

GEORGE DEVEY: A TE AROHA CARPENTER AND HIS FAMILY

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Abstract: *A cabinetmaker, George Devey brought his wife and young family to New Zealand in 1864, accompanied by his brother Jess, a blacksmith. After settling in Thames, from 1883 onwards they lived in Te Aroha, where George erected houses, built coaches, and was the local undertaker. He had the most minimal involvement in local mining possible: acquiring an interest in one claim. His unmarried brother was a blacksmith at Waiorongomai, but would die prematurely of cancer.*

George was a leader of the Methodist community, in particular supervising the Sunday School at Waiorongomai for many years. He was involved in the wider community, and lived long enough to be regarded as one of the 'old-timers'. Despite suffering from three accidents earlier in life, he would live until the age of 97.

His wife Ann first achieved prominence in 1877 for assaulting a teacher because one of her daughters had been chastised. In Te Aroha she worked as a nurse for many years, and was fondly remembered, although previously, when at Thames, her nursing was in part responsible for a maternal death. After she died, the community ensured that her memory was kept alive.

Outlines are given of the careers of their sons and daughters. One daughter, Caroline Ida, married a mostly successful businessman, but another, Laura, suffered from mental problems caused by 'disappointment in love'. Although she found happiness with her second husband, a miner, her life was cut short in tragic fashion.

GEORGE DEVEY'S CAREER

George Devey was born in 1837 to Richard, a cabinetmaker, and Caroline, née Layton, probably in Birmingham, where he was baptized on 13 February, although his death certificate and that of his brother Jess recorded their birthplace as being Wolverhampton.¹ Trained as a cabinetmaker, he was described in 1885 as 'an experienced hand' at coach building and upholstering, 'having been employed for a number of years at

¹ Ancestry.co.uk; Death Certificates of Jess Devey, 22 December 1896, 1896/1605; George Devey, 3 December 1933, 1933/11662, BDM; *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1; *Auckland Star*, 5 December 1933, p. 3.

the London and North Western Railway Carriage works, and also by Messrs Brown & Marshall, private and railway carriage builders, Birmingham'.² In January 1889 he stated that he 'had been forty years an undertaker',³ which, if accurate, meant he started work when 11 years old.

Devey, along with his younger brother Jess, arrived in New Zealand in 1864.⁴ He had married Anna Maria Chambers in 1857 and had had a daughter, Laura Ann, who lived from 1859 to 1862, a son, William George, born in 1860, and another Ann, born in 1862,⁵ clearly shortly after her sister's death. The first child to be born in the colony, Caroline Ida, was born in Auckland in December 1866.⁶ He spent 'some years' in Auckland before moving to Thames after the opening of the goldfield.⁷ His daughters recalled living in a tent behind St George's Hall in 1867 and 1868,⁸ but as his first miner's right was obtained in March 1869,⁹ the family probably settled there then. His only investment in Thames mining was to be one of four owners of the Old Balmoral at Waiotahi Creek in 1871; Jess was another owner.¹⁰

In 1875, when still in Thames, Devey's main occupation was a cabinetmaker.¹¹ In the following year he was chosen to make the mounting and frame for a Masonic certificate.¹² (If he was a Mason, he did not have a

² *Te Aroha News*, 28 May 1885, p. 2.

³ *Te Aroha News*, 2 January 1889, p. 2.

⁴ Death Certificates of Jess Devey, 22 December 1896, 1896/1605; Ann Maria Devey, 19 December 1911, 1911/8048; George Devey, 3 December 1933, 1933/11662, BDM; Auckland Hospital, Register of Patients 1893-1899, folio 112, no. 7703, ZAAP 15288/3a, ANZ-A.

⁵ Ancestry.co.uk; Marriage Certificates of Ann Devey, 17 July 1883, 1883/3367; William George Devey, 2 January 1884, 1884/248, BDM.

⁶ Birth Certificate of Caroline Devey, 11 December 1866, 1866/9163; Marriage Certificate of Caroline Ida Devey, 16 April 1884, 1884/912, BDM; Thames Register of Baptisms 1868-1874, no. 188, Anglican Archives, Auckland.

⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 5 December 1933, p. 12.

⁸ *Thames Star*, 1 August 1913, p. 5.

⁹ Thames Warden's Court, Register of Miners' Rights 1868-1869, no. 1255, BACL 14358/3a, ANZ-A.

¹⁰ Thames Warden's Court, Shortland Claims Register 1870, no. 2410, BACL 14397/5a, ANZ-A.

¹¹ *Auckland Directory 1875-1876* (Auckland, 1875), p. 52.

¹² *Thames Advertiser*, 9 February 1876, p. 3.

leading role in this organization.) In 1880 he tendered, unsuccessfully, to build a house and shops as well as a hopper and shoot for a mining company.¹³ The following year, either he or Jess was erecting a workshop when he was required by the council to move it back because of encroaching on the footpath. ‘The Foreman of Works said he had told Mr Devey some time ago that he was encroaching, but he had taken no notice’.¹⁴

Despite an obituary describing him as a pioneer of Te Aroha,¹⁵ he did not settle there until 1883. ‘After building himself a shop’, he ‘started business as a wheelwright, carpenter, and undertaker’.¹⁶ He advertised himself as ‘Cabinet Maker, Carpenter, Joiner, Wheelwright, Carriage, and General Builder’.¹⁷ In November, he donated a rostrum to the local Wesleyan church; the workmanship reflected ‘very great credit’ on him.¹⁸ He built ‘many of the early houses’,¹⁹ for instance in the following year tendering to erect a six-roomed one.²⁰ In 1885, his workmanship on a coach was lauded. It had been ‘specially built, regardless of expense’, with springs ‘extra wide’.

The body is constructed solely of finest kauri and Hobart Town box hardwood, inside being lined with kauri and rimu highly varnished, with gilt cornices; roof marbled, with gilt moulded margins. The seats are upholstered in handsome Brussels carpeting, whilst linoleum covers the floor. A reading lamp is fixed inside. Of the eight sash lights, four are made to open and shut, so that passengers can regulate same to suit the weather. The coach is painted on the outside in Chinese red, chrome yellow and flake white, picked out with chrome and vermilion, the lettering being in gilt, tastefully shaded. The whole get-up of the vehicle reflects the greatest credit on the local builder, Mr George Devey, who has built and upholstered it single-handed.²¹

¹³ *Thames Advertiser*, 18 August 1880, p. 2, 2 September 1880, p. 3.

¹⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 17 June 1881, p. 3.

¹⁵ *Auckland Star*, 5 December 1933, p. 3.

¹⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 5 December 1933, p. 12; for being an undertaker, see *Te Aroha News*, 18 September 1886, p. 3, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁷ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 22 September 1883, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 10 November 1883, p. 2, 1 December 1883, p. 2.

¹⁹ *New Zealand Herald*, 5 December 1933, p. 12.

²⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 5 April 1884, p. 2, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1.

²¹ *Te Aroha News*, 28 March 1885, p. 2; reprinted in *Waikato Times*, 31 March 1885, p. 2.

Immediately after completing this coach he obtained the contract to enlarge a temperance hotel.²² The following year, his tender for erecting the Anglican church was declined.²³ In later years, he continued to erect or enlarge a variety of buildings.²⁴ In 1887, when his tender to erect a building for the Waiorongomai battery was declined,²⁵ he was working in partnership with James West.²⁶ The local newspaper wrote that they ‘may be relied on to carry out their contract in a thorough and workmanlike manner’.²⁷ They received the contract for one house despite not being the lowest tenderers, and did excellent work, it reported.²⁸ By the end of the following year, he had formed G. Devey and Son.²⁹ Some tenders were declined, possibly because of being too high.³⁰ In 1888, he erected a building at Waihi, probably the former Te Aroha battery, which had been removed there by his brother and a son-in-law.³¹ The following year, he won a contract to build the manager’s house for the Tui reduction works.³² In 1891, two tenders to repair tramway trucks were declined, but two coaches were built to take tourists to Okoroire.³³

In 1898, his advertisement offered more services:

G. Devey and Son, Builders, Contractors, and Undertakers. Every Description of Cabinet Making, Carpentry, Joinery, and Turnery done at their Extensive New Workshop in Te Aroha.
Prices to Suit the Times.

²² *Te Aroha News*, 11 April 1885, p. 2.

²³ *Te Aroha News*, 17 April 1886, p. 2.

²⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 25 September 1886, p. 2, 7 May 1887, p. 2, 25 June 1887, p. 2.

²⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 30 April 1887, p. 2.

²⁶ See *Te Aroha News*, 7 July 1883, p. 2, 27 October 1833, p. 2, Piako County Council, 1 November 1884, p. 2, 11 September 1886, p. 3; *Tauranga Electoral Roll, 1887*, p. 26; *Te Aroha Electoral Roll, 1890*, p. 35.

²⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 25 June 1887, p. 2.

²⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 8 October 1887, p. 2.

²⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 12 December 1888, p. 2.

³⁰ For instance, *Te Aroha News*, 25 April 1888, p. 2, 12 December 1888, p. 2, 12 May 1908, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 June 1891, p. 23.

³¹ *Waikato Times*, 9 October 1888, p. 2, 8 November 1888, p. 2.

³² *Waikato Times*, 12 February 1889, p. 2.

³³ Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 3 September 1891, p. 2, 8 October 1891, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 21 November 1891, p. 18.

*Funerals Furnished. Charges Moderate.*³⁴

In 1896, he had a contract to remove the Catholic church.³⁵ When a Wesleyan one was erected in 1900, ‘the seats and rostrum were entrusted to Messrs G. Devey and Sons, who have carried out their work in their usual high class style’.³⁶ The only controversy over his charges was in 1909, when he sought £15 for repairing and painting a buggy; after the magistrate heard a counter-claim that his price was excessive, he was awarded £10.³⁷

In 1891, he tendered unsuccessfully to repair the Waiorongomai tramway trucks and line;³⁸ the latter would have required the skills of a blacksmith. After Jess left the district in 1890, Devey took over his blacksmith workshop.³⁹ In 1910, his firm advertising more services:

The “PIONEER” IRONWORKS
Geo. Devey and Co.,
Wheelwrights, Shoeing and General Smiths
IRONWORK OF EVERY DESCRIPTION On Shortest Notice
Machinery of any kind Repaired
AGENTS FOR OIL ENGINES AND FITTINGS
General Millwrights
Iron Turning, etc, done on the premises
BUGGIES, WAGGONS AND DRAYS BUILT TO ORDER
NOTE THE ADDRESS - OPPOSITE DOMAIN,
Whitaker Street, TE AROHA.
LICENSED PLUMBER.⁴⁰

WAIORONGOMAI MINING

In December 1887, Devey seconded the nomination of a member of the provisional committee of the Te Aroha Prospecting Association.⁴¹ His only

³⁴ Advertisements, *Te Aroha News*, 22 February 1898, p. 3, 7 May 1898, p. 1.

³⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 18 February 1896, p. 2.

³⁶ *Thames Star*, 13 December 1900, p. 2.

³⁷ Magistrate’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 25 February 1909, p. 2.

³⁸ Piako County Council, Minutes of Meetings of 1 September 1891, 6 October 1891, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

³⁹ Te Aroha Borough Council, Rate Book 1906-1907, Section 8 Block 2 [no pagination], Matamata-Piako District Council, Te Aroha.

⁴⁰ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 3 September 1910, p. 1.

⁴¹ *Te Aroha News*, 3 December 1887, p. 2.

investment was made in the following April, when he was granted half the interests in the Anglesea, one of his sons-in-law, John McLeod Murray, having the other half.⁴² (Details of the working of this claim are dealt with in the outline of the latter's life, below.)

JESS DEVEY

Jess Devey, George's unmarried younger brother, was a blacksmith. He obtained his first miner's right at Thames in February 1869, and was an owner, with his brother and two others, in the Old Balmoral at Waiotahi Creek in 1871, and was one of four owners of the Comus, nearby, in 1878.⁴³ Presumably he was the Devey who sold his three-roomed cottage and smithy and workshops, along with anvil, blacksmith's and carpenter's tools, and furniture and effects, in November 1873 because he was leaving for Napier.⁴⁴ He spent so little time there that he was not recorded on the electoral roll for that district, and was living in Thames once more in 1876, remaining there until moving to Te Aroha.⁴⁵ In April 1880, he and Arthur Prince, formerly a storekeeper at Alexandra, the future Pirongia,⁴⁶ announced that their partnership as blacksmiths and wheelwrights had ended, their Thames business being continued by Devey.⁴⁷

On the opening day of the Te Aroha goldfield, he successfully applied for a business site.⁴⁸ He successfully re-applied for it in 1882, and erected a

⁴² Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1883-1900, 15/1888, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

⁴³ Thames Warden's Court, Register of Miners' Rights 1868-1869, no. 825, BACL 14358/3a; Shortland Claims Register 1870-1871, no. 2410, BACL 14397/5a; Register of Grahamstown Claims 1876-1878, claim 555, BACL 14397/11a, ANZ-A.

⁴⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 19 November 1873, p. 2.

⁴⁵ *Napier Electoral Rolls, 1874*, p. 6; *1875*, p. 6; *1876*, p. 8; *Thames Electoral Rolls, 1876*, p. 17, *1879*, p. 20; he was not recorded in the Thames roll for 1874.

⁴⁶ See Marriage Notice, *Thames Advertiser*, 1 March 1879, p. 2; advertisement, *Waikato Times*, 9 September 1879, p. 3.

⁴⁷ *Thames Star*, 14 April 1880, p. 3.

⁴⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folios 17-18, BBAV 11505/3a, ANZ-A.

shop and one-roomed house, which in 1888 had a ratable value of £13.⁴⁹ He also obtained a business site at Waiorongomai in 1882, but although he paid the rent until 1890, when it was forfeited for non-payment, it is not known if he erected a building.⁵⁰ In June 1881, he sued Audus Raynes, owner of a Cambridge hotel,⁵¹ for work, presumably blacksmithing, in the All Nations. A report of the hearing noted that it appeared ‘from the plaintiff’s statement that he chose lawyers as a good mark (poor Raynes)’.⁵² In 1888, with John McLeod Murray he removed the abandoned Te Aroha battery to Waihi.⁵³ In January 1890, his ‘Very Complete BLACKSMITH’S PLANT, AND OTHER VALUABLE MACHINERY, Blacksmith’s Shop, Dwelling, etc, etc’, were sold for £50 to George Taylor,⁵⁴ a Waiorongomai blacksmith,⁵⁵ who would carry on the business after Jess left for Dunedin.⁵⁶ How long he remained there, or indeed if he did settle there, is not known, for he was not listed in electoral rolls. By 1896 he was an engine driver at a Waihi battery.⁵⁷

In March 1882, he attempted to take possession of a Waiorongomai claim for non-working, but was ‘Non-suited – no miner’s right at time Plaintiff entered’.⁵⁸ As earlier on the day of this judgment he had obtained his first miner’s right,⁵⁹ he immediately reapplied for it for the same reason. ‘Order refused. Application collusive’, an owner of the ground ‘being a partner to

⁴⁹ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folio 206, BBAV 11505/3a, ANZ-A; Te Aroha Town Board, Rate Book 1888 [no pagination], Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

⁵⁰ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folio 226, BBAV 11505/3a; Rent Ledger 1881-1900, folio 334, BBAV 11492/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵¹ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 6 (Christchurch, 1908), pp. 101-102.

⁵² Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 2 June 1881, p. 3.

⁵³ *Waikato Times*, 9 October 1888, p. 2.

⁵⁴ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 11 January 1890, p. 7; Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Rent Ledger 1881-1900, folio 225, BBAV 11505/3a; Transfer from Jess Devey to George Taylor, 20 January 1890, Transfers and Assignments 1890, BBAV 11581/11a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁵ See *Te Aroha News*, 21 August 1886, p. 2, 25 January 1890, p. 2.

⁵⁶ *Te Aroha News*, advertisement, 11 January 1890, p. 7, 22 January 1890, p. 2; Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 21 January 1890, p. 2.

⁵⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 16 October 1896, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Plaintiff Book 1880-1898, 25/1882, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁹ Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Miner’s Right no. 1876, issued 21 March 1882, Miners’ Rights Butt Book 1881-1882, BBAV 11553/1i, ANZ-A.

same'.⁶⁰ During that year he also purchased shares in the Just-in-Time Company of Waitekauri.⁶¹ In March the following year, for £30 he bought a share in the Golden Hill No. 1, at Te Aroha, which was transferred two months later to a company in which he held 1,000 of 30,000 shares.⁶² His last investment was as a partner with three others in a claim at the rear of Te Aroha township in 1888.⁶³ None of these investments were in profitable mines.

Jess died in December 1896, aged 52, of cancer of the thyroid gland, his final illness lasting seven months.⁶⁴ In mid-year he had been forced to leave his work as an engine driver at the Waihi battery because of a cancerous growth on the left side of his neck.⁶⁵ On 1 June, he sought treatment in the Thames hospital for this tumour,⁶⁶ but as this hospital could not assist, on 10 June he was admitted to the Auckland Hospital suffering from a suppurating cyst in his neck and a sarcoma, or tumour, to be discharged 'relieved' on 29 June.⁶⁷ He returned on 21 July, leaving hospital with the same outcome on 18 August.⁶⁸ He then went to Melbourne, where a doctor 'entirely removed the cancerous growth', it was reported, two months before it killed him.⁶⁹ A newspaper reporting his death described him as 'a respected resident of Waihi'.⁷⁰

METHODISM

⁶⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Plaint Book 1880-1898*, 26/1882, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶¹ *New Zealand Gazette*, 19 January 1882, p. 93.

⁶² Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887*, folio 122, BBAV 11500/9a; *Transfers and Assignments 1883*, no. 235, BBAV 11581/4a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 4 October 1883, p. 1437.

⁶³ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Mining Applications 1888*, 60/1888, BBAV 11582/3a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁴ Death Certificate of Jess Devey, 22 December 1896, 1896/1605, BDM.

⁶⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 16 October 1896, p. 2.

⁶⁶ Thames Hospital, *Register of Patients 1884-1902*, p. 75, YCAH 14075/1a, ANZ-A [registered as William Devey].

⁶⁷ Auckland Hospital, *Register of Patients 1893-1899*, folio 112, no. 7703, ZAAP 15288/3a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁸ Auckland Hospital, *Register of Patients 1893-1899*, folio 116, no. 7830, ZAAP 15288/3a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 16 October 1896, p. 2.

⁷⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 25 December 1896, p. 2.

George Devey was recalled 'as one of the central figures in the town's activities, both in respect to business and the church'.⁷¹ A prominent Methodist, near the end of his life he 'proclaimed his adherence to Christian teaching'.⁷² Despite his Methodism, four of his children were baptized as Anglicans, another was a member of this church, and his wife had an Anglican funeral service.⁷³ He was uncompromising in his beliefs, as illustrated in 1902, when at one of the meetings of the domain board he 'protested vehemently against Sabbath desecration in the matter of permission being given to Mr Vaniman to photograph the Domain on Sunday. Having entered his protest Mr Devey left the room, stating that he would not again attend the Board meetings'.⁷⁴

In 1883, soon after moving to Te Aroha, he donated a new rostrum to the Methodist church.⁷⁵ When a new church was erected in 1900, with his carpenter sons he made the seats and rostrum.⁷⁶ He regularly preached.⁷⁷ During 1892, he also conducted services and preached in Paeroa.⁷⁸ Two years later, he was elected to the Te Aroha committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and was re-elected in subsequent years.⁷⁹ In mid-October 1914, it was announced that on the next Sunday afternoon he would 'give an address near the fire bell on the subject of the prophets and the Great War. Young men are specially invited'.⁸⁰ No details of such addresses have survived.

⁷¹ Recollections of J.P. Maingay, *Te Aroha News*, 1 February 1933, p. 5.

⁷² *Te Aroha News*, 26 October 1927, p. 5.

⁷³ Death Certificate of George Devey, 3 December 1933, 1933/11662, BDM; Thames Register of Baptisms 1868-1874, nos. 188, 189, 494; Thames Register of Baptisms 1874-1880, no. 96, Anglican Archives, Auckland; Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 2190, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A; Death Certificates of Ida Wright, 21 August 1893, 1893/3495; Ann Maria Devey, 19 December 1911, 1911/8048, BDM.

⁷⁴ *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 October 1902, p. 32.

⁷⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 10 November 1883, p. 2, 1 December 1883, p. 2.

⁷⁶ *Thames Star*, 13 December 1900, p. 2.

⁷⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1; *Auckland Star*, 5 December 1933, p. 3.

⁷⁸ *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 13 February 1892, p. 5, 10 September 1892, p. 4.

⁷⁹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 2 June 1894, p. 22, 6 July 1894, p. 23; *Te Aroha News*, 22 June 1895, p. 2.

⁸⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 16 October 1914, p. 2.

Although he was living at Te Aroha, others ran the Sunday School there.⁸¹ After he formed the Waiorongomai one in 1884, his younger sons were members of it.⁸² Until 1896, it was combined with the Te Aroha West one, which he had assisted to found and of which he was the first superintendent.⁸³ In September 1884, when he was planning to leave the district, his resignation was accepted with regret, and he was thanked for his ‘earnest and successful labours’.⁸⁴ As he did not leave, in February 1886 he became superintendent again.⁸⁵ Five months later, at a teachers’ meeting, he laid charges ‘of a character somewhat serious’ against another teacher, Mark Lovell,⁸⁶ who was also the secretary and treasurer. The charges were based on ‘information received from some young men’, who Devey ‘reported had left the School and declined to return while Mr Lovell was there’. During the long discussion, ‘no definite reason could be given by the Supt for this refusal on the part of the young men. Subsequently Mr Lovell demanded that he should be informed of facts and what the charges were’, and offered to state what he believed them to be. After his offer was refused on the grounds that the complainants should state their charges, Lovell insisted that his resignation be accepted, stating that Devey had asked him to resign without providing a reason. Devey responded that ‘he could not make his reasons known as the young men had informed him’. Finally, in response to requests from members asked him to, he explained it was because of an 18-month-old report about Band of Hope money, the truth of which Lovell denied. After this report was dismissed as ‘frivolous’,

Mr Devey mentioned other reasons of a personal, official and private nature. Mrs Lovell asked why Mr Devey brought up these

⁸¹ For instance, John Illott was the first superintendent: see *Te Aroha News*, 25 July 1890, p. 2.

