



MOUNT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Newsletter 16 • September 2011

PO BOX 77-002 MT ALBERT AUCKLAND 1350 • PH: 09 846 4230 • WWW.MTALBERTHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG.NZ

Mt Albert Landmark



Photo September 2011 MAHS collection

Clay House, or 'Lyndhurst' at 39 Lloyd Avenue, Mt Albert was the family home built for Thomas and Sarah Clay (nee Siddall) which they and six children moved in to during 1908.

Thomas and Sarah married in Melbourne in 1887 having both travelled independently from Halifax, Yorkshire, England a year earlier to visit relatives. From Melbourne they moved to Nelson in about 1892 and then on to Auckland in 1894, where they lived in Victor Street in Avondale prior to the house in Mt Albert being built.

'Lyndhurst' originally sat on four acres of land which bounded Mt Albert Road, Allendale Road and Lloyd Avenue (which was earlier known as Mary's Lane) and included stables and a lawn tennis court. The original main entrance to the property was from the corner of Allendale Road and Lloyd Avenue. The grand two storey house had three large living rooms, a billiard room, five bedrooms

and two verandahs on each floor. Other features included Marseilles roof tiles, Italian tiles on the lower verandahs and the ornate ceilings imported in prefabricated sections.

Thomas Clay was a land agent who also took an interest in local politics. He was chairman of the Avondale Road Board, held a seat on Mt Albert's first borough council and was mayor from 1917 to 1921. He also served on the harbour board for 16 years.

Clay house was designed by Sarah's brother Edwin Siddall and the current owners Geoff and Jenny Dainty were fortunate to have Edwin's original design plan on waxed linen, to use as a reference for their renovations. Thomas Clay lived in the house until he died in 1955 and in the years between then and 1979, when the Dainty's bought the property, the house had been converted into four flats and required extensive restoration to bring it back to its former glory. The original ornate ceilings, rediscovered when the false ceilings were removed during renovations,

Mt Albert Landmark cont...

have been fully restored and are a beautiful feature of the house.

Local residents may recall in recent years seeing a television production unit filming at Clay House for the successful New Zealand series 'Mercy Peak' – Clay House featuring as the Doctor's residence.

The current City of Auckland – District Plan – Isthmus

Section: Schedule of buildings, objects, heritage properties or places of special value and those subject to heritage orders lists Clay House as category B.

References:

- 1) *Some Notable Very Early Auckland Families, by Warwick Clay*
- 2) *Auckland Museum Streets Record Detail*

Mt Albert Historical Society Committee for 2011/2012



The Society would like to publicly thank and acknowledge the work and contribution from the following outgoing committee members who have all served on the committee for a number of years and who did not seek re-election at the recent AGM: **Carron Boswell (Editor), Jackie Wright, Suzanne Good, Judith Goldie and Ritchie Afford** (co-opted committee member). **Mary Inomata and Rendell McIntosh** have been co-opted to the 2011/2012 committee to cover special projects.

Current committee members, left to right are:
Anna McGlashan, Paul Tubman, Jocelyn Greene, Alice Wylie, Brian Stevens, Francis Mortimer

July Visit to Belmont House



Belmont House, originally known as Winstone House in Stilwell Road was the scene of the most well attended MAHS function this year.



On arrival we were treated to the sight of a 1917 Moon Tourer car parked in the drive, which looked so right with the house and set the scene for an enjoyable afternoon. The car was kindly loaned by the owner, local resident Bill Shears.

After mulled wine and nibbles we gathered to hear a portion of Belmont's history from the current owner Diane McArdle and a previous occupier Jan George, who lived in the property from age five with her mother and grandmother. (Jan's grandmother owned the house from 1944 to 1974).

The photo (left) shows Jan with her hand on the balustrade that she slid down so often as a child.

M.A.H.S Dates To Remember

8th October (Saturday) 2pm: Film Archive screening. Ferndale House, 830 New North Road, Mt Albert. Following our successful archive film screening last year we present a Film Archive screening of specially selected film clips of local interest. Everyone welcome. Refreshments. \$2 payable on entry. Any queries please phone Brian on 626 6664.

5th November (Saturday) 1pm: Bus trip to Oratia. Meet at the Senior Citizens Room, Wairere Ave for a 1pm departure by bus. We will visit the Oratia Folk Museum situated in a fully restored early settler cottage built between 1855 and 1870. The garden has been planted according to Adelle Stewarts 'My Simple New Zealand Life'. We will also be shown the oldest steam engine in New Zealand in working order and other restored old cars etc. This will be followed by a quick trip to the Corban Estate Art Centre situated in the old Corban homestead. Bring your own refreshments. Members only. Numbers limited. RVSP to Brian 626 6664. Cost \$15 inclusive of bus and museum entrance fee.

25th November (Friday) 5pm: Annual Christmas Function. Alberton House, 100 Mt Albert Road, Mt Albert. Carol singing and entertainment. Door prizes. Wine, punch and nibbles. Members only. RSVP essential by Tuesday November 22nd to Brian 626 6664. \$10 per person payable at entry.

Junior Membership

At the recent AGM (27/8/11) a Special Resolution was passed by the members to update the constitution. One of the changes created a new type of membership – that of Junior Member. This is aimed at those individuals that wish to have a membership separate to the traditional 'Family Membership. The age requirements are: "Children of 12 years, up to, and inclusive of 17years of age". No voting rights are assigned to this membership. Nor shall they be entitled to hold any office. Enquiries to Paul Tubman phone 846 4230.

