

THOMAS McINDOE: A TE AROHA SADDLER WHO BECAME AN  
AUCKLAND BUSINESSMAN

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**Te Aroha Mining District Working Papers**

**No. 145**

**2016**

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ISSN: 2463-6266

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

## THOMAS McINDOE: A TE AROHA SADDLER WHO BECAME AN AUCKLAND BUSINESSMAN

**Abstract:** *Starting out as a saddler at Te Aroha in 1891, Thomas McIndoe also became an agent, especially a successful land agent, acquiring some land holdings for himself. After leaving Te Aroha in 1911 he was a businessman in Auckland for the rest of his life. During the mining boom of the 1890s, he invested in many local mines, probably without making much if any money from his share dealings.*

*McIndoe participated in almost every aspect of Te Aroha life, including the Anglican Church, a variety of sports, the Volunteers, the freemasons, and (especially) musical events. Involved in just about every local organization and local government body, he was the first president of the Chamber of Commerce and, briefly, on the borough council. Politically, he was a prominent supporter of the Liberal Party. In addition, he was notable for his charitable acts and for one heroic rescue. His personality was generally amiable, but he had a prickly side as well. He was a notable example of a 'pillar of the local community'.*

### SADDLER AT TE AROHA

Thomas McIndoe was born in Glasgow in July 1865 to William, a dairyman, and Elizabeth, née Sharpe.<sup>1</sup> After coming to New Zealand with his parents when aged five, he was educated at Prince Albert College in Auckland.<sup>2</sup> In 1891, he took over a Te Aroha saddlery and harness-making business,<sup>3</sup> established in the early 1880s by David Brigham.<sup>4</sup> This saddlery and its adjacent house were on the corner opposite the Hot Springs Hotel.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Birth Certificate of Thomas McIndoe, 26 July 1865, ancestry.co.uk; Marriage Certificate of Thomas McIndoe, 27 January 1890, 1890/271, BDM.

<sup>2</sup> 'Addresses Presented to Sir George Grey on his 74th Birthday, 14 April 1886, by European and Maori Residents of Auckland Province', p. 68, Grey New Zealand Manuscripts, MS 275, Auckland Public Library; *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1942, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ronald McIndoe, 'Te Aroha Goldfields', typescript, n.d., p. 1, MS Papers 3806, folder 1, Alexander Turnbull Library; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 831.

<sup>4</sup> See *Te Aroha News*, 23 June 1883, p. 3, 7 February 1885, p. 2, 10 July 1886, p. 3, 18 December 1886, p. 2, 12 March 1887, p. 3, 2 April 1887, p. 2, 21 November 1888, p. 2; *New Zealand Herald*, 11 March 1927, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> McIndoe, p. 1.

In the following November, when his saddlery burnt down, he was a 'very heavy' loser despite insuring the building for £200, the stock for £150, and the furniture for £50.<sup>6</sup> Not till the second half of 1893 did he rebuild his premises on the same site, taking 'the precaution of building a brick wall on the side next to his nearest neighbour, which will considerably reduce the risk of fire'.<sup>7</sup>

In October 1895, 'having received an exceptionally good offer', McIndoe decided to leave Te Aroha, arranging a closing down sale and the sale of his house.<sup>8</sup> An advertisement announcing that he would leave by the end of the year thanked residents for their support.<sup>9</sup> In reporting that his departure, a correspondent described him as 'our popular saddler'.<sup>10</sup> Then, in early December, he announced that instead of leaving he had taken a partner and would trade as McIndoe and Hill.<sup>11</sup> His partner, William Hill, born near Glasgow and 'brought up to mercantile life', had previously done 'clerical work' in Auckland after arriving in New Zealand in 1890. Hill would become secretary of the local Masonic lodge, and when a borough was formed in 1898 he was appointed town clerk and treasurer as well as secretary and treasurer of the Hot Springs Domain Board.<sup>12</sup> In March 1904, their partnership was dissolved by mutual consent, McIndoe carrying on the business 'under the same name as hitherto'.<sup>13</sup>

In March 1897 McIndoe and Hill erected a two-roomed shop on a vacant section near their saddlery warehouse.<sup>14</sup> The following year, it was reported that a 'model plant for the manufacture of acetylene gas will shortly be introduced in the business premises' of the 'enterprising Te Aroha firm of saddlers'.<sup>15</sup> After the declaration of the poll on the night of the

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<sup>6</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 9 November 1892, p. 3; *Auckland Weekly News*, 12 November 1892, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 9 September 1893, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 16 October 1895, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 16 October 1895, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 24 October 1895, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 4 December 1895, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 7 December 1895, p. 3; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, p. 824.

<sup>13</sup> Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 9 April 1904, press cutting in Bank of New Zealand, Paeroa Branch, Manager's Memorandum Book 1902-1904, p. 70, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>14</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 20 March 1897, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 4 June 1898, p. 2.

borough council election, the *Te Aroha News* reported ‘a scene of unusual bustle and animation’.

The attention of the loiterers was arrested and a wide-eyed crowd gathered as if by magic from the shadows of the ill-lighted street. And what was happening in a well known saddler’s shop in our main thoroughfare on Saturday night might well arrest, enchain, fascinate, attention, for with the new borough and its brand new equipment of reforming councillors had come the light which is to revolutionize our system of illumination and turn darkness into day. From that doorway streamed a flood of light the like of which Te Aroha has never seen – of a purity and luminosity, if we may be allowed to coin a word for the occasion, with which sunlight could alone be compared, and when investigation elicited the fact that this – we were going to write – supernal light was emitted from a burner, the aperture of which was less than a pin point, and that the consumption of gas required to frame the tiny jet of light which effectually dimmed and threw into insignificance the couple of kerosene oil lamps commonly employed there for illuminating purposes, was at the rate of 3ft per hour, the wonder grew into naïve expressions of delight and satisfaction. The installation, from various unforeseen causes, from the exhibitors’ point of view, did not reach their expectations. This week they hope to be able to show the public what the light really can do when seen to perfection. We sincerely trust they may.<sup>16</sup>

Five days later, it reported general admiration for another display of acetylene.<sup>17</sup> Nine years later, the adjoining boardinghouse was totally destroyed by fire. ‘McIndoe’s shop caught fire several times, but the flames were suppressed by the brigade, though a high wind was blowing at the time. The side of McIndoe’s shop was charred, but none of the stock was damaged’.<sup>18</sup>

#### AGENT AND LANDOWNER

In 1898, McIndoe and Hill were appointed agents for a Waihou plant nursery.<sup>19</sup> According to McIndoe’s obituary, when ‘large blocks of

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<sup>16</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 14 July 1898, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 19 July 1898, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 October 1907, p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 11 June 1898, p. 2.