⁸² *Te Aroha News*, 10 May 1884, p. 2; Waiorongomai Sunday School, Admission Book 1884-1889, entries for 1 June 1884, 6 January 1889, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

⁸³ *Auckland Star*, 5 December 1933, p. 3; *Strong Blow the Winds: A brief record of the history of the Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956* (Te Aroha, 1956), no pagination [p. 24].

⁸⁴ Waiorongomai Sunday School, Minute Book 1884-1894, entries for 16 June 1884 and n.d. [late 1884], Methodist Archives, Auckland; *Te Aroha News*, 13 September 1884, p. 2.

⁸⁵ Waiorongomai Sunday School, Minute Book 1884-1894, entry for 28 February 1886, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

⁸⁶ See papers on the temperance movement and on religion in the Te Aroha district.

things which had nothing to do with the matter before the meeting and after such a long period. Mr Devey stated Mr Lovell was unpopular among the young men and with all he heard he thought it best for the school Mr Lovell resign.

After denying that he had promised to play for dances, Lovell resigned all his positions and his wife resigned as teacher and organist; both were thanked by Devey for their work.⁸⁷ (In the following year, after telling an anniversary celebration about 'the difficulties he had experienced in starting the school', he said that it was 'handicapped' because of a 'lack of teachers'.)⁸⁸

In July 1887, Lovell quarrelled with other Methodists over an unsuccessful Easter Tree Service and Concert at Waiorongomai: having defied the views of the local committee, it had refused to assist.⁸⁹ The following month, Lovell published a notice in the local newspaper: 'I EMPHATICALLY DENY reports originated by Mr GEORGE DEVEY Senior on Sunday School matters, and hereby challenge him to prove anything that he has stated that reflects on my character'.⁹⁰ The following day, a teachers' meeting advised Devey to 'take no notice' of this advertisement, and the chairman was 'requested to investigate the matter'.⁹¹ The outcome was unrecorded.

In March 1888, Devey was described as the school's 'energetic superintendent'.⁹² By January 1889 his conflict with Lovell had ceased, for he nominated him as secretary.⁹³ (Lovell was then the leading advocate of erecting a church at Waiorongomai.)⁹⁴ After Devey again resigned as superintendent in that month, it was agreed that 'a small memento be

⁸⁷ Waiorongomai Sunday School, Minute Book 1884-1894, meeting of 30 July 1886, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

⁸⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 19 March 1887, p. 2.

⁸⁹ Waiorongomai Congregation, Minutes and Accounts Book 1886-1889, meeting of 19 July 1887, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

⁹⁰ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 13 August 1887, p. 3.

⁹¹ Waiorongomai Sunday School, Minute Book 1884-1894, meeting of 14 August 1887, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

⁹² *Te Aroha News*, 24 March 1888, p. 2.

⁹³ Waiorongomai Sunday School, Minute Book 1884-1894, meeting of 10 January 1889, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

⁹⁴ See *Te Aroha News*, 22 May 1889, p. 2.

presented' to him 'from the Teachers and Scholars as a recognition of his services'; 11s 6d was raised, sufficient to purchase a Revised Version of the Bible.⁹⁵ At the presentation, his 'many amiable qualities' were lauded; the *Te Aroha News* commented that he was mainly responsible for the school being 'in such a flourishing state'.⁹⁶ After several people declined to take on the role, he became superintendent once more in October 1890.⁹⁷ In 1898, one correspondent wrote that he was 'much missed' at both Sunday School and Bible Class, and 'sincerely hoped he will soon be well enough to resume his leadership'.⁹⁸ This Bible Class had been started in the previous year.⁹⁹ In 1908, he stated that he had conducted meetings of the school each Sunday for 25 years.¹⁰⁰ When he ceased to be superintendent has not been traced.

Devey was also a strong supporter of the temperance movement, although he was not a leader of the Band of Hope, the Wesleyan vehicle for fighting the liquor trade.¹⁰¹ In 1887, when a fellow Methodist nominated him for the licensing committee, his nomination was ruled to be informal.¹⁰² In October 1905, he chaired a meeting held by a prohibitionist, and in the following month stood for parliament as a Prohibitionist candidate.¹⁰³ He was nominated 'to safeguard the No-license interest', the *Te Aroha News* explaining that he stood 'merely to ensure that a full poll should take place in the possible circumstance of one of the other candidates withdrawing. It is not expected that any votes shall be recorded for Mr Devey'.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁵ Waiorongomai Sunday School, Admission Book 1884-1889, entry for 6 January 1889; Minute Book 1884-1894, meetings of 21 March 1889, 8 April 1889, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

⁹⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 8 June 1889, p. 2.

⁹⁷ Waiorongomai Sunday School, Minute Book 1884-1894, meeting of 9 October 1890, Methodist Archives, Auckland.

⁹⁸ Manawaru Correspondent, *Te Aroha News*, 5 May 1898, p. 2.

⁹⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 11 June 1887, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Paeroa Licensing Committee, *Te Aroha News*, 11 June 1908, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ See paper on the temperance movement in the Te Aroha district.

¹⁰² *Te Aroha News*, 26 February 1887, p. 2.

¹⁰³ *Te Aroha News*, 3 October 1905, p. 3, 24 October 1905, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 28 November 1905, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ *Thames Star*, 1 December 1905, p. 2.

Nonetheless, he received 19 votes.¹⁰⁵ Three years later, he opposed a license being granted to the new Waiorongomai Hotel.¹⁰⁶

INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

In 1876, Devey enlisted in the Thames Volunteer Rifles Band.¹⁰⁷ In August 1888, and no doubt on other unrecorded occasions, he played the 'baritone' in the Te Aroha Brass Band.¹⁰⁸ The following April, he sang a comic song, 'The Dude', at a concert for the Te Aroha and Waiorongomai United Football Clubs, and 'responded with a well-deserved encore'.¹⁰⁹ Although there is no record of his playing football, in the early twentieth century he was a vice-president of the Te Aroha club.¹¹⁰

In 1886, he convened a meeting to decide on improvements needed in the cemetery, and in the following year sought subscriptions for fencing it and making other improvements.¹¹¹ He was not prominent in local government affairs until 1901, when elected to the borough council and, consequently, the domain board.¹¹² On at least one occasion his involvement on the council caused conflict, for in March 1902 a fellow councillor asked him to explain his 'expression' at the previous meeting; his explanation was accepted as satisfactory.¹¹³ Although re-elected in 1902, he did not stand again in 1903.

In June 1905, he gave evidence to a royal commission considering land tenure:

146. *The Chairman.*] Are you a landholder? – I appear as representative of some of the holders of land in Te Aroha

¹⁰⁵ *Thames Star*, 22 December 1905, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Paeroa Licensing Committee, *Te Aroha News*, 11 June 1908, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Thames Scottish Rifles, Nominal Roll, April 1878, Army Department, ARM 41, 1882/1y, ANZ-W.

¹⁰⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 18 August 1888, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 10 April 1889, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 23 April 1907, p. 2.

¹¹¹ *Te Aroha News*, 13 November 1886, p. 3, 26 March 1887, p. 2.

¹¹² *Thames Star*, 19 April 1901, p. 4; *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 May 1901, p. 26, 9 October 1902, p. 32.

¹¹³ Te Aroha Borough Council, Minutes of Meetings 1898-1911, Meeting of 19 March 1902, p. 133, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

Township, and I hold some town sections myself. Our tenure is under the goldfields regulations. At one time we were promised the freehold of our sections. At the expiration of our original titles we were granted by the Government leases for forty-four years, but we still remain under the same conditions as in the case of the goldfields business sites, in that any one could “jump” our holdings if the rent was not punctually paid. I know one man who had paid for his business-site for twenty years and then got his forty-four-years lease, and yet his title was “jumped” by another person. What, then, is the use of the lease to us? The effect is that we cannot borrow money on our property, because we have no stable tenure. If we go to the Government they also refuse to make advances. Twelve years ago we were negotiating with the Natives for the purchase of the freehold, but the Warden stepped in and stated that if we allowed the Government to buy out the Natives we would be given the option of acquiring the freehold. The Government bought out eleven Natives, but still they do not grant us our freeholds. We are thus at a disadvantage, and we do not feel inclined to improve our properties, and that is why Te Aroha does not make progress. The town had no right to be included in the goldfields, for it never was a goldfield. As matters stand one-half of the town belongs to the Government and the other to the Maoris, the pakeha Maoris. I have an allotment on which I have paid £5 a year for twenty-five years, and I am paying to-day £3 a year under the forty-four-years lease, which, however, is literally useless, because if I do not pay up I am likely to be ousted.

147. *Mr Forbes.*] In reference to the “jumping” case of which you speak, in what way was the “jumping” done? – It was done by the tenant of the lessee. He found that the lessee had not paid his rent, and therefore “jumped” his title under the goldfields regulations. The tenant was held to be the residential occupant of the property. The Warden said that the transaction was a piece of rascality, but that it was within the law and he could not override it.

148. If you had your forty-four years clear, with compensation for improvements, would that not be satisfactory? – Yes.

149. *Mr Matheson.*} Was the promise that you would have the freehold merely a verbal promise by the Warden? – That is all.

150. *Mr McLennan.*] If the township was taken out of the goldfields area, would not the forty-four-years lease be satisfactory? – Yes, in a sense; but we would sooner have the freehold. On these small township sections you do not feel inclined under a leasing system to put up good buildings.

151. Do you not get compensation for improvements at the expiration of the lease? – Not as a rule. Anyhow, at the end of

such a long period there is very little value left in a wooden building.¹¹⁴

On two occasions he was in trouble with the law. In 1889, he was charged with assault, but as the complainant withdrew the charge, its nature is not known.¹¹⁵ In December 1914, he was charged with lighting a fire which had spread into the adjacent reserve, destroyed some bush on the mountain.¹¹⁶ He pleaded not guilty, explaining ‘that he certainly started a fire on his section’ but that ‘when he left it it was out and he firmly believed that some boys had started the real bush fire while bird-nesting’. Evidence was given that from five to ten acres ‘of scenic interest’ had been destroyed ‘and would take a considerable time to grow again’ and that residents had been warned by the local Forest Conservator that a penalty would be enforced should they cause fires. A resident

stated that he had paid a visit to the area which was burning, and on his way he met defendant, who admitted having started it and when warned by him appeared to pay no attention to his remarks. Devey’s section was not properly cleared for burning, and this was an exceedingly dangerous procedure with the strong wind blowing. The fire had destroyed a considerable amount of verdant forest which could not be replaced....

Defendant refused to be sworn, and made a statement much in accord with evidence given by the witnesses. When he left his section on Election Day he did not notice that the State Forest was on fire.

The Magistrate said he did not doubt but the fire was the result of that lighted by Mr Devey and, that being so, the maximum penalty was £100. He felt that all residents should do their utmost to conserve the beauties of Te Aroha.

He would not fine defendant anything like £100, but in future he would make the penalty much heavier than on this occasion.

Accused was fined £5.¹¹⁷

LAST YEARS, ACCIDENTS, AND DEATH

¹¹⁴ ‘Crown Lands: Report of the Royal Commission on Land-Tenure, Land-Settlement, and other matters affecting the Crown Lands of the Colony’, *AJHR*, 1905, C-4, pp. 1043-1044.

¹¹⁵ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 32/1889, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A.

¹¹⁶ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1913-1919, 103/1914, heard on 12 January 1915, BCDG 11220/2b, ANZ-A.

¹¹⁷ Magistrate’s Court, *Te Aroha News*, 13 January 1915, p. 3.

After Devey's wife Ann died in 1911, he lived for another 22 years. By the 1920s his health was declining, and in 1924 a granddaughter, Carrie Milnes, was his housekeeper.¹¹⁸ In 1927, the year he turned 90, he was occasionally seen walking along the main street of Te Aroha, but his memory was 'failing'.¹¹⁹ That October, he attended the Old Identities' Day,¹²⁰ but was so deaf he said 'he had not been able to hear a word' of any of the speeches. 'He still works a little in his garden and found pleasure in this occupation'.¹²¹ His recollections about early Te Aroha, recorded in that year, implied he had arrived in 1880, and exaggerated the lack of shops and hotels:

He came from the Thames, and was one of the first to reside and start business in Te Aroha. When he arrived there was only one building that he can recall – the Hot Springs Hotel. There were no shops, and the only habitations were rough and rude shacks. He remembers the gold discovered on the hillside opposite his present residence, and doubts whether the find was genuine. The domain was then as nature made it, but early use was made of the Hot Springs which soon began to attract many people. Wonderful cures were wrought, according to Mr Devey, in those days. One bath used by ladies, was boxed in affording privacy, but the others were open. Mr Devey thinks that the sand in the bottom of the baths may have had something to do with the cures.¹²²

During his life, he suffered three serious accidents, the first in 1887:

He was putting some goods into his spring cart at the steamboat landing, when his horse took fright at something and started off. Mr Devey sprang to the shafts, and in the endeavour to stop the animal he fell to the ground, the wheel of the cart passing over his shoulders. He was severely bruised about that part of the body, and also had his right hand badly wounded besides sustaining some other contusions. Assistance was speedily rendered, and he was at once conveyed to his home where he is

¹¹⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 9 February 1924, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1.

¹²⁰ For a photograph of him in old age, see *Te Aroha and the Fortunate Valley: Pioneering in the Thames Valley 1867-1930* (Te Aroha, 1930), p. vi.

¹²¹ *Te Aroha News*, 26 October 1927, p. 5.

¹²² *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1.

now progressing favourably. The horse continued his career until he came to the railway crossing, where the wheel of the vehicle came slightly in contact with a post and was capsized. Fortunately the traces parted, and after running some distance the animal was stopped, neither it nor the trap being much the worse for the adventure.¹²³

In 1896 he was knocked unconscious when some of his men removing a church roof dropped scantling on his head.¹²⁴ In March 1929, after he broke his thigh he was reported to be in a serious condition in Te Aroha's Norana Hospital.¹²⁵ Although he recovered, his last years were spent in the Knox Home for Incurables in Auckland, where he was described in mid-1931 as 'very old, very deaf and not mentally alert'.¹²⁶ He died there in December 1933, aged 97. Kidney failure was the immediate cause of death, but for years he had suffered from chronic cystitis.¹²⁷

ANN MARIA DEVEY

Ann Maria Chambers, daughter of George, a bootmaker, was born in Coventry in 1835, and at the age of 20 had married Devey in Birmingham.¹²⁸ Her education was clearly limited, for she signed birth certificates either with a cross or a very shaky signature.¹²⁹ She first came to prominence in 1877 by defending one of her daughters, name unknown because of the loss of the class lists, by assaulting a headmistress, Frances Hazelden. The Thames morning newspaper, in its first report of the incident expressed forthright views (and recorded her name incorrectly):

We are shocked to learn that Miss Hazelden, mistress of the Kauaeranga girls' school, has been the victim of a most

¹²³ *Waikato Times*, 15 March 1887, p. 2.

¹²⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 18 February 1896, p. 2.

¹²⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 18 March 1929, p. 1.

¹²⁶ Peak Kirker and Newcomb to Mining Registrar, Te Aroha, 12 June 1931, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications and Complaints 1927-1933, 26/1931, BCDG 11289/2a, ANZ-A.

¹²⁷ Death Certificate of George Devey, 3 December 1933, 1933/11662, BDM.

¹²⁸ Death Certificate of Ann Maria Devey, 19 December 1911, 1911/8048, BDM.

¹²⁹ For example, see Birth Certificates of Albert Henry Devey, 19 March 1872, 1872/17660; Jane Roberts, 5 April 1884, 1884/11402, BDM.

outrageous assault at the hands of a woman of violent temperament named Davey. The exact particulars we have been unable to ascertain, but from what we can gather it would seem that a child belonging to this disgraceful being was undergoing some chastisement well merited, by all accounts. The mother, hearing of it, came to the school, and getting Miss Hazelden in the porch, attacked her in the most brutal manner, and inflicted severe injuries upon her before the other teachers could come to the rescue. The dismay and terror that seized the little flock when they saw their protectress prostrated and bleeding can be better imagined than described. We trust the committee will at once see that the wretched offender is brought to justice. Leniency in a case of this sort would be quite out of place. If the facts are as we have been informed we consider that the Kauaeranga School Committee should not wait for Miss Hazelden to take the initiative, but should at once take steps to vindicate or condemn her. If they, upon inquiry, consider that her conduct was justifiable, public example of her assailant should be made. If the teachers are not supported in reasonable efforts to maintain discipline, order in school and efficient teaching must come to an end.¹³⁰

Ann immediately responded, her letter probably either being dictated or written by her husband, for it does not read like the letter of an illiterate:

I am at a loss to know where you derived the information respecting the alleged assault at the Kauaeranga school on Thursday afternoon. I think, sir, before you allow such a vile charge to appear in your paper as did this morning, you should first of all make yourself thoroughly acquainted with all the particulars of the case, and not have called me such hard names as you did this morning. I will not on this occasion go into the particulars of what transpired between Miss Hazelden and myself, further than to say that the article referred to was untrue from the beginning to the end, and I am prepared to give the committee the full particulars of what did transpire, and allow them to be judges. I think I am sufficiently well known on the Thames by a large circle of respectable families, who have known me for many years, who will bear testimony that I could not be guilty of the conduct you accuse me of. I consider you have done me a very great injury, and request, in justice to myself, you will insert this short explanation.¹³¹

¹³⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 30 November 1877, p. 2.

¹³¹ Letter from Ann Devey, *Thames Advertiser*, 1 December 1887, p. 3.

The editor responded that he would be 'greatly pleased' if a public inquiry showed that she 'did *not* commit a grievous assault', but until this was proven, 'we decline to withdraw any of the assertions and comments made'.¹³²

On the Saturday afternoon after the assault, the school committee received a letter from Ann 'expressing her regret at the affray', and two members were appointed to confer with Miss Hazelden 'with a view of having the matter settled'.¹³³ The *Thames Advertiser* understood there was 'no truth in the statement made by our contemporary' that Ann had made 'a humble apology' to Miss Hazelden. (As copies for the *Thames Star* for this month have been lost, its reports and opinions are not known.)

This being so we presume the law will be allowed to take its course. In fact an information has been sworn to by Miss Hazelden, and in the interest of law and order, as well as the discipline of our public schools, it ought to be proceeded with. If Miss Hazelden chooses to accept an apology tendered before the Bench she is, we presume, at perfect liberty to do so, but we consider the School Committee will be wanting in the discharge of their duty if they allow an apology delivered to one of themselves to suffice in this case. Miss Hazelden bears unmistakable evidence of the violence of the assault, and a number of children present were very much terrified.

It printed a letter from the committee's chairman stating that, 'being particularly anxious to support the teachers in keeping up the discipline of the school', it had at first decided to take legal action. 'But as Mrs Devey has sent a note to the Chairman, expressing her deep regret that she should have so far forgot herself as to be guilty of the conduct complained of, and an assurance that she is fully conscious that her excited state of mind does not justify such conduct', it had decided not to proceed with the case, and some of its members obtained Miss Hazelden's consent.¹³⁴ Although the *Thames Advertiser* disapproved of their decision, it assumed that the teacher did 'not harbour any vindictive feelings against her assailant' and that her 'delicacy of feeling' and desire to avoid 'publicity and annoyance' meant she did not wish to prosecute.

¹³² Editorial note appended to letter from Ann Devey, *Thames Advertiser*, 1 December 1887, p. 3.

¹³³ *Thames Advertiser*, 3 December 1877, p. 2.

¹³⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 3 December 1877, p. 2.

We may also consider that Mrs Devey's motherly sympathy for her child whom she found in a state of distress at her punishment probably led her to commit the act without reflection, reason, for the time, being dethroned by passion, originating from her maternal instinct. It is a fair assumption that the greatest amount of the animal element, as opposed to the intellectual, of which her nature is possessed, had complete sway at that time. This mother's love is the only extenuation that we can find for the deed.

It understood that the girl had not been 'unduly or too severely punished', for 'no corporeal punishment was inflicted', and insisted that the teacher was

in duty bound to assert her authority and maintain her dignity as essential to the discipline and good management of the school of which she has charge, for it must be plain by experience to her that the children look upon the teachers as a class of persons possessing knowledge, strength, and general goodness greatly superior to their own. The child's regard for the teacher is akin to hero worship, sometimes fear of a tyrant. Such scenes as this assist to remove the pedestal on which the teacher is elevated in the imagination of the scholars. Their belief in, at least, the physical superiority of their hero is sensibly [i.e., considerably] weakened, and the authority of the ruler declines accordingly. Nothing, therefore, should be tolerated calculated to lessen the reverence of the scholar for the teacher. Mrs Devey's act assuredly had this tendency. The scared look of many of the children upon returning to their homes on the day of the assault showed to their parents that something unusual had occurred.

Order was essential, and the committee had the duty to protect the pupils. Even had the treatment of her child 'been inexcusable', Ann's action was not justifiable, as she could have sent her to another school, could and should have 'made representation' to the school committee, or taken legal action. 'We record our earnest protest against allowing a private apology to end the matter'. Although 'many stories' were circulating 'in the absence of any authoritative report', it was 'beyond doubt' that an assault took place, and a public inquiry should be held.

Mrs Devey should have been unmistakably made aware that she was by her act a law-breaker, and it would have been placed beyond cavil that the assault was by no means light, and that she

had rendered herself liable to imprisonment. The action of teacher and Committee having been thus vindicated, the Bench would no doubt have tempered justice with mercy, and merely inflicted a nominal fee.¹³⁵

Subsequently, the committee 'resolved to offer no objection to the information which had been lodged taking its course'.¹³⁶ In the same issue the newspaper summarized a letter from a teacher complaining that committee members tried to stop the case, the committee 'allowing one committeeman to dictate what he is pleased to call an apology and address the same to another committeeman. "A Teacher" knows that Mrs Devey did not write the letter, but that it was dictated by one of the committee in company with Mrs Devey's husband'.¹³⁷ It also published, under the headline 'A School Terror', the views of 'A Parent':

I read Mrs Devey's letter in your paper, and having children at the school I can only express my sorrow that any woman should be guilty of trying to excuse her vile conduct on that occasion. My children came home terrified and trembling from the sight, and it appears that the only punishment sought to be inflicted on a very unruly child, which deserved more, was that of compelling her to stand on a form, which she evaded by her constant screaming until her mother was sent for. I, for one, object to my children's nervous system receiving such a shock through an unruly woman, who knows no better, making such an exhibition of herself, and ill-using the teacher in the way she did, leaving her prostrate and bleeding within sight of the whole school. Thanking you for your exposure of one calling herself and a mother, I am, yours, &c,
A PARENT.¹³⁸

When charged with 'assaulting and ill-using' the headmistress, Ann's counsel informed the court that she admitted shaking her, an 'error' she 'very much regretted':

The child that was the cause of this hubbub was of a delicate, nervous temperament, and a source of the greatest anxiety to its parents. A punishment had been inflicted by the teacher for some slight fault. Not a corporal punishment, but standing on a form.

