

TE AROHA: 1882 TO 1889

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Abstract: *Despite a dip in mid-decade, the population of Te Aroha steadily increased as mining continued, farms were developed, and the tourist trade commenced. Businessmen set up shop because of the high expectations held for the district, and the township became lively both commercially and socially.*

Its development in these years is covered partly chronologically and partly thematically. The increasing numbers of tourists visiting the hot baths, especially after the arrival of the railway, encouraged the erection of excellent hotels and boardinghouses. Although they enjoyed the scenery and the baths, they, like the locals, had to cope with badly maintained roads and footpaths, roaming animals (notably pigs), and occasional gales and fires. But a bridge replaced the punts, and local government in the form of the domain board and the town board gradually addressed the community's needs, although grumbles continued about the tenure of town sections. And the town was well supplied with newspapers.

An active social life was assisted by the erection of a library and a public hall, the latter being used for a wide variety of entertainments provided by both residents and visitors. Dances, 'rinking', and sports were popular, and strengthened a sense of community in this young township.

WHERE TO SITE THE TOWNSHIP

The government originally intended to site Te Aroha township on the western side of the Waihou River. Although the 1880 rush meant that the Te Aroha Goldfields township was established on the eastern side to avoid miners having to cross the river, the original intention remained, as the Gold Fields Secretary wrote in May 1882:

(1) Government had determined to lay out Township on the other side of the River in connection with a Railway Station, etc. This involves a certain amount of drainage and a good deal of necessary delay in survey etc. The Township will when laid out be taken up as the only Freehold Town Land and be occupied by business men for stores merchants offices etc and further back by suburban Residences etc.

(2) The present Township on Maori Land will continue to be Leasehold - will be mainly a goldfield Township where business connected with mining - Wardens Court etc would naturally be conducted and besides this there will be one or two good Hotels

which will depend on the Hot Springs. These are really very valuable and likely to be very attractive. For a small sum a few bathing Houses with self-gravitating baths can be put up and supply of cold water laid on.

‘The present Township must continue’ because it would ‘be of increasing importance’ as it extended towards Waiorongomai.¹ And no township was laid out on the western side of the river, which in time became a suburb of Te Aroha.

POPULATION

In March 1882 there were 300 residents, with more arriving each week.² By February 1883 this had dropped to about 200, but by August the population was increasing each week.³ Four months later, it was ‘fast increasing’, people arriving ‘from all parts of the peninsula’.⁴ In March 1884 a visitor noted nearly 500.⁵

The June 1884 electoral roll listed 107 males, well below the total number; the postmaster, for instance, was not included. By far the largest occupation was mining: there were 26 miners,⁶ one mining engineer, one mine manager, and the mining inspector. Those involved in retail trade comprised two bakers, one grocer, two auctioneers, one storeman, a timber merchant, two chemists, two butchers, three bootmakers and one shoemaker, a tinsmith, an ironmonger, and six storekeepers, unspecified. There were four hotelkeepers, one boarding house keepers, two barmen, and a cook. The building trade comprised two builders, three carpenters, one cabinetmaker, two painters, a bricklayer, an architect, and a timber

¹ Secretary, Gold Fields, to Frederick Whitaker, 16 May 1882, Mines Department, MD 1, 6/14, Part 2, ANZ-W.

² *Thames Advertiser*, 31 March 1882, p. 3.

³ Special Reporter, ‘A Trip to Te Aroha’, *Thames Star*, 14 February 1883, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 18 August 1883, p. 2.

⁴ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 8 December 1883, p. 20.

⁵ Michael Landers, ‘A Trip to Te Aroha and Ohinemuri’, *Freeman’s Journal*, 28 March 1884, p. 13.

⁶ William Clotworthy described himself as ‘settler’, which he may have considered more refined, but he recorded himself as a miner when working at Waihi in the same year: *Tauranga Electoral Roll, 1884*, p. 6.

merchant; the seven contractors would have had some of these skills as well. Transportation required one coach proprietor, one livery stable keeper, an ostler, and three carters. Other skilled tradesmen comprised an upholsterer, a blacksmith, a cordial maker and a surveyor. The white-collar workers were three agents, two clerks, a solicitor, an interpreter, a journalist, a bookkeeper, a schoolteacher, and an inspector of public works. There were three farmers and four settlers, which implied being a farmer. Herbert Cyril Randolph, who had no occupation, may have been a remittance man.⁷ There was also a bellman and a musician.⁸

According to the March 1886 census, the population of Te Aroha Riding, which included Waiorongomai and other areas close to Te Aroha, comprised 667 men and 536 women, including ten half-castes, two Chinese, and one Maori wife,⁹ Ema Lipsey.¹⁰ In the following March, this riding had 340 ratepayers, the rateable value of their property being £88,864.¹¹ The electoral roll published three months later listed 146 male residents, far fewer than the total number. The largest occupation was still mining, with 33 miners, one mine manager, and the mining inspector. In addition to the four storekeepers there were five butchers, two bakers, a hairdresser, three bootmakers and one shoemaker, a saddler, three blacksmiths, an upholsterer, a grocer, a storeman, a tinsmith, a draper, a chemist, a bank agent, and an undertaker. There were three contractors and four labourers. Those connected with the building industry were an architect, three builders, nine carpenters, a timber merchant, a bushman, a joiner, two surveyors, two painters, and two bricklayers. The tourist trade was the primary reason for the five hotelkeepers, four waiters, two barmen, a cook, and, possibly, a musician. Transportation required two coach proprietors, a livery stable proprietor, three carters, an engine driver, an engine cleaner, and two platelayers. There were four farmers, a farm servant, five settlers, and a gardener. Other skilled trades were a printer, a boat builder, and an engineer. White-collar workers comprised two agents, a medical practitioner, a clerk, a bookkeeper, an interpreter, a journalist, two clergymen, a police sergeant, a bailiff, two teachers, and the inspector of

⁷ See paper of social relations and class divisions in the Te Aroha district.

⁸ *Waikato Electoral Roll, June 1884*.

⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 22 May 1886, p. 2.

¹⁰ See paper on George and Ema Lipsey.

¹¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 23 March 1887, p. 2.

public works. The bellman, James Gerrish,¹² was in a category all of his own, and the sole ‘gentleman’ likewise.¹³ In December, John McCombie, miner and journalist,¹⁴ estimated the Pakeha population to be nearly ‘500 souls’.¹⁵

1882

In January 1882, a Thames versifier known only as ‘J’ published a poem entitled ‘Te Aroha’ which anticipated a glorious future:

Beneath thy shadow, near the river’s side
A village stands, but where in future years,
Will rise a busy city, stretching wide,
With bank and warehouse built along the piers.

Thousands may congregate where now the few,
Commerce shall grow, and fortunes vast be made.
Railways on every hand, appear in view,
Gold, wood and wheat, contributing to trade.¹⁶

A visitor agreed: ‘In view of the agricultural, as well as the mining resources of the district’, there was ‘every probability of Te Aroha being, at no distant date, reckoned among the New Zealand cities of the North’.¹⁷

During the year, visitors commented positively on developments. In January one reported that ‘during the last few months’ it had ‘assumed a more cheerful appearance than formerly’.¹⁸ In April a passenger on the maiden trip of the river steamer ‘Miranda’ described its night-time arrival at the upper landing:

Before effecting a landing on the bank of the river, we were hailed from the shore by a voice asking if we had brought any timber.

¹² See paper on his life.

¹³ *Tauranga Electoral Roll, 1887, and Supplementary Roll.*

¹⁴ See paper on Billy Nicholl.

¹⁵ ‘Aboriginal’ [John McCombie], ‘On the Wallaby’, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 December 1887, p. 3.

¹⁶ J., ‘Te Aroha’, *Thames Advertiser*, 21 January 1882, p. 3.

¹⁷ A.L., ‘The Te Aroha Goldfield’, *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 October 1882, p. 20; see also A.L., ‘The Te Aroha Goldfield’, *Auckland Weekly News*, 21 October 1882, p. 13.

¹⁸ ‘On the Te Aroha Mountain’, *Waikato Times*, 31 January 1882, p. 3.

Being informed we had nothing in that line beyond a box of matches, wailings were sent up why we did not bring a punt of timber with us. Sawdust was told to dry up, and his wooden walls would be up by next ship. On getting ashore there appeared to be more timber about than was good for shins; we got in amongst a stack of it in the dark and could not clear it before sundry evolutions of a hippodrome character were performed. After groping our way up for a hundred yards, we got into what appeared to be a line of street in which were numerous knots of men standing about, and all apparently discussing some very important event or events,

namely the news that a battery was to be erected.¹⁹ The next morning he inspected the township, which was 'laid off on a fine slope at the foot of the mountain, the principal street being 11/2 chains wide, which runs out into the country in a south-easterly direction for a distance of about three miles' to Waiorongomai.²⁰

In February, the county council and leading citizens asked the Premier, John Hall, to provide a telegraph line to Paeroa, a bridge, a road suitable for conveying machinery to Waiorongomai, and a justice of the peace. Hall assured a delegation he would assist, should funds be available.²¹ By March, carpenters had received more timber, but the demand was greater than shipping could keep pace with.²² There was 'a considerable quantity of pegging' of town allotments', and, in 'marked contrast' to Thames, 'the trade' being done was 'something marvellous'.²³ During that month, over 100 allotments were taken up and about 12 buildings commenced.²⁴ In early April, a visitor found 'a great contrast' to Paeroa: 'the township was full of life, the hotels doing a good trade, and the stores, of which there were several, were very busy'.²⁵ In mid-April, the *Thames Advertiser* printed a detailed description:

¹⁹ Details of the excitement are recorded in the paper on the Battery Company.

²⁰ 'The First Trip of the S.S. "Miranda"', *Thames Advertiser*, 20 April 1882, p. 3.

²¹ *Waikato Times*, Piako County Council, 14 February 1882, p. 2, 23 February 1882, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 24 February 1882, p. 3.

²² *Thames Advertiser*, 1 March 1882, p. 3.

²³ Visiting Reporter, *Thames Advertiser*, 29 March 1882, p. 3.

²⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 31 March 1882, p. 3.

²⁵ Visiting Reporter, *Thames Advertiser*, 11 April 1882, p. 3.

Visitors to Te Aroha township at the present time cannot fail to be struck with the go-ahead appearance of the place; and if they remain for a few days there they become perfectly satisfied that the township is really going ahead in more than appearance. Hotel accommodation is very limited, many persons passing through having to rest content with securing all kinds of make-shift beds, which the proprietors of the three resting-houses are adepts at making-up, pending the large additions they are making, or purpose making, to their respective hostelries....

A number of other buildings for various businesses are also being erected in the township. Mr D[aniel] J[ames] Frazer [an ironmonger]²⁶ is putting up a dwelling house which will cost him £147, and Mr [Moses] Hotchin's store and shop at £150 [he was a restaurant keeper].²⁷ Another store is going up for Mr [Thomas] Bradley [a coach and livery stable proprietor],²⁸ at a cost of £70. Mr [Harry] Whitaker's [solicitor's] office is about to be enlarged.²⁹ Mr W[illiam] Wilson,³⁰ the draper, purposes adding four more rooms to his dwelling house, while, to meet the requirements of newcomers, Mr Thomas Murray [a farmer]³¹ is having erected four new dwelling houses, by Messrs [John] Thompson [a builder]³² and [Peter] Sinclair [another builder].³³ A butcher's shop and slaughter house is being erected by Mr [Charles Henry

²⁶ See *Te Aroha News*, 9 June 1883, p. 3, 13 September 1884, p. 2, 8 February 1885, p. 2, 27 February 1886, p. 2, 12 March 1887, pp. 2, 3, 4 June 1887, p. 2, 14 April 1888, p. 7, advertisement, 19 May 1888, p. 7; *Te Aroha Correspondent*, *Waikato Times*, 9 April 1889, p. 2.

²⁷ See advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 16 June 1883, p. 3; *Waikato Times*, 4 June 1889, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 23 March 1906, p. 7.

²⁸ See *Te Aroha Correspondent*, *Auckland Weekly News*, 18 September 1897, p. 30.

²⁹ See paper on Harry and Charles: Henry Ernest Whitaker and Charles Stanislaus Stafford.

³⁰ See *Thames Advertiser*, 30 November 1880, p. 3, 3 October 1881, p. 2, 19 April 1882, p. 3; *Thames Star*, 3 July 1882, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 21 July 1883, p. 3, 13 October 1883, p. 3, 5 June 1886, p. 7, 14 August 1889, p. 2.

³¹ See High School Board, *Thames Advertiser*, 7 November 1882, p. 2, 7 December 1887, p. 3, 7 August 1888, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 18 December 1884, p. 2; Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 2 February 1893, p. 2; *Waikato Argus*, 21 July 1900, p. 2.

³² See *Te Aroha Warden's Court*, Certified Instruments 1886, John Thompson to David McLean Wallace, 15 September 1886, BBAV 11581/7a; Rent Register 1881-1900, folio 161, BBAV 11501/1a, ANZ-A.

³³ See *Thames Advertiser*, 28 September 1880, p. 3, 11 December 1894, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 25 November 1901, p. 2.

Albert] Tonge [another builder]³⁴ for Mr [Henry William] Baskeville,³⁵ at a cost of about £150, and a further flesher's shop is being put up by [William Boss] Allan [another builder]³⁶ and Howard [a builder],³⁷ for Mr [Robert] Mackie [a butcher],³⁸ which, when finished, will cost somewhere about £250, while Hone Werahiko,³⁹ the native prospector, is running up a comfortable house for himself and his lately made bride, which will cost him some £147, besides a number of small houses on goldfield sections.⁴⁰

One butcher was recalled in 1948 as an old man visiting the houses, leading his horse, with meat in two sacks slung across the saddle, cutting off portions as required. During the day he would drink in the hotel while the horse wandered off to eat grass and roll over on the meat. When told about this, far from being upset he continued to sell this meat.⁴¹

All the construction going on created a large demand for carpenters, who commanded good wages and were 'difficult to get even at that'. The supply of timber, mainly from the Turua mills, was 'by no means equal to the demand', mainly because of inadequate river transport, but the purchase of the 'Miranda' by the mill owners would ease this problem.⁴² In late April, a visitor reported that the township 'appeared to be full of people', with a lot of building going on and all three hotels being extended.⁴³ A Thames gossip columnist described it as a 'rising township'.⁴⁴ The Hamilton newspaper agreed that it was 'growing with astonishing rapidity'.

³⁴ See District Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 4 June 1884, p. 3; Magistrate's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 23 January 1886, p. 7; advertisement, *Te Aroha Times*, 3 November 1897, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 4 March 1898, p. 3.

³⁵ See paper on Patrick Quinlan.

³⁶ See *Auckland Weekly News*, 2 December 1882, p. 19; *Te Aroha News*, 15 March 1884, p. 2, 5 April 1884, p. 2, 12 April 1884, p. 2.

³⁷ Not otherwise identified.

³⁸ See paper on Robert and Elizabeth Mackie.

³⁹ See paper on his life.

⁴⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 19 April 1882, p. 3.

⁴¹ Ellen Grattan, interviewed by Mobile Unit of New Zealand Broadcasting Commission, 1948, MU 351A, Radio NZ Archives.

⁴² *Thames Advertiser*, 19 April 1882, p. 3.

⁴³ 'A Trip Up Country', *Thames Advertiser*, 26 April 1882, p. 3.

⁴⁴ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 22 April 1882, p. 84.

As ‘over twenty new buildings’ were being erected, there was ‘a considerable demand for carpenters, and good workmen would readily find employment at the highest market wages’.⁴⁵ Early in May there was still a scarcity of carpenters and later that month there was another shortage of timber.⁴⁶

By May the township was ‘evidently progressing, having obtained a barrister and solicitor for itself’,⁴⁷ namely Joshua Cuff.⁴⁸ The *Te Aroha Mail* wrote in June 1882 of its pleasure that tenders had been called to erect a courthouse, a police station, and a post and telegraph office.⁴⁹ Two acres for these buildings was donated by Ngati Rahiri, but as some miners made claims for this land the Te Aroha Township Act was passed.⁵⁰ According to the *Thames Star*, the magistrate needed to visit more often, for business was ‘greatly in arrears’.⁵¹

‘A very striking sign of the times’ was the opening of an agency of the Bank of New Zealand in July,⁵² meeting a ‘long-felt want’. A meeting had intended ‘to invite the opening of a bank’, but when this decision was announced ‘a vote of thanks and approval was adopted’.⁵³ In August, preparations were made for the first small manufacturing business, cordial making.⁵⁴ Three months later, a Government Life Insurance Office opened in the post office.⁵⁵

‘The building trade’ continued to be ‘very brisk’ in August, with buildings being erected for a butcher, a watchmaker, a surveyor, a tailor, a shipping agent, a boardinghouse keeper, a chemist, and a grocer, along with several houses.⁵⁶ In late September there were insufficient carpenters and

⁴⁵ *Waikato Times*, 25 April 1882, p. 2; *The Statutes of New Zealand* (Wellington, 1882), pp. 886-887.

⁴⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 3 May 1882, p. 3, 22 May 1882, p. 3.

⁴⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 5 May 1882, p. 2.

⁴⁸ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 1 (Wellington, 1897), p. 1281.

⁴⁹ Editorial, *Te Aroha Mail*, 10 June 1882, p. 2.

⁵⁰ *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 August 1882, p. 20.

⁵¹ *Thames Star*, 2 August 1882, p. 3.

⁵² *Freeman’s Journal*, 7 July 1882, p. 8.

⁵³ *Te Aroha Mail*, 1 July 1882, reprinted in *Auckland Weekly News*, 8 July 1882, p. 23.

⁵⁴ *Thames Star*, 9 August 1882, p. 2; note ‘Thames Tittle Tattle’, *Observer*, 24 April 1882, p. 84.

⁵⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 November 1882, p. 17.

⁵⁶ *Te Aroha Mail*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 7 August 1882, p. 2.

painters to complete these quickly.⁵⁷ Five weeks later, ‘the extreme difficulty of procuring timber’ meant many buildings remained incomplete and deterred ‘many others from being begun’. The rising value of property was indicated by an allotment being pegged out for £150: 12 months previously it had been pegged out for £5.⁵⁸ When the Board of Education discussed how large a school to build, James McCosh Clark, of the Battery Company,⁵⁹ said there was ‘no doubt’ that Te Aroha was ‘growing almost as rapidly’ as Thames. ‘The sound of the hammer was heard all day long in the district, and houses were going on in every direction’.⁶⁰ In November, when the township was ‘progressing at a wonderfully rapid rate, for buildings of every kind are going up in all directions’, a Thames newspaper recorded visitors wondering whether all were required, but residents had ‘splendid hopes of the future of their district in a mining and agricultural point of view’, even though business was ‘not as prosperous ... as could be wished’.⁶¹ ‘Being at the head of the river’ traffic meant the settlement commanded ‘a considerable trade’.⁶²

1883

In February 1883 a visiting reporter noted about 20 shops and businesses in the main street and ‘a busy appearance, everyone seen being intent on something’.⁶³ ‘Notwithstanding the prevailing scarcity of money and consequent dullness of trade’, the *Waikato Times* detected ‘many encouraging signs’ revealing ‘confidence in the certainty of results in the mining industry’.⁶⁴ ‘New buildings, both public and private’, were ‘daily in course of erection’. John Watson Walker’s hotel⁶⁵ would ‘eclipse’ many of the best hotels in Auckland in both ‘style and accommodation’.

⁵⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 27 September 1882, p. 3.

⁵⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 4 November 1882, p. 3.

⁵⁹ See paper on the Battery Company.

⁶⁰ Board of Education, *Auckland Weekly News*, 21 October 1882, p. 5.

⁶¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 7 November 1882, p. 3.

⁶² *Brett’s Auckland Almanac ... for 1884* (Auckland, 1884), p. 120.

⁶³ Special Reporter, ‘A Trip to Te Aroha’, *Thames Star*, 14 February 1883, p. 2.

⁶⁴ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 15 February 1883, p. 2.

⁶⁵ See paper on his life.

The new Public Hall and reading-room should meet the wants of the place for many years to come, though this is very questionable considering the present rate of progress. There are many other buildings to erect, both public and private, as well as those in course of erection, which, irrespective of mining matters, should keep trade brisk for some considerable time.⁶⁶

One month later, the bankruptcy of Thomas William Carr⁶⁷ threw 'quite a gloom over business people' and would cause 'a serious depression ... for some time to come'.⁶⁸ Another correspondent agreed that 'this district seems to have suddenly collapsed, and why the mismanagement of one man should have had such an effect is astonishing. Yet such is a fact. Businessmen complain of the tightness of the chest, and miners complain that wages are hard to get'.⁶⁹

In early August the new local newspaper reported many buildings being erected and forecast more construction; sections for business sites had 'greatly risen in value'.⁷⁰ Late that month, visitors were arriving 'every day' and 'expressing the utmost satisfaction with the prospects of the place and the good show of gold'.⁷¹ The *Te Aroha News* cited as 'a good indication of the revival of good times' that, on the previous Saturday night, all the hotels had been 'full up, and in one case a local publican had to send out and buy bed and bedding to make up shake-downs to accommodate his customers'.⁷² During September, sections went 'up in value considerably', giving 'every symptom of the great revival so long looked for being at hand. Business of every kind' was 'improving', and 'prospects could not wear a much rosier hue than they do at present. Confidence in the future, rightly or wrongly, seems to be fully established'.⁷³ In the following month, the newspaper offered advice to investors:

There are few better speculations open now in Te Aroha than the erection of small cottages of three or four rooms. At the present

⁶⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 17 February 1883, p. 3.

⁶⁷ See chapter on his life.

⁶⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 20 March 1883, p. 3.

⁶⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 12 April 1883, p. 2.

⁷⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 4 August 1883, p. 2.

⁷¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 28 August 1883, p. 2.

⁷² *Te Aroha News*, 1 September 1883, p. 2.

⁷³ *Te Aroha News*, 22 September 1883, p. 2.

time there are literally no empty houses, and there is a great demand for house accommodation by those whose means will not allow them to build for themselves, but yet who are quite able to pay rent. The houses that have been available are crowded to excess, in some cases two families occupying 2 1/2 roomed and even one-roomed cottages. Cottages of the class referred to can be run up at very trifling costs, and would pay splendid interest for the money invested.

Twelve such cottages were needed immediately, and in a month or so two or three times that number would be required. Existing houses were 'crowded to excess', in some cases two families occupying two-roomed and even one-roomed cottages.⁷⁴ As an example of living conditions, a surveyor's wife recalled houses being erected one room at a time as the owners could afford to extend. Her family, with three young daughters, lived for four years in a whare built of slab walls and a raupo roof. Very comfortable, it had two large rooms with cut-open sacks for walls which she papered over. After the roof over the bedroom blew off, they stayed with friends until moving into a three-roomed house. Her husband then built a house on the western side of the river on the worst land available (the best had been selected already), seven acres of swamp and manuka that the whole family drained, which was very hard work.⁷⁵

In November 1883, a Thames paper described Te Aroha as 'lively at present, no doubt owing to the good returns being obtained at the battery'. Hotel accommodation was scarce, and the building trade brisk.⁷⁶ By the end of the year 'a good many' houses had been erected and immediately occupied. Rents were 'very high', and the three hotels 'always full'.⁷⁷

The *Te Aroha News*' last editorial for the year contentedly described the great developments during the past year, in particular the erection of buildings both public and private and improvements to the baths at the hot springs.⁷⁸ In July, the new school had opened,⁷⁹ and the post office moved to

⁷⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 27 October 1883, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Ellen Grattan, interviewed by Mobile Unit of the New Zealand Broadcasting Commission, 1948, MU 351A, MU 352A, Radio NZ Archives.

⁷⁶ *Thames Star*, 8 November 1883, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 December 1883, p. 20.

⁷⁸ Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 29 December 1883, p. 2.

⁷⁹ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

‘much more spacious’ and ‘much more convenient quarters’.⁸⁰ Late the following month, at the first hearing in the new courthouse, Henry Elmes Campbell, a local solicitor,⁸¹ claimed its erection proved the government’s confidence in the district, which ‘would give the residents additional confidence as well as infuse additional energy and enterprise into their business or speculations’.⁸² By November, the police quarters, including a lock-up, was completed, the last government building to be erected.⁸³ Residents petitioned for a daily mail service instead of receiving mail two or three times a week (partly because of the poor coach connection with Hamilton).⁸⁴

In December, a visiting Thames reporter described the township:

It is close to the bank of the river Waihou, and a visitor approaching it cannot but be struck with the size of the buildings, hotels especially, all of which would compare favorably in appearance with those on the Thames, though Te Aroha is only 3 years old, and it would be difficult indeed for any there to surpass the splendid hotel known as Walker’s. The town has a healthy and clean appearance, and is growing rapidly, new houses, chiefly, however, for dwelling purposes, being in course of erection everywhere, though the chief number appear to be on the northern side, or towards where the railway bridge will span the river. The town boasts of a roomy school, public library, neat post and telegraph office, and the Government Court and Police Buildings, just finished, are very creditable.

The quality of John William Bew’s bricks⁸⁵ was such that he supplied ‘nearly all the orders wanted’ and his brickyard was ‘in full swing’. Residents expected Te Aroha to be ‘the business centre of the district, on account of its superior position’.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 14 July 1883, p. 2.

⁸¹ See papers on Harry Kenrick and on Maori and goldfield revenue.

⁸² *Te Aroha News*, 1 September 1883, p. 2.

⁸³ *Te Aroha News*, 27 October 1883, p. 2, 10 November 1883, p. 2.

⁸⁴ *New Zealand Herald*, 14 November 1883, p. 6.

⁸⁵ See *Te Aroha News*, 20 March 1886, p. 2, 23 April 1887, p. 2, 19 June 1889, p. 2, 9 May 1917, p. 3; *Waikato Times*, 10 November 1888, p. 2, 22 January 1889, p. 3.

⁸⁶ Special Reporter, ‘A Trip to Te Aroha Goldfield’, *Thames Star*, 10 December 1883, p. 2.

