

Reference Number: 2022/903

7 November 2022

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Response - Official Information Request

I refer to your request for information received on 19 October 2022. Your request has been considered under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) and I provide the following information.

Information Council holds on Miranui Flaxmill Remains

Please find attached information regarding the Miranui Flaxmill remains. This represents all the information held on file. The site was protected as a heritage site in the 1999 Horowhenua District Plan (being the Council's first operative District Plan).

I have also been advised that the Miranui Flaxmill remains have since been destroyed, potentially by adverse weather, although this is unconfirmed.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or free phone 0800 802 602.

Horowhenua District Council publishes responses to Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) requests that we consider to be of wider public interest, or which relate to a subject that has been widely requested. To protect your privacy, we will not generally publish personal information about you, or information that identifies you. We will publish the LGOIMA response along with a summary of the request on our website. Requests and responses may be paraphrased.

If you have any queries regarding this information, please contact the LGOIMA Officer on 063660999 or email LGOIMAOfficer@horowhenua.govt.nz

Yours sincerely



Steve McTaylor-Biggs
Executive Sponsor

construction built by the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company. The station was closed in 1980, however, daily commuter trains still stop there when required. A full conservation plan has been done on this building for NZ Rail Heritage Trust.

- 7.9 a) 4048/500018 b) Former BANK OF NEW ZEALAND
 c) 76 Plimmer Tce, Shannon d) 14990/42000
 e) Pt Sec 194 DP 368
 f) II g) C

H46

h) A BNZ was opened in Shannon in 1893-5, reopening as an agency in 1912 with full branch services beginning in 1913. This site was purchased early in 1914. The two-storied brick building was planned to have a frontage of stucco or white stone, the former eventuating, and while the ground floor was to be devoted to the banking business, the upper floor was to be used as offices for the Tenuikanui and Whitanui Flaxmilling Companies and also to provide accommodation for bank officials. By June 1914 the foundations had been laid. By late October, when it was almost complete, the 'Evening Standard' of 28/10/1914 remarked that "it will be many years before the remainder of Shannon comes up to the high standard set by the directors of the Bank, but still it is a start." The bank closed as a branch on 15/11/1977, and operated as a receiving agency of the Levin branch until 26/5/1988. It was purchased by Shannon Buildings Ltd., a community group who hoped to retain banking facilities in the town, and on 27/10/1992, a few days after the Post Office closed, the old BNZ opened as an ANZ-Postbank. This bank closed 16/6/1995. The upstairs flat is used as rental accommodation. This accommodation was never intended for the bank manager as in early 1914 a house was built for the manager in Grey St. This burnt down on 14/1/1926 and then 56 Stout St. (HPT No. 4061) was purchased.

- 7.10 a) /500010 b) MIRANUI FLAXMILL REMAINS
 c) State Highway 57, Shannon d) (see below)
 e) (see below)
 f) g)

H47

h) Miranui Flaxmill was New Zealand's largest flaxmill, (being a seven-stripper mill at its peak) and effectively ran between 1907 and 1936. Construction began in January 1907, and it officially opened on 16/11/1907. Miranui, known as "the big mill", was operated as A. & L. Seifert's Flaxmilling Co. Ltd. between 1907 and 1927, the property being subdivided between 1927 and 1929. Miranui Ltd. operated between 1927 and 1931 when it went into liquidation. The Gibbons family then operated it between 1931 and 1936, with only one or two strippers operating with a government subsidy between 1935 and 1936. The brick fence at the entrance to the former mill site bears the name "MIRANUI". Remnants of the mill are spread now over several properties. These include:

(1) Located on [REDACTED] being Lot 1 DP 13248 Blk XII Mt Robinson SD]. - Part of the former scutching shed, built 1907, being a large red CORRIGATED IRON SHED. Now used as a

farm implement shed, this building has recently had a new roof. Concrete foundations for another large shed are behind this one. Septic tanks from the workers' accommodation also remain underground on this property.

(2) Located on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] being [REDACTED] - Part of the old (two-stripper) Weka Mill, which was also owned by the company, which ran between 1911 and 1921, being a large white CORRIGATED IRON SHED behind the yellow sharemilker's house. Now used as a hayshed. Concrete foundations for another shed are behind this one.

(3) The majority of remains, however, are located on the property of [REDACTED]

Subj to Tram Line and Vegetation Drain Easement on [REDACTED] These include:

(3.i) The former WATER RESERVOIR, a miniature lake now used as a swimming pool. The water, which can be released, is held in place by a dam and the State Hwy 57 end. The reservoir has an upper and lower end separated by a deteriorating weir. The upper end is now overgrown with swamp growth. This reservoir is directly behind [REDACTED] [VNZ 14760/37601, Lot 1 DP 40776 Blk XII Mt Robinson SD].

(3.ii) SUBWAY [Culvert No. 21/3.99] under State Highway 57 and the Main Trunk Railway, now used as a farm stock track but formerly used by the flaxmills to get their tramline under the above road/railway and into the Makerua flax swamps beyond. The RAILWAY SUBWAY is original but the road subway was altered in the 1940s. The present stock track will almost certainly be following the old tram bed across the paddocks on either side. Other former tramway beds are evident all around the property by the poor grass growing ability of the soil there.

(3.iii) The former MIRANUI MANAGER'S HOUSE, now the sharemilker's house, which dates at least to 1906-7, but may have already been on the property when purchased for the mill. Later it was the WEKA MANAGER'S HOUSE.

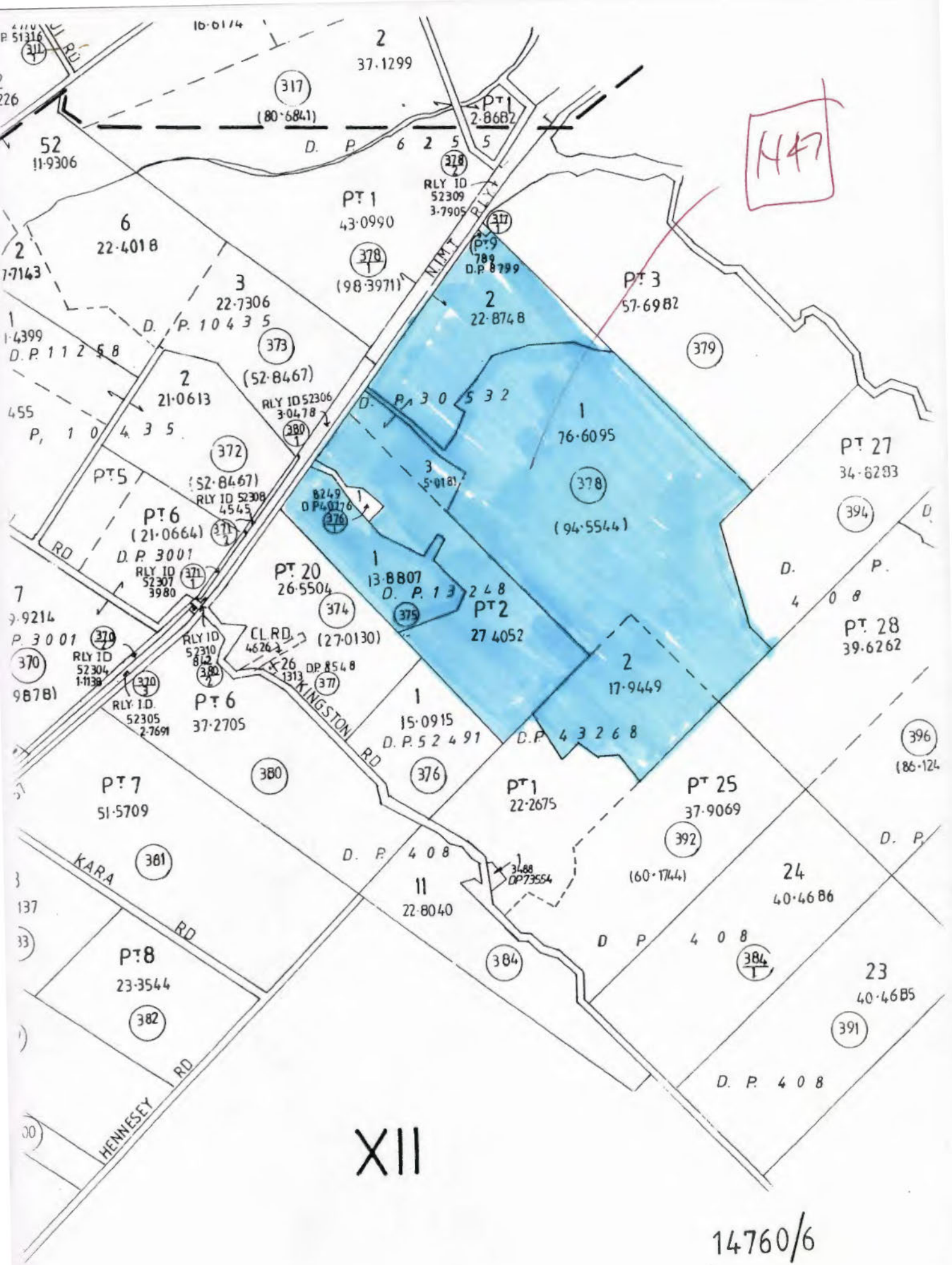
(3.iv) POTASH INCINERATOR which is a square concrete 'building', open on one side, and with a brick chimney above. Overgrown by a tree in a paddock about half way between the two main driveways. This was built c1919 at the suggestion of Prof. Easterfield, scientist at Victoria University, to experiment with producing potash from dead leaves etc.

(3.v) STRIPPING SHED REMAINS - Assorted concrete foundations from this large shed (close to the reservoir) including the engine bed which has a groove for the fly-wheel.

(3.vi) A small BRICK BUILDING with dirt floor, between the former stripping shed and the scutching shed, which may have been the blacksmith's shop (ie. blacksmith = engineer, not farrier). Appears to have had a chimney at one end, since bricked up roughly. A corrugated iron shed with floor attached.

(3.vii) Tiny WOODEN SHED with door but no windows, between brick building and former stripping shed.

(3.viii) CONCRETE WATERFALL - A weir in a creek at the back of the property causing a ten foot waterfall.



147

XII

14760/6

11

4.0 MAKERUA AREA

- 4.1 a) /500010 b) MIRANUI FLAXMILL REMAINS
 b) State Highway 57, Shannon d) (see below)
 e) (see below)
 f) g)

h) Miranui Flaxmill was New Zealand's largest flaxmill, (being a seven-stripper mill at its peak) and effectively ran between 1907 and 1936. Construction began in January 1907, and it officially opened on 16/11/1907. Miranui, known as "the big mill", was operated as A. & L. Seifert's Flaxmilling Co. Ltd. between 1907 and 1927, the property being subdivided between 1927 and 1929. Miranui Ltd. operated between 1927 and 1931 when it went into liquidation. The Gibbons family then operated it between 1931 and 1936, with only one or two strippers operating with a government subsidy between 1935 and 1936. The brick fence at the entrance to the former mill site bears the name "MIRANUI". Remnants of the mill are spread now over several properties. These include:

(A) The majority of remains, however, are located on the property of

Subj to Tram Line and Vegetation Drain Easement on [REDACTED] These include:

(A.i) The former WATER RESERVOIR, a miniature lake now used as a swimming pool. The water, which can be released, is held in place by a dam and the State Hwy 57 end. The reservoir has an upper and lower end separated by a deteriorating weir. The upper end is now overgrown with swamp growth. This reservoir is directly behind the [REDACTED]

(A.ii) SUBWAY [Culvert No. 21/3.99] under State Highway 57 and the Main Trunk Railway, now used as a farm stock track but formerly used by the flaxmills to get their tramline under the above road/railway and into the Makerua flax swamps beyond. The RAILWAY SUBWAY is original but the road subway was altered in the 1940s. The present stock track will almost certainly be following the old tram bed across the paddocks on either side. Other former tramway beds are evident all around the property by the poor grass growing ability of the soil there.

(A.iii) The former MIRANUI MANAGER'S HOUSE, now the sharemilker's house, which dates at least to 1906-7, but may have already been on the property when purchased for the mill. Later it was the WEKA MANAGER'S HOUSE. The house is a box villa with a hipped roof and a straight verandah which is partly enclosed and which is not original. Other modernisation has also been done, including aluminium windows.

(A.iv) POTASH INCINERATOR which is a square concrete 'building', open on one side, and with a brick chimney above. Overgrown by a tree in a paddock about half way between the two main driveways. This was built c1919 at the suggestion of Prof. Easterfield, scientist at Victoria University, to experiment with producing potash from dead leaves etc.

(A.v) STRIPPING SHED REMAINS - Assorted concrete foundations from this large shed (close to the reservoir) including the engine bed which has a

groove for the fly-wheel. In summer the dry grass on the track which went behind this building gives further evidence of its location.

(A.vi) A small BRICK BUILDING with one wall in corrugated iron and a dirt floor, between the former stripping shed and the scutching shed, which may have been the blacksmith's shop (ie. blacksmith = engineer, not farrier). Appears to have had a chimney at one end, since bricked up roughly. A corrugated iron shed with a wooden floor and double doors is attached. The pair have a sloping 'lean-to' type roof.

(A.vii) Tiny WOODEN SHED ('whare') with door but no windows, between brick building and former stripping shed.

(A.viii) CONCRETE WATERFALL - A weir in a creek at the back of the property causing a ten foot waterfall.

(B) Located on [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - Part of the former scutching shed, being a large red CORRUGATED IRON SHED. Now used as a farm implement shed, this building has recently had a new roof. This is definitely not the original 1907 scutching shed as has been thought. That building was still extant in 1917, while this one seems to have been present since at least the 1930s. As it has similar skylights to the 1907 building and both were made from corrugated iron [vertical on the 1907 building and horizontal on this one], it is speculated that the 1907 building blew down or was partially burnt down. Possibly the nearby Spall woolshed, also red corrugated iron, shares a similar origin.

Concrete foundations for another large shed are behind this one and no doubt are also remnants of the much longer 1907 building. Septic tanks from the workers' accommodation also remain underground on this property.

(C) Located on [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] - Part of the old (two-stripper) Weka Mill, which was also owned by the company, which ran between 1911 and 1921, being a large white CORRUGATED IRON SHED behind the yellow sharemilker's house. The single gable shed has a vent protruding from the roof and is now used as a hayshed. Concrete foundations for another shed are behind this one.

4.0 MAKERUA AREA

4.1 MIRANUI FLAXMILL REMAINS [Now spread over three properties] State Highway 57, Makerua.

GENERAL INFORMATION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ayson, Bob, Miranui - the story of New Zealand's Largest Flaxmill, (Wellington, 1977).

NZ Historic Places Trust, Manawatu Regional Committee, Local History Tour, The Manawatu Flax Industry, pamphlet, 23/11/1974. Incl. 'A Brief History of Manawatu Flax Industry', by Ian Matheson.

Souvenir: Miranui & Weka Flaxmills, photo album dated 1917 and owned by Ian Matheson, P.N. City Archivist, Palmerston North.

Also photos from Ian Matheson's collection - in Vol. 3 of his 'Manawatu Flaxmilling' collection.

NEWSPAPERS: SN = SHANNON NEWS; ES = EVENING STANDARD; TD = THE DOMINION.

The 'Shannon News', first published mid-1921 (1921-1930 held at the 'Chronicle' office, Levin, contains many references to the Miranui Flaxmill and its workers. These include:

SN 11/1/1924 3(3): A visit to Miranui Mill described.

ES 1/9/1977: Photo and introduction to Ayson's book.

TD 22/10/1969: A clipping described by John McNeile, Mt. Maunganui. Evidently the first day of publication of the Dominion in 1907 coincided with the official opening of Miranui Flaxmill. A photograph had been taken of the Dominion's delivery van at the gate to the flaxmill and this was reproduced in the paper. The mill was described as the largest ever built in N.Z.

ES 8/10/1979: Letter to Editor from Jim Hargreaves, P.N., describes flaxmilling, Seifert's mill and Sambur's deer at Opiki rather than Miranui Mill.

INTERVIEW WITH F.M. 'BILL' GIBBONS, PALM. NTH, (17/2/1996): His family formerly owned the flaxmill and later farmed the property. His brother, Buster Gibbons, and sister, Beth McNeile, and families, built the two houses on the [redacted] driveway. He can only remember the present building as the scutching shed from a period covering 50-60 years. He said that there was a 'hackling shed', which combed out the fibre, situated between the stripping shed and the scutching shed. This shed performed the second of three phases in the production of the fibre. He does not recall the brick shed but wondered if this was the hackling shed, or even possibly the shed where the power plant was sited.