¹³⁵ Editorial, *Thames Advertiser*, 3 December 1877, p. 2.

¹³⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 4 December 1877, p. 3.

¹³⁷ Summary of letter from 'A Teacher', *Thames Advertiser*, 4 December 1877, p. 3.

¹³⁸ Letter from 'A Parent', *Thames Advertiser*, 4 December 1877, p. 3.

The child began to scream and continued to do so, and the teacher, failing to quiet her, sent for her mother. Unfortunately the girl who took the message made a cock and bull sort of story, and from her the mother understood that the child was almost killed. She came at once to the school, and her excitement was added to by those she met on the road. She was then told that the child's face was blackened and covered with blood. This the mother saw, and in her excitement took hold of Miss Hazelden and shook her. Her son was present and took his mother away. That was all. There had been great exaggeration made in the papers about lying in a pool of blood and so forth, but he had given the simple circumstances. He would show how Mrs Devey came to be so excited.

Counsel for the prosecution disagreed with some of these statements. 'The child had made its face black by tears and dust, and not by any scuffle to get on to the platform, in which it had come in contact with the black-board'. He had been informed that Ann 'had acted in a similar manner, though not carrying it so far, before. These were cases in which teachers ought to be protected'. Miss Hazelden had simply placed the child 'on her platform. No violence was used. The child continued obstreperous, and she sent for the mother, who at once flew at her and shook her so violently that she became insensible. Her face was scratched and her arm bruised'. The headmistress then gave evidence:

Mrs Devey came into the porch and asked which was Miss Hazelden, and on her replying "I am," Mrs Devey accused her of constantly ill-treating the child, and with that placed her hands round her throat. She then got out of the way. Mrs Devey's boy came, and said, "Oh, don't mother." She hardly knew what happened after, but found that her face was scratched, and next morning that her arm was bruised. That was all she knew of the matter. She used no violence to the child. She had slapped her on the back to make her leave off crying.

Under cross-examination, she denied that the child was 'forced against the black-board in any scuffle. She did not notice any black on the child's face when Mrs Devey came. The child had attempted to run away and another brought it back'.

Ann's counsel insisted that the assault 'was simply intended for a shake' and that 'no one more regretted the assault than Mrs Devey herself. Her parental feelings were excited, and although that was no justification for what she had done, it might be considered as an extenuation'. The girl

sent to bring Ann to the school deposed that she had told her 'that Miss Hazelden was afraid her little girl would go into a fit'. The girl's brother George said 'he at once ran off to the school' when news was brought, followed by his mother. 'He found his sister crying. Her face had blood on it and she was wiping it off. When his mother came she spoke to Miss Hazelden and shook her by the shoulders. He took his mother away. Miss Hazelden called for Miss Boon, and asked her if she had seen her strike the child'. Cross-examined, he explained that 'the blood was from his sister's nose. There was only one spot on the handkerchief when he saw it, but she said she had washed it. It was not larger than a pin's head'.

Ann then gave evidence:

Her little girl was of a delicate, nervous temperament, and given to sleep-walking. On the road she was told by many children that Miss Hazelden was beating the child. The child's face was not blackened by bruises. She was very excited, and the child told her Miss Hazelden had boxed her ears. She then shook Miss Hazelden by the shoulders. She was very sorry now that it had appeared in the papers. (Laughter.) She was sorry that she shook Miss Hazelden.

After her counsel stated that 'he had witnesses present to prove that it was not from any natural violence of disposition on defendant's part', the magistrate said 'it was a very bad thing for any parent to interfere with the proper discipline of a school. The teachers should be protected. This appeared more of a moral offence than one in law. The assault itself wasn't much', and fined her 20s and costs.¹³⁹

In response to the charge of 'cavalier' conduct made by the evening newspaper against the committee, its chairman wrote to the *Thames Advertiser*:

I was sent for by Miss Hazelden when Mrs Devey was at the school. I told the messenger then to run at once for a policeman, but on reaching the school found Mrs Devey had left. I saw the extent of the injury that Miss Hazelden had sustained then, and was much surprised at the sensational and exaggerated statement in your next morning's issue. Had that not appeared, I have no doubt but that an apology would have been sent which would have satisfied Miss Hazelden.

¹³⁹ Police Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 5 December 1877, p. 3.

Only 'with great difficulty' was the latter persuaded to agree to legal action, as desired by the committee, 'stating that she would much prefer to settle the matter by accepting an apology'. She later, on legal advice, decided to proceed with the case even though the committee had accepted the apology and had wanted to withdraw the prosecution. 'This is a simple statement of our cavalier conduct, and if we have erred it has been on the side of mercy to a working man blessed with an excitable wife'.¹⁴⁰

Another *Thames Advertiser* editorial stated that both evidence and verdict confirmed its opinions:

In the Court Mrs Devey tried to make it appear that there had been a scuffle, in which the child's head came in contact with the black board, presumably wounding her so as to make blood flow. To establish this by evidence was not attempted, although we are convinced that the defendant's solicitor would have seized upon such a point with avidity as evidence tending to show the use of severe corporeal punishment by the complainant, and thus depriving her of sympathy. As to defendant's son's evidence about blood, it resembled the story of the three black crows, and dwindled down to a spot the size of a pin's head.

No pupil or teacher saw any violence used against the girl, and it was pleased that the case had exonerated the headmistress.

It seems to us that Mrs Devey, instead of frankly admitting her error, and expressing her sorrow at her precipitate action before ascertaining the facts, seems rather to be raising false issues and consoling herself by adhering to the shreds of cock-and-bull stories, which she is fain to think are facts. Her regret partakes of the nature of remorse much more than repentance, for she does not seem to understand, or else will not admit, that she committed an assault upon Miss Hazelden for absolutely nothing. She will not see that Miss Hazelden's treatment of her daughter was kind rather than harsh; that, when viewed impartially, nothing that was done to the child could be taken exception to by any reasonable parent. But Mrs Devey still seems to cherish resentment towards Miss Hazelden, and her sorrow is "for being shown up in the papers."

After justifying its reporting, it regretted 'that Mrs Devey does not frankly acknowledge her wrong doing. If she had admitted that her parental feeling urged her on to the commission of an unjustifiable act without

¹⁴⁰ Letter from William Souter, *Thames Advertiser*, 5 December 1877, p. 3.

waiting to reflect, we could regard her with respect rather than suspicion'.¹⁴¹ 'Red Cap', in criticizing the committee's willingness to accept an apology, was 'doubtful' than Ann would cease assaulting teachers, 'judging from her demeanour in Court'.¹⁴² In practice, she did not commit such an offence again, it was never mentioned in recollections, and instead she was remembered for her kindness to women.

When Ann died, she was recorded as being a nurse.¹⁴³ She was the first and, for many years, only maternity nurse at Te Aroha.¹⁴⁴ She was not only a midwife but also arranged for new mothers to receive the services of a 'Nurse Girl'.¹⁴⁵ Her obituary stated that 'in the early days of Te Aroha she was the only lady practitioner, qualified or otherwise, in the district, and by her prompt and kindly attention to those duties was instrumental in saving many a life'.¹⁴⁶ A resident agreed that she 'saved many a life in the early days'.¹⁴⁷

Despite these positive recollections, in January 1881, when she was still at Thames, it was alleged that her lack of skill contributed to the death of Marion Wilson, the wife of Charles Henry Wilson, later a mine manager at Waiorongomai.¹⁴⁸ She died, some days after giving birth, from blood poisoning because not all the placenta was removed. At the inquest, two doctors criticized her nursing and said she was not a qualified midwife.¹⁴⁹ Wilson said 'Mrs Devey was attending my Wife as a friend during her illness. I have heard that Mrs Devey was an experienced Nurse'.¹⁵⁰ His wife had 'every confidence' in her abilities, they having been friends for five years, and had told him not to get a doctor; Ann also told the worried husband, several times, not to do so. 'Mrs Devey was perfectly sober at all times she was in attendance'. In her evidence, Ann explained that she 'was not engaged to attend Mrs Wilson, but went in to see her as a friend, in the

¹⁴¹ Editorial, *Thames Advertiser*, 5 December 1877, p. 2.

¹⁴² '“Red Cap” on Apologies', *Thames Advertiser*, 6 December 1877, p. 3.

¹⁴³ Death Certificate of Ann Maria Devey, 19 December 1911, 1911/8048, BDM; *Te Aroha News*, 4 December 1912, p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 4 July 1885, p. 7.

¹⁴⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 21 December 1911, p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ Letter from John Williams, *Te Aroha News*, 27 January 1912, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ See paper on the Eureka mine at Waiorongomai.

¹⁴⁹ *Thames Star*, 5 January 1881, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ Inquest on Marion Wilson, Justice Department, J 46 COR, 1881/135, ANZ-W.

event of her mother not being able to wash the baby', and was asked 'to remain with her in consequence of her mother being very deaf'. When the baby was being born and the husband asked 'if he was to go for the doctor', his wife 'would not have him fetched'. In the days after the birth, she visited 'continually afterwards', and 'confirmed Mrs Wilson's opinion that there appeared no necessity to send for the doctor'. Being 'a nurse by occupation', she considered herself 'competent to attend such cases without the assistance of a medical man'. Prior to the birth she had wanted the doctor fetched, 'but Mrs Wilson would not permit it'; she insisted she had done 'all that was necessary in the interest of deceased'. Despite the questioning of her competence and information that the doctor had warned Ann that this was a serious case, because of bleeding prior to birth, and that he was 'very dissatisfied' he was not called, the coroner's jury determined that 'no blame was attached to any one. The Coroner said he could not accept that, and asked them to reconsider their verdict'. They did, and determined that death was by natural causes and that the inquest 'was not necessary'.¹⁵¹

The morning newspaper noted that 'rather than allow the doctor, who had been previously engaged in the case, to be called in at the most critical juncture', Ann 'took upon herself the sold responsibility'. Whilst not wanting 'to impute blame' when the jury did not, it argued that she

took upon herself a responsibility which she was not warranted, under the circumstances, in doing. She had been told that she had a most critical case in hand – that the medical man engaged was ready at a moment's notice to attend – and the husband showed his solicitude by frequent appeals to her – but she preferred to deal with the case single-handed rather than allow him to be summoned, even after his injunction a few hours previously. We have nothing to say adverse to the lady's skill, but we are justified, we think, in questioning her judgment.

Such events were 'almost of every-day occurrence', because 'to save half the fee females of questionable skill are constantly employed in these cases, and the result is not always satisfactory. The fact is, experience is relied upon as more serviceable than any medical curriculum', but 'experience and medical skill should have been combined, at any rate in this instance. It must not be inferred, however, that we impute blame to the midwife'.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ *Thames Star*, 5 January 1881, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 6 January 1881, p. 3.

¹⁵² Editorial, *Thames Advertiser*, 6 January 1881, p. 2.

The evening newspaper, after noting that the inquest and verdict had 'given rise to a considerable amount of comment', argued that a midwife should not have been in charge of a case with 'grave apprehensions of danger'. 'It is simply ridiculous and wicked to entrust it to a person who has not undergone a special course of training, and any woman who has the self-confidence to undertake it is guilty, to say the least, of culpable self-conceit', and wanted the government to forbid 'the employment of unskilled midwives in cases where the slightest symptoms of danger are apprehended'. Marion Wilson's life had been 'sacrificed through the self-confidence and stubbornness of a woman totally unfitted to discharge the difficult duties' required.¹⁵³

At Te Aroha, Ann often did not have the option of calling on a doctor's assistance,¹⁵⁴ but the only maternal death she was connected with occurred in 1902, when one week after giving birth a woman died from peritonitis at her house.¹⁵⁵ As there was no suggestion of her being in any way at fault, no inquest was held.

In December 1911, Ann died, aged 76, after suffering from peritonitis for six weeks and from a heart condition lasting several years. Despite her husband being a pillar of the Wesleyan church, she had an Anglican funeral.¹⁵⁶ Her will was made four days before her death, when 'physical infirmity' prevented her from signing her name; her estate was valued at under £270.¹⁵⁷ Her obituary described her as one of the town's 'oldest and most respected residents', and in the following year one of the earliest settlers described her as 'a pioneer and much esteemed in the district'.¹⁵⁸

After a 'Mrs George Devey Memorial Meeting' was held in January 1912, a shopkeeper who had attended described her in the *Te Aroha News* as an 'eminent Christian woman for it can be truly said of her she left this world better than she found it'. He told the women of the district that 'if you had only the least idea what that big hearted woman did for this district not one of you would refuse to honour her memory'. The editor 'cordially' endorsed this view, and hoped the subscription lists to erect a memorial to

¹⁵³ Editorial, *Thames Star*, 6 January 1881, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ See paper on physical and mental health in the Te Aroha district.

¹⁵⁵ *Thames Star*, 14 May 1902, p. 4; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 14 May 1902, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ Death Certificate of Ann Maria Devey, 19 December 1911, 1911/8048, BDM.

¹⁵⁷ Probate of Ann Maria Devey, Hamilton Probates, BCDG 4420/2841, ANZ-A.

¹⁵⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 21 December 1911, p. 2; recollections of Frederick Strange, cited by Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 12 December 1912, p. 48.

her would be circulated at once.¹⁵⁹ One year after her death, at the pioneers' anniversary sports a 'Ladies' Committee' gave four garden seats to the domain: 'Presented by a few grateful patients to the memory of the late Mrs Ann Devey, for 31 years a nurse in this district'.¹⁶⁰ At the presentation, the mayor 'spoke very highly' of her, 'and said that most of the old residents would remember her many kindly actions'.¹⁶¹ In the following decade, two seats in the Plunkett Rooms commemorated her.¹⁶²

THEIR SONS

By 1920, Devey had 84 descendants, and by the time of his death in 1933 there were 131, including six great great-grandchildren.¹⁶³ His surviving children were three sons and two daughters.¹⁶⁴ The first child to die in New Zealand was Albert Henry, who died in June 1873 of convulsions after 14 months of life;¹⁶⁵ all his other sons survived to manhood. William George, the eldest, became a carpenter, and was married in his father's house in 1884.¹⁶⁶ In 1893, when a carpenter and storekeeper at Paeroa, he dislocated an ankle and suffered from 'Chronic Gastric Catarrh'.¹⁶⁷ Early in the twentieth century, following in their father's footsteps he and his brother Edwin Arthur commenced business in Te Aroha as Devey Bros, 'Builders, Contractors, Upholsterers and Undertakers'.¹⁶⁸ Edwin Arthur Brookes was born in 1875, also became a carpenter, and in 1900 married

¹⁵⁹ Letter from John Williams, with editorial comment, *Te Aroha News*, 27 January 1912, p. 3.

¹⁶⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 4 December 1912, p. 2.

¹⁶¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 12 December 1912, p. 48.

¹⁶² *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁶³ *Te Aroha News*, 21 May 1924, p. 2; *Auckland Star*, 5 December 1933, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ Death Certificate of George Devey, 3 December 1933, 1933/11662, BDM.

¹⁶⁵ Birth Certificate of Albert Henry Devey, 19 March 1872, 1872/17660; Death Certificate of Albert Henry Devey, 17 June 1873, 1873/7751, BDM; *Thames Advertiser*, 19 June 1873, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Notices of Intentions to Marry 1884, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 20/29, folio 944, ANZ-W; Marriage Certificate of William George Devey, 2 January 1884, 1884/248, BDM; *Te Aroha News*, 19 January 1884, p. 2.

¹⁶⁷ Thames Hospital, Register of Patients 1884-1902, pp. 50, 53, YCAH 14075/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁶⁸ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 29 March 1902, p. 1.

the daughter of a local butcher,¹⁶⁹ James Hendy Rowe.¹⁷⁰ He was the son in 'G. Devey and Son' who advertised their services as builders, contractors, and undertakers in 1898.¹⁷¹ He was elected to the Te Aroha school committee in 1907 and 1908, and was still living there in 1927.¹⁷² Frederick John, born in Thames in 1870 (for some reason his birth was unregistered), became a blacksmith, worked with his father at Te Aroha in the 1890s, married at the age of 24, and was also living there in 1927.¹⁷³ George junior was living in Paeroa in 1893 when he broke his ankle in a fall from scaffolding, resulting in his leg having to be amputated below the knee;¹⁷⁴ money was raised in both Paeroa and Te Aroha to pay for an artificial one.¹⁷⁵ In 1896, he became superintendent of the Waitekauri Gold Mining Company's mine and battery;¹⁷⁶ by the late 1920s he was living at Matamata.¹⁷⁷

ANN DEVEY AND ARTHUR WILLIAM TAYLOR

Ann, their eldest daughter, who was born in Birmingham in 1862, in July 1883 married a cordial manufacturer, Arthur William Taylor, in an Anglican ceremony; he was aged 25 and she was 21. Born in Lincolnshire, he was the second son of Thomas, a farmer, then living in or near Te Aroha,

¹⁶⁹ Birth Certificate of Edwin Arthur Brookes Devey, 8 June 1875, 1875/969, BDM; Thames Register of Baptisms 1874-1880, no. 96, Anglican Archives, Auckland; Marriage Certificate of Edwin Arthur Devey, 18 April 1900, 1900/2791, BDM.

¹⁷⁰ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 831; *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 January 1912, p. 26.

¹⁷¹ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 7 May 1898, p. 1; *Wise's New Zealand Directory, 1900* (Dunedin, 1900), p. 694.

¹⁷² *Auckland Weekly News*, 2 May 1907, p. 21, 30 April 1908, p. 32; *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁷³ Thames Register of Baptisms 1868-1874, no. 189, Anglican Archives, Auckland; Marriage Certificate of Frederick John Devey, 2 January 1895, 1895/3928, BDM; *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁷⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 21 June 1893, p. 2.

¹⁷⁵ *Thames Star*, 21 June 1893, p. 2, 21 May 1894, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 July 1893, p. 23.

¹⁷⁶ Paeroa School, Admissions Register 1895-1899, no. 85, Primary School Archives, Paeroa; *Thames Advertiser*, 21 December 1896, p. 2, 26 May 1897, p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1.

and Mary, née Chambers.¹⁷⁸ He had erected a soda water machine at Te Aroha, and operated his 'Soda Water Manufactory' until selling it in October that year.¹⁷⁹ The following year, he was employed in another local aerated water plant.¹⁸⁰ Yet because of his liking for alcohol a prohibition order was issued against him at Thames in 1890.¹⁸¹ Otherwise, the only criminal charge ever laid against him was for not registering his dog.¹⁸²

Taylor was one of five owners of the Agnes claim at Thames in 1875, which they surrendered two years later. Other owners were his father and William Alma Taylor, presumably a relative.¹⁸³ After his brief career in aerated water, he moved to Waitekauri and became a miner for the remainder of his life.¹⁸⁴ When he died, in 1932 aged 75, his occupation was still recorded as a miner, which killed him: for the last seven years of his life he suffered from miners' phthisis.¹⁸⁵ He had been involved in mining at Waiorongomai and Te Aroha since taking out a miner's right in December 1881.¹⁸⁶ He was one of three owners of the Arizona No. 2, granted in early March 1882 and forfeited 12 days later for non-working.¹⁸⁷ The day before this forfeiture, he bought a quarter share in the Arizona for £19, later transferring his interest to the company of that name and receiving 250

¹⁷⁸ Notices of Intentions to Marry 1882-1885, entry for 17 July 1883, Thames BDM; Marriage Certificate of Ann Devey, 17 July 1883, 1883/3367, BDM; *Te Aroha News*, 4 August 1883, p. 2.

¹⁷⁹ *Te Aroha News*, advertisement, 9 June 1883, p. 1, advertisement, 14 July 1883, p. 1, 4 August 1883, p. 2, advertisement, 6 October 1883, p. 1, 20 October 1883, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 14 June 1884, p. 2.

¹⁸¹ Thames Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1889-1893, hearing of 3 November 1890, BACL 13736/37a, ANZ-A; Police Court, *Thames Star*, 3 November 1890, p. 2.

¹⁸² Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 14/1883, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁸³ Thames Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1875-1882, no. 96, BACL 14397/10a, ANZ-A.

¹⁸⁴ Register of Waihi Baptisms 1900-1916, nos. 52-54, 160, 380, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Hamilton.

¹⁸⁵ Death Certificate of Arthur William Taylor, 18 November 1932, 1932/8687, BDM.

¹⁸⁶ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 1829, issued 5 December 1881, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1881-1882, BBAV 11533/1i, ANZ-A.

¹⁸⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 247, BBAV 11567/1a; Plaintiff Book 1880-1898, plaintiff heard on 22 March 1882, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

scrip shares.¹⁸⁸ On the same date as he bought this interest, he bought one share in the Three Fools for £10, which was transferred to the Waiorongomai Company for 960 shares.¹⁸⁹ In July 1883, he bought a quarter share in Golden Hill No. 1, at Te Aroha, for £10, one month later transferring it to the Golden Hill Company and receiving 250 shares.¹⁹⁰ The following March, he was warned that these would be forfeited if the call of 1 1/2d per share remained unpaid.¹⁹¹

They had three sons and three daughters, the first being born 11 months after their marriage.¹⁹² After his death in November 1932, Ann lived until June 1945 before dying from a number of painful illnesses combined with senile dementia.¹⁹³ Both had Methodist funerals.¹⁹⁴ Her estate was £383 19s, to be divided amongst five of her children equally apart from her third son, Robert Alfred Francis, known as Frank, who received nothing because he had 'already received sufficient benefit from me during my lifetime'.¹⁹⁵

CAROLINE IDA DEVEY AND JOHN McLEOD MURRAY

¹⁸⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Transfers and Assignments 1882, no. 184, BBAV 11581/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 13 July 1882, p. 961.

¹⁸⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 64, BBAV 11500/9a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, no. 185, BBAV 11581/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 31 May 1883, p. 722.

