



MOUNT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Games People Played

This is the first part in a series that will examine games played locally over the last 150 years. This newsletter looks at tennis, discus, shot put, trolleying down Owairaka and of course, stick jumping....

Any One For Tennis?

Tennis was well established in Mt Albert in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. The Penman family history says that Maria Penman, who died in 1917, only played under arm on the family court.(1)This was a common practice for colonial women as it was thought that a modified style of play was preferable to playing vigorously. Women tennis players at the turn of the nineteenth century stayed on the baseline instead of moving in to the net and served underarm. Back hand play was avoided and players 'ran around' left hand balls. The game was played on private lawns, with heavy rackets, high nets and with soft rubber balls. Tennis was initially a middle class sport with only the well to do being able to afford the cost of the equipment and later on, club membership fees. (2)

Tennis and croquet gave colonial women the best access to sport as historically they were played by both men and women. When tennis clubs were formed, women were admitted as members without opposition. The Mt Albert Lawn Tennis Club was the second oldest grass court club in Auckland and is a fine example of this. The club was founded in 1894 on a property owned by Mr JT Garlick at Ferndale. In those days, two grass courts were used and the annual subscription was 25 shillings a head. Several lady members who were dieticians used to compete with each other, not only on the tennis courts but also as to who could turn out the most sumptuous afternoon tea. No inter club matches were played but friendly matches were arranged with other clubs. (3)

Women wore voluminous skirts, long sleeved blouses, laced up boots and hats when playing tennis and this dress contributed to their slowness on the court. The shorter skirt on the woman second from the right, in the photo above, would have been considered quite daring.



From Left: Clara Moginie, Florrie Woodroffe, Vera Moginie, Carrie Bush.

Florrie (Florence) Woodroffe was born in 1886 and bought up in Lloyd Avenue, the family possibly built the house at number 33. In 1903, the Woodroffes owned more than an acre of land between New North Road and Allendale Road on the mountain side of Lloyd Avenue, John Phillipps' land was on the other side of Allendale Road. The women in this photo belonged to various Auckland tennis clubs, although none to the Mt Albert one. The Woodroffes had moved away by the time this photograph was taken pre 1921. (Thanks to Barbara Holt for sending me this family photo from her collection).

References:

- 1) Penman- Ross Family History
- 2) Coney, S. *Standing in the Sunshine*
- 3) Mt Albert Tennis Club Anniversary leaflet

Tennis and Politics

Tennis and Passive Resistance

For twelve years, the Mt Albert Lawn Tennis Club leased a small area of land owned by the Railways Department for the ballast railway line. When the ballast pit on Owairaka was closed, Railways surveyed the ballast line with a view to selling the land to adjoining property owners. The land adjoining the tennis courts was offered to the club for 250 pounds. According to AL Caughey, President of the Mt Albert Lawn Tennis Club, this was an exorbitant fee. In July 1932 he wrote to the Railways Department pointing out that the club had been promised the title of the land when it was no longer required for Railways purposes, that the land itself only had a nominal value and that the tennis club was feeling the effects of the depression and was operating at a loss. His final sentence said 'I would be glad to know if the Club could retain possession of the area now occupied by its lawns on sufferance from the Department.'

A huge amount of ill feeling had been generated by the government insisting on selling the ballast line to the people of Mt Albert who felt they should be sold it at a minimal cost in compensation for the destruction of their mountain. The government did not agree!

The reply to AL Caughey's letter contained the following paragraph 'It seems that the attitude being adopted by the owners of land abutting on the railway line is one of **passive resistance** – they look upon it as a foregone conclusion that ultimately the whole line will be handed over to the Borough Council: indeed it was stated to Mr Keenan and I that if it had not been for a change of government, just at the critical moment, the whole line would have been handed over for the sum of 100 pounds. Evidently, there has been a lot of political propaganda in connection with the matter'.

Passive Resistance 1 Railways Department 0

One year later, a memorandum for the Minister of Railways states:

Arrangements have now been finalised to sell to the Mount Albert Tennis Club a portion of this land containing an area of 10.16 perches for the sum of 50 pounds plus Proclamation fee 3 pounds 3 shillings.'(1)

The tennis club ended up spending the amount of money it had available. The frontage to New North Road was not included in the purchase but ended up as the public car park next to the end of the shopping centre.



