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PAHIATUA BOROUGH : THE FORMATIVE YEARS
(1881 - 1892)

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in History at Massey University.

Byron John Bentley
1973

THE
LEGEND
OF
THE BIRD GOD OF PAHI-ATUA

About the year 1625, there was an irruption into the lower Wairarapa district of the ... Rakairangi tribe, when the original Rangitane tribe was dispossessed and driven south. Rai-kau-Moana, the chief of the Rangitane escaped and fled. When he reached Pori-nui-a-kuaka, he looked back and saw his Pa being consumed by fire. A difference of opinion arose between Rai and his people as to whether to hold the Pa at Okahu or to flee.

Rai's atua, Rongomai, counselled flight, but the younger chiefs decided to remain and defend the place saying they "desired to wash their throats in their own streams, rather than in strange waters".

The Pa fell and was left without support, and from Uwhi-manuka, near the place now called Gladstone, Rai-kau-Moana again called on his atua, Rongomai, who changed himself into a bird and took Rai on his shoulders and flew away with him.

After several rests, they reached the hill Pahi-atua about three and a half miles south of the present town of that name.

The atua had a permanent resting place on the south side of the hill and between it and the Mangakaki, a tributary of the Mangatainoka, in a cave about twenty-five yards deep, by about six feet wide, called To-ana-o-Rongomai. Rai was later taken on to Rai-Kapua, due south of Tahoraiti, on the Pahiatua to Napier highway, where he made his home.

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PREFACE

To the New Zealand citizen of the 1970's, surrounded either by the tall buildings of an urban landscape, or the predominantly open fields of a rural environment, the terms Seventy and Forty mile bush may connote more of a legendary forest tract, than the actual existence, less than 100 years ago, of a vast primeval forest, extending from Norsewood to Mauriceville, on the eastern side of the Tararua and Ruahine ranges in the North Island of New Zealand.

The fact that nowadays, dairy and sheepfarms and the towns of Dannevirke, Woodville, Pahiatua and Eketahuna cover what was once bushland, is illustrative of how quickly the early inhabitants of the area adapted to their new environment, and turned their vision of viable communities surrounded by farmland into reality.

This making over of the accessible parts of the North Island inland forest was the outstanding achievement of our people The achievements of all these ordinary struggling people makes the really significant history of the North Island.

George Jobberns¹

The story of Pahiatua is part of "this making over of the accessible parts of the North Island inland forest", though in many ways it is a unique variation on this theme.

Pahiatua's formative period, or the years between bush clearing (1881) and the conferring of borough status (1892), is characterized by all of the aspirations, crises and imaginings that are usually associated with the moving from infancy and adolescence into maturity.

1. Quoted in S.H. Franklin "The Village and the Bush", from J. Forster (ed.) "Social Processes in New Zealand", p.102.

The movement into the bush and the establishment of Pahiatua in one of the last vestiges of unsettled country in the North Island, cannot be looked at as a "journey into the unknown". It was rather an extension of such focal points as Wellington (founded in 1840) and Masterton (founded in 1853).

The settlers who moved to Pahiatua after the land sales in Masterton (1881), were not much different from their contemporaries in these more established centre. This is illustrated by the rapidity in which familiar social institutions were transplanted into Pahiatua, and the growth of criteria necessary for community formation, such as; a sense of belonging to a distinct community, regularized patterns of interaction, a recognized system of authority, and a shared sense of mutual expectations.

Physical isolation and distance were negligible factors in the Pahiatua situation, because a road was in existence before the settlers arrived at their new home, when the road was coupled with a telegraph system, isolation was precluded from virtually any part of the country. Though physical isolation and distance were negligible factors it was a different matter when the attitude of mind of the Pahiatua settler is examined. Gradually surrounding Pahiatua in the decade of the 1880's were a number of government sponsored settlements all endowed with reserves for such government institutions as a Post Office, Bank, Resident Magistrate's Court, Police Station, School and recreation ground. Because Pahiatua was a private township, subdivided into urban sections by private individuals, it found itself, in relation to its government sponsored neighbours, neglected in respect of government institutions.

This situation, as well as engendering a feeling of distinction and "we alone" among the settlers of Pahiatua, was also instrumental in promoting a large amount of energetic self-help and volatile behaviour, over and above that usually found in a community's formative years, on the part of its early citizens, as they aspired to create a viable community out of the dense bush.

In the introduction to this thesis, the initiative behind the settlement of the Pahiatua bushland is examined, with special emphasis on a scrutiny of Pahiatua and its relationship with its government sponsored neighbours. Chapter 2 concentrates specifically on Pahiatua and the men who were instrumental in its creation, through the division of their land into urban blocks. Chapter 3 is concerned with a description of the process of turning bush into pasture, and the business enterprises that were started in Pahiatua in its first 11 years. Chapter 4 examines the growth of community institutions ranging from a Jockey Club to a town board. In Chapter 5 an attempt is made, by examining various controversies, grievances and aspirations that the private settlement of Pahiatua was concerned with in its formative years, to illustrate how a viable community was brought into existence.

As regards the research material for the history of Pahiatua, a wide variety of mainly primary information was consulted. For the initiative behind the settlement of the Pahiatua bushlands, and something of its results, the Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, the Parliamentary Debates and the Cyclopedia of New Zealand, all provided some illustration of the pioneer New Zealand ideal, of getting "men on to the land".

The Pahiatua Town Board minutes gave some glimpse into the workings of bush-town local government, though for the broadest coverage of life in Pahiatua the newspapers, in particular the Pahiatua Star, were invaluable. Because the Pahiatua Star was not founded until June 1886, the Woodville Examiner and the Wellington based New Zealand Mail were important for the years 1881-1886. Without the Pahiatua Star this thesis could not have been written, not only because of the insights it provided through its news columns into the life of a fledgling township, but also because its advertisements depicted the "bread and butter" functions of many Pahiatua inhabitants.

A few years ago the Pahiatua Star was almost another charred mass in the Pahiatua rubbish dump. For some years it was stored

in the news office building in Pahiatua, but lack of space decreed that it be shifted permanently. Only the quick thinking of a former mayor of the town, Mr Alan Carthew, saved the situation, and the Pahiatua Star was diverted to a shed in the Borough Council yards where it remained, until a combination of cockroaches, damp, and mould, saw it removed to the Turnbull Library in Wellington.

Another invaluable information source, which complemented all other material, was the personal recollections of early Pahiatua settlers either by the printed word or a spoken interview. Two early citizens of the town, Mrs Annie Bentley, who was the first white girl born in Pahiatua (1883) and a daughter of an original owner of Pahiatua, Henry Sedcole, and Mr John Hughes, the son of John Hughes also an original owner of Pahiatua, provided much important information through the use of their remarkable memories.

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With the assistance and cooperation of Mrs A. Bentley, and Mr J. Hughes of Pahiatua, my sources of information concerning Pahiatua as it was in the 1880's was vastly increased, and to those two I owe a great deal.

For the photographs, all credit must go to Mr L. Hartley of Pahiatua for the care which he took in preserving intact these early reminders of Pahiatua's past.

To Mrs Maureen Macdonald thanks are due for her care in the typing of the draft and final copy of this thesis.

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Finally I would like to thank my parents, and wife for their constant encouragement and interest.

ABBREVIATIONS

AJHR	Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives
NZM	New Zealand Mail
PD	Parliamentary Debates
PH	Pahiatua Herald
PS	Pahiatua Star

ILLUSTRATIONS

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PLATE 1

A section of the major Forty mile bush road in 1882,
at the site of what was to become the three chain wide
main street of Pahiatua.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PAHIATUA 1881 - 1892

The tract of bushland that was to become the Borough of Pahiatua, was situated in an area known as the "40 Mile Bush", which was part of a larger entity, the "70 Mile Bush".

Apart from rivers and streams, some natural clearings, and a partially metalled road, the Pahiatua area was covered in dense primeval forest, consisting in the main of "Matai, Rate, Kahikatea, Miru, Rimu and some Totara, with dense surrounding undergrowth".¹

The Pahiatua bush was situated approximately in the middle of the Mangatainoka valley, which gave its name to the river that flowed adjacent to the "shadow" town. Immediately to the east, a ridge separated the Manatainoka valley from the Mangaramarama creek.

The location of Pahiatua either side of the sole "40 Mile Bush" road in 1881, not only provided the fledgling township with a ready-made main street, but also provided a focal point from which other roads could be extended, and so push settlement further out into the remaining bushlands.

Location, while of major importance, is only a partial explanation of Pahiatua's rapid growth from clearings in the bush (1881) to conferrment of borough status (1892), and its position as the major focal point of the "40 Mile Bush".

When location is allied with the fact that Pahiatua was the only private township in the area, most, but not all of the answer to the problem - why did Pahiatua flourish so rapidly in its formative years of growth, and other settlements within its immediate hinterland

1. R.G. Heerdegen, "Pahiatua County", p.63.

stagnate and fade? - is supplied.

The major reason appears to be that Pahiatua was unique within its immediate hinterland in that individual initiative, and a mixture of altruism and self-interest among what can be called bush settlement entrepreneurs engendered within its community structure a perpetuating dynamism.

Before paying closer attention to Pahiatua and its immediate hinterland, it is necessary to outline the events which led directly to the opening of the Pahiatua bushland.

The initial impetus in the settlement of the Pahiatua bushland was given by J.O. Ormond, Superintendent of Hawkes Bay, in a number of letters to Donald Mclean, Native Minister and Minister of Lands (formerly Superintendent of Hawkes Bay).

In his first letter dated 10 September 1869, Ormond stated that "it is of great personal importance to secure the district in question [the Forty mile bush] for settlement, and that the establishment of a body of colonists in so central a position on what must be the main line of road connecting the northern settlements with Wellington is really a matter of colonial interest."²

Ormond also saw the settlement of the bush as some solution to the Maori-Pakeha friction of the time: "... it is necessary for me to say that I have promoted the purchase of this large block ... hoping as I do that it may ... speedily become a prosperous and settled district permanently securing the southern settlements of this island against further disturbances".³

As a result of Ormond's advocacy of the desirability of the bushland for settlement, a government surveyor and agent, Samuel Locke, bought from Maori owners large sections of the Forty mile bush. There was little trouble in the transactions as the owners

2. AJHR, 1870, A-18, p.1.

3. *ibid.*

were Maoris from the Manawatu, whose occupation of the "Bush" was fairly spasmodic (though small Pas were to be found in the 1880's at Ngawaparua, Hamua, Tutaekara).

At the time of the Ormond-McLean correspondence a number of public works schemes had been initiated in the "70 Mile Bush" as a whole. Whereas settlement had been started in Masterton in 1853 settlement in the "70 Mile Bush" was not attempted until the early 1870's, when Scandinavians were brought out to New Zealand under the auspices of the public works scheme. These immigrants were settled at Norsewood and Mauriceville, the northern and southern extremities of the "70 Mile Bush", for the purpose of bush felling and roadmaking.

While it is true to say that the Scandinavians never really encroached into the Pahiatua area of the "40 Mile Bush", they were instrumental in decreasing the dimensions of the bushland by settling in the early 1870's on the southern boundary of the Forty mile bush, in a settlement called (Ekotahuna) Mellenskov, and in constructing a road through the bush linking Hawkes Bay with the Wairarapa. In the north, Woodville approximately 15 miles within the "40 Mile Bush" boundary was founded in 1874.

Just as there was nearly a twenty year time gap between the settlement of Masterton and purchase of the bush - due primarily to lack of government finance, and also until hostilities ceased in the Pakeha-Maori wars, no provincial government was willing to undertake further land purchases from the Maoris - there was also some delay in the actual realisation of Ormond's expressed hope, that the entire "40 Mile Bush" should be a settled area.

