

Hause's Mill

On March 20th 1889 a Ballot was held in a Temporary Land Office in Customhouse Quay in Wellington. It was for the sale of 3000 Acres of land in the Horowhenua Block which had been bought from Major Kemp for 30/- per acre. Leun was the center of the block. Attending the Ballot was Richard Hause Sen & his three sons James Richard & John. The two sons secured 600 acres of standing matai bush, the northern boundary being a survey line, where Queen Street now runs from the Railway crossing to approx Gladstone Rd. The Southern end was a line running from Beach Rd to Gladstone Rd.

From the coming to town James & Richard Hause first started ^{saw} milling in the Wainuiomata area about 3 miles ^{south} from the present center of the town down the coast road. [In fact it was only on May 12th 1963 that Jiri company with three generations of the Hause family attended a centenary of a Methodist Church built by Richard Hause Sen & his three sons, & some of the timber was pit sawn, as well as circular sawn. It was built of heart of totara & stamels.

2
there in its original sight today.]
I am not quite sure when they shifted from
Wainuomata to Whitemans Valley but
my father, Richard was married on the 22nd May
1849 & went to Whitemans Valley where the
brothers had been sawmilling for some time.
& the end was in sight. Apparently it took
about three years after they finished in Whitemans
Valley to get started in Leoni.

The mill had to be shifted & quite a few mill
houses to be built as well a two big houses
for James & Richard & a lot of timber had to
be cut. as near as I can remember most
of the men & the Bosses were living in tents
for a while. When the two houses were
built for James & Richard both the families
shifted up to Leoni in ^{August} ~~June~~ 1891.

The mill was on a sight at present
occupied by the Haro Elec. Power Board and
ran till approx 1907. It was again dismantled
& John Kauak took it up the King Country.

The shifting of his mill was no small task
in those days & everything from Whitemans
Valley had to be let down a steep hill
with a big drum & wire rope

The Railway station was shifted from Roslyn Rd to Leveaon in 1894

3

When it was loaded on to railway wagons
& brought up to Leveaon siding. I might
state here that the Leveaon Railway Station
^{in those days} was situated just a few chains north of
the present Roslyn Crossing where
Mr Peter Bartholomew had his mill, some where
about 2 years before the houses arrived
in Leveaon. I was in that area some months ago
& came across some of the old concrete foundation
still there. That mill was shifted to a slight coproy
on the corner of Oxford Street South & Beach Rd.
very soon after we started milling in this area.
The Railway had difficulties in stopping
their trains at Roslyn Rd (Leveaon station in those
days) as it was half way up the Kepotea
hill ^{ran up those days} so decided to shift down to Leveaon.
& the station was built where the water tank
now stands 1894. This Railway was owned & operated
by a private company, The Wellington Manawatu
Railway Coy. and all the people & firms who
could spare a few £ had shares in it &
believe it or not it paid a $\frac{1}{2}\%$ dividend to
its shareholders. Both the House Bros &
Mr Bartholomew had shares in the Coy.

and when they applied for a railway siding into their mills, it was promptly put in & free of charge. Amasing but true, like most good things it came to an end in ^{Dec 4} 1908 when it was taken over by the Government of that time, & all the shareholder paid out ^{the price was} £933000

The standing bush in this area was really marvelous Matai & Totara were predominant with a few Pume White Pine Matai & an occasional Miro & Puketoa.

The Matai was so dense that I have seen 3 trees growing together, all of good milling size 2'6" to 3'6" in diam. These trees had reached their age of maturity & the sap was only an inch thick in nearly all the trees. When heart timber was sold (in those days) it was heart, and clean at 8/- per hundred feet. I have seen timber fed into the steam boiler which was the power that ran the mill, because of a small piece of sap, a knot or a shake. The old fences around the old home, the sheds even the floor of the old cow shed were cast out timber & still solid after 40 years & it never saw paint.

I have never seen a bit of heart matai with grub in
 in but the sap was eaten to dust. Perhaps I
 should explain something that my father used to
 be very particular over & that was heart timber
 cut out of dead trees ^{as he said} would always take
 borer because the resistance of the timber died
 with the tree. I could relate a few home truths
 here but it may have repercussions.