Mt Albert Tennis Club Diagram

Tennis Club boundaries

Number 17 Allendale Road shared a back boundary with the Mt Albert Tennis Club, access to which, from either Allendale or New North Road, was conveniently given by the stony, unsealed track left from lifting the rails of the old ballast line. It also gave Stilwell Road and Allendale Road housewives a short cut to the shops when families rarely had a second car for their convenience and most women travelled to the city by tram car.

References:

- 1) Archives New Zealand 1916/999/1 R3 W2381
- 2) Information from John Stacpoole 2009

M.A.H.S Dates To Remember

13th November(Saturday) 2pm. Auckland in the 1950s. A compilation of heritage film clips. Every one welcome. Gold coin donation. Refreshments afterwards.

10th December (Friday) 5pm. Alberton House. Christmas Cocktail Party. Bigger and better than ever! Come along to see our Special Top Secret Item...\$10 per head. Sorry, members only!

M.A.H.S would like to thank **Suzanne Goode** for her three years service as society secretary. She performed her role very well displaying great diligence and patience. Also, thanks to **Barbara Holt** who was a great help writing several items for the newsletter and is a wonderful source of local history.

Mt Albert: Breaking News

Dick Scott's iconic book 'In Old Mt Albert' was published in 1961 and then, silence....until recently when there has been a flurry of historical investigation. For your edification and in chronological order, this is what is now 'out there'

timespanner.blogspot.com/ is a local history blog written by the indefatigable Lisa Truttman. Do you ever sleep, Lisa? This is an amazing site full of endless photo essays about Auckland history. A lot of it is local though and Lisa has interesting stories about Pt Chevalier, Mt Albert, New Lynn. I was with her on a walk around Fowlds Park and within seconds of her arrival back home there was a fascinating blog with more supporting information and heritage photos.

The **Balmoral, Sandringham, Morningside and Mt Albert** shopping centres have had **character heritage studies** done by Mathews and Mathews Architects Ltd, Ngati Whatua O Orakei, RA Skidmore Urban Design, Lisa Truttman and Tania Mace for Auckland City Council. Each of these studies addresses the heritage qualities of one of the shopping centres. The contextual historic information includes a section on maori settlement, land transactions of early settlers, the development of roading and transport, schools and churches. Each study is wonderfully illustrated by old photographs and other images. The Balmoral and Sandringham character heritage studies can be found online at www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/council/documents/district/updates/ They are well hidden in archived plan modifications 132b, definitely worth the effort of retrieval.

The **Balmoral & Sandringham Heritage Walks** leaflet appeared in 2009. Written by Lisa Truttman and Ngati Whatua o Orakei Ltd, coordinated by Mathews & Mathews Architects Ltd for Auckland City. This is a long, slim 44 page guide for walks around Balmoral and Sandringham. Each page has

at least one image of a notable building or view and lots of very informative text. This leaflet is FREE from information centres, community centres.....

Heritage plaques have popped up in the Mt Albert shopping centre. They are based on information found in the character study and have been cemented into the footpath outside notable buildings. Thanks to Lisa Truttman for managing to reduce her voluminous research into 350 characters per plaque!

The **Mt Albert Historical Society** now has its own **website** and its address is mtalberthistoricalsociety.org.nz/. On it you will find an events calendar and a local heritage page. The heritage item at the moment is covering Mt Albert's first primary school in School Rd. There are also eleven back issues of this newsletter edited by Carron Boswell. Carron can be reached with new stories or information at carronboswell@hotmail.com. Mary Inomata is the Web Master and can be contacted through the secretary at info@mtalberthistoricalsociety.org.nz or memories@mtalberthistoricalsociety.org.nz

Watch out for the **Mt Albert Heritage Walks leaflet** written by Carron Boswell and Ngati Whatua o Orakei Ltd, with assistance from Lisa Truttman. It was coordinated by Mathews & Mathews Architects Ltd for Auckland City. It includes some new local information about the destruction of Owairaka and some interesting heritage photos. This is another leaflet in the series mentioned above and will also be a FREEBIE.