INTERVIEW WITH [redacted]

(17/2/1996): [redacted] worked for Hodder & Tolley Ltd., Palm. Nth. prior to WWII and recalls the terrific amount of horsefeed and hay the company supplied to the flaxmill. The [redacted] went farming in 1943 after Mr [redacted] left the Army. [redacted] formerly Gibbons, was a member of the Gibbons family which had owned the flaxmill. At first they lived in the former offices of the company, which had been converted to a house. Various company records and photographs were still in the office when they moved in and most were saved. These were eventually passed on to the Palmerston North Public Library, although they have a few photos left.

They had preserved a range of photos which were most indicative of what the land had looked like. A big shed nearby was turned into a carshed.

Later the McNeiles built the house now occupied by the Yules on the site of the old Miranui offices. Later, by which time they had five children, they put in the tennis court in front of the house on land which had then been damp ground with rushes. The McNeiles also put in the brick 'Miranui' entrance-way to the property and at one time had an automatic gate there as well which became annoying so was eventually disposed of.

At the time the McNeiles arrived, the property was like a junk heap. The cookhouse and various staff accommodation and entertainment facilities were gone. The accommodation had been opposite the office/house.

Mr McNeile had no recollection of any story relating to the demise of the original 1907 scutching shed. He thought the brick shed may have been a storage shed for bales of fibre.

Buster Gibbons had lived at Opiki for a while after coming back from the war, his house being about 100 yards towards Shannon from the Opiki garage. Then he built the house which is now owned by the Donalds.

INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED WITH [REDACTED] AND IAN MATHESON, PALM BENTH., mostly Janv 1996. Ian Matheson, flaxmill historian and P.N. City Archivist, advises (18/12/1995) that since he provided Bob Ayson with the information that Miranui closed down finally in 1933, he has discovered that 1 or 2 strippers were re-opened during 1935-6 with a Govt subsidy. Thus the mill in fact closed in 1936. The mill thus operated as A. & L. Seifert's Flaxdressing Co. Ltd. 1907-1927 (the property being subdivided 1927-91; Miranui Ltd. 1927-1931 (then went into liquidation); Gibbons family 1931-1936 (ie. Hope Gibbons and sons and daughters).

(A) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] & SUBJ TO TRAMLINE &

VEGETATION DRAINAGE EASEMENT ON [REDACTED]

CURRENT CT: [REDACTED]

PREVIOUS CT: [REDACTED]

HPT-WGN/HPT-MANAWATU: [REDACTED] [1 ref 30]

PHOTOS: 7/27-7/29 taken 8/1/1996, 10/13, 10/15, 10/18-10/24 taken

10/1/1996 by Val Burr

The [REDACTED] which the family bought in 1969, has most of the remnants of the flaxmill. These include:

(A-1) The former water reservoir, a man-made miniature lake which is now used as a swimming pool. This is directly behind the [REDACTED] property

[REDACTED] The water is held in by a dam at the State Hwy 57 end. The Yules drained it a year or two ago in order to clean it out. A

wooden structure like a small jetty at the water's edge (alongside [REDACTED] driveway), appears like the one shown in photos taken when the

mill was operating. Iron pipes protrude in the corners nearest the old stripping shed site. Originally this reservoir was divided into two parts

by a weir but this has now deteriorated and the upper end (the scutching

shed end) is overgrown with water plants.

(A-ii) The subway under State Highway 57 and the Main Trunk Line is the old tramway which once connected the flaxmills with the huge Makerua flax swamp. It is labelled 'Culvert No. 21/3.99', and is now used as a farm stock track by the [redacted] said that the railway underpass is the original one installed by Miranui, but the one under the road was lowered after World War II in order to reduce a rather large bump in the road at this point. The route of the stock track on either side of the subway, as well as the numerous other stock tracks around the three properties will, in most cases, follow the metalled tram beds used by the flaxmill. Disused trambeds would be distinguishable by their poor grass-growing ability, especially in summer.

(A-iii) The former Miranui Manager's house is now the sharemilker's house on the [redacted] property. It dates to at least 1906-7, but may date back further as the home of one of the farmers whose land was purchased for the mill. The house, in its original form, appears in early photos of the mill. It has since had its verandah altered to a plainer form, and more recently had larger aluminium windows fitted. The windows on the Shannon side are original. Fireplaces have also been shifted. Later this house was the Weka mill's manger's house. Perhaps by that time the house which was at the back of the [redacted] property, served as the main Miranui manger's house.

(A-iv) About half way between the [redacted] and [redacted] driveways, is a native tree which has overgrown a concrete construction, perhaps 2 metres square, which is open on one side and which has a brick chimney above it. Blackening from a fire is evident inside. All of this is overgrown by the tree but the sky can be seen up the chimney. Ian Matheson says this was a potash incinerator built around 1919 at the suggestion of Prof. Easterfield, a scientist at Victoria University. This was part of an experiment aimed at producing potash from dead flax leaves etc.

(A-v) Assorted concrete foundations mark the site of the large 'saw-tooth' shaped stripping shed, which stood close to the reservoir. These include two large concrete 'blocks' with bolts sticking up from them, at least one of which once held one of the mill's two Tangye engines. One has a groove for the engine's flywheel. [redacted] also a vintage machinery enthusiast, once found a brass plate on the property which came from one of these Tangye engines. This was for engine No. '906'. Ian Matheson thinks this must indicate the engines were scrapped on the property. [redacted] said that two 'saw-tooths' of the former stripping shed are still in use at Opiki. The area of dried grass in the photos of the site indicates the track which ran behind the shed.

(A-vi) A small brick building with a dirt floor about half way between the stripping shed site and the scutching shed has proved something of a mystery. The rectangular shed has a corrugated iron building with a wooden floor of a similar size attached. The wooden floor is rotten and 'holey'. It has double opening doors. The brick portion once had either a doorway or a chimney at the Tokomaru end which has been fairly roughly bricked up. A large hole has been roughly broken in the bricks between the two parts of the building. It is possible this is the former blacksmith's shop (ie. blacksmith meaning engineer, not farrier). A shed in a similar position

appears in an early photo with two cart wheels leaning against it.

(A-vii) A tiny wooden rectangular building, which has a door but no windows and which [redacted] referred to as a 'whare' is between the above brick building and the stripping shed site. Its original use is unknown.

(A-viii) A concrete weir is at the back of the property and was associated with the mills. This now forms an approximately 10 foot high waterfall.

(A-ix) Although the building has gone, remnants of the old stables, which stood where the [redacted] cowshed now is, regularly make appearances. The large stable, which appears in early photos, was for the flaxmill's c70 draught horses. These had proved more practical in the swamp lands than the locomotive which had been used for the first four years.

(B) OWNER: [redacted] (R.D. 004, PALMERSTON NORTH)

CURRENT CT: [redacted]
 PREVIOUS CT: [redacted]
 HRT-WGN/HRT-MANAWATU: [redacted] /500010B (2 of 3)
 PHOTOS: 7/30 taken 8/1/1996, 10/10-10/12, 10/14 taken 9/1/1996 by Val

Burr
 This property, named 'Miranui', uses the former main flaxmill driveway which now has a brick entrance-way with 'Miranui' printed on it. The brick-work was done by Mr and Mrs John McNeiley, Mrs McNeiley being a member of the Gibbons family who co-owned the flaxmill. The McNeileys used to live in the house closest to the road on this driveway, which is now owned by [redacted] and is [redacted]

The [redacted] property includes the other house on that driveway and formerly belonged to [redacted]. It is thought this house was built in the early 1950s but I could find nothing about it on the Horowhenua District Council Permit Files under its two most recent DP numbers. [redacted] thinks an earlier house on the property was a little further back as there are fruit trees and some garden plants still there. Avenues of mature trees wind around the property. [redacted] understands that this was a very large house. Its fate has not been researched.

The large red corrugated iron implement shed on this property is DEFINITELY NOT the Miranui Scutching shed which was built in 1907 as it has been thought. A photo of the 1907 scutching shed, taken during construction with its roof still partly complete, appeared in the Auckland Weekly News of 10/10/1907 (page 2), and that same building appears in later photos of the mill. The original building was possibly on the same foundations, [certainly the main part faced in the same direction, but appears much longer]. The long building comprised two lengthwise 'sawtooths', with the engine room [which vaguely resembled the present building] protruding at right angles from the State Hwy 57 side. The corrugated iron on the shed was verticle and a photo of the inner framework I have seen shows dwangs. The present shed has the corrugated

iron running horizontally, while the wooden framework has no dwangs.

There is very good reason to believe that the present shed was recycled out of the 1907 shed, and built on the same site/foundations. Certainly the skylight in the present building looks similar to the one in the 1907 building. [redacted] whose family owned the flaxmill and later farmed the land, says that the present building has been on the property as long as he remembers - at least 50-60 years - and was unaware of a previous building. Ian Matheson's Miranui souvenir photo album, prepared in 1917, indicates that the original building was still there at that time [copies attached]. The fate of the original shed therefore is unknown, but a fire or partial fire, cannot be discounted, and Ian Matheson has a feeling that the scutching shed may have caught fire at one stage.

The shed appears in sound condition and has recently been reroofed. It is now used as a farm implement shed.

A large concrete shed foundation is immediately behind this shed and [redacted] thought that the building which stood there blew down in a storm, perhaps the 'Wahine' storm. He also had a feeling [redacted] woolshed which is close by, was also recycled out of an old shed on this site.

This property included the site of the workers' accommodation and the underground septic tanks from these are still there.

(C) OWNER: [redacted]
PALMERSTON NORTH

[redacted]

CURRENT CT: [redacted]
PREVIOUS CT: [redacted]
HPT+WGN/HPT-MANAWATU: [redacted]/500010C [3 of 3]
PHOTOS: 10/16-10/17 taken 10/1/1996 by Val Burr

The [redacted] property has a large white corrugated iron shed, located behind the yellow sharemilker's house, which was originally part of the 2-stripper Weka Mill, and a part of the Miranui complex. It ran between 1911 and 1921. It is now used as a hayshed. The concrete foundations for another large shed are behind this one. The shed is clearly visible from the road. It seems highly likely that this is the most original Miranui shed left.



V428

Valuation Reference 14760 37801 JT		extns	Computer Codes change	indic.	Date of Revision 1/09/93	Date form printed 18/05/94
VI LV CV	Special Values	Nature of Improvements		Occupier (within the meaning of the Rating Act)		
Address of Property/Situation				Name of District		

The sequence of data here is: Owner (if other than Occupier), Special Rating Area information (if any), Description of Property.

REASON.....notice of change of address

A

V428

[REDACTED]		extns	Computer Codes 0 change F	indic.	121000	Date of Revision 1/09/93	Date form printed 18/05/94
VI LV CV	Special Values	Nature of Improvements		Occupier (within the meaning of the Rating Act)			
	200000 665000 865000 ✓ & TREES - 1000	2 DWGS OB OI FG RATEABLE		[REDACTED]			
HECTARES 98.3971 ✓				Address of Property/Situation		Name of District	
				[REDACTED]		HOROWHENUA DISTRICT	

The sequence of data here is: Owner (if other than Occupier), Special Rating Area information (if any), Description of Property.

REGION: 08 MANAWATU-WANGANUI REGION

WARD: 01 Kere Kere

CODE	SCHEME NAME	CLASS	AREA	CV	LV
331	MWRC-LWR MANAWATU SCHEME A	A	25.8999	214300	204800
331	MWRC-LWR MANAWATU SCHEME B	B	38.0404	282900	269100
331	MWRC-LWR MANAWATU SCHEME E	E	34.4568	367800	191100
517	MAKERUA DRAINAGE DIST	A	50.7779		
517	MAKERUA DRAINAGE DIST	G	7.1832		
517	MAKERUA DRAINAGE DIST	X	40.4360		

[REDACTED]





V428

(B)

[REDACTED]		Computer Codes	Date of Revision	Date form printed
[REDACTED]		extns 0 change	1/09/93	16/10/93
Special Values		Nature of Improvements	Occupier (within the meaning of the Rating Act)	
VI	140000	DWG OB OI FG	[REDACTED]	
LV	100000	RATEABLE	[REDACTED]	
CV	240000		[REDACTED]	
	& TREES - 5000		[REDACTED]	
HECTARES		Address of Property/Situation	Name of District	
13.8807		[REDACTED]	HOROWHENUA DISTRICT 42	

The sequence of data here is: Owner (if other than Occupier), Special Rating Area information (if any), Description of Property.

REGION: 08 MANAWATU-WANGANUI REGION

WARD: 01 Kere Kere

CODE	SCHEME NAME	CLASS	AREA	CV	LV
331	MWRC-LWR MANAWATU SCHEME B	B	2.4281	22500	21200
331	MWRC-LWR MANAWATU SCHEME E	E	11.4526	217500	78800
517	MAKERUA DRAINAGE DIST	A	2.8328		
517	MAKERUA DRAINAGE DIST	X	11.0479		

[REDACTED]

REASON.....GENERAL REVALUATION









V428

(C)

