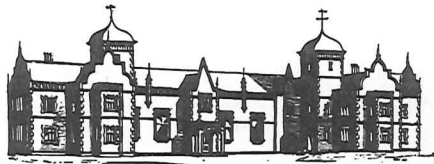


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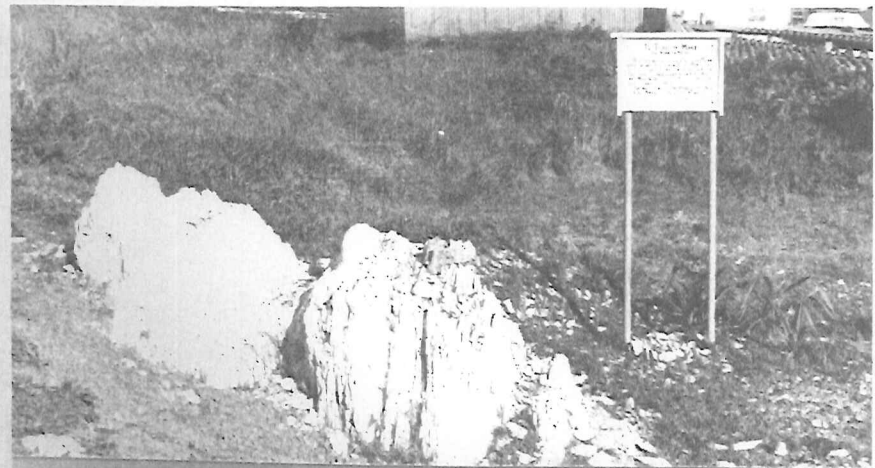
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Duplicate in
the Turnbull



TE TURU O MAKE
(THE STOOL OF MACKAY)

This rock was used as a seat by James Mackay whilst he was bargaining with the Maori tribes for the purchase of over 2 1/2 million acres of their land. Negotiations between the Maoris and Mackay lasted more than a month and were completed on March 25, 1859.

This was known as the Kaikoura Purchase. James Mackay represented the Crown.

THREE ORDEALS FOR A GENTLE SETTLER

or

JOHN KIDSON'S LONG JOURNEY HOME

by *Elsie Locke*

We are grateful to Elsie Locke who has sent us this story that she "uncovered" while researching her family history, "Discovering the Morrisons".

One of the most vivid stories relating to the Wairau Affray of 1843 is the experience of John Kidson. In later life he worked as a gardener for John Poynter. Hilda Small tells us in her book, "Nelson's First Lawyer" that John Kidson never smoked but liked to work with a flower in the corner of his mouth, so Poynter's little daughter found him a fresh "pipe" every morning.

John Kidson did not emigrate as the labourer he quickly became. He was a boat-builder by trade when he sailed in the "Bolton" in 1842 with his wife and their first three children, another was born soon after they landed. He never had the chance to build boats in Nelson. Later he signed the Memorial of Mechanics and Labourers claiming compensation from the New Zealand Company for its unfulfilled promises. This was headed by John Perry Robinson who later became Provincial Superintendent. Nelson had far too large a proportion of working men and the miserable relief given them is well described. These words are included: "We feel we should not fulfil the whole of our duty if we omit to bring before you the case of the widows and orphans of those of our fellow labourers who were induced, and in some cases forced, under the penalty of losing their employment, to accompany your agent to the Wairau." (Nelson Examiner, 27 April 1850).

Amelia Kidson came near to being one of these widows. No doubt it was John's skill with boats that got him involved. He was among the crew who transported the Chief Surveyor, Frederick Tuckett, to investigate Maori resistance to the surveys of the Wairau Plains which had never been properly purchased. The events which culminated in the Wairau Affray are well described by Ruth Allan in "Nelson, a History of Early Settlement". I am concerned here with the courage and endurance of one man.

I take up the story, very slightly abridged, from the Nelson Examiner, 23 December, 1843, with his first ordeal when the fighting ceased at Tua Marina.

I told Mr Thompson and Captain Wakefield . . . I would not surrender as long as I could run. Seeing that I could no longer remain with any chance of escaping, I started up the hill, and I was the last who got away before the natives came up to those who surrendered themselves. I was pursued by three Maories and a dog, at a distance of about seventy yards, and several bullets were discharged by them, which whizzed by me too close to be

pleasant. If I stopped for a moment and presented my gun, they immediately lay down in the fern.

I continued running up the hill, but found them gaining on me. As my gun contained my last charge, I threw it aside, and while they sought it I increased the distance between us. On going over the next hill, a man named Warner, who lay in the fern, called to me, but I beckoned to him to be quiet, which he did, and thereby saved his life, as the natives passed within a few yards of where he lay. My pursuers were again coming up with me, so I took off my coat and threw it away, and then speedily got over the top of the hill into a wooded and deep gully. Here I lay down dead beat, but saw the natives on the hillside from between the trees, endeavouring to lay the dog on my track. I drew out my knife to be ready for whatever might happen, but thank God they did not venture down to me, as the dog would not take up the scent.