In contrast to all this praise, a resident of Waiorongomai, when complaining that Te Aroha was developing at the expense of his own settlement, wrote of its 'shabby allotments and narrow streets'.⁸⁷

1884

When a special correspondent of the *New Zealand Industrial Gazette and Pastoral and Agricultural News* investigated the goldfield in January 1884, he gave a brief impression of Te Aroha:

On arriving at the township - which is at the foot of the western slopes of the Te Aroha Mountain, and possesses already a population of about 500 inhabitants - the visitor cannot but be struck with the clean and neat appearance of the houses, though he might express a hope to see the roads improved by metalling.⁸⁸

The unexpected decline in mining affected its development, but in early March, 'notwithstanding the dull times that prevailed here for a time after the holidays', and still lingered, 'evidences of progress' were 'not altogether wanting. Several buildings have recently been erected'.⁸⁹ In late April, the local newspaper admitted a 'depression in business'.⁹⁰ The following month, a local correspondent assessed the state of affairs:

Things are assuming a rather quiet tone here just now, and it is evident that unless something good turns up in some of the mines on the hill, we shall have to be satisfied, for winter at any rate, with going along in a very steady way. It must not be supposed, however, that the place is at a standstill, if one may judge by the number of new houses going up all over the town.... Houses, especially of a better class, are scarce, and much wanted. Rents are high.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Letter from 'Waiorongomai', *Thames Advertiser*, 10 July 1882, p. 3.

⁸⁸ Special Correspondent, 'A Trip to the Te Aroha Goldfield, Thames District', *New Zealand Industrial Gazette and Pastoral and Agricultural News*, 15 January 1884, p. 27.

⁸⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 8 March 1884, p. 2.

⁹⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 26 April 1884, p. 2.

⁹¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 May 1884, p. 22.

As the Thames Land, Building, and Investment Society had 12 mortgages with a total value of £1,500,⁹² clearly some expensive houses had been erected. That some were built on insecure financial foundations was indicated by an increasing number of bankruptcies; some bankrupts blamed the fading fortunes of the goldfield and township for their situation.⁹³

In July, ‘many houses’ were empty.⁹⁴ Two months later, business was ‘in a very dull condition’ and the population was decreasing.⁹⁵ In response, a serious attempt was made to attract visitors to the hot springs, for instance a paid advertisement published on Christmas Day in the *New Zealand Herald*, its style modelled on a news item:

To persons who wish to spend an enjoyable holiday season, and, at the same time, to restore their energies wasted by a too close application to business, or by cares of any kind, few places offer so many attractions as Te Aroha. The hot-baths, which have already become famous for their wonderful medicinal properties, the pleasing scenery, the ease by which the place can be reached by rail, river, or road, and the exceedingly moderate cost of hotel and other accommodation, combine to render it a most pleasant spot in which to spend an idle week or two, and pleasure-seekers who desire to pass their time quietly and enjoyably cannot do better than visit this neighbourhood, where health and pleasure may be said to go hand in hand. The position of the Springs is almost in the centre of the township, situated at the base of the grand and beautiful mountain, and they are within two or three minutes’ walk of the principal hotels, the Hot Springs hostelry, kept by Mr W[illiam] Weston,⁹⁶ the British by Mr P[atrick] Quinlan, and Walker’s by Mr J[ames] Warren,⁹⁷ being not more than a stone-throw distant. The fares for the single journey from and to Auckland (inclusive of coach between Morrinsville and Aroha) are 27s first-class and 19s 6d second-class. During the holidays return tickets will be issued by rail at single fares. Cheap tickets are also issued by the Thames River Navigation Company, and

⁹² *Thames Star*, 7 August 1884, p. 2.

⁹³ For example, John Watson Walker and Charles Henry Albert Tonge: District Court, *Thames Star*, 6 August 1884, p. 2.

⁹⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 18 July 1885, p. 7.

⁹⁵ *Thames Star*, 4 September 1884, p. 2.

⁹⁶ See *Thames Star*, 12 June 1884, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 22 January 1885, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 24 January 1885, p. 2, 27 June 1885, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 3 September 1885, p. 4.

⁹⁷ See paper on the drink problem in the Te Aroha district.

for those who prefer travelling by water, this route has many charms, as during the spring and summer months the scenery on the river banks is exceedingly lovely, and affords a never failing treat to admirers of the beautiful in nature.⁹⁸

1885

The *Thames Advertiser* noted, in February 1885, that ‘the Te Aroha folks, if not making all the gold they can wish from mining are spiritedly developing the place, and securing a considerable number of visitors anxious to partake of the benefit of the Hot Baths and mineral springs’.⁹⁹ Charles Ahier,¹⁰⁰ a commission agent and its Te Aroha correspondent, probably supplied this information.¹⁰¹ In the following month the licensing committee resolved that, because of an increasing number of visitors, hotels should provide more accommodation.¹⁰² The account of a visit by ‘Voz’, an Auckland journalist, was so positive that it was reprinted in the *Te Aroha News*.¹⁰³ At Morrinsville, train passengers were met at six o’clock by ‘well-appointed coaches’:

We were soon travelling along the fine level road between Morrinsville and Te Aroha, a distance of 15 miles, at a very smart pace. Shortly after half-past 7 we reached the Waihou River, on the opposite side of which the Te Aroha township is situated. The crossing of this river was a novel experience to me. The coach was driven on to a punt, without either driver or passengers alighting, and, upon reaching the other side, was driven off again. A few minutes drive now brought us to the Palace Hotel, a large and commodious building conducted by Mr Warren. Here we alighted, and, after having engaged rooms, &c, were soon engaged ourselves in satisfying the inner man at the dinner table. There was a large number of visitors staying here, and I learned that the other hotels and boarding-houses in the township, all having the reputation of being well conducted, were also full of visitors. After dinner, arming ourselves with towels, we made our way to

⁹⁸ Advertisement, *New Zealand Herald*, 25 December 1884, p. 3.

⁹⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 20 February 1885, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 25 July 1885, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ See *Te Aroha News*, 10 January 1885, p. 7; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 6 (Christchurch, 1908), p. 115.

¹⁰² *Waikato Times*, 12 March 1885, p. 3.

¹⁰³ *Te Aroha News*, 11 April 1885, p. 7.

the principal scene of attraction to visitors, viz, the hot baths. These are conveniently situated in the centre of the township.

He lauded the baths and their medicinal benefits, had an 'agreeable drink' from a spring, and during his fortnight's holiday 'visited all the places of interest, and my time was fully and enjoyably occupied'. From the top of the mountain he discovered 'one of the most magnificent views in New Zealand', which he encouraged others to experience despite the steepness of the climb. Tourists could also visit the Waiorongomai mines. Charges for food and accommodation were 'moderate, and the cost of bath tickets a mere trifle'. Travel costs had been reduced, and when the railway reached Te Aroha it would 'very quickly become one of the chief attractions of New Zealand to tourists and invalids'.¹⁰⁴

The following month, another visitor praised the district:

The little township exists principally upon the money distributed by visitors from all parts of the colonies who go thither for relief. The climate is salubrious, the air is clear and bracing, and the earth productive to a wonderful extent. There are hotels and boarding-houses, generally full, replete with every convenience; pretty rides and drives; good boating, and pheasant shooting in the season.

After describing the beauties of the domain and the district, he noted that although 'most of the best sites' had been leased there was 'any quantity of desirable places for villa residences still available'. He anticipated it would be a splendid place for growing grapes, almond, orange and lemon trees, and 'all sorts of semi-tropical fruits and flowers. Te Aroha had undoubtedly a great future in store for it'. In time 'her baths, instead of concrete, will be formed of marble, and all the luxuries that the world affords, and art and science can provide, will be there found for the delectation of her visitors'.¹⁰⁵

At least 150 residence and business sites were occupied in the main part of the township, Morgantown, by March.¹⁰⁶ In May, Ahier noted signs of 'returning prosperity': footpaths were being made, stores were being painted, and boarding houses were providing increased accommodation

¹⁰⁴ 'Voz', 'A Trip to the Te Aroha Hot Springs', *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 April 1885, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ C. Voice-Hawkins, 'My Visit to Te Aroha', *Observer*, 30 May 1885, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 4 March 1885, p. 3.

because of ‘miraculous cures’ amongst the ‘many invalids’ using the baths.¹⁰⁷ But all other accounts indicated economic decline, apart from the tourist and invalid trade. In February, the *Waikato Times* correspondent wrote that, because mining was so depressed, business was ‘generally exceedingly quiet’.¹⁰⁸ In April, a store sold for £17 and a two-roomed cottage for £12 10s, ‘far below’ their real values.¹⁰⁹ The following month, a bankrupt cordial manufacturer explained that, after starting business in 1883, ‘for some time his affairs prospered; but the general decline of the district, and the failure of some of his customers, led to his bankruptcy’.¹¹⁰ He estimated losing £500 through ‘decrease of business’ and the bankruptcy of some of his customers.¹¹¹ In June it was claimed that ‘during the past twelve months over 100 families had left’ the district.¹¹² But five months later one correspondent was much more positive:

Te Aroha is looking pretty lively just at present. Work seems plentiful in the district, business seems improving and, generally speaking, prosperity is reviving. Mining affairs are very promising just now.... The stream of tourists, invalids, holiday seekers and visitors generally seems to have once more set in, and this season the hotel accommodation of the town threatens to be taxed to the utmost. The Domain Board are making great improvements on the Hot Springs Reserve, and another year or so will see it one of the most attractive fashionable resorts in New Zealand.¹¹³

The possibility of renewed economic growth prompted another attempt to sell sections in ‘the Ruakaka township known as the race course’. This, the only freehold land in the district for sale, not only contained good soil but was also immediately below the new mines at Tui Creek.¹¹⁴ These ‘Ruakaka Township’ allotments were offered for sale ‘on very liberal terms’

¹⁰⁷ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 25 May 1885, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 10 February 1885, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ *Waikato Times*, 16 April 1885, p. 3; *Thames Advertiser*, 18 April 1885, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ District Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 6 May 1885, p. 3.

¹¹¹ District Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 17 June 1885, p. 3.

¹¹² *Te Aroha News*, 20 June 1885, p. 2.

¹¹³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 24 November 1885, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 5 December 1885, p. 2.

in the following February,¹¹⁵ and on the fringe of the settlement suburban sections were offered on 30-year leases.¹¹⁶

One still unfulfilled need was a resident justice of the peace, for ‘occasionally injustice’ was done to ‘persons incarcerated for petty offences in the delay occasioned in obtaining the services of one’, who lived ‘a considerable distance’ away.¹¹⁷

1886

When the first excursion train arrived on 1 March 1886 to inaugurate the line from Morrinsville, the *Observer* did not send a correspondent:

The township, with its romantic mountain over-looking a little wilderness of shanties in kauri timber, and its muddy looking river flowing between flax covered banks is no novelty to us. We have long since admired its beauties and stumbled over the boulders which go to constitute its streets. We have wondered what its little clay excavations led to, and have marvelled yet more why its omnibuses continued to run with a solitary passenger over its muddy roads.

It did agree that immersion in the ‘somewhat slimy cauldron’ in the domain would cure rheumatism, and suggested that, with a train service, ‘perhaps the ghost-like shanties which adorned without enlivening its streets, may again become the scene of human habitation’.¹¹⁸

Locals seized the opportunity provided by the arrival of the first train to make the day a general holiday and do ‘everything possible’ to ‘make things pleasant for townsfolk and visitors’.¹¹⁹ The *Waikato Times* assured those contemplating attending that there were ‘objects of interest and means of enjoyment’ in and around Te Aroha. The main attraction was ‘the baths, to which more than anything else the fast growing celebrity of Te Aroha is due and but for this it might have remained in obscurity for years

¹¹⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 27 February 1886, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ *New Zealand Gazette*, 14 January 1886, p. 31.

¹¹⁷ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 22 May 1885, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ *Observer*, 6 March 1886, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 25 February 1886, p. 3.

to come'.¹²⁰ 'Voz', who revisited shortly afterwards, assisted the tourist trade by his descriptions:

As the popularity of Te Aroha as a health resort and holiday seekers' retreat has now become a household word, not only in Auckland but in most towns of New Zealand, perhaps a short account of a holiday spent there may be interesting to your readers. I need not enter in details of the trip there by rail from Auckland, which occupied a little over seven hours.... Our train reached Te Aroha shortly after three p.m. Upon alighting, I was at once struck with the very great advantage Te Aroha now possessed of having the railway line running right into the township, and the many improvements since my last visit.... A few minutes walk from the station (or a ride by coach for those who prefer it) brought me into Whitaker-street. Here again I was much struck with the strides Te Aroha has taken during the last twelve months, noticeably in the improvements and additions to the hotels and boardinghouses, and in the great improvements made in the Domain reserve, where the now popular and renowned hot baths and mineral springs are situated.

He was enthusiastic about the new facilities in the domain.¹²¹ His second article described 'the many other attractions' providing 'ample means of killing time', notably the battery and mines at Waiorongomai, which could be visited by 'first-class 'buses running several times a day'. Boats 'of all sizes' could be hired 'either by those anxious to explore the river or by loving couples anxious to get a quiet hour away from the noise and the eyes of the busy throng'. Botanists could obtain 'many rare specimens' in the bush, which contained plenty of game. The reading room was open to all, and 'social concerts' were frequently arranged 'for the amusement of visitors', and the brass band frequently playing in the domain on fine evenings. His concluded: 'Go to Te Aroha, and you will be delighted'.¹²²

Looking back over the year, the *Te Aroha News* considered that, despite the general depression, there had been progress, notably the arrival of the railway.¹²³ Its economic impact was welcome, for early in the year the township was semi-depressed. In February, when allotments owned by a bankrupt were sold, 'there was not a large attendance of buyers', bidding

¹²⁰ *Waikato Times*, 27 February 1886, p. 2.

¹²¹ 'Voz', 'A Holiday at Te Aroha', *Auckland Weekly News*, 24 April 1886, p. 6.

¹²² 'Voz', 'A Holiday at Te Aroha', *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 May 1886, p. 7.

¹²³ Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 1 January 1887, p. 2.

‘was not brisk’, and only four were sold.¹²⁴ Perhaps this period was being referred to in the annual report of the Thames Land, Building, and Investment Society in 1896: ‘Some years ago the Society invested money in Te Aroha, and the drop came so suddenly that, like many others who had placed faith in Te Aroha, they had lost money’.¹²⁵

The census taken on 28 March 1886 recorded that the township had 225 houses built of wood and iron, three of cob sod, five of sod clay, wood, and stone, and five tents.¹²⁶ Te Aroha Riding, covering a wider area, contained 264 inhabited dwellings and 55 uninhabited ones.¹²⁷ Late that month, the *Te Aroha News* reported ‘A Sign of the Times! Several fresh business and residence site allotments taken up within the past week or two at Te Aroha; and an enquiry for house property’.¹²⁸ Nearly three weeks later ‘quite a number of residence and business sites’ were being taken up ‘and others previously held have changed ownership’. There was ‘an enquiry for house property’, the local parliamentarian, John Blair Whyte,¹²⁹ securing ‘several excellent sites’, proving that ‘well situated sections’ were ‘bound to command a good figure in this rising township’.¹³⁰ One week later, a correspondent reported allotments and buildings changing hands and properties ‘rapidly rising in value’.¹³¹ Another correspondent wrote that ‘several allotments with and without buildings, have of late changed hands at prices much in advance of what could have been obtained six months ago’; ‘other evidences’ indicated ‘that an era of steady progress’ had set in.¹³² This prompted a *Waikato Times* editorial arguing that improvements were needed. Te Aroha, ‘from being a dull, frozen out mining village’, had suddenly realized it was ‘a famous sanatorium. Its hotels are crowded beyond their legitimate capacity and all its vacant shops and dwellings are finding occupiers’, but its streets and footways remained unformed there

¹²⁴ *Waikato Times*, 23 February 1886, p. 2.

¹²⁵ *Thames Star*, 17 August 1898, p. 4.

¹²⁶ *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand taken on the Night of the 28th March, 1886* (Wellington, 1887), p. 30.

¹²⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 22 May 1886, p. 2.

¹²⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 20 March 1886, p. 2.

¹²⁹ See *Observer*, 29 October 1881, p. 104; *Waikato Argus*, 23 July 1914, p. 3; *New Zealand Herald*, 24 July 1914, p. 8.

¹³⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 10 April 1886, p. 2.

¹³¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 April 1886, p. 2.

¹³² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 10 April 1886, p. 2.

was not ‘the most embryonic scheme of sanitation’. As the council could not meet the costs, the government should assist.¹³³

In June, a visiting reporter noted ‘several handsome private residences, which assist in adding to the attractive appearance of the town’. Most buildings were ‘new, and being kept well painted, give an air of neatness to the whole’.¹³⁴ In August, another reporter visiting the ‘pretty little township’ noted a ‘neat new church’.

Messrs [Thomas] Bradley and Co,¹³⁵ enterprising coach proprietors whose premises adjoin the Palace Hotel, we noticed, have also nearly completed an addition to their building measuring 56ft x 30ft, which will embrace in one division 18 stalls for the accommodation of their horses, and a booking office for themselves at the front. Facing the other division will be an office for Messrs A. Buckland & Co., who intend holding monthly cattle sales. At the rear of this the remaining part of the building is intended to be used as a horse bazaar. Well fenced in at the back of the building is a large cattle yard, most conveniently situated to river, road and rail. A powerful force of water is being laid on from Lipsey’s creek, for washing the buggies, &c.

Although ‘complaints about dull times’ were ‘pretty general’, with ‘good weather and an influx of visitors to this exceedingly pleasant district’ he hoped these would ‘pass away’.¹³⁶ But despite the railway and the increased tourist trade, 1886 was remembered as a ‘period of dullness’.¹³⁷

1887

In January 1887, another visiting journalist recorded his impressions:

One cannot help being favourably impressed with Te Aroha at first sight. The idea conveyed is one of prosperity, cleanliness, and picturesqueness. It is a *multum in parvo*: a little place of huge individualities. The lofty Te Aroha mountain looming up behind the township in ponderous grandeur forms a stately

¹³³ Editorial, *Waikato Times*, 10 April 1886, p. 2.

¹³⁴ Special Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 24 June 1886, p. 2.

¹³⁵ See *Thames Advertiser*, 23 January 1883, p. 2, 18 December 1886, p. 2, 12 October 1888, p. 2, 21 April 1893, p. 2.

¹³⁶ Travelling Correspondent, ‘Te Aroha Notes’, *Thames Advertiser*, 2 August 1886, p. 2.

¹³⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 29 January 1887, p. 2.

background. At its base nestles the neat Domain, with the almost unique springs of thermal waters. On the streets are palatial hotels, superior lodging-houses, and fine shops.

After extolling the beauties of the domain and the pleasures and medicinal virtues of the baths and the mineral water, he noted that ‘on the river numerous rowing boats, specially adapted’ for visitors, could be hired ‘at a cheap rate’. As well, ‘many tourists’ hired horses and carriages to visit the countryside.¹³⁸

The population increased greatly during warmer months because of an influx of visitors. In January, the tourist season was ‘a very prosperous one. The hotels have been crammed for some time past’, resulting in ‘numerous applications’ for accommodation sent by telegraph being refused.¹³⁹ Some tourists even came from England and Australia.¹⁴⁰ But there were complaints about railway travel. Although cheap trips were sometimes provided on weekends, one passenger asked why the return ticket could not ‘be available until the following Monday’. If it was only for one day, ‘nearly the whole of the time’ was ‘occupied in the railway trip, not always conducive to pleasure, health, or comfort’.¹⁴¹

Six months later, another visitor gave details of the efficacy of the hot pools and flattering descriptions of the domain. Twenty acres had been fenced in, and the 45-acre reserve further up the slopes preserving ‘the natural forest growth’ formed ‘one of the attractions and beauties of the place’. The domain board had ‘planted the grounds with pines and other ornamental trees’ and formed paths. There was a lawn tennis ground, ‘apparatus for maypole dances for the youngsters, while in the summer evenings the Te Aroha Brass Band renders musical selections’. He expected the township to be popular with visitors, and listed the advantages that would ‘stand it in good stead’:

There is daily communication with Auckland by railway, so that the Auckland journals are delivered regularly. A postal and telegraph station is also at the visitor’s elbow, so that he is *au courant* with the great world beyond, while yet enjoying the

¹³⁸ Own Correspondent, ‘Impressions of Te Aroha’, *Auckland Weekly News*, 22 January 1887, p. 8.

¹³⁹ *Waikato Times*, 11 January 1887, p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 26 March 1887, p. 2.

¹⁴¹ *New Zealand Herald*, 21 January 1887, p. 5.

charms of country life. The local journal gives the local news. Conspicuous in the township is the schoolhouse, with its ample playground - a silent witness to our State system of education. There are three churches, with as many "sky pilots" [clergymen],¹⁴² though most of the tourists, like [Thomas] Carlyle, "carry their creed under their hat," and about an equal number of commodious comfortable hotels.¹⁴³

In October the daily train was replaced by a twice-weekly mail and passenger service, infuriating the local newspaper because of the effect on visitors.¹⁴⁴ A public meeting voiced loud protests and carried motions opposing the decision.¹⁴⁵ However, earlier Te Aroha gained one feature of an important township: the appointment of two justices of the peace.¹⁴⁶ John McCombie, who visited in December, considered it was one of the few inland towns making 'progressive strides during the past few years'. The main street was 'adorned with several handsome and commodious buildings'.¹⁴⁷

1888

John Wickham Dickson, a former miner who had participated in the opening rush of the goldfield and became 'interested in the working of several' of the first claims,¹⁴⁸ revisited in May 1888 in his journalistic disguise of 'A Tramp, Esq':

Had not been at Te Aroha since the day the field was opened, some eight years ago, and experienced a difficulty in recognising the place again. Should certainly have passed it, only the train declined to take me any farther. Where the fern then flourished, stands now an old-fashioned township, with first-class hotels, churches, schools, town boards, and the other paraphernalia of advanced civilisation. The special feature of the township itself is the famous hot baths, situated in the pretty little domain that

¹⁴² Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8 ed., ed. Paul Beale (London, 1984), p. 1081.

¹⁴³ Own Correspondent, 'A Trip to Te Aroha', *Auckland Weekly News*, 30 July 1887, p. 29.

¹⁴⁴ Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 8 October 1887, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 8 October 1887, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 12 March 1887, p. 2, 30 April 1887, p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ 'Aboriginal', 'On the Wallaby', *Thames Advertiser*, 23 December 1887, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ See *New Zealand Herald*, 26 November 1880, p. 5, 9 October 1919, p. 8; *Observer*, 25 October 1919, p. 20.

has been saved from the maw of the land shark for the public use. The solitary hot mud hole has been converted into a luxurious bath, which, along with the fifteen others of various properties and temperature, are making the name of Te Aroha more universally known than the richness of its gold and silver mines. With health in one hand and wealth in the other, Te Aroha offers attractions that are possessed by no other place in New Zealand, and the next decade may see it the most important city in the colony.

On his arrival he accepted an invitation to the banquet given to Henry Hopper Adams¹⁴⁹ in recognition of his having attracted Australian capital.¹⁵⁰ ‘Over a hundred persons, in best bib and tucker, comprising the agricultural, commercial, and mining interests’ attended, and ‘a pleasant evening was spent’. He devoted all the next day to ‘suffering a recovery’. During the following two days, he inspected the mines.¹⁵¹

Early in the year ‘continued depression’ was reported.¹⁵² When mining revived, the town acquired two more bakeries, two more butcheries, and a second tailor, with the possibility of more small shopkeepers setting up in business.¹⁵³ A flax mill erected on the western bank of the river was employing 14 men and boys by mid-year.¹⁵⁴ Any permanent recovery depended upon the mines. As noted in October, business was ‘dull at present, everyone holding on for the results of the various methods of treating the ores’. Anyone planning on going into business should delay for 12 months while the ores were tested, there being ‘quite sufficient business places for the requirements’.¹⁵⁵ ‘Many very good houses and business places’ had been built and three hotels were ‘very fine buildings’.¹⁵⁶ The year ended with news that the Parkes Process to treat Tui ore was a failure,¹⁵⁷ ‘a severe

¹⁴⁹ See paper on his life.

¹⁵⁰ See paper on the Te Aroha Silver and Gold Mining Company.

¹⁵¹ ‘A Tramp, Esq’, ‘Casual Ramblings’, *Auckland Weekly News*, 12 May 1888, p. 7.

¹⁵² *Te Aroha News*, 4 February 1888, p. 2.

¹⁵³ *Te Aroha News*, 19 May 1888, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 27 June 1888, p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ Special Reporter, *Waikato Times*, 4 October 1888, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ Special Reporter, *Waikato Times*, 11 October 1888, p. 3.

¹⁵⁷ See paper on the Tui mines.

blow to the hopes of the district' that had 'checked the activity and business of Te Aroha'.¹⁵⁸

1889

Some people detected signs of economic recovery during 1889. In January, a Thames newspaper noted that an 'enterprising local bootmaker' had started a branch shop,¹⁵⁹ a vote of confidence in its future. Three weeks later, the *Te Aroha News* reported that new arrivals during the past month meant every house was occupied.¹⁶⁰ But another three weeks later a correspondent reported storekeepers grumbling about the 'inactivity of trade, as compared to previous weeks'.¹⁶¹ Three months later, he wrote that 'during the past three or four weeks business generally has been exceptionally dull, and storekeepers have been complaining, not loud, but deep'. Hotelkeepers, who generally 'do well in business here, are finding their receipts falling off'. The only way to 'liven' the district up was a 'torrent of rain' enabling the battery to resume crushing.¹⁶² In August he was more positive, for 'several new shops and other buildings' were about to be erected. Stables, a butchery, and general store had all expanded their premises, and a tinsmith's shop was being built. 'What between new work and general repairs, caused through the recent destructive storm, together with making the town into a borough, fresh hope should be infused amongst the inhabitants'.¹⁶³ As a sign of economic revival, the following month the town board was told by the government auditor that Te Aroha had 'fewer rate defaulters than most of the country townships he was called upon to visit'.¹⁶⁴

Because economic opportunities had not been as great or as immediate as some had predicted, several residents had to find work outside the town. A new coach service to Waiorongomai starting in February proved popular because Te Aroha residents employed there could, 'for a weekly payment of

¹⁵⁸ *Waikato Times*, 29 December 1888, p. 2.

¹⁵⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 14 January 1889, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 6 February 1889, p. 2.

¹⁶¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 26 February 1889, p. 2.

¹⁶² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 28 May 1889, p. 3.

