

Harold Marsh # 2004.2.97.52
Wellsford Show February 24th 1929
Evan Strange & 'Joy' in the showing.



Newsletter February 2024

Open Hours

Monday, Tuesday - Closed
Wednesday - Saturday - 11am to 3pm
Sunday - 1pm to 3pm
The Museum is open for visitors

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Coming Up in March

10th March - Port Albert Church Service (bring a plate for afternoon tea) 1.30pm

Editors Message

As we bid farewell to the extended and warm summer that graced us this year, I am relieved to report that we were spared the disruptive weather patterns that plagued us in 2023, such as Cyclone Gabrielle and other significant events. The evenings now carry a refreshing chill, and the trees are gracefully shedding their leaves, marking the inevitable transition to autumn. Let us savour the remaining days of summer before we welcome March and bid adieu to daylight saving on the 7th of April.

On a brighter note, our newest exhibit, 'A Mission on the Kaipara – William and Marianne Gittos,' was officially unveiled on the 14th of February. Prior to its public opening, we hosted a special preview for invited guests a few days earlier. Curated by Clare Joensen, this unique display offers a captivating journey and is certainly worth a visit.

In the realm of family history, we are delighted to announce the addition of three family history books, painstakingly researched and compiled by dedicated family members and donated to our museum. These valuable resources now reside in our non-lending library, accessible to our volunteers who help visitors with their own research. Our collection also boasts numerous letters, transcripts, photos and diaries, making our museum a haven for family researchers. If you plan to explore your own family history with us, a heads-up via email or a phone call before your visit will allow us to locate items of interest to your family.

A heartfelt thank you also goes out to those who promptly paid their \$20 membership fee since the start of the year. Your generous support goes a long way in covering the essential operating costs of the museum. We also extend our gratitude to visitors, researchers, and contributors who, through fees and donations, play pivotal roles in sustaining our museum. Every dollar received enables us to keep our doors open and continue telling the compelling story of the Albertland settlers.

Rose

Decoding Wellsford's Identity Through the Second Letter 'E' for Edger

In last month's newsletter, we explored the origin of Wellsford's name, revealing it to be an amalgamation of the surname initials of our early settlers. Having delved into the 'W' for Reverend William Worker, our focus now shifts to the letter 'E' and the significant figure of Reverend Samuel Edger.

Samuel was born on March 22, 1823, in East Grinstead, Sussex, England.

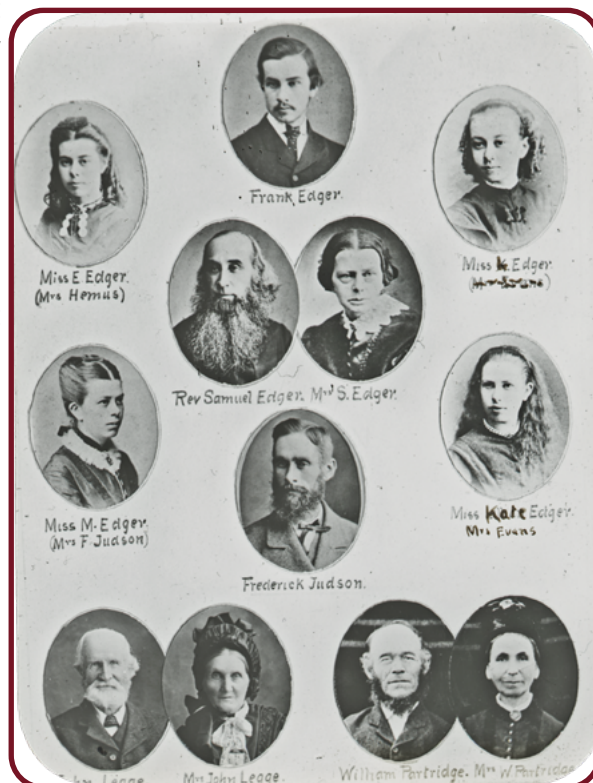
Samuel's upbringing, as the third of eight children born to John Edger, a devout Particular Baptist, and Susannah Ann Edger (nee White), was marked by divergence from his parent's evangelical traditions. Gifted academically, he secured a place at Stepney Baptist College, later Regent's Park Baptist College, where his poetic and philosophical approach to doctrine set him apart from his peers. Subsequently earning a BA from the University of London, he became a co-pastor and later the pastor of the Baptist chapel in Bond Street, Birmingham, marrying Louisa Harwood in 1846.