[REDACTED]		Computer Codes extns. 0 change I	indic. 111000	Date of Revision 1/09/93	Date form printed 21/01/94
VI	Special Values	Nature of Improvements		Occupier (within the meaning of the Rating Act)	
LV	230000:	2 DWGS 08 01 EG		[REDACTED]	
CV	520000:	RATEABLE		[REDACTED]	
	750000:				
	& TREES -	1000			
	HECTARES	Address of Property/Situation		Name of District	
	94.5544	[REDACTED]		HOROWHENUA DISTRICT	
The sequence of data here is: Owner (if other than Occupier), Special Rating Area information (if any), Description of Property.					
REGION: 08 MANAWATU-WANGANUI REGION			WARD: 01 Kere Kere		
CODE	SCHEME NAME	CLASS	AREA	CV	LV
331	MWRC-LWR MANAWATU SCHEME B		2.8328	21300	19400
331	MWRC-LWR MANAWATU SCHEME E		61.1862	538900	322900
331	MWRC-LWR MANAWATU SCHEME G		30.5354	139800	177700
[REDACTED]					
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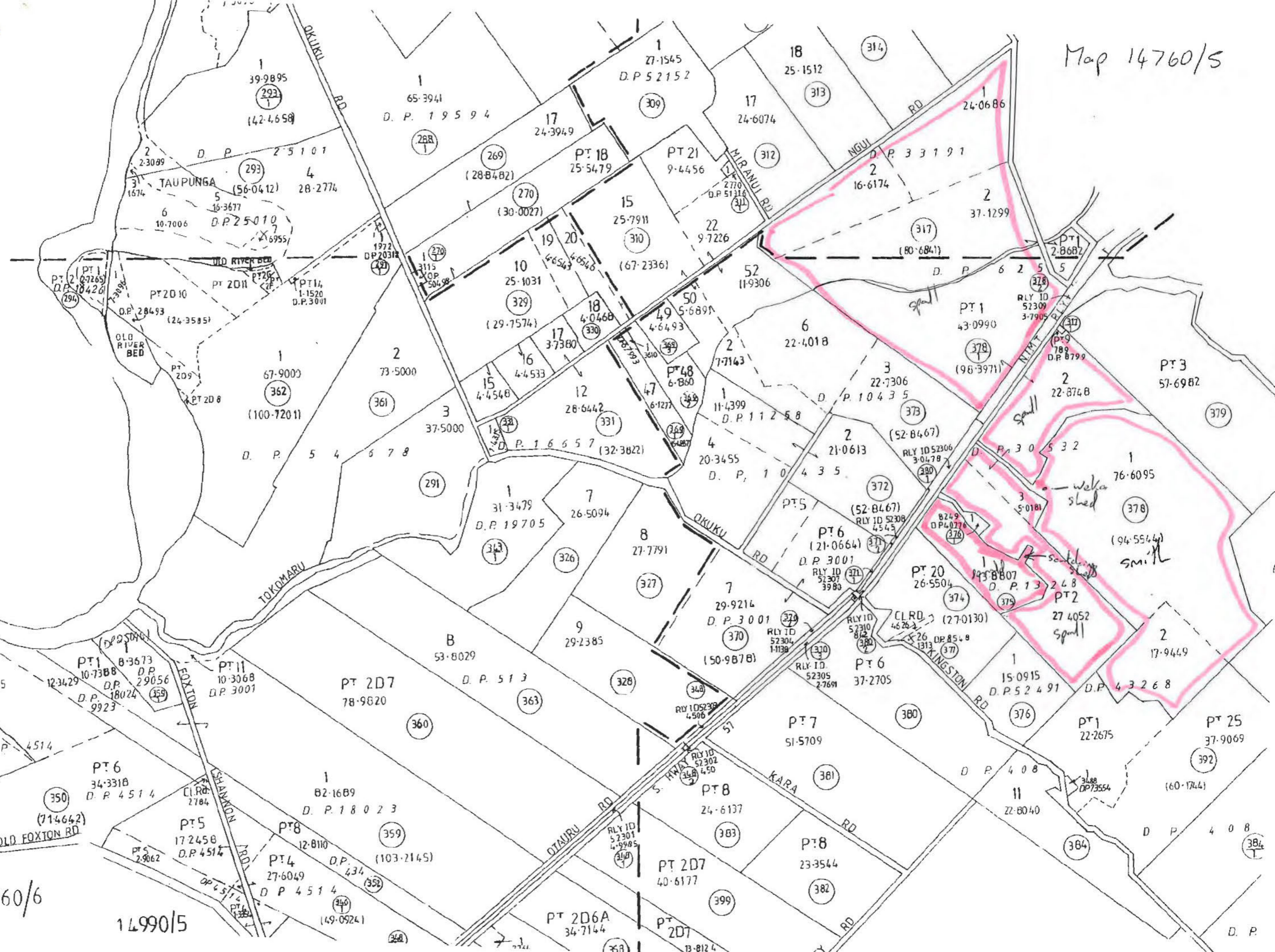
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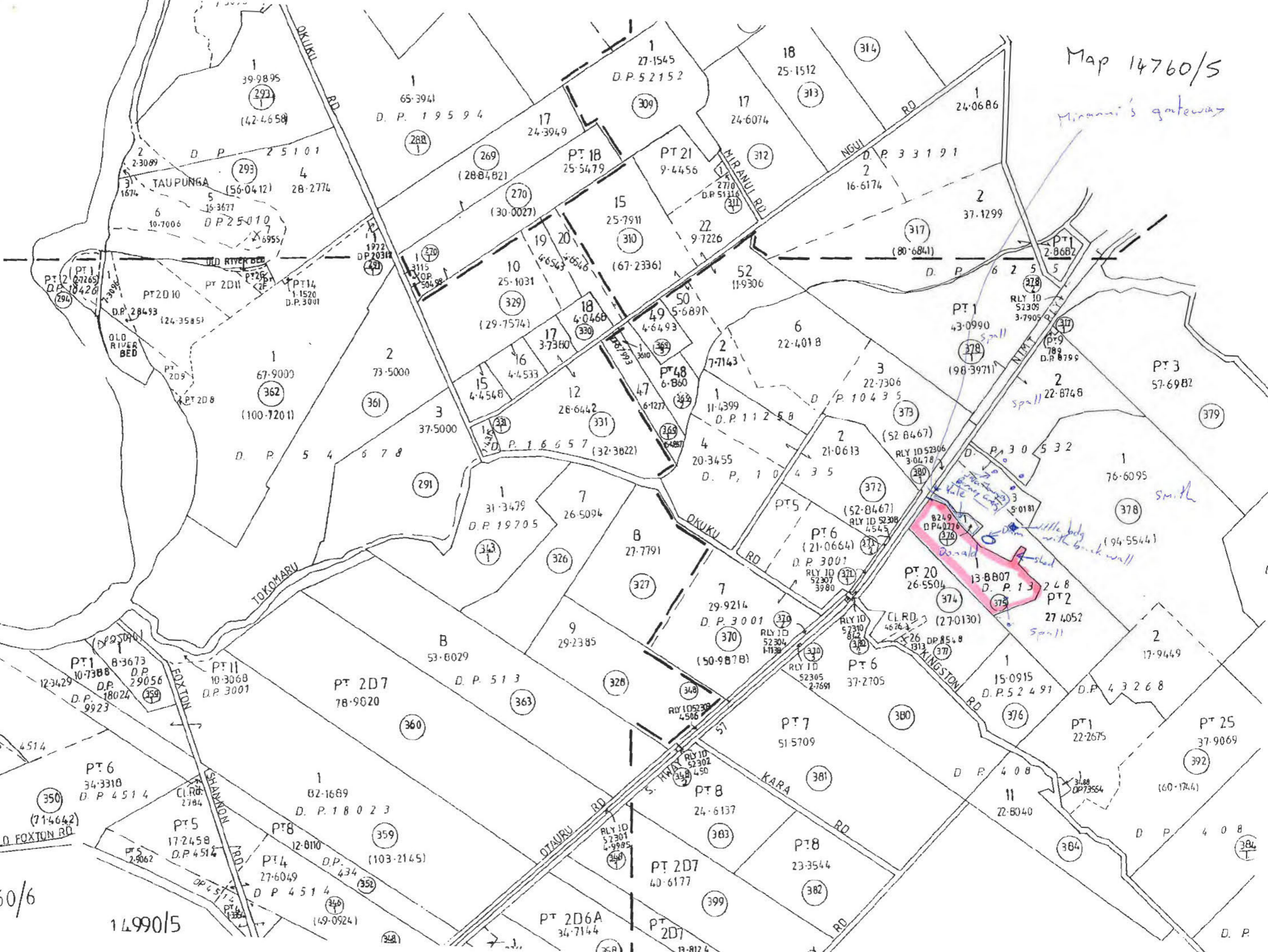


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Map 14760/5
Miranni's gateway



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Cutting flax

Boom times now

Tucked away in a small shed in central Foxton, visitors can find engineer and museum curator Gordon Burr with the last operational flax-milling machine in New Zealand. A boom industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, flax milling is being kept alive by Gordon and the Flax Stripper Museum Trust, which was established in 1990.

The No 5 flax stripping machine from the woolpack factory, which had been mothballed for many years, was acquired on permanent loan by the Foxton Beautiful society, which then set about housing it in a working museum. The town is fortunate to have

the services of Gordon Burr, who began work in the flax industry as an apprentice in 1937 and continued working as an engineer right up until the woolpack factory closed in 1973. It is with much pride that Gordon points out parts of the machine he manufactured or adapted in years gone by or re-assembled in the museum.

Phormium tenax, harakeke, or 'New Zealand flax' as it is known to gardeners throughout the world, has long been recognized for its fibres and has been used for hundreds of years by the Maori people. The process for extracting the fibre in those early days was very labour intensive and time consuming, involving hand scrap-

ing with shells and washing and beating to produce a usable product. A small-scale industry developed in the early 1800s with hand-scraped fibre being exported to Australia and Britain for use in ropemaking.

Around 1860, the industrial revolution finally caught up to the flax industry with the invention of a mechanical beater to strip away the non-fibrous material of the flax.

The difference was dramatic when compared with hand stripping, increasing production a thousand fold.

Despite fluctuations in world prices and ups and downs in the economy, the industry continued to flourish

Continued next page



FLAX MILL, FOXTON
Early flax mill at Foxton

just a fond memory

From page 14
with up to eight mills operating along the busy stretch of river at Foxton during the early 1900s.

Little evidence is left today, however a few remnants of the foundations of the Henry Berry's Awa Mill can be seen on the riverbank at the boat ramp near the end of Purcell Street.

The depression of the 1930s bought about a decline in the industry once again, but it was rescued by the building of a large woolpack fac-

tory at Foxton in 1934. Like many other industries of the day the output of the factory was protected from overseas competition and was subsidised for many years.

World War II impacted again on the industry when the government moved to ensure a supply of fibre for the agricultural sector and the military.

At about this time the government purchased the 2000 plus hectare Moutoa block and acquired a controlling in-

terest in the Foxton woolpack factory, which in its heyday employed around 450 men and women. Production continued up until the 1970s, when Government protection was removed and competition from cheaper imported synthetic fibres caused the closure of the factory.

The Moutoa flax swamps are now rich farmland supporting large dairy herds, the drying racks and tramlines have disappeared and the once-

busy Man now just water, but rekindle sounds an past at the stripping



Tug and flax barge



Sewing flax wool packs



Fresh stripped flax

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FLAX MILL, FOXTON

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The Moutoa flax swamps are now rich farmland supporting large dairy herds, the drying racks and tramlines have disappeared and the once-

busy Manawatu River is now just a quiet backwater, but visitors can rekindle the images, sounds and smells of the past at the Foxton Flax stripping Museum.



Gordon Burr stripping flax



Tug and flax barge



Sewing flax wool packs

Tessa
from Melbourne

**SPECIAL PROMOTION
PRICES THIS WEEKEND**

PARAPARAUMU STORE

*New designs not
previously seen in
New Zealand*



*Pictured
is the Monaco Suite.*

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Sambur part of heritage

SIR, - I was most interested in the recent article you published in your paper on the history of the Sambur deer, which we had many years ago in large numbers in the Manawatu district.

My first recollections of these magnificent animals was when I was a boy round six or seven years of age. My parents had the cookhouse for the flaxcutters or flaxies, as they were known, at Seiferts Mill on the banks of the Manawatu River at Rangitane.

There was no bridge over the river in those days of 1914. A big flax basket on a steel cable brought the flax over to the Mill which was situated on the town side of the river.

I can remember very clearly sitting on the bank of the river with my father, and seeing a mighty stag, with his head and antlers laid back, breaking from hunters with dogs who had been hunting deer in the flax.

In those days one could sit and look across the river for miles, and as far as the eye could see there was nothing but high flax and cabbage trees. This is, of course, now the cultivated Opiki country.

In later years I became a keen hunter and even in the 1930s there were still large areas of flax in the Opiki. On many occasions we would go down to Bill Irwin's farm house in Opiki and set off on very bright moonlight nights and walk the flax tramlines and flylines.

In those days there were many Sambur deer in these areas, and it is indeed a tragedy that their numbers are depleted almost to the point of extinction. The loss of their natural habitat has without doubt contributed to their dying numbers.

I would like to mention at this stage that neither I nor my hunting companions ever shot a hind. To get a really good stag with a trophy head was our prime objective.

Prior to World War II, with my old friends, Perce Smith and Bill Kelly, still both active, we used to hunt the coast at Turakina.

On one occasion we were fortunate in securing a fine trophy head which is one inch outside the New Zealand record.

It is quite true that the Sambur deer will lie very quiet. I myself have walked within three feet of a Sambur hind which has been lying behind a lupin or gorse bush and has sprung up and gone in a flash.

Now it has reached the stage that, unless a total conservation policy is adopted, these beautiful animals will be lost to us for all time, and I would congratulate all the responsible bodies who are endeavouring to attain this end.

My writing may appear to be contradictory in some respects, in so far that I have been guilty of shooting a Sambur stag, but it is to be remembered that going back many years the Sambur was about in large numbers.

One Sunday afternoon I and two of my hunting friends were sitting on the riverbank at the Tangimoana picnic site, when we heard dogs barking away to our right in some rough country of gorse and scrub.

One of my mates said: "Those dogs are on a Sambur".

Sure enough, within a couple of minutes a big stag arrived at the river and without hesitation plunged in and swam the Rangitikei River as if it was only a creek.

He reached the other side, shook himself like a great dog and trotted off across the sand towards Scotts Ferry.

One of my mates said to me: "Will you look at that, long may he reign."

The Sambur is a nocturnal creature and will feed at night. Where crops have been planted adjacent to his habitat he will come out to feed.

This is where he has become prey to hungry meat-hunters with spotlights.

It is good to know that the meat-traders are now refusing to handle Sambur carcasses.

There are many young and keen hunters around as always, and I would express the hope to them that they will always remember the wonderful heritage we have here in New Zealand, and do their utmost to preserve it.

JIM HARGREAVES

Palmerston North

Evening Standard

8/10/1979



VERY little is left now to remind us of the great days of flaxmilling on the Moutua and Makarua Swamps between Shannon and Foxton, but in 1918 and 1917 there were 19 mills alone on the Makarua Swamp and the largest of these was Miranui.

Miranui was New Zealand's largest flax mill.

The stripping shed is seen in the picture shortly after it began operating in 1907. It was closed, after many ups and downs, in 1933, and the last of the mills in the district closed in 1974.

An age had ended. Bob Ayson, of Shannon, has written a brief history of Miranui which was built by the A. and L. Selfert Flaxmilling Company and

opened with much flourish and pomp in 1907.

The value of the booklet lies as much in the pictures as in the text, but Mr Ayson has done us a service by gathering this material and presenting it in a pleasant format.

There is much that is being published these days on our past, and the gathering of such material

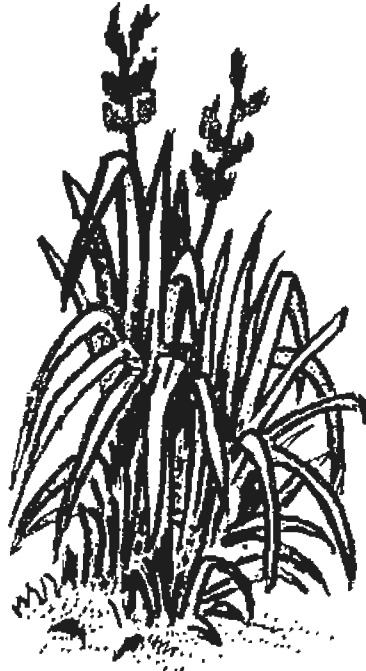
into easily digestible form is a valuable activity. A continuous record of our history is being provided for future generations.

The booklet is in the Southern Press's industrial archaeology series and the publishers are to be commended. — R.J.

Evening Standard 1/9/1977



NEW ZEALAND HISTORIC PLACES TRUST
MANAWATU REGIONAL COMMITTEE



LOCAL HISTORY TOUR

**THE
MANAWATU
FLAX
INDUSTRY**

A GUIDED TOUR OF THE FORMER FLAXMILLING DISTRICTS OF
OPIKI, SHANNON AND FOXTON

SATURDAY, 23 NOVEMBER, 1974

- GUIDES:** Mr H.A. SEIFERT - general manager of "Miranui" mill, 1926. President of N.Z. Flaxmillers Association, 1926-28.
Mr W.E. HALE - general manager of N.Z. Woolpack & Textiles Limited, 1951-1972.
Mr I.R. MATHESON - Chairman of Manawatu Regional Committee of Historic Places Trust. Currently compiling a history of the Manawatu flax industry.

I T I N E R A R Y

A BRIEF HI

1.00 pm DEPART PALMERSTON NORTH AND PROCEED VIA LONGBURN TO OPIKI.

1.20 pm - 1.50 pm OPIKI

Visit Akers' suspension bridge and site of flaxmills. (See photograph No. 2)

1.50 pm DEPART OPIKI AND PROCEED ACROSS OPIKI PLAINS VIA MAKERUA-RANGITANE ROAD.

This road runs through the centre of the former Makerua Swamp, once the largest commercial flax-growing area in New Zealand. (See photograph 1)

2.15 pm - 2.45 pm MAKERUA.

Visit site of "Miranui" mill, the largest flaxmill ever erected in New Zealand. (See photographs 3 and 4)

2.45 pm DEPART "MIRANUI" AND PROCEED VIA SHANNON TO FOXTON.

Visit flax plantations at Moutoa Estate, the last commercial flax-growing area in New Zealand.

3.30 pm - 4.30 pm FOXTON.

Enjoy afternoon tea, kindly provided by Foxton Historical Society.
View photographs of flaxmilling industry.

4.30 pm - 5.00 pm FOXTON.

Visit last flaxmill in Manawatu and New Zealand.
Visit site of former mills on riverbank.
Visit site of former wharf and railway yards.
(See photograph 7)

5.00 pm DEPART FOXTON AND PROCEED VIA HIMATANGI TO PALMERSTON NORTH.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MANAWATU FLAX INDUSTRY by I.R. Matheson

The New Zealand flax plant, known to scientists as *phormium tenax*, contains in its long sword-like leaves a strong fibre, suitable for the manufacture of cordage and coarse textiles. In pre-European times the Maori people made extensive use of this fibre, extracting it from the leaf with a mussel shell and preparing it for use by a slow and laborious process of pounding, scraping and washing.

European settlers were quick to appreciate the potential of *phormium* fibre, but commercial development was hampered for many years by the lack of a quick and economic method of mechanical preparation. In 1867, however, an Auckland engineer invented a machine which extracted the fibre by means of percussion, the flax leaves being fed between a revolving metal drum and a fixed metal bar. Metal projections on the surface of the drum struck the leaf at great speed and so stripped away the non-fibrous tissue from the strands of fibre. This machine (which became known as a "stripper") revolutionised flaxdressing and led to the establishment of an extensive export trade.

