



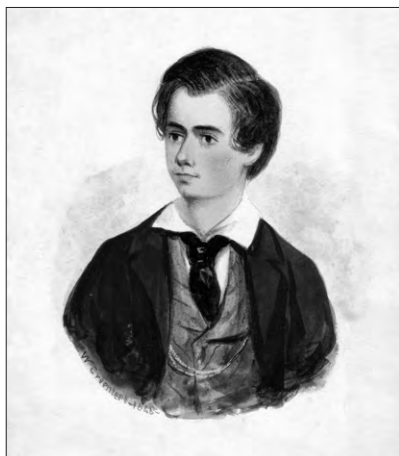
# MOUNT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Newsletter 9 • April 2009

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## Local Hero

This issue starts off with the timely discovery of a letter written by the fifteen year old Allan Kerr Taylor on board the Duke of Portland en route to New Zealand. We are very lucky to have it as it was only was transcribed from its original cross hatched form on March 7! So, this is the first time **ever** that this letter has been published after it's recent discovery in the National Library in Wellington. 'Mrs Pirie' owned the house where Allan boarded between the ages of eight and fifteen. Allan Kerr Taylor went on to buy 500 acres of land in Mt Albert and build our historic home, Alberton. We go on to note a few of our other **Mt Albert 'heroes,'** some current and some forgotten....and there are lots more still to be written about...



Sketch made of Allan Kerr Taylor in 1848 prior to leaving Scotland

My dearest Mrs Pirie,

I now sit down to write you that I may be all ready when we arrive at Auckland to post it by the first opportunity. This letter I intend to write a portion of everyday and you must not think I have been idle the rest of the passage, for I had one ready to send off by any chance that might occur, but there was no good one at all, except once that we made on a ship going to Calcutta and we put some letters on board of her, by her I wrote a note to you, I don't know if you will receive it or not, for I told the Captain to tear it to pieces if he did not meet with a ship homeward bound as it was not worthwhile posting at Calcutta. A few days after we fell in with the ship again and the Captain told us that he had spoken a ship homeward bound and had put our letters onboard. To begin perhaps from the time we set off

may be as agreeable to you as any, so I refer you back to the time, when I told you I was to go down to Gravesend on Wednesday 6th September; which accordingly I did and what was my surprise when I heard there was no Duke of Portland come down yet you can easily imagine, but as there was no way of mending what had been done, I engaged a waterman, who was to tell me when the vessel came down and to row me out to it. I asked him to recommend me to a place where I might have a dinner and a bed if necessary, all of which I had occasion for besides tea and breakfast. I can't say I spent a very happy night at Gravesend [end of page one]

for I was in too great a flurry – Next morning the ship came down and I was on board before ten A.M. it was there first that a sense of my being among strangers and alone and about to leave all that was dear to me, came across me with all its force. We left the coast of Gravesend on Friday morning and arrived at the Margate roads a few hours after and anchored as the wind was not fair for our proceeding, during the night the wind got fair and we ran down to the Downs and there waited for the Captain and a fair wind. The Captain joined us with his wife on Saturday afternoon, as I said before I can now say from experience that he is a very nice gentleman, and has been very kind to me and indeed to all, his earnest wish being to make everyone as comfortable as possible. Mrs Cubitt (Captains wife) is one of those English bred ladies, ready to go off in a swoon when anything serious happens, she is kind hearted and has been so to me especially by lending me books to while away the time and other things not worth while mentioning. We left the Downs with a fair wind on Monday 11th September (from this day the voyage is always calculated) and went

# MT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Local Hero: Allan Kerr Taylor cont. . .

on prosperously; the first land we saw after the last blink of England was the island of Porto Santo discovered by the Portuguese, on the same evening the 22nd Sep. we saw Madeira in the distance. On the 24th we saw land again the island Palma, one of the Canaries, on the 27th we were about 500 miles from the Cape de Verd islands and expected to be there in some four days as we had a beautiful breeze, but God ordered otherwise, for the next day evening (which happened to be Thursday) about six there came on a [ end of page two]