¹⁶³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 22 August 1889, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ *Waikato Times*, 21 September 1889, p. 2.

2s 6d, travel as often as they choose, either in open or closed coaches'.¹⁶⁵ Two months later, a Te Aroha party obtained the contract to erect a water race and tunnel for the Waihi Gold Mining Company.¹⁶⁶ Late in the year, two local miners, with the backing of a brickmaker, butcher, and a grocer, all of Te Aroha, acquired a mine at Upper Tararu, Thames, from which a misleading sample of remarkable richness was extracted.¹⁶⁷ By October, 'quite a number of young fellows' had left, and more would soon depart.¹⁶⁸ Declining mining had not been compensated for by an increased number of tourists: compared with the same time the previous year visitors were fewer and not 'so free with money'.¹⁶⁹

ACCOMMODATION

In April 1882, a Thames newspaper described the changes being made to the three hotels. 'Large improvements' were being made to the Hot Springs Hotel, to a local architect's design.

The plans provide for eight new bedrooms being added to the present number, which will make 17 in all; for removing his bar trade to the extreme end of his building, and allowing for the proper hotel trade being carried on at the other, in which it is proposed to set apart a room for ladies. A dining room, 40 feet by 16, will also be included. The whole building, when completed, will present an imposing frontage of 96 feet, and a depth of 100 feet. Stabling accommodation in proportion to that afforded by the hotel will also be provided at the back. The whole cost in connection with the improvements is estimated to reach £700.

On the opposite side of the road, the same architect designed 'a very large addition' to Patrick Quinlan's British Hotel, to cost 'some £650'. The completed premises would 'afford him facilities for meeting the demands made upon him by the travelling public in even a better manner than he now does, which is very well indeed. This house when extended will contain some seventeen spacious bedrooms, a first-rate kitchen, and a well-finished

¹⁶⁵ *Waikato Times*, 14 February 1889, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 4 April 1889, p. 2.

¹⁶⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 11 December 1889, p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 17 October 1889, p. 2.

¹⁶⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 31 October 1889, p. 2.

dining room capable of seating a large number of visitors'. And John Allwood¹⁷⁰ was spending £200 on his Robin Hood and Little John Hotel.¹⁷¹ During July, 70 rooms were being added to the hotels, then increased to four.¹⁷² They were needed; in that month, a miner boarding in one of them had to sleep on a mattress on the floor in a front room.¹⁷³ The *Te Aroha Mail* described the first portion of John Walker Watson's new hotel, later known as the Palace, which was about to open:

It is being neatly fitted up, so far as the rooms will permit. At present, there are eight bedrooms (single and double), bar, bar parlor, kitchen, &c. The present bar and parlor are only temporary, and intended ultimately for bedrooms, the commercial part of the premises forming part of the main building having yet to be added in front of the present one. The bedrooms are all well furnished and fitted up. The bar and bar parlor each contain good fires, quite a novelty in the hotel line, and one that will be thoroughly appreciated during the cold weather of the present season. When complete, the hotel will be the handsomest and most comfortable in the district.¹⁷⁴

An Auckland newspaper published the architect's plans and specifications for what was considered a fine example of an up-to-date hotel:

The principal front will be 98 feet in extent, with a side frontage to another street of 69 feet. On the ground floor there will be two entrances from the main street, one to the boarding portion of the establishment, and the other to the bar and billiard-room. The bar, 18 x 18, will be at the corner of the two streets, and at the side of it the private bar, 18 x 8. Under the bar will be a cellar, 6 feet in height, running the full extent of the bar. Behind it will be a tap-room, 26 x 14. The hotel entrance leads directly to the billiard-room, which is 35 x 26, and adjacent is [the] sitting-room, 14 x 11. The main entrance hall is eight feet wide, and at the end of it is the staircase leading to the upper floor. On the left of the hall are two sitting-rooms, one 22 x 14, and the other 14 x 11. To the right is the dining-room, 41 x 25. At the end of the main hall is a door communicating with the building already erected, and

¹⁷⁰ See paper on the drink problem in the Te Aroha district.

¹⁷¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 19 April 1882, p. 3.

¹⁷² *Thames Star*, 10 July 1882, p. 2.

¹⁷³ Evidence of James Goard, Gillies J, Judge's Notebook, Criminal Cases 1882-1885, pp. 31-32, BBAE A304/256, ANZ-A.

¹⁷⁴ *Te Aroha Mail*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 7 August 1882, p. 2.

which will form part of the hotel. This latter section will be subdivided into ten bed-rooms. A verandah eight feet in width runs along both street frontages. The upper floor will contain two sitting-rooms, 12 x 14 respectively, and 21 bed-rooms, averaging 14 x 9 each, with bathrooms, lavatory, linen closets, and all the conveniences appertaining to a first-class hotel. The sitting-rooms will open on a balcony the full extent of the frontages of the building, and situate over the verandah. The balcony and verandah will be of an ornamental design. The roof of the building will have a bold projection, ornamented with cut brackets, and the general design of the building will be of a neat and artistic character.¹⁷⁵

As was usual, a Thames brewer paid for its erection, the licensee taking out a mortgage from him over the property.¹⁷⁶ In January 1884, when James Warren¹⁷⁷ ran it, a visitor briefly mentioned it.¹⁷⁸ 'Notwithstanding its youth, Te Aroha can boast some good buildings, chief among them being Warren's Hotel, in the large room of which no less than 130 guests were comfortably accommodated at a recent banquet'.¹⁷⁹ Two months later, another visitor noted 'some pretentious-looking buildings', notably the hotels. The Palace Hotel, if of less perishable materials' (an indication it was not constructed of kauri), 'would do credit to any town in the colony'.¹⁸⁰ It advertised itself immodestly:

THIS is by far the LARGEST, BEST APPOINTED, AND MOST
CONFORTABLE HOTEL in Te Aroha, Containing Suites of
Private Rooms for FAMILIES with PIANO; BATHS,
COMMERCIAL, DINING, AND SMOKING ROOMS.
SPLENDID BILLIARD ROOM.
The Bed-rooms (30 in number) are lofty, well-ventilated, and most
comfortably furnished.
EXCELLENT STABLING,
Buggies and Saddle Horses for Hire

¹⁷⁵ *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 September 1882, p. 18.

¹⁷⁶ *Observer*, 7 May 1882, p. 116; District Court, *Thames Star*, 6 August 1884, p. 2.

¹⁷⁷ See paper on the drink problem in the Te Aroha district.

¹⁷⁸ *Waikato Times*, 7 August 1883, p. 2.

¹⁷⁹ Special Correspondent, 'A Trip to the Te Aroha Goldfield, Thames District', *New Zealand Industrial Gazette and Pastoral and Agricultural News*, 15 January 1884, p. 27.

¹⁸⁰ Michael Landers, 'A Trip to Te Aroha and Ohinemuri Districts', *Freeman's Journal*, 28 March 1884, p. 13.

Cuisine is really First-class, and WINES AND SPIRITS THE
VERY BEST.¹⁸¹

Accommodation was in partly provided by boarding houses. The 'Temperance House and Restaurant' advertised itself in January 1885 as having moderate charges: 'Every attention paid to the Comfort and Convenience of Visitors and Boarders'.¹⁸² In April a 'large new house, known as Tonge's Boarding House', opposite the entrance to the domain and managed by Cecilia Tonge,¹⁸³ the wife of Charles Henry Albert Tonge, a carpenter,¹⁸⁴ was purchased by an Auckland syndicate which intended making it a 'first-class boarding house'.¹⁸⁵ By 1886 accommodation for 300 visitors was available at three hotels and two boarding houses.¹⁸⁶

In 1886, a visiting journalist reported enthusiastically about the hotels:

The hotels and boardinghouses all have earned the reputation of being remarkably well conducted, so much so indeed that many who have visited other hot springs in New Zealand express surprise at learning the moderate charges at the first-class hotels here. Instead of being charged perhaps twelve or fifteen shillings a day, the very best accommodation can be had in Te Aroha either at hotels or private boardinghouses, for from 25s to 35s per week, and, as the cost of bath tickets is a mere trifle, there are naturally very many visitors to Te Aroha, who would hesitate long before going to much more expensive resorts.¹⁸⁷

A 'travelling correspondent' wrote in August that two of the three hotels 'would do credit in every respect to a large town'. The third, the Club, 'also a most convenient and well appointed house', had a proprietress 'whose business tact and agreeable manner' would 'no doubt ensure for her a great

¹⁸¹ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 31 January 1885, p. 1.

¹⁸² Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 31 January 1885, p. 1; for its earlier management, see *Te Aroha News*, 22 September 1883, p. 4.

¹⁸³ See paper on women's lives in the Te Aroha district.

¹⁸⁴ *Thames Star*, 4 March 1881, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 21 November 1883, p. 3, 12 March 1884, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 15 March 1884, p. 2, 20 September 1884, p. 2, 18 April 1885, p. 2, 26 February 1890, p. 7, 6 March 1895, p. 2.

¹⁸⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 18 April 1885, p. 3.

¹⁸⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 9 March 1886, p. 3.

¹⁸⁷ 'Voz', 'A Holiday at Te Aroha', *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 May 1886, p. 7

share of public patronage'.¹⁸⁸ In January 1887 another visiting correspondent described the accommodation:

As for the hotels - well, I have seen most in the provincial district, but, outside Auckland, never aught like these. There is one feature that especially pleased me; there is nothing of the gorgeous gin palace about them. The bar is subordinated to the hotel; and not, as is too frequently the case, the accommodation subordinated to the bar. There are four hotels; but the leading ones are the Club, Hot Springs, and Palace. They seem almost on a par, a spirit of emulation enabling the public to have everything in first-class style. I lived like a prince, had abundance of towels, and occupied a spacious well-furnished bedroom, stayed from Monday afternoon till Wednesday morning and paid 10s 6d. What could be more reasonable? The boarding houses are also said to be very comfortable, and judging by external appearances, very suitable for persons who dislike, or do not affect, hotels.¹⁸⁹

In July, yet another such reporter enthused:

The Te Aroha hotelkeepers seem to be wiser in their generation than some of their brethren elsewhere. At all events they do not seem inclined to make the mistake of "killing the goose that lays the golden egg." The charges are moderate and reasonable, and either at the hotels or at the boardinghouse establishments accommodation could be had at varying rates which no one would grumble at, even with the slenderest purse. Speaking so far as my own experience went, the hotels were well conducted, being what hotels should be - places of board and lodging for the travelling public, and not mere grog shanties, where beer rules the day and billiards the night.¹⁹⁰

John McCombie believed the Hot Springs, Club, and Palace hotels 'would reflect credit on any town in the colony. In fact, it would be very difficult to find three better hostelries', and their charges were 'fixed upon the lowest possible scale'. The fourth one, while 'not quite so pretentious',

¹⁸⁸ Travelling Correspondent, 'Te Aroha Notes', *Thames Advertiser*, 2 August 1886, p. 2.

¹⁸⁹ Own Correspondent, 'Impressions of Te Aroha', *Auckland Weekly News*, 22 January 1887, p. 8.

¹⁹⁰ Own Correspondent, 'A Trip to Te Aroha', *Auckland Weekly News*, 30 July 1887, p. 29.

was equally as comfortable, and charges at the excellent boarding houses were ‘moderate in the extreme’.¹⁹¹

STREETS

In March 1882 heavy rain ‘made the roads very bad in places, especially the newly-formed portions’.¹⁹² The first issue of the *Te Aroha Mail* described the condition of the streets was ‘simply disgraceful’; visitors took ‘the earliest opportunity of departing from the city of mud’.¹⁹³ Three months later, the council agreed to level the streets.¹⁹⁴ That much more work remained to be done was indicated by a suggestion to one resident in November that, ‘when you next conduct ladies from church, it would be advisable to keep them out of the many water holes on the way home’.¹⁹⁵

In February 1883, the streets were ‘of anything but a pleasant nature, especially to a stranger, or night travelling’.¹⁹⁶ The first issue of the *Te Aroha News*, published four months later, urged businessmen to follow the example of their Waiorongomai counterparts by forming footpaths at their own expense instead of merely grumbling.¹⁹⁷ It also complained about the roads, insisting there was ‘not a street’ in the township, only ‘tracks dotted with bogholes’.¹⁹⁸ In July, Rewi Street in front of the post and telegraph office was ‘simply disgraceful and almost impassible’, and the office would be ‘altogether cut off in wet weather’ without improvements; fascines should be laid down and gravel spread ‘so that people could cross without getting over their boot-tops in mud’.¹⁹⁹ In November, access to the public buildings was impossible because of mud, and there was a drain in Rewi Street ‘across which a Hercules could hardly land a prisoner who objected to being

¹⁹¹ ‘Aboriginal’ [John McCombie], ‘On the Wallaby’, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 December 1887, p. 3.

¹⁹² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 4 March 1882, p. 2.

¹⁹³ *Te Aroha Mail*, 3 June 1882, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 30 September 1882, p. 2.

¹⁹⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 170.

¹⁹⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 17 February 1883, p. 3.

¹⁹⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 9 June 1883, p. 2.

¹⁹⁸ Editorials, *Te Aroha News*, 16 June 1883, p. 2, 30 June 1883, p. 2.

¹⁹⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 14 July 1883, p. 2.

locked up'. One drunk had been imprisoned in a hotel because he could not be forced to go to the lock-up.²⁰⁰

In August 1884, the council agreed to level 'the dangerous ditch' in front of the post office and to form a footpath in the main shopping street, Whitaker Street.²⁰¹ The following February, at the request of the domain board it agreed to make a footpath between the hotels and the baths 'for the convenience of invalids', but residents were required to contribute part of the cost.²⁰² The state of the principal thoroughfare had 'long been a standing reproach' and visitors complained 'bitterly of the discomforts and risks they incur in parading over sidewalks after dark'. The council, helped by the townspeople, must have the footpaths fixed before winter because the rough road to the baths was 'disagreeable' for invalids.²⁰³

In March, the council agreed to form footpaths at a cost not to exceed £25, but would only meet half the cost. Denis Murphy²⁰⁴ urged his fellow councillors to contribute £18, 'the Aroha people being very poor and the work urgently needed', but was ignored.²⁰⁵ By late May, it was

possible to stir out after night without incurring the risk of getting maimed by stumbling into some of the ruts or over one of the numerous boulders that formerly bestrewed the side-walks, and there is no fear of the ears of the fastidious being offended, as they might erstwhile have been, by the naughty language of some passing wight, whose toes perhaps had just had an unpleasant experience of the exceeding roughness of the road metal.

It was now easy to go to the baths in the evening, 'the time preferred by many persons for taking a dip'.²⁰⁶ At the end of the month, Murphy wanted £10 spent repairing the footpath outside the post office, for 'gentlemen got water in their boots walking on these footpaths'. Councillors sympathized, but had no money.²⁰⁷ All during winter, Whitaker Street was 'little better than a bog-hole', and it was a 'wonder' no bad accidents had

²⁰⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 10 November 1883, p. 2.

²⁰¹ *Waikato Times*, 30 August 1884, p. 2.

²⁰² Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 12 February 1885, p. 2.

²⁰³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 17 February 1885, p. 2.

²⁰⁴ See paper on his life.

²⁰⁵ Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 12 March 1885, p. 2.

²⁰⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 21 May 1885, p. 2.

²⁰⁷ Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 30 May 1885, p. 3.

occurred. In October, the council made ‘a feeble attempt’ to mend ‘one or two of the worst places’.²⁰⁸ The *Te Aroha News* called for the ‘proper formation, and repair of the streets’, which were ‘in a shameful condition’.²⁰⁹ In November, after a councillor described the streets as ‘disgraceful’, Bridge Street being ‘very dangerous’, and a petition with 67 signatures calling for repairs, the council agreed to spend £30.²¹⁰

Early in February 1886, an engineer worked out the cost of the ‘thorough formation’ of Whitaker and Bridge streets ‘on their permanent levels’. Although these were the main thoroughfares, ‘very little more attention’ had been given to them ‘than if they were bush tracks’, and a correspondent warned that the coming of the railway meant a great increase of traffic.²¹¹ At the February council meeting, Murphy ‘again referred to the necessity of improving the streets’, which ‘were a disgrace to the local body’. The council agreed to spend the ‘quite inadequate’ sum of £85 forming and metalling these two streets.²¹² The following month, it accepted an offer from residents to meet half the cost of making footpaths in Boundary and Rolleston Streets.²¹³

In May, when Whyte, still the local Member of Parliament, told a meeting that Te Aroha should become a borough, he lifted ‘one leg after the other to exhibit, to a sympathising audience, his boots thickly coated with mud, as a proof of the necessity for street improvements’.²¹⁴ As the council had formed Whitaker Street ‘at a late season of the year, the earth had not had time to harden down’, and was ‘in a dreadful state of mud and slush after every shower’.²¹⁵ But the meeting that re-elected the Improvement Committee voted down by a large majority the suggestion that a special rate for road works be struck.²¹⁶ Demands for improvements continued, the postmaster fearing that during winter the street outside his office ‘would

²⁰⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 29 October 1885, p. 2.

²⁰⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 31 October 1885, p. 2.

²¹⁰ Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 14 November 1885, p. 3.

²¹¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 4 February 1886, p. 3.

²¹² Piako County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 13 February 1886, p. 7; Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 16 February 1886, p. 2.

²¹³ Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 13 March 1886, p. 2.

²¹⁴ *Waikato Times*, 8 May 1886, p. 2.

²¹⁵ *Waikato Times*, 11 May 1886, p. 2.

²¹⁶ *Waikato Times*, 18 May 1886, p. 3.

become a quagmire'.²¹⁷ After complaints about the streets near the railway station, 'the engineer was authorised to lay down two crossings in Whitaker Street' to enable 'people to cross from one side of the road to another', and £3 was allocated to improve two other streets 'to enable the children of several residents to get to the school dry shod'.²¹⁸ Two months after his first complaint, 'the postmaster wrote drawing attention of the council to the disgraceful state of the road near the post-office. He asked, if nothing could be done in the way of repairs, that a punt be placed there for the convenience of the public'. The council, lacking funds, was not amused, and forwarded his letter to the government.²¹⁹

Within a month of the election of the first town board in March 1887, a culvert was constructed across Whitaker Street to replace the 'old narrow bridge' beside the Hot Springs Hotel that crossed the dangerous 'chasm that extended across the street for fully half-a-chain above and below it'.²²⁰ Much work remained to be done, as illustrated when a residents broke an ankle in tripping over 'large boulders' on the rough footpath to his home.²²¹ Some long-awaited improvements were made during the following year. In April, footpaths were being made, which would 'greatly add to the comfort of pedestrians' because during winter it had been 'very unpleasant getting about the township after heavy rains'.²²² Two months later, Whitaker Street was levelled, 'large stones' were 'removed from the paths', and gravel was laid down.²²³ Also in June, two men were fined for riding on the footpath in Rewi Street; their excuse was that they had ridden only 'a short distance to avoid a swampy place in the road'.²²⁴

At a meeting of the board in January 1889, one member complained that 'docks and thistles were growing on the sidewalk in Whitaker-street. He thought this looked bad in one of our principal streets'. His colleagues agreed, and ordered their removal.²²⁵ The only complaint about the state of the roads was published in October, when the *Te Aroha News* described a

²¹⁷ Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 1 June 1886, p. 2.

²¹⁸ Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 6 July 1886, p. 2.

²¹⁹ Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 5 August 1886, p. 2.

²²⁰ *Waikato Times*, 21 April 1887, p. 2.

²²¹ *Te Aroha News*, 2 July 1887, p. 2.

²²² *Te Aroha News*, 11 April 1888, p. 2.

²²³ *Te Aroha News*, 16 June 1888, p. 2, 20 June 1888, p. 2.

²²⁴ Police Court, *Te Aroha News*, 20 June 1888, p. 2.

²²⁵ Te Aroha Town Board, *Waikato Times*, 15 January 1889, p. 3.

portion of one of the main streets as almost impassable, with horses sinking into the bog. It contrasted this with the board digging a deep gutter in the upper part of the township to benefit one of its members.²²⁶

ANIMALS

In September 1883, 'A Sufferer' lamented 'the pig nuisance'. It was 'unsafe to leave anything outside' because pigs were 'sure to have everything turned up side down before morning. In no other civilized place are pigs allowed to be at large'.²²⁷ The *Te Aroha News* demanded a pound:

At the present time cows, horses, and pigs wander about everywhere at their own sweet will, and certainly to the inconvenience if not danger of residents and their children. Many persons are now busy in forming gardens, and as all cannot afford to erect fences substantial enough to keep animal trespassers out, in many cases their labour is thrown away. The pigs are an especial menace ... for they can get through wire fences, and householders cannot with safety leave anything consumable out of their back doors without running the risk of having it eaten up. On some days dray horses are scattered all over the township, and invade every partially fenced section.²²⁸

Early the following year, despite a pound being established animals continued to eat gardens. 'The quiet impudence of some of the owners of these animals is almost beyond belief - we have ourselves more than once known such to coolly open gates and put their animals inside the enclosures in the owners' absence'.²²⁹ In December the 'pig nuisance' was 'becoming intolerable', for they were 'continually roaming about'. Nowhere was 'safe from the damaging effects of a visit from some dozens of these animals (whose owners appear to be only too pleased for them to trespass)'.²³⁰ In September 1885 one man was prosecuted for allowing four pigs to trespass

²²⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 19 October 1889, p. 2.

²²⁷ Letter from 'A Sufferer', *Te Aroha News*, 15 September 1883, p. 3.

²²⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 20 October 1883, p. 2.

²²⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 23 February 1884, p. 2.

²³⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 20 December 1884, p. 2.

on the domain.²³¹ In the unfenced cemetery pigs and cattle were tearing up the graves.²³²

In mid-1886 ‘horses, cows (with bells which prove so annoying to many visitors and invalids at night)’, and pigs were wandering the streets.²³³ One man’s 13 pigs trespassed on the domain, causing minor damage for which he was fined one shilling.²³⁴ In August, ‘A Visitor’ wrote complaining about people ‘tying horses to the Domain fence on the footpath, endangering people’s lives, besides cutting up the paths and making it in a filthy mess’.²³⁵ Cows continued to graze freely and lie across footpaths.²³⁶ The inspector of nuisances was ordered to prosecute piggeries and stables creating ‘nuisances’.²³⁷

In May 1888, it was noted that drovers taking mobs of cattle through the township sometimes allowed ‘beasts to lag behind the others to the imminent danger of pedestrians, especially children’. One man had been rushed and tossed by a big bullock, without however suffering any broken bones.²³⁸ One month later, there was a complaint that footpaths had been ‘very much cut up’ by horses.²³⁹ In October, when horses and cattle ‘running at large’ were injuring the footpaths, the board ordered that this be prevented.²⁴⁰ During 1889 a considerable number of these animals wandered through the township because so much land to the south had been fenced off for drying flax during the brief flax boom,²⁴¹ dirtying if not damaging roads and footpaths. The latter were also damaged when people rode horses on them; one man was charged with this offence, but as he was

²³¹ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 28/1885, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A.

²³² Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 22 August 1885, p. 2.

²³³ *Te Aroha News*, 3 July 1886, p. 2.

²³⁴ Te Aroha Magistrate’s Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 29/1886, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A.

²³⁵ Letter from ‘Ratepayer’, *Te Aroha News*, 14 August 1886, p. 3.

²³⁶ Letter from ‘A Visitor’, *Te Aroha News*, 29 October 1887, p. 2.

²³⁷ Town Board, *Te Aroha News*, 5 November 1887, p. 2.

²³⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 12 May 1888, p. 2.

²³⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 13 June 1888, p. 2.

²⁴⁰ Town Board, *Te Aroha News*, 17 October 1888, p. 2.

²⁴¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 19 September 1889, p. 2.

new to Te Aroha he was let off because he might not have been aware this was forbidden.²⁴²

STORMS AND FLOODS

In April 1883, a day of 'heavy showers, accompanied by thunder and lightning', caused the creeks to flood. 'Great fears were entertained that the bridge near the Hot Springs Hotel would be washed away, as the water was flowing over the top of the woodwork and across the road', and some shops and businesses were 'with difficulty' saved from being flooded.²⁴³ In May, a gale completely removed the roof of the battery and a large portion of its walls.²⁴⁴ The following month another gale blew down fences and 'a few zinc chimneys', the front out of an auction mart, and a five-roomed house off its piles.²⁴⁵ It was accompanied by over 36 hours of rain that flooded the western approaches to the punt.²⁴⁶ A month later, the weather was 'fearful', the river was 'very high', and George O'Halloran's stables²⁴⁷ 'had vanished when the morning dawned. Several small houses are rolling about the streets. Old settlers say this is the roughest storm they have had for years'.²⁴⁸ This 'fearful gale' lasted for 24 hours, blowing down several houses, the framework of a hotel under construction, and damaging roofs, walls, and windows.²⁴⁹ It was the worst storm a correspondent had experienced in his 20 years in the North Island: the rain was horizontal.²⁵⁰ But it did wash the mud off the streets. One store became an island, O'Halloran's stables were destroyed for the second time, one small house was turned into 'matchwood', and a brick chimney was blown down.²⁵¹

The next major gale, in August 1889, was 'a regular hurricane, surpassing in violence anything experienced here during the past seven years'. The large balcony of the Club Hotel, facing Whitaker Street, 'was

²⁴² Police Court, *Te Aroha News*, 5 October 1889, p. 2.

²⁴³ *Waikato Times*, 17 April 1883, p. 2.

²⁴⁴ *Waikato Times*, 14 May 1883, p. 2.

²⁴⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 30 June 1883, p. 2.

²⁴⁶ *Waikato Times*, 28 June 1883, p. 3.

²⁴⁷ See paper on his life.

²⁴⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 25 July 1883, p. 2.

²⁴⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 27 July 1883, p. 3.

²⁵⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 31 July 1883, p. 3.