At the corner of Pachelmew Road & Liverpool Street
 out in the paddocks there grew a giant Kumu tree
 on a clay bank which runs through that area.
 In the 1920's I was plowing ^{there} & dragged away some
 very large roots of a tree, working with a
 Mr James Dawson I asked why they were so large
 & he told me that he had felled that tree which
 was ^{the King of the forest} 105 feet without a limb & over 5 feet in diam
 & said what it was used for. Sometime in
 1935 the Bank of New Zealand were renewing
 the inside of the big Wellington Bank &
 when the counters were taken out no one
 could find a join in 12 feet long 3" thick &
 four feet wide & fortunately I was able
 to tell them where the log grew & all its
 measurements in timber terms the tree was
 unblemished & cut 8-125 & 1-10

and (if you are interested) you can see them there
to this day. I suppose millions of £¹⁰ cash have passed
over them since 1900.

[In 1895 the Hauser Bros ^{owned} operated a mill up the south
branch of the Hautere Road between Otaki & Te Horo
over those stoney flats on both sides of the Railway
line. There was a small railway siding there
called 'Hautere' but was taken ^{dismantled in 1900} down when
the mill put out. It was a fairly large area
of solid Totara & even today a large portion
of the same area is growing ^{second growth} Totara. As near
as I can remember the output of that mill was
80,000 board feet a month and employed about
20 men. Apparently the bush had been bought
on a time limit of 5 years and at the end of 9 years
the Bros could see they would have to leave a
lot of beautiful trees still standing if they didn't
change their milling operations so they ~~closed~~ ^{put}
the mill at Leorn & Kereru on part time & took
all the men who could be spared & fell as
many trees as could be, felled & dragged on
to the road & railway off the property & it took
two more years to clean up what they had felled.
These logs were piled up at Leorn & Chau &
cut up when orders for Totara ~~was~~ ^{were} needed
_{were}

4

I mention Kereru which is Kopoterua The name was changed when the Government took over the railway, I have been told that there was another Kereru somewhere else]

Frause Bros had another mill at Kereru just at the back of the Railway station & a lot of white pine timber was cut there & sent to Australia I can clearly remember seeing big U.B railway wagons loaded & being loaded with white pine in pieces 10x10 or 12x12 fourty to fifty feet long [the full length of those big trucks] The manager was a tall thin man ~~by the name~~ & his name was Bill Rogers

That mill when it cut out of timber was shifted to the Horse Shoe lake on the Manatawan River The road was at the southern end of the Shannon Railway station running in a westerly direction to a point which crossed the Manatawan River by the Saunders old homestead & Rata & white pine was cut there for about 3 years I remember seeing some big dead trout in a back wash of the river where the sawdust was dumped & afterwards learned it was the acid which came from the rata sawdust which killed the fish

8
that practice of dumping the sawdust was discontinued when it was discovered what was killing the fish.

At Chaw James & Andrew Gorie had a saw mill just at the back of the railway station on the east side of the line & some of the old mill houses were still standing & used by the mearies up until a very recent date. The Gories were relations of the houses ~~but~~ and used to work together in some ways but I never heard of any financial tieup between the 2 parties.

To keep the mill going it had to be fed with logs, & to do this there were miles of tramways carrying logs into the mill, from different stands of bush. In most, or nearly all cases the trees were picked out for length, size, & kind according to orders received & the bush men would get their advice from the mill foreman as to what was required. The logs were felled & dragged up to a set of skids either by bullock team or a steam winch ~~& rolled up onto a set of skids~~ ready for the tramway man to load onto the trucks & taken to the mill or some other set of skids where logs were stored.

9
handy to the mill in all cases & most
all mills these tramways were hauled by
horse teams. I can remember one big set
of skids where the Veteran Soldiers Home stands
today & the tramway branched at that point
one line going east & end the other going
south. The latter went down to McLeary Rd
& the former to Gladstone road via Queen St.
but as all the milling logs we cut out of the
bush the tram was shifted on to make short
haulage to the tram head. There was no
rivalry or animosity between the Bartholomews
& the House's if one wanted to go across the
others property or tramway they just went
if one couldn't supply a certain grade or
kind of timber it was passed over to the other
& vice versa. The employees worked & played
together, 44 hrs a week from 4-30 AM to 4-30 PM
even daylight ^{sawing} was in practice in the mills
in 1890. The wages were 8/- a day or 1/- an hour
the foreman got 8/- a day. All these men had
families & the prices of clothing & groceries,
boots ^{ect} was in keeping with the wages. Rent
of houses was a days wages 8/-

+ I can remember a big joke which went through the mill for a long time before the boss could find out what it was all about. One of the employees ~~wanted~~ to steller a little & he had asked his workmate to come for a ride with him on Saturday afternoon & bring a good & half sack. Agreed, & they both rode out to Stokio & down the coast. The horses were tied up & the two proceeded well into the sand hills & found quite a large flock of Turkeys going to roost in a fence. The man that stammered a bit explained how to fit the turkeys & said, 1 2 3 4 that's a good young gobbler 5 6 7 & that's another & so on when it became dark they just grabbed the ones they had picked out & put in their sacks. This disturbed the turkeys & they all started a cry that sounded like, which-which which & old Geoq. said It d-d-doesnt -m -m matter which youse hall q-q-got to come.