¹⁹⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 122, BBAV 11500/9a; Transfers and Assignments 1883, no. 302, BBAV 11581/4a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 4 October 1883, p. 1437.

¹⁹¹ Public Notice, *Te Aroha News*, 1 March 1884, p. 7.

¹⁹² Birth Certificates of Florence Jessie Taylor, 4 June 1884, 1884/9732; Ida Julia Taylor, 20 July 1886, 1886/9942; James Harold Sawyer Taylor, 14 August 1888, 1888/16911; Thomas Arthur Taylor, 16 August 1890, 1890/13403, BDM; Register of Hamilton Baptisms 1872-1899, no. 462; Register of Waihi Baptisms 1900-1916, nos.52-54, 160, 380, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Hamilton; Death Certificate of Arthur William Taylor, 18 November 1932, 1932/8687, BDM.

¹⁹³ Death Certificate of Ann Taylor, 1 June 1945, 1945/17408, BDM.

¹⁹⁴ Death Certificates of Arthur William Taylor, 18 November 1932, 1932/8687; Ann Taylor, 1 June 1945, 1945/17408, BDM.

¹⁹⁵ Probates, BBAE 1570, 668/45, ANZ-A; Register of Waihi Baptisms 1900-1916, no. 380, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Hamilton.

Caroline Ida Devey was born in Auckland in December 1866.¹⁹⁶ The only record of her schooling was in 1880, when her attendance was irregular and she was absent from the Standard 3 examination in November.¹⁹⁷ In April 1884, in a Presbyterian ceremony held in her father's house, she married John McLeod Murray, a bookkeeper aged 27.¹⁹⁸ A dressmaker,¹⁹⁹ she was known to all as Kate.²⁰⁰ In mid-December 1883, the *Observer* Man had written 'Kate don't so audibly express a horror of being put in the OBSERVER. As long as you conduct yourself properly, and do not Devey (ate) from the paths of propriety, you have nothing to fear'.²⁰¹ There was no suggestion that she had deviated, instead becoming respectably engaged to Murray, as indicated by their witnessing the marriage of her brother William George in the following month.²⁰² Their first child, John, was born on the first day of February 1885, when Murray described himself as an accountant.²⁰³ George Archibald was born at Waiorongomai in February 1887 and Eva, at Te Aroha, in June 1888.²⁰⁴ Laurence Albert was born in 1890.²⁰⁵ In 1896, Ernest Robert was born, at Waitekauri.²⁰⁶ Their last child, Mary Hamilton, was born in 1903.²⁰⁷

Caroline had married into a prominent Scottish farming family whose distant ancestors were Earls of Annandale and Bothwell.²⁰⁸ Her husband was born in Edinburgh to John, a farmer, and Mary Hamilton, née

¹⁹⁶ Birth Certificate of Caroline Devey, 11 December 1866, 1866/9163, BDM; Thames Register of Baptisms 1868-1874, no. 188, Anglican Archives, Auckland.

¹⁹⁷ Waiokaraka School, Class Lists for 1880, p. 313, YCAF 4135/2a, ANZ-A.

¹⁹⁸ Marriage Certificate of Caroline Ida Devey, 16 April 1884, 1884/912, BDM.

¹⁹⁹ Notices of Intentions to Marry 1884, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 20/29, folio 942, ANZ-W.

²⁰⁰ Death Notice, *New Zealand Herald*, 1 October 1934, p. 1.

²⁰¹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 15 December 1883, p. 16.

²⁰² Marriage Certificate of William George Devey, 2 January 1884, 1884/248, BDM.

²⁰³ Birth Certificate of John Murray, 1 February 1885, 1885/1360, BDM.

²⁰⁴ Birth Certificates of George Archibald Murray, 22 February 1887, 1887/15034; Eva Murray, 23 June 1888, 1888/12170, BDM.

²⁰⁵ Birth Certificate of Laurence Albert Murray, 1890/16323, BDM; Probate of William Archibald Murray, Probates, BBAE 1569/3691, ANZ-A.

²⁰⁶ Birth Certificate of Ernest Robert Murray, 28 April 1896, 1896/582, BDM.

²⁰⁷ Birth Certificate of Mary Hamilton Murray, 1903/17282, BDM.

²⁰⁸ *Waikato Times*, 18 November 1886, p. 2; *Waikato Argus*, 21 July 1900, p. 2.

McLeod.²⁰⁹ Their only son, he had arrived in New Zealand in 1858 with his father and his brothers: William Archibald,²¹⁰ Thomas (both unmarried), George, and James Hunter. They acquired the Mount Stuart station and other land, mostly in the Waitahuna district, inland from Milton in Otago, where they 'successfully carried on sheep-farming and agriculture on a pretty extensive scale'.²¹¹ Murray's father claimed that William introduced machinery into Otago for sowing potato seed.²¹²

In 1873, William and some of his brothers acquired the Maungatapu block, 3,727 acres near the future Morrinsville,²¹³ and leased more land, farming a total area of 10,000 acres, upon which he spent considerable capital developing what he named the Annandale estate.²¹⁴ John and Thomas assisted with farming it,²¹⁵ and may have invested in this property.

²⁰⁹ Marriage Certificate of Caroline Ida Devey, 16 April 1884, 1884/912, BDM.

²¹⁰ See paper on his life.

²¹¹ Letters from Thomas Murray, *Waikato Times*, 16 September 1882, p. 3, 7 February 1884, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 19 April 1884, p. 2, 21 July 1900, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 11 August 1899, p. 6; Death Certificate of Thomas Murray, 9 August 1899, 1899/6748, BDM; Probate of William Archibald Murray, Probates, BBAE 1569/3691, ANZ-A. For map of the locations, see *A Descriptive Atlas of New Zealand*, ed. A.H. McLintock (Wellington, 1960), map 39.

²¹² Letter from John Murray, *Waikato Times*, 14 March 1882, p. 3.

²¹³ Jackson and Russell to William Archibald Murray, 2 May 1873, 20 May 1873, 3 July 1873, 22 July 1873, Letterbook no. 9, pp. 1141, 1223, 1396, 1493, Jackson and Russell Papers, MS 360, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Museum; *Thames Advertiser*, 14 April 1874, p. 3; 'Piako Swamp Sale Committee', *AJHR*, 1875, I-6, p. 11; *Thames Advertiser*, 3 July 1880, p. 4; *A Return of the Freeholders of New Zealand...* (Wellington, 1884), p. M 78.

²¹⁴ See *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 June 1879, p. 13, 28 October 1882, p. 23, 26 January 1884, p. 22; Waitoa Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 19 July 1880, p. 3; *Waikato Times*, 23 March 1880, p. 2, 2 April 1881, p. 2, 4 October 1881, p. 2, 21 January 1882, p. 2, letter from William Archibald Murray, 3 August 1882, p. 3, letter from William Archibald Murray, 21 September 1882, p. 2, 3 March 1883, p. 2, letter from William Archibald Murray, 29 December 1883, p. 2, letter from William Archibald Murray, 12 January 1884, p. 2, 24 June 1886, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 19 March 1887, p. 2.

²¹⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 3 July 1880, p. 15; *Waikato Times*, 14 March 1882, p. 3, 16 September 1882, p. 3, 25 January 1883, p. 3.

Thomas wrote many opinionated letters to newspapers, and tried to inflict his bad verse on editors.²¹⁶

Three years after the Annandale estate was sold early in 1885, William retaining possession for another year,²¹⁷ he acquired the Mount Pleasant estate, also part of the Maungatapu Block in Piako, and farmed it with Thomas before selling it in 1895.²¹⁸ In 1889, with his brother James Hunter and two nephews, he bought 6,000 acres in the Opuatia block, in the lower Waikato, which they called Glen Murray. Thomas lived with him in a house called 'Bothwell'.²¹⁹ Once again it was pioneering farming.²²⁰

Murray's uncles speculated, unprofitably, in residence and business sites in Te Aroha and Waiorongomai, and in agricultural leases in the Thames High School Endowment.²²¹ In 1887, when the high school board

²¹⁶ See *New Zealand Herald*, 11 August 1889, p. 6; letters from Thomas Murray, *Waikato Times*, 16 September 1882, p. 3, 7 February 1884, p. 2; letters from Thomas Murray, *New Zealand Herald*, 18 October 1884, p. 3, 20 October 1884, p. 3, 4 October 1894, p. 3; 'Our Letter Box', *Observer*, 4 August 1894, p. 24, 18 May 1895, p. 24, 6 November 1897, p. 24; letter from Thomas Murray, *Observer*, 24 September 1898, p. 5.

²¹⁷ *Waikato Times*, 10 March 1885, p. 2; *New Zealand Gazette*, 2 July 1885, p. 828; *Thames Advertiser*, 17 December 1885, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 20 February 1886, p. 2, 6 March 1886, p. 2.

²¹⁸ *Te Aroha Electoral Roll, 1890*, p. 25; Piako County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 16 June 1888, p. 2, 13 October 1888, p. 2, 25 January 1890, p. 2; letter from William Archibald Murray, *Waikato Times*, 20 September 1888, p. 3; Waitoa Road Board, *Waikato Times*, 5 December 1895, p. 3.

²¹⁹ *Waikato Electoral Roll, 1890*, p. 22; *Waipa Electoral Roll, 1893*, p. 37; *Waikato Argus*, 12 August 1899, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 27 January 1900, p. 6; Crown Lands Board, *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 May 1890, p. 10; Auckland Lands Board, Minute Book 1891-1893, pp. 46, 56, 103, 153, 307, BAAZ 4019, 12/4, ANZ-A; Ernie Alexander, *Glen Murray's Incredible Pioneers: Over 100 years of amazing history* (Waiuku, 1996), p. 9.

²²⁰ For example, Raglan County Council, *Waikato Times*, 20 August 1892, p. 2, 1 December 1892, p. 2, 20 May 1893, p. 2.

²²¹ For example, *Thames Advertiser*, 19 April 1882, p. 3, letter from 'Miner', 24 August 1882, p. 3, Thames High School Board, 10 October 1882, p. 3, letter from William Archibald Murray, 20 September 1888, p. 3; *Thames Star*, 18 December 1884, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 22 November 1884, p. 2, letter from William Archibald Murray, 6 February 1886, p. 7; letter from William Archibald Murray, 27 February 1886, p. 7, 8 August 1888, p. 2, letter from Edwin Hadfield, 12 December 1888, p. 2, letter from John Murray, 19

was seeking payment of arrears of rent, Thomas wrote 'that payment had been entrusted to a Mr McLeod Murray, and that he was astonished to find the latter had not fulfilled the trust'.²²²

John Murray died at his son's home at Waitekauri in 1896.²²³ Thomas died in 1899, and William in the following year.²²⁴ Despite the latter's years of large-scale farming, his estate amounted to only £2,301 13s 5d.²²⁵

Murray, who obtained his first miner's right in March 1882,²²⁶ invested in three Waiorongomai claims with his uncles Thomas and William. On 10 June, they each bought a third of a share in the Queen for £10, one and two-thirds in the Ruby for £15, and one in the Victoria for £15.²²⁷ The latter was transferred, three months later, to the Victoria Company, as was the Victoria Extended, of which Murray had become sole owner in July, immediately selling all but two of the 30 shares.²²⁸ He was allotted 900 scrip shares in the Victoria Company, in which his uncles also held shares.²²⁹ The Ruby was forfeited in March 1884.²³⁰ Thomas and William also bought small interests in the Eureka in April 1882, which became small interests in the subsequent company;²³¹ they also had a small number of shares in the Hero Company.²³²

December 1888, p. 2, 20 March 1889, p. 7; Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 2 February 1893, p. 2.

²²² High School Board, *Thames Advertiser*, 7 December 1887, p. 3.

²²³ Death Notice, *New Zealand Herald*, 27 October 1896, p. 1.

²²⁴ Death Certificates of Thomas Murray, 9 August 1899, 1899/6748; William Archibald Murray, 26 June 1900, 1900/2299, BDM.

²²⁵ Testamentary Register 1900-1902, folio 39, BCB 4208/14, ANZ-A.

²²⁶ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 1867, issued 1 March 1882, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1881-1882, BBAV 11533/1i, ANZ-A.

²²⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folios 39, 40, 45, BBAV 11500/9a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, nos. 427-435, BBAV 11581/2a, ANZ-A.

²²⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 99, BBAV 11500/9a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, notes taken for David Bettison, c. 1980, but originals not traced, BBAV 11581/2a, ANZ-A.

²²⁹ *New Zealand Gazette*, 14 December 1882, p. 1884.

²³⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Letterbook 1883-1900, p. 22, BBAV 11534/1a, ANZ-A.

²³¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 26, BBAV 11500/9a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 18 May 1882, p. 728.

²³² Public Notice, *Te Aroha News*, 12 July 1884, p. 7.

In September 1886, with Philip Robert Tringham, a miner,²³³ Murray was granted the Success, for which he immediately sought protection.²³⁴ Comprising seven men's ground, it included a large part of the old Waitoki Extended, including its main reef.²³⁵ The following month, he was described as a 'large shareholder' who sold one-seventh of his interest to an Auckland investor at the 'satisfactory price', unstated, of £25.²³⁶ He acquired six shares from Tringham three months later for £60, and sold three for £65.²³⁷ Two shares were bought by John Bealby Smith,²³⁸ who in November 1887 was sued by a miner for wages amounting to £100.²³⁹ Despite Smith being sued, Murray had been referred to in March that year as the chief owner.²⁴⁰

Immediately after being granted the ground Tringham 'and party' commenced prospecting, but mining did not start until August 1886.²⁴¹ Late the following month a 'good reef' was found upon which a level was being driven to give 30 feet of backs.²⁴² Early in October, it was explained that the discovery of this entirely new reef was

partly a result of the prospecting track recently made by the Piako County Council, as it is from this track it is being worked, along this track the quartz is sledged, and in fact the reef was first touched during the formation of the track, although it did not at the time attract attention. The reef now opened up in the

²³³ See, for example, *Te Aroha News*, 4 September 1886, p. 2.

²³⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 139, BBAV 11567/1a; Register of Applications 1883-1900, 78/1886, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

²³⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 18 September 1886, p. 2, 4 December 1886, p. 2; Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 9 October 1886, p. 2; Warden to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 7 April 1887, *AJHR*, 1887, C-6, p. 6.

²³⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 9 October 1886, p. 2, 16 October 1886, p. 2; Te Aroha Warden's Court, Transfers and Assignments 1886, 132/1886, BBAV 11581/7a, ANZ-A.

²³⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 139, BBAV 11567/1a; Transfers and Assignments 1886, 171-173/1886, BBAV 11581/7a, ANZ-A.

²³⁸ See paper on the Waitoa Find: a fraudulent find close to Te Aroha.

²³⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 139, BBAV 11567/1a; Transfers and Assignments 1886, BBAV 11581/7a, ANZ-A; Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 26 November 1887, p. 3.

²⁴⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 12 March 1887, p. 2.

²⁴¹ *Te Aroha News*, 18 September 1886, p. 2; H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 7 April 1887, *AJHR*, 1887, p. 6.

²⁴² *Te Aroha News*, 25 September 1886, p. 2.

winze is from 2ft 6in to 3ft carrying gold from wall to wall, and apparently as rich as what had already been taken out.

Two truckloads plus 30lb of picked stone had been crushed for 'the very excellent return of 60oz hard squeezed amalgam. The gold obtained from a similar parcel crushed a few weeks since realized £3 per oz. Extra hands will be put on as fast as the mine becomes opened up'.²⁴³ A local correspondent was enthusiastic:

It is pleasant at a time like this when dullness in mining seems to be everywhere prevalent, to have to chronicle anything in the shape of a new find. At Waiorongomai, over which field a cloud has hung for a length of time, there has recently been a fresh development, which may tend to impart to goldmining operations there a little more vigour than has been displayed for some time past. The place now operated on cannot be called virgin ground, but so little work has been done in the immediate neighbourhood that there is ample room, and as the late discovery shows, strong encouragement for further prosperity. The locality of the mine is the old Waitoki Extended claim, in which a little work was done, but with indifferent success, by the company who first owned it. A portion of the ground was taken up a month or two ago by the present party, and their enterprise is likely to be well rewarded. From the reef now opened up, which when first struck was only five or six inches in thickness, but has since increased to two feet, some excellent gold bearing stone has been obtained. A small parcel, consisting of two truck loads of general dirt, and about thirty pounds of selected stuff crushed at Firth's battery has yielded over sixty ounces of hard amalgam calculated to give fully thirteen ounces gold, and much of the quartz at the mine is of the same quality. The find is therefore an important one, and it is hoped it will lead to further discoveries in the neighbourhood.

The correspondent hoped the claim would 'continue to be what the name indicates' for Murray and Tringham, 'the fortunate owners'.²⁴⁴ Shortly afterwards, six men were at work and two trucks produced 11oz of retorted gold.²⁴⁵ One week later, the winze was down 17 feet, good prospects were seen, and the council was to be asked to extend the branch tramway to the claim, a distance of four and a-half chains.²⁴⁶ At the end of the month, three

²⁴³ *Te Aroha News*, 9 October 1886, p. 2.

²⁴⁴ *Te Aroha Correspondent*, *Waikato Times*, 9 October 1886, p. 2.

²⁴⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 16 October 1886, p. 2.

²⁴⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 23 October 1886, p. 2.

truckloads produced 4oz 4dwt of retorted gold.²⁴⁷ One month later, the branch tramway was completed, and Murray asked the council to pay the agreed subsidy of £10.²⁴⁸ Another six trucks sent for testing produced 9oz 5dwt retorted gold.²⁴⁹ In early December, miners were stoping south of the winze and carrying the drive north 'with gold showing every breaking down'. Inspired by this result, several parties were prospecting adjacent ground.²⁵⁰

Steady work continued in early 1887, some stone found in the stope in January being of specimen quality.²⁵¹ At the beginning of March, 25lb of picked stone produced 3oz 16dwt.²⁵² Late that month, the low level was in 150 feet, with another 90 feet to be driven to the main reef; another one was expected to be cut before then.²⁵³ With the battery not operating because of lack of water pressure, 80 truckloads were sent to Thames for treatment.²⁵⁴ By the end of the first week of April, the drive was in 210 feet, and by May they had crushed 36 tons for the same number of ounces of gold.²⁵⁵ The reef varied from six to 18 inches in thickness, and higher quality quartz was being extracted.²⁵⁶

During the following 12 months 25 tons from a 'small reef' were crushed for 'about 1/2oz to the ton'.²⁵⁷ The mine was not living up to the highest expectations, for the next report was published in March 1888, when ten tons were sent for treatment.²⁵⁸ In April he was accused by a miner of not working it, and was fined £5 and costs instead of forfeiting it because 'no willful and continuous neglect to work their mine had been

²⁴⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 30 October 1886, p. 2.

²⁴⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 27 November 1886, p. 2, Piako County Council, 4 December 1886, p. 3.

²⁴⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 27 November 1886, p. 2, 4 December 1886, p. 2.

²⁵⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 4 December 1886, p. 2.

²⁵¹ *Te Aroha News*, 22 January 1887, p. 2, 29 January 1887, p. 2.

²⁵² *Te Aroha News*, 5 March 1887, p. 2, 12 March 1887, p. 2.

²⁵³ *Te Aroha News*, 26 March 1887, p. 2.

²⁵⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 2 April 1887, p. 2.

²⁵⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 9 April 1887, p. 2; H.A. Gordon to Minister of Mines, 5 May 1887, *AJHR*, 1887, C-5, p. 32.

²⁵⁶ Warden to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 7 April 1887, *AJHR*, 1887, C-6, p. 6.

²⁵⁷ George Wilson to Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 4 April 1888, *AJHR*, 1888, C-6, p. 12.

²⁵⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 3 March 1888, p. 2.

proved'.²⁵⁹ According to one report, this decision gave 'general satisfaction, as a great deal of work' had been done.²⁶⁰ Another report cited 'great satisfaction' because 'a large amount of money has been expended upon it from time to time'.²⁶¹

By April he had a new partner, Thomas George Marlow, an Auckland commercial traveller with many 'mining speculations', to use his phrase.²⁶² Marlow was granted Success No. 2 in July, for which he obtained protection in September, December, and the following January.²⁶³ Claiming to have spent either over £200 or over £2,000 (reports varied),²⁶⁴ he sought protection while trying to sell it to an English company; he claimed there was no satisfactory means of treating the quartz. The warden granted three months' protection, but required him to work it after that.²⁶⁵

In April 1888, Samuel Luther Hirst, formerly an amalgamator at the battery who had become the proprietor of a mineral water and cordial manufacturing business,²⁶⁶ informed the warden that he was being paid 12s 6d by the trustees in Murray's estate to supervise this mine. He had employed two men and arranged to send quartz to Thames for treatment. The trustees had told him 'to put on men sufficient to hold the ground, and I thought two men would suffice', but the mining inspector later informed him that three and a half were required.²⁶⁷ The following March, Hirst forfeited the Success because it was not being worked according to

²⁵⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Plaint Book 1880-1898*, 10/1888, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A; Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 25 April 1888, p. 2, 28 April 1888, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ Warden's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 26 April 1888, p. 2.

²⁶¹ Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 28 April 1888, p. 2.

²⁶² Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 25 April 1888, p. 2, 28 April 1888, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 January 1891, p. 15.

²⁶³ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Register of Applications for Licensed Holdings 1888-1903*, folio 9, BBAV 11505/8a; *Register of Applications 1883-1900*, nos. 55, 74, 137 of 1888, 1/1889, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

²⁶⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, *Applications for Protection 1888*, Applications dated 23 July 1888, 17 August 1888, 22 December 1888, BBAV 11289/12a, ANZ-A; Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 23 January 1889, p. 2.

²⁶⁵ Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 23 January 1889, p. 2.

²⁶⁶ See *Te Aroha News*, 18 September 1886, p. 2, 17 December 1887, p. 2; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 829.

²⁶⁷ Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 25 April 1888, p. 2.

regulations.²⁶⁸ With a new partner, James Goard, an experienced miner,²⁶⁹ Murray applied for the Success ground again in August and started working it immediately, cleaning out the old drive and sending three truckloads to the battery for testing.²⁷⁰ As nothing further was reported, the good ore must have been exhausted.

