edward McLeod, Probates, BBAE 1570, 137/32, ANZ-A.

<sup>910</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 5 November 1922, p. 8.

<sup>911</sup> Certificates of Title, vol. 31 folio 150, Land Information New Zealand, Auckland.

<sup>912</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 212 no. 1262, box 347 no. 1934, ANZ-A.

<sup>913</sup> Probate of Henry Thomson Gorrie, Probates, BBAE 1569/16110, ANZ-A.

<sup>914</sup> *Observer*, 10 March 1938, p. 6.

<sup>915</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 158 no. 1005, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Herald*, 3 March 1938, p. 13.

for seven years.<sup>916</sup> Upon his death in 1938, he left an estate of only £9,191 11s 9d,<sup>917</sup> probably not a reflection of his investments in Adams' mines.

As a youth, Alison had participated in the Thames gold rush. Founder of the Devonport Ferry Company in 1880, he had big investments in coal, being chairman of directors of Taupiri Coal Mines Ltd for 44 years. He was also chairman of directors of many leading goldmining companies. The first mayor of Takapuna and also mayor of Devonport for many years, he was known as 'the father of Devonport'. He was a member of the Auckland Harbour Board for 22 years, a member of the House of Representatives from 1902 to 1908, and later a member of the Legislative Council for 14 years.<sup>918</sup> When he died in 1945 his estate was only £4,119 3s 10d,<sup>919</sup> a modest amount that cannot be blamed on belonging to Adams' syndicate.

Captain James Smith was a director of coal and gold mining companies as well as a master mariner, shipowner, and shipping agent.<sup>920</sup> One of his obituaries stated that the coal mines at Hikurangi owed 'much of its success to his capital and efforts'. With Adams, he was a founder of the Takapuna Tramway Company, and he participated in all Adams' pre-war ventures.<sup>921</sup> During the mining boom of the mid-1890s, he held interests in 49 mining companies.<sup>922</sup> He made money from the Talisman at Karangahake in particular.<sup>923</sup> In 1901 the *Observer* had asked whether 'a scoop of nine thousand pounds in one week of good, solid British capital is not a good deal? "Jimmy" Smith, of gold and coal-mining fame, sold a few Talismans. What luck!'<sup>924</sup> This windfall enabled him, like Adams, to advance £1,000 to the Broken Hills Company in December that year.<sup>925</sup> He accompanied Adams and other syndicate members on tours of inspection of

<sup>916</sup> *Takapuna: People and places*, ed. Jean Bartlett (Auckland, 1989), p. 153.

<sup>917</sup> Probate of William Blomfield, Probates, BBAE 1570, 258/28, ANZ-A.

<sup>918</sup> *Cyclopaedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 145-146; *New Zealand Herald*, 7 June 1945, p. 4.

<sup>919</sup> Probate of Ewen William Alison, Probates, BBAE 1570, 656/45, ANZ-A.

<sup>920</sup> *Observer*, 30 June 1900, p. 6; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 241 no. 1419, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Herald*, 23 July 1923, p. 8.

<sup>921</sup> *Observer*, 28 July 1923, p. 5.

<sup>922</sup> Colonial Bank of New Zealand, Current Account Ledger R-Z, September 1895-September 1896, folios 339-341, 343-352, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>923</sup> *Observer*, 27 February 1926, p. 4.

<sup>924</sup> *Observer*, 19 October 1901, p. 20.

<sup>925</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary May 1900-December 1901, p. 195 (5 December 1901), Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

the mines, and was a director of many of his mines.<sup>926</sup> In 1906 he acquired equal shares with Adams in a block of land in central Auckland, and three years later Adams transferred an acre on the shores of Lake Pupuke to him.<sup>927</sup> Smith died in 1923 at the age of 76;<sup>928</sup> as he left an estate worth £179,777 15s 4d,<sup>929</sup> clearly any losses he made as a member of Adams' syndicate had been recouped in other ways.

#### SYNDICATE MEMBERS WITH SOME INVOLVEMENT WITH TE AROHA

When William Burton died in 1908, aged 64,<sup>930</sup> the Thames newspaper recorded that he had been 'intimately associated with the mining industry, his holdings being large and particularly confined to the group of mines of which Mr H.H. Adams, who was a close and personal friend of his, was superintendent'.<sup>931</sup> Burton had arrived in Thames shortly after Adams, in January 1868.<sup>932</sup> After being a miner for about a year,<sup>933</sup> he established the Junction Hotel, which he conducted for most of the rest of his life, making it one of the leading hotels.<sup>934</sup> Amongst his many mining investments was a share, with Adams, in the Bright Smile at Te Aroha in 1880,<sup>935</sup> and in two

<sup>926</sup> For example, *Thames Star*, 22 July 1903, p. 2, 19 December 1903, p. 2; note also 5 December 1901, p. 2; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 27 no. 157, box 186 no. 1133, box 187 no. 1137, box 199 no. 1200, box 190 no. 1155, box 214 no. 1276, box 222 no. 1313, box 228 no. 1342, ANZ-A.

<sup>927</sup> Certificates of Title, vol. 136, folio 278, vol. 139, folio 278, Land Information New Zealand, Auckland.

<sup>928</sup> Death Certificate of James Smith, 21 July 1923, 1923/7579, BDM.

<sup>929</sup> Probate of James Smith, Probates, BBAE 1569, 16605/23, ANZ-A.

<sup>930</sup> Death Certificate of William John Burton, 24 April 1908, 1908/2850, BDM.

<sup>931</sup> *Thames Star*, 24 April 1908, p. 2.

<sup>932</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Register of Miners' Rights 1867-1868, no. 3011, BACL 14358/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>933</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Shortland Branch, Individual Accounts Ledgers, October 1868-March 1869, folios 26, 50; April-September 1869, folios 19, 69; 1869-1871, folios 31-32, 59, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>934</sup> See *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, 28 July 1869, p. 639; *Thames Advertiser*, 24 January 1888, p. 2; 'Thames Talk', *Observer*, 25 June 1887, p. 18, 2 May 1908, p. 5.

<sup>935</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 165, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 20 December 1880, p. 3.

claims at Waiorongomai in 1882.<sup>936</sup> His motive for investing in mines was to sell shares for profit. For example, the number of shares he held in the Diamond Gully Company at Waiorongomai declined from 250 in November 1882 to 50 in March 1885, when his failure to pay calls in this failing company meant that these were liable to be forfeited.<sup>937</sup> His particular interest in the Te Aroha rush was to acquire business sites. After pegging out started, he was the first man to reach the warden's office: 'the closed door flew open with a crash before his frantic rush'.<sup>938</sup> His involvement with Adams' ventures was well known and noted at the time;<sup>939</sup> his election to the drainage board would have assisted Adams.<sup>940</sup> He held directorships in many of the syndicate's mines.<sup>941</sup> As noted, he assisted Adams to retain control of his Waiorongomai mines before they became the property of the New Zealand Exploration Company.

When Burton retired as a publican, he had, according to the *Observer*, acquired 'something more than a competence, thanks to business prosperity and successful mining investments', not just with Adams, for he had 'always been considered one of the "lucky ones" in miscellaneous mining speculation'.<sup>942</sup> An 'old and valued client' of his bank,<sup>943</sup> his estate was valued at £6,532 14s 11d.<sup>944</sup> He had a reputation for being careful with his money. In 1904, in a story probably attributable to Blomfield, 'a party of old hands fainted at the Thames the other night when Bill Burton called for

<sup>936</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folios 4, 100, BACL 11500/9a, ANZ-A.

<sup>937</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 14 December 1882, p. 1885; *Te Aroha News*, 14 March 1885, p. 7.

<sup>938</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folios 9, 10, 19, 20, 45, 46, BBAV 11505/3a, ANZ-A; *Thames Star*, 26 November 1880, p. 2; see also 18 December 1880, p. 2.

<sup>939</sup> For example, *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 26 August 1903, p. 2; *Observer*, 20 January 1906, p. 7; *Thames Star*, 24 August 1903, p. 2, 19 December 1903, p. 2, 2 June 1906, p. 2; *Daily Telegraph* (Waihi), 1 May 1906, p. 2.

<sup>940</sup> *Thames Star*, 1 February 1906, p. 2.

<sup>941</sup> For example, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 27 no. 159, box 186 no. 1133, box 187 no. 1137, box 199 no. 1200, box 214 no. 1275, box 222 no. 1313, ANZ-A.

<sup>942</sup> *Observer*, 2 May 1908, p. 5.

<sup>943</sup> Thames Branch Manager to General Manager, 7 May 1908, Bank of New Zealand, Thames Branch, General Manager's Letterbook 1904-1912, p. 425, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>944</sup> Testamentary Registers, 1913-1914, folio 160, BBCB 4208/9, ANZ-A.