surrounding land' were cut up 'the firm entered the real estate business'.<sup>20</sup> In 1903, they advertised themselves as both the Te Aroha Saddlery and as 'House, land, estate, and general commission agents'.<sup>21</sup> Four years later, McIndoe advertised himself as a commission agent, valuer, and land and estate agent as well as a saddler.<sup>22</sup> The following year, he was doing so well that he opened another office.<sup>23</sup> In 1909, he bought a motor car 'suitable for the roads in this district' to assist his land and estate agency.<sup>24</sup> Six months later, he purchased a 'villa residence a short distance outside Hamilton' and intended moving there, Hamilton being 'more centrally situated for his ever-growing business'.<sup>25</sup> In 1911, he sold his Thames Valley Land Agency, promising to keep in touch with Te Aroha and visit 'frequently'.<sup>26</sup>

In 1905, he was offered the Wairakau Estate for £12,500 or any reasonable offer, but was warned that it was already on offer to another person;<sup>27</sup> he did not purchase it. At that time he occupied 80 acres in the Waitoa Riding, with a rateable value of £100.<sup>28</sup> In the following year, his three Te Aroha shops were given a rateable value of £80, another two were valued at £40 and a third at £15, and a house and shop at £30; his wife's two houses were valued at £20 and £15.<sup>29</sup> In 1908, when his wife owned 23 acres in the Waitoa Riding, McIndoe and Company sought a good farm hand.<sup>30</sup> The following year, at a meeting of settlers on the Waitoa Estate

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<sup>20</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1942, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 6 August 1903, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 5 March 1907, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 3 October 1908, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 15 April 1909, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 7 October 1909, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 3 June 1911, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Jackson and Russell to Thomas McIndoe, 21 June 1905, Letterbook no. 86, p. 364, Jackson and Russell Papers, MS 360, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Museum.

<sup>28</sup> Piako County Council, Rate Book 1905-1906, Waitoa Riding, Wairere Block I Section 1, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>29</sup> Te Aroha Borough Council, Rate Book 1906-1907, Sections 1, 11 Block VI, Sections 3, 4 Block I, Section 8 Block XXVII, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>30</sup> Ohinemuri County Council, Waitoa Riding, 1908, folios 23, 47, Valuation Department, BBBC 14670, A150/647, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, 19 September 1908, p. 2.

discussing plans for its drainage McIndoe attempted to move a motion that members of the drainage board should resign.<sup>31</sup>

## IN AUCKLAND

McIndoe moved to Auckland in 1910.<sup>32</sup> In 1928, the *Observer* published a sketch of ‘Tommy McIndoe’:

**Tom McIndoe**, that chippy,<sup>33</sup> cheery little land and estate agent, whose spectacles beam out good prospects to clients and Auckland generally, and is a necessary want of Donald McDonald. They hunt in company and joy ride, too. Tom smells out all the good speculations and Donald bails and gobbles them up. Also Tommy Mac puts the other Mc to when and where to distribute his brass [money]<sup>34</sup> when a benevolent boom is busy in the brain box.<sup>35</sup>

It published an accompanying sketch and commentary about McDonald, who may have been the man who left the West Coast in the late nineteenth century to make a profit of £20,000 in the Transvaal:<sup>36</sup>

**Donald McDonald** has come into prominence in financial circles in Auckland City just recently. Donald is reputed to be a mass of wealth, he certainly has health, and wealth of front [‘bearing, deportment, style’]<sup>37</sup> and assurance with a golden trophy trinket to set off his badge of J.P.-ship.

A speculator whose name adorns most share lists of big financial institutions, D. McD. has no fear whatever of darkening the doors of unemployed to get the smell of a soup kitchen other than to swell its funds.

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<sup>31</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 June 1909, p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 3 October 1942, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Chippy’ can mean ‘unwell, esp. after liquor’, ‘apt to be impudent’, ‘cheap’, or ‘resentfully envious’, none of which seem appropriate: Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8 ed., ed. Paul Beale (London, 1984), p. 210. Nor does ‘irritable, ill-tempered’ (*The Free Dictionary*, online), or ‘aggressively belligerent’ (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, online). Probably the correct word was ‘chipper’, meaning ‘marked by or being in sprightly good humor and health’: *Dictionary.com*.

<sup>34</sup> Partridge, p. 129.

<sup>35</sup> *Observer*, 12 September 1928, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> *Observer*, 16 June 1900, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Partridge, p. 430.

An ardent R.C. and a big supporter of his church, Donald McDonald is whispered to be advisor on the advisory board of Bishop Cleary. Perhaps so, ask Tom McIndoe.<sup>38</sup>

They had been closely associated in land investments and perhaps other business concerns since at least 1909.<sup>39</sup> Despite McIndoe being a staunch Protestant, this did not interfere with their profitable business partnership, the precise nature of which has not been traced.

From July 1920 to November 1941, T. McIndoe and Son, of Queen Street, Auckland, advertised their services as land and estate agents.<sup>40</sup> In 1928 McIndoe was also an auctioneer.<sup>41</sup> His obituary stated that he 'was a past-president of the Auckland Branch of the Real Estate Institute and was also a director of the Land Agents Guarantee Company for many years'.<sup>42</sup>

### INVESTING IN MINING

His was only involved in mining during the mining boom of the 1890s. Early in 1895, he was a member of the three-man finance committee of the Cadman Prospecting Association,<sup>43</sup> which was exploring at Waiorongomai. In July, he applied for six men's ground between Stoney Creek and Waiorongomai, which was granted in the following month.<sup>44</sup> In September he applied for the Starlight Dell, close to Te Aroha, and one month later was on the four-man works committee of the Te Aroha Prospecting Syndicate.<sup>45</sup>

In May 1896, he applied for the Grand Result, 100 acres further up the hillside from the adjacent New Find Amalgamated; despite it being sought

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<sup>38</sup> *Observer*, 12 September 1928, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> See *Te Aroha News*, 25 June 1910, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Advertisements, *Auckland Star*, 3 July 1920, p. 5. – 20 November 1941, p. 20.