Around 1848, Edger assumed pastoral responsibilities in Kimbolton, Huntingdonshire, promoting liberal views on the church. By 1855, he moved to Abingdon, Berkshire, supporting the non-conformist campaign for disestablishment of the Anglican Church but his rejection of denominationalism eventually led to a dispute with a Baptist trustee and his subsequent resignation. The turning point in Edger's life came with William Rawson Brame's proposal to establish the Albertland Colonisation Movement in New Zealand. He was intrigued by the idea of establishing a new, model Christian society in a new land, hoping to unite Anglicans, Wesleyans, Independents, Baptists and all other sincere Christians in a common organisation of fellowship and service. Edger was chosen as 'minister elect' of the settlement giving a key speech on the docks at Gravesend before the settlers embarked on their journey to Albertland in 1862. He was thirty-six years old.

Reverend Samuel Edger had imagined that the settlement could reconstruct the shape of the church but the journey out with the first group of emigrants rudely awakened him with his shipboard diary reflecting his disappointment at colonists who lacked high ideals. Upon arriving in Auckland, Samuel Edger and his family, accompanied by Messrs. G. H. Brookes, W. R. Brame, and Dr. Bell, navigated challenging terrain, transporting their luggage on sledges over rough bush paths. The children, initially riding atop the loaded sledges, soon preferred scrambling through dense undergrowth on foot. Adverse weather, an overturned dray, and a piano left in the rain on the side of the path for several days marked their journey. At Kaipara Landing, Samuel left his family, proceeding to Port Albert with the promise of sending a larger boat for them. In this harsh and desolate countryside, battling heavy rain, the family encountered stray pigs who were trying to steal their potatoes but received warmth from the friendly local Māori.

Samuels' own journey to Port Albert with his companions was also filled with drama and perils after running aground in a storm, wading through mud, and facing uncertain conditions before reaching their destination to find others who had reached the settlement before them, who had erected tents and managed to get things in order. Nothing could have been better, blistered and sore in foot, wet, cold and hungry than to enjoy a cup of tea in the tent of Mr. Partridge and his family.

Sadly, for the group of settlers, one of their group left early in the morning to find his land and didn't come back, causing much concern that he was lost in the bush. That night brought heavy rain and wind, making them fear the worst. However, Sunday morning was calm and beautiful. Six people went to search for the missing settler, lighting signal fires on hills. While the rescue party were absent, they had a short, serious,



Samuel Edger and Family
Harold Marsh Photo # 2004-2-2007-1195

and mournful service. As they sat down for dinner, they saw a boat approaching with Reverend William Gittos, his family, and local Māori. They welcomed the settlers and had their first Sabbath worship. The missing settler returned half an hour later, exhausted from a fearful night in the bush. With an early tea and a short service by Reverend Gittos, the Sabbath ended pleasantly.

Samuel was reunited with his family in late October after they had embarked on a challenging boat journey, with a grounding at the mouth of the Kaipara River, their journey took 40 hours in total. The inhabitants at the new settlement at Port Albert greeted Samuel's family who on arrival noticed tents pitched on a small level ground on a small piece of land beside the river. Here the Edger family; wet, cold and hungry faced the realities of their new life.

One of Samuel's daughters later reflected on the settlers' struggles, acknowledging the hardship faced by delicate women, mothers, and those caring for young children. She was also not surprised that less than half of the prospective settlers had reached the settlement, and of this number a large proportion made the decision to return to Auckland after a very short time.