"half-a-dozen of champagne (my shout)." They were safely brought round with eau-de-cologne, but shocks like that are much too sudden'.<sup>945</sup> Adams discovered the extent of this financial caution in 1906, when he was no doubt the person who informed the *Observer* of the following story. It told of a 'retired Boniface [publican] living at the Thames' who was careful with money. A 'leading mining magnate' who was staying with him, on being disturbed during the night by a dog's howling, found a bone in the pantry and threw it at him. Next morning his host lamented the loss of this 'beautiful piece of mutton' that was to have been their breakfast.<sup>946</sup> Adams was not so amused in March 1907, when his faction was outvoted for control of the Saxon mine. '*They Say* that Harry Hopper Adams' opinion of Bill Burton after the Saxon mine directorate election meeting oozed out pretty strongly through those intelligent eyes, when the register told the tale of a shareless ten-bobber'.<sup>947</sup> This was a reference to Burton remaining a director despite selling his shares, his 'ten bob' being the ten shillings he received for attending directors' meetings. By selling his shares he could not continue as a director and support Adams.

Richard Mitchelson took out a miner's right at Thames on 7 November 1867, and was involved with Adams in mining there in the early 1870s.<sup>948</sup> He then became a gum and timber merchant and storekeeper in the Dargaville area with his brother Edwin.<sup>949</sup> In the late 1880s, he was a partner with Adams at Waiorongomai.<sup>950</sup> A director of many of Adams'

<sup>945</sup> *Observer*, 8 October 1904, p. 7.

<sup>946</sup> *Observer*, 29 September 1906, p. 2.

<sup>947</sup> *Observer*, 16 March 1907, p. 7; see also 'Obadiah', 'Shares and Mining', p.20; for his directorship and original, April 1904, shareholding in the New Saxon Gold Mining Company, see Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 186 no. 1133, ANZ-A.

<sup>948</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Register of Miners' Rights 1867-1868, no. 1932, BACL 14358/1a, ANZ-A; *Observer*, 26 March 1904, p. 17; for example of claim in which he was a shareholder with Adams, see Register of Claims 1872-1874, no. 49, BACL 14397/8a, ANZ-A.

<sup>949</sup> For example, *New Zealand Herald*, 29 June 1893, p. 6, 18 February 1919, p. 6; Prospectus of Mitchelson Timber Co. Ltd., 1898, Hesketh and Richmond Papers, box 93, 1406/M, MS 440, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>950</sup> For example, *Te Aroha News*, 24 March 1888, p. 2, 11 September 1889, p. 2, 26 March 1890, p. 2.

companies,<sup>951</sup> he periodically inspected them with Adams.<sup>952</sup> In 1905, he became a member of the drainage board.<sup>953</sup> On his death in 1919, he left an estate valued at £6,646 18s 5d.<sup>954</sup>

Whereas Richard Mitchelson was not very prominent, his elder brother Edwin was the reverse, being one of the most notable men in the Auckland district. Before speculating in goldmining, he had developed a large timber and kauri gum business.<sup>955</sup> In the 1890s, he was accused of exploiting gumdiggers, mainly through the truck system.<sup>956</sup> A Member of Parliament from 1881 to 1896,<sup>957</sup> over an eight-year period he held a variety of portfolios in conservative governments, including being Acting Premier.<sup>958</sup> After leaving politics, he was mayor of Auckland, chairman of the Auckland Harbour Board, and president of the Auckland Racing Club, as well as holding other public offices.<sup>959</sup> He was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1920.<sup>960</sup>

Mitchelson was involved in mining at Tui from the late 1880s onwards, being a director of the Champion Gold and Silver Mining Company.<sup>961</sup> After

<sup>951</sup> For example, *Observer*, 3 May 1902, p. 10; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 172 no. 1062, box 178 no. 1090, box 186 no. 1133, box 199 no. 1200, box 214 no. 1276, box 230 no. 1351, box 242 no. 1420, box 247 no. 1445, ANZ-A.

<sup>952</sup> For example, *Thames Star*, 3 September 1904, p. 4, 8 October 1904, p. 4, 20 September 1905, p. 2, 2 June 1906, p. 2.

<sup>953</sup> *Thames Star*, 14 January 1905, p. 3, 9 March 1905, p. 3.

<sup>954</sup> Testamentary Registers, 1919, folio 174, BBCB 4208/15, ANZ-A.

<sup>955</sup> For example, *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 June 1883, Supplement, p. 2, 1 October 1892, p. 38; *Freeman's Journal*, 25 January 1884, p. 9; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 422, 624; *Observer*, 17 April 1926, p. 5; Janice C. Mogford, 'Edwin Mitchelson', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, vol. 2 (Wellington, 1993), p. 331; for Mitchelson's own account of his life, see 'The Hon. E. Mitchelson's Story', in Edith May Story, 'Our Fathers Have Told Us' (typescript, c. 1920), pp. 129-135, Alexander Turnbull Library.

<sup>956</sup> *Tribune*, 6 December 1890, pp. 4, 8; *Observer*, 6 December 1890, p. 9, 6 June 1891, p. 3; *New Zealand Herald*, 10 June 1893, p. 3, 27 June 1893, p. 5; Royal Commission on Gumfields, *AJHR*, 1898, H-12, pp. 61-62.

<sup>957</sup> *New Zealand Parliamentary Record* (Wellington, 1913), p. 100.

<sup>958</sup> *Observer*, 15 January 1909, p. 5, 8 April 1916, p. 16.

<sup>959</sup> *Observer*, 15 January 1909, p. 5, 11 June 1921, p. 7.

<sup>960</sup> Mogford, p. 331.

<sup>961</sup> See paper on the Tui district.

Adams' death, Mitchelson wrote that he had known him 'all his life'.<sup>962</sup> In 1888 he acquired a share in Adams' Silver King claim at Waiorongomai.<sup>963</sup> This was sold to the Te Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Company, but he retained an interest in the area, being consulted about the 1890 proposal for a low level tunnel. Although 'said to be most favourably impressed with' it,<sup>964</sup> he could not convince his Cabinet colleagues to support it. He then became, in his words, 'largely interested' in Adams' Te Aroha Syndicate.<sup>965</sup> Mitchelson owned mines at Tui again in 1922, and retained these holdings, largely unworked, until his death in 1934.<sup>966</sup> In the early twentieth century, he was a prominent member of Adams' syndicate, trading in shares and being a director of many of his companies.<sup>967</sup> In 1905, he became chairman of the drainage board, and was re-elected until his retirement in 1913.<sup>968</sup> In 1920, he supported Adams' efforts to obtain subsidies for the Sylvia.<sup>969</sup> They shared other business interests; for example, they both were directors of the Hikurangi Coal Company and the Takapuna Tramways and Ferry Company.<sup>970</sup>

Mitchelson's business ventures nearly became a public scandal in 1888 and 1889, and in 1890 rumours spread about his finances. These were mainly because of supposed links between members of the government and the Bank of New Zealand, with Mitchelson believed to be unable to repay

<sup>962</sup> Edwin Mitchelson to Minister of Mines, 26 July 1928, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W; as an example of their close friendship, see *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 February 1913, p. 25, 27 February 1913, p. 25, 13 March 1913, p. 25.

<sup>963</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 24 March 1888, p. 2, 17 November 1888, p. 2.

<sup>964</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 February 1890, p. 13.

<sup>965</sup> Edwin Mitchelson to Minister of Mines, 4 July 1895, Mines Department, MD 1, 95/816, ANZ-W.

<sup>966</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 June 1933, p. 1.

<sup>967</sup> For example, Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary No. 1, entry for 5 January 1901, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington; *Observer*, 30 November 1907, p. 7, 4 April 1908, p. 11; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 214 no. 1276, box 222 no. 1313, box 230 no. 1351, box 247 no. 1445, ANZ-A; *Thames Star*, 5 December 1901, p. 2.

<sup>968</sup> *Thames Star*, 27 January 1905, p. 4, 1 February 1906, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 January 1910, p. 36, 16 January 1913, p. 36, 13 February 1913, p. 36.

<sup>969</sup> Edwin Mitchelson to Acting Minister of Mines, 18 November 1920, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>970</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 21 January 1909, p. 49; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 222 no. 1313, ANZ-W.

his large debt to it.<sup>971</sup> Fortunately for him, the bank's directors did accept their staff's advice to bankrupt him. The acting manager of the Auckland branch described Mitchelson's gum account as 'the worse case of systematic fraud that has come under my cognizance in connection with any business firm in New Zealand'. He had lied to the bank, claiming he was not taking money from this account for living expenses when in fact he withdrew £1,800 'to pay his gambling and other debts'. The balance and stock sheets were both false, and the firm should be bankrupted and the partners punished 'as a warning to other tradesmen who may be inclined to attempt dishonest practices'.<sup>972</sup> The balance sheet had hidden his insolvency, he had made a fraudulent statement to his creditors, and some of his property was transferred into his wife's name to put it beyond their reach. In his anxiety to avoid bankruptcy, Mitchelson, trying to raise money on his Remuera property and in other ways, assured the bank that he would soon receive a legacy of several thousand pounds from an elderly aunt.<sup>973</sup> Because the directors decided that 'loss by liquidation' would be 'less than by bankruptcy', the bank managed his estate while the other partners in E. Mitchelson and Co. were allowed to pay ten shillings in the pound to be relieved of liability. The general manager protested at this decision in a special memorandum, arguing that Mitchelson had been plundering the bank and that the firm should be made bankrupt to stop their 'fraud and dishonesty'.<sup>974</sup> By 1892, Mitchelson's creditors had received five shillings in

<sup>971</sup> *Observer*, 5 July 1890, p. 7, 12 July 1890, p. 14, 9 August 1890, p. 3, 29 November 1890, p. 9, 6 December 1890, p. 7, 28 February 1891, p. 10, 13 June 1891, p. 6; 'Accusations by Member for Waitotara Committee', *AJHR*, 1890, I-7, pp. 10-11.