JT Garlick founder of the original Mt Albert Lawn Tennis Club which he held on two grass courts at Ferndale.



AC Caughey (not to be confused with AL Caughey of the 'Passive Resistance' story). AC was club president from 1922 -1923, AL was club president from 1932-1934.

Where have all the tennis courts gone?

Mt Albert could be described as a 'tennis suburb'. In conversation with me in 2009, Jim Penman mentioned that, in the 1930s, within walking distance of the family home in Lloyd Avenue there were **twenty five** tennis courts! I resolved to track them all down.....please send additional information and corrections to the editor.

Local tennis courts could be divided into three categories: public tennis courts, church affiliated tennis courts and private courts.

Public Tennis Courts

Around 1920, the **Mt Albert Lawn Tennis Club** shifted to its present location in New North Road opposite the Mt Albert railway station and six grass and three hard courts were laid down. At some unknown time, the club's name was shortened to the **Mt Albert Tennis Club**. (3)Now, this club at 982 New North Road has five synthetic grass courts. The land is privately owned by the tennis club but it has a public membership.

There was also an active public tennis club at **Fowlds**

Park. Three or four courts and a croquet green were in the north eastern part of reserve where Rocky Nook Bowling Club is now.

There were public (?) tennis courts in **Ruarangi Road** near where the flats are at number 21. They led down to Mt Albert Road, finishing near the corner of Highland Rd.

Church Tennis Courts

Mt Albert was settled largely by non-conformist settlers most of whom obeyed strict moral codes.

They were teetotal and many of them didn't believe in dancing. For these residents and their descendants whose social life revolved around the church, tennis and other sports were considered desirable activities. Tennis also fit into the prevailing ethos of 'healthy body, healthy mind'.

The **Mt Albert Baptist Church** had its tennis courts at 'The Rocks' 707 New North Rd with an entrance off St Lukes Road. This home was built by James Arthur Penman and Maria Penman nee Ross.

St Christopher's tennis courts were in Margaret Avenue where the blocks of flats are today.

The **Mt Albert Presbyterian Church** used courts in Lloyd Avenue, they were on the same side of the road as the Croquet Club and down a right of way. These courts, which may not have been owned by the church, were still used by it in the 1950s.

Private Tennis Courts

These have mostly long gone although the site of a tennis court can often be determined by a more recent house or a particularly small section. One of our M.A.H.S members maintains that there was a 'Single Hard Tennis Court Association' whose members were the owners of these courts. She says that they played annually for a trophy....we're waiting for proof.....

Next to 'Ferndale' you can see the imprint of the two lawn courts in the position of two brick and tile houses in Alexis Avenue. (This was the site of the original Mt Albert Lawn Tennis Club).

Sir George Fowlds had two tennis courts at **Greystone Knowe** which is today known as Vi Anne and is found at **884 New North Rd**. According to one informant, this house was moved back when the trams arrived and the tennis courts may have moved too. **Alberton House** had croquet lawns and a lawn tennis court either side of the path in the flat areas.

The new house in front of the bungalow at **13 Alexis Avenue** is built on the site of the tennis court. The bungalow house was built about 1927 by Mr And

Mrs Atkinson whose only daughter Betty married Cedric Randerson. The Randersons continued to live in Betty's family home.

There was another tennis court 'across the stone wall' from the Turner's home at **9 Violet Street**.

Penman's hard court at **65 Lloyd Avenue** is one of the few remaining courts in private ownership. The original lawn tennis court was sealed in 1926 by Ross Penman, his son Jim and friends. Their efforts nearly resulted in the house being burnt down!

The Clay family had a lawn tennis court at 'Lyndhurst' on the corner of **Allendale Rd and Lloyd Ave**. The spot is marked by the newish house in front of this Edwardian villa.

The Page family had a tennis court and summerhouse on their land at **45 Kitenui Avenue**. The original stone wall marks some of their property.

The Fowlers had a lawn tennis court next to the railway line at **22 Lloyd Avenue**.