A year later, on the Anniversary of the settlement, a Public Meeting led to a 'working bee,' where seventeen volunteers, including the two local parsons, Edger and Worker, participated in digging a navigable boat channel.

Life in the settlement was difficult for the Edger family with Samuel receiving well below the promised stipends and an un-attentive congregation. Undeterred, he established a co-operative farm and was the only trustee who fought for the settler's land rights against the remaining trustees. He took pride in building a community chapel in Te Arai; however, the family faced a tragic loss when their house burned in 1866, leaving them with nothing which led to support from Auckland churches after he had served at the Albert Street Independent Church in Auckland as their temporary pastor the previous year.

The Edger family moved to Parnell where Samuel eventually formed his own church. Samuel's advocacy extended to liberal causes, but his health declined after his wife's death in 1880. Returning to England for surgery, he passed away in May 1882.

His legacy continued through his daughter Kate, the first woman to graduate from a New Zealand University with a Bachelor of Arts, University of Auckland in 1877, and his son Frank, a barrister and judge in the Native Land Court.

The Edger family's musical talents were also renown with both Samuel and Frank holding active roles in the Auckland Choral Society.

Citation

Peter J. Lineham. 'Edger, Samuel', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1993. Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2e4/edger-samuel> (accessed 19 February 2024)

The Albertlanders 'Brave Pioneers of the 1860s' by Sir Henry Brett and Henry Hook

'Brave Pioneers of the 1860s' available to purchase at the museum or online at

<https://albertlandmuseum.co.nz/product/the-albertlanders-brave-pioneers-of-the-1860s/>

Memory Lane

Picture this ... on a visit to Helensville Museum last year, where amidst the relics of the past, a nostalgic discovery awaited. Behold an old kerosene heater, a vintage gem that instantly transports you back to the enchanting era of the 1960s!

As my eyes rested on that familiar apparatus, identical to the one that graced our childhood home, this wasn't just any heater, it was the heart of the household, a steadfast companion during chilly, wet days. Transported back to our laundry, this heater worked its magic to dry clothes during days of relentless winter rains. But the enchantment doesn't stop there – envision the morning hustle as we gathered around the glow of the heater, braving the brisk air to get dressed for school and the warnings from mum to be careful – don't get too close!!

And who could forget the distinctive aroma of kerosene that filled the air when refilling the tank?

What a flood of memories! So, let me ask you: What are your fondest memories of those old heaters? Take a trip down memory lane and tell me some enchanting tales about the things that you can remember?



Editors Pick

From the mesmerizing vantage point of Pukenui, overlooking the river, Harold Marsh skillfully captured this picture of the small town of Port Albert as he and his friends ventured around the shores of the Oruawhoro river on Tuesday, the 27th February in 1923.

It is possible that stopping at this idyllic spot was not only a chance to take in the amazing view but also to reflect on an incident fifty-five years earlier in 1868, which Harold's own mother, Elizabeth, had witnessed as she was going about her daily household chores.

Charles Brookes, who was only twenty years of age, set out that day from Takapou Stream near the Marsh family's home and set sail to rendezvous with his sweetheart who resided some distance upstream near Nicholson's Mill.

As Mrs. Marsh watched the 30-foot keel boat, rigged as a fore-and-aft schooner the wind suddenly picked up and an unforeseen squall descended upon the boat tossing it into the unforgiving waters. Feeling compelled to watch this young man as he battled the forces of nature, Elizabeth became increasingly agitated, unable to complete her household duties without constantly returning to the front door to check on his progress. Sadly, during one of her brief absences the boat sank beneath the river's surface where it lay for the next five days, until its recovery with all sails set, just below Rengarenga. The spot where the boat was discovered, and where it was presumed that young Charles had drowned was also where a young man by the name of "Pickles" had accidentally drowned several years earlier while attempting to cross the river between Port Albert and the Raekau in a small boat.