<sup>972</sup> Acting Manager, Auckland Branch, to Inspector, Head Office, 20 August 1888, Bank of New Zealand, Inspectors' Files, Correspondence: In, p. xviii, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>973</sup> Memorandum by Assistant General Manager, for Inspector, 17 May 1889; H.N. Taylor to John Butt (Assistant Inspector, Auckland Branch), 17 June 1889; Edwin Mitchelson to John Butt, 6 July 1889; Edwin Mitchelson to Inspector, 5 February 1890, Bank of New Zealand, Inspector's Files, Correspondence: In, pp. xxix, xxxiii, xliv, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington; Assignment dated 16 July 1889 from E. Mitchelson and Co. to Sarah Mitchelson, Hesketh and Richmond Papers, Box 91, 1040/M, MS 440, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>974</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Board Minute Book No. 8, Minutes of Meeting of 14 May 1889; Acting General Manager to Inspector, 14 May 1889, Bank of New Zealand, Inspectors' Files, Correspondence: In, p. xxviii, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

the pound,<sup>975</sup> but Mitchelson had escaped public exposure and the consequent end of his political career. There were no hints of any financial difficulties in future years, the bank in 1909 happily providing an advance secured by his private assets,<sup>976</sup> and no details reveal the effect of his involvement with Adams' syndicate. When he died in 1934,<sup>977</sup> his estate was sworn as being under £2,000, but further investigation revealing that its net value was nil. That his finances were in a very poor state before the onset of the Depression was revealed in his will, dated 26 February 1929. After allotting legacies to his wife and two children, he added that 'in regretfully cancelling provisions of former Wills in favour of relatives, valued friends, and religious and charitable organizations, altered circumstances of heavy liabilities alone have prevented me from giving tangible expression of my good will'.<sup>978</sup>

The last member of Adams' syndicate who has been researched was, like Adams and the others, a self-made man. Joseph James Craig amassed a considerable fortune, based only in part on mining investment, and did not lose it. His father Joseph, who died in June 1885, left an estate worth £1,075 14s 4d,<sup>979</sup> and willed his carting, coal, and firewood business to him, with instructions to give a tenth of the profits to his other son.<sup>980</sup> Clearly he realized which son had the better business brain. Less than 20 years later, an *Observer* character sketch called him 'Auckland's "Morgan"', a reference to the American millionaire Pierpont Morgan:

JJ's bulky form, with smiling face and black beard, has graced Auckland streets from time immemorial. In fact ... he has earned the applause of citizens for his pluck and foresight. Starting as a carter, he stopped at nothing where money showed its glitter. Wherever business was concerned, in brick kilns, ships, mines, etc, JJ jumped in promptly, and never failed to pull off something good for himself. The remarkable thing about big Jim is that he could carry the whole of this enormous business in his head,

<sup>975</sup> Hesketh and Richmond Papers, box 91, 1058/M, box 93, 1148/M, MS 440, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>976</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager's Diary October 1907-May 1911, p. 156, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>977</sup> Death Certificate of Edwin Mitchelson, 11 April 1934, 1934/4755, BDM.

<sup>978</sup> Probate of Edwin Mitchelson, BBAE 1570, 273/34, ANZ-A.

<sup>979</sup> Testamentary Registers 1883-1886, folio 136, BBCB 4208/2, ANZ-A.

<sup>980</sup> Probate of Joseph Craig, BBAE 1568/1431, ANZ-A.

where another man required volumes of books or bevies of clerks.<sup>981</sup>

At that time he was actively involved in share trading and investing in land and ships, his bank manager willingly providing generous overdraft limits.<sup>982</sup> The *Observer's* obituary described him as 'a man of commanding presence and dominating personality' who 'largely played "a lone hand"'. There was 'no doubt that in all his great enterprises he was guided by instinct'.

Although the predominating instinct of Mr Craig was to make money, he took little interest in money for its own sake or for the things it would buy for himself, his whole interest being that his shrewdness was superior to that of the men with whom he came in contact. His success was due, as a military man put it, to the fact that "he didn't care much for defence - he always attacked." He acted without fear, and instantly.

Craig himself believed he had second sight.

His religion was not spectacular, but it was practical. His benefactions were large, like himself, and very frequent.... There is no doubt whatever that Mr Craig's heart bled for the poor and distressed, and that no social worker for these people ever approached him in vain. He would attend a "left behind luggage" sale, buy the lot and hand it to charity at once. By this means he "beat the other fellow" and did some good as well.

There were 'few businessmen in Australasia so bold or so quick as he. Often eccentric, even his eccentricities showed his largeness, for there was nothing petty in anything he did, and everything he did he put his whole weight into'.<sup>983</sup> Craig owned coal mines, a shipping line, a cartage firm, a brick and pottery works, city property and rural land, and was a director of

<sup>981</sup> *Observer*, 20 December 1902, p. 5; for other details of his remarkable memory for verbal agreements and of his life in general, see 3 October 1932, p. 10.

<sup>982</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Managers' Diaries May 1900-December 1901, pp. 4, 12, 99; January 1902-June 1903, pp. 37, 133, 175; June 1903-August 1905, pp. 111, 112, 133; August 1905-October 1907, pp. 3, 31, 104, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>983</sup> *Observer*, 22 July 1916, p. 5.

a variety of companies.<sup>984</sup> In 1905, he informed his bank manager that he was ‘worth £60000 outside of his interest in JJ Craig Ltd’ and that the profit for himself and his firm for that year was £12,000.<sup>985</sup>

Buying and selling shares freely,<sup>986</sup> he invested in mines throughout the Hauraki district, and was a director in many companies.<sup>987</sup> According to rumour, many of these investments were profitable. In the boom of 1895, it was believed that he ‘made some thousands of pounds by the rapid advance in the values in mining stocks during the past few weeks’.<sup>988</sup> In 1904, he was ‘one of the lucky individuals’ who profited by ‘the boom in Waihi Extendeds’, of which he held 18,000.<sup>989</sup> In 1909, he was referred to as ‘one of the principal mining investors in Auckland’.<sup>990</sup>

Craig had only a very slight involvement with Waiorongomai mining. In 1905, he held 300 shares in Hardy’s Mines,<sup>991</sup> and in 1910 had shares in Waiorongomai Mines Ltd and helped to form its successor, the Waitawheta Gold Prospecting Company.<sup>992</sup> In Adams’ syndicate, he assisted Adams to

<sup>984</sup> For example, *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 310-311; *Observer*, 3 November 1894, p. 6, 4 January 1905, p. 2, 11 August 1906, p. 17, 5 April 1919, p. 9; *New Zealand Mining Standard*, 27 February 1897, p. 11; Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Register of Securities 1887-1896, folios 16-17, 100; Manager’s Diary No. 2, entry for 27 May 1903, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington; *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Weekly News Exhibition Number*, 1898, p. 56; *New Zealand Herald*, 13 July 1916, pp. 5, 9.

<sup>985</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Manager’s Diary No. 3, entry for 29 September 1905, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>986</sup> For example, Bank of New Zealand, Auckland Branch, Shares Register 1894-1905, p. 63; Manager’s Diary No. 1, entries for 5 June 1900, 23 June 1900, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>987</sup> For example, *List of Companies Registered with the Auckland Chamber of Mines* (Auckland, 1896), pp. 2-5.

<sup>988</sup> *Observer*, 8 June 1895, p. 5.

<sup>989</sup> *Observer*, 30 July 1904, p. 7.

<sup>990</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 July 1909, p. 49.

<sup>991</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 165 no. 1208, ANZ-A.

<sup>992</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 158 no. 1006, box 222 no. 1314; Register of Licensed Holdings 1887-1910, folios 185, 187, BBAV A556/27, ANZ-A.

purchase mines and batteries and float new companies,<sup>993</sup> and was a director in some of his mines and a shareholder in many more.<sup>994</sup> He was reported to have made a fortune from the Silverton mine when Adams managed it.<sup>995</sup> Long regarded not only as very wealthy but also as very over-weight, both were proved correct in 1916 when he died at the age of 56 from fatty degeneration of the heart and cardiac failure,<sup>996</sup> leaving an estate valued at £215,164.<sup>997</sup>

#### SYNDICATE MEMBERS EXPLORE ONE OF ADAMS' MINES

In 1902, William Blomfield wrote and illustrated a story of 'How the Directors and Experts Inspected the Tairua Broken Hills Gold Mine: Showing That All is Not Gold That Glitters'. His account showed syndicate members combining business with pleasure, and made jocular comments about their behaviour and dress sense. After an hour's traveling from the Tairua landing 'up a delightful river' while they played 'a desperate game of euchre', they disembarked and went on horseback along the road and across the river.