²⁵¹ *Te Aroha News*, 28 July 1883, p. 2.

completely carried away and smashed in pieces, together with the seats thereon, and the front of the hotel' was 'considerably damaged'. A large window in a vacant draper's store was 'smashed in'; the roof of Bew's brick kiln was 'carried away'; the 'flax mill buildings were unroofed, and a great deal of flax damaged by rain'; one cottage lost its brick chimney and a house was blown down; the front of one store 'was greatly damaged, also stables at rear', and one resident's cow sheds were 'completely wrecked'; Bradley's livery stables 'were partially unroofed', as was a cordial factory and 'other houses'.²⁵² The following month, a lesser storm blew down several fences and the Wesleyan minister's chimney, and the vestry of the Catholic Church was much damaged.²⁵³

FIRES

In the early morning of 17 May 1883, the Hot Springs Hotel was burnt down, for the first time:

About 3.15 on Thursday morning the inmates of the hotel, numbering over 30 persons, were startled in their sleep by the cry of fire through the house and on wakening up they discovered it was a case of immediate flight, as the flames were advancing through the building at a rapid pace, without the slightest possibility of being checked. The cook is supposed to have been the first member of the household to notice the fire, and without losing time he passed along the dormitories arousing the occupants. Mr [James] Warren, whose room is in that portion of the house where the fire is said to have originated, was also early apprised of the calamity, for, on wakening, the roof of his room had started to burn, giving himself and wife but little time to prepare for flight. He also joined the cook in arousing the boarders, and in the space of half a second all were engaged in endeavouring to save the contents of their respective rooms, and the furniture of the other apartments of the house. But as the fire raged along unchecked, licking up the woodwork and scrim, the work of saving the furniture was but partially successful, the major portion of it being too cumbrous to remove in time. By the exertions of a few of the boarders, who seemed for the time being to forget their own personal safety in their eagerness to save whatever they could from the flames, a valuable piano was removed in safety, as well as a quantity of other valuables and domestic appurtenances. Almost every occupant had the

²⁵² *Te Aroha News*, 14 August 1889, p. 2.

²⁵³ *Te Aroha News*, 28 September 1889, p. 2.

misfortune to lose something, though little; though none came out worse (with the exception, of course, of the unfortunate proprietor,) than Mr [Charles Stanislaus] Stafford,²⁵⁴ who had gone down the river on a shooting expedition, leaving all his belongings in his room, amongst which was a gold watch and chain, all being destroyed. The remains of the watch, on being discovered in the morning, showed that it had stopped at 3.20, thus recording the hour of its own fate. There were a few hundred pounds worth of stock in the cellar, which, had it been remembered, could easily have been saved; but, as no one thought of this portion of the house, its contents were likewise destroyed. Within about fifteen minutes after the fire was first noticed the whole building was one burning mass, and attention was then turned to confining the flames and preventing the fire from taking hold of the buildings across the road. A large crowd of spectators having by this time assembled, volunteers were not wanting; buckets and wet blankets were brought into requisition, and by these means the billiard-room building, [James] Clarke's store,²⁵⁵ and Quinlan's hotel, were effectually secured from injury. [Thomas] Veale's store,²⁵⁶ however, was soon seized, and before long was in flames; but, as the proprietors' anticipated its destruction, they had succeeded in carrying off almost all the stock before it caught. Attention was then concentrated on the telegraph and post-office, which looked like following the example of Veale's store. The roof was immediately covered with wet blankets, and a plentiful supply of water from the neighbouring creek was kept going. Care had been taken, however, by the officer-in-charge to remove all letters, documents, and instruments from the building, so with the exception of a little temporary inconvenience its destruction would not have been serious. About 4 o'clock the flames began to smoulder, having succeeded in the total destruction of both buildings, a vestige of neither being left standing.

The cause of the fire is as yet a mystery. [The licensee,] Mr [John] Coleman, went to bed at 12.30, putting out all the fires before he retired. Its origin, however, is supposed to have been in the smoking-room on the right of the old passage. Mr Coleman, who, we regret to say, is a heavy loser, estimates his loss at about £1500, only £700 of which, so far as is at present known, is covered by insurance in the Victoria. Mr Veale's stock was

²⁵⁴ See paper on Harry and Charles: Henry Ernest Whitaker and Charles Stanislaus Stafford.

²⁵⁵ See *Thames Star*, 7 August 1882, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 29 November 1884, p. 2, 17 January 1885, p. 7.

²⁵⁶ See paper on Te Aroha during the first rush: 1880-1881.

insured for £100, but the building, the loss of which he estimates at £100, was uninsured.²⁵⁷

A later report gave Coleman's loss as £2,000, and noted that 'the ladies belonging to the family having a short time to escape, were unable to save the greater portion of their clothes. Mr Walker at once, with his usual kindness, invited them to his hotel, where they now remain'. This account noted that 'it was fortunate that there was scarcely any wind at the time the fire was raging, as the sparks would have been certain to have ignited the buildings across the road'. Clarke's store was prevented from catching fire by 'the application of a few buckets of water', and at Quinlan's hotel 'buckets full of water were kept on the roof in readiness to quench any sparks that might alight'.²⁵⁸

At the inquest into the fire, James Henry Balcke,²⁵⁹ who managed Veale's store,²⁶⁰ 'deposed to having been aroused by the barking of a dog at about 3 o'clock on the morning of the fire. Saw a glare on the roof, and thought his own place was on fire, but being assured in his own mind to the contrary, fell off to sleep again'. After waking ten minutes later, he 'went over to Quinlan's Hotel, and awakened the inmates there, knowing that those at Coleman's would already have been aroused by the fire'. Once he knew everyone in the hotels was awake, 'he directed his attention to saving his own goods'. Coleman now estimated his personal loss 'at over £700 in stock and depreciation of the value of the property and the business'.²⁶¹ For forgetting to rescue provisions and other goods in the basement he was chided by the *Observer* Man: 'John, now, mind the key of the room; think of useful things, not empty physic bottles. In time of fire more valuable articles than them can be saved'.²⁶² Coleman rebuilt the hotel and held 'a free night' to celebrate its re-opening in November.²⁶³

This fire prompted the first of many calls for a volunteer fire brigade. 'Insurance, where people live in such a haphazard manner in wooden

²⁵⁷ *Te Aroha Mail*, 19 May 1883, reprinted in *Thames Advertiser*, 21 May 1883, p. 3.

²⁵⁸ *Waikato Times*, 19 May 1883, p. 2.

²⁵⁹ See 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 3 December 1881, p. 186; *Thames Star*, 24 May 1883, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 30 June 1883, p. 3.

²⁶⁰ *Waikato Times*, 31 May 1883, p. 4.

²⁶¹ *Waikato Times*, 31 May 1883, p. 4.

²⁶² 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 26 May 1883, p. 154.

²⁶³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

houses, with chimneys chiefly of zinc or iron, which may or may not be kept clean, and may or may not be fixed within an inch or three feet of readily ignitable timber', was 'high'.²⁶⁴ Two years later a better water supply was called for, as a fire in the main street would mean 'the greater part of the town might be destroyed and nothing could be done to prevent it'.²⁶⁵ This was illustrated when a two-roomed cottage with a lean-to attached burned down at 11 o'clock one morning. While his mother was attending to her child in the bedroom, flames from the kitchen stove 'somehow caught the woodwork near the fireplace'. Without a water supply there was nothing her husband and the neighbours could do, and 'everything inside the house except a few trifling articles was consumed'. Although the house and contents were insured, their loss was estimated as £50.²⁶⁶ Plans were considered during 1887 for a 'partial water supply' for 'fire prevention purposes', but nothing was done because of the cost.²⁶⁷

There was another major fire in early March 1888. 'Shortly before 4 a.m. on Sunday morning last the dreaded cry of "fire" was heard', and 'within a few minutes the school bell rang out, and speedily a large crowd collected', the fire being in Robert Harris' grocery store,²⁶⁸ with James Hendy Rowe's butchery²⁶⁹ and William Dibsell's bakery and general store²⁷⁰ being on either side. 'When discovered the flames had obtained complete possession of the building, and it was quite evident nothing could be done to save it; and but little as regards the stock; attention was directed towards preventing the flames from spreading to' Rowe's shop.

A number of willing helpers displayed great energy and by means of wet blankets, etc, prevented this building taking fire, although it was much scorched. The store and its contents were speedily burned to the ground. During the day two men were put on by the

²⁶⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 21 July 1883, p. 2, editorial, 22 September 1883, p. 2.

²⁶⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 14 January 1886, p. 2.

²⁶⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 2 October 1886, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 2 October 1886, p. 2.

²⁶⁷ *Te Aroha News*, Town Board, 4 June 1887, p. 2, 29 October 1887, p. 2.

²⁶⁸ See *Te Aroha News*, 7 February 1885, p. 2, 10 July 1886, p. 3, advertisement, 14 August 1886, p. 1, 5 March 1887, p. 3, 12 March 1887, advertisement, 2 April 1887, p. 3.

²⁶⁹ See Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 14 August 1883, p.3; *Te Aroha News*, Piako County Council, 17 January 1885, p. 2, 31 October 1885, p. 7, 6 December 1887, p. 2, 10 March 1888, p. 2; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 831.

²⁷⁰ See paper on his life.

Town Board, and completely extinguished the smouldering embers. It was most fortunate the night was calm, had it been otherwise, the flames must have spread and destroyed several other adjacent buildings. A large Milner's safe was quite warped by the heat, and the books scorched, but in no way destroyed. Much sympathy is felt for Mr Harris in his misfortune, and the loss he has sustained through the stoppage of his business, over and above direct loss of property by the fire.²⁷¹

Harris immediately capitalised on this sympathy with an advertisement thanking those who had helped. 'He would also take this means of notifying that he will re-open business as early as possible, when he hopes to receive liberal support to assist him in his misfortune'.²⁷² The insurance companies paid up promptly, and while using temporary premises he built a replacement store.²⁷³

RIVER TRANSPORT

In June 1882, the Steam Navigation Company was 'said to be reaping a rich harvest' from the rapid growth of the settlement.²⁷⁴ Four months later, 'the increased trade' required more barges to be built.²⁷⁵ In November, there was a daily steamer.²⁷⁶ Late the following year fares were greatly reduced, a one-way trip now costing 5s and a return one 7s 6d.²⁷⁷ Only one passenger steamer operated by mid-1884, and boats to Auckland were tri-weekly.²⁷⁸ By June 1885, one boat made the trip from Thames twice a week.²⁷⁹

In late 1887, an applicant for the post of collector of wharfage dues was told one was not needed, the Thames harbour master saying there were 'absolutely no wharves at Te Aroha worth paying attention to. The only

²⁷¹ *Te Aroha News*, 10 March 1888, p. 2.

²⁷² Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 10 March 1888, p. 3.

²⁷³ *Te Aroha News*, 31 March 1888, p. 2, 7 April 1888, p. 2, advertisement, 14 April 1888, p. 7, 25 April 1888, p. 2, 16 June 1888, p. 2.

²⁷⁴ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 24 June 1882, p. 233.

²⁷⁵ *Thames Star*, 10 October 1882, p. 2.

²⁷⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 4 November 1882, p. 3.

²⁷⁷ *Thames Star*, 14 November 1883, p. 2.

²⁷⁸ *Waikato Times*, 2 August 1884, p. 2.

²⁷⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 26 June 1885, p. 2.

apology for a wharf is a small affair erected by the Thames Steam Navigation Company, just below the Railway Bridge'. The other landing was Dibsell's, where goods were 'simply put upon the river bank'.²⁸⁰

THE PUNT

At the beginning of 1882, 'our new punt' was operating 'splendidly', and the council had constructed good approaches.²⁸¹ Operated by Charles Everitt, it could carry six drays and four saddle horses. It now crossed to 'Firth's store', meaning a holding shed not a shop.²⁸² Some people had wanted it sited 'higher up the river',²⁸³ and in April a resident repeated these complaints:

As situated now, it is most inconvenient, being a considerable distance away from the business part of the township, entailing a long journey on a bad road, on both sides of the river, for anyone wanting to cross. Not only that, but when the river rises the punt cannot work on account of the low banks, a thing which happened last Sunday night, when a gentleman, after riding a long journey, was informed that he could not cross, and was put to the trouble of riding a long distance up the river bank and getting over at the old ferry. The old crossing is a far more suitable place, being right in the township, and at a place where the river is much narrower.²⁸⁴

'Passenger' agreed, calling for a petition to abolish the punt because it was of no use to anyone at the present site. Had it not been for the kindness of a farmer lending his boat and his brother 'pulling them across, many would have to go a few miles out of their course through a certain clique placing the punt where it is, so as to enhance the property of a few and damage the interests of the many'. The earlier punt had run whatever the height of the river.²⁸⁵ In June the stopping of the punt for several days almost deprived Thames of its beef supply. 'A mob of cattle coming from

²⁸⁰ Thames Harbour Board, *Te Aroha News*, 8 October 1887, p. 3.

²⁸¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 3 January 1882, p. 2.

²⁸² Visiting Reporter, *Thames Advertiser*, 29 March 1882, p. 3.

²⁸³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 3 January 1882, p. 2.

²⁸⁴ Letter from 'Observer', *Waikato Times*, 18 April 1882, p. 3.

²⁸⁵ Letter from 'Passenger', *Te Aroha Mail*, 10 June 1882, p. 3.

Waikato to the Thames market had to be turned back last week, and this week not even the ordinary mail coach could complete its journey'.²⁸⁶

In February 1883, the *Waikato Times* wrote that 'the old pioneer punt', the 'only indication of semi-civilization about the township', was 'a great drawback'.²⁸⁷ The following January, the Waitoa storekeeper broke an arm because 'the horse he was riding sprang forward before the punt was quite alongside, and caused the rider to fall'.²⁸⁸ In August, the biggest flood in ten years combined with a gale meant punt traffic was suspended and the mail had to be taken across by boat.²⁸⁹

Residents believed that Everett made a 'more than ordinary' fortune out of his 'well-timed speculation'.²⁹⁰ He lived on the eastern side of the river, and those on the other bank 'cooeed' to be collected, paying 6d for the return trip.²⁹¹

THE BRIDGE

When the Premier visited in February 1882, he was asked to provide a bridge.²⁹² Its site had been determined by naming one street Bridge Street, and businessmen had built close to it on the understanding it would be constructed there. In June, a meeting again called on the government to provide one.²⁹³ On Firth's prompting, the council insisted that any bridge should be a swing one, to avoid impeding navigation to his Matamata estate.²⁹⁴

By February 1883 construction had commenced of a combined railway and traffic bridge with a swinging section.²⁹⁵ Totara piles came from

²⁸⁶ Editorial, *Te Aroha Mail*, 10 June 1882, p. 2.

²⁸⁷ *Waikato Times*, 17 February 1883, p. 3.

²⁸⁸ *Waikato Times*, 29 January 1884, p. 2.

²⁸⁹ *Thames Star*, 20 August 1884, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 19 August 1884, p. 2, 21 August 1884, p. 2.

²⁹⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 2 June 1885, p. 3.

²⁹¹ Ellen Grattan, interviewed by Mobile Unit of New Zealand Broadcasting Commission, 1948, MU 352A, Radio NZ Archives.

²⁹² *Thames Advertiser*, 24 February 1882, p. 3.

²⁹³ *Thames Advertiser*, 1 July 1882, p. 3.

²⁹⁴ Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 2 November 1882, p. 2.

²⁹⁵ *Waikato Times*, 17 February 1883, p. 3; *Thames Star*, 6 March 1883, p. 2, 29 March 1883, p. 2.

Wellington and 200,000 feet of kauri from Hikurangi, near Whangarei.²⁹⁶ By December, the contractors were making 'good headway'. As the 'larger steamers' would not be able to pass it during construction, 'the goods sheds erected at the old landing' were 'removed to below the bridge, which will probably become the permanent landing place'.²⁹⁷ Upon completion in May 1885, it was described as 'one of the finest bridges in the country', with an 'admirable' swinging section.

It looks well, is decidedly ornamental, in fact perhaps a shade more ornamental than useful. Some people say the swing portion of the bridge is a costly piece of nonsense, and that its utility is mere myth. They maintain that it was a bit of Governmental foolishness to tax the country to the extent of the several thousands of pounds which this piece of work required, when for an expenditure of a few shillings river steamers could be made to steam under the wooden structure. Certainly at the present time the wooden portion of the bridge is a good height out of the water. But no doubt the engineers know best.

A meeting of residents asked that it be opened for horse and vehicular traffic as soon as possible, and offered to meet a third of the cost of making temporary approaches.²⁹⁸ Not till July was approval granted to form temporary approaches.²⁹⁹ Foot traffic walked along a plank on the bridge, watching out for trains.³⁰⁰

NEWSPAPERS

'Rumour has it that Te Aroha is very shortly to possess its own again', according to a Thames gossip writer in April 1882.³⁰¹ This referred to the re-establishment of the *Te Aroha Mail*, first published on 3 June by William

²⁹⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 29 September 1883, p. 2.

²⁹⁷ Special Reporter, 'A Trip to Te Aroha Goldfield', *Thames Star*, 10 December 1883, p. 2.

²⁹⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 5 May 1885, p. 3, 2 June 1885, p. 3.

²⁹⁹ *Waikato Times*, 4 July 1885, p. 3.

³⁰⁰ Ellen Grattan, interviewed by Mobile Unit of New Zealand Broadcasting Commission, 1948, MU 352A, Radio NZ Archives.

³⁰¹ 'Thames Tittle Tattle', *Observer*, 22 April 1882, p. 84.

Wilkinson, until recently owner of the *Thames Advertiser*.³⁰² Its advertisement made great claims:

“The Te Aroha Mail,” a full-sized Weekly Newspaper, devoted to Literature and the amusement of the masses. Its columns - eschewing the more dry paths of Politics and big gooseberries - will be filled with amusing stories and Sketches, Literary and Scientific Extracts, etc, which, with the news of the week in brief and leaderettes on social topics, will give it a local zest. It will also supply the latest and most reliable news on Te Aroha, Ohinemuri, and Thames Goldfield district. To advertisers it will offer a cheap medium of communication with the public of Te Aroha and surrounding districts, as the circulation will be such as to warrant the advertisers of the Thames, Waikato, Auckland and elsewhere giving it their heartiest support.³⁰³

The *Waikato Times* and the *Observer* considered its first issue was ‘exceedingly creditable’.³⁰⁴ As almost all copies have been lost, its quality cannot be assessed. In June 1883 the partnership owning it ended and it ceased publication.³⁰⁵

Its replacement, the *Te Aroha News*, was owned by Henry Ernest Whitaker,³⁰⁶ and, until November, edited by Edward Hawkins, formerly of the *West Coast Times*.³⁰⁷ The newspaper was then taken over by Henry Brett, of the *Auckland Star*, who retained a financial interest in it until 1890.³⁰⁸ The *Observer* described the newspaper as ‘an offshoot’ of the *Star*, which provided a new editor,³⁰⁹ John Ilott,³¹⁰ Ilott, who would be both editor

³⁰² ‘Thames Tittle Tattle’, *Observer*, 7 May 1882, p. 118, 27 May 1882, p. 165, 16 June 1882, p. 198; *Thames Advertiser*, 5 June 1882, p. 3.

³⁰³ *Waikato Times*, 13 May 1882, p. 3.

³⁰⁴ *Waikato Times*, 8 June 1882, p. 2; *Observer*, 10 June 1882, p. 204.

³⁰⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 11 June 1883, p. 2, 14 June 1883, p. 2.

³⁰⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 9 June 1883, p. 4.

³⁰⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 25 April 1885, p. 2, 9 May 1885, p. 2.

³⁰⁸ Agreement dated 20 December 1883 between Henry Ernest Whitaker and Henry Brett, Henry Ernest Whitaker, and Frederick Alexander Whitaker; Agreement dated 25 July 1890 between Brett and Co. and Henry Buttle, Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Certified Instruments, BBAV 11581/11a, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, 24 November 1883, p. 4, 19 July 1890, p. 2; *Observer*, 21 April 1906, p. 4; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 828.

³⁰⁹ *Observer*, 21 April 1906, p. 4.

³¹⁰ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 1 (Wellington, 1897), pp. 564-565.

and manager until mid-1890, arrived in Te Aroha from England in January 1884, on the recommendation of his wife's cousin who thought the thermal springs would cure his severe rheumatic fever, which they did. According to his grandson, he invested in Waiorongomai mining, 'but lost substantially'.³¹¹

The *Thames Advertiser* praised its first issue, of 9 June 1883.³¹² Its first editorial confidently described the great prospects of the goldfield. People were 'beginning to feel that the ebb has run its course', and there was 'a buoyancy and confident expectancy very discernable both in mining and general matters - an anxiety to be prepared to take the flood at its turn and float on to fortune'. The field would be unique in New Zealand, for 'the work of goldmining and the plough of the farmer will go hand-in-hand in making, not a mere township of mines and batteries, all life to-day and deserted to-morrow, but the important centre of a large and growing and settled population'. Although 'the special advocate and pleader for the district in all that concerned its interest and prosperity', it would not be 'the mere chronicler of the small beer of passing events' and would discuss 'large questions' and 'important interests'. Its 'position politically and socially' would be 'advanced and assertive'.³¹³

Although it did express opinions on developments in New Zealand and beyond, in October it was criticized for its parochialism. 'The local buster gets all its news from the Public pound. It is pigs roaming at large; cows want pounding; muddy roads; stormy weather; welcome rain; etcettery, and so forth'.³¹⁴ With its second editor it was hoped the news would be 'more newsy'.³¹⁵ It certainly became more combative, as Ilott argued with other leading residents, being criticized for being obstructive and negative, especially by Charles Ahier, for a time clerk for the town board, whose defects Ilott pointed out both in person and in print.³¹⁶ Their conflicts tows were handicapped by Ahier's 'hesitance of speech':

³¹¹ Jack Ilott, *The Ilott Story* (Wellington, 1993), pp. 17-18.

³¹² *Thames Advertiser*, 13 June 1883, p. 2.

³¹³ Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 9 June 1883, p. 2.

³¹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 27 October 1883, p. 8.

³¹⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 November 1883, p. 8.

³¹⁶ For example, *Aroha Gazette*, 7 December 1888, 14 December 1888, press cuttings in Tourist Department, TO 1, 1891/198, ANZ-W; Town Board, *Te Aroha News*, 24 April 1890, p. 2.

What would we have given to have heard that celebrated quarrel between Charles and a former editor of the *Te Aroha News* who suffered from a similar infirmity – only worse, if anything! The favoured audience of this noted encounter say that the scene was excruciatingly comical. The battle was not *fast* but furious, and after lasting from early morn to dewy eve was eventually drawn.³¹⁷

A printer, who learnt his trade in the *Te Aroha News* office in the 1880s, in 1930 recalled those days. In addition to the ‘10 x 12 structure in Whitaker Street’ there was

a smaller room wherein the old double-demy Albion press was stored, on which the weekly paper was printed at the speed of 300 copies an hour. This press was indeed a heart-breaking contrivance. With the ever-increasing flow of gold seekers the population rapidly grew, and the circulation quickly rose, and the old press with its arm stretching power kept one going late into the night. In addition to printing the paper, all jobbing from a visiting card to a double-demy poster was turned out.

The literary department laboured in a cubicle scarcely as big as the other rooms.... The lure of gold attracted many notable personages, and the News Office presented at times a lively appearance. A pestle and mortar was constantly going, crushing specimens brought in from the ranges. Some of the tails of gold left in the dish were quite bewitching.

John Allan Dobson, an experienced miner who became a prominent mine manager,³¹⁸ was employed as mining reporter, ‘and authentic reports were carefully prepared. When the boom was on “wildcat” claims were treated by the paper as such, and the public was never misled’. Ilott ‘toiled assiduously in the interest of the town and district. Few meetings were left unreported’, meaning that ‘the reporter’s life was no sinecure. Travelling meant many weary hours in the saddle over bad roads and in all sorts of weather’.³¹⁹

In March 1888 it changed from being a weekly to being a twice-weekly newspaper, officially because of its faith in the revival of mining, but in

³¹⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 10 January 1895, p. 2.

³¹⁸ See paper on his life.

³¹⁹ T.J. Maingay, ‘Local Press’, *Te Aroha News*, 14 April 1930, p. 5.

reality to fend off a rival.³²⁰ It was claimed that its ‘outspoken policy’, apparently about the prospects of mining claims, ‘did not meet with the approval of all. In the course of time the dissatisfied ones started an opposition paper’.³²¹ Frederick Charles Smithyman had published the first issue of this weekly, the *Aroha Gazette*, in May that year. No copies have survived, but according to the *Waikato Times* this issue had a ‘full quantity of latest local and general news, and other reading matter, with two excellent leading articles which have been favourably received’.³²² The *Thames Advertiser* was less welcoming, noting of the same issue that, while it claimed to fill a desire for more news, its Thames correspondent provided ‘“news” extending five or six weeks back, and shows commendable aptitude for digging from the Thames papers while running down the Thames district’.³²³ The *Te Aroha News* made no mention of its rival until briefly announcing in December that it had ceased publication after receiving nothing but ‘good wishes’ since first published.³²⁴ The *Waikato Times* was more sympathetic, writing that ‘after a severe and plucky struggle of eight months against heavy odds’, Smithyman had been ‘compelled to succumb’.³²⁵ Thirty-six years later, the *Te Aroha News* revealed that during these eight months both papers had lost money because of the small population. Just when Smithyman had decided to cease publication, he unexpectedly received an offer for his paper from Brett. ‘Concealing his great joy Mr Smithyman haggled for a time and obtained an improved offer which he accepted’.³²⁶ He immediately moved to the South Island, where the owner of the newspaper and its printing plant lived.³²⁷

In July 1889, it was reported that another newspaper would be established, ‘the policy and tactics of which’ would ‘be decidedly “agin” the

³²⁰ Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 10 March 1888, p. 2; G.H. Scholefield, *Newspapers in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1958), p. 114.

³²¹ T.J. Maingay, ‘Local Press’, *Te Aroha News*, 14 April 1930, p. 5.

³²² *Waikato Times*, 8 May 1888, p. 2.

³²³ *Thames Advertiser*, 8 May 1888, p. 2.

³²⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 29 December 1888, p. 2.

³²⁵ *Waikato Times*, 29 December 1888, p. 2.

³²⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 8 November 1924, p. 5.