These tragic accidents on the river, which was the 'lifeblood' of the district, would cast a melancholic shadow across the landscape, with no telephones and emergency services available, there were no emergency service calls to summon help for anyone experiencing difficulties or to prevent a tragedy that was about to unfold. For Mrs. Marsh witnessing this event, this tragic day would have remained with her for her lifetime, knowing that she was unable to help this young man return safely to his family.

Charles Henry had arrived in the Albertland district aged 15 after travelling with his two brothers, E.S. Brookes and G. Hovey Brookes aboard the Matilda Wattenbach to the settlement of Albertland.



A visit to Rengarenga 27th February 1923 Port Albert to Pukenui
Harold Marsh Collection # 2004.2.2007.1002

Minniesdale Chapel



A Short History

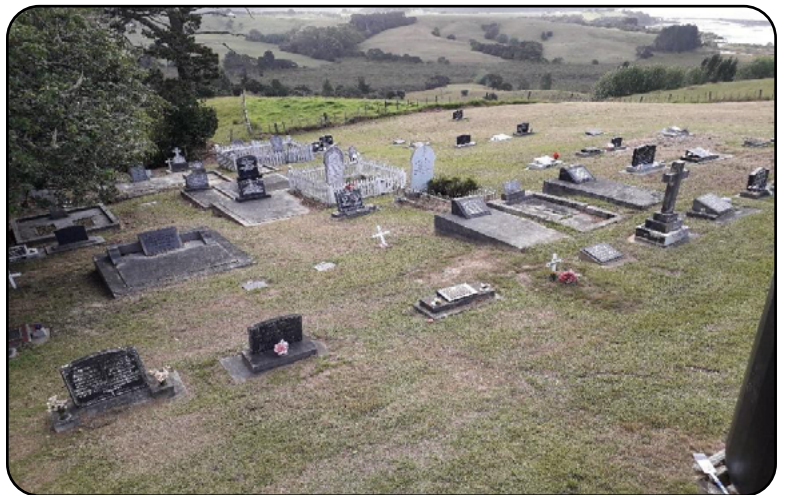
Back in the 1860's, the early Albertlanders came together every Sunday, for worship. These services were held at various homes in the district and all the while these settlers of Wharehine hoped for a chapel of their own. Rev. Edwin Stanley Brookes Senior, a trained Baptist Minister, appeared to them, at one of the openair services in 1866 held in fine weather, and said he intended to build a house of God in which they could hold Divine worship. After many months of labour, the chapel was finally finished. On Sunday, December 29th 1867, Minniesdale Chapel was officially opened and there were two days of celebrations to follow. Over the next 30 or so years Minniesdale conducted many weddings, christenings, funerals and Sunday services. During 1897 and 1899 only five services were held by a visiting preacher, the Rev. J H Collins of the Baptist Union, Auckland, who in conjunction with local members, endeavoured to keep services continuing. In 1902, Minniesdale was given to the district for the use of all denominations. A committee held regular meetings and endeavoured to keep things afloat. Then from 1922 things became more business-like and in 1925 Harold Marsh began 22 years as Chairman. Subscriptions enabled many minor repairs to be completed. Personal donations from local people have helped to preserve the chapel. Saturday 27th December 1947, the community held the 80th Anniversary Reunion, afternoon tea was served and flowers placed on all the graves. At 11am the following day a thanksgiving service was conducted by Rev. E W Hames, the grandson of an Albertlander.



The chapel and cemetery are well cared for by a dedicated group of Trustees who meet regularly. A service was held December 2017 to mark 150 years since the first service, and the months preceding this, much work was done in preparation by the Wellsford Lions Club, trustees and local residents. The grounds are now maintained by the Lions for which the Trustees, and the community, appreciate their time and effort.