<sup>41</sup> Advertisement, *New Zealand Herald*, 10 March 1928, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1942, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 20 February 1895, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1895, 24/1895, BBAV 11289/14a; Register of Applications 1883-1900, 24/1895, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, 10 August 1895, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Applications 1895, 32/1895, BBAV 11289/14a, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, 7 September 1895, p. 2.

by a leading mine manager, Thomas Gavin,<sup>46</sup> McIndoe was granted it in October.<sup>47</sup> Although details of their competition have been lost, ‘some good interests’ were involved’ and the case was seen as being ‘of great importance’, with ‘points of great importance to the mining community’.<sup>48</sup> McIndoe stated that the claim was ‘old Ground, and is difficult to work, and the reefs therein are complex, and of low grade’. £1,000 had been ‘promised by a responsible party for preliminary development’, and arrangements had been made to place it on the London market.<sup>49</sup> In September, he chaired a meeting of the Trident shareholders which decided to sell their ground to the New Zealand Exploration Company.<sup>50</sup> Late the following month he applied for the Edendale, adjoining the Grand Result, which was granted in May.<sup>51</sup> During 1897, both claims were protected for some months, entitling him to work them with a minimal workforce.<sup>52</sup> Both were transferred, to Joseph Campbell,<sup>53</sup> in December 1897.<sup>54</sup>

In October 1896, immediately after obtaining the license to construct a water race to the site of the future Bendigo battery,<sup>55</sup> he obtained protection for it, and then sold it to Campbell in December 1897.<sup>56</sup> A two-mile long water race commencing in Canadian Creek, granted in his wife’s name in May 1897, was sold to Campbell in that month.<sup>57</sup> That his two claims and

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<sup>46</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>47</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1896, 10/1896, BBAV 11289/14a, ANZ-A; Memorandum by Under-Secretary, Mines Department, 26 October 1896, Mines Department, MD 1, 96/1975, ANZ-W; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 12 September 1896, p. 2, 10 October 1896, p. 2; *AJHR*, 1897, C-3, p. 98.

<sup>48</sup> Warden’s Court, *Waikato Argus*, 8 September 1896, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Declaration by Thomas McIndoe, 2 October 1896, Mines Department, MD 1, 96/1975, ANZ-W.

<sup>50</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 21 September 1896, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Mining Applications 1896, 41/1896, BBAV 11289/14a, ANZ-A.

<sup>52</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Applications 1883-1900, 73/1897, 91/1897, BBAV 11505/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>53</sup> See paper on Joseph Campbell and his thermo-hyperphoric process.

<sup>54</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Letterbook 1883-1900, p. 453, BBAV 11534/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>55</sup> See paper on this battery.

<sup>56</sup> Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Rent Ledger 1894-1910, folio 45, BBAV 11570/7a, ANZ-A.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Plan of Water Right, T. McIndoe Applicant, March 1897’, Te Aroha Museum; Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Register of Applications 1891-1899, hearing of 12 November 1896, BBAV 11505/4a; Rent Ledger 1894-1910, BBAV 11570/7a, ANZ-A.



two water race licenses were sold to Campbell for a notional amount, 10s,<sup>58</sup> indicated his association with Campbell's companies. Also in May 1897 he became a shareholder in the Inland Reefs Company, mining at Stoney Creek, unprofitably.<sup>59</sup>

## FINANCES

There was no indication that his mining investments were profitable; his financial success came from his business and his property dealings.

In the 1892 fire, although some of his large stock was saved, he estimated 'his loss considerably in excess of the insurance'.<sup>60</sup> In September 1895, his overdraft of £44 was secured by seven securities totalling £150, and his house was valued at £170. His bank manager recorded: 'Estate shows assets £988, liabilities £668.... Sound'.<sup>61</sup> Two months later, when he intended to leave Te Aroha, his five-roomed house in Wilson Street was offered for sale. Leased until the following March at £26 per annum, it had two good outbuildings, with water laid on and 'every convenience'. Two acres were planted in fruit trees and a 'never failing stream' ran through the property.<sup>62</sup> As subsequently he decided to remain at Te Aroha, there was no sale.

The big gale of mid-1898 blew the verandah off the firm's shop, and others they owned were 'slightly damaged by the overflow of the creek' behind Whitaker Street.<sup>63</sup> In 1900, his nearly completed eight-roomed house burnt down; he was 'a very heavy loser' despite its being insured for £200.<sup>64</sup>

In July 1903, McIndoe had a 'conversation' with his bank manager about the partnership's assets and financial needs:

They own

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<sup>58</sup> Agreement between Thomas McIndoe and Joseph Campbell, 18 November 1897, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Mining Registrations 1897, BCDG 11288/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>59</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 6 May 1897, p. 1036, 27 January 1898, p. 182.

<sup>60</sup> *Waikato Times*, 10 November 1892, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Paeroa Branch, Half-Yearly Balance Books, Balances as at 30 September 1895, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>62</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 6 November 1895, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 2 July 1898, Supplement, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 15 March 1900, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 15 March 1900, p. 3.

Price's 3 shops mortgaged for £280  
 Town Hall " 100 (balance of purchase)  
 Their own shop & four others adjoining with  
 lodge-room Unencumbered  
 Book debts due to them usually about £300.  
 They pay all a/cs monthly.  
 Agreed to let them have limit [of overdraft] of £100 –  
 If they need more they are to give security.<sup>65</sup>

On 30 March 1904, his bank manager recorded another visit from McIndoe. 'The firm is being dissolved as from 1st April, Mr Hill retiring. Mr McIndoe has paid him out already but is to lend him another £100 to complete the house Hill is building'. To enable McIndoe to purchase some goods, it was agreed that his overdraft could be '£400 or so'. The former partners remained 'jointly interested in the firm's properties (Hill 2/3rds McIndoe 3/5ths) though some are in the name of one, some in that of the other'. McIndoe was to 'obtain a letter from Hill agreeing to his pledging the shop &c for the new firm's o/d'. Less than a week later, an overdraft of £450 was approved.<sup>66</sup> Six weeks later, McIndoe bought two small properties in the Te Aroha district.<sup>67</sup> Also in that year, he was allotted 500 of the 75,000 shares in the New Sylvia Company, at Tararu.<sup>68</sup>

In 1909, he was allotted ten of the 1,000 shares of the Manawaru Co-operative Dairy Company, which went into liquidation shortly afterwards.<sup>69</sup> Also in 1909, he was allotted 25 of the 2,000 shares in the Thames Valley Printing Company and elected as a director; it was formed to purchase the *Te Aroha Mail* and the *Morrinsville Herald*.<sup>70</sup> Both newspapers failed. Two years later, although 'no longer trading in Te Aroha', he described himself as 'an owner of a considerable amount of

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<sup>65</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Paeroa Branch, Manager's Memorandum Book 1902-1914, p. 70, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>66</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Paeroa Branch, Manager's Memorandum Book 1902-1914, p. 70, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>67</sup> Bank of New Zealand, Te Aroha Branch, Manager's Diary 1905-1919, entry for 19 May 1905, Bank of New Zealand Archives, Wellington.

<sup>68</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 200 no. 1202, ANZ-A.

<sup>69</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 164 no. 1026, ANZ-A.