The delay in the settlement of the Pahiatua bush-country can be attributed to a combination of factors, all emanating from the depression that New Zealand underwent in the later 1870's and 1880's. During this time hard cash was in short supply, and the reluctance of many to further "the breaking in of the land" was probably aided by the impression of a likely increase in taxation that (the then Minister of Lands) Harry Atkinson "aroused in a New Plymouth speech,

18 December 1875",⁴ which was also frightening the heavily mortgaged large landowner, and the struggling small farmer. "Export prices had been falling since 1873 and between 1874 and 1876 the value of exports per head of population declined sharply. Imports fell by 20%, in the same period loan expenditure and credit expansion slackened. With prosperity faltering, the enormous public debt which went from £8,317,000 in 1870, to £17,388,000 in 1875, "frightened more people into calling for retrenchment".⁵

With this situation in mind the question needs to be asked, how was it that Pahiatua was established in the middle of these depression years? A combination of central government aspiring to get "men on the land", and the advocacy and entrepreneurial abilities of a Masterton nurseryman, William Wilson McCardle supplies the answer, and it is to the latter in particular that Pahiatua owes its name and existence.

In May 1876 McCardle explored the country that was to become Pahiatua County, and almost immediately took steps to have the land that he had explored settled. The relative ease with which McCardle saw his goal realised, points to the fact that not only was he influential in public affairs - in 1876 he led agitation for the formation of Masterton into a borough - but he also had a dynamism that brought him to the notice of a few people in high places.

The steps McCardle took to settle the land were these. As a member of the Wairarapa North County Council, McCardle in company with George Beetham (later a Member of Legislative Council from North Wairarapa) represented the Alfredton riding, and got the present County of Pahiatua formed into a separate riding of the Wairarapa North County Council.

McCardle christened the riding Pahiatua, and it was placed under the control of a road board; his next step was to form the county.

4. J. Bassett, "Sir Harry Atkinson", p.46.

5. *ibid.*

McCardle also belonged to the Wellington Waste Lands Board. Because Pahiatua land had been purchased from the Maoris (1870-71) it was designated "waste land", therefore its sale came under the control of the government and membership of this body gave him more leverage in his desire to settle the Pahiatua land.⁶

In Masterton in mid-1876 - as in Bulls, Normanby, and the Hutt - a small farm association was formed under the direction of McCardle, and he and another influential Masterton citizen A.W. Renall waited on the Waste Land Board recommending the Pahiatua block as especially suitable for small farm settlements. They were "told by the Board that if the settlers really wanted land they should be satisfied with second-class land, instead of picking out the best block in the province".⁷

McCardle, and the Settler Association he led, kept up the agitation for the land they desired; "their endeavours to move the board included the presentation of a petition signed by 300 intending settlers".⁸ In this process, McCardle was recognized as having much influence in the passing of the land Act of 1877 and its amendment of 1879, with Pahiatua being the first block settled under central government legislation.

Under this legislation, a whole range of provincial government land legislation was systematized, and Pahiatua and its immediate hinterland became the testing ground for numerous types of settlement and land purchase, for example, Special and Village Settlements, Small Farm Associations, and improved Farm Settlements, perpetual lease and deferred payment.

6. With reference to the "Cyclopedia of New Zealand" 1896 pp.1044-1045.

7. A personal interview by the writer with Mr Ben Irons, February 1972, at Masterton.

8. R.D. Arnold, "The Opening of the Great Bush", Vol.II, p.362.

With reference to the last of these, the architect of the 1877 Land Bill, the then Minister of Lands Donald Reid, stated that "the deferred payment system will be of enormous advantage in gradually relieving the labour market, by giving those who wish to settle on the land, a little time to pay for it".⁹ For the settlers of what was to become Pahiatua township, the deferred payment system aided them greatly in moving into the bushlands.

The government settlement schemes, in the words of William Rolleston (Minister of Lands 1881-1884), were a conscious attempt by government to provide by a framework of incentive conditions, settlement "... for ... those whose chief capital in the country is their bone and sinew, their industry, and practical experience in the working and subduing of the soil, and carrying on the work of colonization".¹⁰

In 1885, under the auspices of John Ballance (Minister of Lands 1884-1887) the bush areas became a means whereby the urban poor in particular could be settled, under the auspices of the central government, as a way of alleviating the distress of depression in the cities.

Some of the government settlements which helped to turn bush into pasture during the 1880's, were Mangatainoka (a fledgling milling centre), Scarborough (now Mangamutu, two miles west of Pahiatua), Ballance (six miles west of Pahiatua in the Mangahoa valley), Mangoramarama (two miles east of Pahiatua, by the Mangoramarama creek), and Pahiatua village special settlement (half way between Mangatainoka, and the private settlement of Pahiatua). There was also some small farm associations by the Mangahoa river (some six miles west of Pahiatua) and land was leased by some small farmers from the Wellington City Corporation endowment of 1600 acres, having a frontage on both sides of the main road from Pahiatua township to the Toritea road (a road running at right angles to main "40 Mile Bush" road

9. PD, 1877, 25, p.251.

10. PD, 1882, 42, p.167.

giving access to Ngaturi and Makuri).

In 1886, J. McKerrow, Secretary for Crown Lands described the idyllic existence he predicted would be the lot of the Pahiatua village special settlement members.

In the village and small farm settlements, a man by securing five, ten or twenty acres, need never be a day idle, for when he is not employed outside in the district, he has the most delightful of all work in working with his family at home in improving their own place. These village communities ought to become the nurseries of a thrifty industrious population.¹¹

Five years later (1891) it appeared that the village settlement scheme had been economically unsound. W. Copley, in a report on the village homestead special settlement system in New Zealand, described what was happening in reality at the Pahiatua village settlement.

This place which has an area of 765 acres held by 73 settlers is in the midst of dense bushland, and a great deal of work has been done in clearing and timber burning. The holdings cannot be used for some years except for grazing and gardening on a small scale. In the meantime a home is provided on the land for the leasee's family. A little roadwork was done at first, a cow is kept, and a few vegetables are grown for home use, and possibly for sale now and again to the neighbours. The husband goes out to work chiefly at tree-felling for the neighbouring graziers, or in roadmaking, as none of the blocks is sufficient to wholly support a man and his family. Indeed here, as in other settlements, some of holders complain that the blocks (which average about 12 acres) in this district are too small.¹²

The Pahiatua Star, spokesman for the fairly well entrenched (by this time, 1886) private town dweller of Pahiatua, took a lofty attitude to the future viability of the government settlers.

Before the village settlement scheme was given effect to, we were of the opinion that Mr Ballance had introduced a very necessary system in dealing with the waste-lands of the crown, but we must confess that since the establishment of the Pahiatua village

11. AJHR, 1886, C-1, p.4.

12. AJHR, 1891, Session II, C-5, p.7.



PLATE 2

A group of "bush-fellers" pose for the photographer during clearing operations of the Pahiatua and district bushland in the 1880's.

settlement we have reason rather to denounce the scheme than uphold it. Why? ... we find men totally unfitted for bush settlers taking up land ... we protest against the "40 Mile Bush" being used as a sort of depot for the unemployed of the colony. We require good, honest, hardworking men to make the settlement of the vast bush-district a success, and for the credit of his scheme we ask Mr Ballance to seriously consider what he is doing.¹³

Not much notice appears to have been taken of the Pahiatua Star, and in May 1891 it reported that the unemployed from Wellington were still being sent out to the 40 Mile Bush, in this case through Pahiatua, to new areas such as Makuri, for roadbuilding. Apparently some found the work too hard and left, with one of their number putting his feelings onto paper in a poem called "Song of the City Arab", which ended with the following lines

I am sighing for the city
For a stroll upon the pier,
I am sighing for the city
And I'm feeling very queer,
For my boots have lost their polish
And I'm dying for a drink.
The government may go to pot,
I'll work no more, I think
Twere better to be unemployed
Than in the mud to sink.¹⁴

Though these government settlement schemes were in the long run failures, because the holdings of the settlers were too small for economic survival, they were in two ways inseparably bound to the fortunes of the private township of Pahiatua.

For the Pahiatua businessman, the presence of the settlers meant a market became available for provisions and hardware. More importantly, the existence of these settlements acted as a catalyst to the private Pahiatua settlers, who contrasted, and measured their status as a private township against the government settlements (especially Scarborough and Mangatainoka) which had the advantage

13. PS, 10 August, 1886.

14. PS, 19 May, 1891.

of being supplied with reserves for government institutions.

During this formative period of settlement in the bushlands, an energy was created by the settlers of the private town of Pahiatua, as they attempted to procure for themselves all of those component parts (including government institutions) which make up a viable community. In this respect they were more successful than any other settlement in their immediate area, and within 11 years Pahiatua had moved from bush clearing (1881) to borough (1892).

CHAPTER 2

BUSH BOUND

In December 1880, under the central government's new land legislation, applications closed for the selection of land at Pahiatua, and in February 1881 J.G. Holdsworth, a commissioner of crown lands, who also acted in the capacity of Commissioner for the land claims of the New Zealand Company, offered for sale, according to the instructions drawn up in the schedule for the first Pahiatua land sales, twenty five rural sections with a minimum area of 20 acres and a maximum area of 320 acres.

As far as Pahiatua township is concerned, its foundation was the responsibility of six of the land purchasers at the sale. The six sections these men bought, all of them adjoining the main 40 Mile Bush road, were to become, when subdivided into urban lots, the shadow borough of Pahiatua.

The six purchasers included W.W. McCardle, a nurseryman from Masterton, a land agent and small farmer, William Wakeman, a former butcher from Oxford in the South Island, Henry Sedcole, his brother Albert West Sedcole, a farmer also from Oxford, a small farmer from Johnsonville, John Hughes, and Henry Manns, a small farmer. Among other land buyers were a farmer from Opaki near Masterton, John Hall, and three brothers Charles, George, and Thomas Avery. At the sale all the land offered for purchase had not been applied for, so agents for the absentee A.J. (later Lord) Balfour (Prime Minister of Great Britain 1902-1905) bought up for cash the remaining sections. The Hall, Avery, Balfour purchases were all to the south, but in close proximity to what was to become the borough of Pahiatua, and like the other purchases, adjoined the main Forty mile bush road.

As far as actual settlement was concerned, there was some controversy between the Hall and Hughes families over who was to receive the credit for being first settler in the Pahiatua district. It appears that John Hall, by arriving at Pahiatua on

the evening of 28 February 1881, won a narrow victory over John Hughes who arrived the next morning.

For John Hall, the reality of his new bush environment quickly became apparent, as to find somewhere off the road to pitch his small tent, and "boil a billy", he had to set to work with an axe, and make a small clearing. After building a share on his property Hall bought his family from Opaki, and by the end of March 1881 there were resident at Pahiatua, Mr and Mrs Hall Snr., J.H. Hall, Annie Hall (later Mrs Thomas Avery) and William, Robert, James and Thomas Hall. Four brothers John, Edward, Frank, and Herbert Hughes made up the only further settlement at Pahiatua that summer season.

In the second summer season, three brothers, Charles, George, and Thomas Avery arrived. They were followed toward the winter by Albert West and Henry Sedcole. Though there was plenty of manpower available among the first settlers, the first children did not arrive until Albert West Sedcole was accompanied by his family. His daughter, Charlotte (later Mrs W.W. McCardle Jnr.) provides an illustration of how Pahiatua appeared to her.

Arrived July 1882 ... on a brakeload of furniture drawn by four horses ... it took four days to come from Masterton There were a number of Maoris at Hamua, and Tutaekara in those days, with most of them living in the pa at Hamua. The road from Hamua very narrow ... grassed each side ... fern in the ditches ... trees hung with rata vines. The bush was alive with birds, pigeons, kakas, and tuis overhead ... wekas running across the road in front of the horses. Reached the outskirts of Pahiatua ... where the little cottage of John Hall was on the left hand side of the road, with a little clearing on the right. There was no Halls road then, but the Tiraumea which was called the by-road was formed to the top of the hill.

... the bush stood close to the road where the Post Office Hotel is on that side, and about the same on the other Our home was nearby ... a little iron house set back in the bush ... to get to our home we had to go down from the crown of the road, now the centre of the square, under a huge fallen rata tree covered with ferns, and orchids, and across a rustic bridge. The creek was very winding then, and used to run alongside the road. From the creek we went up a little rise to

the house, which was built of iron, and contained four rooms. We stepped out of the back door into the felled tawa trees, and the yard was paved with fallen timber The little iron house was built by Mr Taylor, and my father bought it, as we moved in, Mr John Hughes and Mr Tom Avery, with others who were living there at the time, carried our things in as they carried theirs out Our cooking was done in camp ovens, and sumptuous meals ... roast wild duck, pigeon, pork, kaka, weka, and pukeko ... also an abundance of wild honey ... from it honey mead was made, rather like wine.¹

This then was the type of environment that met the newcomer on arrival in the newly opened Pahiatua bushlands; ahead lay arduous toil to transform bush into pasture and individual holdings into economically viable units. For the new settler, in particular the six who bought the rural sections that together constituted the entire shadow borough, it was also an opportune time to step from the ranks of small farmer, and sawmiller into the realm of commercial entrepreneurs and land sellers, this move being prompted by various factors.