Broken Hills and Harry Adams put us into a serious vein and a full suit of working clothes.... Then the saying struck us as true that the clothes make the man. And a villainous looking crew we were; short shirts, long shirts, and shirts with no front – all tail, dungarees, slouch hats, etc, and a candle apiece. Experts we were now with a vengeance. After lunch in the Grand Hotel of the Hills, and a look through the mill, we started for the levels.... We got there, and traveled through tunnels, down rises into stopes, licked stones and dirt, saw gold, fished out all the mining terms and phrases we knew, and crept down ladders.

After being startled by blasting which 'made the party shudder', they returned to daylight and walked down hill, where the 'clay dabbed party

<sup>993</sup> For example, Thames Warden's Court, Instruments 1904-1905, nos. 2320, 2327, 2097, BACL 11343/12a, ANZ-A; Warden's Court, *Thames Star*, 2 May 1905, p. 2; *Observer*, 2 July 1904, p. 4, 24 September 1904, p. 7, 8 October 1904, p. 7.

<sup>994</sup> For example, Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 186 no. 1133, box 187 no. 1137, box 214 no. 1276, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 21 September 1899, p. 1833.

<sup>995</sup> *Observer*, 27 February 1926, p. 4.

<sup>996</sup> Death Certificate of Joseph James Craig, 12 July 1916, 1916/5519, BDM.

<sup>997</sup> Testamentary Registers, 1915-1916, folio 365, BBCB 4208/10, ANZ-A.

settled on the tram-track and had their photos taken by Jack Adams, assayer, battery manager, and general factotum'. They saw 'a clean-up of the plates for a big return, to the astonishment of all', before riding back 'by the light of the moon; over river, through bush', and through bush lawyers. At the hotel, they cleaned up and dressed up, did 'justice' to 'a great dinner', and two of the party had another game of euchre. The following day, a steamer took them 'to fish and shoot, on and off the Slipper Island', with great success. 'A real good time we had', assisted by drinks of whisky and milk. The steamer trip back to Auckland 'was a bit cheery. Euchre and recitation, with a bit more haka, drove the stray passengers to their berths, and the crew on deck, and nearly overboard. Then silence reigned supreme'.<sup>998</sup>

#### ENOS BOND AIDS ADAMS IN THE 1920s

With the death or financial decline of the members of his original syndicate, Enos Bond became Adams' new backer. A grain and kauri gum merchant in Auckland, with his brother Enoch and three other brothers he had formed Bond and Bond, a merchandising and importing firm.<sup>999</sup> He was associated with Adams by at least mid-1920, when he was a director of the new Caledonian Kurunui Moanataiari Company, which purchased its properties from Adams.<sup>1000</sup> In 1921, in its own way, the *Observer* welcomed the new partnership, though confusing Enos with his brother:

Harry Hopper Adams, and Enoch Bond, pards, lumped their few remaining thousands together and padded the hoof to prospect the rich and never-reached gold deposits of elusive Hauraki Peninsula. Harry ... still worships the golden calf, firmly believing that the ceaseless rattle of the stamps will again liven up the old Quartzopolis [Thames]. Armed with sanguine hopes and half of Enoch's boodle, and with a lifetime experience, Harry Hopper, with the vigour of youth, tackled the forsaken mines.

<sup>998</sup> 'One of Them' [William Blomfield], 'How the Directors and Experts Inspected the Tairua Broken Hills Gold Mine, Showing That All Is Not Gold That Glitters', *Observer*, 3 May 1902, p. 10.

<sup>999</sup> *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 142; *New Zealand Herald*, 1 September 1939, p. 12.

<sup>1000</sup> *Thames Star*, 22 June 1920, p. 2.

With Bond's assistance, he had been able to do more work in the Sylvia at Tararu and the Waitaia at Kuaotunu.<sup>1001</sup> According to the secretary of the Rising Sun Company at Owharoa, in which Bond had a large number of shares and was a director for eight or nine years, Bond was a 'shrewd business man'. He had been 'interested in mining for a great number of years, and I should say has put as much money as any one in this City into mining ventures'. When he invested in a company, he gave 'his time, his energy and his experience'.<sup>1002</sup> His partnership with Adams was to be a financial disaster for him; the details revealed some of Adams' business methods during the 1920s.

In August 1920, Bond accompanied Adams to ask William Massey, who was both Prime Minister and Minister of Mines, for a subsidy to drive 1,000 feet to cut through the Moanataiari slide and one to develop the Sylvia. Bond left the talking to Adams, who told Massey that Bond had been his partner since the start of that year. In the Sylvia, he had spent £3,000 in plant and labour in 'getting to the point where he was informed the ore was.... He had been put on to this by a poor fellow who had miner's complaint, some twelve months ago. They had spent all his money, but he realized everything the miner had told him about the mine was true'. When the under-secretary explained that his department had to investigate the matter and receive plans, Adams 'said he thought perhaps the Minister might see his way to go past that and give them the grant right out. The country was craving for gold', and if this mine 'did not produce £10 per ton in the bottom of the level he would give him the mine'.<sup>1003</sup> The Mines Department was not very keen on Adams' detailed proposals, but, after a prompt from Edwin Mitchelson to the Acting Minister of Mines,<sup>1004</sup> a loan of £5,000 was granted. Adams and Bond requested subsidies for Kuaotunu mines in 1921 and 1922, but did not follow up their applications.<sup>1005</sup> In an

<sup>1001</sup> *Observer*, 20 August 1921, p. 7.

<sup>1002</sup> J.H. Jackson to Minister of Mines, 4 April 1927, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>1003</sup> Minutes of deputation to Prime Minister re Moanataiari and Sylvia mines, Thames, 19 August 1920, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>1004</sup> Edwin Mitchelson to Acting Minister of Mines, 18 November 1920, Mines Department, 18 November 1920, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>1005</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 8 August 1921, and memorandum by Minister of Mines to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 6 March 1922, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/4/33, ANZ-W.

interview in July 1924 between Adams, Bond, and George James Anderson, the Minister of Mines, another loan of £2,000 was refused, but Anderson said that the repayment of the existing loan might be delayed for ten months. Adams immediately requested £1,000, stating that he and Bond were willing to mortgage their property for security.<sup>1006</sup> This extra amount was not granted. The following month, Adams announced himself to be ‘out of pocket in connection with this Venture fully £15,000’, and that Bond had dissolved the partnership.<sup>1007</sup> After trying to keep his mine going by profits from his Takapuna quarry, Adams then attempted to sell it to a German syndicate.<sup>1008</sup>

The next reference to Bond in the Mines Department files comprised letters to Anderson in April 1927 asking for leniency over repayment of the £5,000 debt. A letter from Blomfield was particularly revealing. He argued that Bond’s case was unique, for he had put ‘full trust’ in Adams. The Sylvia venture ‘as you know was disastrous’. Bond had ‘already lost £10,000 and paid up the bank in big instalments’, or was doing so, and was ‘in difficulties to carry out his obligations’. Adams was ‘a difficult man to complete equal payments with, and is very forgetful of appointments, being full of schemes and progressive proposals. Mr Bond finds his position to-day dangerous and depressing. No finality can be reached with his partner and the delays [were] cramping his credit’.<sup>1009</sup> Anderson met Bond, who, at the age of 72, was in a ‘most hopeless condition’ of health and had no property, but was offering £1,000 to be rid of his half share of the debt.<sup>1010</sup> He promised to pay £5 each week, which he would find hard to do. His total losses while ‘associated with’ Adams were approximately £10,500, in addition to which he had lost £7,000 through other mining investments.<sup>1011</sup>

<sup>1006</sup> Memorandum of interview between Adams, Bond, and Minister of Mines, held on 8 July 1924, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>1007</sup> H.H. Adams to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 4 August 1924, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>1008</sup> H.H. Adams to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 22 January 1925; memorandum of 13 April 1925, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>1009</sup> William Blomfield to Minister of Mines, 10 April 1927, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>1010</sup> Memorandum by Minister of Mines, 13 April 1927, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>1011</sup> J.H. McCoy to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 19 April 1927, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W.

His brother Enoch provided £1,001 5s, which was accepted as final payment.<sup>1012</sup> Adams never repaid the money he owed, holding out the possibility of either selling the mine to a Californian syndicate or to a local company he would form.<sup>1013</sup>

Bond retained his interest in mining despite these experiences, and in November 1933 became a director in Waiorongomai Gold Mines.<sup>1014</sup> Before his death in 1939 he had partially restored his finances, leaving an estate valued at £17,904 1s 2d.<sup>1015</sup>

### HIS SONS' CAREERS

One other feature of Adams' life, and one typical of other prominent mining families, was that his four eldest sons all became mine or battery managers. The eldest, John, became a battery manager in the 1890s, and helped his father to supervise his properties at Thames, Coromandel, Neavesville, and Tairua.<sup>1016</sup> He was later a successful civil engineer in New Zealand and Australia, but died of a 'mine-related' illness.<sup>1017</sup> Albert Augustine (Bert) managed the Waiorongomai battery for his father, and, after managing the Broken Hills battery, amongst others, from 1916 to 1921 and then again in 1929, owned mines at Tui.<sup>1018</sup> Richard Waiorongomai (Dick) was in charge of some of his father's mines, as well as

<sup>1012</sup> J.H. McCoy to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 20 April 1927, MD 1A, 32/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>1013</sup> H.H. Adams to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 22 June 1927, MD 1A, 32/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>1014</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 695 no. 4544, ANZ-A.