<sup>70</sup> Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 239 no. 1406, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, 30 June 1910, p. 2; for these newspapers, see G.H. Scholefield, *Newspapers in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1958), pp. 115, 122.

property in the town'.<sup>71</sup> In 1912 he sold his interest in 'Park House', a boardinghouse.<sup>72</sup>

An indication of the family's financial status in 1918 is given in an advertised sale of the 'attractive furnishings' being sold by 'Mrs T McIndoe', of 'Stoneleigh', New North Road, including a 'superior walnut piano, upright grand', and antique and high quality furniture.<sup>73</sup> That his last years in Auckland were only modestly remunerative is indicated by his estate being only £686 14s 2d.<sup>74</sup>

### INVOLVEMENT IN THE TE AROHA COMMUNITY

In reporting his singing at a concert to raise money for the Anglican church, the *Te Aroha News* noted that he was 'always in the fore in helping in any good work'.<sup>75</sup> In 1893, he convened the meeting that formed a rowing club, and was elected to the committee that canvassed for members.<sup>76</sup> In the New Year's Sports of 1895, he was 'the moving spirit' in arranging sports for children, putting 'even more than his usual energy into it'.<sup>77</sup> The following year, 'the children's sports were arranged and carried out by Mr McIndoe with an energy and vigour which left nothing to be desired'.<sup>78</sup> During the 1890s and 1900s he was a vice-president of the football club, in 1897 presenting it with a new football.<sup>79</sup> He was also a vice-president of the tennis club.<sup>80</sup> A bowls player, in 1903 he was a member of the team competing against a visiting club.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 17 August 1911, p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 2 December 1912, p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> Advertisement, *Auckland Star*, 22 October 1918, p. 6.

<sup>74</sup> Probate of Thomas McIndoe, Probates, BBAE 1570, 1183/42, ANZ-A.

<sup>75</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 23 November 1895, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> *Thames Advertiser*, 20 February 1893, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 25 February 1893, p. 23.

<sup>77</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 5 January 1895, p. 9.

<sup>78</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 January 1896, p. 23.

<sup>79</sup> *Thames Advertiser*. 1 April 1896, p. 2; *Waikato Argus*, 6 April 1897, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 23 April 1907, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 17 September 1908, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 16 April 1903, p. 28.

Shortly before he left the district, the local newspaper noted that he was well known for his ‘fluent and racy style’ of oratory.<sup>82</sup> He was even better known for his involvement in music, especially singing. In 1909, when it was reported that he would leave, it wrote that he would be much missed ‘in musical and other circles’.<sup>83</sup> For instance, in 1892 he contributed a song at a ‘free-and-easy’ held by the Young Men’s Club.<sup>84</sup> The following month, at a Waiorongomai concert held to raise funds to rebuild William Roycroft’s house,<sup>85</sup> McIndoe, ‘who was in excellent voice, sang “The Powder Monkey,” “The Troubadour,” and “Sailing,” and was deservedly encored’.<sup>86</sup> Two years later, he sang at a meeting of the Band of Hope and organized a concert to raise funds for the Anglican church.<sup>87</sup> In a concert at the end of 1894, the *Observer* Man reported that ‘McIndoe, our ever ready musical man, gave us a selection in grand style’.<sup>88</sup> At a benefit concert for an ailing resident in 1895, he sang the first song, ‘The Diver’, and one month later sang at a Waihou Junior Dramatic Club entertainment.<sup>89</sup> The following year, the management of the annual concert and dance for the Jockey Club was left in his hands, ‘and despite the fact that he had had rather short notice, a most successful evening was spent’.<sup>90</sup> During the Boer War, he sang ‘Red, White, and Blue’ at a ‘patriotic concert’.<sup>91</sup> In 1903, at a concert to reduce the debt on the Anglican vicarage, he sang ‘A Thousand Leagues’ and in the final quartet, ‘De Ole Banjo’.<sup>92</sup>

At a meeting in 1894, he moved that residents be canvassed to contribute money to form a band.<sup>93</sup> In 1901, as vice-president of the Te Aroha Musical Society he chaired the meeting that decided to disband it.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 29 April 1911, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 7 October 1909, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 August 1892, p. 23.

<sup>85</sup> See paper on the Roycroft brothers.

<sup>86</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 September 1892, p. 21.

<sup>87</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 September 1894, p. 23, 17 November 1894, p. 23.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Te Aroha’, *Observer*, 29 December 1894, p. 22.

<sup>89</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 13 July 1895, p. 23; *Te Aroha News*, 7 August 1895, p. 2.

<sup>90</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 21 March 1896, p. 23.

<sup>91</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 June 1900, p. 39.

<sup>92</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 April 1903, p. 33.

<sup>93</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 30 June 1894, p. 23.

In 1894, McIndoe 'generously promised to present a silver star' to the Volunteer corps 'to be fired for', a 'good example' that a local correspondent hoped would 'be followed by others'.<sup>95</sup> The following year, he gave either this or another medal for the Te Aroha Rifles' shooting competition.<sup>96</sup> The McIndoe Star continued to be presented to the best shots of the Piako Mounted Rifles at least into the twentieth century.<sup>97</sup> In 1902, his firm donated a prize for the gymkhana of the Piako Mounted Rifles.<sup>98</sup> He participated in church parades, singing a sacred solo at one in 1895.<sup>99</sup>

When, in 1895, McIndoe announced his intention to leave the district, a correspondent wrote that he had 'always shown a readiness to help by every means in his power any effort for the welfare of any person or institution in the district, and has done his best to advance the interests of Te Aroha. He will be very much missed by all sections of the community'.<sup>100</sup> His obituary stated that he 'took a leading part in local body and Masonic affairs. He was a member of the Te Aroha Town Board and one of the foundation members of the Te Aroha fire brigade'.<sup>101</sup> He held leadership positions in the Masonic lodge.<sup>102</sup> In 1894, he was elected treasurer of the horticultural society, and was re-elected the following year.<sup>103</sup> On at least one occasion, the committee met in his office.<sup>104</sup> When the volunteer fire brigade was established in 1900, he was its treasurer.<sup>105</sup>

He was elected to the school committee in 1892 and re-elected in subsequent years.<sup>106</sup> In 1901, he received the second highest vote, 39, compared with the highest result, 50.<sup>107</sup> The following year he was

<sup>94</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 March 1901, p. 31, 10 May 1901, p. 26.

<sup>95</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 30 June 1894, p. 23.

<sup>96</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 20 April 1895, p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> For example, *Te Aroha News*, 17 March 1898, p. 2, 15 July 1905, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 18 December 1902, p. 33.

<sup>99</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 2 February 1895, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *New Zealand Herald*, 24 October 1895, p. 3.

