

2 History

A Pictorial History

The intention in this section is to give a brief date-line, listing some key events in the environmental and social history of the island. For further detail where references are not given, refer to Armitage (ed), *Great Barrier Island*, Canterbury University Press, 2001 or Helen Jordan Luff, *Tales from Great Barrier Island*, David Ling Publishing, 2003.

~**20,000 years ago** the sea level starts to rise and no later than 18,000 years ago the island is completely separated from the Coromandel Peninsula.ⁱ

~**1280 – 1350AD** Turi, Ariki of the Aotea canoe, names a number of places where the canoe touches land, including Aotea, later to be called Great Barrier Island.ⁱⁱ Kiore and dogs probably arrive.ⁱⁱⁱ

~**late 1700's** Ngati Wai, led by Rehua, come to avenge the death of a relative and settle on the island.^{iv}

1769 Captain Cook sails through the Hauraki Gulf and named "Great Barrier Island".

1794 Two shiploads of kauri spars were taken for the British Navy.^v Pigs are present now for food and trade.

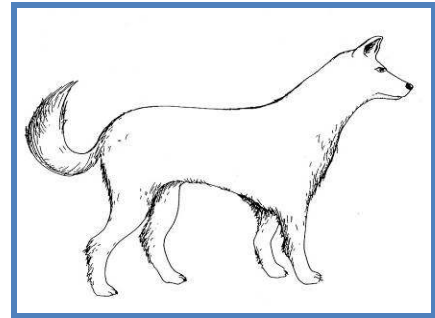
1820's Reports from visiting ships described the island as lacking human habitation.^{vi}

1838 Webster, Abercrombie and Nagle believed they had purchased the entire island from Maori. (After 1840 the sale was annulled by the Crown^{vii} and they retained approx 4000ha). Cats and ship rats arrive with the early settlers?

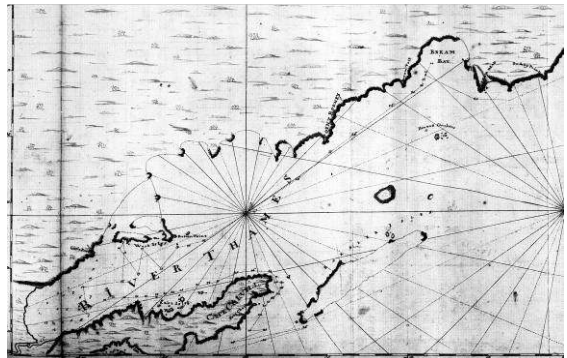
1839 Honey Bees brought to Great Barrier Island

1841 Copper was discovered at Miners Head, 2323 tonnes of ore were extracted containing only an average of 15% copper; after several attempts the company collapsed and the mine closed again in 1867^{viii}.

1848. The 'Stirlingshire' and was launched. This was the largest sailing vessel ever built in New Zealand.



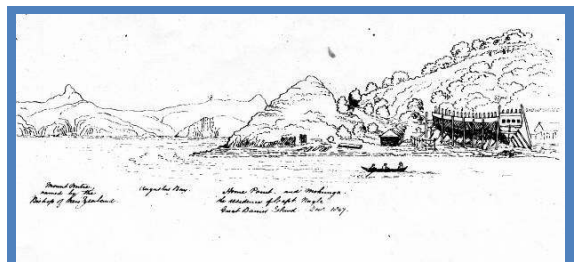
Kuri



Part of Captain Cook's Map.
23-24 Nov. 1769 Cape Colville to Bream Head.



Feral Cat



Drawing by William Bambridge showing Home Point and Mohunga, the residence of Capt. Nagle, and the building of the 'Stirlingshire'.

1854 First farm cleared by Barstow and cattle brought to Rosalie Bay.

~**1860's** Gum digging started, by 1889 between 40 and 50 gum-diggers working here, by 1914 few were left although settlers continued to add to their farming income with gum sales right through the 1920's..... ship rats are now known to be present in North Island.^{ix}

1862 The mining company logged kauri in the Kaiaraara, Wairahi and Kiwiriki catchments. Small operators logged easily accessible kauri until 1888 when the forest was purchased by the Kauri Timber Company.

1868 Hutton publishes a list of the birds then present on Great Barrier Island. Thomas Kirk makes the first botanical collection from the Island which was sent to Hooker at Kew.

