

JOSEPH HARRIS SMALLMAN

Philip Hart

**Te Aroha Mining District Working Papers**

**No. 25**

**2016**

Historical Research Unit  
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences  
The University of Waikato  
Private Bag 3105  
Hamilton, New Zealand

ISSN: 2463-6266

© 2016 Philip Hart

Contact: [prhart@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:prhart@waikato.ac.nz)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

## JOSEPH HARRIS SMALLMAN

**Abstract:** *Born to a mining agent and trained as a mining surveyor, in 1864, less than a year after the birth of his first child, Smallman left England for New Zealand to establish a 'Mining business', promising that his family would join him once it was successful. But they were never asked to join him, and after 1870 he ceased to write to his wife.*

*The 'Mining business' never eventuated, but in 1865 he prospected at Thames, unsuccessfully seeking alluvial gold. Although criticized for living off Maori and doing little prospecting, with his partner he investigated several areas of the Hauraki Peninsula, again unsuccessfully. When the Thames goldfield was opened, with his encouragement, two years later, he mined there for some years, proving himself to be a competent miner but not making his fortune. After working elsewhere, by the mid-1870s he was living with another man's 'half-caste' wife on her land near Te Aroha, having five children with her. Happy to be described as a Pakeha Maori and closely associated with the local hapu, he supported them over land dealings and the development of the district. Despite spending most of his time farming, he remained interested in prospecting, and made some explorations in districts closed to Pakeha. After gold was found at Te Aroha, for a short time he worked with Maori partners in unprofitable claims.*

*Either before or after his second wife had a child by another man in 1886, he left New Zealand to return to his English family; and remarkably, despite his first wife knowing that his liaison had produced children, she accepted him back after his long absence, and they remained together for the rest of their lives.*

### HIS ENGLISH BACKGROUND

According to what Joseph Harris Smallman told the police when he was briefly imprisoned for drunkenness in February 1881, he was aged 35, had been born in England, and was a member of the Church of England.<sup>1</sup> This would have made the year of his birth 1845 or 1846. Fortunately Smallman named his farm near Te Aroha 'King's Hill',<sup>2</sup> a link to his birthplace, the village of King's Hill, near Wednesbury, which was near

---

<sup>1</sup> Armed Constabulary Force, Report of Charges Taken at Te Aroha Lock-Up 1880-1903, no. 6, in private possession.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from J.H. Smallman, *Thames Star*, 5 March 1881, p. 2.

West Bromwich in Staffordshire. He was born there on 20 June 1839, and would be the eldest of five children.<sup>3</sup> Clearly he had given the wrong age to the police - but he had been drunk at the time. His father, Elihu, a mine agent, and his mother, Ann, neé Harris, were living in a coal mining and ironworking area.<sup>4</sup>

By 1861, both Smallman and his father were mineral surveyors.<sup>5</sup> In July that year, Smallman was elected a member of the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers.<sup>6</sup> (Presumably there was no Midlands – or similar - Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers.) He described himself as ‘a Mining Agent, and Engineer’.<sup>7</sup> In November 1862, he married Sophia Spencer in the Wesleyan Chapel, King’s Hill, Wednesbury;<sup>8</sup> she had been born in 1843 at Handsworth, near Birmingham.<sup>9</sup> In September 1863, their son Herbert Spencer was born.<sup>10</sup>

## LEAVING ENGLAND

In mid-July 1864, as his wife later explained, Smallman left England ‘for the purpose of establishing a Mining business in New Zealand and at the time of his so leaving me it was arranged between us that as soon as he had formed the business he should return to this Country and take’ his

---

<sup>3</sup> Birth Certificate of Joseph Harris Smallman, West Bromwich, September Quarter 1839, vol. 18, p. 515; ancestry.co.uk.

<sup>4</sup> Entries for Smallman family, King’s Hill, Wednesbury, Staffordshire, Census of England, 1841, 1851; ‘Wednesbury’, Google.

<sup>5</sup> Entry for Smallman family, King’s Hill, Wednesbury, Staffordshire, Census of England, 1861.

<sup>6</sup> *North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, Transactions*, vol. 9 (1860-1861), p. xxix; vol. 10 (1862), pp. xix, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Declaration of Sophia Smallman, 20 March 1880, J 77/241/6833, The National Archives, Kew, London.

<sup>8</sup> Marriage Certificate of Joseph Harris Smallman, West Bromwich, December Quarter 1862, vol. 6b, p. 1005; declaration of Sophia Smallman, 20 March 1880, J 77/241/6833, The National Archives, Kew, London.

<sup>9</sup> Birth Certificate of Sophia Spencer, West Bromwich, September Quarter 1843, vol. 18, p. 567; Sophia Smallman, Census of England, Staffordshire, 1901.

<sup>10</sup> Birth Certificate of Herbert Spencer Smallman, West Bromwich, December Quarter 1863, vol. 6b, p. 652; declaration of Sophia Smallman, 20 March 1880, J 77/241/6833, The National Archives, Kew, London.

family 'out to him'.<sup>11</sup> In December 1877, Smallman mistakenly wrote that he had lived in New Zealand for 15 years,<sup>12</sup> which would have made his year of arrival 1862, whereas he had arrived in Auckland aboard the 'Ida Zeigler' in October 1864 and received a 40-acre land grant.<sup>13</sup>

An advertisement published on 7 November 1864 asked Mr 'T.H. Smallman, Land and Mine Surveyor, Auckland', to call at a club or leave his address there. 'This request is for business purposes'.<sup>14</sup> Almost three months later, he may have been the Smallman who was a partner of a man named Cooper in a well sinking business in Auckland.<sup>15</sup>

### PROSPECTING THAMES

In March 1865, James Mackay, Civil Commissioner for the Hauraki district, wrote to Ngati Maru rangatira Wirope Hoterene Taipari<sup>16</sup> introducing Walter Williamson.<sup>17</sup> Taipari was the principal owner of land between the Hape and Karaka Creeks, and Mackay had chosen Smallman and Williamson to prospect on his land.<sup>18</sup> Williamson claimed to be familiar with South Australian copper ore, had mined in Victoria, and had been in Queensland as goldfields correspondent for a Sydney newspaper.<sup>19</sup> As Williamson was an alluvial miner unfamiliar with reef mining, and Smallman had no known experience in gold prospecting, alluvial or otherwise, they were unable to find gold. Mackay believed that Smallman

---

<sup>11</sup> Declaration of Sophia Smallman, 20 March 1880, J 77/241/6833, The National Archives, Kew, London.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from J.H. Smallman, *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 December 1877, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Shipping Index, Auckland Public Library; Land Grants for Immigrants, Register of Grantees 1863-1868, no. A2698, Lands and Survey Department, BAAZ 4115/1c, ANZ-A.

<sup>14</sup> Advertisement, *New Zealand Herald*, 7 November 1864, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Southern Cross*, 11 February 1865, p. 1; advertisements, *New Zealand Herald*, 11 February 1865, p. 1, 13 February 1865, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> See paper on Maori and goldfields revenue.

<sup>17</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 January 1869, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> Evidence of James Mackay, *Thames Advertiser*, 15 March 1875, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 2 May 1867, printed in *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 July 1867, p. 8; *New Zealand Herald*, 31 July 1867, p. 4; *Thames Advertiser*, 24 August 1875, p. 3.

had been on alluvial fields in Australia,<sup>20</sup> which presumably explains why he was chosen; had Smallman made this claim? Mackay later recalled that the Superintendent had ‘allowed them some rations, and I gave them a few pounds for other necessities’.<sup>21</sup>

In July 1867, after it was reported that gold had been discovered at Thames by two Maori prospectors, Williamson wrote letters on behalf of himself and Smallman describing their prospecting in April 1865 at what was then known as Kauaeranga. The published extracts from Williamson’s prospecting diary revealed that on 27 June 1865 he had informed Mackay ‘that the prospect obtained was so good that we should feel obliged if he would forward to us a copy of the mining regulations and the by-laws relating to gold’. Whilst awaiting this information, they sank a shaft ‘in the flat about 150 feet in from the left bank of the Karaka Creek’, finding specks of gold as they descended but in-rushing water made it impossible to continue sinking. They constructed a sluice box, panned off, and found specks of gold, Taipari appropriating their best specimen. By early July they had found ‘a few specks mixed with quartz’, indicating that a gold-bearing reef was nearby. On 12 July ‘my companions’, presumably including Smallman, left for Auckland, leaving Williamson to ‘remain some time longer and see what can be done’.<sup>22</sup> After the ‘party separated’, Williamson had tested the Waiotahi Creek, obtaining ‘a prospect that would satisfy any miner’, but then was asked to leave by Ngati Maru concerned about the likelihood of other Pakeha arriving.<sup>23</sup> With the permission of Tanumeha Te Moananui, of Ngati Tamatera, during September and October they prospected his land at Waiomu, north of Thames, without success.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> James Mackay, ‘First Discoveries of Gold in N.Z.’, *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 19 October 1906, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from James Mackay, *New Zealand Herald*, 21 November 1899, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Walter Williamson, *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 July 1867, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 2 May 1867, printed in *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 July 1867, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Williamson, diary, entries for September and October 1865, appended to Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, MS 595, box 21, Session 26, Auckland Public Library; ‘Report by Mr Commissioner Mackay Relative to the Thames Gold Fields’, 27 July 1869, *AJHR*, 1869, A-17, p. 4.