When the Pahiatua land was put up for sale in Masterton in 1881, the attractive lures put forward to induce purchasers promised that the land they were taking up would bring socio-economic betterment, not only because of its alleged fertility, but also because the railway was guaranteed to run through the centre of the sections, promoting settlement and thus raising the land values.

William McCardle, the Sedcole brothers, William Wakeman, John Hughes, and Henry Mann, scenting attractive economic returns, subdivided portions of their rural sections into urban lots and formed a town centre. Mild competition ensued as the six attempted to induce urban dwellers and business enterprises into buying their land.

1. Pahiatua Herald, 16 December 1939. Article by Charlotte I. McCardle.

The success of this manoeuvre was attested by the fact that the growth of the private township of Pahiatua was extremely rapid: within 12 years (1881-1892) Pahiatua's 782 citizens made it eligible for borough status.

Pahiatua's success was found on a combination of circumstances all of paramount importance. Its locality either side of the major 40 mile bush road, the tendency for new roads into the newly opened bushlands to flow from its focal point, combined with an entrepreneurial element, which from the outset contributed a perpetuating dynamism to the spheres of business and public affairs.

CHAPTER 3

THE BREADWINNERS

It is rumoured that a Pahiatua man has lost a £5 note. If we pick it up we shall frame it as a curiosity.¹

It was newly opened country, and the thousands of acres of bush, which determined to a large degree the type of occupation the early citizen of Pahiatua was likely to pursue. Farmers and sawmillers were later joined by roadmen, bridge-builders, coachmen, builders, storekeepers, land agents, and hotel proprietors.

For men like John Hughes and his brothers, who arrived at his bush section of 161 acres, with £60, a block dray, and a draught horse between them, the wait between the felling of the bush, and the transformation of their section into an economically viable sheep and cattle run, required that they find alternative employment. For example, John Hughes with the aid of a compass hired himself out as a surveyor, charging his fellow settlers a fee of 1s. an acre.²

This type of adaptability and diversification of occupation was a common occurrence. Farmers like Henry Sedcole, who with his brother Albert, owned almost one-third of the future borough, operated a sawmill in a clearing on his property. Later, as the bush on his property and adjacent holdings receded to the hills and river, the mill was moved north out of town, and was located between Pahiatua village settlement and Pahiatua.³

The opening up of new blocks of land in and around Pahiatua, the extension of roading and the building of bridges was all carried out

1. PS, 19 November, 1889.

2. Hughes, John. August 1972 at Pahiatua. Notes from this interview are in my possession.

3. Bentley, Annie. February 1972 at Pahiatua. Notes from this interview are in my possession.



PLATE 3

The boiler of a steam-powered sawmill stands tall amidst the bush it is helping to turn into pasture.

by a rapidly growing population which included a large proportion of working men. Employment for these men, predominantly as bush-fellers, whether while they were waiting for their land to come into production, or as secondary employment, or as a sole occupation was usually fairly well assured.

Turning bush into pasture was an arduous and intricate task and as it was the predominant task of early settlers it warrants attention. Not everybody wielded an axe, but everybody was affected by the smoke and sometimes the flame of the huge bush burns.

In Pahiatua and district, bush felling, burning, and the sowing of grass seed seems to have followed a regular pattern. From the beginning of April to the end of November the felling was carried out in the following manner. The underscrub was at first cut down clean to within a few inches of the ground. A thorough operation was required to procure a good burn, and then the larger trees were felled, some people apparently preferring every tree down. When this was completed the whole area was left to dry until the latter end of February or March when it was fired. For the actual igniting of the dried bush a moderately windy day was chosen so as to burn off as great an area as possible. According to a Pahiatua general merchant and land agent, H.W. Briggs, the cost of this part of the operation was assessed "at 27s.6d. up to 33s. per acre according to the size of the trees felled".⁴

Following the felling and the burn came the sowing of the grass seed. Immediately there was a sufficient fall of rain the seed was sown, at a rate of 10 to 12 lb an acre, with a few settlers using more than 20 lb per acre. In July, or August at the latest, sheep were brought on to this grass for a short time and then removed temporarily for a few weeks, until a good bottom of grass was showing. H.W. Briggs calculated that the total cost of putting this land into grass was approximately 30s. an acre for bush-felling, 7s. an acre for grassing, and 2s.6d. an acre for sowing. Briggs stated that

4. PS, 8 October, 1889.

by adding "the original cost of land (take government prices average) ... 30s. per acre ... shows that this land, suitable for dairying, beef, mutton or wool growing, can be bought into profitable working order for an average of £3.10s. acre".⁵

For the early settler of Pahiatua the danger from the massive bush fires was a very real one, and as early as the summer of 1883 fire threatened to destroy the new township. In this blaze which swept from the river (Mangatainoka) to the adjacent hills, the Albert West Sedcole family found refuge from the heat, if not the smoke, in a metal pit by the main 40 mile bush road.⁶

Though the burns took place in February-March it appears that lack of consultation between those about to burn and their neighbours often had dire consequences. It was with this in mind that the editor of the Pahiatua Star admonished the bush burners. "There appears to be no recognized time for bush burning in this district as each holder appears to act independent of his neighbour ... this should not be".⁷

On 8 February 1887 the Star noted that as a result of this lack of liaison a fire started by one of the Hughes family destroyed the house and cowshed of a town neighbour, Mr James of Tiraumea road. The editor of the Star also turned his scrutiny to the townsfolk at large, and warned of the fire hazard. "Every house is of wood ... lines of palings seem purposely made to lead the fire up ... in backyards, on unpainted sheds, piles of timber heaps of rubbish ... further back the paddocks are thick with decaying logs and decayed stumps".⁸

Naturally, where massive stands of bush were being felled, fire

5. PS, 8 October, 1889.

6. Pahiatua Herald, 16 December 1939. Article by Charlotte I. McCardle.

7. PS, 18 January, 1887.

8. PS, 25 October, 1889.



PLATE 4

Bullocks serve as locomotives during sawmilling operations in the Pahiatua and district bushland. Note that the "burn" has left plentiful remnants of what was once dense primeval forest.

was not the only hazard. For some like the Hall family it meant the death of a son in a tree-felling accident (where Carnival Park in Pahiatua now stands), and at times a vain search was mounted for those lost in the dense bush.

Hazards aside, the felling of the bush and the subsequent road and bridge building were valuable sources of income for the aspiring bush settler. Crown land comprising thousands of acres, up for sale during the period 1884-1892 in Mangatainoka block (west of the town), Tiraumea block (north of the town) and Mangaone block (4 miles south of the town)⁹ was a source of employment. Rumours of "a certain block of 1000 acres near the town ... being felled shortly, and if so it means about £1,770 being divided among sturdy axe-wielders",¹⁰ usually proved well founded in fact, if the speed in which the bushland was cleared is any indication.

As well as these blocks of land, the Balfour estate just south of the township provided another valuable source of employment for the bush settler, and further boosted the growth of Pahiatua, as the wages earned there found an outlet in the stores and hotels of aspiring Pahiatua businessmen. The benefits of such employment sources as the Balfour estate were sometimes questioned, as the criticism of a correspondent to the Pahiatua Star calling himself "old settler" illustrates.

My attention has been drawn to an article in a recent Wairarapa daily headed capital and labour ... in which it is stated that Pahiatua's greatest benefactor has been Mr Balfour, that absentee against whom Mr Ballance points the finger of scorn. Mr Balfour's money has enabled scores of small holders of property to establish themselves in that neighbourhood and it still helps very materially to keep the head of the township above water ... allow me as an old settler to state that the above statements are untruthful in the extreme. In the first place only about two or three bona fide settlers in Pahiatua had any hand in felling and fencing when Balfour's estate was taken up, the rest of the labour being done by birds of passage who left nothing behind, but (in a few cases) a creditor

9. NZM, 27 August, 1886.

10. NZM, 8 April, 1887.

or two.

I should very much like to know in the second place how much of Mr Balfour's money is spent in Pahiatua. Almost every article required on the estate including draperies and groceries comes from Christchurch or elsewhere, and barely a sixpence finds its way into the hands of local trades people.¹¹

Though old settler's criticism of "birds of passage" leaving "a creditor or two", was probably true, the fact remains that even if these itinerant labourers were not bona fide settlers, they probably made up for the Balfour estate management's lack of patronage to the town. While they were on the job they spent their money somewhere, and as Pahiatua was the nearest settlement it seems reasonable to assume that they were customers of Pahiatua businessmen.

It was more than fortuitous that the businessmen of Pahiatua could capitalize so readily on the benefits of a situation in which there was a constant flow of people into the town and district. It was due in large part to a combination of a rapid appraisal of this situation by those who subdivided the rural land for business and urban sections, and the energy of those who bought them, leading to a situation of benefit for both parties.

Probably the best example of this liaison between landowner and aspiring businessman was provided by William McCardle, the founder of the town, and David Crewe, a licensed auctioneer and stock dealer from Masterton. McCardle sold Crewe a considerable portion of his land, the most commercially valuable being the sections on Main Street, where Crewe erected a boarding house. This type of land transaction carried its own impetus, as Crewe persuaded other aspirants in business to build at Pahiatua rather than in the government settlement of Mangatainoka (three miles north of Pahiatua). Crewe continued to practice¹ what he preached and very early on, in 1885, he erected a store which he later extended to a two storey boarding house, and shifted it further towards the club hotel. Around the

11. PS, 22 April, 1887.

same time he financed the erection of a bakehouse for Thomas Hicks, and, driven by motives of self-sufficiency and diversification he started a brick-kiln in partnership with A.W. Siddle on Mangaramarama hill to reduce the cost of expensive imported brick.¹²

Once started the Pahiatua business community gathered momentum. The provisions of the grocers of Masterton and the bread and meat from the bakers and butchers of Woodville were soon dwarfed by the supplies of indigenous tradesmen. At the same time as entrepreneurs like David Crewe were carrying out their activities, others such as James Doran who built the first store, and Walter Best the first butcher, were joined by others finding a niche in the Pahiatua business community.

With improved communications and a constantly growing market, the Pahiatua business establishment was soon able to stock most commodities ranging from women's dresses to grass seed. For most tradesmen, particularly those dealing in foodstuffs, delivery of goods by pack-horse and block-dray was an integral part of their service to customers. For the town dweller delivery of bread and meat (by bakers and butchers) on horseback was routine, and for the bushmen encamped in clearings often miles from any settlement, the delivery of foodstuffs by Pahiatua tradesmen was a familiar sight.

Once the land was cleared and bush sections were turned into sheep and cattle runs, the butchers of Pahiatua were quick to take advantage of the fact, and the raising of sheep on their holdings, for eventual sale in their shops, soon became an important feature of the business. Some storekeepers also raised sheep on their land as a supplementary source of income. The following table with the names of the butchers and storekeepers who raised sheep and the size of their flocks, will illustrate this trend.

12. Pahiatua Herald, Article by Nga Koroua.



PLATE 5

The Commercial Hotel stands adjacent to the main Forty mile bush road, in the middle of the infant Pahiataua, in this photograph taken in 1886.

Name	Occupation	1891	1892
Walter Best	Butcher	300	708
Alexander Birnie	Storekeeper	-	260
Godfrey Bottomley	Butcher	51	203
Philip Dawson	Storekeeper	-	153
John Gregory	Storekeeper	-	293
William McCardle Jnr.	Butcher	300	400

Names and Figures taken from SHEEP RETURNS - PAHIATUA COUNTY.
AJHR, H-30, 1892.

Two other major industries at Pahiatua in these early years, were accommodation and drink, carried out under the auspices of boarding houses (Benzies and Hulls) temperance hotels (Crimps-Union) and licensed hotels (Club, Commercial). Apart from their convivial function there appears to have been a constant demand for accommodation in the various hotels, by travellers and itinerant workers, the presence of the latter group indicative of work still being available close by town.