<sup>101</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1942, p. 2.

<sup>102</sup> *Waikato Argus*, 29 October 1898, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 8 October 1900, p. 3.

<sup>103</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 September 1894, p. 23; *Te Aroha News*, 3 April 1895, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 July 1895, p. 23.

<sup>105</sup> *Thames Star*, 5 October 1900, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 7 May 1892, p. 27, 23 December 1893, p. 22, 8 May 1902, p. 41, 4 May 1905, p. 20.

<sup>107</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 April 1901, p. 37.

appointed one of the two members of the 'visiting committee'.<sup>108</sup> In 1905 and 1906, he was chairman.<sup>109</sup>

In 1898, he was appointed a justice of the peace.<sup>110</sup> His son Ronald recalled '2 Irish Factions who were deadly enemies, and Dad who was a J.P. used to stop the donneybrooks [fracas]<sup>111</sup> and get one lot going one way and the others in the opposite direction. However they nearly always finished up in another street when the J.P. went home with a job well done'.<sup>112</sup>

In 1901, with Thomas Gavin he convened a public meeting to consider forming an educational association to discuss the issues of the day. When the meeting agreed to form a Citizens' Association, McIndoe was one of the five men elected to a committee to draw up its rules and procedures.<sup>113</sup> Also in 1901, when the Premier, Richard John Seddon, visited Te Aroha, McIndoe along with James Mills<sup>114</sup> asked him to purchase the suburb of Lipseytown. Later that year, McIndoe told Seddon that this was a good time to purchase it because the owners needed money. 'It would be nothing short of a calamity if a private speculator was allowed to "get a finger in the pie"'.<sup>115</sup> Early in the twentieth century, when he was living in the suburb of Ruakaka, he wanted it included in the borough.<sup>116</sup> In 1905, he gave evidence to a royal commission investigated land tenure:

What is it you wish to say? - I have been asked to state my experience as an agent with reference to the leasehold question. I may state at the present time a number of holdings on the Rangiatea Estate, near Waihou, are on the market. The holders are willing to sell, even at a loss, in order to get clear of the lease and get a freehold. They are prepared to sell at a sacrifice, although land has increased very much in value in the neighbourhood. These farms were taken up, and for the most part are held by the original selectors under lease in perpetuity. I say with scarcely any exception these people are thoroughly

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<sup>108</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 22 May 1902, p. 32.

<sup>109</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 21 September 1905, p. 2, 7 August 1906, p. 3.

<sup>110</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 30 June 1898, p. 1055.

<sup>111</sup> Partridge, p. 328.

<sup>112</sup> McIndoe, p. 5.

<sup>113</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 3 May 1901, p. 31.

<sup>114</sup> See paper on his life.

<sup>115</sup> Thomas McIndoe to R.J. Seddon, 24 September 1901, Maori Affairs Department, MA 1, 13/87, ANZ-W.

<sup>116</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 19 December 1908, p. 2.

dissatisfied with the present tenure. They all hold that they should have the right of purchase. The difference is most marked between the tenures when going through the district. One can always tell which are leasehold farms. The buildings and fences, as a rule, are not as well kept, and the leaseholder does not seem to have the same heart to work his farm.

What benefit would these people gain by acquiring the freehold? – They would benefit in having something in which to invest their savings. At the present time they find their families drifting away because they cannot subdivide their property.

Under questioning, he explained that he was, ‘as a rule’, referring only to the Tangiatea settlers. ‘The freehold will give them heart to make the land. The land requires making’. Asked what was ‘wrong with the lease in perpetuity’, which was ‘secure and long enough for all possible contingencies’, he agreed, but adding that it was ‘very irksome to have the possibility of revaluation being brought forward’, which ‘has had a very disconcerting influence on a lot of farmers. If they wish to sell out they very soon find the value of the lease in perpetuity. It is practically valueless’, at least in this district; he admitted having no experience in any other. Despite agreeing that these farmers knew the conditions applying when they went on the land, he claimed ‘they did not know the land was as poor as it is. The land has been in most cases very disappointing’, requiring ‘manuring for every crop’; the government had paid too much for it. All Crown tenants throughout New Zealand should have the right to purchase, and income from sales could be used to ‘develop the unused lands’.<sup>117</sup>

When a Chamber of Commerce was formed in 1908, he was its first president.<sup>118</sup> With reluctance, he accepted another term in 1910, retiring from when he left the district in the following year.<sup>119</sup>

In 1909, he represented the farming community at a discussion about a proposed Te Aroha carnival.<sup>120</sup> The following year, he chaired a meeting of pioneers that decided to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the goldfield’s opening, and was elected to the organizing committee.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> ‘Crown Lands: Report of the Royal Commission on Land-Tenure, Land-Settlement, and other matters affecting the Crown Lands of the Colony’, *AJHR*, 1905, C-4, pp. 1046-1047.

<sup>118</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 April 1908, p. 36.

<sup>119</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 27 October 1910, p. 3, 2 November 1911, p. 3.

<sup>120</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 26 August 1909, p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> *Te Aroha Mail*, 22 October 1910, press cutting in Te Aroha Library; *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 October 1910, p. 49.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In a by-election for the town board in 1894, McIndoe came bottom of the poll with only nine votes; the two successful candidates received 56 and 76 and another unsuccessful candidate obtained 43.<sup>122</sup> As the local newspaper for this period is lost, it is not known why he did so poorly, or indeed if he pursued his candidacy with any fervour. In 1899 he was appointed a cemetery trustee.<sup>123</sup> During the early twentieth century, he was a member of the Waihou domain board and a cemetery trustee.<sup>124</sup>

At a public meeting in February 1903, he successfully moved to reduce the number of borough councillors from nine to six, arguing that 'with the smaller number winning a seat would be something of an honour, and a compact, workable, and energetic council would be obtained'.<sup>125</sup> Two months later, he became a member of this council without having to fight an election because there were insufficient candidates to require one.<sup>126</sup> Another three months later, he was re-elected in another election required by the reduction in the number of councillors.<sup>127</sup> His career on the council has not been examined; he was not a member in 1904 or 1905.

In early 1906, he was a member of the newly formed Te Aroha Burgesses' Association.<sup>128</sup> At an April meeting that considered a report on improving the water supply, he 'considered it a matter for regret that the Council had not endeavoured to remedy the defects pointed out in the report, instead of trying to thwart the endeavours of the Burgesses' Association'. He moved, successfully, 'that the Council be asked to obtain independent expert opinion, so as to endorse their own engineer's method of carrying out the work, or to uphold the views expressed' in this report.<sup>129</sup> Also in that month, it was reported that he might stand for the

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<sup>122</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 December 1893, p. 22, 6 January 1894, p. 23.