Mackay had obtained permission for them to prospect Mercury Bay.<sup>25</sup> When Williamson returned from there to Thames in March 1866 with three others, not including Smallman, he re-tested the Karaka Stream, finding ‘a few grains to the dish of fine scaly gold – certainly not a pennyweight in all, but sufficient to pay when put through a sluicing machine’.<sup>26</sup> The *New Zealand Herald* was unimpressed, for discoveries at Thames had ‘something of the nature of intermittent fever, seizing on the patient at intervals’:

Something of this kind was the rumour of rich gold-fields in the Thames district, which was prevalent in the town yesterday. Some parties who had been prospecting, or rather camping out, in the direction of the Thames, having run short of provisions, returned to town on Saturday night, and have reported great discoveries, rich leaders, &c. The people of Auckland, however, have been so often gulled with these gold discoveries, that they are scarcely likely to be led away in the present instance.<sup>27</sup>

The following day, the newspaper explained that this party was to be believed compared with that of ‘a well-known individual’, possibly Williamson, ‘who spends much of his time, at the public expense, on the skirts of the Thames district, and who occasionally enlivens the good people of Auckland’ by providing the *Daily Southern Cross* ‘with accounts of his wonderful discoveries and exertions’. It only mentioned two men in the party, but did not name Williamson’s partner.<sup>28</sup>

On 23 July 1867, a *New Zealand Herald* editorial complained of ‘loafers sent down by subscriptions raised from Auckland citizens, to squat for three months at a time on Taipari’s land, eat his kumeras and kill his pigs, and work one day a month’.<sup>29</sup> Two days later, writing on his own behalf ‘and for Joseph Smallman’, Williamson denied that they fitted this description. All the ‘supplies we had from the natives were purchased, with the exception of the kumeras which were freely given to us by the chief. Had we attempted to kill a pig, and were it known to any of the natives that we

---

<sup>25</sup> Evidence of James Mackay, *Thames Advertiser*, 15 March 1875, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Letter from Walter Williamson [the second published in this issue], *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 July 1867, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 27 March 1866, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Editorial, *New Zealand Herald*, 28 March 1866, p. 4; for Williamson’s membership of this party, see his second letter printed in *Auckland Weekly News*, 20 July 1867, p. 21.

<sup>29</sup> Editorial, *New Zealand Herald*, 23 July 1867, p. 3.

had done so, our stay there would have been but short – all the country being held tapu'. As they were accompanied by Maori 'wherever we went', they could not kill any pigs. The shafts and paddocks they left behind was evidence of the work they had done near the ground now being tested by Maori prospectors. His diary proved that not 'a single day was lost during six months, unless through stress of weather'. His report to Mackay described the banks of the Karaka Creek as 'payable ground, and capable of affording profitable employment to fifty or sixty men during twelve months', a considerable underestimation. 'From the day we placed foot on Kauaeranga in March, until leaving it in August, we received no assistance from either the Government or the citizens of Auckland'.<sup>30</sup> He appended his letter of 2 May 1867 to the Superintendent of Auckland Province, then John Williamson (no relation), describing their prospecting.<sup>31</sup> Eleven days later, Smallman wrote to Superintendent Williamson:

Seeing that your Honor is anxious to develop the Gold-fields of this Province, I beg to inform you I firmly believe alluvial gold will be found payable at Kauaeranga, Gulf of Hauraki, having prospected there for months in 1865. The names of native owners at the Kauaeranga are as follows, Shortland [Hoterene] Taipari, Hanauru Taipari [otherwise Wirope Hoterene Taipari, son of Hoterene].

We also found alluvial gold at the Waiotahi, about two and a half or three miles to the north of Kauaeranga, the names of native chiefs are, Karuri, Rapana [Te Moananui].

There is also a piece of ground separated from Kauaeranga by the Karaka Creek, owned by a native woman named Lydia, which also contains alluvial gold. She was not willing at the time for us to prospect upon it, but has since consented.<sup>32</sup>

In 1869 Smallman would inform a meeting of Thames miners that 'for years' he had put 'his heart and soul in opening a goldfield to save' the Auckland province, 'and it was not till' Williamson was elected as Superintendent in March 1867 'that anything could be done. He had mentioned his conviction that there was gold at the Thames' to Robert

---

<sup>30</sup> Letter from Walter Williamson 'and for Joseph Smallman' to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 25 July 1867, printed in *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 July 1867, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 2 May 1867, printed in *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 July 1867, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> J.H. Smallman to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 13 May 1867, printed in *New Zealand Herald*, 31 July 1867, p. 4.

Graham, Superintendent from 1862 to 1865, and Frederick Whitaker, his successor, 'and they had sent him away, saying that there was no payable goldfield on the Thames'.<sup>33</sup> As a consequence of Smallman's suggestion to Superintendent Williamson,<sup>34</sup> on 27 July a public meeting was held in Auckland 'for the purpose of devising measures for opening up the auriferous country in the Thames district'. If Williamson and Smallman were present, they did not contribute to the discussion.<sup>35</sup> Another meeting was held three days later. Upon a prompt from 'Mr Campbell' (John Logan Campbell?) that there was 'a gentleman in this assembly that has been prospecting in the Thames for some time' who could provide 'some information about the wash dirt', Williamson announced

that during one day we got at least at the rate of one penny weight to the load; and on the banks of the Karaka and Waiotahi, there is at least seven feet of the stuff. (Cheers.) Four men working at this, one pulling down the bank, another with a long handled shovel throwing it into the sluice box, can put through enough to earn from £2 to £3 per week. (Cheers.)

A VOICE: Is that surface digging?

Mr WILLIAMSON: Yes. They would find gold on the surface, but after they got on the bottom, whether there was gold there or not, it was not for him to say. The bottom was a kind of rough ground. He had not gone through that. He could only appeal to those present who were miners, and who knew what a false bottom was. (Cries of "Certainly," and cheers.)

Williamson, like others at the meeting, were talking about alluvial gold, not reefs. He also announced that the gold found on the Karaka

extended for four miles, and they had found better gold in a small flat where the creek had evidently run over it at some later period. He could safely say that gold would be obtained in such payable quantities as to be equal to the rate of wages in Auckland. (Cheers.)

---

<sup>33</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 14 January 1869, reprinted in *New Zealand Herald*, 15 January 1869, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 4 March 1870, citing his diary entry for 26 July 1867, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, box 21, Session 26, MS 595, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>35</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 29 July 1867, pp. 5-6.

Smallman's letter of 13 May to the Superintendent was then read out, after which 'Mr SMALLMAN said he could add nothing to what had been said by Mr Williamson'.<sup>36</sup>

In January 1869, Williamson applied for the reward for finding gold at Thames because he and Smallman had been the first Pakeha to systematically prospect it.<sup>37</sup> He stated that he had received a letter written in Maori from Mackay to Taipari introducing him as a prospector. Accompanied by Smallman and Mackay, they had gone to Kauaeranga and were 'placed on the ground, after having received an acknowledgment' from Mackay that there 'were the first Europeans who systematically searched for gold in the Thames district'. This time he stated that they prospected from March to September, finding payable gold.<sup>38</sup> A year later, Taipari told the Goldfields Reward Commission that the two men 'were scratching like hens, and eating my pork', without finding any gold. As he ultimately became tired of providing them with pork, they 'consequently left the district'.<sup>39</sup>

Williamson died in August 1875, of apoplexy, aged 49. His obituary recorded him as having been a prospector 'for many years', his 'strong constitution and active habits' enabling him to 'undergo the trials and hardships of such a life with apparently little effect'. He was 'undoubtedly one of the first, if not the first, to announce the existence of gold' at Thames, and when the district was opened for mining he was one of those who pegged out the Golden Crown claim. 'Unfortunately for himself, he sold his share before gold was struck in it, and he ever after regretted his hasty action'. After remaining for several years, he went to the gold discoveries in Queensland, but returned in 1875 when Ohinemuri was opened. 'He was amongst the first of those who went to the Tairua rush', and was planning another 'prospecting tour' at the time of his death. He had been a mining correspondent for the Auckland press. 'There were few men in the community more generally esteemed and respected than Walter Williamson. His genial humour and gentlemanly manners made him a welcome associate in all circles, and we believe we are not going too far in

---

<sup>36</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 31 July 1867, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Walter Williamson to Superintendent, Auckland Province, 12 January 1869, 'Applications for Reward for finding Goldfield', Auckland Provincial Government Papers, box 19, Session 24, MS 595, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>38</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 January 1869, p. 19.

<sup>39</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 May 1870, p. 6.

stating that he had not an enemy in the district'.<sup>40</sup> No mention was made of Smallman in this eulogy; he had faded into obscurity.