Another rather humorous episode of the same gentleman was when the Army lass put the collection plate out for Geo to contribute a small sum for the cause, & he shook his head. The Army lass said "dont you fear your God old man. Geos replied N.No. Its the other bloke I'm frightened about

Saturday afternoon & Sunday in a lot of homes
 was spent felling the larder for the few extras, X
 There were wild pigs & ~~deer~~ ^{most of the game}
 birds, Pigeons, fish rabbits & hares ^{Yes - I have}
 eaten pigeon stew, & when you are so full that
 you can't get up from the table you can still
 suck the bones,

In both Bartholomews & Pausis mill there was
 a night watch man employed & if a fire broke
 out anywhere within sight, the mill whistle
 was sounded and as a child I was more
 frightened of the sound of those whistles
 than thunderstorms or earthquakes.

Every available man of both mills would
 turn out at any hour of the night to fight
 a fire, and in those days it was no easy
~~task~~ task. The only water that was available
 was out of wells 50 to 80 feet deep, hand
 pumped which was slow. Bucket & windless
 or bucket & rope.

There is a picture in Mr Park's office of the old mill
 hands that worked in the mill at Ueraroa
 & their names & on the back In Selwyn
 Simcox's book of "Etaki" there is a picture
 of the mill & it workers in Prouse's mill at "Hautere"
~~cases~~

11

I think at this stage it would be unfair if I didn't mention the part my mother played in the wellbeing of the mill in general.

She used to travel to Welling once a fortnight & cash a reasonably big cheque for the men's wages. No bank in Keon in those days.

The train was the only means of transport, I can't give you the time of departure or arrival on return but I have heard her say that she only had 21 minutes to get to the Bank of NZ & back to Thorndon Railway station to catch the train back to Keon.

She had a standing order with a cabbie.

I think it was about 1895 when Palmerston North opened a branch bank at Manakau & this was used to ride down there for the men's wages, & it wasn't till before the Bank of NZ started in Keon.

The nearest doctor was in Foxton, no telephones, if you required the services of a Dr. well you had to ride over to Foxton & get him & both ride back again. No bridge over the Manatawau River till you & your horse had to swim it & it was quite a few years before a Dr. came to Otaki.

The broken legs, arms bad all cuts were all taken over to the "bosses misses + she fixed them up + made ^{them} comfortable until they could be put in a stretcher + ~~slung~~ ^{slung} up in the guards van of the tram + sent to the nearest hospital, Wellington. I can remember my mother relating a little episode of a man that had accidently chopped his toe off. After she had attended to it he unwrapped a dully piece of rag with his toe and asked if she could stick it on again.

Another old chap was brought into the old home with the D, Ys. + she took his pants + put him to bed + gave him a pair of a small girls boots + told him when he'd got the boots on she would give him his pants back + he could go home. He was better in 36 hrs, I believe he spent hrs trying to get those boots in.

A man got into the tram at Chau one ^{then went to Slack} morning + he had gone totally blind fighting bush fires. His mates had put him in the carriage + he was heading for Wellington Hospital. My mother inquired what was his trouble + she put his head on the window sill + licked his eyes.

The roughness of the tongue removed the
smoke screen & he regained his sight
immediately. He got off the tram at
Manakau & walked back to Chau,
many & many a time I have seen her removing
steel filings from the men's eyes with a sharp
magnitised pocket knife.

Then there were all the babies she helped into
the world, the sick children, she saved
their lives & they lived a full life. There
still stands an old house in Welton St where
three children had been eating ^{fruit} buries
~~which are very poisonous~~ ^{fruit} down the pit
on their way home from school. They started
with convulsions, & by the time my mother arrived
they were very sick children. She started with an
emetic & made them sick to find out what they
had been eating. Then she tied their hands
& feet & put corks in their mouths to stop them
biting their tongues off, & rolled them in hot
soppy blankets & sweat all the poison
out of their systems. They was sent to Yator
for the Dr & he arrived at 7-30 AM Had
a look at the children & said she had
saved their lives which I don't think I could

have done myself. Those were the mill
formans children & they all grew up &
married & had families of their own

In conclusion I would like to say that
both my father & mother were good Godfearing
people that set an example to others & I
hope I have inherited some of their teaching

Richard Allan Prouse