<sup>123</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 20 July 1899, p. 1330.

<sup>124</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 6 February 1900, p. 2, 10 December 1908, p. 2.

<sup>125</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 12 February 1903, p. 33.

<sup>126</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 23 April 1903, p. 33.

<sup>127</sup> Te Aroha Borough Council, Minutes of Meeting of 29 July 1903, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

<sup>128</sup> *Thames Star*, 16 February 1906, p. 2.

<sup>129</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 12 April 1906, p. 36.



mayoralty.<sup>130</sup> He did not, but, two months later, in a by-election both he and another candidate received 133 votes for the council; McIndoe won on the returning officer's roll of the dice.<sup>131</sup> He was not a member in subsequent years. In March 1909, 'Ratepayer' expressed the view that he, like eight other residents he listed, would make a good mayor.<sup>132</sup> Six months later, after standing for the council in response to requests, because of pressure of work he retired from the contest.<sup>133</sup>

#### A LEADING ANGLICAN

In 1892, McIndoe was noted as a leading Anglican, and for most of that decade was a member of St Mark's vestry.<sup>134</sup> In 1894, at the annual meeting of St Marks he 'was unanimously chosen as parishioners' warden'.<sup>135</sup> In that year he replied to statements in the *Te Aroha News*

which indirectly implied that the Waiorongomai people had already forsaken or were in danger of forsaking God. Now, I have had a good many opportunities of watching the lives of Waiorongomai people, and have no hesitation in saying that they are, generally speaking, as honest, straightforward, truthful, sober, and religious as most people are. I have always thought that Godliness means honesty, kindness, gentleness, goodness, and as most of the Waiorongomai people exercise these virtues, surely it is a mistake to imply that they are forsaking or about to forsake God. If by Godliness is meant the attendance at a place of worship, then in proportion I believe that the Waiorongomai people are far more godly than the Te Aroha people are, because a greater number in proportion attend the services there (when there are any to attend) than at Te Aroha.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> *Thames Star*, 4 April 1906, p. 2.

<sup>131</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 28 June 1906, p. 24.

<sup>132</sup> Letter from 'Ratepayer', *Te Aroha News*, 6 March 1909, p. 3.

<sup>133</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 4 September 1909, p. 2, 18 September 1909, p. 2.

<sup>134</sup> Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 31 December 1892, p. 23; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 8 May 1897, p. 5; *Thames Advertiser*, 24 July 1897, p. 2;

<sup>135</sup> *Church Gazette*, April 1894, p. 71.

<sup>136</sup> Letter from Thomas McIndoe, *Te Aroha News*, n.d., reprinted in *Thames Star*, 7 June 1894, p. 2.

In 1895, the bishop described him as one of the vicar's 'most valued coadjutors'.<sup>137</sup> In January 1898, he resigned as a vestryman, for unrecorded reasons.<sup>138</sup> In 1902, at a church meeting he moved, successfully, that women be permitted to vote at such meetings.<sup>139</sup>

Despite being an Anglican, in 1901 he was stage manager of a concert for the Presbyterian organ fund, and in the following year sang at a concert raising funds for the Presbyterians.<sup>140</sup>

A supporter of the Te Aroha Young Men's Club,<sup>141</sup> in 1894, in the absence of its president he chaired its annual meeting, and was elected one of the two vice-presidents.<sup>142</sup> Subsequently he was appointed to a sub-committee to devise programmes for its monthly meetings.<sup>143</sup> The following year, he was elected to the local committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society.<sup>144</sup>

McIndoe did not approve of drunkenness, and in 1908, perhaps in his capacity as a JP, sought a prohibition order against a drunkard.<sup>145</sup> But three years later he opposed Te Aroha becoming a no-license district, arguing that such a step would affect trade, with the township's business being diverted to Waihou, which had the nearest hotel.<sup>146</sup>

## NATIONAL POLITICS

McIndoe publicly supported the Liberal Party, and attended local branch meetings of the Liberal Federation League.<sup>147</sup> Despite this, in 1899, at an Independent Liberal's election meeting, he moved a vote of thanks, 'explaining that he thought the best place in which to express their

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<sup>137</sup> *Church Gazette*, July 1895, p. 119.

<sup>138</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 13 January 1898, p. 2.

<sup>139</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 15 May 1902, p. 27.

<sup>140</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 12 April 1901, p. 26, 18 December 1902, p. 33.

<sup>141</sup> For instance, *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 August 1892, p. 23.

<sup>142</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 19 May 1894, p. 22.

<sup>143</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 5 July 1894, p. 6.

<sup>144</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 22 June 1895, p. 2.

<sup>145</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1907-1913, 43/1908, BCDG 11220/2a, ANZ-A.

<sup>146</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 17 August 1911, p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> For instance, *Te Aroha News*, 6 February 1895, p. 2, 30 September 1905, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 28 November 1899, p. 4.

confidence was the ballot-box'.<sup>148</sup> A decade later he was mentioned as a possible Independent Liberal candidate for Tauranga.<sup>149</sup> His reasons for not supporting the official candidate were explained when the latter held an election meeting at Te Aroha: McIndoe asked 'if he had been aware that repeated applications had been made to the Minister of Mines for aid towards prospecting, without success', and described the minister as 'the most evasive and unsatisfactory Minister possible to approach. The reason for his turning from a Government Supporter to a rank Oppositionist was that he considered the present Government a one or a two-man show'. Shortly afterwards, he accused the government of deliberately neglecting to spend funds allocated for the Thames low levels.<sup>150</sup>

### CRIMINAL AND HEROIC ACTS

Only two minor offences were recorded. In 1896, after admitting using 'provoking language' against a Te Aroha merchant, he was ordered to keep the peace for three months;<sup>151</sup> the cause of this squabble is unknown. In 1911, he was fined 5s for breaking the speed limit when driving in Hamilton East.<sup>152</sup>

On two occasions, he was praised for helping others. In 1896 he was prominent in saving property during a large fire.<sup>153</sup> In January 1905, he was a hero in a 'Sensational Incident at Te Aroha' when children playing on the riverbank got into danger:<sup>154</sup>

One of them, a little girl aged nine, fell in. Her brother, aged 11, got in and tried to pull her out, but the water was too deep and the current strong. Several people arrived, but were unable to render assistance. Mr Thos. McIndoe, who was at the end of the street, heard the screams and ran, throwing off his coat and vest as he went, and plunged in. The children were sinking, the boy keeping hold of the girl. Mr McIndoe grasped the boy as he dived

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<sup>148</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 17 November 1899, p. 11.

<sup>149</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 8 October 1908, p. 2.

<sup>150</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 24 October 1908, p. 3.