### MINING AT THAMES

The Thames goldfield proclaimed on 30 July, and on the following day, as it was later recalled, 'Joe Smallman navigated the steamer (p.s. "Enterprise") up the tortuous windings of the Kauaeranga Creek, and, with empty stomachs, but high spirits, the pioneer party landed on the then uninhabited plain on which Shortland now stands'.<sup>41</sup> Smallman was issued with a miner's right no. 63, on 18 August,<sup>42</sup> but before that formality he was already mining at Karaka with Williamson, their party 'sinking two holes where the creek enters the flat'.<sup>43</sup> This was described as a sluicing claim.<sup>44</sup> He was not registered as an owner of the Golden Crown, although he was a member of the original party that took up this ground before the bonanza in it was uncovered in 1868.<sup>45</sup> When Moses Ensor, another Thames miner,<sup>46</sup> a school friend who had been born in or near West Bromwich in 1843,<sup>47</sup> was interviewed in 1927 for the diamond jubilee souvenir of Thames, he told of 'the misfortune that befell' Smallman,

one of those who held the Golden Crown ground as a prospecting claim before anyone dreamt that it contained any substantial wealth. He still held his share up to a short time before the great find, but prior to that event he had made it over on some kind of agreement, only to find, when the mine became valuable, that the other person had registered the share in his own name by virtue of the agreement, and destroyed the document itself, of which he held the only copy. Mr Ensor had a personal interest in the

---

<sup>40</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 24 August 1875, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> *Thames Star*, 1 August 1879, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Miners' Rights Register 1867-1868, no. 63, BACL 14358/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>43</sup> *Daily Southern Cross*, 7 August 1867, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> *Hawkes Bay Weekly Times*, 26 August 1867, p. 210.

<sup>45</sup> *Thames Goldfields*, p. 149.

<sup>46</sup> See *Thames Advertiser*, 18 November 1879, p. 3, 10 December 1879, p. 2, 20 January 1880, p. 3, 24 April 1880, p. 3; *Thames Goldfields*, pp. 116, 187, and photograph on p. 183.

<sup>47</sup> Index of English Births, March Quarter 1843, West Bromwich, vol. 18, p. 562.

matter, inasmuch as, had Smallman retained his interest, he, as an old schoolmate, was to have shared it with him.<sup>48</sup>

This suggested that Smallman was cheated; however, as the ‘some kind of agreement’ was legally binding, whether the transfer had been destroyed was irrelevant: Smallman having transferred the share, the new shareholder was entitled to hold it in his name and to receive any wealth the mine produced. As the agreement was not registered with the warden, perhaps Smallman could have denied signing it; but as he had not been registered as an owner of the claim, he still could not have proved entitlement. Perhaps he had ‘made it over’ for a fixed period of time rather than permanently, but Ensor did not clarify this.

Probably Smallman helped to peg out the Golden Crown. Williamson certainly did, but ‘unfortunately for himself, he sold his share before gold was struck on it, and he ever after regretted his hasty action’.<sup>49</sup> This mine was reputed to have distributed £141,904 to its lucky shareholders.<sup>50</sup>

Smallman was not registered as an owner of any claim until the Hit and Miss at Tapu Creek was registered in June 1868. Beforehand, he sold a sleeping half share, retaining a working half share.<sup>51</sup> In August he had one of eight shares in the Fiery Cross at Tararu, selling it three months later for £10.<sup>52</sup> In September, he was a defendant in a case over possession of the adjacent Lancashire Lass, representing himself rather than using a lawyer.<sup>53</sup> Smallman and four others had pegging out of five men’s ground, Smallman receiving a share by arranging the pegging out. In his evidence, he said that ‘at about midnight on the 7th of August’ another miner ‘came to my tent’ and asked him to arrange this, which was done at seven o’clock the following morning. As their pegging out had been done according to the regulations, his party won their case.<sup>54</sup> In July 1869 he held 200 of the 5,500 scrip shares in the Leviathan Company, which mined at Karaka

---

<sup>48</sup> *Thames Goldfields*, pp. 153-154.

<sup>49</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 24 August 1875, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Thames Goldfields*, p. 149.

<sup>51</sup> Thames Warden’s Court, Thames Claims Register 1868, folio 327, BACL 14397/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>52</sup> Thames Warden’s Court, Thames Claims Register 1868-1869, no. 749, BACL 14397/2a; Register of Agreements 1868, folio 429, BACL 14417/2a, ANZ-A.

<sup>53</sup> Warden’s Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 21 September 1868, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Warden’s Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 25 September 1868, p. 4.

Creek under his management.<sup>55</sup> Its mining lease expired early the following year because the survey was not completed.<sup>56</sup>

In October 1870, when informing the warden of the position of the Californian and other reefs, he was tributing in the California, at Tararu, giving his occupation as ‘Miner and Surveyor’.<sup>57</sup> Late that month, a mining reporter visited the ground and reported favourably on his work:

Before the Californian mine was taken on tribute by Messrs Smallman and [James] Senior,<sup>58</sup> the locality of Fiery Creek wore a wretched aspect. Only the Wild Missouri Company’s ground was in work, and it is to the indomitable energy and pluck of these two miners that the present improved state of things is to be attributed. Where they commenced upon the reef, the stuff was only worth a couple of pennyweights the ton, but soon the yield increased to 6dwt, and ... the last cleaning-up gave about 9dwt the ton. The crushing now in progress at at the Wild Missouri’s machine promises a yield of 1oz the ton, so much has the lode improved in quality, as it is followed into the hill and upwards, by stoping. A height of between 70ft and 80ft has been taken our by a length of say 200 feet.<sup>59</sup>

In the following January, it was reported that Senior had sold his interest, Smallman retaining his.<sup>60</sup> At the annual meeting of the California Company held in that month, the prospects of ‘this rising company’ were extolled:

During the first twelvemonths subsequent to its opening, the mine was in a languishing condition, mainly on account of the almost impossibility of getting in calls to work it, and it was not until it fell into the hands of Messrs [Humphrey] Rawlings<sup>61</sup> and

---

<sup>55</sup> *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, 30 July 1869, p. 646, 23 August 1869, p. 785; advertisement, *Daily Southern Cross*, 24 August 1869, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, 1 March 1870, p. 102.

<sup>57</sup> Thames Warden’s Court, Warden’s and Magistrate’s Courts Notebook March-December 1870, Warden’s Court hearing of 19 October 1870, BAOL 14457/2b, ANZ-A.

<sup>58</sup> See *Auckland Electoral Roll, 1869*, p. 182; *Thames Star*, 9 October 1886, p. 2, 1 June 1887, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Own Correspondent, *Daily Southern Cross*, 27 October 1870, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> *Daily Southern Cross*, 24 January 1871, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> See *Auckland Electoral Roll, 1869*, p. 170; advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 11 June 1881, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 6 August 1883, p. 2.

Smallman, the first tributers, that there was the slightest foreshadowing of the brilliant career now apparently in store for it. The first tributers held it six months, and obtained on an average half an ounce of gold to every ton crushed. The terms of agreement having been broken by the first tributers, the tribute was cancelled by the directors, and a second one let to Messrs Senior and Smallman. Under their management the development of the mine proceeded rapidly, as may be inferred from the fact that up to date they had broken out and crushed 2,500 tons of stone, which yielded 827oz 5dwt 11gr of melted gold, the rate per ton being 6dwt 12gr.

By then, Smallman and Senior having sold three-quarters of their tribute for £500, it was being worked by a third party of tributers.<sup>62</sup> It may have been around this time that Smallman informed his wife that 'he was very ill and he sent his Will to me saying that he had a good interest in a Goldmine'.<sup>63</sup> In 1891 a portion of the Norfolk mine was still known as 'Senior and Smallman's block'.<sup>64</sup>

Smallman became one of the six owners of the Shanghai Rooster, at Fiery Creek, Tararu, in late January 1871.<sup>65</sup> In mid-February, using the plea that it was not being worked properly, Henry George Corlett<sup>66</sup> sued him to obtain his one share.<sup>67</sup> According to Corlett, Smallman employed a man without a miner's right 'to work the share previous to date of complaint'. A miner admitted that he had worked the share from 23 January to 6 February without possessing a right, Smallman having told him that another miner would pay the cost of one. As this man did not do so, on 7 February the share was transferred to another person; Corlett was non-suited.<sup>68</sup>

At a public meeting held at Thames in July 1868 to discuss how to celebrate the first anniversary of the goldfield, Smallman seconded the

---

<sup>62</sup> Special Correspondent, *Daily Southern Cross*, 27 January 1871, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> Declaration of Sophia Smallman, 20 March 1880, J 77/241/6833, The National Archives, Kew, London.

<sup>64</sup> *Thames Star*, 28 August 1891, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Shortland Claims Register 1870-1871, no. 2406, BACL 14397/5a, ANZ-A.

<sup>66</sup> See advertisement, *Daily Southern Cross*, 10 October 1871, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> Thames Warden's Court, *Auckland Weekly News*, 18 February 1871, p. 15.