³²⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 22 August 1888, p. 2; Waikouaiti County Council, *Otago Daily Times*, 1 June 1891, p. 4; *Bruce Herald*, 16 October 1891, p. 2, 23 October 1891, p. 4.

other organ'.³²⁸ On 10 August the first issue of the *Te Aroha Weekly Mail* was published by Sir William Wasteneys, then a local lawyer, and with others published 'a string of papers'.³²⁹ He had claimed the baronetcy in 1887, but it was not officially recognized. In March he had purchased the *Waikato News*, published in Cambridge, which expired after one year.³³⁰ Despite containing much local news, by mid-October his Te Aroha newspaper was no more.³³¹ Two months later, Wasteneys published the first issue of his *Te Aroha - Waiorongomai Times*.³³² The *Te Aroha News*, which had ignored his first paper, in referring to the latest one stressed it was published in Cambridge.³³³ It lasted nine weeks.³³⁴ No copies of either of these short-lived newspapers have survived. Wasteneys moved on to the South Island and then to England, having lost both his money and his wife.³³⁵

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In 1883 the *Waikato Times* recommended Te Aroha become a town district so it could provide proper streets, footpaths, and other facilities.³³⁶ The *Te Aroha News* agreed, anticipating big improvements in roads and footpaths, water supply, and drainage.³³⁷ In July about 100 people unanimously supported forming a borough that included Waiorongomai, a committee being elected to collect the necessary 100 signatures.³³⁸ This move may have prompted the council to grant £100 for drainage and street formation two months later.³³⁹

³²⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 2 July 1889, p. 2; *Observer*, 20 July 1889, p. 11.

³²⁹ *Waikato Times*, 13 August 1889, p. 2; Scholefield, p. 114.

³³⁰ *Auckland Star*, 3 June 1903, p. 1.

³³¹ *Waikato Times*, 13 August 1889, p. 2, Te Aroha Correspondent, 17 October 1889, p. 2.

³³² *Observer*, 21 December 1889, p. 11.

³³³ *Te Aroha News*, 18 December 1889, p. 2.

³³⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 19 July 1890, p. 2.

³³⁵ See *Auckland Star*, 8 March 1890, p. 5, 3 June 1903, p. 1; advertisement, *Inangahua Times*, 14 July 1890, p. 3; *Daily Telegraph*, 10 July 1896, p. 3.

³³⁶ *Waikato Times*, 17 February 1883, p. 3, 28 June 1883, p. 3.

³³⁷ Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 30 June 1883, p. 2.

³³⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 17 July 1883, p. 2.

³³⁹ Piako County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 15 September 1883, p. 2.

In February 1884 a licensing committee was elected; little interest was shown in the election because there was ‘no division of interests’.³⁴⁰ In November a meeting was told by James Mills that the borough petition had the requisite number of names. After it unanimously supported the proposal, a committee comprising representatives from Te Aroha, Waiorongomai, and Quartzville was established to advance the issue.³⁴¹ The following February, a ‘very largely attended’ and ‘thoroughly representative’ meeting again called for a borough.³⁴² A committee then met to ensure words led to action. ‘Vigorous measures were adopted for the re-canvassing for signatures to the petition for the formation of the proposed borough, a fresh plan has been made, and two canvassers appointed’.³⁴³ In June, ‘a gentleman who takes an active interest in the affairs of this place’ received a letter from the Premier stating that if his government’s proposals for local self-government were carried, ‘many of the evils under which this district suffers will be avoided’.³⁴⁴ Shortly afterwards, the government announced that a borough could not be formed because Te Aroha did not possess 250 resident householders.³⁴⁵

In July a Te Aroha Improvement Association was elected ‘to watch the interests of the district’. Its members were a clerk, two mine managers, a carpenter, an ironmonger, a chemist, and a butcher.³⁴⁶ Its secretary was Edward Peel, a cordial manufacturer recently bankrupted because of the ‘general decline of the district’.³⁴⁷ When John Ballance, Minister of Lands, visited in November, he commented on the ‘very bad state’ of the streets and ‘strongly advised’ forming a town board to enable residents to make improvements.³⁴⁸

As the council could not pay for public works, it was argued that a borough could raise loans for this purpose.³⁴⁹ The council’s chairman

³⁴⁰ *Waikato Times*, 19 February 1884, p. 2, 26 February 1884, p. 2.

³⁴¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 25 November 1884, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 29 November 1884, p. 2.

³⁴² *Te Aroha News*, 28 February 1885, pp. 2, 7.

³⁴³ *Te Aroha News*, 7 March 1885, p. 2.

³⁴⁴ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 19 June 1885, p. 3.

³⁴⁵ Piako County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 27 June 1885, p. 2.

³⁴⁶ *Waikato Times*, 14 July 1885, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 18 July 1885, p. 2.

³⁴⁷ District Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 6 May 1885, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 18 July 1885, p. 2.

³⁴⁸ *Waikato Times*, 10 November 1885, p. 2.

³⁴⁹ Editorial, *Waikato Times*, 10 April 1886, p. 2.

commented in February 1886 that it ‘was the only town of the same dimensions’ without a board.³⁵⁰ The initial plan, devised by the Improvement Committees of Te Aroha and Waiorongomai, was for a borough including both settlements, but when a deputation met the Colonial Secretary in November he recommended a town board.³⁵¹ After a petition signed by 106 residents requested that one be formed and the council gave its approval, the Te Aroha Town District was proclaimed on 29 December.³⁵²

A meeting to criticize the domain board held in September was so disrupted that organisers prematurely abandoned it:

From the very start a determined attempt to obstruct the meeting and generally block the proceedings was made, by several who were apparently champions and defenders of the Domain Board, as regards the appointments made by them at their last meeting. One party (who only the other day figures as defendant in an assault case), moved that the meeting pronounce the Chairman both mad and drunk; another (who was certainly not accountable for what he said, having imbibed too freely), tried to keep the floor during nearly the whole time, and to “talk down” all business.³⁵³

In November, ‘unlike other meetings’ recently held to discuss ‘questions of local importance’, at one about improving the cemetery there was ‘perfect unanimity’, everyone agreeing it should be made into ‘a decent state’, with some making ‘sharp criticism’ of the trustees for being ‘culpably unmindful of their duty’.³⁵⁴ A committee was elected to collect funds to fence it.³⁵⁵

Few were interested in the 1887 licensing elections.³⁵⁶ In contrast, the first election for the town board, shortly afterwards, ‘excited a good deal of interest’:

³⁵⁰ Piako County Council, *Te Aroha News*, 13 February 1886, p. 7.

³⁵¹ *Waikato Times*, 3 August 1886, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 20 November 1886, p. 2.

³⁵² *Te Aroha News*, 4 December 1886, p. 2, 8 January 1887, p. 2.

³⁵³ *Te Aroha News*, 18 September 1886, p. 2.

³⁵⁴ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 18 November 1886, p. 2.

³⁵⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 20 November 1886, p. 2.

³⁵⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 5 March 1887, p. 2.

From an early hour the friends of the two parties were busy bringing voters to the poll, and their exertions were continued throughout the day. The proceedings were conducted in a fair and satisfactory manner by both sides, and, with the exception of one or two slight ebullitions of feelings by the more zealous of the partisans, nothing occurred to disturb the general harmony.

The working men's candidates won four of the five seats. 'A considerable crowd waited outside the polling-house, and when the result was made known there was much cheering by the friends of those who had been returned'.³⁵⁷

A *Te Aroha News* editorial in December 1889 attacked the town board's bumbling incapacity.³⁵⁸ It was equally unimpressed with a petition to replace it with a borough combining Te Aroha with Waiorongomai and Quartzville which had received 70 signatures in July.³⁵⁹ After it was sent to parliament, the newspaper published a detailed analysis proving a borough would not be of financial benefit and that its promoters were misleading residents about the amount spent by the council on mining. 'An impecunious Borough Council' would not be able to provide assistance, it warned.³⁶⁰ Residents of Waiorongomai and Quartzville agreed, and their counter-petition requested their exclusion led the government to refuse to establish it because its rateable base would be inadequate.³⁶¹

RENTS AND TENURE

In July 1885 a petition and deputation to the warden asked for reduced rents on some allotments whose occupants 'may be disposed to purchase them'. This was necessary because the tenure, 'though well enough on a prosperous goldfield', was 'hardly suitable under existing conditions'.³⁶² Residents should be treated the same as at Waiorongomai, where rents on

³⁵⁷ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 12 March 1887, p. 2.

³⁵⁸ Editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 21 December 1889, p. 2.

³⁵⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 20 July 1889, p. 2; for the signatories, see *Te Aroha News*, 23 October 1889, p. 2.

³⁶⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 31 August 1889, p. 2; see also letter from the council chairman and accompanying editorial, *Te Aroha News*, 7 August 1889, p. 2.

³⁶¹ *Te Aroha News*, 5 October 1889, p. 2.

³⁶² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 9 July 1885, p. 3.

business sites used for homes had been reduced from £5 to £1.³⁶³ Nothing definite was decided, but those present wanted the township withdrawn from the goldfield and ‘existing restrictions removed’ to enable people to purchase the freehold.³⁶⁴ Shortly afterwards, a meeting discussed obtaining a more secure tenure and another petition asked the government to purchase all Maori land held under goldfields regulations.³⁶⁵ In July, residents disagreed with the terms offered by George Lipsey, spokesman for the landowners, for obtaining the freehold.³⁶⁶ However, when a deputation in November asked the Minister of Lands, John Ballance, for the freehold, it was stated Lipsey agreed to changes whereby lessees had an inducement to make improvements; Ballance claimed to be sympathetic.³⁶⁷

Some argued that a change in the system of tenure meant the value of all property would be ‘largely increased’.³⁶⁸ A prominent supporter of local development, William Archibald Murray,³⁶⁹ was informed by a visitor that ‘there seemed to be no homes being created, no gardens, no permanency’, all because, in Murray’s opinion, residents could not obtain the freehold.³⁷⁰ Although the landowners were unwilling to grant this, they were willing to give leases in perpetuity, a concession that would induce people ‘to erect a good class of buildings’.³⁷¹

In August 1889, there was ‘a cry of discontent’ about ‘the tenure of a large portion of township allotments’. A meeting would be called ‘to try to enforce on the Government a fair settlement of European rights against Maori and pakeha relations’, meaning George Lipsey’s family,³⁷² who were ‘luxuriating in the receipt of rents collected by Government, a larger revenue than they ever had, whilst miners and tradesmen who have made the place and stuck by it are struggling for a crust’. It was believed that if Te Aroha and Waiorongomai became freehold their populations would

³⁶³ See *Waikato Times*, 10 September 1885, p. 3, 15 September 1885, p. 2.

³⁶⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 11 July 1885, p. 2.

³⁶⁵ *Waikato Times*, 14 July 1885, p. 3.

³⁶⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 18 July 1885, p. 7.

³⁶⁷ *Waikato Times*, 10 November 1885, p. 2.

³⁶⁸ *Waikato Times*, 23 February 1886, p. 2.

³⁶⁹ See paper on his life.

³⁷⁰ Letter from William Archibald Murray, *Te Aroha News*, 6 February 1886, p. 7.

³⁷¹ Special Reporter, *Waikato Times*, 11 October 1888, p. 3.

³⁷² See paper on George and Ema Lipsey.

increase five times within two years.³⁷³ In early September a petition sought the warden's aid in obtaining a rent of £1 for business sites used for homes. Lipsey, who had reduced some rents, supported this adjustment, which was made.³⁷⁴ The change gave 'much satisfaction', and the *Te Aroha News* hoped it was 'but the thin end of the wedge, and that similar reductions will shortly be announced with respect to all other allotments not on the main streets'. It was in the interests of the Maori owners 'that these back street allotments should be taken up and occupied', and it was 'ridiculous, and a hindrance to settlement, to demand an annual rental of £5 for them'. Obtaining leases in perpetuity was 'of great importance' to residents and local prosperity, and it hoped the town board would 'bestir themselves in the matter', as was 'their duty'. As the land was leased for a goldfields township there was little prospect of obtaining the freehold, but 'the next most desirable improvement' was perpetual leases, which Lipsey had agreed to but the board had taken no action.³⁷⁵ At subsequent meetings, Lipsey, board members, the warden, and the mining inspector agreed all sections should be leased in perpetuity and that rent on business sites should be £5 only if a business was established. Lipsey and the warden believed that granting leases in perpetuity 'would induce people to build better houses and carry out more improvements'.³⁷⁶ Shortly afterwards, Lipsey agreed to cut the rents of about 60 business sites to £2.³⁷⁷ Immediately, many people applied for these sites.³⁷⁸

'Cyclops' was still not satisfied, his December letter being given the heading 'Home Rule at Te Aroha'. He complained that the more 'labour and capital' expended on the sections,

the greater will be the rates and taxes, etc, and should sickness, depression of trade, or any other cause arise which would render a tenant unable to pay the rent, our courthouse officials, acting as the agents of our Landlord, forfeit our properties, and where are we? In the same place as the Irish tenants, viz, in the street; our

³⁷³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 22 August 1889, p. 2.

³⁷⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 7 September 1889, p. 2, 25 September 1889, p. 2.

³⁷⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 28 September 1889, p. 2.

³⁷⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 2 October 1889, p. 2.

³⁷⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 5 October 1889, p. 2; Edward Gallagher (Chairman, Te Aroha Town Board) to George Lipsey, 10 October 1889, Mines Department, MD 1, 6/14, Part 1, ANZ-W.

³⁷⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 9 October 1889, p. 2.

only title being the rent receipt; and what compensation do we get for the improvements? If we wish to remove from one part of the estate to another part of the same we cannot do so without the consent of the Landlord; and that is not to be obtained without the payment of backsheesh. There is no doubt that we have much more to complain of than any other tenants. In almost every place that could be mentioned rents, whether ground, house, or shop, are subject to the same fluctuations as business, and investments of other kinds; but not so here. When this place was opened with the flourish of trumpets nine years ago, a labourer's wages were 9s per day; carpenters, 10s to 12s. Anyone having houses to let could get high rents for anything with a roof on it; tradesmen could get high prices and large profits, and get in their money very much better than they can now. What a different tale we have to tell now. Good men idle, or working 10 hours for from 4s to 6s per day; comfortable dwellings empty, or else let at ridiculously low rents. You can put up with this as best you may, but pay the Landlord you must without delay, or else lose all you've put together.

He cited a poor widow unable to pay the £5 rent on her site.³⁷⁹ Controversies over tenure and rents would continue until freehold was obtained in the twentieth century.

THE LIBRARY

By June 1883 nearly £20 was collected towards erecting a library.³⁸⁰ The following month, subscribers signed the deed of incorporation, and in November it opened in the ante-room of the public hall.³⁸¹ By December, two committee members had enrolled 50 new members, and in that month it received the proceeds of an Art Union.³⁸² One month later there were over 70 subscribers.³⁸³ Two months later, it was 'rapidly growing in favour and usefulness, and its existence supplied a want that was long felt in the district'. It received a government grant of £34 4s 9d.³⁸⁴ In January 1885, the second annual general meeting of subscribers was informed it was in a

³⁷⁹ Letter from 'Cyclops', *Te Aroha News*, 11 December 1889, p. 2.

³⁸⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 30 June 1883, p. 2.

³⁸¹ *Te Aroha News*, 14 July 1883, p. 2, 21 July 1883, p. 2, 3 November 1883, p. 2.

³⁸² *Te Aroha News*, 15 December 1883, p. 2, 22 December 1883, p. 2.

³⁸³ *Te Aroha News*, 19 January 1884, p. 2.

³⁸⁴ *Waikato Times*, 29 March 1884, p. 3.

prosperous state, with 40 regular subscribers and donations producing a fifth of its revenue. The reading room, 'free to all, had proved to be of great usefulness, and was largely frequented by visitors coming here to the baths. In the library there are now nearly 400 volumes, comprising a large number of standard works in science, history, travels, and biography'. A government grant would be sought for purchasing more books.³⁸⁵ Two weeks later, 'over a hundred volumes of standard works by noted authors' had been added. 'Most of them relate to science, history and biography and nearly all are well and handsomely bound'. A man about to leave the district had sold them for a third of their value. 'Several handsome donations of books' had been given in the past year, and Lipsey had presented a 'fine bookcase'.³⁸⁶

The 'very good library and free reading-room' made visitors 'welcome to pass a few hours' reading the 'principal newspapers'.³⁸⁷ As 'considerable inconvenience' was sometimes experienced 'owing to the rather limited dimensions of the reading-room, the frequenters of which have lately increased greatly in number',³⁸⁸ in February 1885 the management committee asked the domain board for a site and arranged a concert and ball to raise money towards erecting a new building.³⁸⁹ In April, approval was given for a library to be built on the corner of the reserve nearest to the Hot Springs Hotel.³⁹⁰ Entertainments, lectures, and dances were held to aid the building fund.³⁹¹

During 1886, the library had 42 annual subscribers and received more donations of books.³⁹² The annual meeting held in February 1888 was told that 'in consequence of the continued depression' the number of subscribers had fallen to 28, although the reading room 'continued to be well patronised'.³⁹³ As its funds were 'very low' in August, an entertainment was held which included a 'Drawing Room Entertainment, by the Mount Aroha

³⁸⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 22 January 1885, p. 3.

³⁸⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 10 February 1885, p. 3.

³⁸⁷ 'Voz', 'A Trip to the Te Aroha Hot Springs', *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 April 1885, p. 7.

³⁸⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 10 February 1885, p. 3.

³⁸⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 28 February 1885, p. 2; advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 28 February 1885, p. 7.

³⁹⁰ *Waikato Times*, 7 April 1885, p. 2.

³⁹¹ For example, advertisements, *Te Aroha News*, 6 March 1886, p. 7, 20 March 1886, p. 7.

³⁹² *Te Aroha News*, 29 January 1887, p. 21.

³⁹³ *Te Aroha News*, 4 February 1888, p. 2.

Troubadours'.³⁹⁴ Later that month, it was found necessary to charge five shillings per year to use the reading room.³⁹⁵ An entertainment put on in October by a visiting troupe attracted only a 'very small attendance', despite the library being 'in urgent need of funds'; there was 'but little interest taken in this institution', the *Te Aroha News* lamented.³⁹⁶ By the following January there were only 24 subscribers. The librarian was given notice and invited to re-apply at a lower salary because the end of a small government subsidy made it impossible to pay the former rate.³⁹⁷

THE PUBLIC HALL

In October 1882 an 'overcrowded' concert in a public dining room 'made the necessity of erecting a public hall patent'.³⁹⁸ Shortly afterwards, at a meeting 300 shares in a public hall company were taken up, and five directors appointed. Lipsey 'liberally agreed to return the rent annually' of the site chosen.³⁹⁹ On 1 December, 49 subscribers signed the memorandum of association of the Te Aroha Public Hall and Reading Room Co. Ltd. Its capital of £500 was in £1 shares; most shareholders had five, the largest holding being 30. The number of shares held by three people is not known because the document is damaged, but the remainder held a total of 350.⁴⁰⁰

When the hall was completed early in 1883, it supplied 'a want very much felt'. Designed by local architect Francis Pavitt,⁴⁰¹ a correspondent described its 'very creditable appearance' in detail:

Public Hall, 40ft x 30ft; stage, 30ft x 10ft; passage, 8ft wide x 16ft long; two reading-rooms, each 16ft x 15ft; ticket office, 5ft square; two dressing-rooms at back of stage, each 15ft x 8ft. The hall will seat about 300. The height of stud is 14ft, and the roof is lined up to collar beams, making the height of hall 19ft. The front is covered with rusticated boarding, and the rest of the building weatherboarded, with iron roof. The roof over the hall is

³⁹⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 1 August 1888, p. 2.

³⁹⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 25 August 1888, p. 2.

³⁹⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 27 October 1888, p. 2.

³⁹⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 26 January 1889, p. 2.

³⁹⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 October 1882, p. 2.

³⁹⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 4 November 1882, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁰ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 41 no. 259, ANZ-A.

⁴⁰¹ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 825.

supported by framed principals, strengthened with 3/4in iron tie rods. Passage and hall has dado and lining, and the rest of the building is lined. The height of stage is 3ft in front above the hall floor, with a rise to the back of 3 inches.⁴⁰²

However, the *Te Aroha News*, normally positive about every local development, soon complained that it was 'exceedingly draughty and cold'.⁴⁰³

The hall was officially opened in March with the obligatory concert and dance.⁴⁰⁴ It was used for Anglican and Presbyterian services and sittings of the warden's and magistrate's courts until the courthouse was completed.⁴⁰⁵ In the year to February 1886 the debt on it was reduced by £40, 'which considering the dullness' of the times was considered satisfactory. A committee was appointed to raise a mortgage of about £160 to pay off all liabilities.⁴⁰⁶ 'Well patronised' socials and dances were held one evening a week in the early months of the year, proceeds going to providing 'a proper stage'.⁴⁰⁷ There was a 'very great improvement' in May when the 'unsightly and barn-like' interior was gradually being 'transformed', starting with the stage. Soon all the hall would be 'handsomely painted and papered. The appearance of the stage is now very pleasing and the scenery has been arranged to suit any kind of entertainment'.⁴⁰⁸ Improvements were still required, as pointed out in mid-1887 by the manager of the Southern Cross Comedy Company:

Your hall should have full seating accommodation, chairs for the *elite*, forms for the *canaille* [the rabble; literally the vulgar]. Then the stage should be fully and safely lighted, by wax candle floats and footlights, and stock scenery provided. A grave mistake has been committed in the formation of the dressing rooms, the floor of which should be at a dead level with that of the stage, to avoid the noise of footsteps during performances. A good wind-tight lamp over the main entrance is absolutely necessary. All of these

⁴⁰² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 10 April 1883, p. 2.

⁴⁰³ *Te Aroha News*, 21 July 1883, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁴ *Waikato Times*, 17 March 1883, p. 2.

⁴⁰⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 10 April 1883, p. 2.

⁴⁰⁶ *Waikato Times*, 23 February 1886, p. 2.

⁴⁰⁷ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 13 February 1886, p. 16; *Te Aroha News*, 24 April 1886, p.

2; Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 20 May 1886, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 20 May 1886, p. 3.

details attended to, good professional companies would doubtless often visit you.⁴⁰⁹

Despite the defects of the hall, many such companies did.

MASONS

There were a 'considerable number' of Masons in the district, and in January 1884 an Oddfellows Lodge was inaugurated and four months later an elaborate ceremony consecrated its lodge, 'Te Aroha S.C.' [Scottish Constitution].⁴¹⁰ Only occasionally were Masons mentioned in the press, as in July, when details of an entertainment were published.⁴¹¹ By the end of that year, the lodge had 'progressed financially, if not numerically'.⁴¹² In February 1888, Lodge Te Aroha's hall was consecrated, and the ball held in July commenced with a 'Grand March in Regalia'.⁴¹³

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY RESIDENTS

1882 started 'rather dull', because during the holidays 'sporting men' in particular went to other towns.⁴¹⁴ Social life did not remain dull, according to one man who arrived that year. 'There was a pretty lively crowd here too, I can tell you', he recalled in 1937, for miners 'swarmed back to the flat on Saturday nights, where they proceeded to make things lively'.⁴¹⁵ Part of the liveliness was predictable; the *Observer* published a sketch, 'Scene at Te Aroha', showing a drunk trying to get on a horse the wrong way round.⁴¹⁶ In December, it asked for the name of the man 'who made a mistake in his room and got into a lady's instead. He had evidently taken too much P.B.',⁴¹⁷ meaning porter beer.

⁴⁰⁹ Letter from J.W. Barlow, *Te Aroha News*, 2 July 1887, p. 3.

⁴¹⁰ *Waikato Times*, 26 April 1884, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 12 January 1884, p. 2, 17 May 1884, p. 2.

⁴¹¹ *Te Aroha News*, 4 July 1885, p. 2.

⁴¹² *Te Aroha News*, 26 December 1885, p. 2.

⁴¹³ *Te Aroha News*, 25 February 1888, p. 3, 7 July 1888, p. 7.

⁴¹⁴ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 3 January 1882, p. 2.

⁴¹⁵ Recollections of Charlie Garlick, *Te Aroha News*, 7 April 1937, p. 5.

⁴¹⁶ Cartoon, *Observer*, 22 July 1882, p. 310.

⁴¹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 9 December 1882, p. 198.

In March 1884, there was reported an unusual amount of entertainment:

The quietness that usually prevails in our midst has during the last week given place to a period of mild excitement. On Friday evening the Presbyterians of the district held their first anniversary concert; Monday was observed as a holiday in honour of Ireland's patron saint; on Tuesday old and young flocked to see Robson's Diorama of the Egyptian War; and tonight (Wednesday) the American Evangelists, Mr and Mrs Phelps and Mr and Mrs Dorman joined forces with the members of the Blue Ribbon Army in an onslaught upon the crying evil of the day, intemperance.⁴¹⁸ The Presbyterian concert was the most successful affair of the kind that has yet been held in Te Aroha, and would, indeed, have been regarded as a high-class entertainment in the capital city of the province.

Two singers came from Thames, and another had been a soloist with the Auckland Choral Society.

In addition to these there were the leading vocalists of the district, and with such a host of talent the programme was a most enjoyable one, and afforded such a treat to the numerous audience as is seldom obtained in rural districts.

St Patrick's Day, as usually celebrated, was on this occasion more honoured in the breach than in the observance. It was very generally kept as a holiday, but anything in the shape of festivity was nowhere visible, and the streets during the day wore quite a Sunday aspect. Most of those who were on pleasure bent betook themselves to Paeroa, where there was a good day's racing, followed by a ball in the evening.⁴¹⁹

The Easter holidays were 'dull' because of an absence 'of amusements or festivities'. On Easter Monday 'the only visible attempt at open air amusement was a game of lawn tennis, in which two ladies were to be seen languidly doing battle with a solitary individual of the opposite sex'.⁴²⁰

In mid-July 1885, the future mayor, James Mills,⁴²¹ suggested the men form a Social Club and Debating Society because 'the only place' where

⁴¹⁸ For this aspect of local life, see paper on the temperance movement in the Te Aroha district.

⁴¹⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 22 March 1884, p. 2.

⁴²⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 12 April 1884, p. 2, 19 April 1884, p. 2.