In April 1888, with his father-in-law Murray obtained the Anglesea, two men's ground adjoining the Success and the Silver King.²⁷¹ In July, he successfully sought three months protection because, after working continuously and putting in a 150-foot drive, they had run out of funds and needed more capital.²⁷² They abandoned it in August 1889.²⁷³ Also in April 1888, he and the other two owners of the Jacky, which they had marked out in February 1887, abandoned it.²⁷⁴ In September 1888, he and three partners (one being Jess Devey) were granted the Theodolite, close to Te Aroha.²⁷⁵ The following August, with another and different partner, he applied for the Nil Desperandum, two men's ground adjoining the Silver King, but withdrew this application a month later.²⁷⁶

Although his recorded occupations were all clerical ones, in at least some of these claims he was more than just a sleeping partner, supervising the work if not actually mining. In March 1889, his tender to drive 150 feet in the Golden Crown for 6s a foot was accepted, and he worked it with six

²⁶⁸ Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 6 March 1889, p. 2.

²⁶⁹ See Thames Warden's Court, Shortland Claims Register 1870, no. 2252, BACL 14397/5a; Register of Grahamstown Claims 1878-1880, no. 589, BACL 14397/12a; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 338, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

²⁷⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 24 August 1889, p. 2.

²⁷¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1883-1900, 15/1888, BBAV 11505/1a; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 327, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

²⁷² Te Aroha Warden's Court, Application for Protection dated 31 July 1888, BBAV 11289/12a, ANZ-A; Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 5 September 1888, p. 2.

²⁷³ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 327, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

²⁷⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Transfers and Assignments 1888, Notice of Abandonment, 10 April 1888, BBAV 11581/9a, ANZ-A.

²⁷⁵ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1883-1900, 60/1888, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

²⁷⁶ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1883-1900, 57/1889, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

men.²⁷⁷ Six weeks later, his party had finished this drive.²⁷⁸ In May, he tendered unsuccessfully to drive in the *Montezuma* and put in the lowest tender for driving 100 feet in the *Phoenix*.²⁷⁹ In 1888 he and Jess Devey had a contract to dismantle the abandoned Te Aroha battery and remove it to Waihi.²⁸⁰ This nearly proved fatal for him, as when a chain lifting the stamper pan snapped the falling machinery just missed his head.²⁸¹

Whilst at Te Aroha, Murray had a variety of occupations. In the electoral rolls, he described himself as a bookkeeper.²⁸² From 1884 until 1886, Murray managed one of the largest stores at Waiorongomai,²⁸³ owned by Thomas Wells and John Lamb Souter.²⁸⁴ When he resigned in January 1886 and announced that he was to become a storekeeper at both Waiorongomai and Quartzville, the local newspaper recommended him as ‘well known in the district, both as a first class man of business, and also for his universal affability of character’.²⁸⁵ In February he was selling a ‘personally selected’ stock of groceries, drapery, boots and shoes, glassware, ironmongery, and ‘mining requisites’, and would deliver goods to Te Aroha.²⁸⁶ In May he advertised having received a shipment of prime oats.²⁸⁷ He was also an agent for the *Waikato Times*.²⁸⁸ At the beginning of July, he ‘moved into the large and convenient store lately vacated’ by another storekeeper, his ‘several important alterations and improvements’ making it ‘extremely well arranged. Owing to steadily increasing business his larger premises will be found a great convenience’.²⁸⁹ In January 1887, he advertised the goods available at his ‘New General Store’, and reminded residents that he delivered to Te Aroha, Waiorongomai, and Quartzville and had ‘a long residence in this district and connection with the same line of

²⁷⁷ *Waikato Times*, 12 March 1889, p. 2.

²⁷⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 24 April 1889, p. 2.

²⁷⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 11 May 1889, p. 2, 22 May 1889, p. 2.

²⁸⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 3 October 1888, p. 2.

²⁸¹ *Te Aroha News*, 13 October 1888, p. 2.

²⁸² *Waikato Electoral Roll, 1884*, p. 15; *Tauranga Electoral Roll, 1887*, p. 18.

²⁸³ See *Te Aroha News*, 22 March 1884, p. 2, 7 March 1885, p. 7.

²⁸⁴ See paper on Thomas William Carr.

²⁸⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 23 January 1886, p. 2.

²⁸⁶ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 20 February 1886, p. 2.

²⁸⁷ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 1 May 1886, p. 2.

²⁸⁸ *Waikato Times*, 17 June 1886, p. 3.

²⁸⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 3 July 1886, p. 2.

business'.²⁹⁰ At the beginning of April, he advertised a 'grand clearance sale' because he was abandoning storekeeping, but later that month announced that he was 'carrying on business as usual'.²⁹¹ In May, having decided to concentrate on selling groceries, for cash only, he sold all his drapery, boots, and ironmongery.²⁹² In August, he took over the Domain Store, a large one opposite the domain, and transferred his stock from Waiorongomai; once more a general storekeeper, he still sold for cash only.²⁹³

In mid-July 1887, he was sued for £1 10s and £40 4s 2d, an indication of financial difficulties.²⁹⁴ In September, his estate was assigned for the benefit of his creditors, all those owed money were asked to submit claims to the trustees, and tenders were called for his stock and 'plant'.²⁹⁵ Within a month his 'commodious and centrally situated Premises' was sold.²⁹⁶ Debts owing to his estate were still being collected in April 1889.²⁹⁷

Just before his storekeeping business failed, Murray had announced that he was setting up as Te Aroha's sole auctioneer.²⁹⁸ At the end of the year he advertised himself as 'Auctioneer and General Commission agent',²⁹⁹ for the last time.

At a meeting of the town board in January 1888, the ledger and cashbook were laid on the table for inspection because it had 'been found necessary to employ' Murray 'to rewrite and post them from the start, owing to the manner in which' the previous treasurer had kept them.³⁰⁰ In July, he was appointed its clerk, and in the following month was confirmed as clerk, treasurer, and rate collector.³⁰¹ Three months later, he gave notice of

²⁹⁰ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 15 January 1887, p. 3.

²⁹¹ *Te Aroha News*, 2 April 1887, p. 2, 23 April 1887, p. 2.

²⁹² *Te Aroha News*, 7 May 1887, p. 3.

²⁹³ *Te Aroha News*, 27 August 1887, pp. 2, 3.

²⁹⁴ Thames Magistrate's Court, *Plaint Book 1884-1887*, 203/1887, BACL 13737/13; Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, *Civil Record Book 1884-1889*, 22/1887, BCDG 11221/1b; ANZ-A.

²⁹⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 24 September 1887, p. 3.

²⁹⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 29 October 1887, p. 3.

²⁹⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 14 January 1888, p. 2; Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, *Civil Record Book 1884-1889*, 47, 48/1889, BCDG 11221/1b, ANZ-A.

²⁹⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 27 August 1887, p. 2.

²⁹⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 23 October 1887, p. 2, advertisement, 31 December 1887, p. 3.

³⁰⁰ Town Board, *Te Aroha News*, 7 January 1888, p. 2.

³⁰¹ *Te Aroha News*, 14 July 1888, p. 2, 11 August 1888, p. 2.

his wish to resign as clerk, 'as he expected to be away from the district'. Several board members 'expressed regret at being obliged to accept' his resignation, speaking 'in high terms' of his work; it was accepted 'with regret', and he continued to act as clerk until a new appointment was made.³⁰²

His main involvement in local politics was to support temperance, which must have endeared him to his father-in-law. In April 1882, John Murray, possibly his father, was elected to the licensing committee, and in October 1886 Murray replaced an existing member.³⁰³ Nominated again in 1887, he was the last one to be elected, with 24 votes compared with the highest polling candidate's 35.³⁰⁴ In 1886 he supported the interests of Waiorongomai, in January being elected as its representative on the domain board and in December convening a meeting to oppose closing the telegraph office and being elected to a committee to draw up a petition against this.³⁰⁵

In January 1888, it was understood that he was likely to move to Thames 'at an early date'.³⁰⁶ In August the following year he unsuccessfully applied to be the town clerk there.³⁰⁷ Not till January 1890 did he leave, selling his 'SUPERIOR HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE AND EFFECTS', which included an oval kauri table, a colonial sofa, two American cane armchairs, and 'Polished Kauri and Rimu Half Tester Bedstead and Drapings'.³⁰⁸ His sale was 'very well attended and on the whole realized good prices'.³⁰⁹ During that year he managed the public battery at Nenthorne, inland from Palmerston in Otago, before moving in 1891 to live at Lawrence.³¹⁰ In June 1892, he returned to Te Aroha as a storekeeper, but

³⁰² Town Board, *Te Aroha News*, 14 November 1888, p. 2.

³⁰³ *New Zealand Gazette*, 27 April 1882, p. 634, 14 October 1886, p. 1309.

³⁰⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 26 February 1887, p. 2, 5 March 1887, p. 3.

³⁰⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 9 January 1886, p. 7, 4 December 1886, p. 3, 11 December 1886, p. 2.

³⁰⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 14 January 1888, p. 2.

³⁰⁷ *Thames Star*, 23 August 1889, p. 2.

³⁰⁸ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 11 January 1890, p. 7.

³⁰⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 21 January 1890, p. 2.

³¹⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 22 January 1890, p. 2; several entries for purchasing machinery and parts in A. & G. Price, Letterbooks 1889-1891, 1891-1893, A. & G. Price Archives, Thames.

moved to Paeroa two months later.³¹¹ By 1896 he was an accountant at Waitekauri.³¹²

In 1900, under the will of his uncle William Archibald Murray he was to receive £50 annually for his children. Two years later, when he was a mining accountant in Auckland, the executors of his estate successfully appealed to the Supreme Court for approval to pay the annuity to him for the children's food and clothing and other needs. When employed in this position in Waitekauri, he had received £250 a year, but was dismissed in January 1901 'owing to retrenchment'. Until the end of November that year, 'although he made every effort to find or procure employment' he obtained work for only ten weeks at a weekly salary of £3. After November, he had a temporary job as a storeman, for £2 8s a week, out of which he had to pay 14s in rent each week and, with no private means or property, had great difficulty supporting his family.³¹³ He was still a storeman in April 1903, when he reported the theft of a small inlaid box containing jewellery, total value £15.³¹⁴ He continued living in Auckland, later being an accountant once more (one of his tasks was to assist the executors of his mother-in-law's estate) until his death.³¹⁵

Murray died in 1943, aged 86, of heart failure after enduring other illnesses, including cancer of the larynx; all his children outlived him.³¹⁶ Caroline had died in 1934 aged 68 after 'a long and painful illness';³¹⁷ she had suffered from tuberculosis for ten years, which had gradually spread through her body. Despite her Methodist upbringing, her funeral was conducted by the Fellowship of the Friendly Road.³¹⁸

³¹¹ Te Aroha School, Admissions Register 1889-1897, nos. 786, 787, Primary School Archives, Te Aroha.

³¹² Birth Certificate of Ernest Robert Murray, 28 April 1896, 1896/582, BDM.

³¹³ Probates, BBAE 1569/3691, ANZ-A.

³¹⁴ *New Zealand Police Gazette*, 8 April 1903, p. 90.

³¹⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1927, Supplement, p. 1; John McLeod Murray to Mining Registrar, Te Aroha, 27 June 1931, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications and Complaints 1927-1933, 26/1931, BCDG 11289/2a; Register of Mining Privileges 1913-1932, folio 143, BBAV 11500/4a, ANZ-A.

³¹⁶ Death Certificate of John McLeod Murray, 8 January 1943, 1943/26070, BDM.

³¹⁷ Death Notice, *New Zealand Herald*, 1 October 1934, p. 1.

³¹⁸ Death Certificate of Caroline Ida Murray, 29 September 1934, 1934/15243, BDM.

LAURA DEVEY AND JOHN WALDRON WRIGHT AND GEORGE
MILNES

Laura, the youngest daughter, was born in 1867,³¹⁹ but her birth, like that of George and Frederick John, was not registered. When she married, in May 1889, she was a dressmaker aged 21.³²⁰ Judging by her later behaviour, it is likely that she was the child whose hysterics in the Waiokaraka school in 1877 had led to the scandal caused by her mother assaulting the teacher. The following year she and her sister Caroline were enrolled in the Kauaeranga Boys School (it also enrolled girls), and won the fourth prize for 'general proficiency'; her sister was second.³²¹ In 1879, when in the Third Standard, her only award was the second prize for good conduct.³²² The following year, she was back at the Waiokaraka School; despite regular attendance, she failed the Standard Three examinations, passing only three of the seven subjects.³²³ Despite these results, her father later stated she been 'a general prize winner at school' who was, until 1887, 'active industrious and affectionate, with good health'.³²⁴ She was hit over the head at one school, and was 'once in a state apparently of catalepsy' for some weeks.³²⁵

The only time she was mentioned in her early years at Te Aroha was in July 1884, when she gave a recitation at a meeting of the Band of Hope.³²⁶ From late November 1887 until early the following April, when released as 'improved', Laura was incarcerated in the Auckland asylum. Upon admission, she was recorded as having had an 'attack of two months duration. Cause Disappointment in love affairs. Is suicidal'. The doctors reported her to be 'deeply melancholic', wringing her hands, with her eyes fixed on the ground and refusing to speak. 'Her mother states that she does

³¹⁹ Marriage Certificate of Laura Devey, 10 May 1889, 1889/1064, BDM; Waihi Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 28 August 1903, p. 1; Waiokaraka School, Class Lists for 1880, p. 317, YCAF 4135/2a, ANZ-A.

³²⁰ Marriage Certificate of Laura Devey, 10 May 1889, Register of Marriages 1883-1907, Te Aroha BDM.

³²¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 18 December 1878, p. 3.

³²² *Thames Star*, 17 November 1879, p. 2.

³²³ Waiokaraka School, Class Lists for 1880, p. 317, YCAF 4135/2a, ANZ-A.

³²⁴ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1893-1896, folio 185, YCAA 1048/6, ANZ-A.

³²⁵ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1896-1898, folio 93, YCAA 1048/7, ANZ-A.

³²⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 5 July 1884, p. 2.

not sleep. Will not eat and took a carving knife to cut her throat'.³²⁷ Two weeks later, she had 'a most miserable expression. Will not speak, but sits picking at her fingers. Listless, lachrymose, and apathetic. Will not take food and requires to be fed. Cannot be got to occupy herself in any way – Is weak, thin and anaemic. Menstruation deficient'.³²⁸ Over the next three months, she had slowly improved, ate voluntarily, and was 'more cheerful, contented and lively – Sleeps well and is considerably better physically'.³²⁹ A month later, in April, as the improvement was 'maintained', she was 'allowed out on trial for six months to the care of her mother at Te Aroha'.³³⁰ In October she did not return as had been agreed, but later that month was discharged as being recovered.³³¹

The admissions register recorded the cause of her melancholia as 'Disappointment in marriage'.³³² Six years later, her father explained that she had become insane 'because she was not allowed to marry her present husband', John Waldron Wright.³³³ Thirteen months after being placed in the care of her mother, she married him just before becoming a mother. Unlike her siblings, Laura was married in the registrar's office. The *Te Aroha News* explained that Wright was living at Dargaville, and that the ceremony was to have been held in her parents' house. 'Sufficient notice not having been given', the Wesleyan minister 'being absent from home for some days just at the time, the marriage took place at the Registry Office, Te Aroha, Mr Wright being unable to absent himself from business long. We wish the young couple much happiness'.³³⁴ It must have known this was not the full story, for on the following day the birth of a daughter was

³²⁷ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1885-1887, p. 10, entry for 24 November 1887, YCAA 1048/4, ANZ-A.

³²⁸ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1885-1887, p. 10, entry for 11 December 1887, YCAA 1048/4, ANZ-A.

³²⁹ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1885-1887, p. 10, entry for 10 March 1888, YCAA 1048/4, ANZ-A.

³³⁰ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1885-1887, p. 10, entry for 13 April 1888, YCAA 1048/4, ANZ-A.

³³¹ Avondale Asylum, Register of Patients Absent on Trial 1879-1918, no. 1454, YCAA 1024/1; Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1453, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A.

³³² Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1453, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A.

³³³ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1893-1896, folio 185, YCAA 1048/6, ANZ-A.

³³⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 18 May 1889, p. 2.

registered.³³⁵ According to the *Observer*, ‘he was wedding at two o’clock in the afternoon, and at ten o’clock that night his bride presented him with a pledge of his own, or somebody else’s, affection’.³³⁶ According to George Devey, the child was certainly Wright’s, as he had ‘seduced her’.³³⁷

Wright, then a railway guard, was 12 years her senior. He was born in Reading, England, in December 1855 to John, a ‘gentleman’, and Matilda Sophia, née Brady, whom he had married in County Clare, Ireland, three years previously, when she was aged 16.³³⁸ To his children their father was always known as John Waldron Wright.³³⁹ She was the daughter of a County Clare clergyman. After his father’s death in 1856, six years later his mother was remarried to Gerald Butler Beere, a professional soldier, in Limerick.³⁴⁰ After Beere retired from the army, Wright and his sisters Ann and Matilda arrived in Auckland with their mother and stepfather in November 1863.³⁴¹ Beere quickly took charge of No. 1 Company of the Fourth Waikato Militia, and after the Waikato War was one of Hamilton’s most prominent early settlers, owning a farm on the site of the future Beerescourt (originally Beere’s Fort, or, in Wright’s spelling, Beersfort).³⁴²

³³⁵ Birth Certificate of Lorrinor Wright, 11 May 1889, 1889/1064, BDM.

³³⁶ *Observer*, 29 October 1898, p. 5.

³³⁷ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1893-1896, folio 185, YCAA 1048/6, ANZ-A.

³³⁸ Marriage Certificates of John Waldron Wright, 10 May 1889, 1889/1064; 23 July 1908, 1908/6297, BDM; Inquest, Justice Department, J 46 COR, 1931/485, ANZ-W; Ancestry.co.uk.

³³⁹ Marriage Certificates of John Waldron Wright, 10 May 1889, 1889/1064; 23 July 1908, 1908/6297, BDM; Death Notice of Ann Wright, *New Zealand Herald*, 12 April 1915, p. 1.

³⁴⁰ Annotated Photograph of Matilda Sophia Beere, n.d., J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library; H.C.M. Norris, *Armed Settlers: The story of the founding of Hamilton, New Zealand, 1864-1874* (Hamilton, 1963), p. 111; Ancestry.co.uk.

³⁴¹ Register of Land Grants for Immigrants 1863-1868, Land Claims B2431-B2433, BAAZ 4115/1c, ANZ-A; annotated photograph of the three children taken at Beeresfort, Hamilton, in 1873, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁴² See *Waikato Times*, 2 January 1879, p. 2, 21 September 1880, p. 2, 14 October 1880, pp. 2, 3, 23 October 1880, p. 3, 29 October 1881, p. 3, 29 December 1881, p. 3; Norris, *Armed Settlers*, pp. 21, 28, 105, 110, 111, 117-118, 167, 173, 182, 184, 185, 194; Norris, *Settlers in Depression: A history of Hamilton, New Zealand, 1875-1894* (Hamilton, 1964), pp. 6-7, 82, 92, 208; Peter Gibbons, *Astride the River: A history of Hamilton* (Hamilton 1977), pp. 50, 54.

In 1877, Beere called his 300 acres 'Beere's Grove'.³⁴³ His house, 'placed on a lower terrace by the Waikato River' on the edge of the farm, was outside the borough, and had 'some fine gardens, vineries, etc, around it'.³⁴⁴

Wright lived with his family in Hamilton for most of the 1870s. Annotated photographs and three surviving diaries from those he kept from 1875 onwards³⁴⁵ described his life before going to Te Aroha and provide insights into his personality. He was photographed in militia uniform, and his descendants believed he had 'connection with Von Tempsky's Forest Rangers',³⁴⁶ which, if meaning that he fought with him, would have made him an impossibly precocious fighter, as Gustavus Ferdinand Von Tempsky was killed in September 1868.³⁴⁷ The annotator rightly added that there was 'no official proof of this however'.³⁴⁸

His 1877 and 1878 diaries described his life working in his stepfather's Kiwi Flour Mill, at which he lived, although he visited his family at 'Beersfort' regularly.³⁴⁹ The mill was three and a half miles from Hamilton, on the road to Ohaupo.³⁵⁰ He helped to erect machinery, worked the mill as required and usually for long hours (sometimes until midnight or even later), and assisted with the accounts, all under Beere's supervision.³⁵¹ He

³⁴³ *Waipa Electoral Roll, 1877*, p. 2; Norris, *Settlers in Depression*, p. 208.

³⁴⁴ *Descriptive Handbook to the Waikato: Its condition and resources* (Hamilton, 1880), p. 21.

³⁴⁵ John Waldron Wright, note in front of his diary for 1878 and entry for 28 July 1878, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁴⁶ Annotated photograph of John Waldron Wright in militia uniform, n.d. [May 1880?], J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁴⁷ W.T. Parham, *Von Tempsky – Adventurer: A biography of Major Gustavus Ferdinand Von Tempsky* (London, 1969), p. 200.

³⁴⁸ Annotated photograph of John Waldron Wright in militia uniform, n.d. [May 1880?], J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁴⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1877, in particular entries for 30 March, 12, 13, 18 July, 31 August, 21, 22 November, 6 December,

³⁵⁰ *Descriptive Handbook to the Waikato*, p. 23.

³⁵¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1877, in particular entries for 3, 9, 11, 18, 25, 31 January, 9 February, 7, 29 March, 4, 5, 17 April, 2 May, 4 August, 22 August, 6 September, 9 November, 12, 18, 31 December; Diary for 1878, in particular entries for 3, 4 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

socialized with other young men, especially on Sundays.³⁵² He won a running race in the 1877 New Year sports, attended a boxing match, and played billiards.³⁵³ Throughout 1877 he ‘bathed’ either in a ‘pond’ or in the river with friends, usually on a Sunday, but not until December did a friend start teaching him to swim.³⁵⁴ He attended a lecture on phrenology, and borrowed books to read (titles unrecorded).³⁵⁵ Almost every Sunday he attended church, and remained a lifelong member of the Church of England.³⁵⁶ As he was musical, his stepfather gave him a cornet, which he played privately, not in the concerts he regularly attended.³⁵⁷ He enjoyed the rare dance, almost his sole contact with women who were not his sisters;³⁵⁸ in the only disapproving comment made about another man in his 1877 diary he recorded the name of a man who had ‘Missbehaved himself’ at a ball.³⁵⁹ In May 1877, he joined the volunteer cavalry, and became an active member.³⁶⁰ A common recreation was to shoot ducks and other birds.³⁶¹ Only once was he recorded as fishing for eels.³⁶²

³⁵² For example, John Waldron Wright, *Diary for 1877*, entries for 18 March, 29 April, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁵³ John Waldron Wright, *Diary for 1877*, entries for 2 January, 28 May, 11 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁵⁴ For example, John Waldron Wright, *Diary for 1877*, entries for 4, 5, 7 January, 29 April, 25 November, 16 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁵⁵ John Waldron Wright, *Diary for 1877*, entries for 12 January, 24 June, 3 July, 9 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, ANZ-A.