For more detailed history of this beautiful chapel there is a booklet for sale in the chapel – An Historical Record 1867-2017. In time, an update will be done, when current stocks are depleted. There is a Facebook page and a website www.minniesdale.com that has photos, a timeline of events, surnames of those buried in the cemetery, recent newsletters, and a contact page if anyone wishes to purchase a plot or hire the chapel. Thanksgiving Anniversary Service 7th January 2024 Once a year the Trustees host a Thanksgiving Service, on or near, the date of the opening service

in 1867. If this falls too near Christmas or the New Year it is held over until the Sunday following. This allows visitors from afar to join in this significant annual event. We dedicated this years' service to the memory of Edward (Ted) and Runa Halfpenny, departed this life, November 2000 and December 2023, respectively. The pencil sketch at the top of the page, was drawn by Ted as a teenager, and shows how much the chapel and surrounds have changed over the years. January 7th, 2024 dawned a beautiful sunny day. Over 50 people attended Minniesdale Chapel and all survived the heat in the tiny confines, thankfully. Nothing much has changed in all these years, with only the double doors leading in and two windows opening behind the altar and pulpit, with a view of the Oruawharo River. The chapel was full to capacity, hosted by Clare Joensen standing in at the last minute, assisted by Albertlander Chris Hill who did the



blessings for the day. Clare welcomed all the speakers and the hymns that were chosen for the service, Love Divine & How Great Thou Art, as per usual, sounded lovely within the walls of this beautiful building. Our first speaker, Peter Marsh, gave us the history of two pioneering women in his family who came out with the early settlers, and then to follow we had a prayer for those early people who helped establish and settle the area. HeartsAchord singers, sang 'Owen Sound' and 'Amazing Grace'. Both songs came to America (with settlers) from the UK, from 1700 to around 1850. These hymns and anthems were sung and played in English parish churches and nonconformist chapels in the same era. This selection was very appropriate, remembering all those nonconformists who came here to practice their own religion, without restrictions. Jacob Garrett then read a scripture, Psalm 91, who was followed by our guest speaker, Phil van der Mespel, with a message based on this Psalm. After the closing blessing the Trustees of Minniesdale Chapel gave thanks to those who helped plan this service and those in the congregation who came together on this day. Thoughts were expressed for those who could not attend. An invitation was extended to all to join in a shared afternoon tea at the Wharehine Hall. A huge thank you must go to everyone, too many to name, who contributed to make this such a special day and have always been happy to offer their time. The Trustees do appreciate this.



Prepared by Barbara Lane. Trustee & Treasurer

HISTORICAL ALBERTLAND MARRIAGES

February is usually a very settled month (weather wise) and the hustle and bustle of Christmas is far behind us so what better time than to have a wedding.

On a warm Tuesday evening in February, Isabella Wiseman McPherson and Maurice Gover Dudding were married at the All-Saints' Church in Wellsford. It was on February 24th in 1931 and Belle as she was known, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J McPherson of Wellsford, married Maurice, the second son of Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Dudding of Port Albert. Reverend F. D. Hart presided over the ceremony.

On her father's arm, the bride entered the church revealing her captivating ankle-length frock of crepe-de-chine adorned by frills of georgette and silver trimmings. A beautiful embroidered tulle veil, arranged with a half circlet and a cluster of orange blossoms adorned her. To the delight of onlookers, she carried a bouquet of sweet peas, maiden hair fern, and a surprising touch of asparagus.



2004.2.01.175

Isabella (Belle) McPherson-Maurice Dudding wedding.

L-R Atheena McPherson, Belle McPherson (Bride), Jean Crozier

Her attendants, Miss Jean Crozier and Miss Atheena McPherson, added to the elegance of the ceremony. Miss Crozier, in an apple green georgette dress with frills, and Miss McPherson, in a rose-pink crepe-de-chine attire, complemented the bride exquisitely. Tulle headpieces coordinated with their frocks, and each held bouquets of lilies and sweet peas.

Maurice, the groom, was accompanied by his best man, Mr. Oswald Dudding, and groomsman, Mr. Lester Turner. The enchanting strains of the "Wedding March," skillfully played by Miss Nellie Hood of Kaipara Flats, accompanied



Belle's graceful entrance.