⁴²¹ See paper on his life.

working men could exchange opinions and enjoy 'social chat' was 'under some verandah', which was 'not very enjoyable in the present winter weather'. As many houses were empty, by 'clubbing together and subscribing a few pence weekly' they would be able to meet and enjoy each others' society in comfort' (and without their wives). He wanted them to discuss political and social issues, but 'if no other result accrued than the providing of a place for special chat, and the passing comfortably of the tedious hours after tea, it would be worth while'.⁴²² A correspondent agreed: 'The want of some such institution to exercise the intellect and bring out the latent eloquence of those amongst us whose talents lie in that direction is much felt, and in the dearth of other means of whiling away the long winter evenings the proposed society will prove of much benefit'. The magistrate, Harry Kenrick,⁴²³ offered the use of the courthouse for one night a week until more suitable accommodation could be found.⁴²⁴

Only about 12 men attended the meeting convened by Mills to inaugurate this society. His speech revealed his high hopes; members would

converse and discuss matters of interest, and were they so inclined could have a game of chess or draughts, see the local and provincial papers, and spend an hour or two comfortably, and in connection therewith it would be highly desirable to start a debating class. Much attention was now being paid to our gold reefs, and perhaps they would be able to establish a branch mining school in a small way, and get some of the more simple appliances and apparatus, and information that would enable them to learn a little more than they knew respecting the grand reefs about them.

Referring to new processes for treating ore, he wanted facilities provided for experiments. There were 'many questions' to discuss. Politics was 'at a very low ebb. The question of taxation especially deserved consideration as it at present weighed very unjustly on some classes'. He offered to give 'his own ideas on these matters, and for others to do the same. There were many other subjects requiring attention. Notably, the need for co-operation', which he explained 'at length', having been connected with this movement in England. After the mining inspector, George

⁴²² Letter from James Mills, *Te Aroha News*, 18 July 1885, p. 7.

⁴²³ See paper on his life.

⁴²⁴ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 25 July 1885, p. 2.

Wilson,⁴²⁵ John Ilott, and others spoke, a committee was formed to draw up the rules. Its members comprised Mills, Pavitt, Ahier, Frazer, and Dobson.⁴²⁶ The rules were approved a week later by a meeting that included men from Waiorongomai and Waitoa. ‘Lectures and mutual assistance in useful knowledge such as Mechanics, Mineralogy, Chemistry and other sciences’ would be provided, members paying 2s 6d to join and 1s each month, these fees being set low to enable all to join. Mills hoped that the society would, in time, work in conjunction with the library to keep expenses down. For the moment, it would meet every Wednesday evening for discussions.⁴²⁷

A ‘large attendance’ at the first meeting heard Mills lecture on co-operation.⁴²⁸ It must be presumed that meetings continued for a short time, but, apart from the second meeting that debated the domain board allowing the use of overflow water by bottling companies, none were reported.⁴²⁹ Probably the number attending was never very large, for a skating rink operated on the same evenings.⁴³⁰

In 1885, the new year was welcomed in ‘the usual fashion’:

The morning was ushered in with the customary demonstrations of a less boisterous kind than is common at such a time, and the din that makes night hideous on these occasions was of brief duration. The brass band welcomed the new born year with a few lively tunes, and after a short tin-kettle serenade by the youthful revellers, the town resumed its wanted calm. There was a large turnout of the residents both old and young during the day to participate in the various amusements. The feast provided for the children attending the day and Sunday schools was a great success. Not a hitch occurred to mar the proceedings and the little folks, of whom there was a great muster, enjoyed themselves immensely till dusk, when they were marshalled into ranks and marched homewards headed by the band playing the familiar strains of “Home Sweet Home.”⁴³¹

⁴²⁵ See paper on his life.

⁴²⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 8 August 1885, p. 7.

⁴²⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 15 August 1885, p. 2.

⁴²⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 22 August 1885, p. 2.

⁴²⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 29 August 1885, p. 7.

⁴³⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 27 June 1885, p. 2.

⁴³¹ *Te Aroha Correspondent*, *Waikato Times*, 6 January 1885, p. 2.

In January, the band organized an excursion on a paddle steamer for a picnic downstream at the 'Peach Grove at the Willows'. Races and games were organized and the band played selections and then a moonlight concert during the return trip. About 150 people attended an event greatly spoiled by rain.⁴³² One month later 'socially' everything was 'as dull as ditchwater'.⁴³³ Almost everybody observed the St Patrick's Day holiday in March, many attending the races at Paeroa.⁴³⁴ In November, some of the earliest residents commemorated the opening of the goldfield at the Hot Springs Hotel:

The usual loyal and patriotic toasts were proposed and heartily responded to; also the following:- "Success to Te Aroha," "Warden Kenrick," "Local Industries," "The Miners," coupled with the name of the late Hone Werahiko, "Minister of Mines," "Minister of Lands," "The discoverer of silver at the Tui creek," "The Ladies." A number of songs were contributed by those present, and a very pleasant evening spent.⁴³⁵

In 1886 the new year was not celebrated 'with the characteristic noise and hilarity'.⁴³⁶ Later in January, 'A Visitor' claimed many visitors were bored and suggested a marquee be erected in the domain to provide shade and that music be provided in the evenings.⁴³⁷ Local performers continued to assist worthy causes; for instance, concerts and dances to raise funds for churches.⁴³⁸ The library building fund required regular fund-raising events, as in March, when an entertainment and dance included a 'Dramatic Performance entitled "The Area Belle" by Local Amateurs'.⁴³⁹ Later that month a visiting Presbyterian minister lectured on 'David Livingstone, His Life and Labours'.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³² *Te Aroha News*, 24 January 1885, p. 7, 31 January 1885, p. 2.

⁴³³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 10 February 1885, p. 3.

⁴³⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 21 March 1885, p. 2.

⁴³⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 28 November 1885, p. 2.

⁴³⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 5 January 1886, p. 2.

⁴³⁷ Letter from 'A Visitor', *Te Aroha News*, 23 January 1886, p. 7.

⁴³⁸ For example, advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 10 April 1886, p. 7.

⁴³⁹ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 6 March 1886, p. 7.

⁴⁴⁰ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 20 March 1886, p. 7.

In July, a shoemaker, Alfred Henry Whitehouse,⁴⁴¹ advertised a lavish entertainment:

A VARIED ENTERTAINMENT will be held in the Public Hall, Te
Aroha, on TUESDAY NEXT, comprising Songs, Choruses, Duets
(vocal and instrumental), Recitations, etc, including the first
Appearance of the Unrivalled
AUTOMATIC WAXWORKS
with VENTRILOQUAL IMPERSONATIONS.
Grand Finale, the Mirth-provoking Farce
“Old Fellow”;
or,
SHAKESPEARE REMODELLED.
To be followed by a DANCE. Holders of Front Seat Tickets Free.
Admission - Front Seats, 2s; Back, 1s; Dance only: Tickets, 2s.
A Treat in Store. Come All.⁴⁴²

A ‘Grand Concert and Dramatic Performance’ was given on Race Night in November to raise money for the hall’s decoration fund. The first part of the programme featured vocal and instrumental music and step dancing, and in the second ‘Larkins’ Love Letters’ was performed, followed by dancing.⁴⁴³

In May 1887, attendance at the ‘Inauguration Soiree of the United Association of Te Aroha Hotel Employees’ was by invitation only;⁴⁴⁴ this (mock?) body was never heard of again. Open to all was the ‘Grand Miscellaneous Entertainment by Visitors, assisted by local talent’, to raise money for the St Mark’s Church organ fund.⁴⁴⁵ In June, to raise money for the library a lecture was given on ‘The Age in Which We Live’, followed by a musical entertainment and a dance.⁴⁴⁶ Late in August, an entertainment to aid the library included a ‘double Highland fling dance by the Te Aroha Midgets in full Highland costume’.⁴⁴⁷ This was repeated the following month, the fling being ‘greatly admired, and a repetition of it was loudly called for’. ‘Most’ songs ‘were well selected’. The second half of the evening

⁴⁴¹ See chapter on his life.

⁴⁴² *Te Aroha News*, 17 July 1886, p. 3.

⁴⁴³ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 20 November 1886, p. 3.

⁴⁴⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 7 May 1887, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁵ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 14 May 1887, p. 3.

⁴⁴⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 4 June 1887, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 27 August 1887, p. 2.

‘consisted of a charade in costume, in which some of the actors displayed a considerable degree of histrionic ability as well as much taste in dressing for their respective parts’. Being ‘pleasingly played throughout’, it was ‘much applauded’. The brass band played for the subsequent dance, and ‘also during the evening rendered selections in excellent style’.⁴⁴⁸

A variety of entertainments were provided during 1888. In March, Warden Stratford gave an address on life at sea, military adventures, and other yarns, proceeds going to the library.⁴⁴⁹ Later that month a ‘Grand Entertainment’ was held to reduce the debt on St Joseph’s Catholic Church; 70 ‘valuable prizes’ were distributed before it concluded with the expected dance.⁴⁵⁰

For much of 1889, a particularly sociable year, polite amusements were arranged about every fortnight. The new year ‘was observed in the usual manner’. The brass band ‘played a number of selections in the main street for about an hour and a half’, t ‘Auld Lang Syne’ at midnight, and then played ‘in the new year with some more inspiriting selections. The usual amount of crackers and fireworks were of course let off’. The exteriors of the main hotels were ‘tastefully decorated’ with large ferns, nikau and other greenery, and Chinese lanterns.⁴⁵¹ About 25 couples danced to violin and piano until four o’clock in the morning at the ‘Social Ball’ held on New Year’s night; refreshments had been provided for a ‘far larger number’.⁴⁵²

In April a concert and dance to raise money for the Te Aroha and Waiorongomai United Football Clubs attracted a large attendance, 50 couples dancing to piano, cornet, and ‘clarionette’. The concert comprised an overture, unspecified, played by the band, seven songs, six comic songs, a duet, and a performance of the Highland fling by two boys; four items were encored.⁴⁵³ Two weeks later, band members provided an entertainment again comprising songs, mostly comic, and dances. ‘A short farce, entitled “Jim Jones’ Cousin,” brought the entertainment to a close; after which the Hall was cleared for dancing, which was kept up with much spirit for several hours, the music being provided by the Brass Band’.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁴⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 13 September 1887, p. 3.

⁴⁴⁹ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 3 March 1888, p. 3.

⁴⁵⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 17 March 1888, p. 11.

⁴⁵¹ *Te Aroha News*, 2 January 1889, p. 2.

⁴⁵² *Te Aroha News*, 5 January 1889, p. 2.

⁴⁵³ *Te Aroha News*, 10 April 1889, p. 2.

⁴⁵⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 24 April 1889, p. 2.

July provided a burlesque on the subject of the Sleeping Beauty, along with a concert and tableaux, all performed by schoolchildren ‘assisted by several amateurs (some of whom hail from a distance)’.⁴⁵⁵ Waihou schoolchildren’s concert in September to raise funds to paint their school was assisted by Te Aroha residents, including a woman who displayed her ‘wonderful waxworks’.⁴⁵⁶ The following month, an entertainment was provided by the Te Aroha schoolchildren for the same purpose.⁴⁵⁷

MUSIC

In March 1882 a meeting agreed to form a brass band, subscribed ‘a considerable sum’, and decided to obtain honorary members who would pay £1 1s annually.⁴⁵⁸ The committee to canvass for these members comprised two publicans, two miners, the owner of a dining room, and a shoemaker.⁴⁵⁹ Subscriptions were sought outside the township, and by mid-April the district had ‘been canvassed, and a fair amount of support’ guaranteed.⁴⁶⁰ A visitor described the band’s first practice, later that month, as ‘melodious’.⁴⁶¹

‘Why can’t they get a choir in the church?’ asked the local *Observer* Man in June.⁴⁶² This problem was solved by late July, when he reported that ‘H. makes a splendid leader in the choir’.⁴⁶³ In November, the church choir was ‘progressing favourably under the tuition of Miss C., much (surprising to say) to the parson’s discomfiture’.⁴⁶⁴ The latter comment was never explained, but Miss C. was Martha Clarke, a good pianist who for two

⁴⁵⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 6 July 1889, p. 2.

⁴⁵⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 11 September 1889, p. 2, 14 September 1889, p. 2.

⁴⁵⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 2 October 1889, p. 2.

⁴⁵⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 29 March 1882, p. 3.

⁴⁵⁹ Patrick Quinlan, John Allwood, James Gordon, John Waldren Wright, Frederick James Lawrence, and Alfred Henry Whitehouse: *Waikato Times*, 28 March 1882, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁰ ‘Waikato Whisperings’, *Observer*, 15 April 1882, p. 68.

⁴⁶¹ ‘A Trip Up Country’, *Thames Advertiser*, 26 April 1882, p. 3.

⁴⁶² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 10 June 1882, p. 201.

⁴⁶³ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 July 1882, p. 313.

⁴⁶⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 25 November 1882, p. 170.

years was ‘a leading spirit in musical matters’ before her marriage to a doctor in September 1884 and her subsequent departure.⁴⁶⁵

A concert to raise money for a harmonium (to be used by all denominations) held in the dining rooms one October evening illustrated the extent of local talent. The programme included an unspecified overture, ‘very creditably performed’ by the band ‘considering the limited practices which had been possible’, songs, a piano duet, comic songs, character songs, a man impersonating the female voice, and a trio of two violins and a flute. Non-musical items comprised parlour magic, ventriloquism, and recitations. After the National Anthem, the room was cleared for dancing, which lasted until daylight.⁴⁶⁶ The first concert in the new hall ‘on the whole’ was ‘a pronounced success’. After an overture played by the band, adults and children sang nine songs, four comic songs, and two duets. ‘The whole of the items were extremely well rendered’, and afterwards dancing ‘was kept up till 4 o’clock’.⁴⁶⁷

During 1883, reportedly the church choir went ‘from bad to worse since all the pretty young ladies have left’.⁴⁶⁸ A new comic song, ‘A Cat’s Rambles to the Goody Goody’s Saucepan’, could be obtained for 1s 6d from George Llewellyn Mills,⁴⁶⁹ a local miner.⁴⁷⁰ While this report appears to indicate a musical talent not otherwise noted, it may hint at some now-lost domestic drama. Some new residents brought more musical skills, for instance the wife of a medical practitioner.⁴⁷¹

The periodic concerts usually raised funds for community projects. In February, one was held for the Presbyterian Church in a new billiard room. ‘Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, the settlers from the surrounding districts attended in considerable numbers’, including several from Paeroa. The programme ‘was rendered in a manner highly creditable to our local talent, and speaks well for the future improvement of Te Aroha in appreciating high class music’. The highest class of music was a chorus from *Il Traviatore* by Verdi and a duet for violin and piano by Bellini; the

⁴⁶⁵ See ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 2 June 1883, p. 170; Marriage Certificate of Martha Clarke, 4 September 1884, 1884/3230, BDM; *Waikato Times*, 4 September 1884, p. 3.

⁴⁶⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 23 October 1882, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁷ *Waikato Times*, 17 March 1883, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁸ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 14 July 1883, p. 14.

⁴⁶⁹ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 July 1883, p. 12.

⁴⁷⁰ See *Thames Advertiser*, 24 June 1896, p. 2.

⁴⁷¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, 8 December 1883, p. 17.

remainder comprised popular songs along with a recitation and an instrumental piece.⁴⁷² In May, a soiree and concert to assist the Presbyterian organ fund and ‘to promote social intercourse’ reportedly ‘came off very successfully’, about 150 attending despite the weather. Seventeen people performed in 18 items, some participating in several items.⁴⁷³

A combined soiree and concert in June attracted from up to 300, and ‘charming faces and lovely toilettes were the order of the evening’. Thames singers participated, showing up some local talent. ‘“I’ll wander back again” is a sweet little song, but, Harry, you murdered it; in fact, we all wished you would wander back to Waiorongomai, and not to the stage. It would be a sort of kindness to leave the Waitoa performer unnamed’.⁴⁷⁴ A concert and dance held in July in aid of the Church of England ‘attracted a crowded attendance, and the entertainment was a genuine success’, several singers being singled out for praise. ‘The band opened the concert with a fine selection’ and the choir was ‘very efficient’.⁴⁷⁵ A concert held in November was ‘a great success’, according to the *Observer*’s observer:

Mrs T[homas] Lawless [Margaret was the wife of a Waiorongomai publican]⁴⁷⁶ was the star of the evening in the ballad, “Love’s Request,” and responded to an encore by giving a “Definition of a Kiss.” Mrs Bruce’s song, “You’ll Remember Me,” will take us a long time to forget. I have heard Miss Swan to better advantage, but I think she was troubled with a cold. Miss Brown’s song I considered rather vulgar. Pop’s song I cannot say much for, as I am quite positive were it not for the accompaniment by Miss Ginn, from the Thames, it would have been a failure. Miss Ginn accompanied throughout the evening, and I must say anything near her performance has not been equalled in this district.⁴⁷⁷

After a concert in mid-1883, there was talk of forming either a Choral or Philharmonic Society, but although many ‘leading residents’ agreed to assist it took six months before the first steps were taken to form a choral society.⁴⁷⁸ A correspondent wrote in March that ‘the musical talent’ had

⁴⁷² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 24 February 1883, p. 2.

⁴⁷³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 29 May 1883, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁴ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 2 June 1883, p. 170.

⁴⁷⁵ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 28 July 1883, p. 12.

⁴⁷⁶ See paper on Thomas Lawless.

⁴⁷⁷ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 8 December 1883, p. 16.

⁴⁷⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 21 July 1883, p. 2, 26 January 1884, p. 2.

‘massed itself into a body with the imposing title of the Aroha Choral Society, and from the ability of several of the members (especially amongst the ladies)’ it was ‘likely to prove a thorough success’.⁴⁷⁹ It was stillborn.

In March 1884 a Presbyterian concert that was ‘the most successful affair of the kind’ yet held, and would ‘have been regarded as a high class entertainment’ in Auckland. Two female singers from Thames assisted local performers, and the evening provided ‘a treat to the numerous audience’ that was ‘seldom obtained in rural districts’.⁴⁸⁰ ‘Local talent’ played two violins, a flute, clarinet, cornet, euphonium, and piano, and the many encores for the singers proved ‘the audience most thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment’.⁴⁸¹ ‘Notwithstanding the cry of dull times and the scarcity of money, our townspeople still find means occasionally to enjoy themselves’, as in the contribution by Te Aroha’s ‘ablest musicians and sweetest singers’ to the concert held when the Waiorongomai schoolhouse opened.⁴⁸² In mid-year a dance was arranged by a visiting harpist.⁴⁸³ In September, a concert raised money to purchase instruments for the band.⁴⁸⁴ Its bandmaster formerly had held the same post with the 10th Hussars.⁴⁸⁵ A ‘Surprise Party’ for its funds

was not so great a success financially as was hoped for. None but local talent was brought into requisition, and the programme partook of an impromptu character; songs, recitations, musical selections on the pianoforte and by the band and various dances being promiscuously mingled. The band music was really good.⁴⁸⁶

The following March, it played at a Paeroa race meeting.⁴⁸⁷ The following month, at a concert to raise money for the library building, a local carpenter, John Cornes,⁴⁸⁸ sang his ‘new patriot song’, entitled ‘The Sons of New South Wales’, in honour of those fighting in Sudan against the Mahdi.

⁴⁷⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 8 March 1884, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 22 March 1884, p. 2.

⁴⁸¹ *Te Aroha News*, 22 March 1884, p. 2.

⁴⁸² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 8 May 1884, p. 2.

⁴⁸³ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 21 June 1884, p. 7.

⁴⁸⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 27 September 1884, p. 7; *Waikato Times*, 7 October 1884, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 8 November 1884, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 15 November 1884, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 21 March 1885, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁸ See *Waikato Times*, 8 March 1887, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 18 February 1926, p. 10.

‘As a composition, it reflects much credit on the author’.⁴⁸⁹ At the ‘grand opening night’ of the new stage in the hall in 1886, the local ‘Christy Minstrel troupe’ performed.⁴⁹⁰ Some local amateurs calling themselves the Tui Minstrels performed in Paeroa in May.⁴⁹¹ Music for dancing was normally provided by only two or three musicians: for instance, a cornet and a piano.⁴⁹²

Re-formed at the start of 1886, the band played in a ‘creditable manner’ during the summer evenings.⁴⁹³ A social and ball was held for its patrons and honorary members in August, and ‘band socials’ were held every Thursday evening late in the year.⁴⁹⁴ It played at the races in November.⁴⁹⁵ During the 1887 Christmas holidays, local musicians played in other townships. The Te Aroha Troubadours, who had ‘given ample proof of their individual ability’, performed at Waiorongomai, Morrinsville, and Paeroa,⁴⁹⁶ and some band members played at the Mackaytown Athletic Sports on Boxing Day.⁴⁹⁷ In February 1888, the domain board arranged for the band to play in the domain for one night a week for the following three months,⁴⁹⁸ the final part of the tourist season. In August, it consisted of three cornets, one bombardon, a baritone, two horns, a euphonium, and three drummers, all conducted by Charles Everett, the local boat builder. A successful ball held that month raised funds to buy music for it.⁴⁹⁹

More amateur musicians were occasionally noted, as when one man was ‘improving on the accordion fast. He can play “Home Sweet Home” with double time’.⁵⁰⁰ ‘Uncle Tom’, a ‘Service of Song performed by the Wesleyan church choir and friends, attracted about 100 people; the admission price of

⁴⁸⁹ *Waikato Times*, 9 April 1885, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 24 April 1886, p. 2.

⁴⁹¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 2 June 1886, p. 2.

⁴⁹² *Te Aroha News*, 23 January 1886, p. 7.

⁴⁹³ *Te Aroha News*, 16 January 1886, p. 7, 13 February 1886, p. 2; Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 16 February 1886, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 28 August 1886, p. 3; 23 October 1886, p. 3.

⁴⁹⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 27 November 1886, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 24 December 1887, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 31 December 1887, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁸ Domain Board, *Te Aroha News*, 25 February 1888, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 18 August 1888, p. 2.

⁵⁰⁰ ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 3 November 1888, p. 17.

2s may have prevented more attending.⁵⁰¹ A benefit concert was held for the woman who played the organ for St Mark's Anglican Church and the Wesleyan Sunday School and was 'ever ready to give musical assistance to all'; she was presented with a bag of sovereigns.⁵⁰² One woman sang so well in church that the *Observer* Man 'regretted that so much talent' was being 'wasted in an obscure place like Te Aroha', for she was 'fitted to shine in the higher musical circles'.⁵⁰³

The 'very creditable manner' of the band's playing in the domain on a Saturday evening in February 1889 inspired the *Te Aroha News* to suggest the domain board should make a small financial contribution to enable these performances to continue.⁵⁰⁴ Having played there several times for free, it was voted £7 10s per annum to play 'for the amusement of visitors'.⁵⁰⁵ When performances resumed in the warmer weather, a large number of people heard it play 'in a most creditable manner'.⁵⁰⁶ In March, an unsuccessful attempt was made to form a minstrel troupe and brass band from Tui and Waiorongomai residents to provide music, singing, and dancing.⁵⁰⁷

A most unlikely advertisement appeared in April 1889:

Valuable Violin. For Sale, A Violin, by Stradivarius Cremonensis. A Really Magnificent Instrument of exceptional power and sweetness of tone. Price £25. May be seen and tried at the office of the *Te Aroha and Ohinemuri News*.⁵⁰⁸

Nothing further was heard of this bargain price Strad.

DANCES

As all dances lasted well into the early hours of the morning, some until daylight, it was necessary to provide refreshments at midnight.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰¹ *Te Aroha News*, 7 January 1888, p. 2.

⁵⁰² *Te Aroha News*, 14 April 1888, p. 2, 21 April 1888, p. 2.

⁵⁰³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 August 1889, p. 18.

⁵⁰⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 13 February 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁰⁵ Domain Board, *Te Aroha News*, 6 March 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁰⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 13 November 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁰⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 27 March 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁰⁸ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 13 April 1889, p. 7.

⁵⁰⁹ For example, advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 26 January 1884, p. 7.

Because it would not be seemly for dances to continue into the early hours of Sunday, all were held on week nights, despite the dancers then having to work. Curiously, no dances were recorded as being held on Friday nights.

In February 1884 the Bachelors' Ball lasted until dawn; card tables were provided for non-dancers.⁵¹⁰ In October 1887 the Bachelors' Ball had the largest attendance yet: with up to 200 present, 'the floor was far too crowded for comfortable dancing'. The stamina of both dancers and musicians was tested, for dancing did not cease until 'long after daylight' to music provided by piccolo, cornet, and piano. The opportunity to wear fancy dress meant that most men wore military or sporting attire.⁵¹¹ Another fancy dress ball held the following month was also a great success.⁵¹²

Although in mid-January 1889 the *Observer* Man complained that 'once upon a time Te Aroha was a very sociable place to go for a ball or a dance, but now it is the reverse', he recorded that a ball had just been held.⁵¹³ Four weeks later, he wrote that news was 'scarce just now; no amusements', but detailed the flirtations at another ball.⁵¹⁴ On Easter Monday in April, the band held a 'Variety Entertainment' and ball.⁵¹⁵ That same month, the Te Aroha Quadrille Assembly started a series of dances, men paying 2s to attend, 'ladies by invitation' (and therefore free).⁵¹⁶ The first 'was fairly attended by the fair sex, but very poorly by the sterner sex, and to their discredit, they appeared to do their best to throw cold water on the affair'. After 14 dances, 'all dispersed at 12 o'clock, having enjoyed themselves as well as circumstances permitted'. A violinist and accordion player took turns to provide the music. It was planned to hold these dances fortnightly, 'and ladies who received invitations' could 'hold them good for the quarter'.⁵¹⁷

In July, about 40 couples attended a ball given by the flax mill employees, dancing being 'kept up with spirit until nearly 5 a.m.'.⁵¹⁸ August

⁵¹⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 23 February 1884, p. 2.

⁵¹¹ *Te Aroha News*, 23 October 1887, p. 2.

⁵¹² *Te Aroha News*, 26 November 1887, p. 2.

⁵¹³ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 19 January 1889, p. 17.

⁵¹⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 16 February 1889, p. 17.

⁵¹⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 13 April 1889, p. 2.

⁵¹⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 3 April 1889, p. 7, 17 April 1889, p. 7.

⁵¹⁷ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 4 May 1889, p. 17.