³⁵⁶ John Waldron Wright, *Diary for 1877*, entries for every Sunday, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library; Marriage Certificate of John Waldron Wright, 23 July 1908, 1908/6297; Death Certificate of John Waldron Wright, 13 April 1931, 1931/3078, BDM.

³⁵⁷ John Waldron Wright, *Diary for 1877*, entries for 7 February, 30 March, 21 November, 6, 24 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁵⁸ John Waldron Wright, *Diary for 1877*, entries for 2 March, 25 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁵⁹ John Waldron Wright, *Diary for 1877*, entry for 2 March, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁶⁰ See in particular, John Waldron Wright, *Diary for 1877*, entries for 10, 11, 14, 15, 16 May, 1 September, 15, 18, 19, 20 October, 19, 23, 27 November, 29 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁶¹ For example, John Waldron Wright, *Diary for 1877*, entries for 24, 26 May, 2, 7 June, 31 July, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

In January 1878, Wright travelled Dargaville, where he ‘met Aunt Minnie Stopped at Nortons’.³⁶³ Frederic Norton, his uncle, was a surgeon at Dargaville.³⁶⁴ The following day, he returned down the Northern Waioa River to Aratapu and then walked to Te Kopuru to see the sawmills.³⁶⁵ Aratapu was then the largest town in Northern Waioa, with the largest sawmill in the colony; its population was 445 in 1881.³⁶⁶ Te Kopuru, two miles further down the river, was another centre of the timber industry.³⁶⁷ After his unexplained visit to this district, he spent several days in Auckland hearing a cornet player at a theatre and a band practicing and buying a violin tutor and a mouthpiece for his cornet; he also purchased a book on bookkeeping.³⁶⁸

Back in Hamilton, he continued to work at the mill until, on 17 September, ‘Disputed with Capt Beere and left Mill’.³⁶⁹ Possibly they had quarrelled about his work, for the *Descriptive Handbook to the Waikato* of 1880, which praised everyone and everything, noted that with ‘new and extensive machinery’ erected by new owners ‘a first-class flour is now turned out, being different to that which for many years obtained anything but a good name for the Kiwi brand’.³⁷⁰ His walking out on Beere meant that almost immediately afterwards, when ‘the starting of the new and improved machinery at the Kiwi flour mills was made the occasion of a

³⁶² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1877, entry for 22 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁶³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 13-15 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁶⁴ *Marsden Electoral Rolls, 1878*, p. 28; *1880*, p. 22.

³⁶⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 16 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁶⁶ *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 627; *A Descriptive Atlas of New Zealand*, map 26; E.K. Bradley, *The Great Northern Waioa*, 3 ed. (Auckland, 1982), p. 41-44; Stephen Fordyce, *Longwater: Historical aspects of the Northern Waioa* (New Plymouth, 1998), pp. 15-17; Wayne Ryburn, *Tall Spars, Steamers and Gum: A history of the Kaipara from early European settlement 1854-1947* (Auckland, 1999), pp. 24, 39-40, 57.

³⁶⁷ Ryburn, pp. 56-57.

³⁶⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 19-22 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁶⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 17 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁷⁰ *Descriptive Handbook to the Waikato*, p. 23.

public festivity', he alone of his family was not present.³⁷¹ His name was not mentioned in the speeches praising both mill and Beere.³⁷²

Until then, Wright had relieved his often-long hours of work by socializing with male friends, some of them staying overnight with him at the mill.³⁷³ Sometimes he stayed with his family; once he had a bicycle, it took him 40 minutes to travel from Beere's Fort to the mill.³⁷⁴ He swam, usually with male friends, in the 'pond' or river almost every Sunday, even on cold winter days.³⁷⁵ A member of the Choral Society, he attended their 'singing class', usually every Tuesday evening.³⁷⁶ He attended concerts,³⁷⁷ and practiced his cornet, probably to the annoyance of those within hearing distance, for in February he noted having 'discovered way to muffle cornet'.³⁷⁸ In mid-March, 'Left off playing cornet';³⁷⁹ his lip needed medical treatment that lasted some months.³⁸⁰ Whilst unable to play the cornet, he taught himself to play the violin.³⁸¹ In July, he started playing it, often at John Ridler's house, with his friend George Loftus Lane, who played the

³⁷¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 21 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁷² *Waikato Times*, 24 September 1878, p. 2.

³⁷³ For example, John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 19-24, 28 February, 4, 18, 21-23 March, 1 April, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁷⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 3 June, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁷⁵ For example, John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 3 February, 7 April, 9 June, 28 July, 4 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁷⁶ For example, John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 19, 26 February, 5 March, 21 May, 18 June, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁷⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 1, 6 February, 14 March, 9 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁷⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 4 February, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁷⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 1878, entry for 16 March, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁸⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 19, 31 March, 1, 6, 8, 30 April, 1, 6, 14, 16, 31 May, 4 July, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁸¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 27 April, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

concertina.³⁸² Ridler, a prominent member of the local community,³⁸³ had a farm at the Hamilton end of the road to Ohaupo, as well as a smaller one at Claudelands, on the outskirts of Hamilton.³⁸⁴ At the end of 1879, he leased Beere's mill with a partner, purchasing it with another partner, John Knox, in May 1881.³⁸⁵ Knox was a leading Hamilton auctioneer and public figure,³⁸⁶ who had a small involvement in the Te Aroha goldfield;³⁸⁷ Knox and Ridler were also partners as auctioneers and general storekeepers from 1889 to 1891.³⁸⁸ In 1880, Ridler was a director of the Waikato Gold Mining Company, established in December to mine at Te Aroha.³⁸⁹ For a time, Ridler was also in partnership with Lane.³⁹⁰ The latter, a farmer, participated briefly in the Te Aroha rush.³⁹¹ He later became a gumdigger, and, after years of ill health, died in poverty in 1903, aged 63.³⁹²

³⁸² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 21, 24, 26 July, 18 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁸³ For his involvement in local government, see *Waikato Times*, 18 July 1882, p. 2, 24 April 1883, p. 3, 15 April 1884, p. 3, 24 April 1884, p. 2, 7 April 1885, pp. 2, 3, 4 May 1886, p. 2, 13 May 1886, p. 2, 18 May 1886, pp. 2, 3, 25 May 1886, p. 2, 27 May 1886, p. 2, 19 November 1888, p. 3, 13 January 1890, p. 2.

³⁸⁴ *Waipa Electoral Rolls, 1877*, p. 12, 1880, p. 17; *Descriptive Handbook to the Waikato*, pp. 22-23; *Waikato Times*, 27 December 1880, p. 3, 22 October 1881, p. 2; Norris, *Armed Settlers*, p. 175; Norris, *Settlers in Depression*, p. 223.

³⁸⁵ *Waikato Times*, 1 January 1880, p. 2, 24 May 1881, p. 2, advertisement, 1 January 1885, p. 1.

³⁸⁶ *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 740; *Observer*, 21 November 1903, p. 5, 6 February 1904, p. 4, 8 April 1905, p. 4, 10 June 1905, p. 4.

³⁸⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 195, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 28 April 1881, p. 476; 'Waikato Whisperings', *Observer*, 15 January 1881, p. 170, 18 March 1882, p. 10.

³⁸⁸ *Waikato Times*, 27 July 1889, p. 2, 10 February 1891, p. 3.

³⁸⁹ Norris, *Settlers in Depression*, p. 102.

³⁹⁰ *Waikato Times*, 3 May 1881, p. 3.

³⁹¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 389, issued 25 November 1880, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1880, BBAV 11533/1a; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 229, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 30 December 1880, p. 1797.

³⁹² Auckland Hospital, Register of Patients 1893-1899, folio 80, no. 6666, ZAAP 15288/3a; Auckland Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, Applications for Relief 1894-1907, p. 200, no. 11389, YCAB 15245/2a; Costley Home, Minute Book 1897-1903, pp. 46, 156, YCAB

Wright may have been able to play the concertina also, for in August he mended it.³⁹³ By mid-September, he may have been able to play the cornet again, for on Sunday he 'went over to Ridler's and brought cornet then home and to Vincents brought Violin heard Lane play the piano'.³⁹⁴ Was he the Vincent who was a partner in the 'very extensive' Hamilton Pottery Works on the Ngaruawahia to Hamilton road?³⁹⁵ In the early 1880s Augustus Vincent had a house on a farm owned by Ridler, near Hamilton, grew apples, and was on the committee of the choral society.³⁹⁶ The following evening in mid-September, 'Jack and I went over to Ridders Loftus Lane came over to practice with consortina about 9 pm left consortina for dick'.³⁹⁷ The latter, whose surname was unrecorded, had earlier stayed at the mill, bathed in the pond with him, ridden his velocipede, and accompanied him when he went to a choral society rehearsal.³⁹⁸

Wright's musical interests as well as his working of the mill brought him into contact with other prominent members of the community. Just before leaving Hamilton, he practiced the cornet and Lane played the piano 'at Lequesnes',³⁹⁹ probably meaning the hall constructed by a prominent

15251/1b, ANZ-A; Death Certificate of George Loftus Lane, 25 August 1903, 1903/4710, BDM.

³⁹³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 28 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁹⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 15 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁹⁵ *Waikato Times*, 9 June 1877, p. 2, 15 December 1877, p. 2, 24 January 1880, p. 2, 29 January 1880, p. 2, 18 September 1880, p. 2, 5 October 1880, p. 2, 11 January 1881, p. 2, 31 May 1881, p. 2, 27 August 1881, pp. 2, 3, 12 November 1881, p. 3, 17 November 1881, p. 2; *Descriptive Handbook to the Waikato*, p. 21.

³⁹⁶ *Waikato Times*, 22 October 1881, p. 2, 8 May 1883, p. 2, 10 February 1885, p. 2, 19 March 1885, p. 2, 18 March 1886, p. 2.

³⁹⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 16 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁹⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 19-24, 28 February, 18 March, 7, 13 April, 2 May, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

³⁹⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 5 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

local merchant and publican, Philip Le Quesne, although possibly Le Quesne's home.⁴⁰⁰

In April he acquired a 'Velocipede', or bicycle, which he quickly learnt to ride.⁴⁰¹ On the first Saturday after acquiring it he 'went along the road on the Velocipede at night', and on the following Tuesday 'went in to the singing class rode in on bicicle'.⁴⁰² The following week, he rode to Ohaupo collecting money from those whose wheat had been milled.⁴⁰³ When riding his bicycle to his Tuesday evening singing classes, he left the mill at eight o'clock and returned at ten-thirty.⁴⁰⁴ He continued to participate enthusiastically in the Volunteers, regularly attending parades and shooting practices, usually doing well in competitive shooting.⁴⁰⁵ In February, he won his first sweepstake at the races and also 'won some money by pistol shooting'.⁴⁰⁶ He enjoyed dancing, attending several dances, and attended entertainments of various sorts.⁴⁰⁷ He continued to borrow books.⁴⁰⁸ Occasionally he shot birds, and once he rode on his bicycle 'to see the hunt the dogs killed a hair'.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁰ For Le Quesne and his hall, see *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 749; Norris, *Settlers in Depression*, pp. 8, 27, 40, 65-66, 135; for his Waikato Hotel, see *Descriptive Handbook to the Waikato*, pp. 23, 30.

⁴⁰¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 10-12 April, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁰² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 13, 16 April, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁰³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 26 April, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁰⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 18 June, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁰⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 23 February, 2, 25, 26 March, 9-15, 25 May, 3, 4, 24, 31 August, 1 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁰⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 13 February, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁰⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 14 March, 15 May, 18 May, 15 June, 19 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁰⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 22 April, 10 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁰⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 6 April, 21 May, 12 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

In a later addition to his diary entry for 10 May, he wrote that at the Volunteer parade and drill he ‘first saw M. Txxx---’,⁴¹⁰ whose name was never recorded. Not until 3 August was there any further mention of her, when he recorded being ‘Much in L-v- M-l-oncel-’, his attempt to spell ‘melancholy’.⁴¹¹ Three days later, a Tuesday, he went to his singing class and ‘got back at 12 pm “M. T—” ’.⁴¹² Three days later, when he went into Hamilton to a children’s concert, he ‘saw M. T----’ once more.⁴¹³ The following day, a Saturday, after attending a football match he ‘got back to Mill saw M. T----’.⁴¹⁴ Next Tuesday evening he went to the Choral Society and ‘Met the T----’,⁴¹⁵ who seems to have been a member. If so, she did not attend the last choral practice for that month; on that day he sent ‘L’, presumably a letter, ‘to M.T.’⁴¹⁶ After the Volunteers’ Church Parade on the following Sunday, he met her again.⁴¹⁷ After this entry she was never referred to again.

After his row with Beere, he never worked at the mill again. Immediately after their quarrel he took the train to Auckland, where he stayed for two days, meeting a friend and hearing a choir practice and a band play at a skating rink.⁴¹⁸ Three days later, he returned to the mill,

⁴¹⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 10 May, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴¹¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 3 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴¹² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 6 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴¹³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 9 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴¹⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 10 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴¹⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 13 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴¹⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 27 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴¹⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 1 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴¹⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 17-19 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

‘packed up things then back to Beersfort’,⁴¹⁹ where his mother and siblings must have welcomed him; Beere’s reaction was not mentioned. Another two days later, he ‘packed up things then back to Beersfort’.⁴²⁰ When the reconstructed mill was opened, his mother and sisters attended the function, but he did not.⁴²¹ Until he left Hamilton three weeks later, he filled in time by attending dances, concerts, the choral society, Volunteer drill and shooting, visiting friends, and playing his cornet.⁴²² One day was spent at Beersfort ‘at arithmetic music wrighting diary’.⁴²³

On 9 October, Wright left Hamilton for Auckland,⁴²⁴ en route for Dargaville. His mother gave him three guineas; there was no mention of Beere farewelling him.⁴²⁵ Nor did Lane farewell him: ‘coolness with Lane’ was recorded four days before his departure, when he had practiced the cornet to Lane’s piano accompaniment.⁴²⁶ He had kept in touch with his uncle and aunt at Dargaville, in August recording that he had written to ‘uncle Norton’.⁴²⁷ When the boat stopped at Te Kopuru, ‘Uncle fred came on board’, and he stayed at ‘Uncle Norton’s House’ for ten days, exploring the area before starting work at Te Kopuru on 21 October.⁴²⁸ His first day’s work started at two o’clock, ‘trucking timber to the wharf with youngster

⁴¹⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 22 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴²⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 24 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴²¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 21 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴²² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 20, 23-26, 28, 30 September, 1, 4-7 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴²³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 27 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴²⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 9 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴²⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 8 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴²⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 5 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴²⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 14 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴²⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 10-21 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

knocked off at 6 pm went to the band room and reading room'.⁴²⁹ From then on, he worked hard from six in the morning until six in the evening, trucking and stacking timber and loading boats.⁴³⁰ On one day he recorded 'Sweating like a Bull'.⁴³¹ When not working, he explored the district, went to the library, swam in the river, played cricket, danced, sang in the choir, or played his cornet.⁴³² He attended church, on one Sunday going 'to hear the Bishop'.⁴³³ The names of two books he read were recorded: Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* and the 'Arabian Knights'.⁴³⁴ He lived in 'the sleeping house' with the other single men, who were rebellious about the quality of their meals.⁴³⁵ On his second weekend at Te Kopuru, he borrowed a rowing boat 'and went up to Kaihu'.⁴³⁶ Kaihu, at the junction of the Kaihu and Wairoa rivers, was a private settlement that was renamed Dargaville, after its founder, later that year;⁴³⁷ it was not the settlement of that name that was developed upstream from Dargaville in the 1890s at a site Maori had called Opunake.⁴³⁸ He left Te Kopuru at 4.30, pulling against the tide, arriving at 7 p.m.; he stayed the Saturday night 'at Aunt Minnies'. The following day, he 'had Breakfast at Aunts pulled to Aratapu in an hour', and

⁴²⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 21 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴³⁰ For example, John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 22, 23, 25 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴³¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 29 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴³² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 22, 23, 26, 29 October, 9-12, 14-16, 20-24 November, 7, 8 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴³³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 10 November, 1 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴³⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 10, 16 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴³⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 2, 8, 9 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴³⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 2 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴³⁷ Ryburn, 58.

⁴³⁸ *A Descriptive Atlas of New Zealand*, map 26; Ryburn, p. 67; Bradley, p. 114, and photographs between pp. 114-115.

was back at Te Kopuru by 12.30.⁴³⁹ He rowed upriver to visit his uncle two weekends later.⁴⁴⁰ He took the steamer to the races at Kaihu in early December, and ‘got drunk’ on the return trip.⁴⁴¹ He wrote to John Thorpe,⁴⁴² a builder,⁴⁴³ with whom he had been friendly in Hamilton,⁴⁴⁴ but no letters to other Hamiltonians were recorded, apart from his sending a photograph of himself to his mother.⁴⁴⁵

On 10 December, while he was working on the circular saw ‘Stocktakers of Mill arrived we were loafing in the Mill all day and skylarking cleaned up the Mill at night this was the last work the Mill did for the old company. Meeting at the Hall in the evening and Breaking up of the Band dance’.⁴⁴⁶ The following day, ‘cleaned up yard and stacked all timber’, which made him ‘Crook’. He gave five shillings ‘towards Library’, and noted that ‘a lot of the old hands went to Aratapu’.⁴⁴⁷ After filling in time rowing up river to stay with his aunt, he ‘Went to Kelly but He would not take me on then pulled to Aratapu and Karr took me on at £2 per week’.⁴⁴⁸ His new job required him to truck timber for ten hours a day. ‘The Mills working hours are from 6 am to 6 pm 1 hour for dinner and 40

⁴³⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 2, 3 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁴⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 17 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁴¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 4 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁴² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 18 November, 17 December (Thorpe’s reply noted), J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁴³ *Waikato Times*, advertisement, 31 December 1878, p. 3, 1 November 1879, p. 2, Waikato County Council, 13 February 1879, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 16 September, 8 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁴⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 26 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁴⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 10 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁴⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 11 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁴⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 13-16 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

minutes for breakfast and knock off at 1.00 on Saturday'.⁴⁴⁹ For entertainment, there was his cornet, a band, a 'farce at the Hall which was duffing' (meaning 'no good, inferior'),⁴⁵⁰ dancing, walking up the bush tramway with fellow-workers, and swimming in the river.⁴⁵¹ His last diary entry indicated that he was not enjoying life in Aratapu 'or the city of sawdust' as he accurately described it.⁴⁵² There were 145 men working in its three sawmills, the single men living 'mostly in a house call the house of blazes' (probably a reference to Hell);⁴⁵³ they were 'a dull lot of fellows'. The 'Young Ladies of the place are rather Shy and don't show out much and are by my knowledge the Miss Chadwicks Otto Johnson Watson Wood'. He concluded that 'Another year has gone and what is in the distance who knows. Fare Well, 1878'.⁴⁵⁴ His diary for 1879 has not survived, but the 1880 one (the last one, unfortunately) reveals that he had not charmed any of these young women.

Wright spent New Year in 1880 in Hamilton with his family. On New Year's Day, he swam in the river and then attended a sports meeting in the afternoon. 'Met young Thorpe and all the old hands.... Spent evening at Thorpes Piano playing'.⁴⁵⁵ Before being farewelled on 5 January by all the family, he bathed in the river, met old friends, danced, joined in a hunt, went to church, and after an evening meal at a friend's house played the piano and sang.⁴⁵⁶ On the train to Auckland he 'had long chat with young

⁴⁴⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 17, 20, 31 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁵⁰ Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8 ed., ed. Paul Beale (London, 1984), pp. 349, 350.

⁴⁵¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entries for 23-25, 27-30 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁵² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 31 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library; his view of it as a city of sawdust was confirmed in an 1893 description: Fordyce, p. 21.

⁴⁵³ Jonathon Green, *The Cassell Dictionary of Slang* (London, 1998), p. 104.

⁴⁵⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1878, entry for 31 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁵⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 1 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁵⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 2-5 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

Lady from the Thames'.⁴⁵⁷ In May, he returned to his family, socializing with male friends and in particular rowing with some of them to Rangiriri to shoot ducks.⁴⁵⁸ With Beere, with whom he was clearly reconciled, he returned to Auckland, saw a muster of Volunteers, and by being photographed in his uniform was too late for their review.⁴⁵⁹ He enjoyed the Friendly Societies' Ball, afterwards seeing 'young lady and Mother home' and not returning to his hotel until 5.30 in the morning.⁴⁶⁰

On his first day back at Aratapu in January, he did not go to work, for being secretary and/or treasurer of the Accident Relief Fund he worked on its 'business' and conducted a quarterly meeting.⁴⁶¹ Later in the year he received applications for relief.⁴⁶² At the beginning of June, he 'Spent evening writing Accident Relief Business' and then 'held Accident Relief Meeting in library', and a week later 'Spent evening at Library', apparently on the same business.⁴⁶³ At the end of the month he spent another evening writing up the accounts.⁴⁶⁴ He was also a member of the 'Hall committee'.⁴⁶⁵ In June he 'attended Library Meeting',⁴⁶⁶ presumably meaning the library committee.⁴⁶⁷ In October, he recorded taking books to friends.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁵⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 5 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁵⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 8-21 May, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁵⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 23, 24 May, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁶⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 24 May, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁶¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 9 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁶² For example, John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 27 May, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁶³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 1, 3, 8 June, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁶⁴ Johan Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 30 June, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁶⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 12 January, 5 June, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library; for this committee, see Bradley, p. 43.

⁴⁶⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 12 June, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁶⁷ For the library, see Bradley, p. 43.