At **22 Summit Drive** the Glaister's house at number 9 had a tennis court where 7,7a now stands. The Turners built a tennis court at the top of Summit Drive

'**Ainslie**' the McLean family home and later lived in by the Anderson family had a tennis court. Also, in **Allendale Road** the Caughey family had their court on the site of the Everill Orr Home.

The Wilks home, later known as School House, then the Industrial School and now the **Alice Wylie Reserve**, had at least one tennis court. So far, we haven't been able to tell which of the previous owners put in the tennis court.

The Whitley's house at **36 Mt Albert Rd** had a tennis court next to it.

The Tattersfields property in **Allendale Road** had a tennis court, access to the house and court was from Stilwell Rd.

Please send your tennis stories and photos to the editor:

**Carron Boswell carronboswell@hotmail.com
phone 846 1313**

How things have changed

...from a local newspaper c.1946

'Two young married women with children are outstanding among athletes in Auckland. They are Mrs Una Bassett, winner of the shot put event in the Auckland women's senior championships this year, and Mrs B Roberts, New Zealand champion woman discus thrower.'

'A member of a family well known for its sports activities in Auckland, Mrs Bassett was formerly Una Amoretti, while before her marriage Mrs Roberts was Billie Singe'.

'I do most of my training in the back yard. I don't know whether the neighbours think I'm wonderful or silly, but I think they mostly think I'm silly' said Mrs Bassett with a smile'.

'Constant light training is what she believes in. She has never had a coach but said she felt she would improve in the hands of a trainer'.

'Thirty feet was the distance which made her champion this year- the farthest she has ever put a shot in a championship event- although she said she had bettered that distance in training. She has won the women's senior championship on three occasions.'

'Persuaded by her brother, Mr V Amoretti to take up athletics, she became a sprinter of considerable merit but forsook running when she became interested in shot putting when it was introduced for women about 1935.'

'The shot used today weighs 9lb but when Mrs Bassett first took up the sport it weighed 10lb. 'You could hardly lift it, much less throw it,' she said. However, it was with a shot of this weight that she became Auckland women's champion in 1938. It was soon after this that the weight was reduced to the Olympic standard weight.'

Both of these women were great athletes but how many examples of sexism can YOU find in the newspaper article quoted?



Una Bassett throwing shot put possibly at the Auckland Championships at Carlaw Park in 1939.

The Amorettis founded the Mt Albert Athletics Club. The Evening Post on 23 February 1937 said 'Few families in the Dominion show the active interest in amateur athletics displayed by the Amoretti family of Auckland, four members of which - two daughters, a son and their mother - took part in the athletic carnival at Carlaw Park on Saturday.'

Clearly, Una was encouraged in the shotput by her mother as the article goes on to say 'Although she does not appear on the track as often as her son

and daughters, Mrs Amoretti is always present at meetings at which her children compete. She took part in the competitions on Saturday, however, and was responsible for a creditable performance in the ladies' putting the shot contest, in which she gained third place'. (Margaret Amoretti nee Marchbank, Una's mother, worked as a maid for the Kerr Taylors during the Hayley's Comet of 1907....)



Una Bassett throwing the discus.

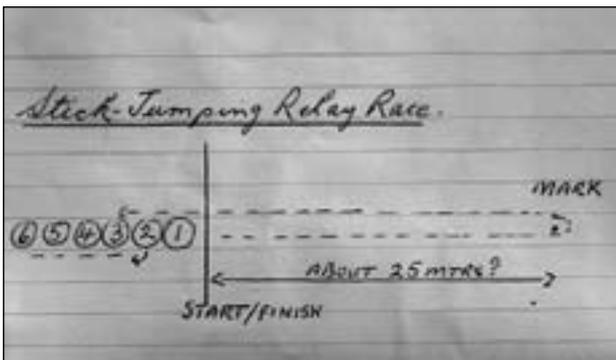
Trolleys

"Living high on the northern slopes of Mt Albert Auckland in the late 1920s made trolley tracking down rough metal roads and negotiating hair raising bends in a butter box plonked on a piece of 4x2, with four wheels and a piece of rope to guide us, a dangerous and precarious past time. We lived at 10 Belmont Road (later renamed Stilwell Road). My father, Cyril White, had the house built in 1921. My trolley tracking friend was Basil Stilwell, son of Wilfred Stilwell who later became a Judge in the Arbitration Court."