<sup>68</sup> Thames Warden's Court, Warden's Notebook February-June 1871, hearing of 15 February 1871, BACL 14457/2c, ANZ-A.

resolution that a celebration be held, and was elected to the committee that was to arrange this.<sup>69</sup> In the following January he was elected to the committee of the new Miners' Association.<sup>70</sup>

### COROMANDEL MINING

Smallman participated in a mining rush at Coromandel in 1869. In October, he asked the Superintendent about the rules for pegging out, and shortly afterwards, with 11 others, applied for a claim.<sup>71</sup> He was one of the shareholders in the Golden Crater Company at Tokatea.<sup>72</sup> When miners met with the Superintendent there in the following January, Smallman asked him about the provision of government money for the goldfield.<sup>73</sup> For some years he had a house in Ring's Road, Coromandel, this property enabling him to be listed on the Thames electoral roll, but when in 1874 he applied to be on the roll using this household qualification, his eligibility was challenged because he had left the district.<sup>74</sup>

Although Smallman was living at Coromandel in 1871,<sup>75</sup> he may have gone for a time to Rotorua in the early 1870s. In 1872, amongst the assets of a bankrupt, John Richard William Guilding,<sup>76</sup> a Pakeha Maori who had previously been married to Smallman's wife, was £20 he was owed by Joseph Smallman, stated to be of Rotorua.<sup>77</sup> There was a family tradition that Smallman's first child had been born in Rotorua in November 1870;<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> *Daily Southern Cross*, 16 July 1868, p. 4.

<sup>70</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 14 January 1869, reprinted in *New Zealand Herald*, 15 January 1869, p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 2 October 1869, p. 13; Coromandel Warden's Court, Applications 1869, no. 26, AAAE 1126/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>72</sup> Advertisements, *Daily Southern Cross*, 24 August 1869, p. 6, 29 October 1869, p. 7.

<sup>73</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 22 January 1870, p. 7.

<sup>74</sup> Thames Electoral Roll, August 1873-September 1874 [no pagination], Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFL 8170, 3015/73, ANZ-A; *Coromandel Mail*, 21 May 1874, Supplement, p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> *Thames Electoral Roll, 1871*, p. 41.

<sup>76</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>77</sup> District Court, Thames, Grahamstown Bankruptcy Files 1872-1875, entry for 30 April 1872, BACL 14471/5a, ANZ-A.

<sup>78</sup> 'Record of Members: Early to 1919: Te Aroha Branch', no. 19, Latter Day Saints Archives, Hamilton.

he was then actively mining at Tararu, but it is possible that his wife had gone to Rotorua for family reasons. In January 1873, William Wigley Moffatt, an engineer, was charged with having obtained clothes and money from a Tauranga storekeeper under false pretenses in the previous November. As the storekeeper knew Smallman, who was living at Ohinemutu (the main settlement at Rotorua), Moffatt 'asked whether he might not be allowed to pay the whole or part of Smallman's debt, as he had some matters in hand for that person'.<sup>79</sup> Moffatt was 'living with Smallman, who was in possession of some of his goods'. After being found guilty, Moffatt was charged with obtaining goods under false pretenses from Hone Werahiko, also then living at Ohinemutu.<sup>80</sup> Called to give evidence, Smallman 'said he had been in partnership with' Moffatt and was also 'a victim' to his 'misrepresentations', having been 'in the employ of Captain Mair, when prisoner induced him to leave. He showed witness what he said were bank deposit receipts for over £1,000, and told him that he had sold a vessel'. What really induced him to enter a partnership was being shown 'three nuggets' and being told 'that he could show him where between 20oz and 30oz of gold a day could be obtained'.<sup>81</sup> Moffatt must have known of Smallman's earlier prospecting, and had successfully tempted him by producing specimens that he claimed were found in the Rotorua district, one that was to prove totally barren of gold. Smallman would have been helping Gilbert Mair to make roads in the Rotorua district rather than assisting his land purchase work.<sup>82</sup>

## FAMILY

From at least the mid-1870s Smallman was living with his family at Paharakeke, on the Waihou River to the north of Te Aroha in an area now known as Mangaiti. What became known as 'Smallman's Point' on the river was 'about five miles below' the bridge at Te Aroha.<sup>83</sup> He was by then married, under Maori custom, Charlotte, otherwise Harriet or Harete or

---

<sup>79</sup> Supreme Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 11 January 1873, p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>81</sup> Supreme Court, *Daily Southern Cross*, 11 January 1873, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> D.M. Stafford, *The Founding Years in Rotorua: A history of events to 1900* (Rotorua, 1986), pp. 69, 72, 74-76; R.D. Crosby, *Gilbert Mair: Te Kooti's nemesis* (Auckland, 2004), pp. 236-243.

<sup>83</sup> *Auckland Star*, 6 November 1886, p. 5.

Hareata, the daughter of Pakeha Maori William Nicholls.<sup>84</sup> On one occasion her name was recorded as ‘Charlotte Harriett’;<sup>85</sup> as increasingly she was referred to as Harriet, this name will be used here. She had previously been the first (and only legal one) of John William Richard Guilding’s wives.<sup>86</sup> In an official memorandum of 1882, she was referred to as Harete Te Whakaawa, otherwise ‘Mrs Guilding alias Mrs Smallman’.<sup>87</sup>

The land court recorded Harriet as having lived on the Mangamutu No. 1 block at Paeroa at an unknown date.<sup>88</sup> In 1916 her children claimed Section 31 Block 1X of the Aroha Survey District, at Ruakaka, Te Aroha, ‘as being portion of the original grant to their mother by Judge Fenton in 1864’. By 1916 the family had sold 415 acres of this land to the Crown.<sup>89</sup>

There is no information about when Harriet left Guilding for Smallman, but it must have been at the end of the 1860s, judging from the dates given when their children were baptized into the Mormon Church between 1888 and 1894. The church’s records, based on information provided by their descendants, estimated their marriage as occurring in ‘about 1868’.<sup>90</sup> None of the children’s births were registered, but the ‘Record of Members’ of the Te Aroha Branch recorded that James Smallman and Hareata, as they were recorded, had the following offspring:

Sidney Harris was born 19 November 1870, at Rotorua, and not baptized until December 1892, at Te Aroha.<sup>91</sup> Another record in the Mormon archives gave his date and place of birth as 8 October 1869, at Mangaiti,<sup>92</sup> which seems more likely. His school records gave his year of birth as 1871.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>85</sup> Marriage Certificate of Florence Priscilla Smallman and Kenneth Eric Ross, 6 June 1900, 1900/2810, BDM.

<sup>86</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>87</sup> Memorandum, n.d. [c.3 April 1882], Te Aroha Block, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-W.

<sup>88</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book, no. 44, p. 249.

<sup>89</sup> Maori Land Court, Block Files, H792, Te Aroha, No. 1 file, Maori Land Court, Hamilton.

<sup>90</sup> International Genealogical Index, Southwest Pacific, Latter Day Saints Archives, Hamilton.

<sup>91</sup> ‘Record of Members: Early to 1919: Te Aroha Branch’, no. 19, LDS Archives, Hamilton; see Death Certificate of Allan Randolph Smallman, 24 April 1905, 1905/2488, BDM.

<sup>92</sup> International Genealogical Index, Southwest Pacific, LDS Archives.

<sup>93</sup> Te Aroha School Roll 1884, YCAF 4135/13a, p. 85.

George William was born at Te Aroha (probably Paharakeke) on 22 December 1874.<sup>94</sup> Like the next three children he was baptized on 9 December 1888 at Te Aroha.<sup>95</sup> His first son would be named Joseph Harris.<sup>96</sup>

Charlotte Letitia, sometimes Letitia Charlotte, was born on 1 February 1875 either at Opotiki or Mangaiti.<sup>97</sup> Her marriage certificate gave a birth date of 1873.<sup>98</sup> She was commonly known as Lottie.<sup>99</sup> She was the guardian of her sister Lillian in 1892.<sup>100</sup>

Helen Mary was born on 18 January 1879 at Te Aroha;<sup>101</sup> was she the Ellen Eleanor who, according to her marriage certificate, was 21 in January 1899?<sup>102</sup> Another record gave her birth date as 1 February 1878, at Mangaiti.<sup>103</sup> At school she was known as Nellie.<sup>104</sup>

Florence Priscilla was recorded imprecisely by one descendant as born in December 1880, also at Te Aroha.<sup>105</sup> The Te Aroha school recorded her

---

<sup>94</sup> 'Record of Members', no. 9, LDS Archives, Hamilton; Birth Certificate of Joseph Harris Smallman, 14 June 1902, 1902/16586; Death Certificate of George William Smallman, 28 January 1923, 1923/2789, BDM.

<sup>95</sup> 'Record of Members', no. 9, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

<sup>96</sup> Birth Certificate of Joseph Harris Smallman, 14 June 1902, 1902/16586, BDM.

<sup>97</sup> 'Record of Members', no. 8F, LDS Archives, Hamilton; International Genealogical Index, Southwest Pacific, LDS Archives.

<sup>98</sup> Marriage Certificate of Letitia Smallman, 1 September 1893, 1893/2309, BDM; Notices of Intentions to Marry 1893, folio 898, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 20/38, ANZ-W.

<sup>99</sup> Te Aroha School Rolls, 1884, YCAF 4135/13a, p. 84; 1 July 1890, YCAF 4135/27a, ANZ-A.