His first day's work in January was spent digging gum: 'Got about 60 pounds of Bad gum very tired went to Bed early'.⁴⁶⁹ On the last day of the month he 'went gumdigging after dinner', managing to lose someone else's spade.⁴⁷⁰ On his first day's work for the year for his employer, he was 'working on wharf all day', and for much of January was trucking timber and loading cutters.⁴⁷¹ He was given management responsibilities, arranging for the filling of orders.⁴⁷² Early in February, he received an order for mouldings: 'awful job worked 2 and 1/2 hours overtime'.⁴⁷³ In mid-June, he spent one day 'trucking about yard to wharf. Boss Sick pretty easy time of it'.⁴⁷⁴ He worked until 3 December, when 'Fought with Mowhenny and got the Sack fought up in the Bush in Morgans Paddock, and beat him'.⁴⁷⁵

Wright actively participated in social life, and recorded much socializing with other males.⁴⁷⁶ He was still shooting birds,⁴⁷⁷ playing football, and once attended 'Boxing in evening'.⁴⁷⁸ In mid-January, he 'attended discussion class and appointed another night to meet'; when it met on the following day and elected a committee he was not recorded as

⁴⁶⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 12 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁶⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 10 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁷⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 31 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁷¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, in particular entries for 12-16, 21, 28, 31 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁷² For example, John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 22, 23 January, 26 May, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁷³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 5 February, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁷⁴ Johan Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 14 June, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁷⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 3 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁷⁶ For example, John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 25 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁷⁷ For example, John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 29 May, 19 June, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁷⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 1, 10 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

standing.⁴⁷⁹ Late in the month he attended the class again: 'great dust at throwing out Bill of prayer'.⁴⁸⁰ At the end of May, he 'beat the Boss at Malthus or overpopulation the cause of poverty'.⁴⁸¹ In July, 'was chairman for the evening impromptu Speeches'.⁴⁸² At the end of August there was a 'members meeting in the old Schoolroom on the wages question'.⁴⁸³ In October he 'attended the last Meeting of the discussion class'.⁴⁸⁴ He attended church regularly, once going during the week as well as on Sundays.⁴⁸⁵

A member of the Band of Hope, a temperance society, he attended several meetings during the year, having 'a great night' at one in August.⁴⁸⁶ Despite belonging to it, and in October disapprovingly noting, after a new hotel opened, that there were 'drunken Men every where',⁴⁸⁷ in mid-September he had gone to a Christy Minstrel performance, had 'Miserable dance', and 'got half tight'.⁴⁸⁸ In mid-October he went to the hotel and later got 'tipsy' at a birthday party.⁴⁸⁹ His entry for 1 November revealed what

⁴⁷⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 19, 20 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁸⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 26 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁸¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 31 May, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁸² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 26 July, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁸³ Johan Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 28 August 1880, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁸⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 11 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁸⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for Sundays and 19 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁸⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 6 July, 3 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁸⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 2 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁸⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 18 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁸⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 12, 15, 16 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

happened after a strenuous day: 'My mate was drunk hard days work in consequence played foot Ball went to the hotel and got Jolly tite'.⁴⁹⁰

He continued to play the cornet, once playing for a dance at Kaihu.⁴⁹¹ In January, he 'attended Singing class was fined 2/- paid 8/- and left the class'.⁴⁹² Presumably he had been fined for non-attendance, which may have been the reason why he 'did not attend Singing class' a week later.⁴⁹³ An organizers of the 'Maskerade' Ball in June,⁴⁹⁴ he 'went dressed as a Soldier first, and a Jocky after changed with Meadey', correctly William Meadley, who ran a boarding house at Aratapu.⁴⁹⁵ 'Had great fun'; as dancing did not end till 4 o'clock in the morning, he was 'very sleepy the following day'.⁴⁹⁶ On 23 July, 'I went to the Dramatic performance and enjoyed myself Splendid. The play was very good did not Miss a single dance'.⁴⁹⁷ The following day, he 'went to the Dramatic performance danced till 12'.⁴⁹⁸ A dancing class commenced two days later, which he regularly attended.⁴⁹⁹ At the end of July he went dancing after work.⁵⁰⁰ A correspondent recorded that at the first gathering arranged by the Aratapu Debating Society, held in early October, his cornet solo was 'much approved'; he then acted as the

⁴⁹⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 1 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁹¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 12 January, 15, 27 July, 13, 15 October, 6 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁹² Johan Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 21 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁹³ Johan Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 28 January, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁹⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 28 May, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁹⁵ *Marsden Electoral Roll, 1878*, p. 25; Bradley, p. 43.

⁴⁹⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 18, 19 June, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁹⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 23 July, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁹⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 24 July, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁴⁹⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 26 July, 5, 12 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁰⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 30 July, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

clerk of court in a mock hearing.⁵⁰¹ In November, he attended a meeting 'of Variety troupe and was made Treasurer'.⁵⁰²

The first mentions of women were of platonic relationships. He took a Miss Morgan to a meeting of the Band of Hope in early July, and on the first Sunday of August 'Went to church and up tram with Misses Chadwick'.⁵⁰³ There were six of these, the daughters of John, a local storekeeper.⁵⁰⁴ On 23 July he was 'Rather taken by J.O.' at a dance, and the following evening danced with her again 'and got into Hot W with' a male rival.⁵⁰⁵ Early in August he 'took Jennie over to the dance and had pretty good dance'.⁵⁰⁶ The following day, a Sunday, after church he had a 'long chat with Jennie'.⁵⁰⁷ Three days later he 'played draughts with Jennie but She would not come out'.⁵⁰⁸ Clearly an unrecorded tiff had occurred, for later that month 'Jennie refused to go' to a dance, and he recorded being introduced to another young woman.⁵⁰⁹ A week later he visited another.⁵¹⁰ In mid-September, he attended the 'first Christy Minstrels performance had very pleasant dance after performance with the Miss Chadwicks'.⁵¹¹ On the following evening he had 'miserable dance' and got half drunk, and spent

⁵⁰¹ Aratapu Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 5 October 1880. p. 3.

⁵⁰² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 8 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁰³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 6 July, 1 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁰⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 14 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library; Bradley, p. 42; Ryburn, p. 57.

⁵⁰⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 23, 24 July, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁰⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 7 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁰⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 8 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁰⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 11 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁰⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 21 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵¹⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 28 August, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵¹¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 17 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

the next morning 'Moping about'.⁵¹² Five days later, at a 'big' dance he 'danced with the Miss Chadwicks Most of the evening and went home with them'.⁵¹³ Two days later, he 'went up the tram with Miss M and E.C. Chadwick', and on the following Sunday 'went out with the Miss Chadwicks in the afternoon'.⁵¹⁴ The following Saturday, 'Went down to the cricket ground, had game of rounders with the Miss Chadwicks Minnie and I went along the Kopuru road had dance in the evening and enjoied Myself emmense'.⁵¹⁵

Probably he and Jennie Orr renewed their friendship at this dance, for the following day he took her 'up the River round the Island'.⁵¹⁶ Yet five days later he 'went down on the wharf and asked J to go out would not'.⁵¹⁷ The following day, after playing rounders on the cricket field, he 'came home with the Miss Chadwicks'.⁵¹⁸ Two days later, 'Out with J....';⁵¹⁹ did the dots imply something particularly exciting? Certainly their relationship was becoming warmer: the following Saturday he spent the evening with her 'at Pillingers' (one of his misspellings? Mrs Pillington owned a boardinghouse),⁵²⁰ and on Sunday went 'up the tram' with her and another woman.⁵²¹ Two days later, he called at Meadley's boardinghouse and 'escorted Miss Orr Home', where they spent an hour on 'p Ver', presumably

⁵¹² Johan Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 18 September, 19 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵¹³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 24 September, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵¹⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 26 September, 3 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵¹⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 9 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵¹⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 10 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵¹⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 15 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵¹⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 16 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵¹⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 18 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵²⁰ Bradley, p. 43.

⁵²¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 23, 24 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

Pillinger's verandah, and 'got Kxxx from J.O.'⁵²² (Undoubtedly a kiss.) Three days later, a Friday, 'Spent evening at Pillingers with Jennie' and gave her a purse.⁵²³ On Saturday they 'went to entertainment at Te Kopuru', especially notable because 'Jennie and I fell off wharf'.⁵²⁴ On Sunday, after attending church, he went up the tramway with another person 'and Jennie had Lxxx Scim [or so the word appears to be] no tram',⁵²⁵ an elusive entry: Lxxx meaning 'Love'? At the beginning of November, when Meadley visited, he 'let the cat out of the Bag about J and I';⁵²⁶ clearly their flirtation was meant to be a secret, and he spent the following evening with his friend, 'pretty miserable'.⁵²⁷

In mid-November, after an entertainment he danced with Jennie.⁵²⁸ A week later, after dining with a friend, he 'Went down' with her, presumably meaning he took her home.⁵²⁹ The following day, he 'Met J. and went down with her did a good Sp---',⁵³⁰ meaning spoon, a colloquialism for being sentimentally, even foolishly, amorous.⁵³¹ The following evening was spent at 'pils-----', presumably Pillingers, 'with J.O.'⁵³² Two days later, 'Jennie

⁵²² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 26 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵²³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 29 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵²⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 30 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵²⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 31 October, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵²⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 2 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵²⁷ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 3 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵²⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 13 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵²⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 21 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵³⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 22 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵³¹ Partridge, p. 1131.

⁵³² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 23 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

and I went up the Tram in the evening and down on the wharf.⁵³³ The following day, 'Attended the Masked Ball brought Jennie Orr pretty good fun went as a sawyer and in uniform', suggesting he changed his costume during the dance. Before this dance, held on Friday night, he had 'knocked off' work 'at 3 pm went home with my girl to Bed at 3.30 pm',⁵³⁴ which might have been a very intimate encounter but probably was a muddled entry for 3.30 am. The next evening was spent 'on p V Spooky with Jennie Orr', and the following day he 'Came home with Jennie and did good Spoon'.⁵³⁵ Next day, 'Met Jennie coming from Band of hope and walked home with her', and the following day he was "huffing and Spooning" with her.⁵³⁶ 'Huffing' has not been traced in dictionaries of slang, and may be his own shorthand for what happened. One rare definition of 'huff' as used in the late nineteenth century was either buttocks or vagina,⁵³⁷ but this meaning may not have reached the Kaipara, and his diary did not reveal how intimate they became.

On the day he fought a workmate and was dismissed, afterwards he 'walked up tram' with Jennie.⁵³⁸ After making preparations for his departure on the following day, a Saturday, he 'went out with Jennie', and on Sunday 'Met Jennie after church and had good Spoon'.⁵³⁹ On two days he farewelled married women friends, accompanied by Jennie; the second entry simply ended with the word 'huffy'.⁵⁴⁰ Both he and Jennie left Aratapu for Auckland, separately, going out together on his first evening

⁵³³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 25 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵³⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 26 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵³⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 27, 28 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵³⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 29, 30 November, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵³⁷ Green, p. 622.

⁵³⁸ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 3 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵³⁹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 4, 5 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁴⁰ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 6, 7 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

there.⁵⁴¹ On their first full day together there they 'went through the cemetery and out in the evening'.⁵⁴² The next day, 'Went out with Jennie in the evening round by the domain', and on the following, a Saturday, they 'went over to the North Shore. Met Mrs Carr, collected Shells. Went to panorama won picture frame. Walked about queen Street with Jennie'.⁵⁴³ On Sunday, they 'went up Parnell and through the Domain had feed of Strawberries had row with Jennie', after which he walked up Queen Street with a male friend.⁵⁴⁴ The following day, 'Made it up with Jennie and walked round to the cemetery', and the next one was spent 'loafing about'. They went to the theatre, and he 'gave her scarf and broach'.⁵⁴⁵ The next day, the last one before he travelled to Hamilton, he spent the morning 'loafing about' with another male friend. 'Met Jennie after tea and wished her fairwell'.⁵⁴⁶

Through the loss of his subsequent diaries the fading of this increasingly passionate relationship with Jennie Orr cannot be traced. Presumably they kept up contact by letter after he arrived in Te Aroha but they did not marry (nor did she marry anyone else, at least not in New Zealand).⁵⁴⁷ Nor had their spooning and huffing resulted in a baby,⁵⁴⁸ unlike his relationship with Laura Devey. Clearly a lively man with varied interests and very susceptible to the opposite sex, he was to entrance Laura for several years, causing anguish for herself and her family.

Although his stepfather was aware of the possibility of making money from goldmining, in 1868 investing in a discovery at Rangiriri,⁵⁴⁹ Wright

⁵⁴¹ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 8, 15 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁴² John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 16 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁴³ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 17, 18 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁴⁴ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 19 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁴⁵ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entries for 20, 21 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁴⁶ John Waldron Wright, Diary for 1880, entry for 23 December, J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library.

⁵⁴⁷ Index of Marriages to 1920, BDM.

⁵⁴⁸ Index of Births 1881, BDM.

⁵⁴⁹ Hamilton Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 21 November 1868, p. 6.

was not involved with mining before moving to Te Aroha. Four days after taking out a miner's right on 4 January 1881 he purchased a half share in a Tui claim, and a month later bought another; the following month, it was forfeited.⁵⁵⁰ He later acquired interests in one Te Aroha and five Waiorongomai claims.⁵⁵¹ His name headed the list of owners of the Arizona in October, and on their behalf he asked the warden for an extension of time for its surveying, as their surveyor 'has been unable to complete the work on account of Press of business'.⁵⁵² Two weeks later, he was sued for having surplus ground in two Waiorongomai claims and for not working another.⁵⁵³ Whilst he did some mining himself, which he recorded as being his occupation in 1882 and 1884,⁵⁵⁴ he also paid others to work some of his interests, and in 1882 a miner who sued him for £13 in unpaid wages was awarded £7 2s 9d and costs.⁵⁵⁵ When two of the claims were floated as companies, he held scrip shares in them.⁵⁵⁶ Holding 1,250 shares in the Arizona Company in June 1882, by March 1884 he had sold all but 500, which were liable to forfeiture if a call remained unpaid.⁵⁵⁷

Apart from mining in the early 1880s, Wright had a variety of jobs, in 1883 being a storeman.⁵⁵⁸ Four years later, he described himself as a

⁵⁵⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 1661, issued 4 January 1881, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1880-1881, BBAV 11533/1g; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 201, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁵¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folios 6, 8, BBAV 11500/9a; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 267, BBAV 11567/1a; Plaintiff Book 1880-1898, 53-55, 104/1882, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁵² John Waldron Wright to Harry Kenrick, 31 October 1881, and attached lists of shareholders, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Applications for Licensed Holdings and Special Claims 1880-1881, 18/1881, BBAV 11582/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁵³ John Bullock to Harry Kenrick, 14 November 1881; R.N. Blencowe to Harry Kenrick, 17 November 1881 [two letters], Te Aroha Warden's Court, Warden's General Correspondence 1881, BBAV 11584/1b, ANZ-A.

⁵⁵⁴ *New Zealand Gazette*, 13 July 1882, p. 961, 16 November 1882, p. 1733; Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 41 no. 259, ANZ-A; *Waikato Electoral Roll, 1884*, p. 24.

⁵⁵⁵ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaintiff Book 1880-1898, 48/1882, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁵⁶ *New Zealand Gazette*, 13 July 1882, p. 961, 16 November 1882, p. 1733.

⁵⁵⁷ *New Zealand Gazette*, 13 July 1882, p. 961; Public Notice, *Te Aroha News*, 29 March 1884, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁸ Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Civil Record Book 1881-1884, 47/1883, BCDG 11221/1a; Plaintiff Book 1881-1894, 47/1883, BCDG 11224/1a, ANZ-A.

surveyor.⁵⁵⁹ Also in 1887, he successfully applied for a timber license.⁵⁶⁰ In 1882 he joined the provisional committee of the brass band.⁵⁶¹ The only mention of his involvement with sport was in 1886, when he was an easy winner in a 200-yard swimming race held during the Te Aroha regatta.⁵⁶² The following year he won a diving match at the Hamilton swimming sports by staying underwater the longest.⁵⁶³

On the night of their delayed marriage, their son Lorrinor was born.⁵⁶⁴ His name possibly reflected her mother's; the dictionary defines loriner as an historic name for a 'bit-maker, spurrier',⁵⁶⁵ an unlikely reason for choosing this name. According to his later account, Wright immediately left Laura and her baby. 'I sent my wife £10 or £15 when I went away. I went to Dargaville. I never returned to Te Aroha. For 7 or 8 months I got a letter now & again from my wife. They have all been burned. I answered them. I wrote last & got no answer'.⁵⁶⁶

In August 1890, Laura registered the birth at Te Aroha of a daughter, Ida.⁵⁶⁷ According to her father, after being deserted for three years she had met Wright again, clearly not at Te Aroha, 'and lived with him for two days and again became pregnant'.⁵⁶⁸ Ida died from measles, aged three, in August 1893, after an illness lasting a week. It seems Laura was not present at her death, for her mother signed the death certificate and recorded her presence at it.⁵⁶⁹ The death notice, published in Auckland over a week later, implied that Laura was living with Wright at Kawakawa, and referred to Ida as their 'only daughter'. Ida was recorded as the granddaughter of George and Ann Maria, who probably placed the notice in

⁵⁵⁹ *Tauranga Electoral Roll, 1887*, p. 27.

⁵⁶⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1883-1900, 18/1887, BBAV 11505/1a; Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 26 March 1887, p. 3.

⁵⁶¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 29 March 1882, p. 3.

⁵⁶² *Te Aroha News*, 13 November 1886, p. 2.

⁵⁶³ *Waikato Times*, 1 February 1887, p. 2.

⁵⁶⁴ Birth Certificate of Lorrinor Wright, 11 May 1889, 1889/18858, BDM; for this being a boy's name, see Death Certificate of Laura Milnes, 25 August 1903, 1903/5016, BDM.

⁵⁶⁵ *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 5 ed. (Oxford, 1965), p. 722.

⁵⁶⁶ Supreme Court, Judge's Notebooks, Conolly J, Divorce and Matrimonial 1889-1900, p. 198, BBAE A304/118, ANZ-A.

⁵⁶⁷ Birth Certificate of Ida Wright, 14 August 1890, 1890/9728, BDM.

⁵⁶⁸ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1893-1896, folio 185, YCAA 1048/6, ANZ-A.

⁵⁶⁹ Death Certificate of Ida Wright, 21 August 1893, 1893/3495, BDM.

the press, for the last sentence of the notice reflected their faith: 'Not died but gone before'.⁵⁷⁰

As Laura's mental condition was fragile, it seems likely that Ann Devey looked after both her children; she certainly brought up Lorrinor.⁵⁷¹ In December 1893, three months after her second child died, Laura was re-admitted to the asylum, having suffered for a month and a half from 'Melancholic Stupor' caused by 'domestic trouble'.⁵⁷² She was recorded as being suicidal and dangerous to others. Two doctors noted that she had been 'very low spirited and melancholy for some time, that she sometimes gets so violent that she has to be strapped down to prevent injury to herself and others that she is quite uncontrollable and uses bad language'. Her father explained that, 'having been melancholy since her husband's desertion of her [she] became much worse' after Ida's death 'and eventually violent'.⁵⁷³ In the ward, she was hysterical, taciturn, clenched her teeth, and had a tendency to take her clothes off; because of irregular sleep and eating she was thin and weak, with a blistered neck. One month later, although an abscess in her mouth had been cured she continued to be lethargic and had slight attacks of catalepsy. By mid-June, she appeared 'completely recovered', was 'now wanting out of the Asylum', and was released on trial into her parents' care later in that month.⁵⁷⁴ She was supposed to return in late September but did not, but was discharged as recovered in early October.⁵⁷⁵ Both her mother and Wright contributed to her maintenance at the asylum, the former paying £1 a week to a total of £8, and Wright 5s a week; Wright's payments ceased after 2 May 1894, by which time he had paid £5, and his debt of £1 18s 7d was written off.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁰ Death Notice, *New Zealand Herald*, 1 September 1893, p. 1.

⁵⁷¹ Supreme Court, Judge's Notebooks, Conolly J, Divorce and Matrimonial 1889-1900, p. 227, BBAE A304/118, ANZ-A; Te Aroha School, Class List for November 1894, YCAF 4135/41a, p. 105.

⁵⁷² Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1927, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A.

⁵⁷³ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1893-1896, folio 185, YCAA 1048/6, ANZ-A.

⁵⁷⁴ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1893-1896, folio 185, YCAA 1048/6, ANZ-A.

⁵⁷⁵ Avondale Asylum, Register of Patients Absent on Trial 1879-1918, no. 1927, YCAA 1024/1; Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 1927, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A.

⁵⁷⁶ Avondale Asylum, Maintenance Payment Register 1885-1899, folios 50, 181, YCAA 1045/1, ANZ-A.

After leaving Te Aroha, Wright lived at Dargaville, and was at Kawakawa in 1893.⁵⁷⁷ From August 1896 until at least the following March, he assisted his stepfather survey claims at Thames.⁵⁷⁸ Clearly they had kept in touch after Wright left Hamilton, and it must be assumed that they met when Beere used the Te Aroha baths for his health in 1885.⁵⁷⁹ In July 1898, when an ‘up-country’ storekeeper at Paro-o-taroa, the settlement south of Te Kuiti at the tunnel being driven on the main trunk railway line,⁵⁸⁰ he sought a divorce, claiming that on the night of his marriage ‘the respondent gave birth to a child Laurenor’, as he wrote his name, ‘which was not the child of your Petitioner and your petitioner thereupon separated and ceased to live with the Respondent’. He gave no reason why the birth should have come as a surprise. After declaring that Laura had married George Milnes on 27 August 1896, making her a bigamist, he proceeded to blacken her character. ‘At various times since your petitioner separated from his wife’ she ‘committed adultery with persons unknown to your petitioner’.⁵⁸¹ In September, when filing a citation to require Laura to attend the court, he omitted the latter charge, restricting himself to charging her with committing adultery with Milnes through marrying him.⁵⁸²

As noted, the *Observer*, which did not name the parties involved, was amused by his case:

He was wedded at two o’clock in the afternoon, and at ten o’clock that night his bride presented him with a pledge of his own, or somebody else’s, affection. He thought it rather hard that he should be plunged into family responsibilities even before the

⁵⁷⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 22 December 1888, p. 7, 18 May 1889, p. 2; Death Notice, *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 September 1893, p. 1.

⁵⁷⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 21 March 1896, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁹ For Beere’s ill health and use of the baths, see *Waikato Times*, 7 June 1883, p. 2, 24 March 1885, p. 2, 28 April 1885, p. 2, 18 June 1885, p. 2, 6 August 1885, p. 3.

⁵⁸⁰ See *Wanganui Herald*, 13 December 1887, p. 2; *Auckland Star*, 10 October 1892, p. 3; *Observer*, 29 October 1898, p. 5; *Waikato Times*, 13 October 1902, p. 2.

⁵⁸¹ Supreme Court, Divorce Files, Affidavit by J.W. Wright, 30 July 1898, BBAE A48, D97/1898, ANZ-A.