On the international market, however, *phormium* had to compete against several high-quality fibres, the most important of which were manila (from the Philippine Islands) and sisal (from Central America and East Africa). Unfortunately, *phormium* was never able to equal the importance of these rival fibres and market prices for the New Zealand product were subject to great fluctuations according to the availability of manila and sisal.

The first Manawatu flaxmills were established in 1869-70, when there was a shortage of manila on the world market. This produced a "boom" in the *phormium* industry and six flaxmills were soon at work in the Foxton district. Two were powered by steam engine, two by water wheels and two by horses walking round and round in a circle. All these mills closed down when market prices slumped in 1873.

The market remained depressed until 1888, when a sudden demand for binder-twine in the U.S.A. produced a second "boom" in the *phormium* industry. Flaxmills sprang up like mushrooms and by December 1889 there were over 50 mills at work within a 10 mile radius of Foxton. However, an increased supply of manila soon depressed the market once again and by 1895 only 6 mills were still at work.

A third "boom" began in 1898, when the Spanish-American war in the Philippines resulted in a severe shortage of manila, but this time there was no sudden slump in the market and prices remained high for 20 years.

During this time phormium fibre established a good reputation on overseas markets, largely due to an improvement in the quality of the fibre. This improvement resulted from the introduction of compulsory grading before export and the adoption of a scientific approach to the industry. Important developments were made in swamp management, mill design and mechanical efficiency, and small one-stripper mills were gradually replaced by larger structures, containing several strippers under one roof. The first of these new mills was the seven-stripper "Miranui" ("the big mill"), established near Shannon in 1907. This mill was the largest ever erected in New Zealand.

NEW ZEALAND

By the time of World War One, the industry was centred on the huge Makerua Swamp, which lay on the east bank of the Manawatu River and extended from Linton in the north to Shannon in the south. This swamp contained about 14,000 acres of flax and during the peak of its production (1916-17) was supplying green leaf to 43 strippers situated in 18 mills. Most of these mills owned large blocks of the swamp.

The second largest swamp in the district was the Moutoa Swamp, situated on the north bank of the Manawatu River between the Shannon Bridge and Foxton. It contained about 4000 acres of flax and was the chief source of supply for the mills of Foxton. From 1903 until 1940 this swamp was owned by the firm of Stevens, Easton and Austin, who sold flax on a royalty basis to the Foxton millers. Prior to the introduction of motor lorries in the 1920s, a fleet of steam launches and punts transported the flax from the swamp to the mills, six of which were situated on the riverbank within the Borough of Foxton.

At the conclusion of World War One there was a severe slump in the export market and during the 1920s the flaxmilling industry declined in importance. This was partly due to the widespread damage caused by "yellow leaf" (a virus disease in the flax), but was also the result of increasing competition from the sisal industry of East Africa. The great depression of the early 1930s brought an end to the export of phormium fibre and by 1940 only one mill (in Foxton) was still in operation.

This mill continued to operate until August 1974, supplying fibre for the manufacture of woolpacks, floorcoverings and underfelts. These products were manufactured in the Foxton factory of N.Z. Woolpack & Textiles Limited, a company in which the N.Z. Government has a controlling interest. However, the high costs of phormium production have resulted in the fibre being phased out of use and replaced by synthetic fibres and wool. The flax industry of Manawatu appears to have ended forever.



A GUIDED

S A T U R

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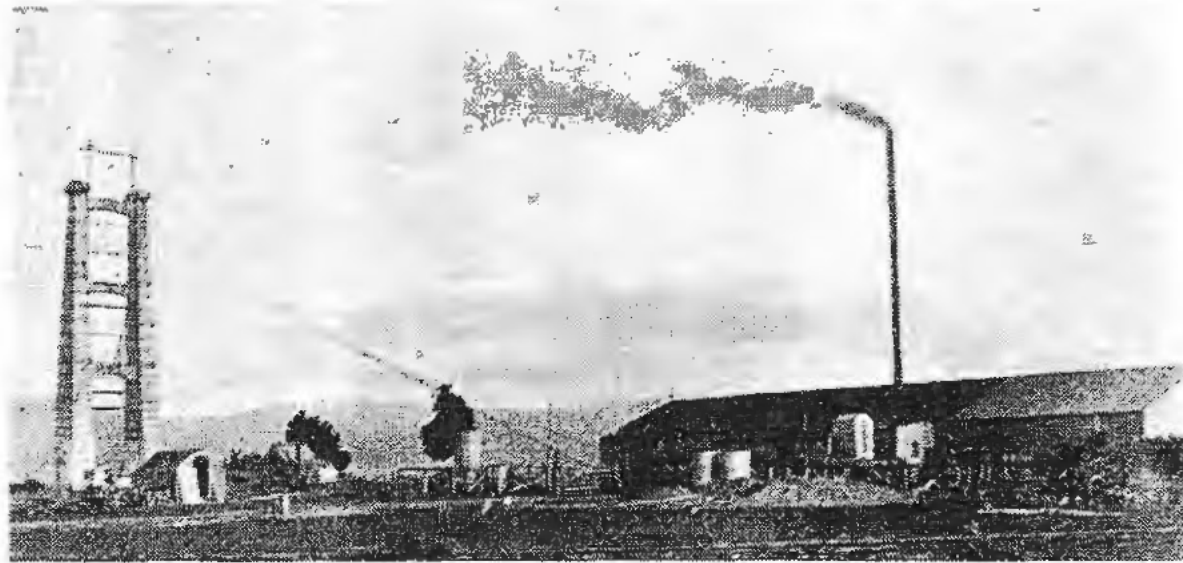
THE FLAXMILLING INDUSTRY OF MANAWATU

Photographs from . . .
Palmerston North Public Library
and
Mr. I. R. Matheson's
collection.



1 *Right:* THE MAKERUA SWAMP, 1908. Showing tramline running from centre of swamp to "Miranui" flaxmill.

2 *Below:* THE "TANE" MILL ON AKERS' ESTATE AT RANGITANE (now known as Opiki). Showing suspension bridge in course of construction (1917).



Photograph
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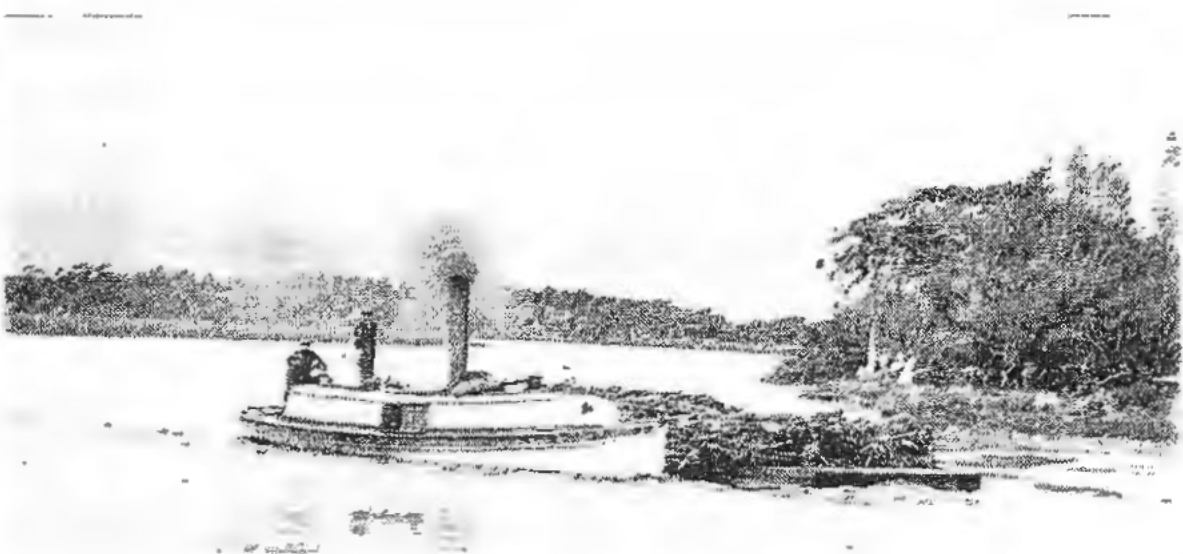


7 FLAXMILLS AT FOXTON, 1912. Looking downriver from Ferry Hill (now Seaview Gardens) and showing the mills of H. Berry, H. Greig, G. Coley and A. King. In the background can be seen the wharf, railway yards and the fibre grading store of Levin & Co.



5 Above: IN THE MAKERUA SWAMP, 1912. These men were "ramies", employed to load bundles of flax onto horse-drawn trucks for transport to the mill.

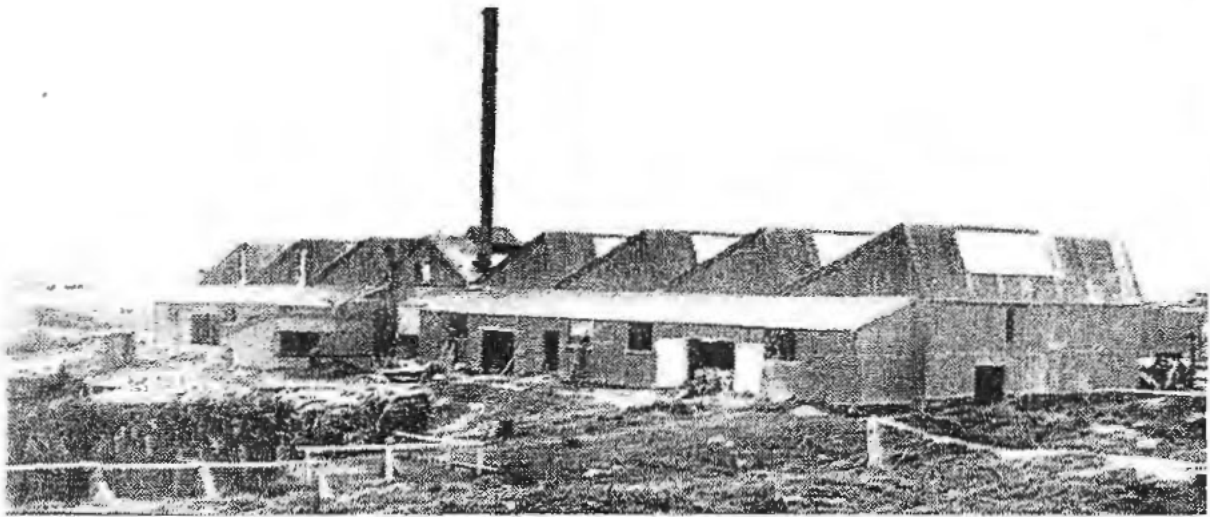
6 Below: ON THE MANAWATU RIVER, ABOUT 1912. A steam launch and punt transporting flax from Moutoa Swamp to the mills of Foxton.



NEW ZEALAND Situated
finished in 1917 by A. & L.
closed down in 1933.

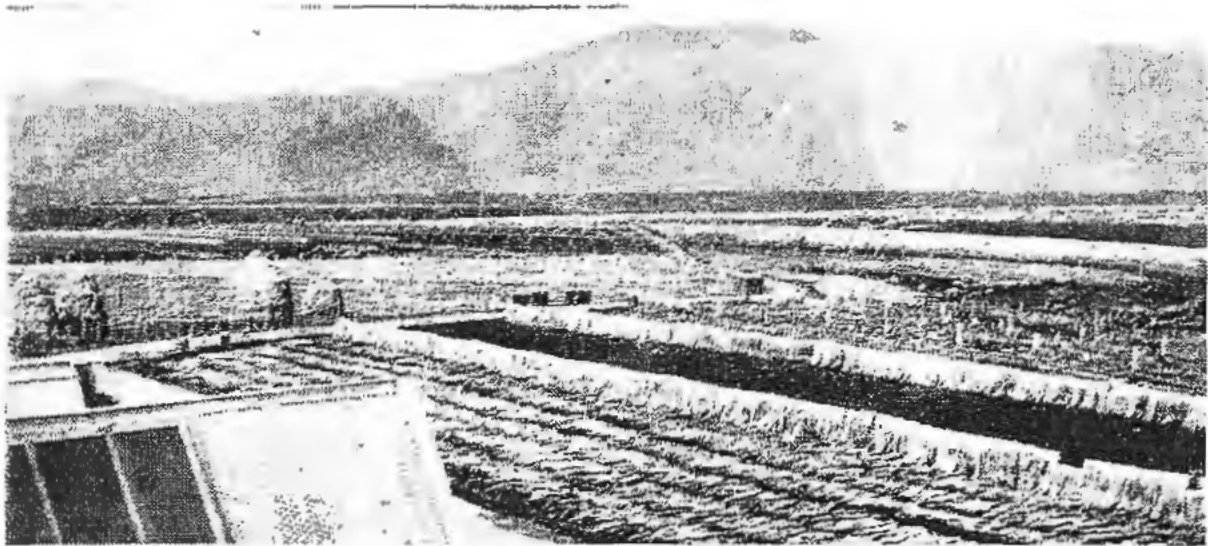
ward from the roof of the
about 400 acres were utilized





3 Above: "MIRANUI" — THE LARGEST FLAXMILL EVER ERECTED IN NEW ZEALAND. Situated at Makerua, 3 miles north of Shannon. Housed 7 stripping machines. Established in 1907 by A. & L. Seifert's Flaxdressing Company Ltd., and sold in 1927 to Miranui Limited. Closed down in 1932.

4 Below: FIBRE PADDOCKS AT "MIRANUI" ABOUT 1908. Looking eastward from the roof of the scutching shed and showing fibre on the ground, on fences and in stacks. About 400 acres were utilized for bleaching purposes.



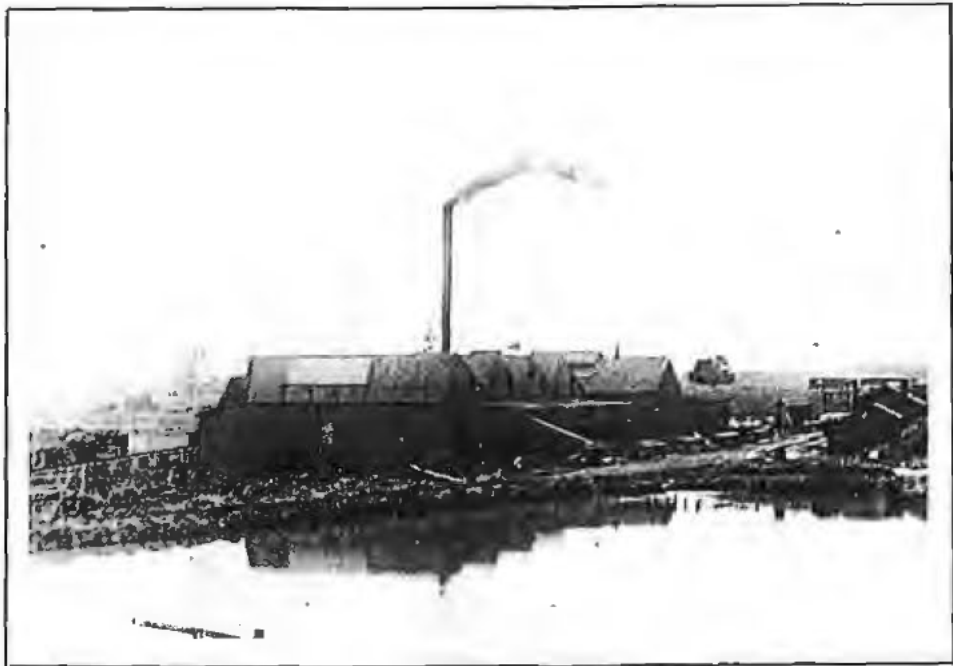
5 Above
flax

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MIRANUI —

The story of New Zealand's
largest flax mill



By Bob Ayson

Southern Press Industrial Archaeology Series

MIRANUI — THE STORY OF NEW ZEALAND'S LARGEST FLAX MILL

By Bob Ayson

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1977

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without permission.

Southern Press Ltd
P.O. Box 11-272,
Wellington
1977

COVER: Once a familiar sight in the Manawatu—Miranui, with a plume of smoke from the tall mill chimney. The name is Maori for "big mill"—"Mira"—mill, "nui"—big. The "flaxies" called Miranui "the big mill" and rarely used the Maori name. Photograph: Palmerston North Public Library.