<sup>100</sup> Te Aroha School, Admissions Register no. 2 (1889-1897), no. 800, Primary School Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>101</sup> 'Record of Members', no. 10, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

<sup>102</sup> Marriage Certificate of Ellen Eleanor Smallman and Henry McCormick, 24 January 1899, 1899/250, BDM.

<sup>103</sup> International Genealogical Index, Southwest Pacific, LDS Archives.

<sup>104</sup> Te Aroha School, Admissions Register No. 2 (1889-1897), no. 603, Primary School Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>105</sup> 'Record of Members', no. 11, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

date of birth as 30 November 1881.<sup>106</sup> When married in June 1900 she gave her age as 19,<sup>107</sup> suggesting that the 1880 date was correct.

### LIVING AT PAHARAKEKE

Paharakeke is not shown on modern maps. One produced in 1873 showed this block of land as being on the eastern side of the Waihou River, where the Mangaiti Stream enters the river.<sup>108</sup> Two 1878 maps seem to place it on the western side of the river, just to the north of the Aroha Block.<sup>109</sup> Harriet, along with three Maori, owned 100 acres on the eastern side of the river.<sup>110</sup> In 1879 Smallman was described as having a 'selection' opposite Omatai, a block of land on the western bank of the river opposite Paharakeke.<sup>111</sup> The previous December, a man seeking to obtain land for sale at Te Aroha described a trip there by river. 'On arriving at a small settlement, two miles below Omahu ... the tourists landed, and were welcomed on shore by a few native friends and the only white settler in that locality, Mr Joseph Smallman, the friend and mate of the late Walter Williamson'.<sup>112</sup> A river crossing was located there,<sup>113</sup> and in the early 1880s a sawmill was erected adjacent to it.<sup>114</sup> In 1910, Harriet's 100 acres, Section 1 Block V of the Aroha Survey District, was subdivided amongst herself and her children.<sup>115</sup> One of their children started a store at Mangaiti, in which a post office was opened in 1906.<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> Te Aroha School, Admissions Register no. 2 (1889-1897), no. 604, Primary School Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>107</sup> Marriage Certificate of Florence Priscilla Smallman and Kenneth Eric Ross, 6 June 1900, 1900/2810, BDM.

<sup>108</sup> 'Te Aroha No. 1', 1873, LINZ, Hamilton.

<sup>109</sup> 'Plan of Aroha Block', 1878, ML 3062; ML 3503, 16 May 1878, LINZ, Hamilton.

<sup>110</sup> 'Omahu Native Reserve', 1889, MS 95412, LINZ, Hamilton; *Waikato Times*, 30 October 1886, p. 3.

<sup>111</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 14 April 1879, p. 3; for map showing Omatai, see ML3503, 1878, LINZ, Hamilton.

<sup>112</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 4 December 1878, p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 10 August 1921, p. 1.

<sup>114</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 30 August 1884, p. 2.

<sup>115</sup> Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Book no. 60, p. 367; Aroha Block V Section 1, H1194; Te Aroha Block, no. 1 file, H792, Land Blocks, Maori Land Court, Hamilton.

<sup>116</sup> *Thames Star*, 1 June 1906, p. 2.

In December 1877, when the sale of the Aroha Block was being negotiated, Smallman wrote from 'Omahu, Te Aroha', meaning the Ngati Rahiri pa, to the Auckland press in response to an editorial in the *Thames Advertiser* about 'certain interested Pakehas, who get a nice income out of Maori land owners and anxious speculators', and to 'designing Pakeha-Maori, and others'. They were accused of trying to 'raise the wind' [raise money]<sup>117</sup> by trying to sell to private speculators land that was already pledged to the government by large advances from James Mackay:<sup>118</sup>

In justice to the Government, to the Ngatirahiri, to the public generally, and myself, I reply through your columns. The article states there is a gulf between Europeans and the owners of these lands, quoting an extract from the Immigration Act, as the ominous gulf, when in reality he should have stated that Mr James Mackay and his wrongly devised schemes for obtaining these lands is the real gulf which has for years past been the deadlock to the opening up of this Upper Thames to Europeans, whereas if less bounce, less brandy, and more open dealings had been brought to bear with the real owners, these plains, which are now covered with fern and swamp, would at the present time be smiling with the homesteads of happy families. Instead of the rat, cricket, grasshopper, and swamp hens being sole occupants of the soil, we should hear the lowing of cattle, bleating of sheep, and neighing of the horse; the mountains, instead of standing in their primitive beauty, would be belching forth their golden ore; instead of one solitary steamer plying up and down her river, it would be in constant foam from busy life. In making arrangements with Maoris for their land, it should be done quickly, fairly, and honestly. Place the money before them if it be a reasonable amount per acre. They are, like ourselves, too fond of money to refuse it; present time with them is everything, the future they care very little for, and I can truly state that if Mr Mackay had taken one fourth of the money he says he has advanced on Te Aroha, and laid it down in the Omahu settlement, with the usual guarantee for a native reserve, he would have obtained every signature, this looming trouble would have been averted, the native title extinguished, and the country reaping the benefit. If he had been receiving a low salary, with a bonus on completion of certain purchases, the rapidity of lightning would have been very little quicker than the accomplishment. The enquiry of the present day is, what is the real obstacle to the

---

<sup>117</sup> Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8 ed., ed. Paul Beale (London, 1984), p. 957.

<sup>118</sup> Editorial, *Thames Advertiser*, 27 November 1877, p. 2.

opening of the Upper Thames? In Mr Mackay's report, he states that he has paid over £12,000 to the natives for this block, and that a mere handful – twenty-two refractory ones – are holding it in check. Ask anyone, or the whole of the tribe, if half that amount twelve months since, handed to them in cash, would not have given the Government a full title to the whole block. If the Government wanted to stop the flow of water in any large river, would they commence at its mouth or the fountainhead? These Aroha natives state that when the money was being paid by Mr Mackay to Ngatitamatera and others, that they protested against it, and told him he might as well throw it into Hauraki, that they alone were in possession of the land, and they alone had the right to take or withhold the money. The result is this – either the country's money has been lavishly wasted, or the Ngatirahiri tribe should be wrested from this, and the public in possession of that for which they have paid. The mind of the Ngatirahiri is, they are quite willing to open up this country on reasonable terms, but not on the strength of former reckless advances. They are fully alive to the advantages to be derived by the leasing of their lands instead of having them locked up, being perfectly satisfied with the arrangement come to with Mr Frederick Strange over his lease above Wairakau.<sup>119</sup> That alone was the cause of [Hoani] Nahe's<sup>120</sup> mission to Grahamstown, with a view of further leases and the offer of the ranges to the Government, not with the view of raising the wind, as the editor of the *Thames Advertiser* terms it, a feat he appears to thoroughly understand, but working the bellows of the Government organ without notes. I think the thanks of the Government and public are due to Mr F. Strange for breaking the crust of Te Aroha, which Mr Mackay, with years of finessing, was unable to accomplish. The sooner a competent and disinterested man is appointed to make a searching investigation, what money has really been paid on behalf of the Government and to whom, the sooner will our surplus population on the Thames (or Broomhall)<sup>121</sup> be in possession of the country they have so long desired. The statement Mr Editor makes respecting certain interested and designing Pakehas pocketing Maori land-owners' money and entrapping unwily Europeans, is rather too strong and far-fetched. There are but two Europeans residing here at present

---

<sup>119</sup> For details of the attempt by Frederick Strange to acquire Wairakau from Ngati Rahiri, see *Thames Advertiser*, 27 November 1877, p. 3, 17 December 1877, p. 3.

<sup>120</sup> Member of Parliament for Western Maori from 1876 to 1879: J.O. Wilson, *New Zealand Parliamentary Record 1840-1984* (Wellington, 1985), p. 222.

<sup>121</sup> For the proposed 'Broomhall Settlement' to bring English farmers to settle at Wairakau, see paper on special settlements.

[George Lipsey was the other],<sup>122</sup> and as he has placed it in the plural, I must be the one referred to. During the whole term of my residence in this island (fifteen years) I have not taken sixpence from Maori landowners or anxious speculators, but from the style of his writing one is led to believe he must be an adept at handling the filthy lucre. *Hone soit qui mal y pense*. By a full insertion you will oblige.<sup>123</sup>

Mackay's report, referred to above, was written at the end of July,<sup>124</sup> despite being on the far side of the 'frontier of civilisation', Smallman managed to keep up with events, at least in so far as they affected himself and his Maori associates.

The *Thames Advertiser* referred to him early in March 1878 as suffering 'from periodical attacks of *cacoethes scribendi*', meaning 'an incurable itch to write'.<sup>125</sup> 'Recently' Smallman had written 'to an Auckland contemporary hitting out all round in a wild manner, and, we fear, with considerable disregard for facts'. Two letters had been written on 6 March:<sup>126</sup>

One of these is a complaint against the "blowing genius" of Mr Dynamite Thompson, and a very ridiculous "idea," as he calls it, that "the same amount of blasting power that would have realised an equal effect without the use of boring apparatus" as Mr Thompson produced with his 95lb of dynamite at one charge in snagging the Waihou. He says:- "Several persons witnessed the spray of water flying into the air, which each computed at about one hundred feet. Is the Aroha mountain any higher? These days of blowing one's own trumpet are past, even in New Zealand, and trash such as Thompson writes about is merely a blind advertisement polished – a work of save-penny, make-me-rich, go-home system. What would the public think of a poor Thames miner published he had driven 6 feet in the drive in an eight hours' shift instead of over 4 feet?" Mr Smallman's second communication of the same date refers to certain so-called "grams" in a contemporary (to which the letter should have been

---

<sup>122</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>123</sup> Letter from J.H. Smallman, *New Zealand Herald*, 29 December 1877, p. 3.