<sup>1015</sup> Probate of Enos Bond, Probates, BBAE 1570, 769/39, ANZ-A.

<sup>1016</sup> For example, Marriage Certificate of John Henry Adams, 8 July 1899, 1899/3034, BDM; *Thames Star*, 13 July 1899, p. 4, 5 July 1905, p. 2; *Observer*, 28 July 1923, p. 4.

<sup>1017</sup> Spicer, p. 85.

<sup>1018</sup> For example, H.H. Adams to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 11 December 1896, Mines Department, MD 1, 97/24, ANZ-W; *New Zealand Mines Record*, 16 July 1903, p. 509; Thames Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1915, 22/1915, BACL 14350/3a; Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1916, 6, 8-12, 23, 24, 26, 45/1916, BBAV 11289/22a; Register of Mining Privileges 1913-1932, folios 66-68, BBAV 11500/4a; Mining Applications 1929, 6/1929, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

others'.<sup>1019</sup> He died from a 'mine-related' illness.<sup>1020</sup> Henry Hopper Adams Jr. prospected several areas, including Waiorongomai in 1951.<sup>1021</sup>

### EVALUATIONS OF ADAMS' CAREER

In its obituary, the *New Zealand Herald* stated that he had been a prominent Mason, although any leadership roles he may have had in this organization were not listed. It estimated the total cost of all the batteries he erected at one million pounds.<sup>1022</sup> The *Thames Star* reprinted the account of Adams published in the *Thames Diamond Jubilee Souvenir* of the previous year, where he was the first of 'Some Surviving Old Identities' to be lauded:

No man had worked more consistently or more thoroughly for the development of the Thames and neighbouring goldfields.... There is no field on the peninsula on which he had not worked, and nearly always as a director of important undertakings. In late years his enterprise had been so general and his mana had so much overshadowed everything on the Thames

that his career was summarized in detail. 'He supervised, contracted for, or built for his companies twelve batteries of note'. The article concluded that he had 'foresight, courage and experience as his chief resources. His interests, as regards gold production, were the interests of the community'.<sup>1023</sup> Four years later, the newspaper wrote that his fame would 'never be effaced from Thames mining history'.<sup>1024</sup> In a letter of sympathy to Eliza Adams, the under-secretary wrote that his death had 'removed one of

<sup>1019</sup> For example, *Thames Star*, 15 August 1906, p. 2; Memorandum by Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 1 August 1922, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W; Bank of New Zealand, Thames Branch, Gold Dealers' Book 1913-1932, entries for 23 March 1923, 31 August 1923, 28 January 1924, 12 September 1924, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington; *New Zealand Herald*, 18 June 1936, p. 16.

<sup>1020</sup> Spicer, p. 85.

<sup>1021</sup> For example, Health Department, Te Aroha Water Supply 1950-1967, YCBE 1990/524a, ANZ-A; Mines Department, MD 1A, 5/50, Part 2, ANZ-W; *AJHR*, 1957, C-2, p. 30.

<sup>1022</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 16 May 1928, p. 12.

<sup>1023</sup> Weston, pp. 182, 184; reprinted in *Thames Star*, 15 May 1828, p. 5.

<sup>1024</sup> *Thames Star*, 18 August 1932, p. 13.

our most energetic pioneers from the mining community, and his loss will be greatly felt'.<sup>1025</sup>

The *Observer* obituary was probably written by its owner and principal cartoonist, William Blomfield, an 'old Thames boy' whose wife was a relative of Adams', and who had known him 'for ages' and was associated with his mining ventures 'many times'.<sup>1026</sup> This was the only obituary to include personal insights into Adams' personality and career. Under the headline 'Thames Mining Deuce', it described him as the 'leading authority in mining engineering and practice', whose advice was sought by people 'in high standing'. Adams was 'the greatest optimist in the mining world', who had 'made small fortunes for many, and made small fortunes and lost them'. Self-educated, because of being 'so adept' at an early age he had become a leading mining figure:

Up and down, his luck has been fickle, and the lack of education a big bar. In book-learning, mathematics, etc, he was deficient, his knowledge of Nature's earthly treasures and the winning of them was profound. In mining engineering Harry had few equals, in fact, his busy brain was for ever evolving new schemes.... It was said of him that he could build an up-to-date mill out of heaps of scrap.

This obituary concluded that,

active to the last, Harry Hopper Adams was a remarkable man. The late Richard Seddon remarked on one occasion after an experience with H.H., who was opposed to his party: "If that man with his big forehead had only had education, what a wonder he would have been and where would he stop."<sup>1027</sup>

In the 1940s another 'old Thames boy', the former miner Alfred Frederick Sawyer, then in his seventies, recalled 'poor old Harry', who, in

<sup>1025</sup> Under-Secretary, Mines Department, to Eliza Adams, 18 May 1928, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W.

<sup>1026</sup> William Blomfield to Minister of Mines, 10 April 1927, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 2, ANZ-W; for photograph of Blomfield amongst other directors visiting the Broken Hills mine with Adams in 1899, see Weston, p. 67; for his article and sketches of a 1902 visit, see 'One of Them', 'How the Directors and Experts Inspected the Tairua Broken Hills Gold Mine', *Observer*, 3 May 1902, p. 10.

<sup>1027</sup> *Observer*, 23 May 1928, pp. 5, 15.

his expensive work at Waiomu and Moanataiari, 'had no Luck.... For a life time he was the most prominent mining man - about the Thames, Te Aroha, and Up Country'. The failure of his Moanataiari efforts in the late 1920s

broke his heart and he died in Auckland worried to death, he was a good sort to all and to all local charities - sadly Missed and had bad Luck - being a couple of weeks too late buying up Waiotahi G.M.C. Just before this got the Big Famous Patch.... No Mining Venture was too big for his workings.... Harry was a great Engineer - Practical man.... Poor Old Harry died of a Broken Heart - no Luck in any of his mining Venture to repair for his Life work.... Many a man here can remember him for his generosity - Freely Given.... Scores of his Friends - lost all their Life Saving - Following his Ventures - To Dam - his Luck - he deserved Better.... we miss his sort now.... Towards his last years - Harry fell on hard times - nothing he does, or his Sons - brought any LSD [pounds, shillings, pence] home.... Bad Fortune - Getting Old etc + Family not much use to him - they ... had no Luck for all their lifes work ... Dam. Good Sort - to Miners.<sup>1028</sup>

Sawyer also recalled his cyanide and oil flotation plant on the Thames beach and his gold dredge working the foreshore for years. 'This like all poor Old HH Adams - Big Costly Works - was a great Failure - he died of a Broken Heart - over Foreshore and affairs over Moanatorai Mining venture'.<sup>1029</sup> These somewhat incoherent memoirs indicated that, apart from the popular belief that he died of a broken heart because of the failure of his Moanataiari venture, he was fondly remembered as a kindly person, and that his friends, by providing financial support, had lost substantial sums. As the Thames newspaper wrote, Adams had 'made fortunes and lost them'.<sup>1030</sup>

In one important way, Adams was similar to other leading mining prospectors and miners, as the case studies of Billy Nicholl and Clem Cornes show. In a letter to the Minister of Mines in 1922, he wrote that 'I admit that I am a very sanguine man - but if I was not I would not have

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<sup>1028</sup> Alfred Frederick Sawyer, Recollections, n.d. [1940s], W.G. Hammond Papers, folder 34a, MS 134, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Museum.

<sup>1029</sup> Alfred Frederick Sawyer, Notes: No. 1, Mines [1946-1947], W.G. Hammond Papers, folder 34b, MS 134, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Museum.

<sup>1030</sup> *Thames Star*, 18 August 1932, p. 13.

been able to follow my profession successfully'.<sup>1031</sup> But as their experiences also revealed, being sanguine could not overcome the lack of value in so many of the mines they discovered or developed.

### HIS PERSONALITY

In the early twentieth century, as a symbol of his new wealth he wore a diamond ring - but hid his hand in his pocket,<sup>1032</sup> possibly a sign of modesty. The *Thames Star* referred to his new fame in jocular fashion:

Hard work seems in some cases to agree with men, but with the majority it is the men who disagree with hard work. An example of the former is found in Mr H.H. Adams, who does more hard work than most men engaged in mining pursuits, and yet is gaining in weight and increasing in size. His new hat appears to fit him better than his old "tile," that is because it is said to be a size or two larger. There are few things more annoying than a hat that does not fit well, but that happens sometimes in cases where men are growing, especially in the head.<sup>1033</sup>

Presumably because he was not amused by the implication, one week later Adams refused to allow a *Thames Star* reporter to inspect his New Moanataiari mine. The public could 'draw their own conclusions', wrote the editor.<sup>1034</sup> According to an *Observer* cartoon, Adams insisted that the owner of the newspaper pay £25 to be allowed into a tunnel where gold had been found.<sup>1035</sup> If this illustrated one aspect of his personality, here are two more examples from December 1904. When Adams and Burton were involved in a motor bus crash, Burton fell on Adams. 'When they had sorted themselves out Mr Adams smiled and said to his companion as he rubbed his bruised anatomy:- "Just your luck; you always manage to fall soft" '.<sup>1036</sup> The second was 'an act of practical sympathy' performed in an 'unostentatious manner' after a man working in one of his mines was killed: he 'said that every possible attention was to be paid to the bereaved widow, and subsequently

<sup>1031</sup> H.H. Adams to Minister of Mines, 23 September 1922, Mines Department, MD 1A, 23/3/2, Part 1, ANZ-W.