gale, little expected by the Captain or any other person on board, as it is a very rare thing in these latitudes, happening perhaps once in four or five years. It continued in all its fury till Saturday night when it first began to subside a little, to describe the storm would be impossible, as I was not on deck nor indeed any of the passengers, but I heard that the sea was one sheet of foam, nothing to be seen but sea and sky. On the Friday it raged so furiously, that a sailor who had been eighteen voyages, declared he had never seen the like, from what I have said you will see we had a very bad storm, but thank God we lost none of the ships rigging of any consequence and nobly did the ship uphold the character of the Clyde for sending the best ships. In consequence of not being prepared for such an event, some of the passengers got their clothes wet by the water coming in, but however I contrived to escape. The first thing that happened of any consequence was the death of Mr Panton's daughter; which occurred on the 7th October and he had it put up in spirits to take to Auckland, they were not very long in want of a daughter for on the 3rd November Mrs Panton gave birth to a daughter; nearest land to which she can lay claim for her birth is Trinidad. We were becalmed upon the line for about three weeks and o it was a tiresome time, the day was so hot we did not know what to do and at night we could not sleep on account of heat, I was for my part getting very ill indeed, but we got a nice wind a little past the line and it soon brought us into cold weather – and I have enjoyed excellent health since. On the 2nd November we saw Martin Vas, six miles off and also Trinidad in the distance, hereabouts we fell in with the Ajax, a new ship sent out by government with Emigrants [ end of page three]

to Otago, it left the same day with ourselves and strange we should have sailed so much alike, but now she left us in the lurch as she was as light as a cork on the water as her provisions had sunk down well when you consider there were some three or four hundred people on board, whereas we were deep in the water with a large cargo. On the 9 November at three in the morning I was awoke by a strange motion of the ship and then heard a crash, so I thought there was something wrong and accordingly got up and dressed myself as quick as possible and went on deck, and

what my astonishment when I saw the three topmasts gone and nothing but the stumps left. It appears it was one of these white squalls that did it, for they come so suddenly and are not seen, that they play destruction before you can do anything. We were very busy passengers and all and in three or four days we had done all that could be done, that is to say the spare masts were put up for every ship carries a few, but we had not enough, so the ship doesn't look the beauty she left the Downs, but however she will nicely be done up in New Zealand as it is a famed country for the masts of ships. When we rounded the Cape of Good Hope is matter of conjecture for they wont tell us the longitude, the reason I know not, but we suppose that they want to take us unexpectedly into Auckland, but were too cunning for them, in my opinion we rounded the Cape somewhere about the 21st November. We began after this to look out for St Pauls but before we reached this a rather serious affair happened, the Doctor was taken ill with bilious fever and was delirious four or five days, raving terribly, no person can manage him but the Captain, one night he was so frightened [end of page four] - [ beginning of cross hatched words on page one]

at an imaginary ghost that he jumped out of bed, knocked down the boy that was watching him and ran up to the poop and there at the stern was trying to go over board, but fortunately the Captain was on deck at the time and he stopped him at once and he was brought down and put to bed again in a few days he was able to get up for a short time and now he has quite recovered and is himself again. On the tenth of December in the evening we had a sight of St Pauls, and now is the time to begin to get impatient, knowing that we are only a few weeks sail from New Zealand, but I am afraid we will be longer than the usual run, for we have a good deal of light winds, and so we might expect, it being the height of summer in these quarters. You will no doubt be wondering how I recollect the events I related just now so well with their dates, but you must remember I have kept a sort of narrative of the weather and anecdotes of things that have happened in the ship, which I intend writing in the form of a letter to the boys, now you must not expect any thing very grand but simply the fact as it happened and as I thought it at the moment. Christmas came round as usual, but not so happy as formerly, no smiling faces to greet me on attaining my sixteenth year, New Year's day much the same. On the 3rd January 1849, we made Van Dieman's Land and on the 12th the North Cape of New Zealand and on the forenoon of the 15th January 1849 we entered Auckland Harbour. The first boat I could get I went ashore in as I was all ready, and went straight up to the Tamaki and found Richard driving the bullocks, and heard that William was in town and as it afterwards turned out, William was standing at the place where I landed and was spying me through a glass. I feel

## M.A.H.S Dates To Remember

**9th May (Saturday) 2pm.** 'Show and Tell.' Senior Citizens Club Rooms, War Memorial Park. Bring along a family story, an interesting photo or artefact from Mt Albert. You will be surprised what you can unearth from the deep recesses of your cupboards or your brain and amazed by what others have found in theirs! Each speaker has a ten minute maximum... This event is open to the public so please bring Aunt Bessie and Mrs Brown from next door. Gold coin donation. Refreshments afterwards.