The accommodation situation as reported by the Pahiatua correspondent to the New Zealand Mail in August 1886, is one example of how demand often exceeded supply in those years, which would have been instrumental in prompting the building of the various boarding houses and hotels: "There is very inadequate provision for travellers as the hotel is generally crowded, and the temperance hotel was reported the other night as making up seven shakedown in the two sitting rooms".¹³ By 1889, the hotels (Club, Commercial) were able to serve locally brewed beer over the bar-room counter, supplied by the North Island Brewery and the Pahiatua Brewery "in casks of from 5 to 54 gallons each."¹⁴ The former brewery boasted that "it was turning out a class of beers and stout equal to the finest brewed

13. NZM, 27 August, 1886.

14. PS, 27 September, 1889.

in the colony".¹⁵

For the business community of Pahiataua, the advent of a newspaper - The Pahiataua Star - in June 1886 under the editorship of Alex Black, meant that the township and surrounding district had as well as its roads, local communication through the printed word. Apart from its columns covering international, national and local events, the newspaper provided a means by which the local businessman could advertise his wares. These ranged from those of a professional nature such as a lawyer offering legal advice, to the price of bricks from one of the local kilns.

As the demand for the Pahiataua Star increased its twice weekly appearance (Tuesday and Friday) was increased to thrice weekly (Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday). The editor and proprietor of the Star, Alex Black, purchased the hand-operated printing press from A.E. Haggen, the proprietor of another local newspaper, the Woodville Examiner. It would appear that Alex Black was not over-endowed financially as he gave Haggen promissory notes for the purchase of the press. A legal wrangle ensued when Haggen attempted to collect the sum that he was owed on a date earlier than had been agreed. Black took the case to the supreme court in Napier, judgement was given against Haggen: and the court ruled that nobody could recover the money from Black.¹⁶

Whether or not this dispute had anything to do with the scarcely concealed antagonism between the two newspapers is a moot point. It may only have been two fledgling newspapers parochially mirroring the attitudes of two fledgling bush towns, nevertheless it is an interesting insight into a relationship between two newspapers which went further than the printed word.

Just prior to borough status being conferred (1892) the business community of Pahiataua showed how quickly the town had grown, and

15. PS, 27 September, 1889.

16. Pahiataua Herald, Article by Nga Koroua.

also how Pahiatua had assumed the role as the chief business centre of the surrounding district.

For example, by 1889 there were six grocers and storekeepers, ten clothing merchants, four coachmen and carrying companies, three blacksmiths, three brickmakers, two saddlers, and two solicitors. The above is only a representative sample of the entire business community, but it serves to illustrate the growth of the "breadwinner" sector, and the fact that multiplication (even as much as ten times - as in the fancy good/draper/tailor trade) did not appear to preclude viable individual businesses.

Commercial rivalry between the various businesses was apparent from the outset as those who opened shop in Pahiatua attempted to attract custom and patronage through the pages of the Pahiatua Star. Occasionally some tradesmen were willing to take business rivalry further than newspaper advertisements.

A 'brick duel' is on the way. Last Tuesday we the Pahiatua Star announced that Mr Price had turned out a first class kiln of bricks and this has so annoyed Mr Oliver that he has challenged his opponent to try conclusions for £5/side. The weapons are to be bricks - the hardest to be found in the respective kilns. They are to top each other over the head, and the man whose brick breaks first loses the wager.¹⁷

Overall, in the formative years of Pahiatua borough, the business community was characterized by "men on the make". Their success in achieving a viable economic position is illustrated by the rapid growth in the number of business institutions. By themselves however, business institutions can only engender the social growth of a community to a certain extent, by providing an economic base. Other factors, in particular social institutions, complement the bread and butter functions of a community's life, by encouraging social interaction and a community spirit, integral components in any viable community.

¹⁷. PS, 8 November, 1889.



PLATE 6

A view of Pahiatua emerging from the bush, taken from the eastern hills in 1886. (The roadway that can be seen in this picture is Wakeman Street).

CHAPTER 4

GROWTH OF COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS, 1881-1892

Although Pahiatua was rapid in providing a wide variety of social institutions ranging from a Parliamentary Union to a Tennis Club, it differed markedly from Government sponsored settlements, in that, as a private township, it could not rely on the Government to provide such services as a Post Office, Police Station, Resident Magistrates Court, or even the land allotments for them. In its formative years self reliance and initiative were required from the citizens of Pahiatua to ensure that they received what their contemporaries in government sponsored settlements were given as of right. This situation and its consequences for Pahiatua will be examined in more depth in Chapter 5; nevertheless in two important examples, citizen initiative in respect of land for schooling and recreation, will be examined in this chapter.

From the outset of settlement (in the early 1880's) social relationships were developed between the early settlers of Pahiatua, with house-warming parties for new arrivals.¹ Later on when the number warranted it all-night balls and dances were held, usually in the auction mart of David Crewe, and later (from 1888) in the Olympic Theatre, "where the floor was level and the seats could be taken out".² As a network of social contacts were built up the demand for institutionalized organisations within the community was soon manifested. The one common denominator linking these various social institutions was that they all had antecedents in the various communities the Pahiatua settler had come from.

Some of the first institutions established were the various lodges and clubs, and their dates of initiation can be traced

1. Pahiatua Herald, 16 December 1939. Article by Charlotte I. McCardle.

2. Pahiatua Herald, Article by Nga Korour.

approximately through the New Zealand Mail and the Pahiatua Star. One of the earliest clubs was the Pahiatua Parliamentary Union, which, very early in the life of the infant settlement, was reported to be "flourishing ... with William McCardle on the ministry side".³ Until the library was constructed (1888-1889) the Parliamentary Union met regularly in the Club Hotel. By August 1886 the Good Templars had built a hall, and the Foresters were reported to be very ambitious of emulating their example.⁴ The Foresters appeared to flourish exceptionally well in Pahiatua, and in 1891 the Star reported that "the local Foresters Court was still increasing in number. Almost every meeting candidates are initiated and the roll now stands close upon one hundred financial members".⁵

A Temperance Union was formed in these years, with citizens such as Henry Sedcole playing a prominent part, though if the following letter to the Pahiatua Star is any indication, the Union's impact was not widely felt.

I think it is a scandalous shame that steps are not taken to put down the drinking that goes on in this township on Sundays. Men are to be seen in all directions whose condition is anything but creditable. The constable here should make an example of some of the publicans.⁶

In early 1887 the Star reported that sixty men had subscribed their names to a "Pahiatua Working Man's Club", and mentioned that the club would be licensed to sell liquor to members.⁷ Another lodge with the indigenous name of Tararua was begun in 1891,⁸ and the horse racing fraternity of town and district started the Pahiatua Jockey Club.⁹

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3. NZM, 2 July, 1886.
 4. NZM, 13 August, 1886.
 5. PS, 7 July, 1891.
 6. PS, 31 August, 1891.
 7. PS, 21 January, 1887.
 8. PS, 6 January, 1891.
 9. PS, 5 June, 1891.

The following excerpt from the Star's editorial of 5 June, 1891 on the founding of the Pahiatua Jockey Club is worth inclusion as it perhaps illustrates something of the new bush settler mentality, characterized by the stereotype of self-sufficient "men on the make"; ever ready to turn their hand to the making of profit, even if it was within the realm of sport.

Owing to the enterprise of Mr Walter Best ^{of} Pahiatua's first butcher who owned land south of the town ^{who} has made a first class race-course on his land at Tutaekara, no obstacles stand in the way of holding the first races, although it is a matter of doubt whether the club will continue to use Mr Best's land, as it is too far away ^{from Pahiatua} [six miles approximately from Pahiatua] We are extremely pleased to see that the present attempt has been successful for it is high time we offered some inducement to our own sporting men, and it is also time that we encouraged outside sporting men to come amongst us. Hitherto everything has been drained from the district. With a local club there is a good prospect of keeping our own money in the place, and also of inducing settlers to come amongst us, who must leave capital behind them. These are perhaps selfish motives, but what is not selfish in these times.¹⁰

For the ladies of the town, a recreational outlet was opened for them in the formation of a mixed Tennis Club, when "a ground ... was laid off in Mr Hughes paddock".¹¹ According to the Pahiatua Star this was perhaps to the detriment of the cricket club: "it is very much to be feared that tennis will kill what little interest existed in cricket".¹² As it turned out, the cricket club continued to field an XI, and matches with outsiders such as a Woodville XI was soon part of its itinerary.

One of the major events in the sporting calendar of Pahiatua and district was the annual sports held by the Pahiatua Athletic Society in January of every year. This club was founded in the late 1880's. Like the tennis club this body utilized a stump-free

10. PS, 5 June, 1891.

11. PS, 2 September, 1887.

12. *ibid.*

paddock of Mr Hughes, though a paddock of Avery's (south of town) was at times the venue for the various running, wood chopping and horse jumping that took place.

Rugby Union Football in Pahiatua and district appeared to attract a keen following, and in 1886,¹³ the word "Bush", connoting the indigenous environment, became the official name for the local Rugby Union. Matches within the Union between Woodville and Eketahuna were quite common, and for the first time, in 1891, the Bush team played its nearest rival Wairarapa, losing 14 to nil.¹⁴

Because they were citizens of a private township, the feature common to all of these sporting bodies was that they were forced to utilize the land of private citizens in order to conduct their various pursuits. To most citizens the lack of a public recreation ground was unsatisfactory, and their common desire to procure a ground ensured a community response seen in other similar instances, and characterized by a feeling of solidarity, self sufficiency and local area identity.

That a ground for recreation purposes is very keenly felt in Pahiatua was brought prominently forward at the combined meeting of Cricket Club and Sports Committee on Friday evening. Unfortunately we do not come under the magic head of Government Township or no doubt our outlook as regards proper reserves would be much better, but the only thing to be done now is to make the best of a bad case and endeavour to do something for ourselves. Perhaps failing to purchase a piece of land, some arrangements might be come to with the Wellington City Council to grant a long lease of a few acres of its immense reserve. This would, if successful be a most convenient site, and we feel sure our Wellington friends would maintain their reputation of being good settlers by asking a very small rental.¹⁵

As it turned out, in the period 1881 to 1891 the people of Pahiatua continued to depend on their own resources for sporting facilities.

13. A.C. Swan, "New Zealand Rugby Football Union 1892-1967", p.10.

14. A.C. Swan, "Rugby in Wairarapa 1876-1960", p.20.

15. PS, 13 July, 1886.

For the exponents of fishing rod and rifle, the bush and its various streams and rivers provided a rich hunting domain. The shooting of the native pigeon by the early bush settler appeared to have the same attraction as does duck shooting today, and the Pahiatua Star reported that "everyone is going to shoot pigeons shortly and great yarns are being spun about the number procurable".¹⁶ For the fishermen an acclimatization society was in existence by the late 1880's, and the action of W.W. McCardle who bought up from Masterton some "five hundred trout and liberated them in a stream near his house",¹⁷ ensured that the local rivers were soon well stocked with fish.

Complementing, and interacting with the above clubs and societies, were the more formal social agencies such as the churches and schools, and local government bodies such as the Town Board and the Licensing Committee.

As in many other fields, self-sufficiency was the keynote when some of the settlers aspired to move religious services from their homes into the more formal surroundings of a church. With this end in mind, a few Methodist settlers held a meeting toward the end of 1886, during which Joseph Burrows donated a section in Julia Street. Philip Dawson, the local postmaster, promised the house-blocks, while sawmillers Henry Sedcole and Alex Yule gave the timber. A "working bee" was formed to clear and burn off the logs and brush on the section, and a "bee" was also arranged to build the church, with local builder H.H. Godfrey directing operations.