<sup>1032</sup> *Observer*, 15 October 1904, p. 7.

<sup>1033</sup> *Thames Star*, 2 September 1904, p. 4.

<sup>1034</sup> *Thames Star*, 12 September 1904, p. 2.

<sup>1035</sup> Cartoon, *Observer*, 17 September 1904, p. 5.

<sup>1036</sup> *Thames Star*, 21 December 1904, p. 2.

he dispatched a message of sympathy accompanied by a cheque for £20'.<sup>1037</sup> One evening in 1884, when a boy working in the battery was killed, he had gone 'at once and found the boy lying alongside the creek'. After finding his pulse was beating, he told another boy 'to take the lamp and I would carry him into the retort house; this was done. I took his boots off and got two of the hands in the battery with me to rub his feet, and he came to and moved his limbs. I sent off for a doctor', but the boy died soon after being taken home.<sup>1038</sup>

Some arrogant behaviour was noted, as in 1909, when, as a member of the drainage board, he arranged with the engineer to reduce the cost of pumping. When asked for his authority to do this, Adams 'said if he could make a saving of £50 a month he thought he was justified in doing it at once'. After the chairman pointed out that there was 'a proper way of making changes', he expressed surprise 'at any one objecting to him effecting a saving right away'. After more debate, during which Adams was silent, the secretary clarified that Adams had tried to arrange a meeting with the chairman; this ended the controversy, notable for Adams not deigning to explain the circumstances.<sup>1039</sup> The *Observer*, which because of his friendship with Blomfield generally published snippets favourable to him, noted in 1912 that he had informed a public meeting that 'he made Takapuna', and gently mocked him as another Maui.<sup>1040</sup> In its Christmas Annual for that year, the following was included in its article commenting on leading personalities under the heading 'Applied Classics': 'H.H.A.: "Of their own merits modest men are dumb." (G. Coleman, *Heir at Law*)'.<sup>1041</sup> In his will, written on 8 October 1927, Adams described himself as a 'Mining Expert'.<sup>1042</sup>

His family recalled him continuing 'to have his large dinner parties' after he retired from mining, spending 'more and more time on his front verandah with his cherrywood pipe and panoramic view'. A granddaughter remembered 'his kindness to all his family and his joy in entertaining. She

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<sup>1037</sup> *Thames Star*, 12 December 1904, p. 2.

<sup>1038</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 24 May 1884, p. 2.

<sup>1039</sup> *Thames Star*, 7 May 1909, p. 2.

<sup>1040</sup> *Observer*, 13 July 1912, p. 5.

<sup>1041</sup> *Observer*, Christmas Annual, 1912, p. 19.

<sup>1042</sup> Probate of H.H. Adams, BBAE 1570, 297/28, ANZ-A.

said he was a companionable man with a generous nature, a bountiful table and an unforgettable cherrywood pipe'.<sup>1043</sup>

## CONCLUSION

His career was an example of an ill-educated miner who became a prosperous mine owner but over-extended himself through being oversanguine. Not only did he fall from being a millionaire to dying penniless, the friends and associates who helped to finance his ventures also suffered from their involvement with him. As with so many miners, as the value of the remaining ore declined so did their financial fortunes, and no matter what elaborate schemes were devised they could not succeed. Adams was a self-made man with considerable untrained engineering skills, who was responsible both for his becoming the most prominent Hauraki miner in the early twentieth century and his subsequent mining and financial failures.

### *Appendix*

*Figure 1:* Henry Hopper Adams, n.d., Adams family portrait, Arthur Mahon Collection, Te Aroha and District Museum; used with permission.

*Figure 2:* ‘Blo’ [William Blomfield], ‘Manager Harry Adams says he would rather build a dozen mills than make a speech’, in ‘Sketches of Mining Celebrities at the Opening of the Waihi-Silverton Battery’, *Observer*, 11 April 1896, p. 12.

*Figure 3:* ‘One of Them’, ‘How the Directors and Experts Inspected the Tairua Broken Hills Gold Mine. Showing That All is Not Gold That Glitters’ [with sketches by ‘Blo’], *Observer*, 3 May 1902, pp. 10-11.

*Figure 4:* ‘Blo’, ‘H.H. ADAMS. May good luck attend your efforts to exploit and develop the goldfields. Local brains and experience are worth more than foreign capital’, *Observer*, 26 December 1903, p. 13.

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<sup>1043</sup> Spicer, p. 85.

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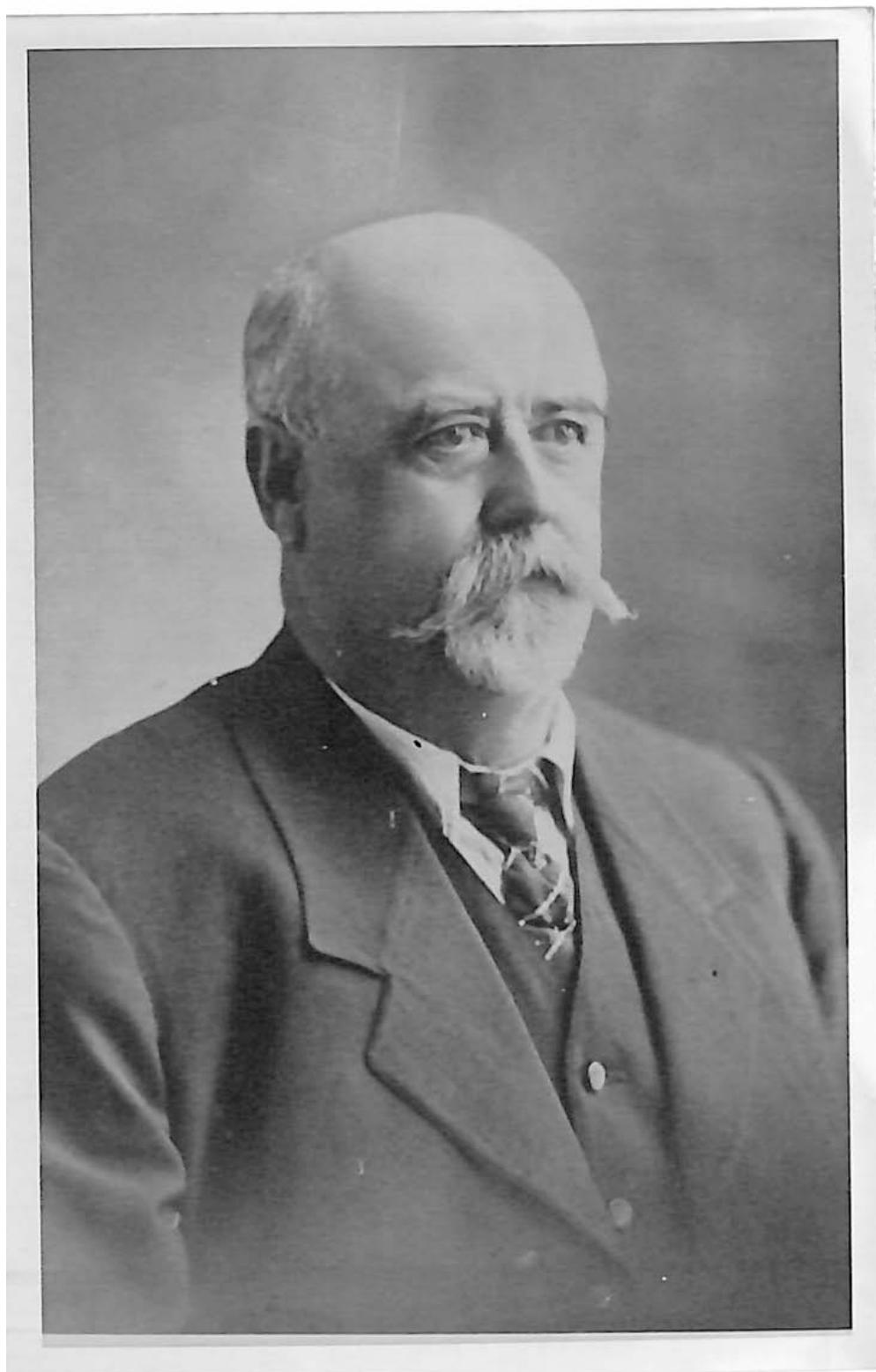
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## How the Directors and Experts Inspected the Tairua Broken Hills Gold Mine.

Showing That All is Not Gold That Glitters.

BY "ONE OF THEM."