MAHS Membership Renewal

Invoices for membership renewal for the year ending June 2012 have been emailed (where available) or posted out to current members. Prompt settlement of membership fees would be most appreciated. Any queries please contact Paul Tubman, Treasurer, phone 846 4230 or by email pault.@bfbp.co.nz

News from the Past...

FATAL ACCIDENT: TWO MEN KILLED IN A GRAVEL PIT.

A melancholy accident occurred yesterday forenoon at Mount Albert, which resulted in the death of Mr. George Bray and his father-in-law, Mr. Walton Pell. The unfortunate men, in company with Samuel Bray, a lad about 12 years of age, son of Mr. George Bray, went to the gravel pit on the summit of the mount, for the purpose of procuring scoria ash for which they had a contract to supply the Waitakere Road Board. Whilst the deceased were filling the dray, the lad noticed that the face of the pit was giving way. He immediately called out, to warn the others, and then ran to make his escape. Owing to the shape of the pit, which has only a narrow entrance that was blocked up by the dray, he had to scramble up a bank about twelve feet in height, and had almost reached the top when the falling gravel struck him, burying him up to the waist, in such a position that he was quite unable to extricate himself. The slip had completely buried the other two, who were related to him as father and grandfather. The boy states that he heard groaning for about ten minutes after the gravel bank fell. The boy cried out for help, and his appeal was fortunately heard by Mr. Edward Sadgrove, who lives about a quarter of a mile from the spot, and who hastened to the lad's assistance. He released

the boy, who was only slightly injured. Mr. Edward Allen and others, in response to the calls of Mr. Sadgrove, soon arrived, and proceeded vigorously to rescue Messrs. Bray and Pell. They ultimately found the former in a position which showed that he had been in the act of running when the earth struck, but life was extinct. Pell was shortly afterwards found completely crushed by a large boulder, which was resting on his back. Dr. Aickin of the Lunatic Asylum, who had been sent for, was promptly on the spot and pronounced life to be extinct in both. After intelligence was received in Auckland of the accident, Constable Bullen rode out to the scene of the accident and had both bodies conveyed to Mr. Bray's late residence, where an inquest will be held to day at 2 o'clock. Mr. Bray who was well known and respected throughout the district, was forty five years of age. He leaves a wife and six children. Mr. Pell was aged fifty four. The pit in which they met their death has for a long time past been considered dangerous to work in, but no steps have been taken in the matter either by the district board or by the Provincial Government authorities.

Southern Cross Newspaper 8 May 1874 p.2

The First Mt Albert Primary School

Our first Mt Albert primary school opened its doors in 1870 as a result of the Common Schools Act to remove education from church responsibility. Mr McElwain presented one acre to the Auckland Education Board from his farmland between Kingsland and Morningside. The Mt Albert school roll of 1879 classes one and two, mention very familiar names in Mt Albert - Sadgrove, Woodward, Garlick, Kelly, Walters, McGeehan, McDonald, McBride – the list goes on. The first wooden school building was erected by local residents at their expense on the site. In 1880, this first building was removed, and replaced by a two-roomed wooden building.

The school roll grew rapidly and the building underwent a number of additions and remodeling over the years. From 1903 – 1906 attendance grew from 248 to 323 on average with five teachers who in fact had to share classrooms. This was an unsatisfactory state of affairs and in 1912 the addition of two classrooms were made to accommodate sixty pupils, though the Chief Inspector noted that *“I do not think the accommodation thus provided will be able to meet the rapidly growing needs of this suburban district.”*



Mt Albert School Staff 1896 - 1897: National Archives
Miss K Nicoll; Miss F Willerten; Miss M Nicholson
Mr R T Reid; Mr L C Witham; Mr Ingram

The school was remodeled again in the 1920s but a request for a rebuild denied, as it was pointed out that the Auckland Education Board owned another site on the corner of Mountain Road (now Kitemui Ave) and Alexandra Ave (now Alexis Ave) and it was considered better to build there than add to the present site.

The school was however never built on that site as by 1936 the Education Board was looking at the site occupied by the Morningside Quarries (commonly referred to as Wilson's Quarry) on Salisbury Road (now Sainsbury Road). Tenders were finally put out for the building work in 1939 and the Mt Albert School was relocated to Sainsbury Road in 1940.

The Auckland Education Board held onto the School Road property until 1954. It leased the building to the RSA for 21 years. The crown split the building from the rest of the site in subdivision and the reserve was vested in the council.

It is still crown property under the Ministry of Maori Development.



Mt Albert Primary School, School Road, 2010.
MAHS collection 2010

Future Newsletters

Planning is currently underway for future newsletters and we would welcome and encourage your contribution. This could take the form of a 'letter to the editor' or submission of an article and/or photos, or perhaps a suggested topic(s) that you would like the Society to research and include. Contributions and suggestions can be emailed to info@mtalberthistoricalsociety.org.nz or mailed to MAHS at PO Box 77002 Mt Albert, Auckland 1350.

All previous newsletters and other useful information can be found on our website www.mtalberthistoricalsociety.org.nz



STOP PRESS!

The Alice Wylie Reserve in New North Road is due to receive major renovation work in the grounds in the near future. The Albert-Eden Local Board has supported this project and Auckland City Council will commence the work soon. Once completed there will be a formal 're-opening' function to celebrate the upgrade.