<sup>151</sup> Te Aroha Magistrate's Court, Criminal Record Book 1881-1896, 11/1896, BCDG 11220/1a, ANZ-A.

<sup>152</sup> Magistrate's Court, *Waikato Argus*, 9 May 1911, p. 2.

<sup>153</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 1 February 1896, p. 15.

<sup>154</sup> For a photo of the two children, see *Auckland Weekly News*, Supplement, p. 4.

in, and brought him up to the surface, still holding to the girl. Willing hands rendered help, and all were safely landed on the beach. The place where they fell in was deep water, and the current was taking them away, and but for Mr McIndoe's plucky rescue they would both have been drowned.<sup>155</sup>

He was subsequently presented with the Humane Society's medal.<sup>156</sup>

## FAMILY

Their son Ronald recounted a story of his mother visiting Kawau Island when her father, George Crouch, reported on the copper mine there.

Mother was a girl of about 16 with a long pigtail down her back and was most attractive looking. Granddad asked her if she would like to go and see Sir George's home there with exotic plants and birds and animals. Granddad warned her about Sir G who was a bit of a lad but she said she could take care of herself, which she did, and had a most enjoyable day.<sup>157</sup>

Crouch had fought in the Crimean War and against Maori in the 1860s before becoming a brickworker and, later, a farmer.<sup>158</sup> In January 1890, when aged 24, McIndoe married Jessie Crouch, aged 23, in Auckland.<sup>159</sup>

Their first child, Ronald, was born at the end of that year, and subsequently they moved to Te Aroha,<sup>160</sup> where all their subsequent children were born. Norman was born in October 1892,<sup>161</sup> and twins Lionel and Reginald, prematurely, in August 1893;<sup>162</sup> Lionel lived for seven hours and his brother for 41, both dying of 'Debility from Birth; Premature'.<sup>163</sup> Grace Dorothy was born in October 1894, Ivan in July 1896, Lorna Doreen

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<sup>155</sup> *Auckland Weekly News*, 19 January 1905, p. 21.

<sup>156</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 11 July 1905, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 18 January 1906, p. 26.

<sup>157</sup> McIndoe, p. 2.

<sup>158</sup> *Auckland Star*, 14 September 1922, p. 9; *Observer*, 23 September 1922, p. 6.

<sup>159</sup> Marriage Certificate of Thomas McIndoe, 27 January 1890, 1890/271, BDM.

<sup>160</sup> Birth Certificate of Ronald McIndoe, 1891/3768, BDM; McIndoe, p. 1.

<sup>161</sup> Birth Certificate of Norman McIndoe, 26 October 1892, 1892/11964, BDM.

<sup>162</sup> Birth Certificates of Lionel McIndoe, 27 August 1893, 1893/10151; Reginald McIndoe, 27 August 1893, 1893/10152, BDM.

<sup>163</sup> Death Certificates of Lionel McIndoe, 27 August 1893, 1893/3501; Reginald McIndoe, 29 August 1893, 1893/3508, BDM.

in November 1902, Maida Adrienne in April 1905, Jason in July 1907, and Wavency Joan in 1909.<sup>164</sup>

Their eldest son Ronald recalled being ‘a good pupil, always head of the class’ at Te Aroha. ‘Not much competition. Dad decided to send my brother and self to Auckland Grammar School’.<sup>165</sup> Ronald’s recollections record other examples of his father’s assistance in setting him up for life. When a teenager, after working for a time in Auckland he was brought back to Te Aroha; ‘Dad said he could do with me at home, so went into his office which was a “flop.” Then he got me to go into Law’, working for the local solicitor, Peter Gilchrist.<sup>166</sup> After 1909, ‘Dad wanted me home in Auckland to which the family had moved and he got me a position with Russell and Campbell’, solicitors.<sup>167</sup> Before 1916, Ronald took up a sheep farm of 250 acres at Rewiti, near Helensville.<sup>168</sup>

I heard that the next door neighbour wanted to sell and suggested that Dad buy the 250 acres and it would fit in well with the Wool Shed and conveniences. On Sunday I discovered a huge kauri log at the head of a gully having got away from the bullocks. They couldn’t shift it and no bulldozers then. It was about 30 feet long and 8 feet through ... so it had to stay. Water was short so we arranged for drillers to drill at house section. They had hand gear, no engine, and at about 40 feet struck solid rock. They turned the job in, but Dad agreed to pay extra for rock work and after about 3 days hard work broke through and struck the best water was ever had on a farm.<sup>169</sup>

When he died, McIndoe left a widow, three sons, three daughters, eight grandchildren and one great grandchild.<sup>170</sup> His youngest daughter, Wavency Joan, never married.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Birth Certificates of Grace Dorothy McIndoe, 4 October 1894, 1894/12506; Ivan McIndoe, 1896/11246; Lorna Doreen McIndoe, 12 November 1902, 1902/13249; Maida Adrienne McIndoe, 24 April 1905, 1905/15964; Jason McIndoe, 29 July 1907, 1907/15138; Wavency Joan McIndoe, 1909/10256, BDM.

<sup>165</sup> McIndoe, p. 5.

<sup>166</sup> See *Observer*, 21 April 1894, p. 3; *Thames star*, 23 July 1898, p. 2; *Auckland Star*, 27 April 1917, p. 6.

<sup>167</sup> McIndoe, pp. 5-6.

<sup>168</sup> Marriage Certificate of Ronald McIndoe, 1 March 1916, 1916/3267, BDM; McIndoe, p. 6.

<sup>169</sup> McIndoe, p. 7.

<sup>170</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 12 October 1942, p. 2.

## HIS PERSONALITY

Despite favourable mentions in the press, McIndoe had a prickly side to his personality, as revealed at a meeting of Waitoa ratepayers in 1909, called to consider a controversial proposal to approve a £6,000 loan needed, the chairman of the drainage board explained, ‘to cleanse, widen, and deepen existing watercourses and outfalls for water, and to make and construct new water-courses, outfalls and drains’. At the end of his speech, the chairman ‘invited expressions of opinion’.

For some minutes not a sound was heard, no remarks were passed, and those present appeared perfectly satisfied.

Mr T. McIndoe broke the silence by moving a motion to the effect that the meeting gives its hearty support to the loan, and pledges to do all in its power to carry the scheme through to a successful issue.

Mr Donald McDonald seconded. He thought the less said the better. The time had arrived for action. Let them get to work and do something to push the district along.

The Chairman declined to accept the motion. The meeting was purely a formal one, and no resolution could be passed.