Foreword

The days have long gone since the sounds of flaxstripping machines filled the air, and gangs of men wielding razor sharp hooks cut flax in the Manawatu swamps, and wagon loads of flax fibre trundled towards the waiting railway wagons at Foxton and Shannon.

Today, it is hard to realise that a major industry once existed in the Manawatu which employed hundreds of workers in flaxmills scattered throughout the flaxbearing swamps. Occasionally one comes across the remnants of an old mill or even the mention of a name helps to revive the memories of the handful of old "flaxies" still living in the area.

Such a name is Miranui, once the largest and most well equipped of all the flaxmills ever built for the production of New Zealand flax. To say that you worked at Miranui — or the big mill as the "flaxies"

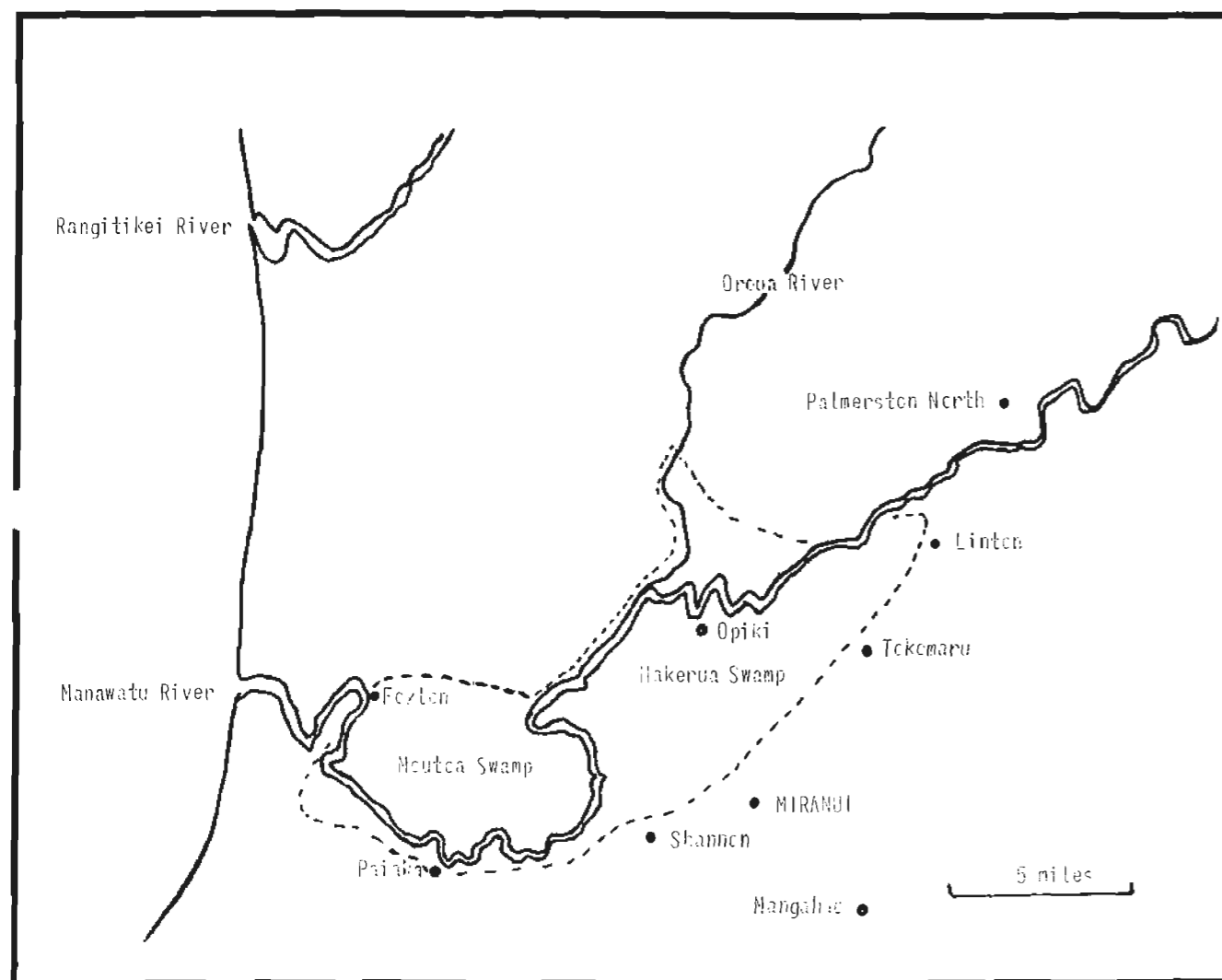
called it — was to be envied by all other flax workers. It was the ultimate in flaxmill design, and as such, bore its name proudly for nearly 30 years.

Apart from outlining the long neglected history of the mill, this booklet also provides, through the many photographs included, a rare opportunity to study the flaxmilling process step by step.

It is not the intention of this booklet to provide a detailed account of the mill, and I am aware that some details which perhaps should have been included, have been omitted. However, I feel it is a true account of the mill and I hope it will convey a nostalgic impression of the mill's era. I am indebted to all those who supplied photographs and gave information about Miranui and so made this booklet possible.

B. Ayson
Shannon 1977

Sketch map showing places mentioned in the Introduction



Introduction

Once a familiar landmark in the Manawatu district, the Miranui flaxmill was regarded as the largest ever built for the production of fibre from New Zealand flax (phormium tenax). Miranui (Maori for "the big mill" and known as such by the "flaxies") operated from 1907 to 1933 and was the first mill in New Zealand designed specifically for large scale flax fibre production.

Owned and operated by the A and L Seifert Flaxdressing Company, the mill was designed to produce 2500 tons of quality fibre from 22,000 tons of flax leaf annually. During the mill's years of production more than one million pound's worth of fibre was produced for world-wide marketing under the "Nui" brand.

The mill was built on a 300 acre site two and a half miles north of Shannon on the Shannon-Tokomaru main road (now Highway 57), at Makerua. The buildings were situated on terrace land on the eastern side of the road overlooking the Makerua Swamp (now the Opiki Plains). In those days the Makerua Swamp which covered 22,000 acres was known as the "great swamp" and was recognised for its high flax yield. During the height of the flax industry in 1916-17 there were 19 mills in the swamp, operating 42 flax-stripping machines and employing more than 700 workers. The mills dressed about 8500 tons of fibre, providing about 250,000 pound's worth of exports each year for many years.

"Flaxies" of many nationalities were drawn to Miranui by the prospects of good working conditions and steady employment, and numbers increased from 150 employed at the start of production to more than 300 during the mid-1920s. The "flaxies" enjoyed excellent facilities at the mill including accommodation in comfortable bunkhouses for 15s 6d a week plus meals. There was a dining room which could seat 130 people, a reading room and a billiards room with two tables. A store provided the workers with a wide range of goods.

Miranui operated seven stripping machines in the main building and two in a smaller building called the Weka mill. These machines removed the outer tissue of the flax leaf exposing the strong coarse fibre which was used for making ropes and cordage. The stripping shed was 205 ft long and 74 ft wide and was the largest building on the site.

In the centre of the shed was the power house containing two huge Tangye suction gas engines made in Birmingham, England, the larger of which developed 120hp and the smaller 115hp.

In front of the stripping shed were the yards where 400 tons of flax could be stored after being transported from the swamp. The yards were floored with wooden planks secured to concrete pillars to raise the flax above the ground level to protect it against flood waters. The scutching shed stood on a hill behind the stripping shed, and was surrounded by fields where the fibre was taken to dry and bleach in the sun. The building had 8000 sq ft of floor space and contained the scutching machines and the presses for baling the

fibre. The scutching machines flailed the stripped fibre with beaters to remove any outer tissue still remaining, and the power to drive these machines was supplied by two gas engines each of which developed 90 horse power.

The mill obtained its water supply mainly from two large artificial reservoirs, the larger holding 750,000 gallons, and there was also a plentiful supply of artesian water.

A unique feature of the mill was the 3ft gauge tramway which ran from the mill three and a half miles into the swamp. A small five ton steam locomotive was bought from Bagnall and Co of England in 1907 to haul the specially built flax wagons. Unfortunately even this tiny machine proved too heavy for the tracks across the swamps and it was sold to work later on bush tramways on the Waitakere coast near Auckland and near Raetihi in the central North Island. Teams of horses therefore took over on the flax tramway from 1910.

History of the Mill

The history of Miranui is linked with the history of the New Zealand flax trade and the influence this industry had on the prosperity and development of the Manawatu district.

In pre-European times the Maori made considerable use of flax, using the undressed leaves to make baskets, mats, fishing nets and many other items of everyday use. They obtained the fibre by scraping the leaf with the sharp edge of a mussel shell called the kuku. The operation of scraping is called "haro" and the fibre is "muka." The Maori recognised about 60 varieties of flax, and the general name for it was "harekeke" or "korari."

Captain Cook was greatly impressed with the Maori's use of the plant and on his return to England introduced it to Europe. The early flax traders arrived and employed Maori tribes to strip the flax in exchange for guns, blankets and trinkets, the price of a musket being a ton of dressed flax — still more flax was required to obtain the powder and ammunition.

A regular export trade to Australia and England began about 1830, and with the invention of a mechanical stripper to dress the flax, small one-stripper mills were erected throughout the country. In 1831 the price of flax on the English market was from 18 pound to 25 pound a ton, and in one year alone 1062 tons were exported.

The flax industry faced stiff competition from other fibres such as jute and manilla, and the availability of these fibres greatly influenced the price of the New Zealand product. The first big boom the New Zealand industry enjoyed was in 1869-70 when fibre fetched prices of up to 40 pounds a ton, but a drop to 20 pounds a ton in 1873 put many flaxmillers out of business.

The boom which preceded the building of Miranui began in 1898, was caused by the shortage of manilla from the Philippine Islands and lasted for ten years. During this period there were vast improvements made in the design of mill buildings and machinery. A

compulsory grading system was introduced to ensure that the finest quality of fibre was maintained and associations were formed to look after the interests of mill owners and the flaxworkers. In 1906 there were 240 flaxmills in New Zealand with more than 4000 workers producing about 557,000 pounds' worth of exports.

The first Manawatu flaxmills were built during the first flax boom and by 1889 there were 50 mills in the district, most of them in the Foxton area. Low prices forced most of these mills to close and by 1895 there were only six left. In later years the Manawatu district produced nearly 80 per cent of the country's exported fibre.

When the second boom arrived in 1898, the Makerua swamp regarded up to this time as worthless, came under the scrutiny of speculative landbuyers. The swamp was covered with small flax plants growing about 30 inches high, a veritable carpet of potential wealth.

The flax growing area extended from about two miles north of Shannon on the western side of the North Island Main Trunk line west to the Manawatu River. The boundary of the flax swamp followed the river as far north as Linton some 12 miles from Shannon and to a point several miles from Foxton. In all, the flax covered an area of some 14,500 acres out of the 22,000 acre swamp. The swamp itself was part of the 215,000 acres of land granted by the New Zealand Government to the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company on completion of their railway line from Wellington to Longburn in 1886.

By 1902 10,000 acres of the swampland around Linton and Tokomaru in the north and along the Manawatu river had been sold. The remaining 12,000 acres near Shannon was regarded as worthless and unsuitable for further development as it was considered too low for natural drainage to be effective while pumping would have been uneconomic.

In 1902 Dr W. A. Chapple, a medical practitioner of Wellington, paid 1000 pounds to the company for an option over the last unsold block of the swamp. He formed the Makerua Estate Company with Messrs John Plimmer and Sydney Kirkaldie, also of Wellington, and Alfred Seifert, a young flaxmiller of Waka on the Manawatu River between Foxton and Shannon. The company bought 12,343 acres of potentially flaxbearing land at two pounds 10s an acre, a total cost of 30,857 pounds 10s. The company courageously set about draining the land in spite of opinions of the exports who said it could not be done, and after thousands of pounds had been spent their efforts were rewarded.

The draining had a beneficial effect on the spindly flax plants and soon acres of flax growing eight feet high and over covered the "worthless" land. The land was divided into blocks and sold to flaxmillers at a handsome profit.

In 1906 Alfred Seifert, who had observed the operations of large textile mills overseas, conceived the idea of building a flaxmill on a larger scale than had ever been attempted before. His brother Louis, also a Manawatu flaxmiller, was also interested in the project and together they formed the A. and L. Seifert Flaxdressing Co. This company bought the last big

flax block in the Makerua swamp from the Makerua Estate Co, the Miranui block of 4200 acres, for 13 pounds 10s an acre, a total price of 56,700 pounds.

Alfred was only 29 years of age when he became the managing director of the company. The other directors were Messrs Louis Seifert, Hope Gibbons (chairman of directors), Maurice Cohen, H. F. Gibbons, J. P. Innes and C. J. Monro. Alfred was assisted with the plans of the mill by the consulting engineer Mr J. A. Merrett, and the company's architect was Mr L. G. West.

In January 1907 newspaper reports stated that the construction of the largest flaxmill in the colony would begin at Makerua. Eleven months later on Saturday November 16, 1907, more than 150 people gathered at the mill to witness the official opening ceremony performed by the Hon R. McNab, Minister of Lands and Agriculture.

At a luncheon held in the spacious dining room, Mr Hope Gibbons presided over the speeches given by a number of the visitors. He also read a telegram from the Premier Sir Joseph Ward who expressed his regret at being unable to attend, but who wished the company every success in its enterprise. Later in the day the visitors and press members were given a conducted tour of the mill and the flax fields.

Soon after beginning operations the company was faced with a fall in the price of flax fibre, and higher running costs. But gradually the price improved and production was increased from under 1000 tons of fibre produced in the first years to over 2000 tons by 1911. In 1908 a mortgage of 45,000 pounds was raised from the AMP Society, being the amount owed to the Makerua Estate Co for the purchase of the Miranui land. This debt was paid by 1919.

Frequent battles were waged against floodwaters which spilled from the Manawatu River into the swamp and over the years systematic draining of the land continued, coupled with flood control work. A fire in 1912 caused 350 pounds' worth of damage to the scutching shed and another in January 1914 destroyed a bunkhouse.

The outbreak of war in 1914 caused a major disruption to the mill. The stripping machines were shut down for three months after war was declared and the wages and salaries of mill workers were reduced as the price of fibre dropped to only 18 pounds a ton. However the low price was only short-lived and the following year the price rose to 28 pounds a ton and the year after that the company's annual report noted that the quantity of fibre milled was a record since the company started.

The summer of 1917 was the driest experienced for many years and the company lost twenty-two and a half acres of flax in a fire which swept through parts of the swamp. Neighbouring mills also lost heavily and it was estimated that some 500 acres of flax were burned that summer.

A critical period began in 1918 when a mysterious disease appeared, which started to attack and kill the flax. The disease first was noted in the north-west of the flax area on the Tane mill land sited near the present Opiki hall.

Almost immediately 200 acres of Miranui flax was similarly stricken, the cause being a virus, which

became known as the yellow leaf disease. The virus damaged the roots and the crown of the plant, cutting off the supply of nutrient to the leaves causing them to turn yellow and become shorter and narrower. Adjacent mills were also affected with some of the smaller ones being forced to close due to the shortage of healthy leaf.

The worried mill owners engaged a government scientist Dr L. Cockayne, to investigate the disease in an effort to stop it spreading any further. But no cure was found, although various views were expressed regarding its cause. The most widely held opinion was that the gradual draining of the swamp had precipitated it. Meanwhile the yellow leaf disease continued unchecked and half the flaxcrop in the swamp was either destroyed or damaged.

By 1921 Miranui has lost 35 per cent of it flax and in December of that year the two-stripper Weka mill, also owned by the company, was closed down due to the shortage of leaf. A cut in wages was made the following year, as although the quality of fibre produced at Miranui remained high, production continued to fall.

With the closure of the Weka mill the seven strippers at Miranui continued in operation until 1922 when these were reduced to four, then to two in 1923, when only 1000 tons of fibre, less than half the normal production, was achieved. Grave fears were expressed that even these might have to stop production and the future looked black for the company.

"Our only hope is an abnormally high price for fibre" stated a dismal annual report to the directors. The yellow leaf disease had proved so disastrous that the leaf dropped from an average yield of 30 tons an acre for three to four year old crops to seven or eight tons an acre for crops five or six years old.

The company even postponed a decision to install electric power at the mill, due to the cost of conversion, even though it would result in a 13s a ton saving in production. The power was supplied by the new hydro-electric dam at Mangahao a few miles to the south, and was available from September 1924. The company finally made the change to electricity in 1926.