1889 Charles Winklemann, teacher and botanist (married to one of the Malcolm daughters at Rosalie Bay and a regular visitor over 15 years) wrote an article in the Auckland Weekly News mourning the loss of kauri through fire^x

"Anyone who has explored the indescribable beauty of the interior cannot fail to heave a sigh of regret as these selfsame forests are seen in flames.... I have year after year witnessed such scenes on this island".^{ix}

1892 Sanderson brothers discover silver and gold in the Okupu area, the settlement Oreville (also spelt Oroville) was established and its population rose to 400 inhabitants; in 1920 the mine was abandoned and the works moved to Thames.^{xi}

1896 Pigeon post to Auckland starts after the sinking of the Wairarapa in 1894 highlights the slowness of communication. This was the first official 'airmail' in the world.

"Sept 30 1890, Charlie Osborne's arm shattered while playing with loaded rifle at Tryphena. Pigeon 'Velocity' dispatched by Mr Werner from Okupu, arrived 6 hours later at Mr Howie's pigeon loft in Newton road. Mr Howie jumped on his bicycle and alerted the master of SS Kawau, which set out for Great Barrier Island with nurse Lizzie Smith and a doctor on board. In storm conditions Charles was taken back to Auckland Hospital, but in the end his arm had to be amputated" (NZ Herald Jan 25 1908).

TO GUMDIGGERS Steam to Great Barrier Gum-Fields

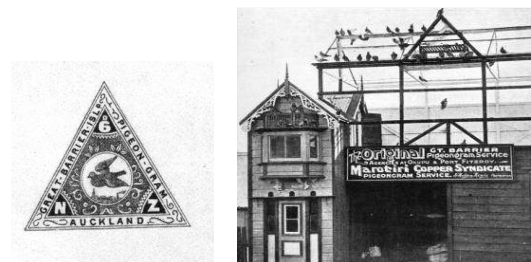
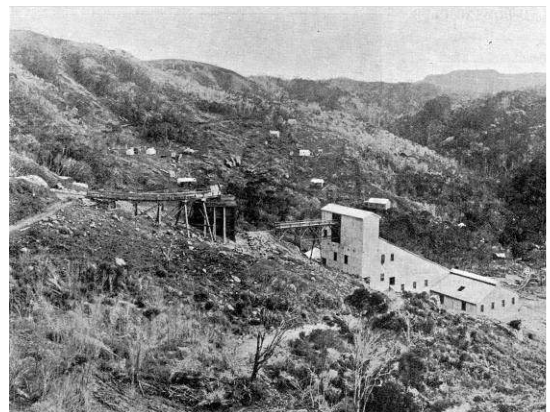
For the convenience of diggers desirous of proceeding to the above gum-fields the SS FINGAL will leave Auckland for Blind Bay and Kaiarara (weather permitting) at noon, on Wednesday, 29th March, and should weather not permit on that day, the SS GLENELG will sail on the following day, Thursday, 30 March. Fares ten shillings.

NB. Gum plentiful. Highest values paid for gum. Stores at reasonable rates. Good wages can be made.

C. J. HUTCHINSON
15 Custom House Street.



Senecio kirkii. Named after Thomas Kirk. Painted on Great Barrier Island by Fanny Osborne, then of Tryphena, c. 1916.



"The original pigeon gram services' loft, Newton Rd., Auckland".

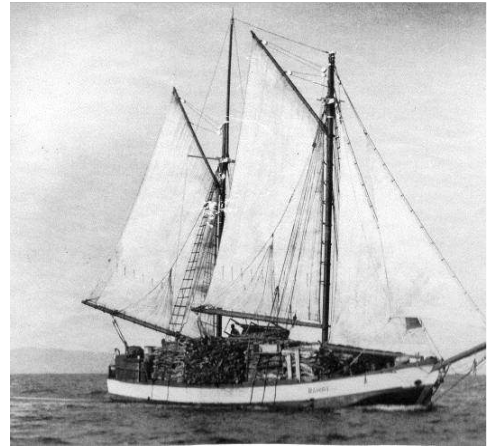
1900's Kanuka and manuka continue to be cut for pasture. Firewood shipped to Auckland to supplement farming income. The pasture is burned annually to stimulate new growth^{xii}. Grass seed is grown and sent in sacks to Auckland.

1908 The Marine Department picks and sells rock oysters in the Hauraki Gulf; eleven thousand sacks were sold in the first year at prices up to 12s 6d per sack^{xiii}, a highly successful commercial activity.

".....oysters are now only a memory on the shores of the island"^{xiv}.

1909 (Right) Timber mill opens at Whangaparapara to process timber from the Hauraki Gulf and Coromandel; this is believed to be the largest mill in the Southern Hemisphere employing 50 men; it closed again in 1914.^{xv}

"Over 55,000,000ft of kauri logs were rafted to Auckland 1926-41"



Rahiri sails to Auckland loaded with firewood. Date unknown.