This, the first church in Pahiatua, was opened on 20 May 1888, with some services conducted by visiting ministers and laymen from Woodville. It did not stay long on its original section as J. Redman, a local man who often took the services, proposed the removal of the entire structure to a section near his residence at

16. PS, 25 March, 1887.

17. PS, 3 September, 1889.

the other end of town near the existing Post Office. This was carried out by a team of bullocks, and the church was reopened on 31 May 1893.¹⁸

The Anglicans (who held their services in the school house) were not far behind in attempting to emulate the Methodist example, and the Pahiatua Star reported the following information: "The section offered by Mr Wakeman ... as a site for an English Church has been purchased, the diocesan fund supplying the money. An attempt will now be made in Pahiatua to raise sufficient money by subscription to build a church. Substantial promises have been made".¹⁹ Four years later the Star reported the opening of the Church of England Sunday School,²⁰ and in one of its Tuesday editions noted that "the first marriage ceremony in the Pahiatua English Church was performed this morning".²¹

By June 1888 the Catholics of Pahiatua had collected £100, and were negotiating the purchase of an acre from Mr Wakeman, fronting Wakeman Street. The local pastor "Father John McKenna was successful in this deal, and set to work to build a small church on the corner of Tyndall and Wakeman Streets, but facing the latter a further block of land - five and a half acres - was secured nearby, as a possible school and convent site".²² Until the opening of their church in 1895, the Pahiatua Presbyterians conducted their church services in the town hall.²³ The vacated brewery of Mr Jessops (Pahiatua Brewery) was converted into a barracks and meeting place by the Salvation Army, and their first service was due to be conducted on 25 January 1891.

18. Pahiatua Herald, Article by Mr C.L. Stokes.

19. PS, 14 June, 1887.

20. PS, 16 January, 1891.

21. PS, 27 January, 1891.

22. V.J. McGlone, "Fruits of Toil", p.43

23. Pahiatua Herald, Article by Mr C.L. Stokes.

One of the most eagerly sought social institutions in these early years was a school, and as in many other instances, the need was met by the private citizen of the township. In 1884 an original settler, A.W. Sedcole, started the first school in his home. From there it was carried on by his daughter Jessie in a 10 feet by 10 feet corrugated iron shed. In the same year it was recognized that the present educational facilities were going to be inadequate for future school intakes, and that a larger structure was required. The founder of the town, W.W. McCardle, responded to the need, giving land for a school and a headmaster's house. Following a visit by him to the Education Board in April 1884, a State school was built a year later by one of the tenderers, A.W. Sedcole, and started with a roll of 41.²⁵ By May 1887 the monthly report of the headmaster Mr Yeats stated that "during last month the average attendance at school was 111 with 147 on the roll ... the wet weather had reduced the average a little, as was the case, more or less, during the whole winter".²⁶ It appears that the school not only catered for the children of Pahiatua township, but also attracted children from Mangatainoka (which had its own school by 1889) and Mangaramarama,²⁷ who travelled to Pahiatua either on foot or on horseback.

Though the local state education board (Wellington) had supplied a school and a salaried teacher, as late as 1891 they came under fire for lack of cooperation. Such a charge was in accordance with the general tenor of the time, as Pahiatua citizens considered themselves poorly treated, and generally neglected by government. Reporting that the school roll was 181, the editor of the Star went on to state that

again we have to refer to the peculiar action of the Wellington Education Board. For a considerable

24. PS, 20 January, 1891.

25. Pahiatua District High School 75th Jubilee Magazine. p.5.

26. PS, 20 May, 1887.

27. Pahiatua Herald, 16 December 1939. Article by Charlotte I. McCardle.

period the Pahiatua school committee has been paying for school requisites out of capitation grants ... until now, it is found quite impossible to continue this and the board was appealed to. They as usual refuse to do anything and of course the school must suffer the question arises; under a system of free education who should supply the schools with the materials necessary for carrying out the system?²⁸

For the benefit of any older settler interested in furthering his education in music and the arts a day and night private school was opened in 1889 by a Miss Reese (later a teacher at Pahiatua School), who promised to fill any educational void in the town, and "prepared to receive pupils for tuition ... terms 15s. per quarter ... with full information as to subjects taught on application".²⁹

Naturally enough in a community where fires were a common feature, fire fighting was always part of a settler's life. In 1892 steps were taken by a few interested settlers to form a fire brigade. In October they asked the Town Board for funds, which were granted, and in December for a bell-tower,³⁰ which met with the same response. In the mid 1890's the Fire Brigade boasted a uniformed band under the guidance of a Mr Starkey.

In 1886, the Pahiatua correspondent to the New Zealand Mail reported the following information regarding the infant settlement: "buildings are going up in all directions and as these are more by ten than the requisite number of fifty householders a Town Board is in the course of formation".³¹

With the installing in power of townsmen who would control the administrative affairs of the infant settlement, a formal community institution was added to the many other component clubs and organisations, which collectively made up an entity that was

28. PS, 3 July, 1891.

29. PS, 27 September, 1889.

30. Pahiatua Town Board Minutes 7/4/92.

31. NZM, 16 April, 1886.

distinctively identifiable as Pahiatua.

The actual establishment of the town board was the work of a meeting of interested townsfolk, which took place in the schoolroom in late March 1886. W.W. McCardle presided over the meeting, and gave a full explanation on the matter for which it was called. A Mr Thos Miller moved the first resolution,

that in the opinion of this meeting the time has now come ... to form a town-board for Pahiatua, to be composed of six sections [those six sections which were subdivided by their owners into urban lots] ... which will make the district about one mile square, bounded on the north by the Wellington endowment, on the west by the Mangatainoka river, and on the east by back line of sections 17, 21 and 26 [Sections 16, 20 and 24 were the other three pieces of land which made up the town-board area]... Mr A.W. Sedcole spoke ... on the matter of rates showing that the town board could not strike a larger rate than the road board [this body made up of some citizens of Pahiatua can be called the fore-runner of the town board] viz. $\frac{5}{4}$ d in the pound, and that ... a town board to be composed of six wards would be the most satisfactory and desirable way in which a district could be worked. The motion was carried unanimously.³²

On 3 September 1886 the chairman, and the six members of the town board were elected. Those selected from the 12 nominations were; Messrs J. Hughes (Farmer) as chairman, H.W. Briggs (grain seed merchant), W. Wakeman (land valuer-farmer), J. Burrows (small farmer), D. Crewe (auctioneer-stock agent), J.S. Crimp (proprietor Temperance Hotel), and A. Reese (farmer, bridge-builder). The major function of the board in these years appeared to revolve around the administration of the town's finances, and maintenance of the township's streets, and its general sanitation.³³

One of the board's first actions was to borrow £300 under the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act 1886 which it proposed to

32. Wairarapa Standard, 2 April, 1886.

33. NZM, 10 September, 1886.

spend on street-stumping and clearing (£200) and street levelling (£100).³⁴

Apart from a patriotic overture (King, Queen, and Princess Streets), local identities (Wakeman, Mann, Dawson and Sedcole Streets) and indigenous terms (Mangatainoka, Mangahoa and Tiraumea Streets) predominated among the street names, perhaps reflecting on how quickly Pahiatua was building up its own identity.

Following an outbreak of typhoid fever in the township the board employed a Doctor Milne from Woodville to report on the causes of the disease. The following excerpt from his report, reveals the rudimentary and unsanitary nature of early Pahiatua's sewerage and refuse disposal.

I believe, the most important factor in the production of the recent case of typhoid fever to be the creek running at the back of the town, which appears to be made a receptacle for the refuse from all the dwellings adjacent to it. Inevitably it is the recipient of three drains - one from the Union Temperance Hotel, one from the Commercial Hotel, and one from Benzies boarding house - not to mention the surface drainage which it receives from several pig styes and dung heaps situated along-side of it. It also forms a handy place for the inhabitants of the private dwelling houses and other buildings along its banks ... in which to get rid of their refuse. There is no free-flow from the stream for at intervals it is dammed by logs and rubbish I am credibly informed that this creek forms the chief water supply for several dairy cattle, which involves the grave risk of infecting the milk supplied to the community.³⁵

It took time of course but under the auspices of the town board, a night soil cart was purchased, and such receptacles as pit closets were closed or required to be well disinfected.

34. Pahiatua Town Board Minutes 6/6/87.

35. *ibid.*, 27/5/91.

As the above illustrates the early settlers of Pahiatua were never long in establishing some common social framework in which they could meet their fellows and together build up a whole network of social relationships, thereby aiding the growth of a viable and progressive community.

The fact was noted in the above outline of the growth of community institutions that Pahiatua settlers were prone to agitations, particularly when it concerned the lack of facilities that a government sponsored township received as of right. Agitation is the operative word, and the essential ingredient in any discussion on Pahiatua in these formative years. The major by-product of this agitation was a "flexing of the adolescent muscle" within the town, toward its immediate hinterland, and towards central government. This was a self-perpetuating dynamism, and facilitated growth of community solidarity and identity. This is probably symptomatic of all fledgling settlements, but it was particularly acute in the private township of Pahiatua.

CHAPTER 5

A NEW AND PRIVATE SETTLEMENT

Before attempting to examine in depth other factors engendering community solidarity in Pahiatua and the consequences of this in the township's formative years, it is necessary first to look at, in general terms, the prevalent attitudes of its populace.

Most of the early settlers of Pahiatua arrived with the sole purpose of making good both economically and socially. It mattered little what their earlier professions or trades might be for they saw in Pahiatua a chance to do better than they had done in their previous communities. Thus the Pahiatua community had on the surface anyway, the appearance of an individualistic society where one made good by the use of the sweat of his brow and the shrewdness of his brain.

Tempering and governing this individualistic trend was the scrutiny which every settler underwent so that acceptable behaviour was maintained. Egalitarianism was the accepted norm of behaviour in this society, and anybody who attempted to step out of the collective fold was quickly noted. One of the best examples of this wary maintenance of what was considered acceptable behaviour or the status quo arose during a visit to Pahiatua, in 1886, of John Ballance, then Minister of Lands in the Stout Ministry. Only the Town Board and a few citizens were invited to a luncheon to meet and speak to the minister. A lack of food was the reason later given for this, but at the time, the closed doors at the reception in the Good Templars Lodge had more sinister connotations for a Mr Paddy Murphy, as the following letter illustrates,

Sor, can yes til me who had the managment of Mr Balince's reception. Faith an I wanted to be prisent at the faste, but whin I wint to the door, I was towld it was not for the likes of me - only for the gintry.

Paddy Murphy.¹

1. PS, 15 October, 1886.

Even ministers of the crown were openly criticised if they appeared to criticise the people of Pahiatua, who were seen in this case by a Pahiatua citizen who unlike Paddy Murphy attended the ministerial reception, as a microcosm of the people of New Zealand.

Both the Chairman and Mr Ballance made the remark that the land schemes of the latter were calculated to raise the people from the position of 'hewers of wood' and 'drawers of water'. Such a remark was hardly to be listened to with patience. It was almost an insult to the intelligent class of artisans and skilled workmen, which forms the bulk of the population of this colony.²

Occasionally there were apparent anomalies in this egalitarian demeanour, as two similar examples of advertising in the Pahiatua Star illustrate. In one advertisement David Crewe notified the readers that he had "opened a second dining room for the convenience of the working class, all meals 1s.",³ and in another the newly opened North Island Brewery, stated that "for the benefit of the gentry, it was turning out a class of beers and stout equal to the finest brewed in the colony".⁴ Though the wording in the advertisements could have been seen as drawing "class" distinctions, no apparent conflict resulted, perhaps because most Pahiatua people thought of themselves as either all gentry or all working class.

Though they were ready to identify with the rest of New Zealand in respect of their rank and station in life, the early Pahiatua settlers appeared to feel a sense of what can be called "we alone". Their sense of distinctiveness and self-sufficiency appears to have been heightened by the fact that not only was Pahiatua a new bush town, but it was the only private one among a number of government sponsored settlements. This feeling of distinctiveness engendered a great deal of volatile behaviour on the part of the early Pahiatua settler in the town's formative years. From the

2. PS, 19 October, 1886.

3. PS, 25 May, 1889.

4. PS, 27 September, 1889.

beginning, town growth was greatly boosted by energetic entrepreneurs and in the process of moving from infancy to adolescence, what was initially commercial dynamism spilled over into public affairs. This volatile behaviour was at times confined within the town boundary, as north vied against south for the location of a Post Office, or, when a licensing district was formed, a new hotel. More usually though the citizens of Pahiatua turned their energies outward to embrace other local bodies and central government in an attempt to induce them to serve the town's interests. In so doing they were building up an entity distinctly identifiable as Pahiatua.