<sup>124</sup> James Mackay to Minister for Public Works, 31 July 1877, *AJHR*, 1877, G-7, pp. 7-8.

<sup>125</sup> A quotation from Juvenal: D.P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary*, 5 ed. (London, 1987), p. 82.

<sup>126</sup> These have not been traced in either the *New Zealand Herald* or the *Auckland Star*.

sent):- Sir, At times *pigeons* carry curious *grams*.<sup>127</sup> According to your contemporary, old Tutuki was about the only dissentient to the opening of Te Aroha roads for a road to pass through. If it had been stated that the old grog loafer Karauna [Hou],<sup>128</sup> the man who (to obtain a nip) handed the stick to Mr [Alexander] Brodie,<sup>129</sup> it would have been correct. I was told by Karauna the survey should not proceed until they (Ngatirahiri) were paid, not only for the land, but also for the opening of it. Tutuki then came forward, took a flag with his name upon it and planted it upon the highest point in proximity to the line of road, and proclaimed it open for survey. And in the presence of the tribe, his son and relatives commenced cutting lines. Since then Karauna and others have attempted to stop it, but could not prevail over old Tutuki.<sup>130</sup>

This second letter was an attempt to rebut a *Thames Advertiser* reporter's account of a meeting at Te Aroha on 20 February between Ngati Rahiri and the county council to arrange for the construction of a road through the Aroha Block. (Smallman was not recorded as being present.)<sup>131</sup>

Despite being a farmer, Smallman had not given up prospecting. On 17 July, it was reported that he was leaving on that day to prospect the King Country:

Mr Smallman possesses an invitation signed by some of the principal natives and is personally acquainted with Te Heuheu [of Tuwharatoa], who is also favourable to his visit. This octogenarian prospector has been rustivating with the Maoris in the Te Aroha for a few years past, but no doubt considers the time has arrived when something further may be done towards testing the Tuhua and other supposed gold-bearing districts in the interior of this *terra incognita*, with the sanction and support of the natives.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup> A reference to the pigeongrams published in the press.

<sup>128</sup> See paper on his life

<sup>129</sup> As chairman of the Thames County Council he had been handed a stick at a meeting to agree on constructing a road from Te Aroha to Thames: see paper on the Aroha Block to 1878.

<sup>130</sup> Letter from J.H. Smallman, *Thames Advertiser*, 9 March 1878, p. 3.

<sup>131</sup> 'The Roads. Meeting of Natives at Te Aroha (By Our Own Reporter)', *Thames Advertiser*, 22 February 1878, p. 3.

<sup>132</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 24 July 1878, p. 2; reprinted in other newspapers, e.g. *Otago Witness*, 10 August 1878, p. 4.

Nothing was heard of this unsuccessful trip; unsuccessful because there was no gold to be found.

In late August, when the government was requested to provide a post office at Omahu, the Ngati Rahiri pa, Smallman was 'willing to act as postmaster'.<sup>133</sup> Two weeks later, he wrote another letter to the press urging assistance for both the unemployed and 'the upper country':

Twelve years ago there was raised in Auckland the painful and heart-rending cry of destitution; it was estimated that eight hundred men, with their families, rose from their scanty beds trusting to a beneficent providence to place a meal before them. Our late respected Superintendent, Mr [John] Williamson, proposing stone-breaking as the only means of alleviating their distress. A many availed themselves of the opportunity, and as many said, "I cannot beg; to break stones I am ashamed." Fortunately, the Thames opened out her arms; and carried away the surplus population. We have now the same lamentable cry here, and the heartless Borough Councillors, with a united voice, cry out – "Break stones." The menial occupation may be hailed by some with delight, by others rejected. Suppose reverses were suddenly to fall across the path of [Charles] Deans,<sup>134</sup> [Thomas] Rawdons,<sup>135</sup> and a few of the Borough Council, and their only means of subsistence would be by cracking stones all day long in Pollen street, to be gazed upon by those who knew them in the jolly days of affluence, what would be their feelings in such a position. I think it is time the working men, who may not have a super-abundant amount of food, but still hold votes, should look to them, and endeavour to elect men who will strain every nerve to place the Thames in such a position that no man resident there will have cause to utter the piteous cry of destitution. If Borough Councillors will assist the County in making and improving roads to the upper country, instead of beautifying their own fancy little spots, they would introduce trade and capital here, and thereby save the poor little hungry children from starvation.<sup>136</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 29 August 1878, p. 2.

<sup>134</sup> Secretary of the borough council: see paper on Harry Kenrick.

<sup>135</sup> Foreman of Works: see *Thames Star*, letter from 'A Ratepayer', 13 February 1877, p. 2, 5 July 1878, p. 2, 27 November 1878, p. 2.

<sup>136</sup> Letter from J.H. Smallman, *Thames Star*, 10 September 1878, p. 2.

Immediately afterwards he travelled to Thames to attend the farewell to James Mackay.<sup>137</sup> At this gathering, he was referred to as having been ‘prominent in the early days’ and praised for having assisted to open the goldfield. In returning thanks he ‘expressed the pleasure he felt at being present to do honor to Mr Mackay’.<sup>138</sup>

In June 1879, when two of his horses were stolen, he offered a £3 reward for their return.<sup>139</sup> Two months later, when an elderly carpenter who had been erecting a building at Paharakeke fell into the river from a small flat-bottomed boat and was drowned, Charlotte and her sister assisted in finding his body.<sup>140</sup> In April 1880, in what a newspaper described as ‘a singular application’, he asked the Waste Lands Board to exchange the 40-acres he had been granted upon arrival in New Zealand ‘for a similar area at Te Aroha. – The Board of course could not entertain the request’.<sup>141</sup>

### THE TE AROHA GOLDFIELDS

In October 1880, after gold had been found at Te Aroha but before the opening of the field, a journalist visiting the area. ‘Joe Smallman came past with a large party of natives on horse-back, and reported a find which would give about eight (8) dwts to the ton up the Wairakau valley’, upstream from the future Waiorongomai goldfield.<sup>142</sup> This find was never heard of again, closer inspection clearly having revealed its worthlessness. He was reported to have pegged off claims,<sup>143</sup> but did not register any when the field opened, no doubt for this reason. With Maori partners, at the beginning of 1881 he pegged out a claim at Tui and acquired interests in other ground there, and probably supervised the mine whose adit was driven from the creek.<sup>144</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 14 September 1878, p. 3.

<sup>138</sup> *Thames Star*, 14 September 1878, p. 2.

<sup>139</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 26 June 1879, p. 2.

<sup>140</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 29 August 1879, p. 3.

<sup>141</sup> Waste Lands Board, *New Zealand Herald*, 16 April 1880, p. 6.

<sup>142</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 20 October 1880, p. 3.

<sup>143</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 22 October 1880, p. 5.

<sup>144</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Notices of Marking Out Claims, January 1881, no. 140, BBAV 11557/1b; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folios 189, 201, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 26 January 1881, p. 3.

None of these claims were to produce any gold. He also pegged out one claim at Te Aroha in January,<sup>145</sup> but took no part in Waiorongomai mining.

### A MURDER ACCUSATION

Some Maori suspected him of involvement in the murder of Himiona Haira in February 1881.<sup>146</sup> Smallman was then living in a tent on the Tui claim.<sup>147</sup> On the day of the murder, he gave Procoffy 2s 6d, which he spent on drink. Smallman's horse was being ridden around Te Aroha during the day, Procoffy and Himiona Haira arguing in the early evening about who should take it back to Smallman.<sup>148</sup> The only time Smallman was recorded as drunk was that evening, when he was locked up for a time for being drunk and disorderly,<sup>149</sup> Whilst in police custody, a miner, William Catran,<sup>150</sup> rode his horse, to the annoyance of Himiona Haira.<sup>151</sup> According to the *Te Aroha Miner*,

It is curious how difficult it is to disabuse the mind of a native of an idea, no matter how palpably erroneous it may be proved to be. Ever since the murder, the Maoris here, and notably the relatives of Himiona, have not been backward in stating that they believe Mr Joseph Smallman had a hand in the affair, in consequence of a threat he made to the deceased some time ago. Several Europeans have gone to the trouble to show the Maoris how fallacious their idea is, as Smallman did not leave the township till 12 o'clock, while all the evidence conclusively points to the fact that the unfortunate native had been murdered fully an hour before. Hints have been dropped that Smallman may expect no mercy if he falls into the hands of the relatives, and one of our Thames contemporaries in a recent issue, mentioned that he couldn't be found. Mr Smallman, however, came into town on Thursday, having been working in the bush, and had quite recently heard of the suspicion of the natives. He told the police

---

<sup>145</sup> *Thames Star*, 12 January 1881, p. 2.