In 1919 experiments had been carried out at the mill by a chemist Professor Easterfield, on the prospects of manufacturing industrial alcohol by fermenting the juices of the flax leaf. Although the project never went beyond the experimental stages, tests indicated that 198.4 gallons of 95 per cent alcohol were daily flowing down the Miranui drains — equal to an annual rate of 50,000 gallons. It was reasoned that if the company could obtain 1s 6d a gallon for the liquid it could be worth 3750 pounds a year. Alfred Seifert went to the United States of America to purchase the necessary equipment but instead ordered a methylated spirit plant which was installed and operating in the mill by 1920. A small amount of paper was also manufactured from the flax waste.

In a desperate effort to save the foundering industry a new method of cutting flax was tried. This was the sideleafing method, by which only the mature leaves of the flaxplant were cut, leaving the centre "sucker" leaf and the two supporting leaves on each side to

grow again. This resulted in an increase of 8s 6d a ton more in production costs, but it also gave a 90 per cent greater yield as each plant could be cut yearly instead of every four or five years by the "hook" method. The cutting was carried out with a sharp knife and required more men than the old method.

Much to the relief of all concerned the sideleafing method was held to be a success and heralded Miranui's most productive period. In the initial stages the overall production rate remained low, only 1511 tons being produced compared with the annual total of 2400 tons before the war. This reflected the decline in production rate throughout the country, which had fallen to 12,000 tons in 1924 compared to 24,000 tons during the boom years. But by 1925 the Miranui strippers were operating day and night and with the introduction of electric power the company reached its record output in 1926 of 25344 tons of leaf milled, which yielded 3118 tons of fibre.

To cope with the increased production an extra 100 men were employed, bringing the total number of workers to over 300. A camp called Central Camp was built in the swamp with a dining room to seat 50 and with sleeping quarters for 28. During this period money and men flowed freely through the district. Gambling was rife and the local hotels were always well patronised by the flaxies. The more energetic formed sports teams and the Miranui rugby team won a number of trophies in local competitions. The two-up school held at the mill every fortnight on pay day enjoyed a notorious popularity and gamblers came from miles around to try their luck.

There are still those in the district who remember the convoys of 50 or more workers riding their bicycles every morning from Shannon out to the mill. The festive occasion of the year was the Miranui Ball, which was held in the Druids Hall at Shannon. The hall was decorated with streamers of flax fibre, and with flax leaf and flax bales, and no doubt a merry time was had by all.

But unfortunately the sideleafing success was short-lived as it was found that the continuous cutting was adversely affecting the flax by making the leaves grow smaller. Reluctantly the method was stopped and production immediately plummeted to below 2000 tons. In 1923 when the yellow-leaf disease was at its height and fears for the mill's future were being expressed, the company grew oats, turnips and potatoes to see if the land was suitable for such crops. Estimates were also made as to the benefits of converting the land to dairying and raising cattle in the event of a total flax failure. Therefore with the final blow of the sideleafing failure the company reluctantly decided that flaxmilling was no longer profitable and their only alternative was to sell the mill and to farm the land.

In 1927, the mill, its equipment and 3105 acres of flaxland was sold for 46 pounds an acre to a new company, Miranui Ltd. The old company retained 1286 acres, consisting of 258 acres of highland and 1028 acres of swamp, only 242 acres of which were flaxbearing. Miranui Ltd continued flaxdressing on a reduced scale until the diminishing flax and the economic depression finally forced the company to

stop operations in May 1933. The remaining 50 staff sought Government relief work.

Today there is little evidence of the once flourishing industry. The great swamps have been drained and converted into valuable farmland and most of the flax has disappeared. The last flaxmill in the Manawatu, at Foxton, closed in August 1974, ending an era which began with the first settlers. Most of the Miranui mill

was demolished when the land was taken over for farming. Only the remains of the scutching shed can be seen on the site today serving as a mute reminder of the past. However the name Miranui lives on, as the property which occupies the site has retained the name, which is displayed at the old entrance to the mill for all to see — a reminder of the days of "the big mill."



(1) A photo taken in 1916 of the Directors of the A and L Seifert Flaxdressing Company which operated the "Miranui" Flaxmill from 1907 to 1927. From left: Messrs Louis Seifert; H.F. Gibbons; Alfred Seifert (Managing Director); C.J. Monro; J.P. Innes; Maurice Cohen; Hope Gibbons (Chairman of Directors). Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.

Alfred and Louis Seifert

John Herbert Seifert was born in 1831 at Gassnitz Sax Altenborg, Germany, and became a cabinet maker. He emigrated to New Zealand in the ship "Zealandia" in 1858, and continued his trade in New Zealand for a while before taking up farming on Kaiapoi Island, North Canterbury.

He married Miss Jane Brown who came to New Zealand in the ship "William Miles" in 1861. Later he moved to North Loburn, Canterbury, and first started in the flax industry at Mt Thomas with two of his sons. Soon afterwards the flax market declined and he went back to farming until he retired to live in Rangiora.

Six of the Seifert brothers, Herman, George, Fred, Alfred, Louis and Walter, were all actively engaged in the flaxdressing industry. The seventh son, Robert, died in South America. In 1906 it was mentioned that an estimated 15 per cent of the total hemp output of New Zealand was produced under the Seiferts' name.

Alfred Seifert was born in North Loburn in 1877 and was the fourth son. He was educated at the public school and after a short time spent in farming, he joined his brothers in a flaxmill near Westport. In 1894 he joined his eldest brother, Mr Herman Seifert, in a flaxmill near Lake Wanaka. He moved to the North Island in 1898 and in May of that year joined his brothers George and Frederick Seifert in owning a mill by the Oroua bridge. The firm soon took over another mill on Aker's property.

The partnership was dissolved in 1899 and Alfred started a mill of his own on the Heaton Park estate. In the same year he married Miss Esther Blondell of Winton, Southland.

He became managing director of the A and L Seifert Flaxdressing Co ("Miranui") in 1906 and remained so until 1926 when the company was sold to Miranui Ltd. He carried out many experiments on the flax plants to improve their quality and yield.

In later years he was engaged in farming and potato growing and was chairman of the Potato Growers' Association for several years. Among the other offices he held was that of President of the New Zealand Flaxmillers' Association, he was a member of the Palmerston North City Council for two terms, chairman of the Makerua Drainage Board for some years and a member for 25 years. The Manawatu Oroua River Board also claimed his interest as did the Horowhenua Electric Power Board of which he was a member since its inception in 1923. He was one of the founders of the Manawatu Daily Times and held the position of chairman of directors.

He was an enthusiastic golf player and was chairman of the New Zealand Golf Council's Research Committee, a member of the Palmerston North Young Men's Literary and Debating Society and a former Palmerston North Rotary Club member.

He died at Palmerston North on August 11th, 1945, aged 68, after a short illness. A flaxmill owner at 21, head of the largest flaxmill in New Zealand at 29, this was the calibre of the man who conceived "Miranui."

Louis Seifert was also born in North Loburn and entered the flaxmilling industry in the Rangitikei district. He operated two mills there until he sold them and went to England and America. On his return he bought a mill at Rangitane near the Oroua bridge and built two other mills after having acquired a considerable area of flaxbearing land. He employed 60 men at these mills.

He became a director of the A & L Seifert Flaxdressing company and when his brother Alfred was away on business he took over the running of the mill. He also set up an experimental flax cultivation scheme in Queensland, Australia.

He died in 1953 after a lingering illness.



(2) Left: The largest flaxmill ever built in New Zealand — "Miranui" about 1910. In the foreground is the main entrance to the mill off the Tokomaru-Shannon main road. The mill buildings are, from left: the stripping shed, the scutching shed, the mill office and the dining room with the bunkhouses at the rear. This view is looking towards the Tararua ranges. Note the loaded wagon and horses in the centre. Photo: J. McNeile

(3) Below: Construction in progress on an unidentified section of the mill. Horsepower was a valuable asset to the builder. Photo: J. McNeile.



(4) The mill's five ton "Bagnall" locomotive carrying guests and members of the press on the day of the official opening. They are returning from a tour of the Makerua flax swamp. The engine is passing beneath the railway line owned by the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company which passed the mill. The mill owners paid the railway company the sum of 1 pound for many years for the right to pass beneath the line. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.



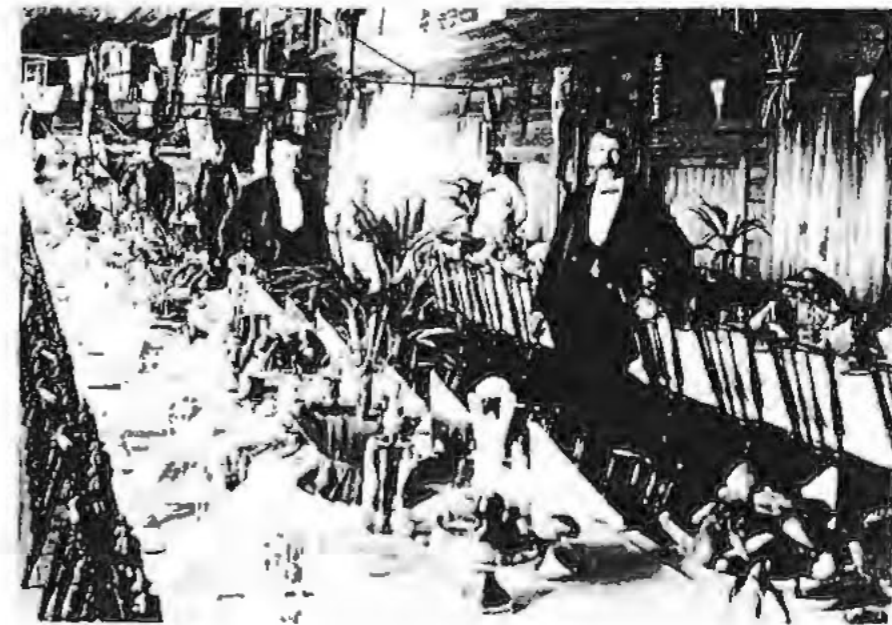
(5 and 6): Left, Mill managers about 1911. From left: Messrs Frank Lichfield (secretary); Dick Webb (mill manager); Bill Sherman (swamp manager); Louis Seifert (director); James Hallam (accountant). Photo: J. McNeile.

... and the workers (below). A "family" photograph taken outside the mill office about 1911. At this time "Miranui" employed about 200 workers and the average wage was nine shillings and sixpence a day. Photo: J. McNeile.



(7) Above: The well-appointed and spacious dining room with the three bunkhouses at the rear. "Miranui" workers enjoyed facilities envied by all other flaxies in New Zealand. Each bunkhouse could accommodate 24 men in comfort with two beds to each room. There was also a reading room and a billiards room.

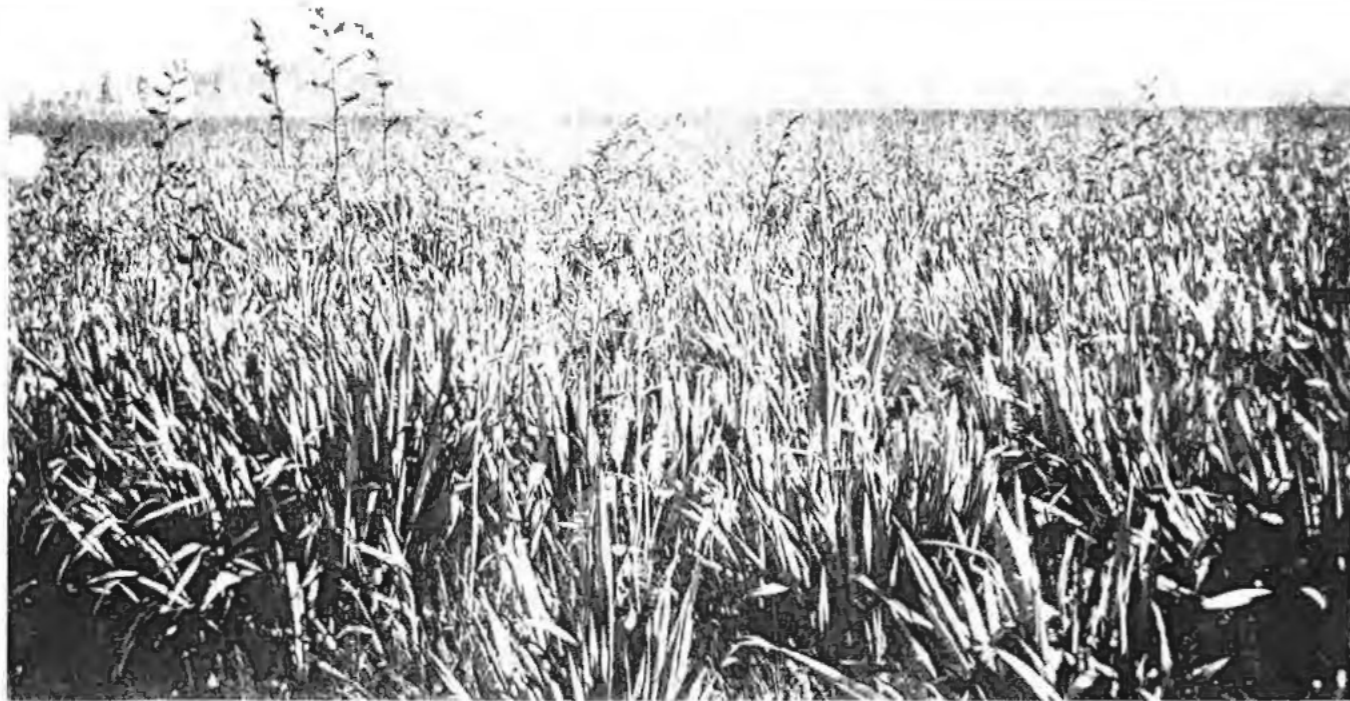
(8) Below: The dining room and staff at "Miranui" at the official opening of the mill on Saturday, November 16th, 1907. The dining room could seat 130 people. The man on the right was the chief cook, nick-named the "Immortal Phipps." Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.





(9) Above: A view of the bunkhouses and dining room looking west towards the entrance to the mill in the right background. One of the reservoirs which supplied water to the mill can also be seen. Flax fibre is bleaching on the ground and on fences. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.

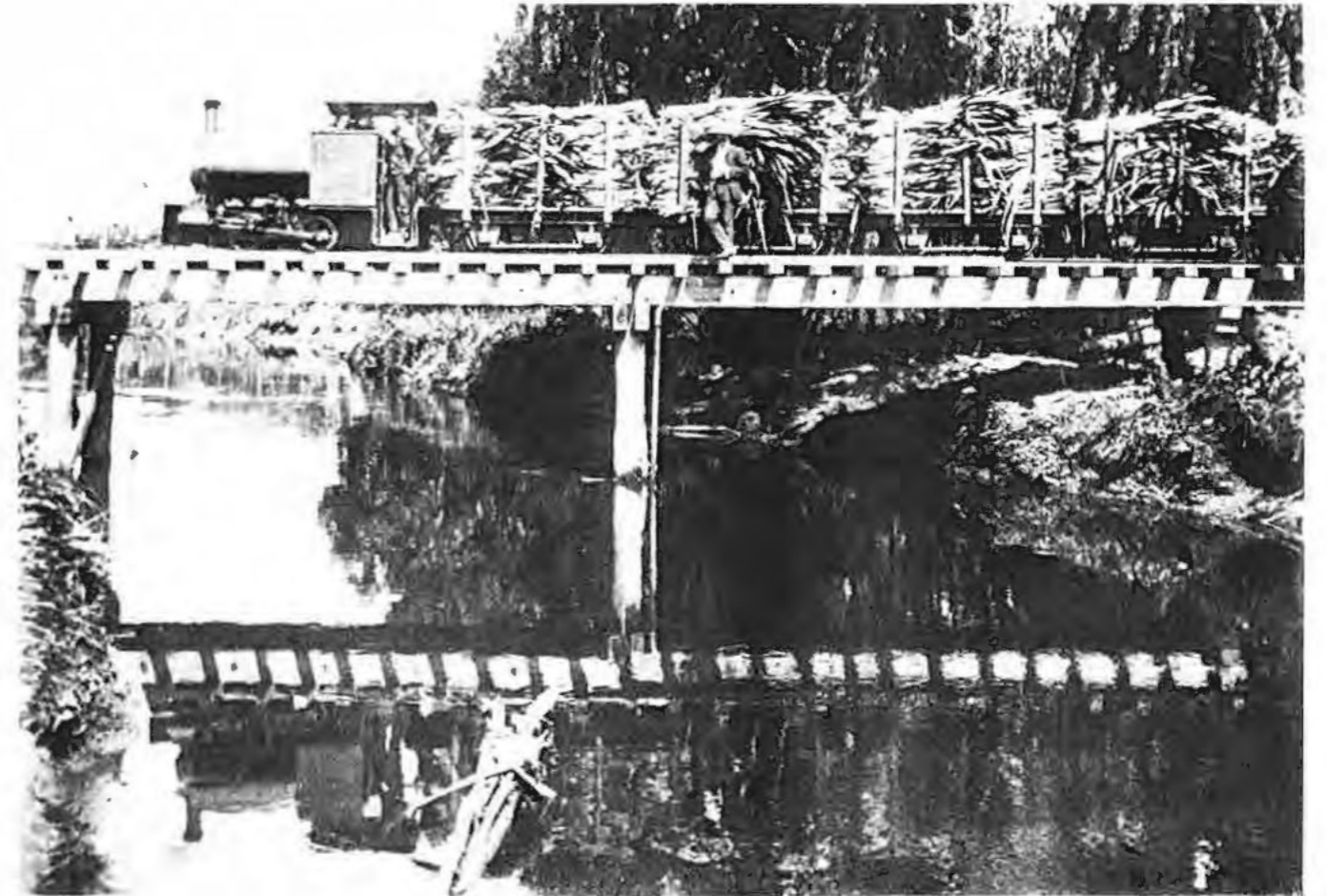
(10) Below: A scene now disappeared forever - acres of flax growing in the Makerua swamp. The leaf of the native New Zealand flax plant contains a strong coarse fibre which was made into ropes and cordage, and in later years, woolpacks and bindertwine. The leaves of the plant are 3 ft to 10ft long and 3 inches to 4 inches wide when fully grown. It took the flaxplant 3 to 4 years to grow to a sufficient size to allow cutting. Note the seed stalks growing above the flax which the flaxies called "claddy-sticks." The bush in the background marked the boundary of the swamp and was a popular hunting area. Photo: J. McNeile.