Mr McIndoe said that the people were mostly of the opinion that work had been delayed quite long enough, and that money should have been borrowed from the Government, an Engineer employed, and systematic work carried out. A certain amount of ill-feeling existed, feelings of disappointment on the part of those ousted from power by the vote of the ratepayers. He referred to the Chairman and certain members of the previous Board, who had done absolutely nothing during their term of office, with the exception of “getting the back up” of the Piako Council, and causing that body to cease all work on the road, which the Board appeared eager to take control of, and to which the County objected. It was quite right that the County should retain the roads. In some places Councils and Drainage Boards had worked jointly in the question of road drainage – using the road drains as outlets. Drains were at times used with the sanction of the Council, but not in opposition. The Board had worked in opposition to the Council, and as long as such a state of affairs existed no good could result. He had been spoken of as a speculator, and an absentee. They were all speculators in a sense, the man who bought for, say, £3, looking to sell for £6 per acre, and so on. He had big interests in Waitoa, and he worked for its

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<sup>171</sup> Probate of Jessie McIndoe, Probates, BBAE 1570, 39/47, ANZ-A.

advancement. He was not likely to cut off his nose to spite his face. He was not an arrant idiot. He saw people in the room who had made all sorts of misstatements against him, and he would like them to say what they had to against him now and he would reply to them. He liked fair play. He was present at the meeting at great inconvenience to himself, and as he had to leave by the "wild cat" [a train] that evening for Auckland he would like the parties to speak out. He strongly objected to canting and underhandedness; private meetings and such-like: let those who had any accusations to make be straight about it. There were people in the Waitoa who preferred to sink and drag others with them, rather than indulge in a little self-sacrifice. Such men were a curse to the district and a bar to progress. The so-called speculators had plenty of go in them, were prepared to spend money to make it, and objected to remain in a hole and not endeavour to help themselves out of it. They believed in making roads and drains and generally improving their farms; the other sort were dreamers and no good to the country. Mr McIndoe, who warmed up to his subject, spoke of the discord bred by certain people who considered themselves (spiritually) wonderfully good, but who were nothing but mischief makers, smarting under the fact that they were ousted from power. The present Board had acted fair and square, and were not guilty of any "monkey tricks." Should the Board neglect its duty he would be one of the first to turn against it and see that justice and right was meted out to the ratepayers. An engineer should be employed and the work properly done.

The Chairman reminded Mr McIndoe that Government would not allow any loan money to be expended only under the supervision of an engineer. The Government must be fully satisfied before it will advance money at all.

Mr McIndoe said that no doubt everything would be looked into before action was taken, and everything done to prevent money being wasted. He objected to the cruel imputation hurled by Matthew Henry<sup>172</sup> and his several satellites. All the drains in the late Board's scheme were round Matthew Henry's block; he could prove it; while those living west of No. 7 and along the Eastport Road were not considered at all. He (the speaker) knew every inch of the Waitoa, and had been over it time after time during the past eleven years. He felt sure the loan would be carried. The non-progressive party would be once again defeated. If they defeat the loan they defeat themselves. Should the loan be defeated, property would decrease in value £1 per acre; if successful an advance of £2 per acre would result. Mr McIndoe, in the course of his remarks, directed very forceful language towards Mr Henry, and called upon him to defend himself.

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<sup>172</sup> See *Thames Star*, 18 February 1908, p. 1.

Silence reigned supreme, and Mr McIndoe remarked “See there is not a kick in him. If it was in Matheson’s house he would have plenty to say, but not here before the public.”

Shortly after this the meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.<sup>173</sup>

His outburst prompted a response from ‘Central Waitoa’:

Those present at the recent statutory meeting, held in the Waitoa Schoolhouse, were amazed at the fiery eloquence of Mr Thos. McIndoe. The gentleman (?) in question attacked every professing Christian present. He alone was the perfect man, all others were hypocrites, backbiters, discord-breeders, and any other pet name he could lay his tongue on. Mr McIndoe and his paper [*Te Aroha Mail*] appear to scoff at anything and everything for the upholding of humanity. Mac’s speech was like a lot of the articles in the paper which he runs – or at least has a big hold on. The slanderer’s remarks were borne with Christian fortitude by those they were hurled at, and the muck thrown did not stick. By Mr McIndoe’s attitude he did not help his side one bit, on the contrary he did harm. He said he was born a Christian, and had been one all his life and was proud of it. I was pleased to hear this testimony, and I hope and trust his future actions will be a credit to him.<sup>174</sup>

## DEATHS

McIndoe died in Auckland in September 1942, aged 77, after suffering for two years from a gastric ulcer.<sup>175</sup> He left a widow, three sons and three daughters, eight grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.<sup>176</sup> His widow died four years later, aged 80, of heart disease.<sup>177</sup>

## CONCLUSION

McIndoe would have been hard put to find another Te Aroha organization or committee to belong to, for during his two decades there he was very actively involved in both formal and informal ways with the

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<sup>173</sup> *Te Aroha News*, 25 June 1910, p. 3.

<sup>174</sup> Letter from ‘Central Waitoa’, *Te Aroha News*, 30 June 1910, p. 2.

<sup>175</sup> Death Certificate of Thomas McIndoe, 28 September 1942, 1942/28095, BDM.

<sup>176</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 3 October 1942, p. 9.

<sup>177</sup> Death Certificate of Jessie McIndoe, 28 December 1946, 1946/34933, BDM.



community at large and tried to assist local progress. His mining investments were unprofitable, as with almost so everyone else, but his business interests flourished there, and he went on to be moderately successful as an Auckland businessman.

*Appendix*

*Figure 1:* 'Blo' [William Blomfield], sketches of 'Tommy McIndoe, Real Estate', and 'Donald McDonald, Financier', *Observer*, 12 September 1928, p. 4.

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Tom McIndoe, that chippy, cheery little land and estate agent, whose spectacles beam out good prospects to clients and Auckland generally, and is a necessary want of Donald McDonald. They hunt in company



**TOMMY McINDOE, Real Estate.**

and joy ride, too. Tom smells out all the good speculations and Donald bails and gobbles them up. Also Tommy Mac puts the other Mc to when and where to distribute his brass when a benevolent boom is busy in the brain box.

\* \* \* \* \*

Donald McDonald has come into prominence in financial circles in Auckland City just recently. Donald is reputed to be a mass of wealth, he certainly has health, and wealth of front and assurance with a golden trophy trinket to set off his badge of J.P.-ship.

A speculator whose name adorns most share lists of big financial institutions, D. McD. has no fear whatever of darkening the doors of unemployed to get the smell of a soup kitchen other than to swell its funds.

An ardent R.C. and a big supporter of his church, Donald Mc-



**DONALD McDONALD, Financier.**

Donald is whispered to be advisor on the advisory board of Bishop Cleary. Perhaps so, ask Tom McIndoe.

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