<sup>146</sup> See paper on the TeAroha murder.

<sup>147</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 25 February 1881, p. 3.

<sup>148</sup> *Thames Star*, 14 February 1881, p. 2.

<sup>149</sup> Armed Constabulary Force, Report of Charges Taken at Te Aroha Lock-Up 1880-1903, no. 6, in private possession.

<sup>150</sup> See *Thames Advertiser*, 24 April 1875, p. 3, 4 May 1893, p. 3; *Thames Star*, 2 October 1905, p. 2, 5 December 1910, p. 2.

<sup>151</sup> *Thames Star*, 25 February 1881, p. 2.

he was in fear of his life, and yesterday morning left for the Thames, via Hamilton.<sup>152</sup>

An elaboration of this suspicion was that Smallman and two other men had held Himiona while Procoffy cut his throat. When Himiona Haira's brother was in Thames he 'seemed satisfied that Smallman was not implicated', but stated that he would 'not be able to disabuse the minds of his tribe of the idea that Smallman was mixed up in the affair'.<sup>153</sup> One week later, when other Maori were discussing the possible guilt of Procoffy, they blamed 'two others – whom they name – and peculiar stories are going about respecting one of these, whom they blame for having a hand in the crime'.<sup>154</sup>

Hoera Te Mimiha,<sup>155</sup> uncle of the victim, accused Smallman of killing his nephew because he had 'passed by the body of deceased, and, as he did not say anything to him about it (having met him shortly afterwards), he concluded that Smallman must have had something to do with the murder'.<sup>156</sup> In another version of his statement, he accused Smallman to his face of having instigated the murder because he would have seen the body when going to his house. 'As he did not say anything to the natives about the matter', he 'concluded that he knew something of the occurrence. As Smallman and William Marshall<sup>157</sup> were 'very startled' when he spoke to them after the murder and seemed surprised to see him, he considered the former was linked to the murder.<sup>158</sup> Marshall had been working on the Homeward Bound claim at Tui, and was suspected

partly because he was working in a particular locality, and partly because the mouth-piece of a pipe, found near the murdered man, was identified as his. How it came to be there, Marshall cannot account for, unless Himiona had picked it up at the hotel. These men were ordered off by the police, for the peace of the district,

---

<sup>152</sup> *Te Aroha Miner*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 19 February 1881, p. 2.

<sup>153</sup> *Thames Star*, 21 February 1881, p. 2.

<sup>154</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 28 February 1881, p. 3.

<sup>155</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>156</sup> *Thames Star*, 2 March 1881, p. 2.

<sup>157</sup> His life has not been traced.

<sup>158</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 3 March 1881, p. 3.

and for their own safety, and had to walk the forty miles to Hamilton.<sup>159</sup>

A Te Aroha correspondent for the *Thames Advertiser* gave additional details of Smallman's reported flight. 'Smallman, the well-known Pakeha-Maori, has become so frightened at the threats of the natives, who believe him to have had something to do with the murder, that he has left for the Thames via Cambridge and Auckland'. He also reported 'some excitement' being caused 'by the finding of a spur in the tent of Smallman's mate', presumably Marshall, but this was shown not to have belonged to Himiona.<sup>160</sup> Two weeks later, Smallman, giving his address as 'King's Hill, Te Aroha', wrote to the *Thames Star* to deny the 'false' statements made about him in the *Thames Advertiser*, explicitly criticizing its editor, William Wilkinson:<sup>161</sup>

The former part of last week I had two men engaged assisting me to get out fencing posts. On Thursday I was preparing to take out my crops when a friend from Paeroa came and said I had better clear out as two Maories were hanging about my place, determined to shoot me. I went into Morgantown [the central part of Te Aroha], and was advised to go to the Thames, via Hamilton. I remained in Morgantown two days, and considered that the Maories had then sufficient time to prove that they were in error, and would not molest me, I returned home, where I have remained ever since. These sensational paragraphs of his are like many of his editorials, conceived in imagination, and fully matured by "down pourings." I am termed by him the noted Pakeha-Maori. If it had not been for my spirit of enterprise and jeopardizing my life years gone by, I very much doubt whether he would have been the proprietor of the Advertiser or occupant of the Civic Chair [William Wilkinson] at the present day. From the time I landed in this country to the present, I have always possessed an ardent desire to search after and bring to light its mineral wealth in those places which have [been] hitherto locked up against us, and have managed to explore into places where no other white man at the present day dare plant his foot [a reference to his prospecting in the King Country]. Twice in my expeditions I have been taken prisoner by the Maories, and released again when they saw the advantages to be had by any

---

<sup>159</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 February 1881, p. 17.

<sup>160</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 19 February 1881, p. 3.

<sup>161</sup> See *Thames Advertiser*, 22 December 1881, p. 3; *New Zealand Herald*, 23 September 1921, p. 6.

discovery made on their territory. If this spirit of enterprise necessarily compels me to carry the name your supererogate friend over the way chooses to give me, I am quite willing to accept it.<sup>162</sup>

At the accused's trial in the Supreme Court, Smallman 'deposed that he had had a quarrel with a man. There was a bloodstain on his shirt, which came from his bleeding. He was advised by the police to "clear out" to the Thames, but he had not left the place, and did not mean to'.<sup>163</sup>

#### AFTER 1881

Smallman was last listed in an electoral roll in April 1885, when he was a 'settler' at Paharakeke.<sup>164</sup> He had had no further children with Harriet. Her last child, Lillian Matilda, was born in February 1886, at Katikati. In the record of members of the Te Aroha branch of the Mormon Church, no father's name was recorded, although in a second entry Smallman's name was crossed out; in the 'Record of Children Blest in the Te Aroha Branch of the New Zealand Mission, no father was listed.<sup>165</sup> Despite the strong implication that another man was her father, Lillian always bore the surname Smallman.<sup>166</sup> Alternative dates of birth recorded by the Te Aroha school were 30 July 1882, clearly wrong, and 2 February 1887.<sup>167</sup>

Harriet's pregnancy to another man was either the cause or the consequence of Smallman leaving her. In March 1887 his eldest son was recorded as living 'with his mother' at Paharakeke.<sup>168</sup> In 1891, a flag station on the railway line to Paeroa was planned for 'Mrs Smallman's', at Mangaiti.<sup>169</sup> Clearly it was years since Smallman had lived there.

---

<sup>162</sup> Letter from J.H. Smallman, *Thames Star*, 5 March 1881, p. 2.

<sup>163</sup> Supreme Court, *Auckland Star*, 14 April 1881, p. 3.

<sup>164</sup> *Tauranga Electoral Roll, 1885*, pp. 25, 31.

<sup>165</sup> 'Record of Members', no. 12; 'Record of Children Blest in the Te Aroha Branch of the New Zealand Mission', no. 19F, LDS Archives, Hamilton.

<sup>166</sup> Marriage Certificates of George William Smallman, 12 December 1901, 1901/4480; Lillian Matilda Smallman, 1908/2095, BDM.

<sup>167</sup> Te Aroha School, Admissions Register no. 2 (1889-1897), nos. 800, 873, 927, Primary School Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>168</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 26 March 1887, p. 2.

<sup>169</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 26 October 1891, p. 3.

When Harriet died in August 1912 at Mangaiti, aged 68, her death certificate lacked important details. She was recorded as Harriet Smallman, a farmer, who had married Smallman alone, where and when unknown, and had had two sons and two daughters, ages not given.<sup>170</sup> Her obituary simply referred to her as ‘one of the oldest settlers in the district’.<sup>171</sup>

At an unknown date, Smallman returned to England, to be reunited with his legal wife and sole legitimate son. Why she accepted him back is unknown, and a puzzle, for, after his departure, his wife and son had been forced to live with her mother for about 20 years.<sup>172</sup> He had not ‘contributed either directly or indirectly one penny towards the support of his family since the day he left. And it was of course worse than that, as she later discovered. In 1880, she stated that Smallman had written to her ‘regularly by each mail from the time he left until the year 1870’.

I did not hear from my said husband either directly or indirectly from December 1870 until January 1878 when he informed me in a letter from him that he was coming home. My said husband however did not return. In October 1875 I made enquiries respecting my said husband through the Agent General for New Zealand the result of which was that I found he was still living in that Colony.

In the middle of 1878 I made enquiries respecting my said husband through a cousin of mine a Mrs Griffiths who resides at Hauraki Thames River New Zealand and she informed me that my husband was living in the Bush of that Colony with a Half Caste woman the daughter of a Maori<sup>173</sup> Chief and that he had three children by the said woman. I wrote to him and informed him of what I had heard but I afterwards received (although he did not reply to my letter) from my said cousin a letter in my husband’s handwriting dated from Te Aroha<sup>174</sup> New Zealand addressed to my said cousin in which he complained of her having given me the information she had done.<sup>175</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> Death Certificate of Harriet Smallman, 8 August 1912, 1912/5821, BDM.

<sup>171</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 10 August 1912, p. 2.

<sup>172</sup> Sophia and Herbert Spencer Smallman, Census of England, Staffordshire, 1871, 1881, 1891.