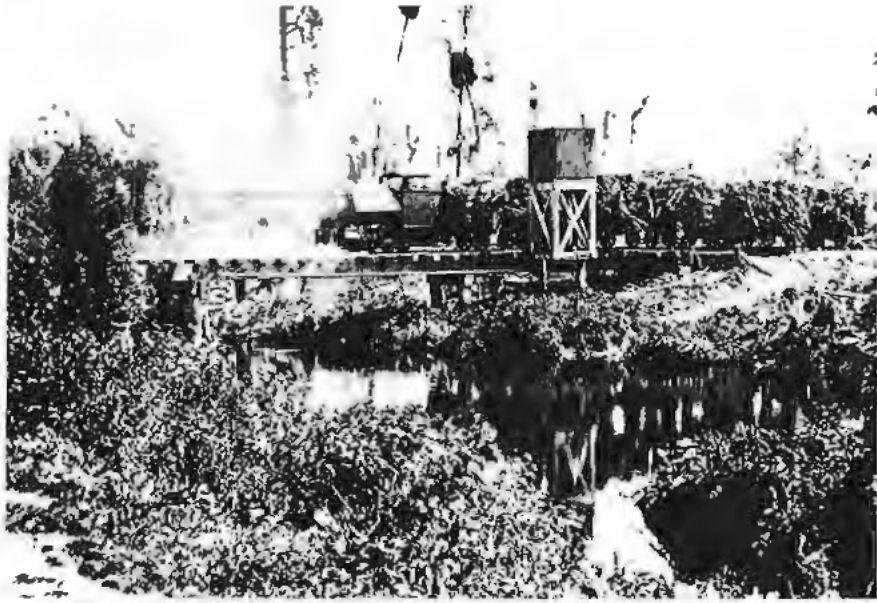


(11) Right: Flaxcutters having a welcome rest amongst the flax. The swamp was divided into blocks which were cut once every four years by the flaxcutters who used a sharp blade shaped like a reap hook. The portions of the block allotted to each group of cutters were called "breaks". The flax was cut about one foot above the base of the plant and tied into bundles of about 25 to a ton and stacked for the "trammies" to collect. Over three acres of flax was cut daily and the average worker cut 3 1/2 to 4 tons of flax in a 8 hour day. About 22,000 tons of leaf was cut annually. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.



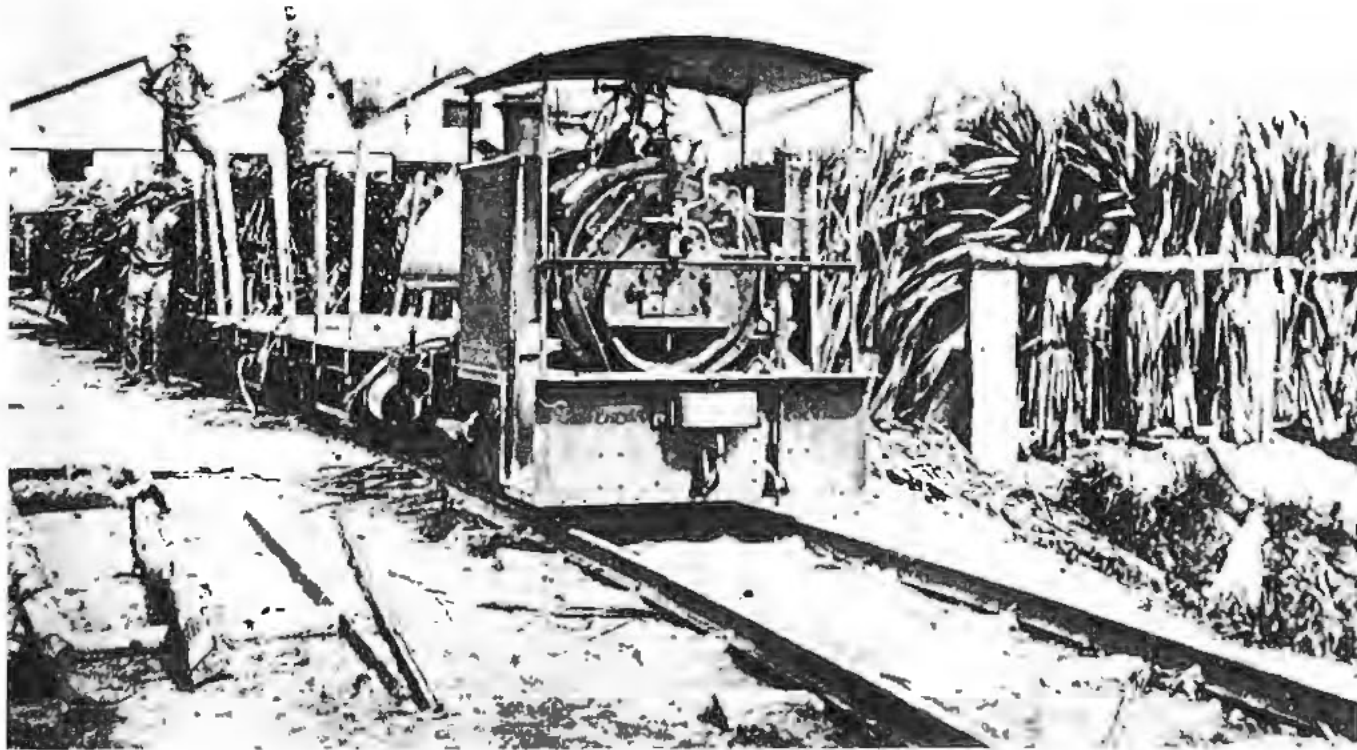
(12) Below: The locomotive with a full load of flax pauses on the bridge over the tranquil Tokomaru River. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.





(13 and 14) Above: A picturesque scene of the engine crossing a stream on the boundary of the Makerua swamp. Photo: J. McNeile.

Below: Journey's end. Unloading the flax at the storage yards in front of the stripping shed at Miranui. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.



(15) Right: When the locomotive proved too heavy for the track in the swamp, horses were used to pull the flax-laden wagons or trams to the mill. Two of these powerful animals, half light and half draught, hauled five trams and three horses were needed to pull a train of 9 trams. Each tram when fully loaded weighed over a ton. Over 70 horses were used to carry out the various tasks at the mill and in the swamp. In 1920 the horses were replaced with motor trucks. The "trammies" drove the horses and laid the rails into the blocks of flax. Over 11 chains of tramlines were pulled up and relaid every day. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.

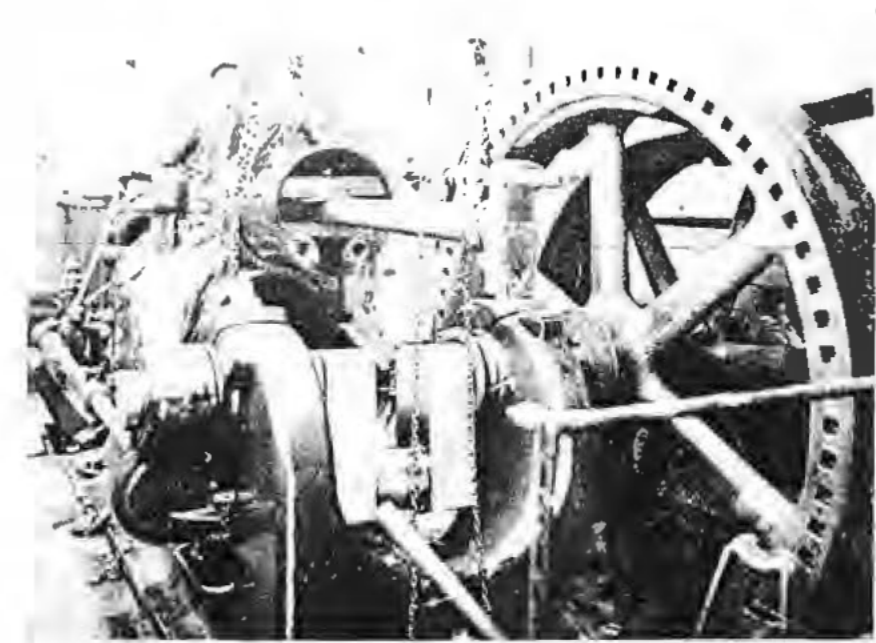


(16) Below: Early view of the stripping shed at "Miranui" taken shortly after the mill began operating in 1907. Photo: J. McNeile





(17) Above: A rear view of the stripping shed in the early days with the 750,000 gallon reservoir in the foreground. The water was used to wash the flax fibre during the stripping process. Photo: J. McNeile.



(19) Above: The "Tangye" suction gas engine used to drive the seven stripping machines at "Miranui". Two of these engines were installed in the engine house. The largest produced 120 h.p. and the other 115 h.p. These engines gave good service until 1916 when they were replaced with a more powerful triple expansion condensing steam engine. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.



(18) Left: A view of the stripping shed taken in the 1920s. Note the differences between this photo and the earlier one. A tall chimney stack has been added and seven sets of rails run right into the building to feed the stripping machines. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.



(20) Below: Some of the "flaxies" employed in the stripping shed about 1916. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.



(21) Left: One of the seven stripping machines in operation. A "benchloader" placed the leaf butt first onto the stripping table and the "feeder" passed the leaf into the mouth of the machine. The leaf was fed between a revolving metal drum and a fixed metal bar where raised flanges of blunt steel on the drum struck the leaf at about 2000 rpm, stripping off the outer tissue and leaving the fibre to fall beneath the machine. The leaf was fed through the machine at 25 cwt an hour. Photo Palmerston North Public Library



(22) Left: Once stripped, the fibre was placed on an endless chain by the "catcher" and washed thoroughly before being collected and twisted into hanks and then hung over draining poles where they remained for about 24 hours before being collected by the "paddockers" Photo: I. Matheson

(23) Right top: The hanks were collected by "paddockers" on horse and cart and taken to the fields where they were laid out on the ground in rows to dry and bleach by the action of the weather and the sunlight. After three or four days when the upper side was sufficiently bleached, the fibre was turned over to bleach the other side. After about 10 days the fibre if dry was hanked up and either taken to the scutching shed or made into stacks. If it had not dried sufficiently the fibre was hung on drying lines or fences. Photo Palmerston North Public Library.



(24) Right centre Flax bleaching at "Miranui". The mill buildings are in the background. There were about 250 acres of bleaching paddocks at "Miranui". Photo: Palmerston North Public Library



(25) Right below: Two "flaxies" making a stack of bleached fibre. These stacks were cone shaped to shed rain more easily and stood 12ft to 16ft high. The tails of the hanks faced outwards, and the stack could be left intact for several months with only the outer hanks becoming discoloured. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library





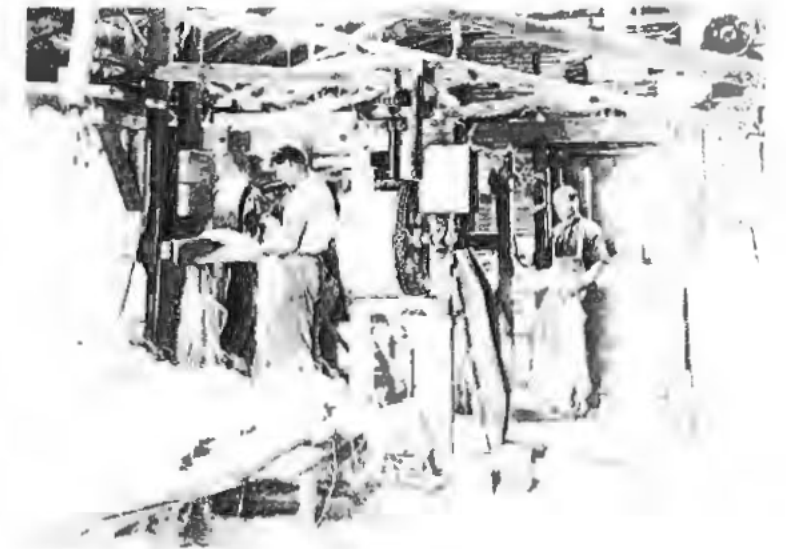
(26) Above: Fibre bleaching on fences and on the ground at "Miranui." J. McNeile.



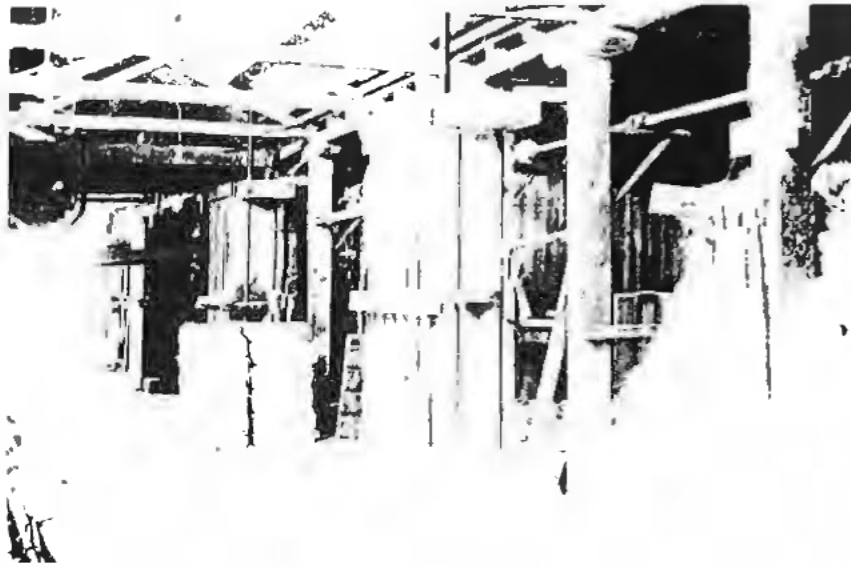
(27) Left: Fibre caught by floodwaters which frequently inundated large areas of the "Miranui" land Photo: Palmerston North Public Library



(28) Above: Men working in the scutching shed at "Miranui." The "scutcher" poked one end of the hank through a slot in the front of the box-like machine while holding onto the other end. Inside the machine a beater with six arms revolved at about 200 rpm inside a six foot diameter drum, and flailed the fibre to remove any remaining vegetation. Once the fibre was thoroughly beaten it was pulled out and the other end put in to complete the process. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.