**T**AIRUA Broken Hills, but mainly gold, was the attraction that seized a party of solid business men away from cosy beds and asphalt footpaths. And when that solid party stepped off the deck of the Waiotahi to board a powerful (smelling) oil launch at Tairua landing, things took a turn for the better in the appearance of each member of the party, so far as slovenly ways were concerned. Mr E. W. Alison, who appeared dressed in a full suit of S.A. kiniki, slouch hat added, and was christened "General Bobs" on the spot. He tried to ex-



"General Bobs."

plain that his appearance of a cross between Witheford and Napier was an anxiety to appear like a mining expert. The fire in his eye, however, glinting in the lining case in Mr Harry Gorrie's pocket, told its tale. His "poor brother" Alec looked subdued as he ranged his eye over the floating river palaces with an idea of purchase for the Devonport trade—gold-brain covered with a skin of Thompson's young and youthful engineer added. Mr Willie Frater bowed his head and covered his damaged eye in submission to the military figure in the bow, while Major Holgate explained to the brothers Ted



"Dick" Mitchelson.

and Dick Mitchelson it was after care-training and many official trips to the Tairua hills that the King of Devonport's pride and Takapuna's fancy had adopted this military covering and carriage. Well, we all forgave him, and steamed away from the deserted milling township of Tairua, with its millions of feet of rotting timber

and rusting machinery, and where the adjacent miners import timber from the islands to New Zealand for a vengeance. After an hour's trip up a delightful river, and amidst the footing



**T**he Gold-bound Skipper, on the horn by the "General," and a desperate game of euchre we played at Laycock's landing, and alighted. Horns of various breeds and colours awaited the party. Harry Gorrie got on first and bestrode the only bit of blood in the mob. We prodded the roads and forded the river in an elongated string, led by the "General," who did not finish and allowed the "Major" to do him by a good hundred lengths.



"Harry" Adams — Tairua Broken Hills' Boss.

Broken Hills and Harry Adams put us into a serious vein and a full suit of working clothes. The General was



"Stand up and eat the King yer brother."

loath to cover his glory, but the steel of the manager's eye bade him robe and he did. Then the saying struck us as true that the clothes make the man. And a villainous looking crew we were: short shirts, long shirts, and slacks with patches, all the dungeoneers, slouch hats, etc., and canary spicets. Experts we were now with a vengeance. After lunch in the Grand Hotel of the Hills, and a look through the mill, we started for the levels. With Frater at the helm, and him, and his dangerous optics gloomed dark under his cap, but we got there, and travelled through tunnels, down rises into slopes, licked stones and dirt, saw gold, fished out all the mining terms and phrases, lay low, and crept down ladders. Suddenly there was a deep boom that threatened our General



**T**he Chairman receives a report, out and published. Edwin Mitchelson from head to heel, and made the party shudder. Shooting! And the guns began to play. From this point out the General was deposed. We got into light at last and slipped down hill. Alec Alison tried to work a gun, but the gun jammed, and, but the Major got into stride and, couldn't stop, to the dismay of a shift that was making its way up-hill with parcels of gelignite. The hill shook when his feet touched ground, a distance of twelve yards apart. The others are preserving a couple of holes as a



**T**he Major getting way on curio. The gallant soldier finished just short of the level and clay-dashed path, tumbled on the tram-track and had their photos taken by Jack Adams, assayer, battery manager, and general factotum. If the picture taken ever comes to light, we will tell you where on the tram-track at least one of the party. After a cleanup of the plates for a big return, to the astonishment of all, we got our hacks and belted off back to Laycock's by the light of the moon; over river, through bush, and, as Harry Gorrie known, to the sorrow of his torn lug, bush lawyer.



"Harry" Gorrie falls amongst lavers.

A great dinner they gave us at Laycock's—and didn't we do justice to it! The General got out of his khaki (about time), Major Holgate bared out and out, and the leggins, riding-pants, and spurs, with the rest to match, while the others were satisfied with a wash and brush up. E. W. would persist in dragging Edwin Mitchelson into the water, up to a friendly gang of eels, to their sorrow. Early morning saw us all afoot, ready for benzine and launch, which we got soon enough. The deposed General here smelt blood in a horse, and pursued it, by setting the owner to ride the horses. We wish him luck of his bargain. Tairua turned out to meet the important party on its return. Mr Harvey, with a hungry,



**M**r Harvey—Tairua's mill-white duds, tired look for society, dressed in spotless white, was never tired of seeing to our wants. E. W. turned provido, and serried us with bacon, ham, biscuits, and milk, while guns and ammunition littered the store verandah. For a steamer the Effort awaited our pleasure to fish and shoot, ou and off the Slipper Islands. And the day we had—that is, all bar Major Holgate, E. W. Alison, who tells some real tall shooting yarns with himself in the picture, and Fred William Frater, who would not "eat the King ye brother" who, armed with a gun and ammunition, two dogs, a hungry greyhound and an extremely fat retriever, hoarded the island to shoot rabbits. The rest of us fished. We caught every colour, shape, size, and name of fish you could imagine—big-bellied, small-eyed, and sharp-finned, stumpy "shoe-makers," transparent pink trevally, schnapper, rock cod, blue cod, whapuka, rocks, seaweed, and whisky and milk—in fact, everything to make the day enjoyable, and the skipper helped



"Bobby Raw"—past seventy-four.

Figure 3: 'One of Them', 'How the Directors and Experts Inspected the Tairua Broken Hills Gold Mine. Showing That All is Not Gold That Glitters' [with sketches by 'Blo'], *Observer*, 3 May 1902, pp. 10-11.

amazingly. Bobby Raw, the pub-keeper at the landing, a man of seventy-five who has just taken to himself his third, with his beaming pink face and sailors' roll, kept us and the fish lively until the boat pulled alongside with the rabbit slayers and dogs. One poor bunny happened their way, and it's the word of E. W. Alison or W. Frater who killed it, by gun or stick. Anyhow, some believe one and some the other, and, while a boat-pulling quarrel between the deposed General "Bobs" and the Major was progressing, we returned to the landing amidst the plaudits of the Tairua population, who had fish enough to satisfy a shag. Johnny Raw treated us to lunch before we left that lovely spot of curling planks and rusting tram rails. E. W. and another gave the astonished



*Alex. Alison dishes a prospect.*

and shocked residents an exhibition of shouting and stamping, meant to represent a Maori haka after a cannibal feast. The population went home to think. Mr Harvey had a tear in his eye, and even the crew of the oil launch sighed as the steamer bore us off. The last night was a bit cheery. Euchre and recitation, with a bit more haka, drove the stray passengers to their berths and the crew on deck, and nearly overboard. Then silence reigned supreme. To-day, those mining experts, directors and investors of the great Tairua Broken Hills would frown

