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Wainuiomata Historical Society

C/- 16 Enfield Road
WAINUI-O-MATA

Monday 3 October 1983

Mrs C Tunnington
53 Winara Avenue
WAIKANAE

Dear Chris

Your letter of 29 September is to hand and I must thank you for your generous donation of \$20.00. However, apart from time and travelling costs (cheap through my husband's Rail pass) my research costs my nothing, and think of the valuable data I got from you at no cost!

Hence your donation goes towards the bronze (or similar) plaque to be installed on the Sinclair Family Cemetery Cairn. We haven't decided upon the exact format yet, but all descendants, as many as we know of (can you give us any names to whom it would be worth my writing?) were to be approached for a small donation. Yours is more than generous, and a receipt will be forthcoming after our next Committee Meeting. Thanks for the thought - it was nice of you.

Some years ago a local vicar (after Rev de Candole) was asked to do a "cleaning of the house" in the vicinity of the original Sinclair home, "Moness" (or where Mrs Lovegrove thought the home was). The occupants of the modern home on the site were "concerned about peculiar happenings which involved their dog becoming very upset. If I remember rightly the apparition of two small children was involved also. On checking events with Mrs Lovegrove, we found that the house was on the site of the old homestead. The two children I think died from scarlet fever, as did the nurse. I performed a cleansing of the house and also with Mrs Lovegrove, found the gravesite in the Sinclair cemetery. We had a brief service and laid flowers on the grave site.

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Chris Tunnington
3 October 1983

As far as I know the manifestation ceased from that time onward. For further information I suggest you check with the occupants. The woman's christian name was Vivienne and she was at that time a teacher at Woodhatton School, her husband being county engineer. For your further interest, I was involved in a similar situation in the street opposite Mrs Lovegroves home. That seemed to be associated with a maori massacre in the 1800's. ... end quote:

Now, before you get excited about the above, 2 or 3 things trouble me.

- a) I interviewed Mrs Lovegrove in August 1981, when she told me of the above, and I quote
"...Hugh's sister Isabel an adult spinster, came to stay at "Moness" where she developed diptheria. 4 children of Hugh's died along with Mr McIlvrde's daughter and infant Prouse. The 6 graves, unmarked, are in a hedged plot at the junction of Hine Road and Sunny Grove although sadly overgrown. Robertsons have since built exactly on the Moness site and apparently Isabel Sinclair's presence was felt quite strongly by both Mr and Mrs Robertson, their children and their dog and cat (the latter of whom decamped). Mrs Lovegrove, Mrs Robertson and the Vicar of the time took flowers to the supposed gravesite vicinity and the Vicar said some prayers here. The presence did not reappear..."
- b) Vicar Kearse was under the impression that the children had died of scarlet fever. His 'cleaning of the house' took place some years before my interview.
- c) We know the Prouse infant didn't die of scarlet fever. I am going to Births & Deaths to check what John Hugh Sinclair died of at 19 months in 1881. While I'm there I'll check on John Sinclair's first wife, Isabel, just out of curiosity. Should young John Hugh have died of either scarlet fever or diptheria, then I'll have a stab at the same date for a McIlvrde - its only \$2.00 but certainly a very unlikely stab in the dark.
- d) note - Isabel Sinclair (the spinster sister of Hugh and your Great Great Aunt) came to NZ about 1859 & died 1882 neither of scarlet fever nor diptheria - a full year after young John Hugh, and two years after Richard Prouse IV. Nevertheless, I mustn't scoff until I determine the dates and causes of death of John Hugh Sinclair and the young McIlvrde infant.
- e) I can't account for a nurse who died of any contagious disease. Unless buried in the public cemetery - but why there?

What I am trying to say is, Mrs Lovegrove is not a family descendant, and has been here a mere 40 years (says me, of 22 years) and is only working on word of mouth. Don't things get distorted - and accepted as fact?

Enough for now - I'll be in touch - lets hope that Dick McIlvrde is a genuine person interested in the cause enough to help us out as far as possible. Good luck with the gardener/ing - hope you aren't paying the weeder for the work you are doing!!!

Vicky