**11th July (Saturday) 2pm.** 'The history of the Mt Albert shops and where to from here...' Senior Citizens Club Rooms, Rocket Park. Lisa Truttman talks us through her research on the shopping centre. Followed by brief presentations from others about specific local shops and looking at old photos. Information will be given about council planning re our town centre. Anyone with memories or opinions to share is most welcome. Open to the public. Gold coin donation.

**22nd August (Saturday) 2pm.** Annual General Meeting. Details T.B.A. Senior Citizens Club Rooms, War Memorial Park.

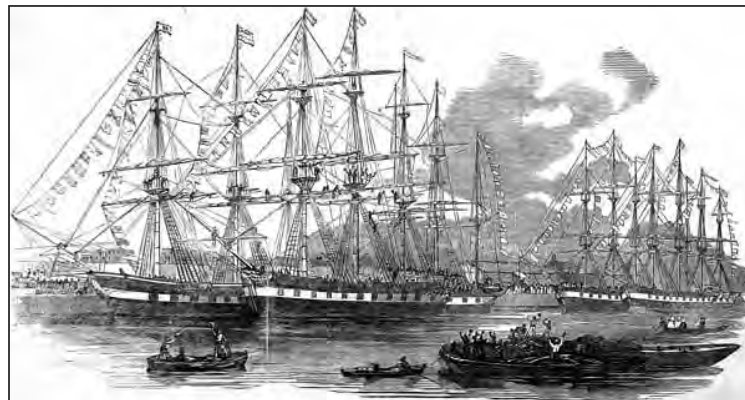
### Please, Please, Please...

M.A.H.S wants stories written by you about your time in Mt Albert. We are also anxious to collect photographs and ephemera. Don't think 'you won't be interested' because we are! We have an Acquisitions Policy which covers all written materials and any images both large and small. Contact us now!

Bob (845 2529), Richie (846 0389), Carron (846 1313) and Mary (846 4509) are sitting in their cars with their motors running.....

**Happy 3rd birthday, Mt Albert Historical Society!** The inaugural meeting was on 9th April, 2006. Haven't we done well?! M.A.H.S thanks all of our supporters.

*Local Hero: Allan Kerr Taylor cont...*



Canterbury Association ships at the East India Docks in London in 1851: the Bangalore, Dominion, Duke of Portland, Lady Nugent, Midlothian, Canterbury

*happy in the profession I have made, what I see done and the little I do is my pleasure. William and Richard join me in kind love to you, Mrs Willok and Miss Peterkin and George and John & little Fredd. Remember me to all inquiring friends. The beauty of William's farm I cannot describe, it must be left to your imagination. I must now conclude if this to go by the first mail, but more particulars shall follow –*

*Believe me,*

*My Dear Mrs Pirie*

*Yours Affectionately and Truly.*

*Allan Kerr Taylor*

*Tamaki, 19th January 1849.*

*Reference: Taylor Papers. MS-papers-1761-3. Alexander Turnbull Library.*

# Depression Heroes

## ‘Uncle Tom’ and ‘Uncle Scrim’

‘Uncle Tom’ (Thomas Threader Garland 1877- 1964) and ‘Uncle Scrim’ (Colin Scrimgeour 1903-1987) were two well known radio personalities from the 1930s. Thomas Garland made his broadcasting debut in 1923 on 1YA in Auckland. He was a strong Methodist who ran weekly children’s sessions under the name ‘Uncle Tom’ and organized many of the station’s religious broadcasts. He invited the Methodist city missionary ‘Uncle Scrim’ to broadcast a talk about his experience of flying through a rainbow and this led to a lasting association between the two.(1)



*‘Uncle Scrim’ broadcasting to the nation.*

‘Uncle Tom’ and ‘Uncle Scrim’ worked together with 1ZR and began the Fellowship of the ‘Friendly Road’. Later they moved to 1ZB. At a time when controversial current affairs and news broadcasting was prohibited, the ‘Friendly Road’ was the most prominent public voice in support of a depression hit population.

‘Uncle Tom’ was also an innovative broadcaster with a special interest and talent in training and broadcasting choirs, particularly children’s choirs. For 35 years he trained up to four choirs with a combined membership of around 300. He arranged weekly broadcasts and also concerts at the Auckland Town Hall. Thomas Garland did not proselytize and intended to give his listeners ‘a bit of a smile’.