About the same time as the private township of Pahiatua was conceived, the government divided Mangatainoka, a fledgling milling centre three miles north of Pahiatua, into urban sections, with the intention of making it the principal settlement of the area. This idea was thwarted by the initiative taken by the original Pahiatua inhabitants, as they competed with one another in attracting, by the sale of sections of land, shopkeepers and other commercial enterprises.

This action, and the expectation that the railway would pass through the town (with this in mind the first owners of Pahiatua had planned a three chain wide main street) the original owners and promoters of settlement in Pahiatua attracted a second wave of men who had capital, and above all possessed the entrepreneur qualities necessary to promote viable economic enterprise in the infant settlement. One man in particular, David Crewe, a licensed auctioneer and stock dealer, exemplified these traits, and it was he who really weighted the scales in Pahiatua's favour by doing all he could to see that others who aspired to commercial enterprise in the newly opened bush lands opened up shop in Pahiatua.

Though Pahiatua rapidly established a broad spectrum of social institutions, the town sadly lacked governmental services, and as a private township self-sufficiency and a certain amount of resilience was called for. Pahiatua people, though aware of their town's status and prepared to do something for themselves, still thought they should receive government institutions.

With the failure of Mangatainoka to establish itself as the key settlement of the area, the government attempted to make Scarborough (now Mangamutu, two miles west of Pahiatua) fulfill that role. As a consequence government reserves were set aside in Scarborough for different public buildings such as a Post Office, School, and Recreation ground; as the Pahiatua Star reported it, "there are only two houses, but it is all laid off (on paper) as a city with squares and parks and goodness knows what. All you really see is a great unfenced paddock of I suppose 300 acres".⁵

Though Pahiatua was fairly well consolidated by the time Scarborough (as it turned out) was unsuccessfully set up by government, it serves to illustrate the fact that as a private township, Pahiatua could not rely on such things as government reserves. And to have established such institutions as a bank, post office, school, court, and police station, necessitated altruism and citizen cooperation.

Within the town the settlers were almost immediately concerned with the lack of a broad range of social facilities under the headings of culture, law enforcement, education, banking, health and communications. Generally, in their agitation to establish such facilities as a library, police station and court, school, hotels and a post office, the citizens of Pahiatua cooperated well together, displaying a solidarity and a dynamism that was fast promoting a valuable community spirit.

Occasionally though, as in the case of the location of the Post Office, and to a lesser extent, membership of the licensing committee, unanimity was forgotten, particularly in the first instance, as two factions of townspeople attempted to serve their own interests.

An original owner and subdivider of land in Pahiatua, H. Mann, was the first Pahiatua Postmaster (1882) and combined that task with the duties of a storekeeper. In 1884, Philip Dawson, a

5. PS, 25 October, 1889.

storekeeper, took over as Postmaster,⁶ and in 1886, when the Post Office controversy was building, the Pahiatua correspondent to the New Zealand Mail wrote of Dawson's job,

he receives twice daily much longer mails than arrive at many offices where there is a salaried Postmaster. Also he is expected to discharge a variety of duties even in connection with land for sale, and it is preposterous to do all this and also find desk room and accommodation all practically gratis.⁷

Warming to the attack, the correspondent went on;

Pahiatua is unmistakably an important business centre, compare it with dozens of other towns where a proper post-office has been built by government, and you find it bigger than they and growing much faster if voluntary effort is necessary before public buildings can be erected one is tempted to ask what on earth governments are for.⁸

The voluntary effort, mentioned above, revolved around two petitions and offers of land that were placed before government by Pahiatua settlers. One of the petitions stated "that the Post Office be erected in a central position accompanied with an offer of half an acre [provided by leading townsmen, Reese, McCardle, Campbell, Wakeman, Crewe, Miller, King and Briggs] and the other praying that the site, not to be removed from the present locality accompanied by the offer of one acre of land."⁹

Looking at this situation the editor of the month old Pahiatua Star commented on "the unusual amount of activity on the part of a large number of the community, and we fear ere the matter is settled a warlike attitude is likely to be taken up by the residents of the northern and southern ends", and went on to admonish the one acre petition, stating that the "majority of settlers will be made to suffer for the benefit of the few, as the situation is almost on

6. Pahiatua Herald, Article by Nga Koroua.

7. NZM, 9 July, 1886.

8. NZM, 13 August, 1886.

9. PS, 23 July, 1886.

the extreme northern boundary".¹⁰ As it turned out, the citizens of Pahiatua had to wait several years before their existing postal facilities were replaced, and the first permanent officer took charge in 1892.

A similar situation was predicted by the Pahiatua correspondent to the New Zealand Mail, when Pahiatua was made a licensing district (1886). To the correspondent this would

mean a deadly struggle between the north and south ends of the town. There will be an attempt to get in members who will favour the granting of a licence to a hotel opposite the present one at the north end, ... and of course a similar attempt will be made to ensure the interests of Mr Waterworth who designs a hotel at the south end ... being guarded.¹¹

Though the south end of town was eventually successful in having a hotel established (Post Office in 1891) the deadly struggle predicted by the correspondent, seemingly owed more to the precedent of the Post Office incident, because no conflict appeared to occur.

The Post Office controversy, while illustrating internal dissension and something of a contentious situation, was more the exception than the rule in these years; the demand for social institutions, central government facilities and local bodies were catalysts rather than dividers in a growing sense of solidarity and identity as a distinct community.

As far as schooling and a recreation ground were concerned, citizen cooperation, which in the first instance was coupled with state participation, ensured that the town was provided with educational and sporting facilities.

Pahiatua's desire to have a life-style that would put it on a par with contemporaries all over New Zealand, manifested itself in the interest shown in the Public Library. To the editor of the

10. PS, 23 July, 1886.

11. NZM, 6 March, 1887.

Pahiatua Star, Pahiatua's lack of library facilities called for rectifying measures; he commented

a town without a library and reading room is very far behind its time, and we would suggest that steps be at once taken to establish such a desirable institution. A reading room could be made useful for many purposes, such as for posting up all plans relating to crown land sales in, and outside the district, and this alone would be of immense benefit.¹²

About two months later the New Zealand Mail reported that "a committee has been formed to accept a section offered gratis for a public library".¹³ The section of land was given by William Wakeman, with "A.W. Sedcole offering bricks for the chimney, and David Crewe offering to bear the cost of erecting the same".¹⁴ By the end of 1887 Pahiatua had its "desirable institution" constructed, and another social amenity was added to the town.

As far as health and medical facilities were concerned, Pahiatua had the services from 1886 of a chemist Coleridge Ridd,¹⁵ who, lacking proper training and facilities, was forced to send most accident and other patients to Masterton Hospital. In 1891, this reliance on the hospital, and its future use was the subject of an editorial in the Pahiatua Star.

The Masterton Hospital is an institution that deserves hearty support from every class of settler in the Forty mile bush. For many years now a large number of patients have been sent annually to the hospital, and so far very little has been subscribed to the expenses of the institution which are exceedingly heavy The trustees (of the hospital) desire to point out that while the bush district is responsible for nearly all the accident cases treated in the hospital, the support received from the Bush is very small, and in view of the benefit derived, altogether

12. PS, 29 June, 1886.

13. NZM, 13 August, 1886.

14. PS, 25 May, 1889.

15. Pahiatua Herald, Article by Nga Koroua.

out of proportion to the contributions received from other parts of the district. During the past year only £16.19s. was contributed by the Bush out of a total £204 from the whole district.¹⁶

This lack of financial support from the settler of Pahiatua and district, may have been the result of the bush settler's reasoning that if his already injured body was going to suffer on the dray and coach journey to Masterton (45 miles away), his pocket was not going to undergo the same fate.

As far as a Police Station and a Resident Magistrates Court was concerned, Pahiatua, as with other government institutions, had to rely on its own resources to a large extent. Before a police constable was appointed to the town (in the late 1880's) Pahiatua was under the jurisdiction of a visiting policeman from Woodville, and the surveillance of Alex Reese (farmer - bridge-builder) who unofficially settled any disputes.¹⁷ An old settler calling himself "Nga Koroua", described one such incident of this unofficial law enforcement

They were rough days I can tell you. I have seen men out in the street, fighting openly to settle some dispute, perhaps from a row over a game of cards A few fancied themselves as scrappers. One such picked upon an old Irishman one day and slapped his face just to start a row. Alec Reese ... who was a very big, powerful man, took up the cudgles for the old Irishman. The argument grew and the fight started then and there in the street. Reese gave his antagonist a terrible hiding.¹⁸

Until Pahiatua's town hall was constructed in 1890 the Woodville resident Magistrate's Court was the venue for any citizen of Pahiatua who had reason to attend its sittings.

16. PS, 13 January, 1891.

17. Interview with Mr J. Hughes, February 1972.

18. Pahiatua Herald, Article by Nga Koroua. See by ...

As illustrated previously, there was continual agitation by the citizens of Pahiatua in these years over the lack of government institutions and cooperation. When this was coupled with dissatisfaction with the local County Council, and with the issue that monopolised the Pahiatua Star headlines for two or so years, the proposed site of the railway, the infant township had plenty of grievances to cut its teeth on.

Government institutions were still coming under attack by the local editor in 1891, and something of the private town complex comes out in his list of objectionables.

The Pahiatua Police Station or what is known as such ... is a disgrace not only to the district, but likewise to the department that allows such an unsatisfactory state of affairs to exist we hope the present government [Ballance Ministry] will take a practical view of various matters that require attention in this district. Hitherto there has been a tendency to damn us because we were unfortunately a 'private township' but notwithstanding all the hard swearing of the Ministers of the Crown, the private township still survives and is likely to.¹⁹

A further tirade against the government followed four months later.

The town board is about to appoint a new clerk, and in consequence will have to remove its offices to the town hall. The question arises, how is the business of the board to be conducted in the hall seeing that one room is occupied by the library, and the remaining two rooms by the R.M. court It is no use 'beating about the bush', the board must notify the government at once that they have had the use of the hall for over 12 months free of cost, and being now required for other purposes they must pack up their traps and move on.

When we remember the government (no particular one) has treated the township in a most shabby manner as regards reserves, we are compelled to conclude that by accepting a free gift from the town board of a thing they could very well afford to pay for, they have shown a most contemptible spirit. Pahiatua has

19. PS, 24 February, 1891.

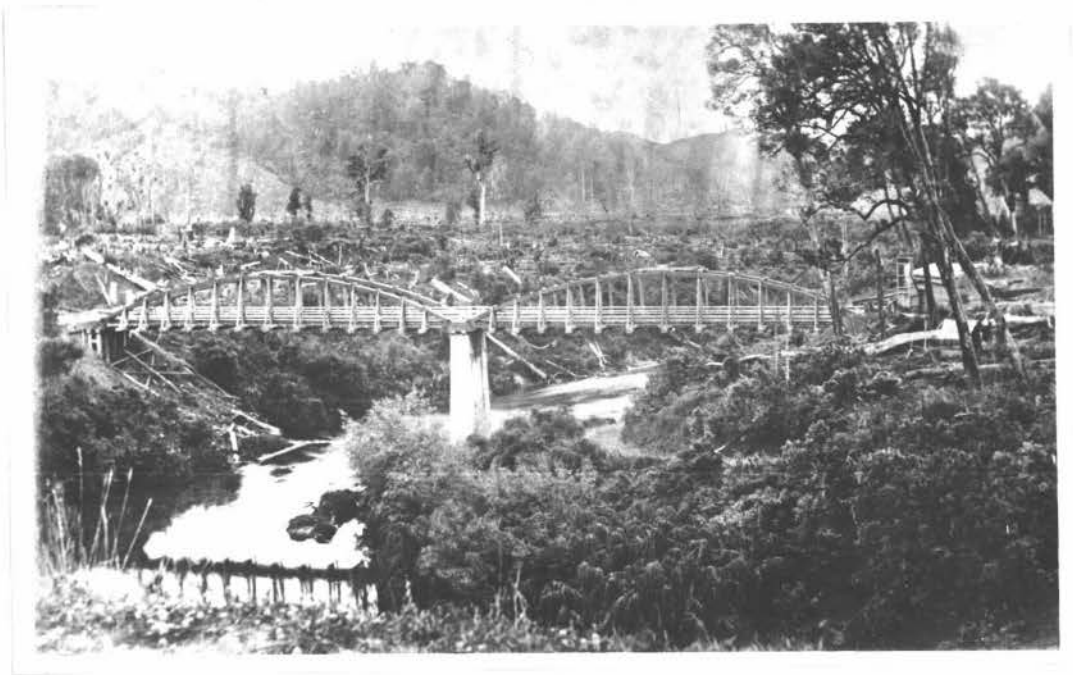


PLATE 7

A bridge spans the Tiraumea river at Ngaturi, (eight miles east of Pahiatua) on the main road to Makuri and Pongaroa.

for years been the centre of the most important land sales held in the colony, returning enormous revenues to the government, yet they have not established a single office here.²⁰

If it was not central government being called to task in these years, it was somebody else, and in quite a few cases the Wairarapa North County Council suffered the "spotlight" treatment of the Pahiatua settler.