"Their efforts crowned with success: A good haul of crayfish at Great Barrier Island." (There are at least 40 crayfish in the photo!)

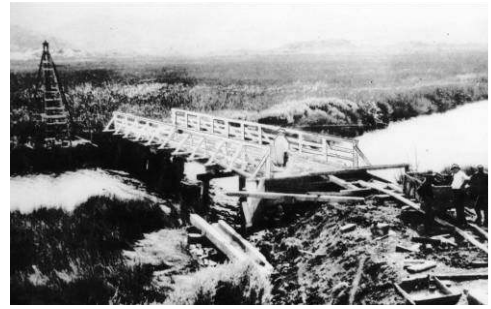


1913 Great Barrier Island County Council starts up and plans roads and wharves, finding funds through the 1920's. Settlers gift land and tender for the work.

1900 - 1925 Farmers made their living from dairy, cattle, and sheep (nearly 20,000 sheep in early 1900's). Cream was sent to Auckland weekly, skim milk fed to pigs Goats were introduced to graze cliff edges..... Bee-keeping: up to 10 tonne honey sent off annually with half as much again consumed on the island^{xvi} (honey was sometimes bartered for groceries).

1927 Kaiaraara dams completed allowing 40 men to get the remaining timber out of the Kaiarara valley over 3 years^{xvii} but dismaying Mowbray:

"I saw what had happened to the Kaiaraara stream. The banks of the stream had been torn and mutilated. Its bed was four or five times its former width..... this is what happened when the timber men carried out their flooding operations to the kauri to the sea. The defacement of that valley was complete"^{xviii}



Construction of Kaitoke Bridge. c.1916



Loading sheep on the 'Jane Gifford', Karaka Bay 1925..



Lower Kaiaraara dam in construction 1924. View from upstream looking down



Above: Lower Kaiaraara dam Photo in 2009. View looking upstream.

1930's Depression relief workers assist in road building for five years and the Army complete some in the 1940's^{xix}. The Great Barrier Island forest is mostly harvested with logging ceasing finally at the outbreak of World War II.

1934 First Tryphena wharf is completed at Shoal Bay after protracted debate. The Medland brothers complete their preferred alternative at Puriri Bay in 1936.^{xx}

1938 The Claris airfield is built at Kaitoke^{xxi} and the idea of a National Park is first raised.^{xxii}

1940's Post-war population slump. Unproductive pasture on hill slopes abandoned and scrub spreads.

1956 Whaling station is built at Whangaparapara for a short resurgence of whaling....ceased in 1962 due to declining catches.^{xxiii}

1970's Farming is reduced with removal of fertiliser subsidies, closing of the cream factory in Auckland and high freight costs.^{xxiv} Tourism activities continue to expand to supplement residents' income.

1976 Forest service planted locally sourced kauri seed in former farmland... experimented with rimu, totara and kahikatea.^{xxv}

From 1976 – 1986

c. 20,000 kauri seedlings were planted annually. Pines, Eucalypts and Acacias were also planted for erosion control.

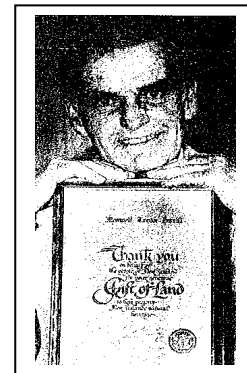
1983 Mining Bill passed banning all mining on the island.^{xxvi}

1984 Max Burrill gifted more than 10% of Great Barrier Island to the country.

1987 Department of Conservation formed out of Forestry Service, Lands & Survey and NZ Wildlife Service. These departments all had land interests on Great Barrier Island.



October 1931. First plane lands at Oneura Bay, Port Fitzroy, piloted by J.D. Hewett .



Max Burrill gifted more than 10% of Great Barrier Island to New Zealand



Old Telephone exchange Tryphena 1985

1990's Mussel farmers establish harvest and send away 1500 tonnes annually.

1991 Automatic telephone exchange installed.^{xxvii}

1998 Rise in conservation employment by private initiatives, community groups and Department of Conservation.

2000 Beachcare groups start at Medlands and Awana. Start of feral cat trapping by Department of Conservation at Okiwi.

2004 Goat eradication on Great Barrier Island – Department of Conservation and Auckland Regional Council.

2004 First regionally extinct bird - North Island Robin - returns to Great Barrier Island – released at Windy Hill by Windy Hill Rosalie Bay Catchment Trust and Glenfern Sanctuary.