Colin Scrimgeour, on the other hand, gave weekly broadcasts called ‘The Man in the Street’ which were designed to give voice to the concerns of the common people and to push the rigorous censorship of broadcasting to the limit. On the evening before the 1935 election ‘The Man in the Street’ was jammed and prevented from going to air by the orders of the coalition government. Under the new Labour government ‘Scrim’ became Controller of Commercial Broadcasting until he fell out with Prime Minister Peter Fraser in 1942. (2)

‘Uncle Tom’ and ‘Uncle Scrim’ both lived in Mt Albert. ‘Uncle Tom’ lived at 47 Lloyd Avenue and ‘Uncle Scrim’ lived at 6 Highland Rd.



*Depression Heroes cont...*

## A. Lois White

A. Lois White was one of Auckland's leading artists of the mid twentieth century. She attended Elam School of Art from 1923 as a student of life drawing, painting and composition design. In 1927 she became a part time teacher in the art school and full time in 1934. Her ability as a figurative painter became well known at this time and her paintings 'invite a reading of female relations, of friendship and connection, both romantic and otherwise.' 3)



*Lois White photographed by Herbert Tornquist, c.1923.  
(A. Lois White Archive, Museum of New Zealand.)*

During the depression she expressed left wing political themes in her painting and was influenced by the political activity of 'Uncle Scrim' - 'Street Mission' and 'On the Air' were topical works of hers. She was a committed Methodist who supported the church's attempts to modernize and address social issues such as unemployment and poverty.

Lois' most productive decade was the 1940s. She continued her social commentary with paintings like 'Fleet's in' which is of a group of American sailors consorting with a couple of local women. In the 1950s her reputation was

gradually eroded as abstraction became more influential. She left Elam eventually in 1963 having been edged out by the 'new guard'. In the 1970s and early 80s she was heartened to note that there was an 'upsurge of interest in what I have done over the years.' A. Lois White died in 1984.

Lois White had a well established Mt Albert pedigree. Her mother was born Annie Phillipps and was remembered as a formidable Methodist matriarch. She poured tremendous energy into organizing other peoples lives, particularly those of her sisters and her children.

One of her nieces remembered that 'Aunt Annie was a tyrant, bossy, dictatorial and feet firmly planted on the soil until bad legs put her in a chair permanently beside the parrot's stand in a downstairs room.' Annie's father was Frank Phillipps who ran W. Phillipps and Sons, oil and colour merchants in Queen Street. During Lois' time there was a small gallery in the wallpaper section and the firm imported fine art reproductions as well as selling artists materials.

Lois' father was Arthur Herbert White , an architect. His architectural clients included a number of wealthy Methodists. He designed the two additional storeys and hexagonal tower for the Caughey residence 'Rahiri' in McLean St. He was also responsible for the original Mt Albert Methodist Chapel. In 1911 Arthur installed the family in a house he designed and had built for them at 5 Richardson Rd.( Lois lived in this house until 1952).

## References

- 1) *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* [www.dnz.govt](http://www.dnz.govt)
- 2) *Auckland Museum City Education Kit. Social Studies and History classes, years 1-13.*
- 3) *Green, N. 'By the Waters of Babylon. The Art of A. Lois White'*

# Forgotten Heroes

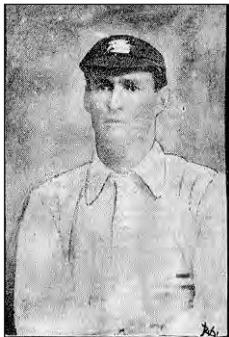
## Jeannie Boyd Fowlds

When my sons attended Gladstone School (around the millennium) we used to be able to buy a school pool key which allowed us access to the swimming facilities in the holidays. I was always intrigued by a commemorative plaque to Jeannie Boyd Fowlds near the shallow end. A letter from Murray Stevenson explains her early death...(Ed)

'The Fowlds family had been involved with Pt Chevalier School, now Gladstone School, since the early 1900s. George and Annie Fowlds' eldest daughter Jeannie Boyd Fowlds died of typhoid fever in Mt Albert on February 4th 1900 aged 12 years 7 months.....

As a memorial to their daughter, Jeannie, the Fowlds donated a swimming pool to the school. It was there in 1912 as my father and his siblings (and the headmaster's sons) used to ride their bikes around the pool and into the pool which was six feet at one end. In those days there was no filter system and when the water got green it was changed.'<sup>1)</sup>

## Sydney Smith



Sydney Smith

Sydney Gordon Smith (S.G) was born in Trinidad in 1881 and died in Auckland in 1963. He lived for many years at 18a Mt Albert Road. S.G was a very talented cricketer.

He hit 1,000 runs in a season four times (best season was 1913) and took 100 wickets in a season four times, performing the double three

times. His best season was 1909 with 115 wickets.