To most settlers of Pahiatua and its immediate hinterland, the construction and upkeep of roads was of utmost importance. Roads were the means whereby Pahiatua was linked to its smaller neighbours, the government sponsored settlements, the means by which Bush settlers had access to their properties (or hoped to have), and the way they received vital provisions, in many cases from Pahiatua tradesmen. Because roads were an indispensable link between the urban and rural sections of the bush district, both were constantly watchful that their joint interests were served.

For the bush settler in the outlying districts, once the burn had been completed and the grass sown, it was of great importance to him that sheep were bought in to feed it down. If, as was usually the case, no roads were in existence the settler often taxed himself, sometimes as much as 10 shillings per acre, to ensure that a road, belated though it might be, was not long in being constructed through or adjacent to his property.

As far as Pahiatua township was concerned, its roading was under the jurisdiction of the Town Board (formed in 1886) with the main communication links of the area, the Forty mile bush road and its county offshoots, under the jurisdiction of the Wairarapa North County Council. And it was towards this latter organization that often vehement attention was turned.

The editor of the Pahiatua Star, some Pahiatua citizens, and

20. PS, 10 July, 1891.

a group of Maoris were the major perpetrators of attacks on the local County Council. The editor of the Star launched his onslaught in the first month of publication and turned his scrutiny to the main Forty mile bush road.

The county is subsidised to the extent of about £2000 a year for the maintenance of the Forty Mile Bush Road, plus special grants for extraordinary damage ... we should like to know how the money is expended ... tons of gravel are deposited in dray loads and wasted away ... numerous trees blown down over the road, stopping traffic for a considerable time ... the county is mismanaging our affairs.²¹

Less than a year later Henry Mann, an original settler voiced his complaints in a letter to the Star.

I have just heard that they [the County Council] have given instructions to the roadmen to stop all drays working on the main road, that have less than 4 or 5 inch tyres. They are not satisfied with the large amount of rates they receive from us, and the exorbitant tolls they collect must further handicap us, by making us get new wheels at great expense to please their whims I notice particularly that there are no toll gates where the majority of councillors live.²²

Attacks on the County Council were not only confined to paper. To the Maoris (before the advent of a bridge, the Maoris had earned money ferrying passengers across the river) who lived in a Pa adjacent to the newly constructed Ngawapurua bridge (opened in July 1885) a toll gate that was attached to it was the signal for direct action. The Pahiatua Star reported how "Maoris tied a rope to the toll-gate at the bridge, and brought the elegant structure crashing to the ground".²³

A few days later, once the toll-gate was an established fact,

21. PS, 29 June, 1886.

22. PS, 17 May, 1887.

23. PS, 1 February, 1887.

the editor stated that

no more shameful act has been perpetrated than the erection of this gate at Ngawapurua. The County council ... which unfortunately we form part, has for years been drawing the blood out of this district in the shape of rates, and has not returned a single penny. Now we are called upon to pay exorbitant tolls to provide further funds for the bolstering up of an institution, which is noted for nothing else, but mismanagement.²⁴

In the local news column of the Star in the same months, the local reincarnation of a biblical hero was called for: "the Bush settlers have no respect for the county council, and if some modern Samson could be found who would pull down the institution, and disperse the legislators he would be immortalised".²⁵

The petition was one of the major instruments used in these early years to recruit support for any grievance, and the county council issue was no exception, as Pahiatua and Eketahuna citizens in particular, nominated their local town and road members as replacements for the present county office holders, with the sentiment, "some steps should be taken to free ourselves from the yoke of oppression".²⁶ Partial success, it appears, was the result of this petitioning and the Pahiatua County Council (the residents of Pahiatua were still liable for taxation by the Pahiatua County Council) was formed in 1888, with a Pahiatua citizen Job Vile (coach and livery stable owner) becoming the first chairman.²⁷

Matters such as the county council issue, though exploding into prominence, were just as quickly relegated to the sideline, and perhaps on occasion given another airing if the grievance warranted it. Often other actions, which the Pahiatua townsmen considered

24. PS, 4 February, 1887.

25. PS, 11 February, 1887.

26. PS, 11 March, 1887.

27. Irons, Ben. February 1972 at Masterton. Notes from this interview are in my possession.

high-handed, superseded such issues as the county council, and a new bout of sparring with, for example, central government, would begin.

Most of the time, settler grievances were aired with this latter body, through letters and petitions, though periodically visits from ministers to the township were occasions when citizen deputations could appeal directly to central government.

When the Premier Sir Robert Stout visited Pahiatua in 1885, some of the proposals put before him by A.W. Sedcole on behalf of the town and district, included construction of proper roads, rough crown lands to be perpetually leased in blocks of 400 to 640 acres, instead of 100 acres, and a request was made for information on where the railway line was to go, so that the recreation ground and cemetery could be located.²⁸

A year later the then Minister of Lands, John Ballance, visited the town, and during his stay told the settlers that they should make their wants known through their representative. The Pahiatua rejoinder to this, was that Mr Beetham (member of a sheep farming family in the Wairarapa) "the member for Wairarapa North ... was almost a perfect stranger to the settlers in the Bush ... further Mr Beetham ... is in the ranks of the opposition, and it is just likely that any representations from him would have little weight".²⁹ It appears that Ballance also failed to impress the Pahiatua delegation: "... the Pahiatua settlers having little or no confidence in Mr Beetham went themselves to the fountain-head, and got nothing for their trouble".³⁰ This type of indignation of the citizens of Pahiatua characterized the whole period, and issues such as the future location of the railway line, further illustrated the private settlement on the defensive.

28. Woodville Examiner, 4 December, 1885.

29. PS, 24 December, 1886.

30. *ibid.*

This issue was the major controversy in these years and for the energy it created, the most influential in promoting solidarity and a distinct feeling of "we alone" among Pahiatua citizens. By 1886, five years after Pahiatua had been founded, the promised railway line that was to run through the town and district had only reached Woodville, ten miles north of Pahiatua, and Eketahuna, sixteen miles south.

To the editor of the Star and the original settlers, the railway line through the town and district would have the combined effect of increasing land values and providing an outlet for local produce. The Pahiatua Star's editor's vision of the position was optimistic;

this bush will keep dozens of mills going, and Wellington appears an almost inexhaustible outlet. Our line would, through this timber industry, pay from the very day it is opened, and pay handsomely. It would be the means of giving employment to hundreds of people and bring annually into the district, thousands of pounds of foreign capital. This timber supply would keep the railway busily engaged for years to come, or until there would be sufficient population, and sufficient land under cultivation to yield sufficient produce to take the place of timber traffic.³¹

To many inhabitants of Pahiatua, the report of a government engineer, Mr Knorpp, in early 1887, stating that the railway line would have to by-pass Pahiatua, mainly because its proposed site, the main road, was prone to flooding,³² was the signal for a major protest. When it was learnt that the government proposed taking the line west of the town and through the government settlement of Scarborough, John Ballance, the Minister of Lands and advocate of the various government settler schemes, became the arch-villain of the piece. "People here are constantly denouncing Mr Ballance as a traitor, and asserting that he is purposely starving Pahiatua in order to drive settlement into some fancy association of his own".³³

31. PS, 11 June, 1886.

32. NZM, 11 March, 1887.

33. NZM, 17 December, 1886.

Even the founder of the town W.W. McCardle came under scrutiny. A correspondent to the Pahiatua Star named "Watchful", asked if it was true that McCardle had been working against the line going through Pahiatua, so that it would run the other side of the river, and added: "the reason assigned for this has been, that Mr McCardle owns land on both sides of the road leading to the proposed station, which would consequently become valuable."³⁴

Public meetings were held to discuss the issue, and at one of the first (4 March 1887), the general sentiment of the townsfolk was voiced by some of the original settlers. H. Mann, as one of the earliest settlers, gave it as his opinion that Mr Knorpps report, "so far as floods were concerned was absurd",³⁵ and the chairman of the meeting, W.W. McCardle, endorsed a statement by W. Wakenan who said: "when the Pahiatua land was sold ... Mr Holdsworth the then Commissioner was very plain about the railway passing through the town and he made use of this argument to induce people to buy ... government will have obtained money under false pretences, unless they construct the line through Pahiatua".³⁶ At the same public meeting, a storekeeper, Alex Birnie, probably spoke for a lot of people when complaining that "he came here 12 months ago and purchased 2 acres for £400 fully understanding that the railway would come through the town. He had since expended £400 more on the property".³⁷ The meeting concluded with a unanimous resolution that the government should continue with its intention of running the railway through the town, and that the report of Mr Knorpp was inaccurate. A subscription was also started, and about £17 was collected in the room, so that a competent engineer could be

34. PS, 31 December, 1886.

35. PS, 8 March, 1887.

36. *ibid.*

37. *ibid.*



PLATE 8

Pahiātua and its squares, looking northward in 1902.

employed to revise Knorpp's report.³⁸

The Pahiatua correspondent took it upon himself to speak for his fellow citizens, stating: "we merely want solid producible reasons why the government wants to shift it, we are not all simpletons or crazy partisans, if we get a reasonable answer we shall understand it".³⁹

A qualified engineer, J.T. Carr, was employed to forward a second opinion on the location of the railway line. His report, which came out in favour of the railway line running through Pahiatua, maintained that the advantages of his proposed line would outweigh any disadvantages. Carr's route planned to eliminate $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of proposed railway construction, which he put down as a saving of £6000, adding a further saving of £6000 for maintenance of the same. Also, there would be a saving of about eight miles of bush felling and clearing, a total saving of £13,500, which, said Carr, "would more than pay for the extra bridge over the Makakahi and the extra cost of bridging the Mangatainoka, mentioned under the heading of disadvantages, and also for the land to be acquired from private owners".⁴⁰ This report by Carr was matched with a petition signed by 220 Pahiatua residents, calling for a redress of the "great injustice ... being done them",⁴¹ and given to George Beetham member for the district to forward to government.

The 220 citizens of Pahiatua who signed the railway petition not only had to contend with central government over this issue, but also with a counter petition taken up by a disillusioned Pahiatua resident, Alex Reese ("Mr Reese has so long enjoyed uninterrupted sway here [as Pahiatua's unofficial Policeman] that he looks upon

38. NZM, 11 March, 1887.

39. *ibid.*

40. PS, 6 May, 1887.

41. NZM, 13 May, 1887.

the person who attempts to doubt his authority as a sworn enemy")⁴² on behalf of some half a dozen government sponsored settlements around Pahiatua.

As it turned out, nothing concrete was achieved at the time with either petition, as it was not until ten years later that the line was completed west of the town, thus saving the bridging of the Makakahi and the Mangatainoka at Mangatainoka.

The railway controversy also stirred up much ill-feeling between Pahiatua, and its close neighbour Woodville, ten miles to the north. The respective newspapers, the Pahiatua Star, and the Woodville Examiner, were the chief protagonists and spokesmen for an era in which two relatively new settlements were going through their formative years, and flexing their adolescent muscles in an attempt at creating elbow room, and an identity for themselves. Vehemence and sarcasm abounded in this situation of attack and counter-attack, and a strident parochialism often characterized the writings of the two newspapers, as they purported to give voice on behalf of their respective reading public.