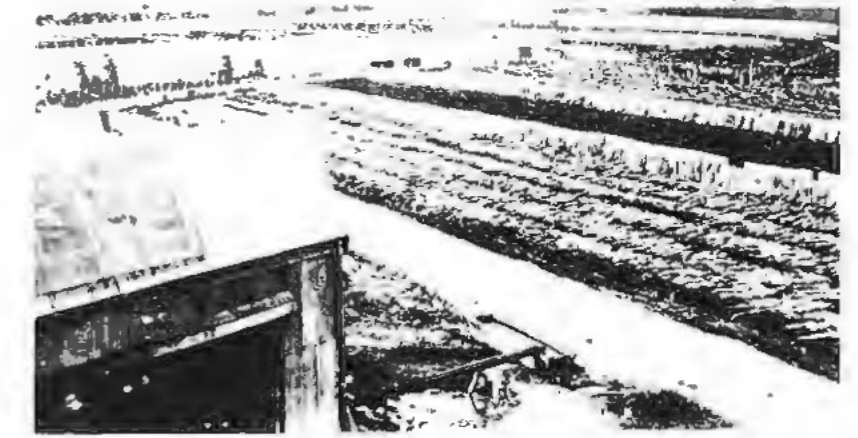
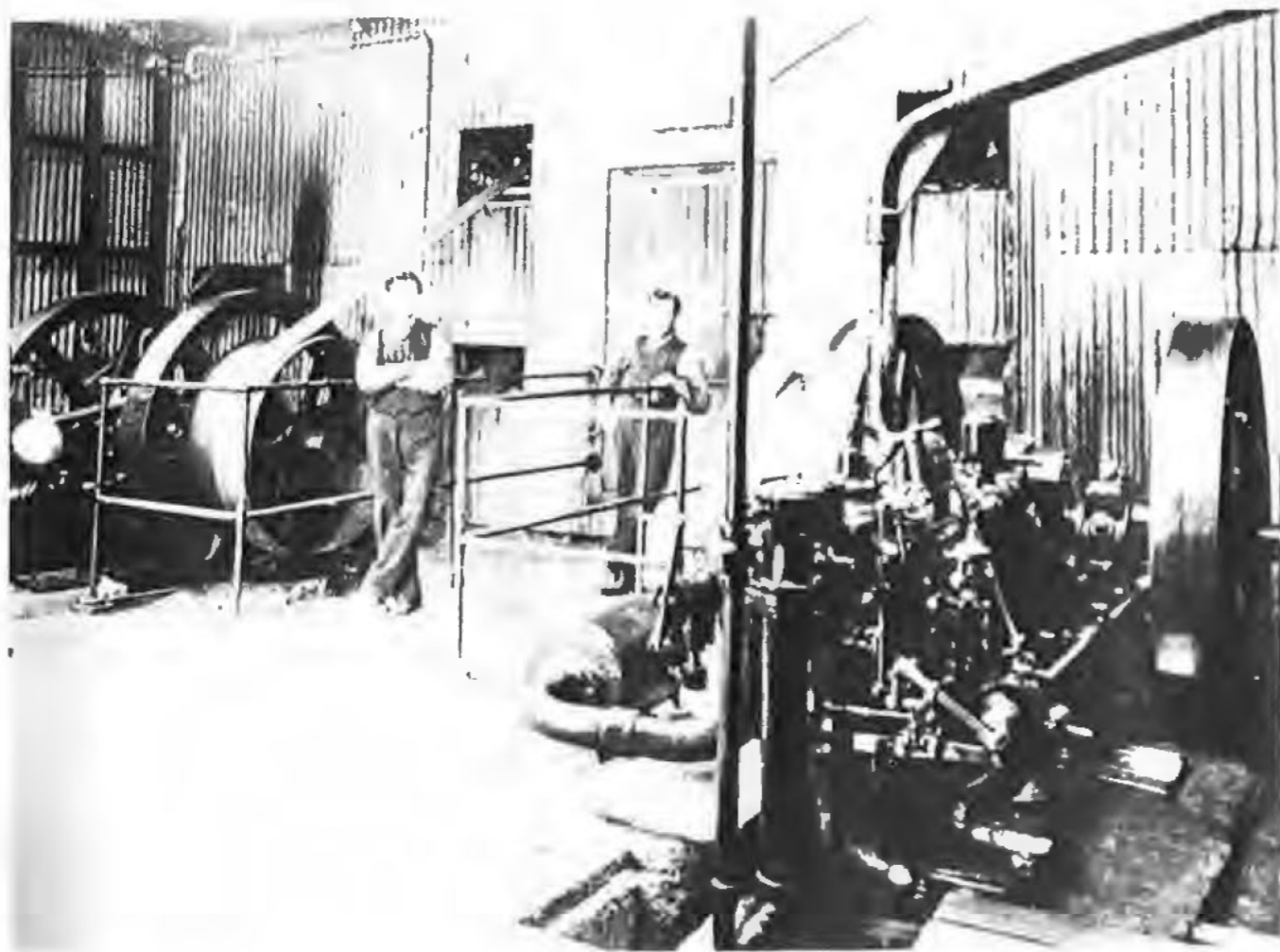


(29) Right: A later development was the automatic scutching machine, seen here operating in the "Weka" mill at "Miranui", which operated on the same principle as the hand type, but instead of the men holding the fibre, it was held by a grip after being thrown over an endless chain which carried one end of the fibre into the scutcher. After it was scutched it was drawn out to alter the grip to the other end of the fibre. Photo: I. Matheson



(30) Left: After the fibre was scutched it was taken to the five wooden screw presses installed in the scutching shed. In the early days the screw presses were operated by hand but when this photo was taken, they were power driven. The scutched fibre was made into hanks of about 5lbs in weight and pressed into bales of about 4cwt. The size of the bales was length 4ft, width 2ft, and depth 2ft. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library

(31) Below: The gas engines, each of 90 hp which drove the "Miranui" scutching machines. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library



(32) Right top: Fibre bleaching at "Miranui". This photo was taken from the roof of the scutching shed. Several cone shaped stacks can be seen on the left. Photo: J. McNeile



(33) Right centre: A wagon-load of fibre passes fibre bleaching on the ground. Photo: Palmerston North Public Library.



(34) Right lower: Unloading bales of "Miranui" fibre at the Shannon railway station. About five bales of fibre weighed one ton. The men are, from left, Reg Tippler, Bert Tremewan, and Keri "the Maori". Photo: V. Tippler



(35) Above: A group of flaxies posing by the two-stripper "Weka" mill at "Miranui." Some of the descendants of these men still live in the Shannon area. The men are, left back, Messrs Norman Gill; Harold Buckman; Fred Small, Jack Olsen; Ted Gingle; Jack Moss. Front: Lionel Buckman; Gus Burke, Vern Pope; Lyndsay Randell. Photo: V. Tippler.

(36) Below: The entrance to the mill as it looks today. The gateway can be seen on highway 57 about 2½ miles north of Shannon. In the old days the stripping shed was situated beyond the trees on the left, and the access road led to the office, with the dining room and bunkhouses on the right. The remains of the time-worn scutching shed still stand where it was built in 1907. Photo: B. Ayson.



1. Part of old
scutching shed
(large corrugated iron
shed)
On Donalds' property
Purchased 1994/5 ^{2nd} Co-sin of
Brendan ^{1st} Tom Matheson

Farnely Gibbons property

2. Water reservoir
(miniature lake)
used now for
swimming pool
Property, in front of Donalds'

3. Part of old "Weka"
mill (corrugated
iron shed)
On Spalls property.
Weka mill ran
about 1911 to 1921
in association with "MARA WOI"

4. Tunnel under road
and railway
(modified) - on site of
old tramway.

5. old ~~farm~~ house
[on ~~fall~~ property
has a manager's
house for
"Weka" mill.

Yours in Bob Dyson's
book. He says
Miramiri closed
1933. I have
subsequently that
1912 started
reopened
1935 - 1936.
(with govt subsidy).
So will finally
closed 1936.

Stuartson
18/12/95.

Quinship

1. A. & L. Seifert's
Flax Dressing Co. Ltd

1907-1927
Company subdivided 1927-1929

party
reson

2. Mirani Ltd

1927-1931
(went into liquidation)

3. Gibbons family

(Hope Gibbons
and sons
and daughters)

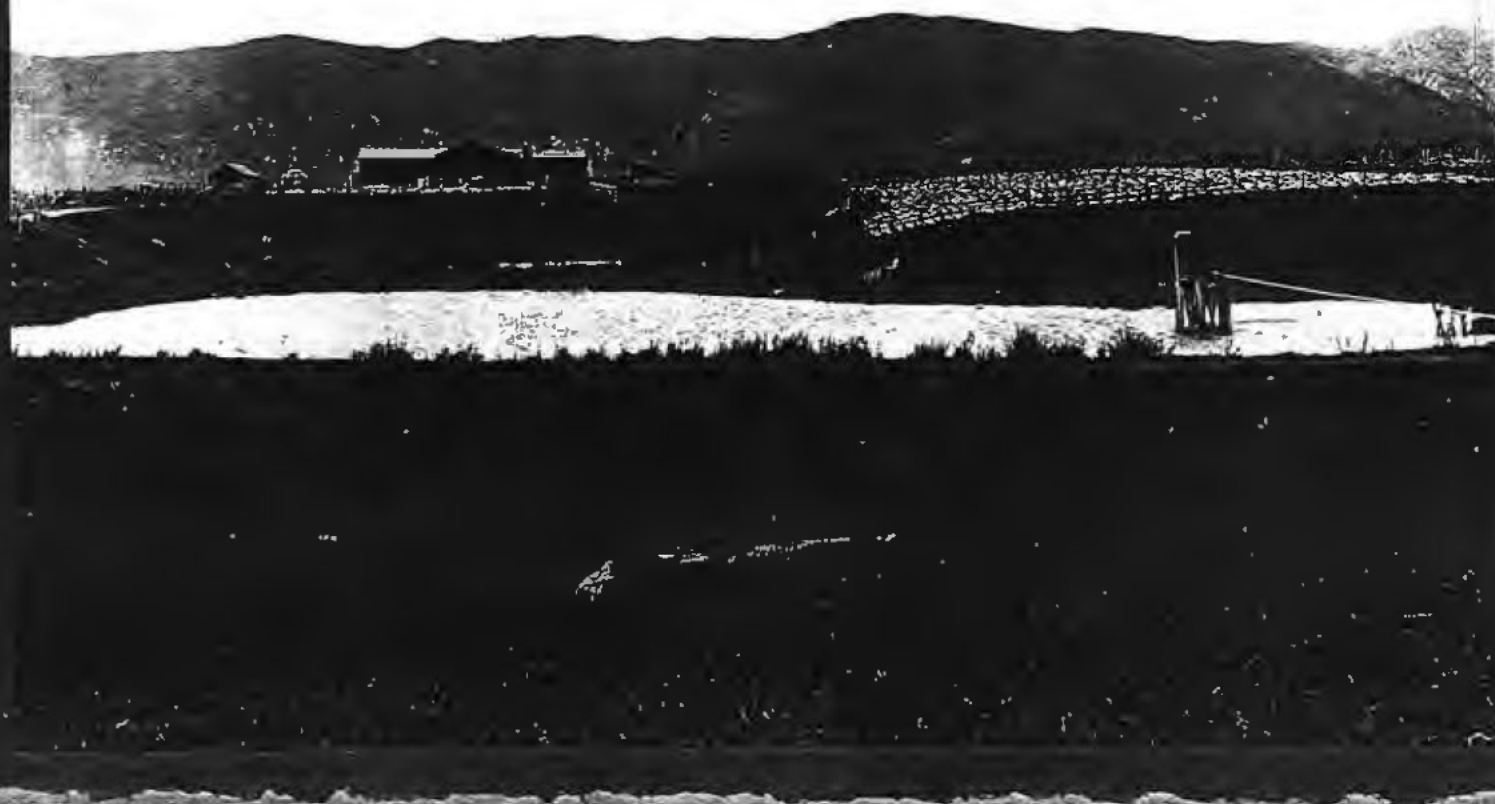
1931-1936

"GRAND"

—————

of
y.

Souvenir Miranui & Wella Flaxmills' (Album) 1917
(Owned by Ian Matheson, PN)



Miranui Scutching Shed showing Mill Dam
in the Foreground

Pg 22.



Weka Mill

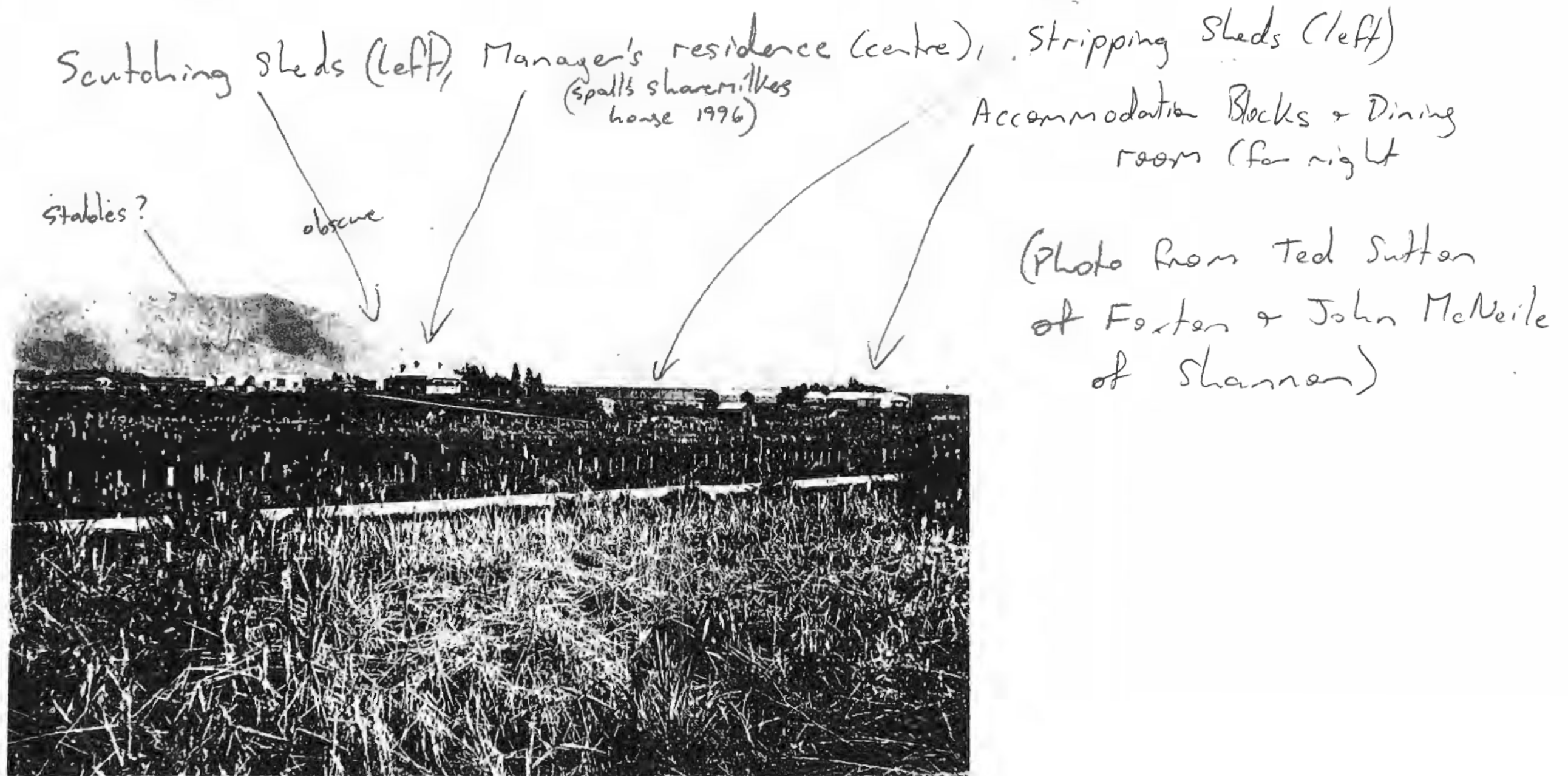
From Vol 3 of Ian Matheson's Manawatu Flaxmilling Photographic Collection

██████████ sharemilker's cottage 1976



Fibre Paddocks of Miranui Mill (1918 - or 1919)
Showing house situated to south of scutching sled
then occupied by Jim Carter, Manager of Welke Mill
- photo from Seifert family

View of Miramui Mill about 1907-8



Brick shed?
(Note 2 cart wheels
alongside)



View of Miramichi Stripping Sheds from the roof of the Scutching Sheds
about 1907-8. Looking westward towards swamp (Note train on
railway line in distance)

Photo from Ted Sutton of Foxton &
John McNeile of Shannon.