⁵¹⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 10 July 1889, p. 2.

commenced with a fancy dress ball and ‘Spread Supper’.⁵¹⁹ Despite ‘unpropitious’ weather, 60 couples attended a plain and fancy dress ball late that month that had no fancy dress because the costumes did not arrive from Auckland; instead, nearly everyone wore evening dress. It opened with a grand march, and dancing took place to music provided by a violinist and a pianist until midnight, ‘after which there was an interval of about an hour for supper, which was laid out on tables down the centre of the hall’. This concluded, dancing continued ‘till nearly daylight’ on Thursday.⁵²⁰

A ‘Plain and Fancy Dress Carnival’ held on a Wednesday evening in October commenced with rinking from 7.30 to 9.00, then a grand march, dancing till midnight, supper, and dancing till almost daylight, music being provided by a pianist and a violinist. Sixty couples attended, including some from Te Aroha West, Waiorongomai, and Waitoa.⁵²¹ ‘Many of the dresses were simply superb’, showing ‘a latent amount of talent amongst the Te Arohaites sufficient to keep up a regular round of amusements during the rinking season’.⁵²² Those tired of local dances went by special coach to a ball in Paeroa in early November.⁵²³ A concert and dance for St Joseph’s attracted an excellent attendance at the end of this month.⁵²⁴

RINKING

By 1885, rinking, or roller-skating, a ‘pleasant and beautiful exercise’ in the opinion of the local newspaper, was held in the hall one evening each week.⁵²⁵ In 1887 the 13-week skating season commenced in July. Between 30 and 40 people attended on opening night, and the rink operated each Tuesday night from seven till ten o’clock, as a cost of 15s a double ticket for the season or 5s for a ‘lady only’.⁵²⁶ Within two weeks, a skating and dancing club operated every Thursday night as well, skating commencing at seven o’clock and dancing at nine.⁵²⁷ The successful season ended on 27

⁵¹⁹ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 3 August 1889, p. 2.

⁵²⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 24 August 1889, p. 2.

⁵²¹ *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1889, p. 2.

⁵²² ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 19 October 1889, p. 8.

⁵²³ *Te Aroha News*, 6 November 1889, p. 2.

⁵²⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 30 November 1889, p. 2.

⁵²⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 27 June 1885, p. 2.

⁵²⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 9 July 1887, p. 2.

⁵²⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 23 July 1887, p. 2, 30 July 1887, p. 3.

September with a plain and fancy dress ball.⁵²⁸ In April 1888, the 'Aroha Electric Skating Rink', named because electricity had come to Reefton, commenced its season.⁵²⁹ According to a Thames newspaper, the residents were jealous of Thames and wanted a special rink rather than using the hall.⁵³⁰ In August, hoping to increase its popularity, the management contemplated 'introducing vocal and instrumental musical selections at future rink meetings'.⁵³¹ One correspondent was 'greatly surprised to note the proficiency of some of the rinkers and more especially the graceful movements of two young ladies' who outshone 'anything of the kind I witnessed at either the Auckland or Thames floors'.⁵³²

During 1889, rinking, along with a dance, was held every Thursday evening. Men paid a shilling, but women did not pay.⁵³³ The *Observer* Man noted that the rink was 'greatly patronised' by women, some of whose 'attitudes' were 'decidedly unique'.⁵³⁴ 'Our quiet township' was 'undergoing a revolution', with rinking being the latest fashion and more popular than dancing. It was 'amusing to the onlookers to see the floor rise and strike the amateurs'. One male was 'a most picturesque skater' who could not 'balance himself. Misses E., G., and C. are quite accomplished rinkers, and the envy of the others'.⁵³⁵

VISITING ENTERTAINERS

In June 1882, Captain William Jackson Berry, a great raconteur with a feast of tall stories about his life,⁵³⁶ gave his 'famous lecture' about his 'ups and downs' in the colonies.⁵³⁷ Of particular interest to younger residents would have been the visit of the Royal Australian Circus in July. Advertised as being 'the great moral show of the century - instructive,

⁵²⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 3 September 1887, p. 2.

⁵²⁹ *Te Aroha News*, advertisement, 21 April 1888, p. 7, 25 April 1888, p. 2.

⁵³⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 26 May 1888, p. 2.

⁵³¹ *Te Aroha News*, 18 August 1888, p. 2.

⁵³² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 16 August 1888, p. 2.

⁵³³ *Te Aroha News*, 17 July 1889, p. 7, 24 August 1889, p. 2.

⁵³⁴ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 24 August 1889, p. 18.

⁵³⁵ 'Te Aroha', *Observer*, 7 September 1889, p. 18.

⁵³⁶ See *Observer*, 2 October 1880, p. 20, 8 October 1881, p. 58, 15 July 1882, p. 282, 6 February 1897, p. 7, 19 November 1898, p. 6, 4 May 1907, p. 4.

⁵³⁷ *Waikato Times*, 20 June 1882, p. 2.

edifying, and entertaining', the moral aspect was not obvious from the list of gymnasts, acrobats, tumblers, 'voltigeurs', an equestrian, Signor Bartolo 'the inimitable contortionist', four clowns, and trained horses and ponies.⁵³⁸ The performance was most successful.⁵³⁹ Two months later, amusing American novelties were displayed and sold: 'tricks, puzzles, an alligator lamp, bottle of cement, or marking-ink pencil'. The purveyor explained how his tricks worked to all who bought a bottle of his mending cement.⁵⁴⁰

In August 1883 *Te Aroha News* complained that 'few places in the colony, however small', had 'such a general dearth of rational amusement'. It therefore welcomed as 'a pleasant break in the dread monotony' a visit from the Auckland Concert Company.⁵⁴¹ Two months later the Queen's Variety Troupe gave the first of two performances to 'a very fair house'. They provided 'a concert in which some very good songs were given, feats on the horizontal bar and trapeze, and negro farces', and ended with a dance. Residents 'desirous of enjoying a hearty laugh or hearing a good song' were encouraged to attend the second performance.⁵⁴²

'Professor Hubert', 'illusionist and prestidigitateur', in January 1884 gave an entertainment, 'Seeing is Not Believing', followed by a dance.⁵⁴³ In early April, an entertainer from London showed magic lantern slides of Scottish scenery, the Egyptian war, and 'comic scenes' for very low admission prices.⁵⁴⁴ There was a big attendance in July at Miss Carry Nelson's 'varied entertainment': she sang to her own accompaniment, Miss Lottie danced, and the evening ended with a general dance.⁵⁴⁵ In August, Herbert Smith advertised a 'GRAND PANORAMA OF THE WORLD, COLOSSAL MIRROR OF NEW ZEALAND', comprising scenic views of the latter along with the Zulu War, the Melbourne Exhibition, and a 'Splendid Real Water Fall of various Colours', ending with a dance.⁵⁴⁶ This 'limelight entertainment' had to be postponed, but when shown included local views photographed by

⁵³⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 21 July 1882, p. 2.

⁵³⁹ *Thames Star*, 20 July 1882, p. 2, 24 July 1882, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 16 September 1882, p. 2.

⁵⁴¹ *Te Aroha News*, 18 August 1883, p. 2.

⁵⁴² *Te Aroha News*, 27 October 1883, p. 2.

⁵⁴³ *Te Aroha News*, 5 January 1884, p. 2, 12 January 1884, p. 7.

⁵⁴⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 12 April 1884, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 12 July 1884, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁶ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 9 August 1884, p. 7.

Smith himself.⁵⁴⁷ In October, the short season of 'Fisher's Opera Bouffe Burlesque and Pantomime Company' promised a change of programme every night, but few attended.⁵⁴⁸

The Pritchard Family provided their 'Celebrated Drawing-Room Entertainment' in January 1885.⁵⁴⁹ Three months later, 'Professor Rice, Mind-Reader, the Greatest Wonder of the Century', revealed his skills at mind reading, physiognomy, and music.⁵⁵⁰ This was 'very successful' and was repeated several times.⁵⁵¹ The following month, Woodyear's Circus gave a Monday night performance 'to a very fair audience, by whom the numerous clever feats in horsemanship, athletics, etc, were greatly appreciated'.⁵⁵² In August the 'Wonders of the World' panorama attracted a good crowd.⁵⁵³ Two months later, three performances were given by another troupe:

The WONDERFUL FAUST FAMILY! and the FOUR MARVELLOUS MIDGETS. HERR VON DER MEHDEN, the great Cornet Soloist, who will introduce his beautiful Musical Specialities. BEAUTIFUL MARBLE STATUARY, with Limelight Effects. MUSICAL CLOWNS. GRAND DRAWING-ROOM ENTERTAINMENT. The Silver-toned HAND-BELLS. Mr C. Waud, the great Cello Soloist and Pianist MIRACULOUS RISKY PERFORMANCE. Concluding with the Funniest of Funny PANTOMIMES. The FAUST FAMILY Celebrated Brass Band of eight performers will give an open air Concert at the Hall half an hour before the performance commences.⁵⁵⁴

In 1886 some performers brought new technology. In May, residents were informed that 'The Wonder of the Age - the Marvellous "CAMERA OBSCURA" is on view daily from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m.' in the domain.⁵⁵⁵ The *Te Aroha News* considered it 'really worth a visit, the ever changing views

⁵⁴⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 30 August 1884, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁸ *Te Aroha News*, advertisement, 11 October 1884, p. 7, 25 October 1884, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 31 January 1885, p. 2.

⁵⁵⁰ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 25 April 1885, p. 7.

⁵⁵¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 30 April 1885, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 2 May 1885, p. 2.

⁵⁵² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 21 May 1885, p. 2.

⁵⁵³ *Te Aroha News*, 8 August 1885, p. 2.

⁵⁵⁴ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 17 October 1885, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁵ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 8 May 1886, p. 7.

forming a source of astonishment to all'.⁵⁵⁶ Three months later, three visiting troupes advertised their attractions. The 'St Leon's Menagerie of Wild Beasts' had bare-back and somersault riders, female jugglers, tumblers, gymnasts, six funny clowns, trick horses, 'fairy ponies', lions, tigers, bears, camels, a Tasmanian Devil and other unspecified animals, along with 'Little Gus St. Leon, the Baby Equestrian (only 5 years old)'.⁵⁵⁷ 'Professor' Lio Medo, 'the Great American Natural Scientist and Elocutionist', gave an elocutionary rendering of Dickens' *Pickwick Club*, followed by a 'Marvellously Funny Phrenological Discourse, entitled HEADS AND FACES I HAVE SEEN', concluding with a free platform examination of any volunteers' heads; the discreet could consult him privately.⁵⁵⁸ Miss Amy Johns' 'Pleasant Hours Company' provided 'Comedy, Songs, Mirth, Opera, Duets, Music, Burlesque, Dances, Mimicry'; once more the evening ended with a dance.⁵⁵⁹ The musical highlight of the year was two concerts, each with a different programme, performed by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the famous black Americans, who were listened to with 'rapt attention'.⁵⁶⁰

Two visitors provided very different performances in January 1887. One man gave the drawing-room entertainment 'Romer's Relations', followed by 'Ollo Podrida, or a Cosmopolitan Mixture'; for variety, he played music on wine bottles.⁵⁶¹ 'Professor' Woodroffe, assisted by two 'talented Lady Workers', gave an exhibition of 'Fancy and Philosophical Glass-blowing'. 'Two STEAM ENGINES, made entirely of Glass, will be in constant operation'.⁵⁶² The Lynch Family of bellringers, instrumentalists, and vocalists performed in May, concluding their show with 'Five Shillings a Week'.⁵⁶³ Its advertisement was very sober compared with that published the previous week for 'HERBERT'S AND FITZGERALD'S GREAT LONDON CIRCUS, EQUINE, PARADOX AND EQUESCURRICULUM the only Circus built on the enduring corner of pure honesty, basked by Brains, Energy and Capital, with the whole World at its feet'. In addition to acrobats and gymnasts, performing horses would do military drill and a 'lady' named

⁵⁵⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 8 May 1886, p. 2.

⁵⁵⁷ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 20 August 1886, p. 3.

⁵⁵⁸ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 20 August 1886, p. 3.

⁵⁵⁹ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 20 August 1886, p. 3.

⁵⁶⁰ *Te Aroha News*, advertisement, 11 December 1886, p. 3, 18 December 1886, p. 2.

⁵⁶¹ *Te Aroha News*, 22 January 1887, p. 2.

⁵⁶² Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 22 January 1887, p. 3.

⁵⁶³ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 28 May 1887, p. 3.

Acola would be shot from an 80-ton gun into the arms of an 'artiste' hanging in mid-air. Amongst the 29 artists was 'the King of the Air' and the 'Champion Vaulter of the World', who would leap over a horse 29 feet away from the leaping board. Their performance ended with 'the funniest Afterpiece ever shown, in which the Management will give ONE POUND to any one who will ride once round the ring'.⁵⁶⁴

In June, the Southern Cross Company, comprising juveniles from Thames, performed a play, a 'Jubilee Allegorical Tableau', and a farce in which 'the Te Aroha popular midgets will assist their Thames friends'.⁵⁶⁵ A dark and rainy night meant a 'most discouraging attendance'.⁵⁶⁶ The following month produced another enticing advertisement: 'Thauma!!! (Dr Lynn's Masterpiece). The most Startling and Sensational Mystery of modern times, Will be on view at TE AROHA TONIGHT.... Notwithstanding the Extraordinary Attraction of THAUMA, the price of Admission will be only ONE SHILLING, Children Half-price'.⁵⁶⁷ In August, a visiting troupe put on a programme entitled 'Twa 'Oors Wi' A When O Scotland's Chiels', with Highland dancing, Irish jigs, bagpipe music, ballads, and recitations.⁵⁶⁸ Two months later, the Michigan Midgets, 'the Funniest of Funny Corner Men, and the Beautiful and Accomplished Ladies' performed.⁵⁶⁹ A brass and string band, the Thames Snowflake Minstrels, visited in December.⁵⁷⁰

The Thames Snowflake Minstrels performed again in June 1888,⁵⁷¹ and in October 'Professor Anderson, the Great Wizard of the North', performed 19 'Necromantic Illusions', using his 'enchanted WIZARDIAN Psychromantheum'.⁵⁷² Also during that month, Max Rinkle, 'POLYPHONIC WONDER, Mongolian and Humourist', drew a poor house at Waiorongomai and an even worse one at Te Aroha.⁵⁷³ Despite this, Rinkle's 'New Speciality

⁵⁶⁴ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 21 May 1887, p. 3.

⁵⁶⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 11 June 1887, p. 2, advertisement, p. 3.

⁵⁶⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 25 June 1887, p. 2.

⁵⁶⁷ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 9 July 1887, p. 3.

⁵⁶⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 6 August 1887, p. 2.

⁵⁶⁹ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 1 October 1887, p. 3.

⁵⁷⁰ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 10 December 1887, p. 3.

⁵⁷¹ *Te Aroha News*, 13 June 1888, p. 2.

⁵⁷² Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 17 October 1888, p. 7.

⁵⁷³ *Te Aroha News*, advertisement, 17 October 1888, p. 2, 24 October 1888, p. 2, 27 October 1888, p. 2.

Company' from Australia advertised a return visit in November but was then unable to come.⁵⁷⁴ Residents were thereby deprived of seeing Miss Edith Hayden, 'the Primo Cantatrice', Miss Jessie Harrison, 'the Celebrated Speciality Artist', Madame Rinkle, 'the Serio-Comic Queen', Monseur Eugene, 'the Wonderful Contortionist', Rinkle himself, 'the Inimitable Polyphonist', and Carl and Jose, 'the Automatic Hat Spinner, Jugglers, and Acrobats!'⁵⁷⁵

Two visiting lecturers spoke in early 1889. The first gave 'An Evening with Robert Emmett, the Irish Patriot and Martyr of 1803', enlivened by Irish ballads.⁵⁷⁶ An Auckland clergyman spoke on 'Lights and Shadows of London Life' one month later, attracting a 'good house'.⁵⁷⁷ The most notable return visit was by the Fisk Jubilee Singers. As they intended to give only one concert, the *Te Aroha News* urged 'all lovers of music' to hear 'the strange weird plantation melodies, and inimitable part singing'.⁵⁷⁸ Their performance attracted 'a bumper house', with many 'unable to obtain even standing room',⁵⁷⁹ prompting a second concert. The newspaper considered this 'talented Company'

had every reason to be well satisfied with the very hearty reception accorded them. Never before have we seen anything like such a crowd assembled to be present at an entertainment at Te Aroha. The doors were announced to be open at half-past seven, and long before that hour numbers were waiting outside, and by a quarter to eight, every available seat was occupied, and the passage filled also. In fact the Hall was regularly packed, and a large number of persons had to go away unable to obtain even standing room. Waiorongomai, Morrinsville, Waitoa, Paeroa, and surrounding districts generally were well represented.⁵⁸⁰

The 'Tourist Minstrels' attracted only a small audience in May.⁵⁸¹ 'Freda's Troubadours' arrived at the end of that month with a 'New, Sparkling, and Refined' show featuring Amy Vaughan, 'the Masher Queen

⁵⁷⁴ *Te Aroha News*, advertisement, 24 November 1888, p. 7, 28 November 1888, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁵ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 24 November 1888, p. 7.

⁵⁷⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 19 January 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 12 February 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 27 March 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 3 April 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁸⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 6 April 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁸¹ *Te Aroha News*, 15 May 1889, p. 2, 22 May 1889, p. 2.

and Baby Impersonator'.⁵⁸² In August minstrels Devere and Moore performed,⁵⁸³ followed by the Payne Family of musicians from Ballarat, fresh from creating 'such a stir in Auckland'.⁵⁸⁴ In October it was announced that 'the Great Frank Lincoln' would present his imitations, approving references from the Prince of Wales amongst others being quoted to encourage attendance.⁵⁸⁵ The following month, residents could attend a display of 'limelight views', or a performance by the mimic and ventriloquist MacCabe assisted by 'Mdlle Minnie' in 'Begone Dull Care' and 'The Magic Statue'.⁵⁸⁶ The last troupe to visit that year was the 'Celebrated Bairnsfather Family' with their Scottish song and wit.⁵⁸⁷

CELEBRATING THE COMING OF THE RAILWAY

The inaugural excursion train left Auckland at ten minutes past six in the morning of 1 March 1886 with about 750 passengers in about 20 carriages; many, including the mayor of Auckland, who had purchased tickets were unable to obtain their seats. 'At almost every station fresh accessions of strength were received' until it arrived at Frankton Junction, when 'there must have been about a thousand, until at Ruakura it had 1500' in either 32 or 35 carriages.⁵⁸⁸ Passengers from Auckland did not return until 2.15 the following morning.⁵⁸⁹ At stations along the way passengers refreshed themselves with 'nips'. The mayor of Newmarket 'had his private carriage filled with vocalists and violinists', who 'at intervals during the long ride ... rendered a number of pieces'. At Te Aroha, residents cheered the train's arrival, and visitors were taken to the baths or to the Waiorongomai goldfield with its 'famous gorge'.⁵⁹⁰ Since early morning, 'numbers of willing hands' had erected the decorations:

⁵⁸² *Te Aroha News*, 29 May 1889, p. 2, advertisement, p. 7.

⁵⁸³ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 10 August 1889, p. 7.

⁵⁸⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 10 August 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁸⁵ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 16 October 1889, p. 7.

⁵⁸⁶ *Te Aroha News*, advertisements, 13 November 1889, pp. 2, 7, 23 November 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁸⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 18 December 1889, p. 2.

⁵⁸⁸ *Waikato Times*, 2 March 1886, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 March 1886, p. 12.

⁵⁸⁹ *Observer*, 6 March 1886, p. 12.

⁵⁹⁰ *Observer*, 6 March 1886, p. 13.

A very large triumphal arch across Whitaker-street at the corner of Boundary-street, tastefully decorated with ferns and evergreens of all description, and in the centre the word "Welcome" in large letters extending across the whole width of the arch. Flags and bunting interspersed with ferns, etc, extending from the top of the arch to the ground on either side, whilst proudly floating above the whole was the Union Jack of Old England. A very similar triumphal arch was also erected across Lipsey-street entrance to the station grounds, the work being carried out with very great taste and skill, and the inscription "Welcome to Te Aroha" in the centre most appropriate. Decorations of every description were carried out all over the township, and bunting and flags floated on the breeze from the Post Office, hotels, and places of business. In the Domain grounds, a pole of great height was erected on a knoll about the centre of the grounds, which carried a large handsome flag, etc, over the entrance gate whilst a small arch of evergreens with a banner in the centre executed in colours "Welcome to Te Aroha." A temporary awning was erected over the drinking fountain, the boy's statue which surmounts same had a piece of blue ribbon encircling his neck, in order to inspire confidence in the total abstainers hailing from afar, that they might with safety indulge in a glass of the liquid. Large posters tastefully executed in various colours were to be seen all over the town, bearing such appropriate mottos as "Te Aroha the Sanatorium of New Zealand," "Advance Upper Thames," "Welcome to Te Aroha," etc.⁵⁹¹

A puriri tree and an oak were planted in the domain by the wife of the local Member of Parliament.⁵⁹² Hamilton's mayor and councillors were present, along with members of other local bodies and 'a large number of influential settlers from all the surrounding settlements'. About 80 people attended the banquet in the hall, at which many toasts and speeches praised those who constructed the line and the government which had provided the money, along with plaudits for the development and prospects of the district, interspersed with 'appropriate selections' played by the band.⁵⁹³

A NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION

⁵⁹¹ *Te Aroha News*, 6 March 1886, p. 2.

⁵⁹² *Observer*, 6 March 1886, p. 13.

⁵⁹³ *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 March 1886, p. 12.

On New Year's Eve in 1887, a 'miscellaneous entertainment, including several Tableaux Vivants', was performed to raise money for the Anglican church. The hall was full, some having to stand; two columns of the newspaper were required to describe performers and their contributions, providing a most detailed account of these amateur entertainments. The first item was a piano solo by the daughter of the Minister of Public Works, which was much praised. After a song, the curtain rose on the tableau 'The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe', revealing

a company of about thirty children, dressed in white, seated all across the stage, each with a cup and spoon wherewith to partake of the broth.... One of the elder ones had the broth ladle in her hand as if in the act of serving out a second supply when arrested in so doing by the rise of the curtain, whilst standing on one side was Miss Newby attired in a very becoming white cap, adorned with the most approved maternal-looking frills, and having her large family evidently under complete control. Scene 2 represented the same group, looking in the reverse position to that in the previous scene, whilst Miss Newby, still acting the part of the old woman, held a most awe-inspiring rod of correction in a threatening manner over one of the juveniles, who, from the very serious look on his face, evidently had experienced the weight of the gentle "mother's" hand at some previous period and had not forgotten it. Scene 3 represented the children all asleep, after which they were again shown tucked snugly away in the "shoe."

As this ended the children's contribution, they watched the remainder from seats at the front. The second tableau depicted, in several scenes, two elderly rivals for the charms of a bashful maiden. Another song preceded the third tableau, 'The Game of Life', in which an angel protected a student playing chess with Mephistopheles. After two more songs, the fourth tableau was an Arcadian romance entitled 'Dresden China'. That was followed by a recitation by a visitor from Wales lasting almost 20 minutes and declaimed without recourse to notes and without faltering, prompting 'rounds of applause'. The fifth tableau gave the story of the Knave of Hearts stealing tarts from the Queen of Hearts in five scenes; the dresses were 'got up on a most elaborate scale'. After a song by Miss Hartley, Master Tonge sang and then performed a hornpipe with his brother, both wearing sailor's costumes. 'This part of the entertainment was most vociferously applauded', and an encore was demanded. A tableau on the theme of Jack and Jill

followed, after which there were two more songs, and then the final tableau, 'Father Christmas and the New Year':

On the curtain rising Old Father Christmas was discovered; his flowing robe and holly crowned cap whitened with flakes of snow, whilst before him stood a pum pudding of goodly dimensions in the midst of flaming spirits, which hissed around it. As the flames expired, and the curtain dropped Xmas exclaimed -

Regard me not with blank amaze,
Old Christmas vanishes in a blaze.

The second scene represented the Old Year to whom came slowly forward the New Year wishing him good-bye. The Old Year raised his hand over the child's head, and in solemn tones pronounced the following words:

Welcome! Young and bright New Year
Bring happiness to each one here,
You advance, I disappear.

The last scene disclosed the members of the company grouped on the stage, the angel of good attendant upon individual life rising high over all. In front of the group a portrait of Queen Victoria was displayed, and the entertainment was brought to a close by the Company singing "God Save the Queen."

Afterwards, the brass band 'played several well-known selections' in the streets, followed by 'Auld Lang Syne' at midnight. 'Crackers and fireworks were let off in all directions, and the Palace and Hot Springs Hotels were lit up with Chinese lanterns'.⁵⁹⁴

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Queen Victoria's Jubilee created much patriotic fervour. Plans were made to celebrate in a way that would not 'lag behind other towns in the colony'. As well as a march and speechifying, a 'Jubilee Avenue' of 50 trees was to be planted by 'all the principal persons connected in any way with the district'. Members of all the public bodies would participate, and opportunities 'afforded for appropriate speeches' by all wishing to orate. After sports held during the day, in the evening a 'miscellaneous

⁵⁹⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 8 January 1887, p. 2.

entertainment' would be followed by a dance. An 'important feature' would be 'the reciting of a Jubilee ode, and to procure a suitable composition it has been decided to offer a small premium, to be competed for by all who aspire to poetic fame', who would submit their efforts to a committee under a nom de plume. Sub-committees appointed by a public meeting organized the different events to ensure success.⁵⁹⁵

On the day, 'more undesirable weather for a holiday could not well be imagined':

Up till ten in the forenoon the rain continued to fall more or less heavily, and a meeting of the committee was held to consider whether it would not be advisable to delay the celebration until the following day. As the weather at that hour showed signs of moderating, it was resolved that there should be no postponement and that the programme as arranged should be carried out as far as circumstances would allow. At one o'clock, therefore, there was a general muster at the school grounds where a procession was formed, the children headed by the brass band taking the lead, followed by the Masonic body in regalia, and the greater part of the residents.⁵⁹⁶

After the 25 Masons came the town's officials, followed by the general public.⁵⁹⁷ They marched to the domain, where the avenue of trees was planted 'under the most adverse' weather.⁵⁹⁸ The trees included an English oak in memory of Warden Kenrick, a totara for the miners, a puriri labelled 'Hone Werahiko - In Memoriam', the 'ladies of Te Aroha' had a white spruce, an English oak was planted for 'Tutuki Puhi, for Natives', and a totara for 'Mokena Hou - In Memoriam'. Other trees honoured leading residents along with Firth and Clark of the Battery Company. 'Queen Victoria's Tree', another English oak, was planted by Ema Lipsey, wife of George and daughter of Mokena Hou. Because of the rain, 'speechmaking was indulged in by but very few, and was of the briefest description'.⁵⁹⁹

Meanwhile the children marched to the Public Hall for shelter, and after the completion of the work at the avenue they were joined by the adults. There matters wore a much brighter aspect.