Roger White

Stick jumping

"I was born in Grey Lynn on 4th February 1925. I started school in 1930 and left Owairaka School in Standard 6 in 1937. My family moved into their new house June 1926 in Weston Ave. I married in 1951 and we left Mt Albert in 1985 to be nearer our married daughter and family.



Stick Jumping relay race diagram

The number 1 player on the word 'go' runs around the mark carrying a pole about 1.25 metres by 20mm. He returns and runs down the right hand side of the other players and the number 2 player grasps the other end of the pole on the other side of the players. As they move towards the number 6 player, all the other players jump over the pole (which presumably is held near the ground).

The number 2 player then takes the pole and repeats the actions of number 1. (Number 1 takes his place behind number 6). Each player takes his turn with the pole, until number 1 is back at the front of the line. When number 6 returns I presume that is the end of the race."

Noel Parsons



Stick Jumping Champions

Stick jumping was a serious sport and I have included this grainy photocopy sent to me that proves it! The Owairaka School Stick Jumping Team won the competition at the Primary School Sports in the Domain probably in 1931. The boys were in Standard six and their teacher coach was Mr Mabbett. Noel Parson's brother is right back. (Editor)

Our Streets

*In September, I attended a one hour short course entitled 'Beginning your Family History' at the Mt Albert Public Library. The course was run by Mt Albert Library staff as part of the Auckland Heritage Festival and was a very effective introduction to locating the family history resources on the Auckland City website. Simply go to www.aucklandcitylibraries.com and click on Heritage collections and services in Quick links. We then scrolled down the page to Auckland Research Centre and clicked on to Family history. This opened up the Family History Front Page which links to all of the Auckland City Council's family history pages and gives information on how to begin your search. When I got home and fired up my own computer I was thrilled to find an obituary for Archibald Albert, my great grandfather. More importantly for this newsletter, I struck gold with the name 'Monaghan' when I searched the New Zealand Card Index. Below is a transcript of the information I was e-mailed (for the sum of \$6) about the Monaghan family that gave **Monaghan Avenue** it's name. Unfortunately, the date this article was written is not clear and neither is the identity of the author.....*

'In 1842 there sailed from England a Mr and Mrs Colwill (but known as Caldwell) in the 'Duchess of Argyll' arrived in Auckland that year. After some weeks of living in a raupo hut about Albert St, they moved to Tamaki where the third child was born in 1845'.

'The year 1847 saw them move to that piece of land where Gladstone School now stands. Mr Caldwell died six months after a son was born here and Mrs Caldwell later married a Mr P Monaghan an ex Imperial Soldier and they had three children, the last being born six weeks after the father died, leaving Mrs Monaghan a widow twice with seven children to raise. This influenced her into selling some of the estate comprising 20 acres, to the Education Board for the building of the school then called Pt Chevalier School. About 1896 Mr Pat Monaghan, a son, came with his family and lived on the estate with his mother whose health was failing. She passed away in 1898 and was buried beside her husband in Symonds St R.C cemetery; later the property was subdivided and sold'.

'One of the streets now the boundary of Pt Chevalier and Mt Albert was named Monaghan Avenue. Mrs Monaghan known to everyone as

'Grannie' round the locality still resides there and had her ninetieth birthday on July 1st last. Her three sons, Jack, Walter (Krug) and Bill who had been prominent in the sports organizations of the district especially the Football Club of whom Walter and Jack were foundation members. Walter was made a life member and still took an active interest till the time of his death in the prime of his life. Both Jack and 'Krug' as he was generally known will rank among the all time 'greats' with the local fishermen. All three sons predeceased their mother'.

'We have to thank Mr Gilbert Woodlock of Grey Lynn, a grandson of the Caldwells, and nephew of Mrs Monaghan for the information contained in this article. Mr Woodlocks father joined the staff of the Mental Hospital in 1876 and resigned in 1906, thus giving 30 years service 28 years of which he served as nightwatchman'.

According to Doreen Suddens' unpublished manuscript, three acres of land for Pt Chevalier School were bought from Mr P Monaghan for 300 pounds in 1887.