2005. Biosecurity measures introduced at wharves.

2006 Argentine ant eradication programme starts, organised by Department of Conservation and Auckland Regional Council with volunteers from the community. Feral goats eliminated.

2008 Predator proof fence completed at Glenfern Sanctuary. Fallow deer, pigs and rats eliminated from Motu Kaikoura. Rat eradication commenced.

2009 First community rat-trapping programme commences at Mulberry Grove, Tryphena.



Mussel Farm Port FitzRoy



Release of North Island robins at Little Windy Hill, Tryphena.



Predator proof fence
Glenfern Sanctuary, Port FitzRoy

Photos and paintings in order: Kuri; King, C.M. (1990) *The Handbook for New Zealand Mammals*. Oxford University Press, New Zealand, Capt. Cook map; Salmond, A 1991 *Two worlds. First meetings between Maori and Europeans 1642 – 1772* Viking Press, Cat; *Department of Conservation website*, Stirlingshire drawing; *William Bambridge*, Gumdiggers Advertisement; *New Zealand Herald 1882*, Senecio Kirkii; Goulding, J.H. 1983 *Fanny Osborne's Flower Paintings*. Heinemann Pp84, Oreville Settlement; *C. Young collection*, Pigeon loft; *Auckland Weekly News 1898.*, Rahiri, timber milling, Kaitoke bridge, Jane Gifford, Kaiaraara dam; *C Young Collection*, Crayfishermen; *Auckland Weekly News 1915*, First Plane, *A Breckon Jr*; Whaling, *NZ Herald*; Telephone exchange, *New Zealand Herald*; Mussel Farm; *Ken Scott*, Robin release; *Windy Hill collection*, Predator proof fence; *Glenfern Sanctuary*,

- i Robert Bailey, *Great Barrier Island, Guardian of the Hauraki Gulf, A Short History*, 1994
 - ii Wilmshurst, J. M. et al. 2008. Dating the late prehistoric dispersal of Polynesians to New Zealand using the commensal Pacific rat. *PNAS* 105 (22): 7676-7680. Te Aue David, Tipene O'Regan & John Wilson, *The Survey Pegs of the Past: understanding Maori Place Names* compiled for the New Zealand Geographic Board, 1990
 - iii Tennyson & Martinson, *Extinct Birds of New Zealand*, Te Papa Press, Wellington, 2006
 - iv Armitage (ed), *Great Barrier Island*, Canterbury University Press, 2001, p11 (further references to this will be shown Armitage followed by the page no)
 - v Armitage, p14
 - vi Helen Jordan Luff, *Tales from Great Barrier Island*, David Ling Publishing, 2003, p13 (further references to this will be shown 'Luff' followed by the page no)
 - vii Armitage, p13 . Note that when the commissions which examined those early Old Land Claims found that there was not justification purchase of a whole block of land by the settler claimants, the balance was not returned to the tangata whenua but was declared "surplus" and ownership was assumed by the Crown. All land on Aotea was effectively alienated prior to the establishment of the Native Land Court in 1865, both through the Old Land Claims and the Rangitawhiri Crown Purchase. The awarding of the "Native Reserve" at Motairehe (Katherine Bay) was also unusual. None of that land has since been alienated. (Pers comm. Keir Volkerling).
 - viii J. Henderson. 'The Copper Resources of New Zealand' in *The NZ Journal of Science & Technology* (referenced by Luff).
 - ix Tennyson & Martinson, '*Extinct Birds of New Zealand*' Te Papa Press, Wellington 2006
 - x *Notes of the Great Barrier Island, Auckland Weekly News, 22/6/1889*
 - xi Armitage, p29
 - xii Armitage, p15
 - xiii David Johnson, *New Zealand's Maritime Heritage*, p168
 - xiv Luff, p59
 - xv Armitage, p31
 - xvi Armitage, p15-17
 - xvii Luff, p67 quoting George Murray, Interview for the *New Zealand Herald*, 19/4/51
 - xviii John Mowbray, Mt Hobson's Scroll of Fame, *The New Zealand Observer*, 18/7/1931
 - xix Robert Bailey, *Great Barrier Island, Guardian of the Hauraki Gulf, A Short History*, 1994
 - xx Luff, p50
 - xxi Luff, p125
 - xxii Luff p51 quoting Burton Wells, *Report for the Commissioner of Crown Lands North Auckland District*, 1938
 - xxiii Hauraki Gulf Park Board, *The Story of Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park*, 1983, p26
 - xxiv Luff, p47
 - xxv Luff, p191 quoting Don Woodcock
 - xxvi Luff, p102
 - xxvii Luff, p141
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