⁵⁹⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 4 June 1887, p. 2.

⁵⁹⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 23 June 1887, p. 2.

⁵⁹⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 25 June 1887, p. 2.

⁵⁹⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 23 June 1887, p. 2.

⁵⁹⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 25 June 1887, p. 3.

A maypole had been erected, and the dance which was to have been carried out in the domain was now gone into with great spirit. There was an abundance of refreshments for the young folks, and enlivened by the strains of the band, everyone seemed to forget the disheartening state of things outside. After the dance the author of the prize Jubilee ode signed "Loyalty" was called upon to recite his composition and the Rev. S. Lawry appeared on platform in response to the call. It is almost needless to say the verses were read in excellent style, and at the finish the author was greeted with loud and hearty cheers. This was followed by a few short addresses from some of those who had assisted at the planting of the avenue, and the occasion was taken advantage of by most of the speakers to give expression of their feelings of loyalty to Queen and country.

In the evening the hall was crowded for an entertainment provided by local amateurs. Lawry, the resident Wesleyan minister, 'was again called upon to recite the Jubilee Ode, and the maypole dance was repeated by the children, in costume'. The 'warm applause which followed the efforts of the various singers testified to the pleasure of the audience'.⁶⁰⁰ After Thomas Scott, a mine manager,⁶⁰¹ danced the Highland fling in full Highland costume, an original pantomime, 'Jubilee Jinks', by an unrecorded author, 'provoked roars of laughter'.⁶⁰² Several hours were then spent in dancing, and 'altogether the day's proceedings, in spite of the vileness of the weather, were of a most enjoyable kind, and gave ample evidence of the loyalty and spirit of the inhabitants'.⁶⁰³

All 20 verses of Lawry's ode were suitably patriotic, as the fifteenth verse illustrates:

Beneath Te Aroha's lofty peaks
 We celebrate the Jubilee
 Of Queen Victoria's glorious reign;
 We vie with England's citizens
 In loyal deeds and hearty cheer,
 Though far away from where the throne
 Lends splendour to surrounding things.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 23 June 1887, p. 2.

⁶⁰¹ See *Thames Star*, 16 August 1882, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 3 May 1883, p. 2; *New Zealand Gazette*, 11 February 1892, p. 298.

⁶⁰² *Te Aroha News*, 25 June 1887, p. 3.

⁶⁰³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 23 June 1887, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁴ *Waikato Times*, 25 June 1887, p. 2.

For his poetic toil, which defeated 11 worse effusions, Lawry received a prize of £1 1s. He was ‘most vociferously applauded; the sentiments being given expression to and the ode being unmistakably in accord with the feelings of those assembled’. The speeches that followed were such that, ‘could our Queen have been present on the occasion, she could not but have been highly gratified at the many heartfelt utterances of loyalty and affection that were given expression to’.⁶⁰⁵ The *Te Aroha News* in a special jubilee edition praised the queen and the fact that she reigned over ‘the greatest, most wealthy, and the most nearly cosmopolitan empire that the world has ever known’, which marked ‘the “golden age” of the Anglo-Saxon race’.⁶⁰⁶ After all these activities, there was a jubilee carnival for the children and more dances.⁶⁰⁷

HORSE RACING

Horse races were highlights of every year. According to the *Te Aroha News*, residents’ ‘sporting proclivities’ were ‘very largely developed’ and every man knew ‘the points of a horse’ and was ‘acquainted with the pedigree of every good piece of horseflesh for twenty miles around’. Many impromptu races were held on a small racetrack at Ruakaka since 1880, and in February 1883 the Te Aroha Jockey Club was formed.⁶⁰⁸ Its first committee, like later ones, comprised some of the most prominent settlers: Henry Ernest Whitaker, accountant and legal secretary to the Battery Company; Patrick Quinlan, John Coleman, George O’Halloran, Thomas Lawless, and John Watson Walker, all past or present publicans; one lawyer, Joshua Cuff; George Lipsey, the principal landowner; a shopkeeper, one of the Balcke brothers; Henry Hopper Adams, the battery manager; and Clement Augustus Cornes, a leading miner.⁶⁰⁹

The club held its first race meeting in March, a coach leaving especially early from Thames to enable people to arrive in time.⁶¹⁰ About 500 attended, ‘of whom fully half were mounted on horseback. Three booths

⁶⁰⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 25 June 1887, p. 3.

⁶⁰⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 21 June 1887, p. 1.

⁶⁰⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 9 July 1887, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 8 December 1883, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 12 February 1883, p. 2.

⁶¹⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 13 March 1883, p. 2.

had been erected, and a plentiful supply of necessaries furnished to refresh the inner man'.⁶¹¹ Subsequently it was decided to alter the racetrack to remove two 'sharp and dangerous' corners. Steeplechases were also held over farmland belonging to Lipsey and Cornes.⁶¹² The Spring Meeting, held in November, attracted crowds of, in particular, 'well-to-do farmers, lucky diggers, [and] happy-go-lucky Maoris'.⁶¹³ It prompted a *Waikato Times* report 'that a fairly large section of the sporting community of Waikato' had made 'serious complaints' about 'the disgraceful conduct of certain matters', which,

if true, do not reflect very creditably on those upon whom the responsibility of the meeting rests; nor do they in any way betray that love of fair play, at the expense of personal loss, which should characterise all matters in connection with the turf. It has been complained to us that the Cup race was one altogether unequalled in the annals of racing, and that certain matters in connection therewith should not be allowed to pass unnoticed. Dewdrop started the favourite for the event but Robert-the-Devil was considered almost a certainty by his own immediate Waikato friends, and by them had been backed to win. It is alleged, on the other hand, that the stewards of the races were considerably interested in Dewdrop, whom they had backed to carry off the leading honour of the day. Dewdrop was ridden by a professional jockey, who, on the fall of the flag, exerted himself to knock everyone out of the race but his own particular mount, and in this, it is said, he succeeded to a great extent, having run one boy inside a post, and crossed another - Robert-the-Devil - knocking him both out of his place and running. Robert's jockey having got himself together again, soon found his way into the lead. There being some water on the course, Robert jumped slightly to one side to evade it, but his lead was so considerable as not in any way to interfere with Dewdrop's running. Robert won, and a protest was duly entered against him for crossing. The stewards heard the protest, and after a little consideration gave in favour of Dewdrop, and disqualified Robert. The latter's owner now alleges that while he was away fishing up his witnesses through the crowd, the stewards gave their decision without hearing his side with the exception of one witness. He further alleges that the stewards were much interested in Dewdrop's win; and also that, after giving their decision, they admitted their rashness in hurrying it through in the manner they did. The foul riding of

⁶¹¹ *Waikato Times*, 17 March 1883, p. 3.

⁶¹² *Te Aroha News*, 20 October 1883, p. 2.

⁶¹³ *Te Aroha News*, 1 December 1883, p. 2.

Dewdrop's rider has been much complained of, and it is considered very surprising that he was not disqualified instead of Robert, who ran a fair and open race throughout.⁶¹⁴

The *Te Aroha News* ignored this article, as it commonly ignored all criticism from outsiders, and 16 days later Francis Pavitt, secretary to the club, denied the story. When the stewards met, 'every opportunity' was given for interested parties to 'give testimony, but almost the only one who responded to the bell-ringers call was the jockey boy of the horse Robert-the-Devil', who 'acknowledged in a very straightforward manner that he did cross the mare as stated'. It had been an accident, caused by his using the whip. As the protest was for the cross, the case was decided on its merits. The stewards were 'thoroughly honest and honourable gentlemen', and Pavitt regretted that 'some disappointed persons' had been permitted to publicize their unfair claims.⁶¹⁵

Impromptu races were held periodically, with gambling on the results creating intense interest. For instance, in December 1883 a horse race took place between two ponies.⁶¹⁶ The previous month, a 'spirit medium' visiting had a revelation that First Demon would win the Melbourne Cup; it did not.⁶¹⁷ One noteworthy event in 1884 was an exhibition of the skills of a horse tamer and rider in November.⁶¹⁸

In March 1886 the Jockey Club was revived at a 'well-attended' meeting: 'every effort will be used to make it the most successful that has yet been held here'.⁶¹⁹ The 'sporting spirit' was also kept alive by races between local horses.⁶²⁰ Because the Ruakaka track was too rough, in January 1889 the Jockey Club accepted John Woods' offer of a paddock on his Te Aroha West farm to be a new racecourse.⁶²¹ The first race day on the new course attracted up to 500 spectators, who were entertained not only by

⁶¹⁴ *Waikato Times*, 4 December 1883, p. 2.

⁶¹⁵ *Waikato Times*, 20 December 1883, p. 2.

⁶¹⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 8 December 1883, p. 2.

⁶¹⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 19 November 1883, p. 6.

⁶¹⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 22 November 1884, p. 2.

⁶¹⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 26 January 1886, p. 3.

⁶²⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 16 February 1886, p. 2.

⁶²¹ *Te Aroha News*, 23 January 1889, p. 2.

the horses but also the brass band. The afternoon was marred by the wind stirring up large clouds of dust.⁶²²

SPORT

Running races were held occasionally. For instance, in 1883 ‘a hundred yards foot race was arranged’ between publican John Allwood ‘and a visitor from Auckland named Kelly. The latter won by about a yard’. Coleman ‘was by no means satisfied, and another race was arranged’, which he won. ‘A good many sovereigns changed hands on the event’.⁶²³ In that year, the only organized sport mentioned in the press was rugby. The Te Aroha team, captained by Whitaker, included ‘four or five Public School boys who know every move of the game’.⁶²⁴ When a match against Thames was held in September, one journalist expected to see some Thames men ‘coming home on stretchers’.⁶²⁵ Their ‘hard fought’ match against ‘the burly inhabitants of “Love Mountain” ’ resulted in ‘a draw slightly in favour of Te Aroha’. Afterwards, the Te Aroha club entertained the visitors in the evening, as was the norm.⁶²⁶ The match, on the Ruakaka racecourse, attracted either 250 or 400 spectators.⁶²⁷ Afterwards, the *Thames Advertiser* gave some advice:

Before the Thames footballers again try conclusions with their Te Aroha friends it might be advisable that a well-appointed ambulance be provided, or at least that a surgeon be retained on the occasion of the contest. The contingent who invaded the up-country territory on Saturday last, though returning unvanquished, were considerably the worse of the battle with the heavy-weight Arohites. Two combatants ... came into violent collision during the game, both were stunned, and the Thames man is minus an incisor, and had his lower lip laid open. Another received a charge in the chest from a stooping kickist, and was otherwise severely mauled, and a third had his most prominent facial organ enlarged. An up-country surveyor sprained an ankle,

⁶²² *Te Aroha News*, 16 February 1889, p. 2, 13 March 1889, p. 2.

⁶²³ *Te Aroha News*, 8 December 1883, p. 2.

⁶²⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 3 September 1883, p. 3.

⁶²⁵ ‘Thames Tittle Tattle’, *Observer*, 1 September 1883, p. 16.

⁶²⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 3 September 1883, p. 3; ‘Thames Tittle Tattle’, *Observer*, 8 September 1883, p. 6.

⁶²⁷ *Waikato Times*, 6 September 1883, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 8 September 1883, p. 2.

while abraded shins and blackened eyes were at a discount (among the Aroha team), and the rough play has considerably shaken most of the players.⁶²⁸

Consequently, at the return game later that month Thames had four emergencies whereas Te Aroha had only one.⁶²⁹ The *Thames Advertiser* noted that the ‘capital physique’ of Te Aroha’s players ‘was the subject of general remarks, the Thames men appearing in very poor comparison with them, and their weight was also considerably in their favour’. This match was drawn also.⁶³⁰

In October, Lipsey allowed the use of his paddock for a cricket field and for tennis, although it could not be used for such until levelled and sown.⁶³¹ According to the *Te Aroha News*, there were good cricketers at both Te Aroha and Waiorongomai, singling out Charles Stafford and Thomas Lawless as ‘men whom selection committees for Interprovincial matches should not forget’.⁶³² In late December, Stafford supervised cricket practice every afternoon.⁶³³ On Boxing Day, sports of various kinds were held in ‘Morgan’s Paddock’,⁶³⁴ close to the river, where Mokena Hou had lived and which he still owned (later known as Herries Park). Residents also used it as their football ground.⁶³⁵ But adults playing football on Sundays offended many people.⁶³⁶

Billiards rarely merited attention, except when a tournament in a hotel, as in February 1884, attracted considerable interest.⁶³⁷ A correspondent wrote in that month that ‘the half-friendly and half-jealous rivalry that exists between our two townships has for some time been kept ablaze by a series of cricket matches’.⁶³⁸ In January, there was a match between Te Aroha and Waiorongomai teams, and the following month

⁶²⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 4 September 1883, p. 2.

⁶²⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 21 September 1883, p. 2.

⁶³⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 24 September 1883, p. 3.

⁶³¹ *Te Aroha News*, 27 October 1883, p. 2.

⁶³² *Te Aroha News*, 15 December 1883, p. 2.

⁶³³ *Te Aroha News*, 22 December 1883, p. 2.

⁶³⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 22 December 1883, p. 2.

⁶³⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 15 September 1883, p. 2.

⁶³⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 30 August 1884, p. 2.

⁶³⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 16 February 1884, p. 2.

⁶³⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 28 February 1884, p. 3.

between the married and single men of both settlements; Waiorongomai won the former 'after a severe struggle', the bachelors receiving 'a sound drubbing for their audacity'.⁶³⁹ In March, cricket was 'still the only out-door game in which any interest is evinced'.⁶⁴⁰

By early May, 'the cricketing season may now be said to be over, and muscular Christianity has assumed its cold weather phase', with footballers organising a team. There were 'many strong and active players' who would be 'a hard lot to deal with, and no less able to hold their own than they proved themselves to be in wielding the willow'.⁶⁴¹ Hamilton Verity⁶⁴², captain of the Te Aroha team, emphasized the manly aspect of this game at a banquet at Thames later that month. 'Many people had a great prejudice against football, but he thought, if the game were played in a proper manner it was a healthy and manly sport. Every father should cultivate a taste for manly sports in his boys'. Many of the British soldiers then 'suffering hardships in Egypt owed the endurance of their constitution to football'.⁶⁴³ In the last match of the year, Waiorongomai and Quartzville versus Te Aroha and Waitoa, the former won after some 'rather rough' play.⁶⁴⁴

In spring, a Te Aroha Cricket and Tennis Club was formed.⁶⁴⁵ In the first match of the new cricket season Waiorongomai defeated Te Aroha.⁶⁴⁶ Boxing Day Sports were held once more in Morgan's Paddock.⁶⁴⁷ Those seeking another new form of exercise could pay the 'very reasonable rates' charged for the use of the 'handsome pleasure boats' that Charles Everitt had built with the tourist trade particularly in mind. His brother William's 'swift little steam launch' would tow a boat up-river and those who had hired it would then paddle down with the current. A couple of Rob Roy canoes were also being built for hire.⁶⁴⁸

⁶³⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 26 January 1884, p. 7, 23 February 1884, p. 2; Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 28 February 1884, p. 3.

⁶⁴⁰ *Waikato Times*, 15 March 1884, p. 2.

⁶⁴¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 8 May 1884, p. 2.

⁶⁴² See paper on the strike at Waiorongomai in 1884.

⁶⁴³ *Thames Advertiser*, 27 May 1884, p. 3.

⁶⁴⁴ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Te Aroha News*, 7 October 1884, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 1 November 1884, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁶ *Waikato Times*, 4 November 1884, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 27 December 1884, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 11 July 1885, p. 2.

In May 1885, 'our local athletes, who for a length of time past have shown no signs of life', started to organize for the football season. The club would 'play at a disadvantage, as several of its best men have left the district, but a strong team can still be got together who will be able to give a good account of themselves against all comers'.⁶⁴⁹ In October, a lawn tennis club was formed and new courts were nearing completion in the domain.⁶⁵⁰

That football was less organized in 1886 than in previous years was indicated by an announcement in August that a 'scratch football match' would be held in Morgan's Paddock: 'All interested in the Game invited'.⁶⁵¹ In October, attention turned to the river, when a race for four-oared boats was held over the two mile distance from Tui Pa, the new name for Omahu Pa, to the railway bridge.⁶⁵² This race prompted the first Te Aroha Regatta, held on the Prince of Wales' birthday holiday on 9 November. The *Te Aroha News* hoped this successful occasion would 'be but the precursor of many more such pleasant gatherings'. A number of fresh contests were 'being arranged for at an early date'.⁶⁵³

The only sporting event of particular note during 1887 was 'a boxing match just for fun with bare fists'. An observer did not 'think there was much fun about it as they both had black eyes'.⁶⁵⁴ The only notable development during the following year was the re-formation of a tennis club.⁶⁵⁵

An example of poor sportsmanship was reported in January 1889 under the headline, 'Novel Fishing'. Shoals of fish, 'apparently of the trout species', had been spotted close to the town, prompting a number of men to hold 'a council of war':

Before long the siege was laid, the match at the end of a 10-foot supplejack was applied, and while the fuse fizzed in the water, with breathless awe a crowd of men and naked boys stood, not by their gun, but at what they considered a safe distance. The shot went off and so did the fish, and whether through exasperation at the disappointment or the intense heat of the weather,

⁶⁴⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 5 May 1885, p. 3.

⁶⁵⁰ *Waikato Times*, 15 October 1885, p. 3.

⁶⁵¹ *Te Aroha News*, 14 August 1886, p. 3.

⁶⁵² *Te Aroha News*, 16 October 1886, p. 2.

⁶⁵³ *Te Aroha News*, 23 October 1886, p. 2, 13 November 1886, p. 2.

⁶⁵⁴ 'Te Aroha Twists', *Observer*, 4 June 1887, p. 18.

⁶⁵⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 26 September 1888, p. 2.

immediately after this about 20 persons were weltering in the river looking for the fish, alive or dead. One of the latter was found and measured about six inches in length. It is understood our sportsmen are to adopt different tactics the next time these fish come along.⁶⁵⁶

Outdoor pursuits involving killing were common: in May the chairman of the domain board commented that the police should stop people 'traversing the Domain with guns'.⁶⁵⁷ A man who lived at Waihou as a teenager in the 1880s recalled that the annual wild pig hunt was a favourite sport. Captain Cookers were common in the bush, their flavour enhanced by feeding on the peaches and apples that fell from the trees early missionaries had planted along the river.⁶⁵⁸

Bowls was popular with both locals and visitors, and in June 1889 the domain board decided to improve the green.⁶⁵⁹ Football clubs were re-formed at Te Aroha and Waiorongomai early that year.⁶⁶⁰ They united in April to hold an entertainment and dance to raise funds to improve the old football field on the Ruakaka racecourse, after which it was hoped to revive the enthusiastic football matches of some years previously.⁶⁶¹ The first game between these clubs took place that month, when it was anticipated that 'considerable interest' would be taken in the 'friendly contest'.⁶⁶² The occasion was a social as well as a sporting one:

The greatest interest was evinced in the match, and some time prior to play commencing, large numbers might be seen wending their way to the ground on foot, horseback, and in vehicles, and the merits and demerits of the players were freely discussed. A temperance booth was erected on the ground and did a good business trade in the afternoon. From Waiorongomai a large contingent were present anxious to witness the contest.

⁶⁵⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 22 January 1889, p. 3.

⁶⁵⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 11 May 1889, p. 2.

⁶⁵⁸ Sir James Parr, 'Two Hemispheres: My Life' (typescript, 1934), pp. 11-12, in possession of Christopher Parr, Remuera, Auckland.

⁶⁵⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 5 June 1889, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁰ *Waikato Times*, 16 April 1889, p. 2.

⁶⁶¹ *Te Aroha News*, 30 March 1889, p. 2.

⁶⁶² *Waikato Times*, 16 April 1889, p. 2.

After a ‘well contested’ game, Waiorongomai won by one point to nil, ‘undoubtedly having the advantage both as regards weight and previous practice’. A ‘very pleasing feature’ was ‘the good humour which prevailed, notwithstanding the rough handling both sides received’.⁶⁶³ The teams united to play Paeroa at Waiorongomai in May, winning two to nil. ‘Although the play at times was rather rough the utmost good humour prevailed throughout’. An example of this roughness was the breaking of a rib of the captain of the home team early in the match, despite which he kept playing ‘in a brilliant manner to the last’.⁶⁶⁴ A return game at Paeroa was also won by the united team, which in July won against Katikati and then in September defeated Huntly 11 to 1.⁶⁶⁵ The Te Aroha team also played against the flax mill workers on two occasions.⁶⁶⁶ After the end of the football season, there was talk of reviving the Te Aroha Cricket Club,⁶⁶⁷ but this did not eventuate before the end of the year.

CONCLUSION

Te Aroha started the decade as a mining town, but as mining declined it became a tourist destination and the centre of an agricultural district. As other papers confirm, it was not an atomized society but one similar to most, if not all, rural communities, with considerable social interaction and sharing of labour and talents in both work and entertainment.⁶⁶⁸ By the end of the decade it was a well-established township, and would continue to prosper and develop in subsequent decades.

Appendix

Figure 1: Burton Bros, ‘Te Aroha – Thames’, 1884, C.013350, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

⁶⁶³ *Te Aroha News*, 17 April 1889, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 15 May 1889, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 29 May 1889, p. 2, 10 July 1889, p. 2, 13 July 1889, p. 2, 11 September 1889, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁶ *Te Aroha News*, 25 September 1889, p. 2, 12 October 1889, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 23 November 1889, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁸ See Rollo Arnold, ‘Community in Rural Victorian New Zealand’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol. 24 no. 1 (1990), pp. 3-21, for his rebuttal of Miles Fairburn’s atomisation argument.

Figure 2: Burton Bros, 'Te Aroha – Thames', 1884, A10077, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries; used with permission.

Figure 3: Burton Bros, 'Te Aroha – Thames River' [showing the coach to Hamilton being transported on the punt], 1884, C.013351, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

Figure 4: 'Railway Bridge and River', c. 1885, Te Aroha and District Museum; used with permission.

Figure 5: Robin Hood and Little John Hotel and nearby shops, c. 1883, Te Aroha and District Museum; used with permission.

Figure 6: Portion of Whitaker Street, Te Aroha, c. 1883, Te Aroha and District Museum; used with permission.

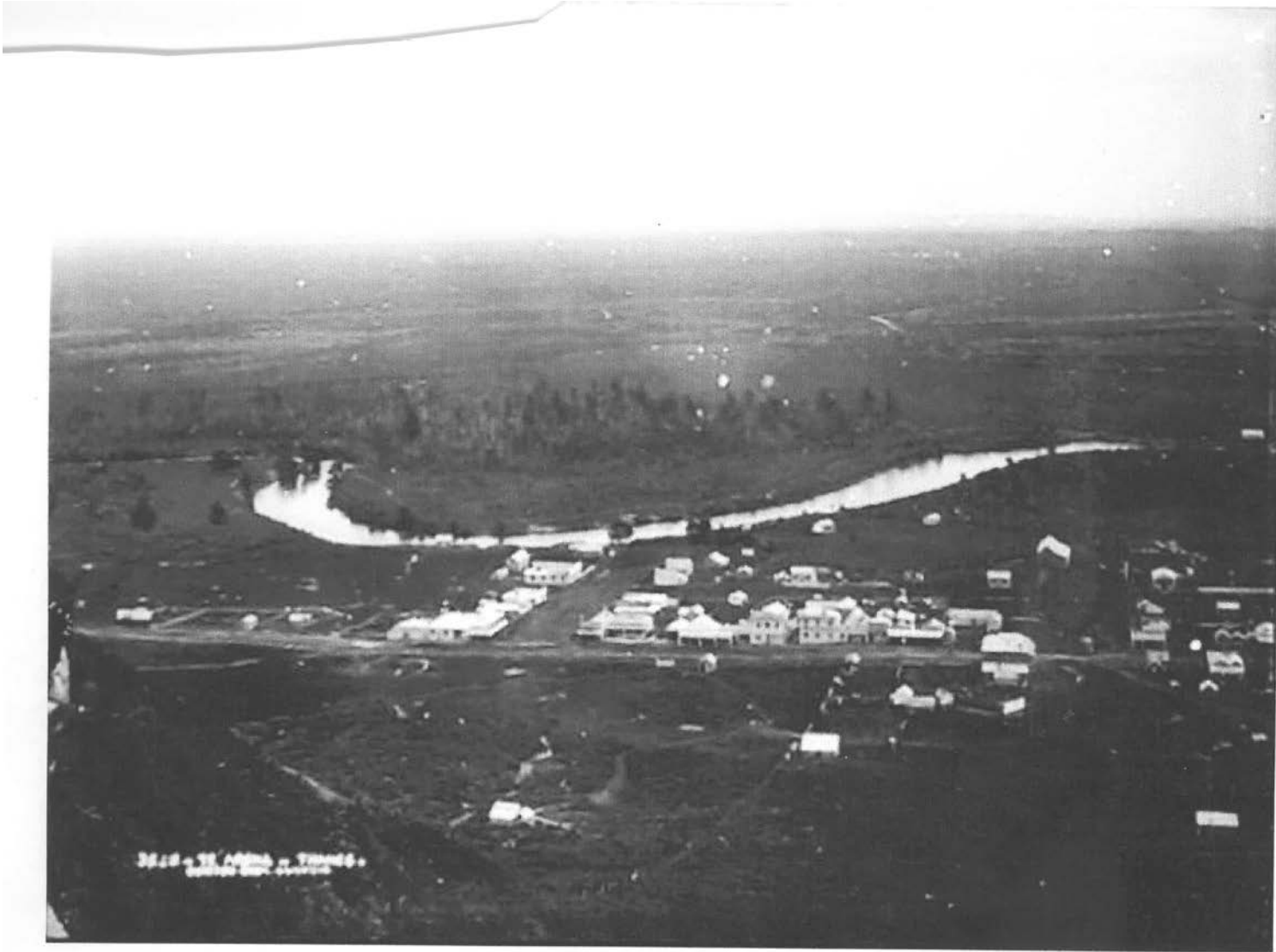


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