The apparent support the Woodville settler gave the construction of the Manawatu Gorge Railway, was the cause of a Pahiatua Star "salvo", complaining that it would be "far better had the money been voted for a line through the Forty mile bush. For the editor of the Star the gorge route would mean that "workshops should be at hand to the gorge ... so as to hoist out, and fix wrecked engines ... falling into the river". Also needed, according to the Star would be a "hospital (morgue would perhaps be more suitable) in some convenient place at one or other end of the gorge. We would recommend the Woodville end because it is adjacent to a cemetery".⁴³ The controversy that the government had aroused in Pahiatua, by proposing to lay the railway line through Scarborough (under the jurisdiction of the Pahiatua West Small Farm Association) was reason enough for

42. PS, 24 April, 1887.

43. PS, 27 July, 1886.

the Woodville Examiner to counter-attack.

The Pahiatua West Small Farm Association seems to have aroused the envy and hatred of the Pahiatua Star, and in consequence a malicious article in the issue of the paper dated 3 December is fraught with the wildest surmises. It says that the Minister of Lands is leaguings with the association in order to destroy the township of Pahiatua The ... association would have just cause of complaint if they found the government spending large sums of public money to divert a railway to benefit speculators. Pahiatua is doomed and the principal township will be on the association block.⁴⁴

Six months later, the petition taken up by Alex Reese of Pahiatua on behalf of the government settlements around Pahiatua was championed by the Woodville Examiner.

The question of the railway location should be considered on broad grounds. As against the interests solely of Pahiatua (this is all the opposition care for) there are the interests of some half a dozen associations viz.: The Masterton-Mangahoa, Wellington-Mangatainoka, the village settlements near the Mangahoa river, the townships of Ballance and Scarborough, which in a short time will carry a large population.⁴⁵

This type of parochialism that Woodville and Pahiatua displayed was not confined to the railway issue, but spilled over into a broad range of issues, from the tolls Pahiatua travellers had to pay at the Woodville end of the gorge road, to the best representative of the Forty mile bush in Parliament.

This latter issue became very important to the Pahiatua settler, when the electoral boundary changes before the election of 1887 excluded George Beetham from further representing the district, and bought Woodville, Pahiatua, and Eketahuna into a new Bush electorate named Woodville. Before these boundary changes were implemented, the two candidates for the North Wairarapa electorate for the 1887 election were the sitting member Beetham and the founder of Pahiatua, and a Vogel-Stout supporter, W.W. McCardle. Before any campaign

44. Woodville Examiner, 14 December, 1886.

45. Woodville Examiner, 27 May, 1887.

began, the electoral boundaries were changed, and W.W. McCardle was opposed by a Mr Baker ("a Woodville resident, who had 220 signatures declaring for him")⁴⁶ and Mr W.C. Smith who had previously represented Woodville as member for the Waipawa electorate.

The Pahiatua Star immediately came out in favour of McCardle, and noted that there "is great public interest in the election", and one correspondent signed "Exchange Clerk", suggested having a column called telephone exchange, in which "anyone might contribute scraps of news and intelligence of interest to those around".⁴⁷

The Pahiatua Star's news column reported most of McCardle's meetings (those that were not were covered in the telephone exchange column), and at one of them a sample of the questions he received from Pahiatua citizens, illustrates the variety of issues that were of interest to them. John Hughes, the then chairman of the Town Board, asked McCardle if legislation could be enacted in the matter of bush-fires; other questions concerned a state bank, elective land boards, and a land tax on absentees.⁴⁸

Some of the predominant issues on McCardle's election platform concerned retrenchment in the civil service, opening up of the country by a complete system of roadmaking, reform in railway management, settling the people on the land, making advances to settlers other than those taking up land under the village homestead system.⁴⁹

W.C. Smith was the victim of Pahiatua's bias for the "favourite son" McCardle, and for hardly venturing into the latter's domain, he

46. PS, 24 June, 1887.

47. *ibid.*

48. PS, 19 July, 1887.

49. PS, 9 August, 1887.

was roundly criticized by the Star.

Mr Smith, by his action, has shown himself to be a coward, for whilst he had the tremendous advantage of having occupied the confidence of a large portion of the electorate for a number of years, he is afraid to give utterance to his views (if he has any) until two untried aspirants for parliamentary honours have made the way straight for him.⁵⁰

As far as the results of the election were concerned, Smith was the winner with 922 votes, followed by Baker with 761 votes. McCardle though polling highest in Pahiatua and Eketahuna, was lowest by a wide margin in polling booths north of the Manawatu river, and finished with 452 votes.⁵¹ As this discussion illustrates, a wide range of issues became the concern of the Pahiatua residents as they moved from a clearing in the bush, and proceeded toward building a viable community.

The culmination of the energy and local pride that these formative years engendered, was the granting of borough status in 1892, eleven years after the founding of the town. Again, it was citizen initiative that prompted the move to formalize the identity of Pahiatua. The man who was to be Pahiatua's first mayor, Job Vile (coach and livery stable proprietor) proposed in the "public opinion" column of the Star, that Pahiatua by achieving borough status could become more self-sufficient in financing its town projects.

I should advise the Town Board ... to as early as possible revert back to the rating act of 1876 which will enable them to make their own valuations annually. Then every person who builds a house and requires something done to the street or footpath leading to it will be enabled to get it because his property will be taxed for that purpose. As things are now, it is simply impossible to cope with the requirements of the town without funds. Then the town may do as it chooses, divest itself of the county government and save itself a duplicate rate by being proclaimed a borough, and the earlier the better.⁵²

50. PS, 9 August, 1887.

51. AJHR, 1887, Session II, H-13, p.2.

52. PS, 23 June, 1891.

Nine months later Vile's proposal concerning the township's change of status, was given concrete response with a petition committee being established, consisting of Messrs Vile and Sedcole and the chairman of the Town Board, Joseph Dawson, with the intention of asking the governor "to declare the Pahiatua Town District a borough within the meaning of the Municipal Corporations Act 1886".⁵³ The petition to the governor-general met with a favourable response, and with a population of 782 in the census of 1891 Pahiatua was eligible for the change in status. On 3 August 1892 the last meeting of the Town Board took place, and on 12 September 1892 the first meeting of the newly elected Pahiatua Borough Council was held in the town hall.⁵⁴

For the position of Mayor, two men Job Vile and Joseph Dawson put their names forward as candidates, with Job Vile being chosen as Pahiatua's first Mayor. For the nine places on the new Borough Council 19 townsmen were candidates, and in the election the following men were successful: H.H. Hughes, T.U. Tosswill, G. Bottomley, W.W. McCardle Jnr., A. Yule, J. Burrows, J.D. Wilson, H.W. Briggs. The large number of candidates for the Borough elections is perhaps indicative of the support, loyalty, and public spirit that Pahiatua had engendered in its formative years.

53. Pahiatua Town Board Minutes 4/1/92.

54. *ibid.*

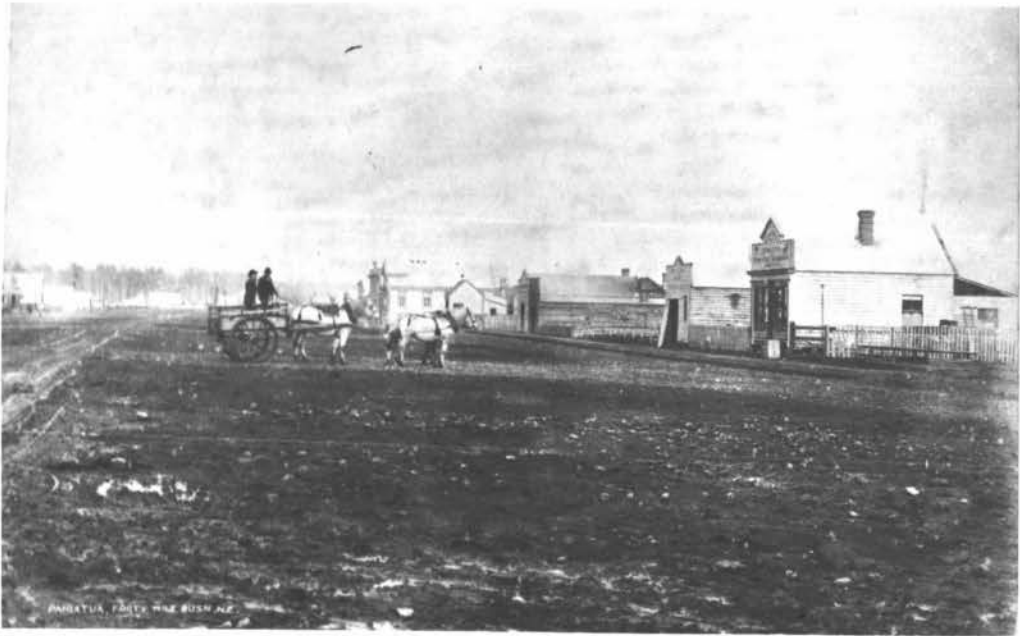


PLATE 9

Two views of Pahiataua and its three chain wide main street, still waiting for the promised railway line, 1888.

CONCLUSION

By 1892 and the conferment of borough status the town of Pahiatua could look back on its first 11 years with a considerable feeling of achievement. From a bush clearing adjacent to a narrow and partially metalled road a town grew under the auspices of people who knew what they wanted and set out to achieve it. From the bush they expected and in most cases got, pastureland. From their home-life they aspired to, and in most cases saw realised, the trappings of modern civilization, from a Post Office to a School.

What aided the successful growth of Pahiatua, was that the idealism of the early settlers was tempered to a large degree by practical hard-headedness. These two traits turned a bush clearing into a viable community.

The unique situation of Pahiatua as the only private settlement within its immediate hinterland, gave added impetus to the already hard-working bush settler of Pahiatua. The energy that this created saw Pahiatua outstrip its close neighbours and firmly entrench itself as the leading township of its area.

Today the situation as far as Pahiatua and its close neighbours are concerned is virtually the same as it was in 1892. Pahiatua is still the major service centre of a predominantly rural area, with the old government settlements of Mangatainoka, Ballance, Mangaramarama, Kaitawa, Mangamutu (Scarborough), apart from the brewery of Mangatainoka and the railway at Mangamutu, minute reminders of what might have been.

The Pahiatua village settlement between Pahiatua and Mangatainoka is now farmland, with little trace of its former tenants remaining.

As for the bush, few traces remain, apart from Carnival Park in Pahiatua, and the odd stand of bush on some of the farms in the district.

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APPENDIX

CENSUS

- I Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand taken for the night of the 28 March, 1886.

Pahiatua 307 total.

Source: Census of New Zealand, 1886.

- II CENSUS 1891

PAHIATUA TOWN DISTRICT	782 total
	468 males
	314 females

PAHIATUA OUTLYING DISTRICT	772 total
	411 males
	361 females

APPENDIX

BOROUGH OF PAHIATUA
Election of First Councillors

"The Municipal Corporation Act 1886" and its amendments, "The Regulation of Local Electors Act, 1876", and Order in Council published in the New Zealand Gazette of 28th July, 1892, No.61, page 1105, constituting the borough of Pahiatua.

Notice is hereby given in pursuance of the above recited Acts and Order-in-Council, that at the election held at this day at the Town Board office, Pahiatua for the return of nine councillors, the following votes were polled by each candidate respectively:-

Burrows, Joseph	61	4
Briggs, Henry William	76	2
Bottomley, Godfrey	52	8
Beaumont, Henry	48	
Birnie, Alexander	46	
Clark, James Pirie	26	
Dawson, Joseph	92	1
Gould, Albert William	48	
Godfrey, Harry Hearnder	27	
Henderson, James	41	
Hughes, Herbert Hesper	59	7
McCardle, William Wilson Jnr.	51	9
Page, James	24	
Puckle, Duncan	34	
Sedcole, Albert West	13	
Stevens, Henry	50	
Tosswill, William	61	5
Wilson, James Donald	60	6
Yule, Alexander	76	3

I have therefore to declare Joseph Dawson, Henry William Briggs, Alexander Yule, Joseph Burrows, Williams Tosswill, James Donald Wilson, Herbert Hesper Hughes, Godfrey Bottomley, and William Wilson McCardle Jnr., who have received the highest number of votes, duly elected councillors for the Borough of Pahiatua.

William J. Reeve

Substitute Returning Officer
Town Board Office, Pahiatua.
Sept. 8, 1892.