Following the ceremony, the celebration continued at the Wellsford Hall, where 100 guests were warmly welcomed by Mrs. J. McPherson, the bride's mother, resplendent in a navy-blue spun crepe-de-chine frock with a matching hat. Mrs. Dudding, the groom's mother, was equally elegant in coral crepe-de-chine adorned with georgette and lace.

The reception was a joyous affair, with music and dancing captivating the guests until the early hours. The happy couple bid farewell in style, departing in a car, the bride adorned in an ensemble of crepe-de-chine and georgette, complete with matching 'Moroccan' coat, a summer fashion accessory of the early 1930s. As the echoes of celebration lingered, the union of Maurice Gover Dudding and Belle McPherson is yet another chapter in the annals of Wellsford's history.



Congratulations to our Museum Volunteer; Grahame Henderson and his wife Carol who have recently celebrated 55 years of marriage on the 22nd of February.

HISTORICAL ALBERTLAND BIRTHDAYS

Historical Albertland Birthdays

06/02/1884 Florence Margaret Grice born at Port Albert

09/02/1905 Leonard Percy Grice born in Auckland

Friends and Supporters of 'Albertland Heritage Museum' birthdays in February

26th February Allan Peake

And a special Happy Birthday to any of our friends and supporters we have missed.

Museum News

On a beautiful sunny, Sunday afternoon recently, we enjoyed a visit from Daniel and Jacob from West Auckland, who, while staying in Wellsford, took the opportunity to explore our museum. For Daniel, this visit served as a nostalgic journey to his childhood spent in Wharehine, allowing him to share memories with his son. Jacob who will soon be turning eight years old, found delight in our museum and, like many other visitors, thoroughly enjoyed playing our majestic grand piano.

Engaging in conversation with our volunteers on duty, we discovered that Daniel and Jacob shared familial ties with not only the Blackburn family but



also the Witheford family, both integral parts of the history of Wharehine. Daniel recounted memories of the houses where his family members once lived, providing information for our volunteers on duty that may help others who visit. Interestingly during their visit, we also looked at some more recent historic photographs of Wellsford that were being used for a new display, triggering memories of shops he visited as a young boy. Thank you, Daniel and Jacob for visiting our museum. It was a pleasure to hear your stories of Wharehine and Wellsford and we look forward to welcoming you back to our museum in the future.

UPDATE!

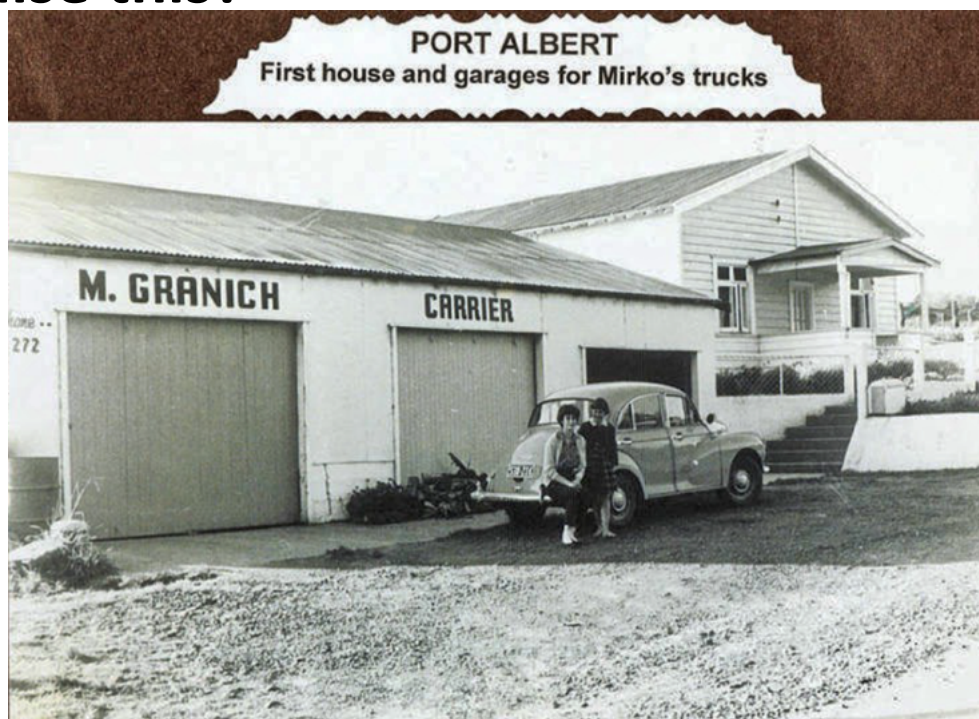
We are thrilled to share a heartwarming update with you. Achieving positive outcomes is a delightful experience, and while it may take some time, the rewards are truly gratifying. In our May 2023 newsletter, we posed a question about the intriguing journey of our grand Cornish & Co piano, fondly known as the 'Boudoir Queen,' from its origins in America to its current home at the Albertland Heritage Museum. Today, we are pleased to provide an answer, at least in part, to this inquiry.