<sup>173</sup> Written as ‘Marie’.

<sup>174</sup> Written as ‘Te Auroha’.

<sup>175</sup> Declaration of Sophia Smallman, 20 March 1880, J 77/241/6833, The National Archives, Kew, London.

A subsequent affidavit stated that he had ‘without any reasonable excuse deserted’ her. Since his ‘desertion’, she had ‘maintained herself by her own industry and by the assistance of her friends’. As she had ‘become possessed of certain property’ and was ‘likely to be possessed of further property consisting of money household furniture and effect and an expectancy under the Will of one of her own relatives’, she sought a protection order over her property so that Smallman and any of his creditors could not claim it.<sup>176</sup> Her request was granted.<sup>177</sup> She could have obtained a divorce, having been, in her words, ‘deserted’ for so many years,<sup>178</sup> but chose only to protect her property. Was she still expecting him to return, as he had told her, in January 1878, that he would do soon? Or was she expecting to benefit from his mining investments, for in 1870 he had sent her his will ‘saying that he had a good interest in a Goldmine’?<sup>179</sup>

Despite Smallman’s betrayal of his marriage vows, the 1891 census revealed that they were living together at 210 Solo Hill, Handsworth, near West Bromwich, Smallman working as a mining engineer once more, as he would for the rest of his life.<sup>180</sup> At the time of the 1901 census, they were visiting their son, a ‘managing director, tube worker’, at Handsworth. Smallman was still a mining engineer, and their home address was ‘Fair view’, 34 Old Park Road, Wednesbury. They had a domestic servant.<sup>181</sup> In 1911, they were living apart, possibly because of Smallman’s work commitments, Smallman in Wakefield in Yorkshire, and Sophia in Stratford-on-Avon.<sup>182</sup>

After having a ‘valvular disease of heart’ for an unknown number of years, Smallman died, aged 85, in March 1925, at 20 Old Park Road,

---

<sup>176</sup> Affidavit of Sophia Smallman, 1 April 1880, J 77/241/6833, The National Archives, Kew, London.

<sup>177</sup> J 77/241/6833, The National Archives, Kew, London.

<sup>178</sup> See Lawrence Stone, *Road to Divorce: England 1530-1987* (Oxford, 1990), p. 388.

<sup>179</sup> Declaration of Sophia Smallman, 20 March 1880, J 77/241/6833, The National Archives, Kew, London.

<sup>180</sup> Joseph H. and Sophia Smallman, Census of England, Staffordshire, 1891; Death Certificate of Joseph Harris Smallman, 22 March 1925, West Bromwich, March Quarter 1925, vol. 6b, p. 1078.

<sup>181</sup> Joseph H., Sophia, and Herbert S. Smallman, Census of England, Staffordshire, 1901.

<sup>182</sup> Joseph Smallman, Yorkshire, and Sophia Smallman, Warwickshire, Census of England, 1911.

Wednesbury, with his son being ‘in attendance’.<sup>183</sup> His widow died, in the same district, late the following year.<sup>184</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Smallman was not a Pakeha Maori in the earlier sense, but by living amongst Maori and having part-Maori children he was called one, and was happy to accept this label. His involvement with Ngati Rahiri meant that, when mining commenced at Te Aroha, he prospected only with Maori and managed their claims. Unlike other Pakeha Maori in this district, he abandoned his ‘wife’ – or did she abandon him? Unlike the stereotypical Pakeha Maori, he did not live slothfully on the labour of his Maori relatives; instead, like so many miners, once mining declined he took whatever work was available. His knowledge of the Maori language and of Maori ways meant he could explore areas closed to Pakeha, and saved him from ill treatment when discovered. Not having practical experience of prospecting, he was unsuccessful, looking for alluvial gold at Thames where none existed; like everyone else, he did not realize there was no gold in the King Country. For a time he had earned money from mining before becoming a small farmer, but probably returned to England with little if any money to show after being away for over 20 years. And his return raised the most puzzling question of all: why did his wife take him back?

### *Appendix*

*Figure 1:* Photograph of Harete or Charlotte Nicholls, n.d., Anita Manning Collection; used with permission.

*Figure 2:* Photograph of Charlotte Smallman’s children, n.d., Anita Manning Collection; used with permission.

*Figure 3:* Plan of Patuwahao Block, showing 100-acre section on southern bank of the Mangaiti Stream allocated to ‘Harete & others’, Maori

---

<sup>183</sup> Death Certificate of Joseph Harris Smallman, 22 March 1925, West Bromwich, March Quarter 1925, vol. 6b, p. 1078.

<sup>184</sup> Death Certificate of Sophia Smallman, West Bromwich, December Quarter 1926, vol. 6b, p. 887.

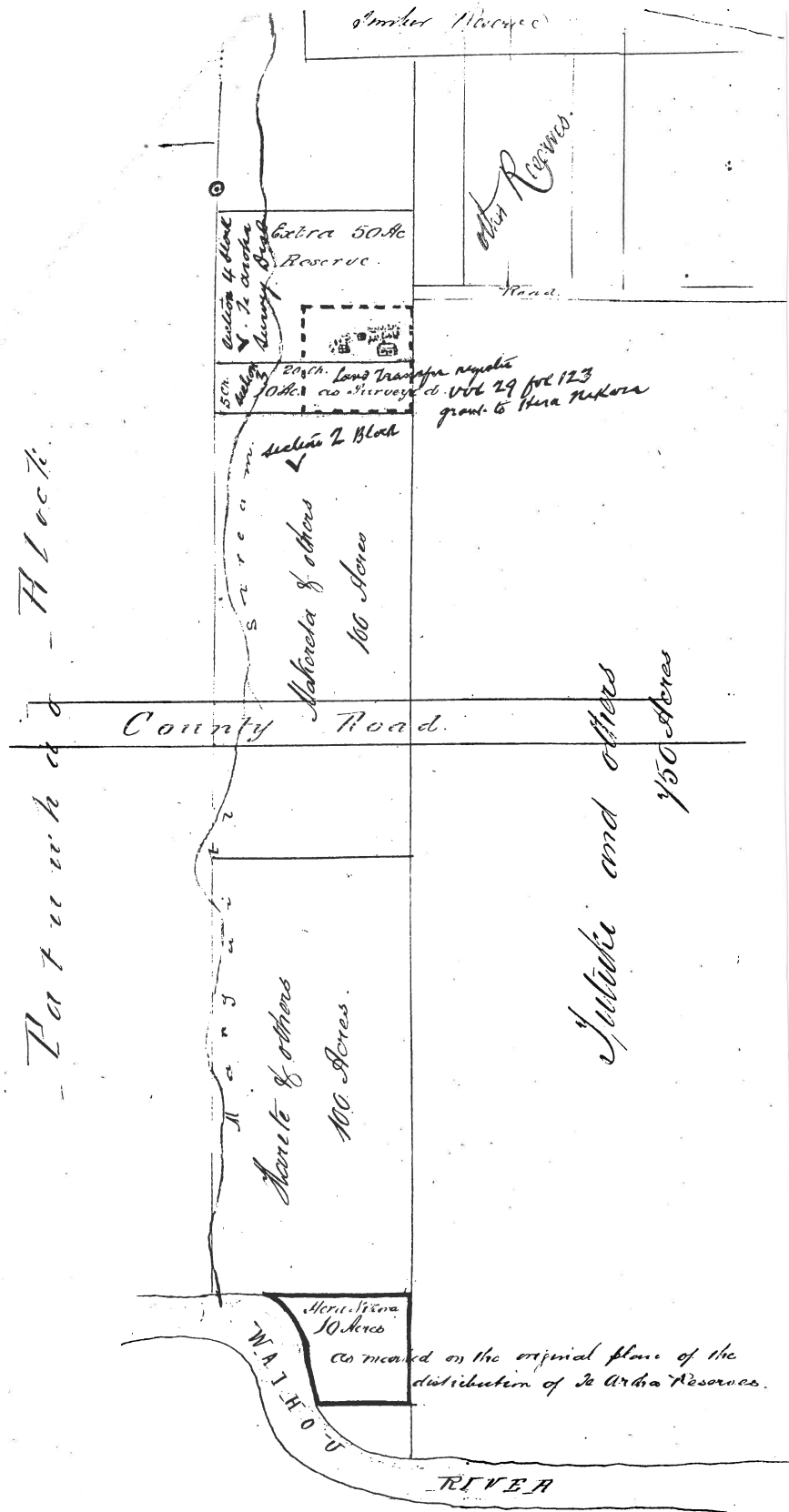
Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-W [Archives New Zealand The Department of Internal Affairs Te Tari Taiwhenua].



**Figure 1:** Photograph of Harete or Charlotte Nicholls, n.d., Anita Manning Collection; used with permission.



**Figure 2:** Photograph of Charlotte Smallman's children, n.d., Anita Manning Collection; used with permission.



**Figure 3:** Plan of Patuwaho Block, showing 100-acre section on southern bank of the Mangaiti Stream allocated to 'Harete & others', Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/86, ANZ-W [Archives New Zealand The Department of Internal Affairs Te Tari Taiwhenua].