He proved the best all rounder on the 1906 West Indies tour to England and after the visit remained in England to qualify for Northamptonshire. He captained that county in 1913 and 1914.

In 1915 he emigrated to New Zealand and played with much success here appearing in the representative New Zealand team against English and Australian touring sides. His highest score

was 356 for Auckland v Canterbury at Auckland in 1919/20 and his best bowling 9/34 for a West Indies XI v Bennetts XI at Port of Spain in 1901/2.

He is considered one of 'the most accomplished yet shadowy figures in cricket history' playing for both the West Indies and New Zealand before either was granted test match status. Between times he was one of the finest players in the English county game playing for Northamptonshire. 2)

## Sarah Elisabeth Jackson

Sarah Elisabeth Jackson was appointed the matron of the Auckland Industrial School in 1882. She held that role when the school transferred to its Mt Albert base and continued as its manager until retirement in 1916. The Industrial School received neglected, destitute, criminal and uncontrollable children. These children lived in the school before being placed out in the community. So, in addition to overseeing all aspects of the Industrial School, Sarah was responsible for supervising children who had been licensed out from the school to employers.

Sarah's involvement in child welfare continued with her appointment in 1926 as one of the first women justices of the peace. She exercised jurisdiction for several years in the Children's Court in Auckland.

Sarah's personal life reflected her commitment to the welfare of children. She belonged to a range of philanthropic and religious groups. She also shared the progressive social ideas of her time on the role of women. She was one of the three Auckland delegates to the first revived national conference of the National Council of Women in 1918. 3)

Sarah Jackson lived at 11 Marne Rd, Sandringham. She died in 1948, aged 88, and is buried in the St Lukes Church graveyard.

## References:

- 1) Letter from Murray Stevenson to Rich Afford. 20/08/06
- 2) Collection of cuttings from Richie Afford
- 3) Dictionary of New Zealand Biography

# Local Walk 9

## Discovering buildings by Arts and Crafts architect, Basil Hooper.

### **The Arts and Crafts Style**

While the Californian bungalow was embraced by middle class New Zealanders, Arts and Crafts architecture was considered a suitable choice for the wealthy to replace their unfashionably grand Victorian and Edwardian villas. Arts and Crafts buildings followed several principles: they should be designed with the owners in mind, they should be integrated with their site and its landscape by the use of local building materials and their design should be based on traditional local buildings (English) rather than classical styles. Beauty should be derived from structural elements rather than non functional decoration. The hand of the craftsman should be evident rather than the work of the machine (In New Zealand J.W. Chapman-Taylor was more rigorous than Hooper in adhering to these principles).

### **Start the walk at number 2 Oakfield Avenue.**

This house was built in 1924 for the Lambourne family by Basil Hooper. It was one of his first Auckland homes and is built of brick with heavy half timbered gable ends. The top story with the matching gable was a fairly recent addition. The house is not typical of the largely weatherboard houses Hooper built in Auckland. Instead it refers back to the brick bungalows he built in Timaru in the 1910s. The tudor style is similar to Timaru's Orbell house. Referencing a traditional English house is quite common for an Arts and Crafts house.

### **Cross the road to number 40 Kitenui Avenue.**

This house was also built in 1924. The porch 'articulation' is a very good example of how Hooper reduced the entry to human scale by using a low, stepped roof and the wooden brackets to reduce the apparent height of the supporting walls. Typical diamond paned windows are hung quite low adding to the inviting appearance of the entry way. The house is built in weatherboard which was in contrast to the roughcast brick masonry of his South Island homes.

### **Walk up Kitenui Avenue enjoying the bungalows as you go. Cross over into Summit Drive. Walk up to number 5.**

This house was built in 1925 for the Takle family. It is a medium sized brick building with planning conforming to the typical architects and builders designs of the 1920s. It is an example of a home that incorporated elements of previous house designs having aspects of several other Hooper houses in it. The roof is similar to the Odlin house at 56 Mountain Road but it lacks the side gables. The scale is similar to several Dunedin houses for example the original 'Harpree' built for the Hooper family in 1919.

### **Turn right down Stilwell Rd and then right down Ferner Ave. Walk down to number 7.**

The wooden L shaped bungalow has a relatively steeply pitched, corrugated iron roof. The only other known example of a similar Hooper house is 4 Seabreeze Road, Devonport. The Ferner Ave house was built in 1925 for the Holland family.