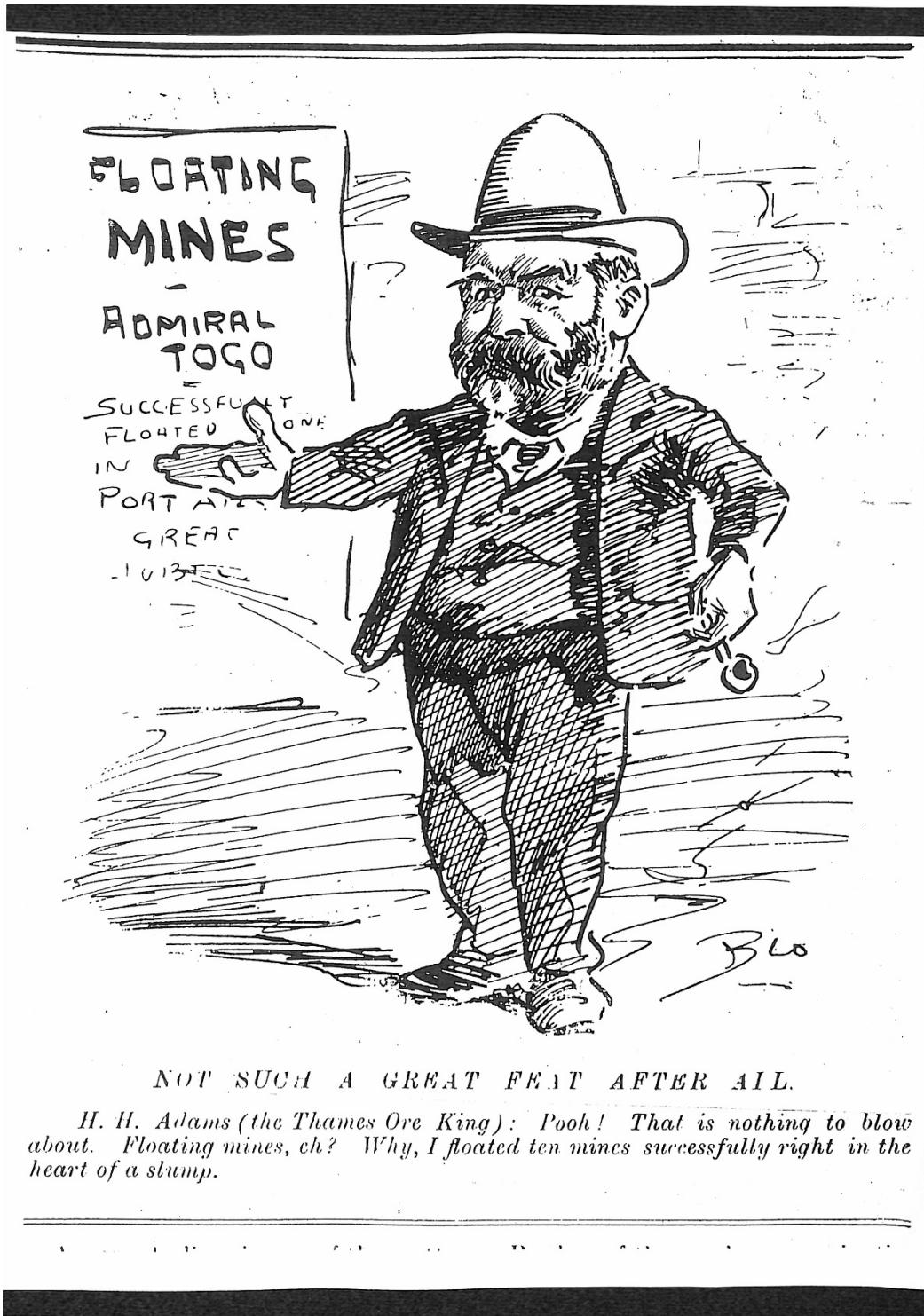


*"My poor brother" on the haka.*

and pass on if one but suggested to them that they at one time had a "poor brother."



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*THE BATTLE OF THE THAMES SWELLED HEADS.*

*Captain Harry Hopper Adams: My head is swelled, is it, Bill McCullough, since I've been getting the gold? Well, yours is swelled a darn sight too big to get into this tunnel, and it will cost twenty-five pounds to bring it down small enough to let you squeeze through.*

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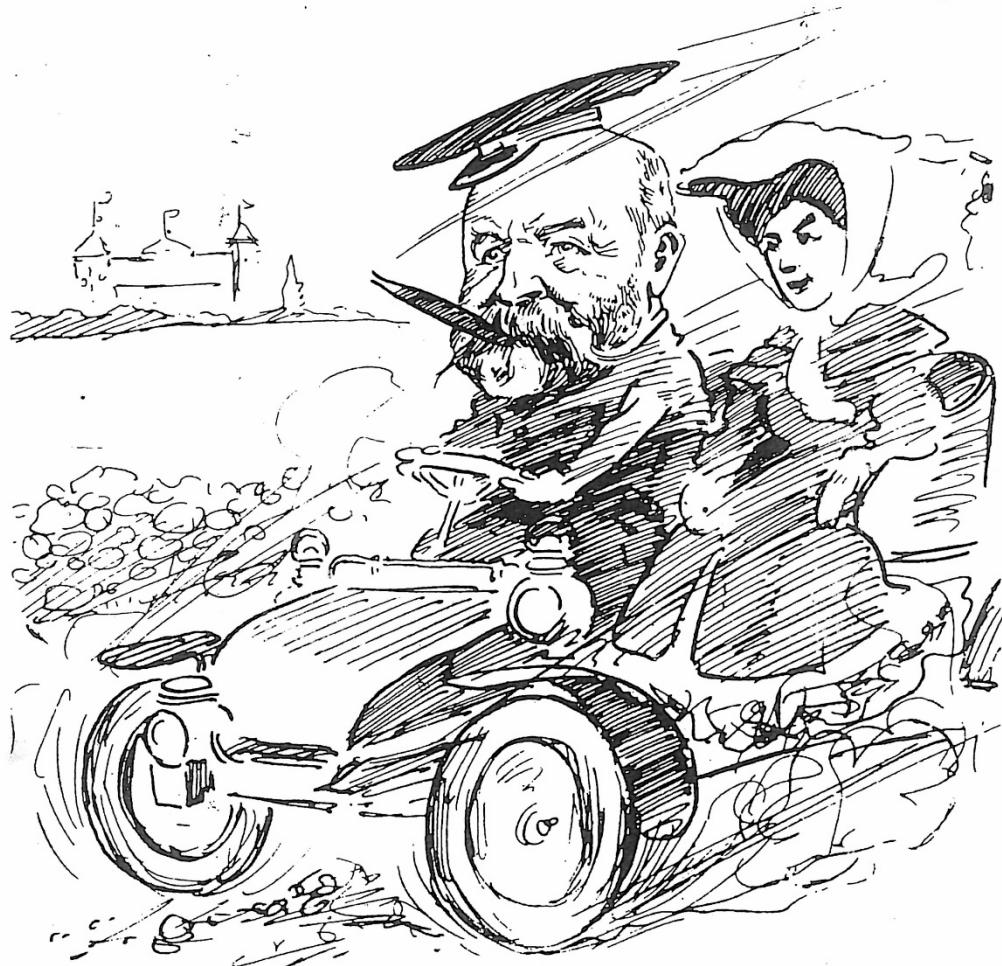


EUCHRE AND THE THAMES DRAINAGE BOARD.

*James Lennox (Big Pump Chairman): This is not fair. You've got six cards, Harry.*

*Harry Adams (with an eye on the Queen of Beauty Pumps): That's right. It's the odd card that takes the trick.*

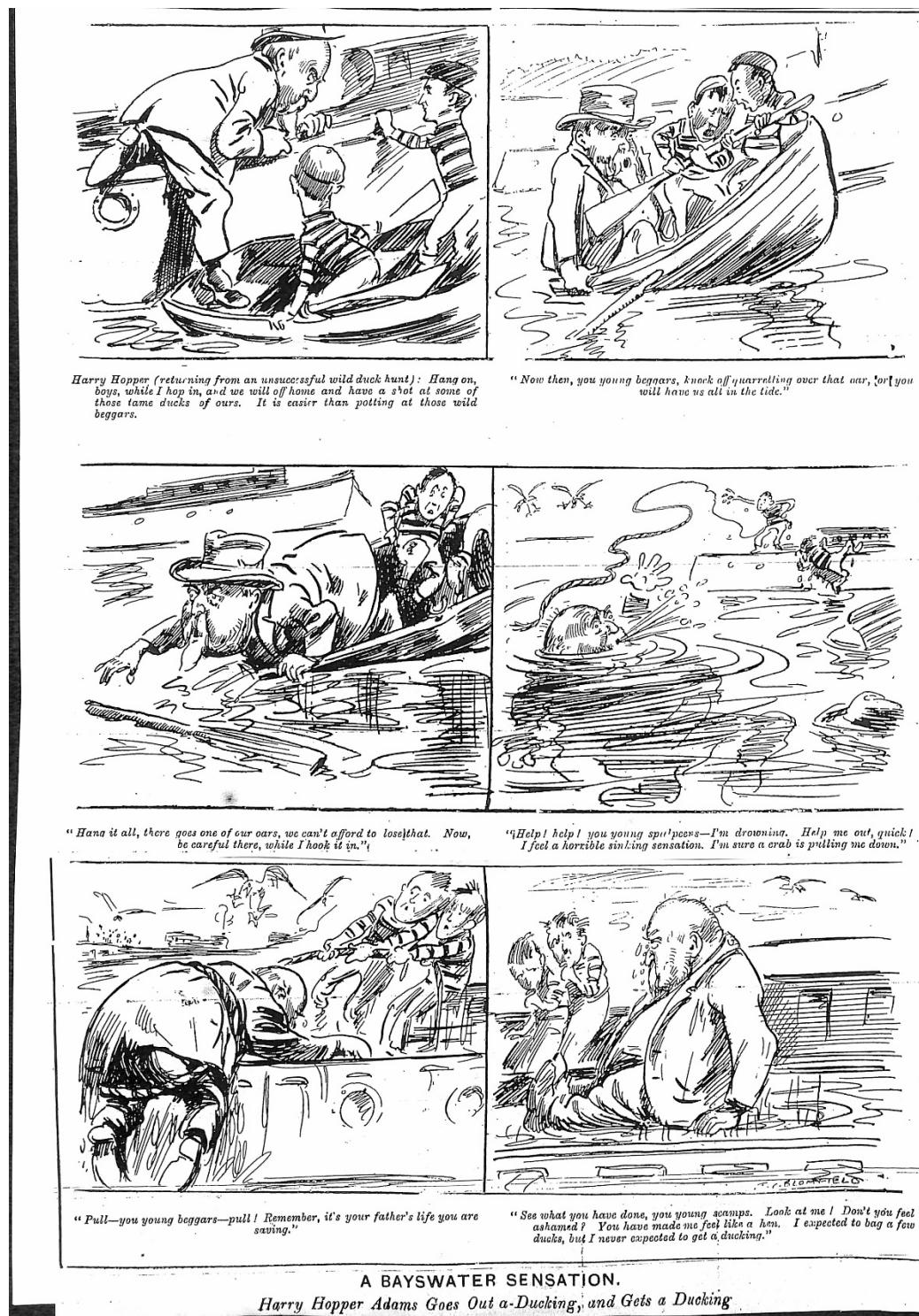
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HARRY SEES COLOURS

*Harry Mining Magnate Adams: By Golly, if I could only make the mining industry move along at this rate, we'd see some dividends.*

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