In August of last year, Warren Kelly made the suggestion that the piano may have belonged to the Pictor family from the old homestead in Clague's Road. We can now confirm the accuracy of this information, as Ian Pictor, a family member, recently visited the museum and validated this historical connection.

According to this newfound information, Arthur George Pictor acquired the piano as a Wedding Anniversary Gift for his wife Alice (nee Turner). It held a place of pride in a sitting room, dedicated for special occasions, in the old villa. When the property was sold, their son Milton Pictor relocated the piano to his residence in Davies Road. Eventually, the piano found its way to the museum through a generous donation by Roger Dennis Pictor.

We are delighted to announce that this cherished artifact, affectionately referred to as the 'old girl' of the museum, has been officially accessioned. Her records now include this significant historical background, and her Accession Number is #2024.11.1. We are honoured to preserve and share the rich history of the 'Boudoir Queen' with our community.

Recognise this?



**Record ID DGHS-PA-1-3-039 Mirko (Mick) Granich's house and truck garage
at Port Albert – 1950-1959**

Acknowledgement: Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections DGHS-PA-1-3-039

Opening of New Exhibiton (11th February 2024) 'A Mission on the Kaipara' – William and Marianne Gittos



Invited Guests at Opening of 'A Mission on the Kaipara' - William and Marianne Gittos

Recently we had the honor of extending a warm welcome to esteemed guests, marking the opening of our new exhibition, 'A Mission on the Kaipara – William and Marianne Gittos.'

At the heart of the occasion was Clare Joensen, not only the Museum Vice Chairman and Curator of the exhibition, but also the custodian of a profound personal connection with the Gittos and Hobbs family. In a captivating display of storytelling, Clare transported our guests to the very essence of 'A Mission on the Kaipara' telling stories of this early Māori Methodist missionary family and their associations with many others around the Kaipara district.

Our doors to this exhibition are now open, and we invite you to embark on your own journey of discovery and to witness the meticulously arranged exhibits of Gittos and Hobbs' family treasures, a testament to the lives that helped shape the Kaipara region.



**Museum Vice President and Curator
Clare Joensen**



**Volunteer
Peter Buckton at
opening of new
exhibition on 11th
February 2024**



A MISSION ON THE KAIPARA:

William and Marianne Gittos



George Dilly, Camp at Albertland, Nth Auckland
Watercolour, 254 x 825mm
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, Purchased 1970

New EXHIBITION

A Mission on the Kaipara is a new exhibition telling the story of Reverend William Gittos and his Wife, Marianne Gittos (née Hobbs).

Opens 14 Feb 2024

Albertland Heritage Museum

Library Plaza

15 Port Albert Road Wellsford

Mon-Tues: Closed

Wed – Sat: 11am–3pm

Sun: 1pm–3pm

Regular entry fees apply