### **Retrace your steps to Stilwell Road, turn right when you reach it and continue down until you meet Allendale Road. Turn left and walk along to number 42.**

This house has a classic Hooper motif: a diagonal bay window seen as a pair of oriel windows abutting the ends of adjacent walls. The bay does not continue to the ground. This is an example of a standard mid to late 1920s bungalow with Hooper details (eg the diagonal bay) added. This home was built in 1926 for another member of the Lambourne family.

### **Walk back along Allendale Road the way you've come. Continue to Mt Albert Road turning right and walk until you reach number 23.**

This is Hooper's last known house in Auckland and is more highly decorated than one would expect for a home built in the late 1930s. The chimneys on the outside walls are typical Arts and Crafts. The semi-circular entrance arch is supported on corbel-like mouldings as is the detail on the chimney. This house is described as 'a reluctant response to the onslaught of modernism.'<sup>1)</sup>

## Reference:

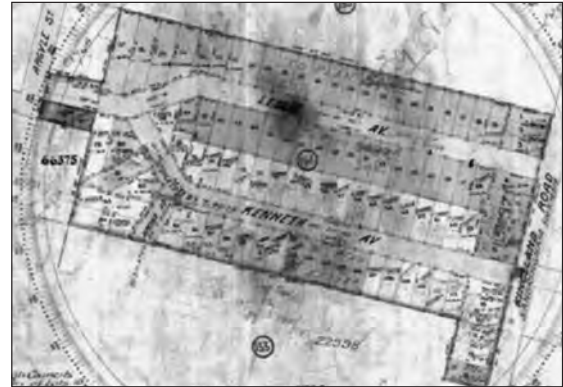
- 1) Allen, R. 'Motif and Beauty. The New Zealand Arts and Crafts Architecture of Basil Hooper.'

## Our Streets

Last month Mary Inomata and Lisa Truttman put in a lot of work preparing for the Shawville Estate walk around Shaw St, Collins St, Ethel St, Leslie Ave and Kenneth Ave on February 15th. To our consternation (but not really surprise) Lisa discovered that the naming of the streets, as reported in newsletter 7, is an historical myth. This myth says that the streets were named after Shaw's children and has been gaining veracity as it has passed from Dick Scott to John Davenport to the Auckland City Library website. Here follows the corrected version as printed by Lisa on her blog site at <http://timespanner.blogspot.com/>.



Detail from DP4806, LINZ records



Detail from DP 4163, LINZ records.

‘There’s just one slight problem with Scott’s book, Davenport’s book, and the library database: Elihu Shaw didn’t subdivide Allotment 153 where McDonald, Shaw, Collins and Ethel Streets were dedicated, nor did he subdivide Allotment 154, where Kenneth and Leslie Avenues were dedicated. In fact, he never owned Allotment 154 in his lifetime, and Allotment 153 was subdivided as “Shawville” well after his death.

I’ll go more into Elihu Shaw’s story in another post when I can, but ... here’s the gen. He died in 1895, and the executor of his estate was his son-in-law Alexander McDonald. It was McDonald who subdivided Shaw’s farm at Morningside (he himself was a market gardener as was his father-in-law in Shaw’s latter years). Another son-in-law was Mr. Collins. The McDonald, Shaw and Collins families are each memorialised in “Shawville” streetnames (the subdivision taking place in 1910, 15 years after Elihu Shaw’s death.) It’s not certain who Ethel was, but I reckon she was either a McDonald or a Collins.

As for Kenneth & Leslie Avenues, these streets are on a farm formerly owned by James Gribble until his death c.1886. In 1891, his son-in-law, S. L. Hirst, had the title, and in 1906, 20 years after Gribble’s death, the allotment was subdivided and the roads dedicated. Who were Kenneth and Leslie? Probably either from the Gribbles or the Hirst families. Hopefully more info. will come to light.

For the record, the names of Elihu Shaw’s children were: John, Silas, Emily, William, Mary, Martha, Elizabeth and Reuben. Nary a sign of an Ethel, a Kenneth or a Leslie. To Scott’s credit, however, he may not have thought to check the subdivision plans at the time, and wouldn’t have had ready access as we have today to the Shaw family history. His book, though, is still a classic.’

### Sources:

*The Gardener and the Squire’s Daughter*, Gwen P. Howe, 1988  
*Deeds Indexes for Allotment 153 and 154, Section 10, Suburbs of Auckland*, LINZ.  
Posted by Timespanner at Saturday, February 14, 2009 2 comments