⁵⁸² Supreme Court, Divorce Files, Citation requiring Laura Wright to attend Court, 17 September 1898, BBAE A48, D97/1898, ANZ-A.

honeymoon, and more especially as he had only known the lady five months.⁵⁸³

Laura neither contested his account of their wedding and its aftermath nor opposed the divorce. In February 1899, when he cited Milnes as co-respondent, he was the only witness,⁵⁸⁴ neither Laura nor Milnes being present:

I was married to respt 10 May 1889 at Te Aroha. The night we were married a child was born. I left home next day. I knew the child could not be mine. We had been intimate about five months. It was a mature child. I have not seen my wife since. When I say I left home, I left my wife's mother's home, where we were stopping. Have not seen Milnes, I used to know him years ago.

Questioned by the judge, he stated that he had never returned to Te Aroha, and that he had sent either £10 or £15 and had replied to a few of her letters. 'I knew she was pregnant when I married her. Did not think she was so far gone. She has never applied to me for support'. The case was adjourned until June,⁵⁸⁵ when once again neither respondent nor co-respondent attended. Under questioning from his counsel, Wright stated that he had seen Milnes on 26 February, four days after the previous hearing:

I told him I wished to see my wife. He told me he did not wish me to see her. I asked him if he was married to her, he sd he was. I asked him if he had any children registered in their names. He sd he had a child. I showed him a copy certif of birth. This is it. (Put in) He said it was correct. I showed him certif of marriage (put in). He said that was correct. He did not deny it. I again asked to see her. He objected. I did not see her. I then came to Auckland & searched register of marriages, and compared it. I saw signature Laura Devey in the book. That was the woman I married. I knew her handwriting. On Monday 15 June I went to Waitekauri with a witness, Robert Cannell, who is here. He knew my wife before I was married and was present at my marriage. I pointed co-respts house out to him. He went to the house and came back. Then I went to the house. I knocked at the door. Milnes came out. I

⁵⁸³ *Observer*, 29 October 1898, p. 5.

⁵⁸⁴ Supreme Court, Divorce Minute Book 1869-1908, p. 138, BBAE 5636/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁸⁵ Supreme Court, Judges' Notebooks, Conolly J, Divorce and Matrimonial 1889-1900, p. 198, BBAE A304/118, ANZ-A.

asked to see my wife. I saw her. I asked her if she was married to George Milnes. She sd she was. I asked if she had any chn by Milnes registd in their name. She sd she had. She had a child in her arms. I asked her if she remembered marrying me in Te Aroha. She sd she did. I asked Milnes if he admitted that what she said was correct. He sd it was. I then left them. They are known as Mr & Mrs Milnes in Waitekauri.⁵⁸⁶

Robert Kelly Cannell, formerly a blacksmith at Waiorongomai but then at Waihi,⁵⁸⁷ was the only other person to give evidence. He confirmed that he knew Wright ‘well’ and had been present at his wedding, and also confirmed visiting Laura’s house at Waitekauri. He went inside with her, and waited until Milnes

came home very shortly after. I did not tell her what I had come about until he came. I saw a little child a few months old. She took it & nursed it. I asked him if he was married to Laura Wright formerly Laura Devey. She was not present when I asked this. He said “yes I am.” I asked him if he had any children registered in their names. He sd yes. I sd Wright was down the road if they wanted to see him. Respondent must have heard the conversation. She is generally called Mrs Milnes.

After Wright told the judge that Laura’s mother was rearing Lorrinor and that he had ‘never been asked to support it’, a decree nisi was granted.⁵⁸⁸ Wright’s counsel ‘said the woman had made a mistake believing she could re-marry, and he did not apply for costs’, but successfully asked for the decree absolute to be made three months after the decree nisi instead of after the longer period required under earlier legislation.⁵⁸⁹

In July 1908, when he was a sawyer living at Stratford, Wright, a widower since Laura’s death in 1903, at the age of 52 (he recorded it as

⁵⁸⁶ Supreme Court, Judges’ Notebooks, Conolly J, Divorce and Matrimonial 1889-1900, pp. 225-226, BBAE A304/118, ANZ-A.

⁵⁸⁷ For his career at Waiorongomai and Te Aroha, see *Thames Star*, 15 January 1881, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 5 May 1888, p. 2, 18 August 1888, p. 2, 16 January 1889, p. 2; Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 21 May 1892, p. 22; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 6 August 1892, p. 8.

⁵⁸⁸ Supreme Court, Judge’s Notebooks, Conolly J, Divorce and Matrimonial 1889-1900, pp. 226-227, BBAE A304/118; Divorce Minute Book 1869-1908, p. 143, BBAE 5636/1a, ANZ-A.

⁵⁸⁹ Divorce Court, *Auckland Star*, 19 June 1899, p. 5.

being 51) married Alice Mary Mantle, 28, the daughter of a 'settler'.⁵⁹⁰ There was no need for haste on this occasion, as Alice was not pregnant. They would have three daughters and a son.⁵⁹¹ Most of the rest of his life was spent working in the timber industry at Kakahi, near Taumarunui.⁵⁹² In 1931, he committed suicide 'by hanging whilst in a state of unsound mind', in the coroner's opinion.⁵⁹³ At the inquest, his wife explained that she had found him hanging from a rafter in the kitchen in the early afternoon. She had not seen him since the previous evening,

when he was at tea with his family. My husband has been in the habit of sleeping in the house we used to occupy before I took the Shop, as he objected to the noise of the Shop, but there was no separation or disagreement between us. During the past 12 months my Husband has suffered from Insomnia and been very depressed, He also worried greatly over Finance apparently being afraid that his Capital would not last long.⁵⁹⁴

A storekeeper confirmed that he had suffered from insomnia and had been worried about his financial position. During their discussions 'it was quite apparent to me that his worry brought him almost to a point of insanity. He has at times stated that he was afraid his health would get so low that he might do away with himself'.⁵⁹⁵ Wright's second daughter confirmed that he worried about his finances 'to the extent as would almost make him insane on the matter. He was very frail and suffered from Insomnia. I have never heard him say that he intended to do away with

⁵⁹⁰ Marriage Certificate of John Waldron Wright, 23 July 1908, 1908/6297, BDM.

⁵⁹¹ Death Certificate of John Waldron Wright, 13 April 1931, 1931/3079, BDM.

⁵⁹² Annotated photographs of John Waldron Wright in militia uniform, n.d., and of his son John Waldron Norton Wright on his wedding day, n.d., J.W. Wright Papers, MSC 14, Hamilton Public Library; Death Certificate of John Waldron Wright, 13 April 1931, 1931/3079, BDM.

⁵⁹³ Death Certificate of John Waldron Wright, 13 April 1931, 1931/3079, BDM.

⁵⁹⁴ Evidence of Alice Mary Wright, Inquest, Justice Department, J 46 COR, 1931/485, ANZ-W.

⁵⁹⁵ Evidence of Herbert Leopold Pratt, Inquest, Justice Department, J 46 COR, 1931/485, ANZ-W.

himself but has at times made some queer statements such as you would be better off without me'.⁵⁹⁶

As Wright had discovered, Laura had met George Milnes, had children by him, and had married him, bigamously. Milnes had been born in Birmingham to George, a bootmaker, and Esther, née Coade or Cope.⁵⁹⁷ In January 1866, when aged six, he arrived in Auckland from Wednesbury in Staffordshire with his parents, two elder brothers, and two younger sisters.⁵⁹⁸ In 1876, when aged 17, he was at Thames, where he joined the Hauraki Rifle Volunteers.⁵⁹⁹ At the inaugural reunion of the Waihi Old Boys' Association in 1931, when he responded to the toast to the pioneers, he dated his arrival in Waihi, to cut timber, at about 1881.⁶⁰⁰ In 1882, with another miner he briefly owned a Thames claim, selling his half interest to his partner after three months.⁶⁰¹ Three years later, he was one of two owners of another, which was abandoned after two months.⁶⁰² He was first involved in mining at Waiorongomai in August 1883, when he purchased a half share in the Commercial, which became 500 scrip shares when it was floated as a company.⁶⁰³ After mining declined there, he mined at Thames once more in the late 1880s and early 1890s, living with his brothers Edward James, a tailor, and Thomas William, a shoemaker.⁶⁰⁴ He then mined at Karangahake, Waihi, and finally, in 1898, at Golden Cross, at the head of the Waitekauri valley.⁶⁰⁵

⁵⁹⁶ Evidence of Anne Moana Clewlynn Wright, Inquest, Justice Department, J 46 COR, 1931/485, ANZ-W.

⁵⁹⁷ Marriage Certificate of George Milnes, 27 August 1896, 1896/1693; Death Certificate of George Milnes, 16 May 1939, 1939/27960, BDM.

⁵⁹⁸ Register of Nominated Immigrants 1859-1872, pp. 105-106, AREPRO 4711/448, ANZ-A.

⁵⁹⁹ No. 3 Coy Hauraki Rifle Volunteers, Nominal Roll as at 31 March 1877, Army Department, ARM 41, 1878/1v, ANZ-W.

⁶⁰⁰ *Waihi Daily Telegraph*, 27 October 1931, p. 2.

⁶⁰¹ Thames Warden's Court, Register of Claims 1882-1884, no. 1056, BACL 14397/14a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁰² Thames Warden's Court, Register of Claims 1884-1886, no. 1392, BACL 14397/15a, ANZ-A.

⁶⁰³ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 143, BBAV 11500/9a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 4 October 1883, p. 1518.

⁶⁰⁴ *Thames Electoral Roll, 1887*, p. 16; *Te Aroha Electoral Roll, 1891*, p. 23.

⁶⁰⁵ Paeroa Warden's Court, Register of Miners' Rights 1893-1898, issued on 16 May 1893, 15 August 1898, ZAAP 13786/1a; Register of Licenses 1892-1895, folio 116, ZAAP

When he married Laura in August 1896, he was aged 37 and she was 29.⁶⁰⁶ Their first child, Ann, was born at Te Aroha in January 1897. The birth certificate recorded, vaguely, that they had been married in Auckland in 'March 1896'.⁶⁰⁷ No marriage had taken place than; instead, in late August, at the registrar's office in Auckland, presumably chosen for discretion, they were married, Laura giving her surname as Devey and her status as spinster.⁶⁰⁸ According to a newspaper report published at the time of her divorce, Laura believed 'that after seven years' separation she could re-marry'.⁶⁰⁹ (She would not be charged with bigamy.) Sarah Eliza was born, also at Te Aroha, in November 1898, in the presence of her grandmother, who presumably was the midwife.⁶¹⁰ Edward George Thomas was born in August 1900, when Milnes was mining at Golden Cross.⁶¹¹ Their last child, Caroline Ester, was born at Te Aroha, in December 1901, by which time they were living at Waitekauri.⁶¹² The children were baptized as Anglicans.⁶¹³

Three weeks after bearing her first child to Milnes, Laura returned to the asylum suffering from acute mania caused by childbirth, the attack lasting one month. 'Rather weak health and thin condition'.⁶¹⁴ A doctor recorded that she would not speak. 'Her husband states that she was much affected by the loss of her Uncle [Jess] at Xmas from Cancer, & declares she has seen both him & her husband's Father in heaven, dead 30 yrs ago'. Her 'foolish remarks', made one month before giving birth, were seen as signs of

13296/1b; plan of residence site at Waitekauri applied for by George Milnes, application 551/98, received 3 September 1898, Mining Maps, YCBW 1711/381, ANZ-A; Marriage Certificate of George Milnes, 27 August 1896, 1896/1693, BDM.

⁶⁰⁶ Marriage Certificate of George Milnes and Laura Devey, 27 August 1896, 1896/1693, BDM.

⁶⁰⁷ Birth Certificate of Ann Milnes, 2 January 1897, 1897/816, BDM.

⁶⁰⁸ Notices of Intentions to Marry 1896, folio 15 no. 416, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 20/43, ANZ-W; Marriage Certificate of George Milnes and Laura Devey, 27 August 1896, 1896/1693, BDM.

⁶⁰⁹ Divorce Court, *Waikato Argus*, 20 June 1899, p. 2.

⁶¹⁰ Birth Certificate of Sarah Eliza Milnes, 27 November 1898, 1899/14249, BDM.

⁶¹¹ Birth Certificate of Edward George Thomas Milnes, 15 August 1900, 1900/18984, BDM.

⁶¹² Birth Certificate of Caroline Ester Milnes, 12 December 1901, 1902/1408, BDM.

⁶¹³ Waihi Register of Baptisms 1900-1916, nos. 57-59, Anglican Diocesan Archives, Hamilton.

⁶¹⁴ Avondale Asylum, Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 2190, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A.

derangement, and a week before her confinement she had become so violent that she had to be strapped to the bed. After giving birth to a healthy child, she became worse, her father reporting that she had been ‘tearing & breaking furniture & clothes & spitting in people’s faces & refusing to take her food’. This doctor considered her dangerous to property but not to people nor suicidal. A second doctor described her as ‘restless, fidgeting about, talking or whistling, conversation impossible – quite incoherent – all appearance of mental exaltation such as is common in puerperal mania’, meaning mania caused by giving birth. Milnes stated that she had

a comparatively easy labour, but at the same time she was very excited. Since then she has hardly slept at all. Very restless – had to be watched & restrained – sometimes violent – pulls her clothes off – talks and whistles. He is her second husband & her believes she was in the Auckland Lunatic Asylum under similar circumstances two years ago.⁶¹⁵

She had uterine ulceration ‘after confinement’. Described as a ‘short thin dark little woman’ with a ‘melancholy expression’, she was so restless and destructive that initially she was confined in a canvas dress. ‘Never laughs or smiles’. After being sleepless and noisy at night, by mid-April there were signs of improvement, for although still ‘restless and maniacal’, she was ‘able to scrub & do needlework’. Early in May, she was ‘quieter. Works very well. Eats and sleeps well’. By the end of that month, she was an ‘exceedingly good worker. Very cheerful’.⁶¹⁶ She was released on trial into Milnes’ care in mid-July, six months after being admitted, and discharged as recovered at the end of October.⁶¹⁷

As Laura was never re-admitted to the asylum and had three more children by Milnes, their marriage seems to have been a happy one. It ended in early August 1903, after they had lived in the Waitekauri district for six years, when a Karangahake correspondent reported a ‘very nasty burning accident out at Golden Cross’. After her clothes caught fire, her back from her loins upward ‘was very severely burned’; she was doing ‘as well as can be expected’.⁶¹⁸ One day later, a Waihi correspondent reported

⁶¹⁵ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1896-1898, folio 93, YCAA 1048/7, ANZ-A.

⁶¹⁶ Avondale Asylum, Case Book 1896-1898, folio 93, YCAA 1048/7, ANZ-A.

⁶¹⁷ Avondale Asylum, Register of Patients Absent on Trial 1879-1918, no. 2190, YCAA 1024/1; Register of Admissions 1885-1896, no. 2190, YCAA 1021/2, ANZ-A.

⁶¹⁸ Karangahake Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 12 August 1903, p. 4.

that she had 'very serious burns on the back, chest, and arms. At present she is in a very critical condition'.⁶¹⁹ After 15 days in the Waihi hospital, she died.⁶²⁰ The inquest was told by a hospital doctor that, when admitted, she had 'severe burns which covered the whole of her back from her neck down to below her waist, her face sides and both arms. Internal inflammation was set up, with severe vomiting and peritonitis', and death resulted from exhaustion and shock.⁶²¹ A correspondent wrote that her 'sufferings were very great, but up till within a day or two of her death hopes for her ultimate recovery had been entertained'. After her funeral, held in her father's house, she was buried in the Te Aroha cemetery.⁶²²

At the time of the accident, Milnes was mining either half a mile or a mile from his house. When he reached home after being told of the accident,

he found everything had been done to allay his wife's sufferings from the burns, and that the doctor had been sent for. The accident occurred while deceased was whitening the fire place, one sleeve on her dress catching fire. The flame spread, and unable to put it out she rushed outside and endeavoured to get into a small creek just by, but there was not sufficient water in it, and she then ran on to deeper water. By this time several neighbours appeared on the scene, who rendered all possible assistance.

A man and a woman 'took her out of the creek. My wife told me that it was an accident'. In evidence not included in the press report, he added that Laura 'was in her right state of mind at the time of the accident. She was not always in her right state of mind. She has been an inmate of the Avondale Asylum on two occasions. She was only out of her mind during pregnancy'; clearly he had not been told about her first admittance. The coroner ruled that she 'died from the effects of accidental burns'.⁶²³ Aged only 36, she left a 14-year-old son from her first marriage, a three-year-old son from her second, and daughters aged six, four, and one.⁶²⁴

⁶¹⁹ Waihi Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 13 August 1903, p. 4.

⁶²⁰ Waihi Hospital, Register of Patients 1903-1910, folio 2, no. 30, ZABW 4935/1a, ANZ-A.

⁶²¹ Evidence of Dr W.G. Guinen, Inquest, Justice Department, J 46 COR, 1903/767, ANZ-W.

⁶²² Waihi Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 28 August 1903, p. 1.

⁶²³ Evidence of George Milnes, Inquest, Justice Department, J 46 COR, 1903/767, ANZ-W; Waihi Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 28 August 1903, p. 4.

⁶²⁴ Death Certificate of Laura Milnes, 25 August 1903, 1903/5016, BDM.

One of the saddest aspects of a terrible death was that all Laura's children apart from Lorrinor were with her when her dress caught fire.⁶²⁵ Her eldest daughter's account was published almost 70 years later:

There were three girls and a boy in our family and a terrible tragedy befell when our Mother was burned to death. I was about 7 years old at the time and along with my sister and brother was sent to the Parnell Orphanage. Auntie Sarah Coutts at Thames took the baby, but we were always proud of the fact that our father never failed to contribute to our keep.⁶²⁶

Clearly her father could not cope with rearing four young children whilst working to support them. Nearly two months after her death, all the children apart from Caroline ('the baby') were admitted to the Parnell Orphan Home; Caroline was admitted when aged 7.⁶²⁷ In 1908, Ann was taken from her home by her aunt, Caroline Murray, and lived with her grandparents and attended the Te Aroha school. Her grandfather had become her guardian.⁶²⁸ A clergyman at Kohukohu took Edward in December 1914 and Caroline in January 1916, and Sarah went to live with her father in December 1913.⁶²⁹ Ann continued to live in Te Aroha, probably with her grandfather, being married there in 1919, when her sister Sarah was living there also.⁶³⁰ At the beginning of 1924, the youngest daughter, Caroline, known as Carrie, was Devey's housekeeper. She was nearly drowned in the river when swimming with three other Girl Guides, being unconscious when pulled ashore.⁶³¹

⁶²⁵ Evidence of George Milnes, Inquest, Justice Department, J 46 COR, 1903/767, ANZ-W.

⁶²⁶ Ann Jamieson, 'Waitekauri to Paeroa', *Ohinemuri Regional History Journal*, no. 16 (June 1972), p. 21.

⁶²⁷ Parnell Orphan Home, Admission Index 1862-1920s, entries under children's names, Anglican Archives, Auckland.

⁶²⁸ Parnell Orphan Home, Admission Index 1862-1920s, Anglican Archives, Auckland; Te Aroha School, Admissions Register no. 4 (1904-1918), no. 2188, Primary School Archives, Te Aroha; Jamieson, p. 21.

⁶²⁹ Parnell Orphan Home, Admission Index 1862-1920s, entries under children's names, Anglican Archives, Auckland.

⁶³⁰ St George's Church of England, Thames, Marriage Register 1915-1920, no. 40, St George's Church Archives, Thames.

⁶³¹ *Te Aroha News*, 8 February 1924, p. 1.

Possibly Milnes was the George Milnes who pleaded guilty to being drunk in an Auckland street in September 1909.⁶³² In February 1910, he was admitted to Thames hospital for a reason not recorded in the surviving records, and was not discharged until a month later. Although then employed in the Golden Hills mine near Tairua, fees amounting to £3 15s were never paid.⁶³³ On 5 April, he was again admitted, and not discharged until 1 June. His address was care of ‘Ted’ Milnes, his brother Edward James, who was still working as a tailor in Thames,⁶³⁴ and when discharged he promised to arrange to pay the £8 14s ‘when gets employment’. Despite being prompted, he never paid, presumably because of his financial state.⁶³⁵ After living for 15 years at Waitekauri, in 1916 he moved to Waihi, where in 1920 he was hospitalized with lumbago but was soon discharged cured.⁶³⁶

Milnes remained at Waihi until 1939, dying aged 81 of broncho-pneumonia, having had bronchitis for years, possibly a legacy of mining.⁶³⁷ The Waihi newspaper wrote that he had a ‘large number of acquaintances’, and during his long residence ‘took an active part in school matters, and served several times as a member of different Waihi High School Committees. He was also an enthusiastic supporter and helper of the Waihi Federal Band’, During the Great War he had done ‘patriotic’ work, ‘and although his wage-earnings were small, many of his closest friends were aware that genial old George (“Major”) was giving more than a fair share towards helping the boys at the front’. He would be buried at Te Aroha with his wife,⁶³⁸ who had predeceased him by 36 years.

CONCLUSION

With one partial exception, members of this respectable Methodist family had good lives and all experienced the joys of parentage. All, whether

⁶³² Auckland Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1909, folio 239, BADW 10254/61a, ANZ-A.

⁶³³ Thames Hospital, Fees Register 1907-1910, entry for 11 February 1910, YCAH A431/74, ANZ-A.

⁶³⁴ *Thames Electoral Roll, 1911*, p. 81.

⁶³⁵ Thames Hospital, Fees Register 1910-1910, entry for 5 April 1910, YCAH A431/73, ANZ-A.

⁶³⁶ Waihi Hospital, Register of Patients 1919-1922, no. 81 of 1920, ZABW 4935/1d, ANZ-A.

⁶³⁷ Death Certificate of George Milnes, 16 May 1939, 1939/27960, BDM.

⁶³⁸ *Waihi Daily Telegraph*, 17 May 1939, p. 3.

male or female, were hard working, some becoming more prosperous than others but none being poverty-stricken. How happy their lives were is not easy to estimate, but in the case of Laura it is clear that ‘disappointment in love’ led to several years of emotional torment. Only in her latter years, when married to her second husband, could she be said to be happy, but that happiness was cut short in a dreadful fashion. The experiences of this family and its in-laws reveal a great deal about the texture of ordinary life at that time.

Appendix

Figure 1: George Devey’s workshop, n.d. (1880s), Te Aroha and District Museum; used with permission.