I remained quiet until dark, and then started over hill and dale, and a wretched night I had, wading through swamps and rivers; sometimes crawling through, and sometimes rolling over the high fern. At length I came to a river, which I could not touch the bottom of, so I got up a tree to wait till the moon rose, that I might see the other side. (Probably the Pukaka stream.) Here the thought of home almost drove me mad, and I am not ashamed to say I was greatly relieved by having a good cry.

When the moon rose I swam to the other side of the river, which was not very wide, I then pulled off my waistcoat and shirt and wrung them—my trowsers were torn into pieces. The travelling was now better, and I reached the hills which overlook Robin Hood's Bay (just outside Port Underwood) about daybreak.

In this bay is a pa, to which the natives had proceeded. I did not know they were there until I had got half way down the hill, when I recognised their whaleboat. A native who saw me called to me to come down, but I turned round and ran into the bush. About three o'clock in the afternoon I reached Ocean Bay, tired, nearly naked, and very hungry, having eaten nothing since six o'clock on the morning of the day previous. I was well received by the whalers, and remained with them two days.

John Kidson volunteered for his second ordeal. He was among the crew of the boat which took Reverend Samuel Ironside, the missionary of Port Underwood, down the coast and over the Wairau bar and up the river in weather too daunting for the sailors of the Government brig *Victoria*. They reached the scene of battle and sadly buried all the dead they could find.

The Company boat had been taken by the Maoris. The survivors were short of transport and had reason to fear the hazards of those uncharted coasts. The routes through Picton and Havelock were as yet unknown. The Tophouse pass had been discovered and used, but no track had been cut or marked. Here John Kidson faced his third ordeal.

I set out with four others to walk round to Nelson, as we preferred doing so to going by boat. Our provisions at starting consisted of about twenty-one pounds of biscuit, and three pieces

of pork weighing about twelve pounds, and a little tea and sugar. We were without compass, but one of the party had instructions from Mr Tuckett of the route. We slept that night at the pa at Robin Hood's Bay (The Maoris were now co-operative).

On the following day we were at the (deserted) pa at the mouth of the Wairau, and finding an old canoe there we ascended the (Opawa) river in it, as far as what had been Mr Cotterell's station, where we slept that night with one blanket to cover five persons.

The next day we walked as far as we were able, and then lay down wet and miserable, it having rained nearly all the day. We got but a short distance the next day, as the rivers were swollen by the rain and we could not cross them. The two following days we also travelled slowly; and as our provisions were running short, we were compelled to go on short allowance. This was the worst of all, and caused plenty of grumbling. I had shot a few ducks, which helped a little.

A council was held to consider whether it was better to go on or return. We at length all set forward again together. That night we reached the long desired wood (ten miles of beech forest over the Tophouse pass), and at the entrance we shared the last of our provisions, which amounted to half a pannikin of biscuit crumbs each. I had also shot a kaka, which we stewed in our tea-kettle. Two of the party saved a part of their share till the next day, but I and the others ate our portions and wished for more. Here we lay for the night, wet, cold and hungry.

We had great difficulty to get through the wood, and as we proceeded, differed widely as to the right course. Some thought we were too much to the right, others that we had gone too far to the left, but I kept my own course and the others followed. Although I had strong misgivings that we were going wrong, I said nothing, as it was distressing to hear the complainings of the others.

After a day and a half of toil we got out of the wood, and then there were pleasant faces, although we were weak for want of food and the rain continued to fall. We halted for the night about three miles from the wood, and I tried to get some fern root, but it was too small to be of any use.

In the morning we saw a smoke at a distance, which cheered us up, and we journeyed towards it down a valley which I have since learnt was the Motueka. When we came to the river we found it very rapid, and in crossing, which I was the first to do, I was carried off my legs. Thank God, I managed to scramble to the opposite side, but the others would not follow me. So I pushed on alone, and after some time saw two of my companions coming up to me. Having found a wild turnip I sat down and ate it, and another of our party soon reached us.

As we could see nothing of him who was now missing, we feared he had been drowned in crossing the river. We ascended a hill to obtain, if possible, a sight of the fire, but neither smoke nor fire was to be seen. We now agreed that when we halted for the night we should kill a dog that was with us, which had belonged

to Burton, one of the men who had fallen at the Wairau, to give us a chance of reaching our homes, as we were sinking for the want of food.

Before proceeding further, I proposed to fire off my gun, in order that our missing companion might hear it if he was alive. This was agreed to—and my gun was answered by two voices from the bottom!

This gave us great joy, as we knew some succour was at hand, because we had lost only one companion, and there were two persons near us. At last one called me by name, but we could not find them until they had lighted a fire. We found them to be two men who had been sent in search of us. They furnished us with provisions, and one went on to look for our missing companion. In about half an hour they returned together, and we were then taken on to some whares at a short distance where we rested for a couple of hours. We then went on to a survey station, where we slept the night, the men waiting on us as if we were children. Goddard, the man we had supposed was lost, was very ill for a great part of the night, which we attributed to his eating wild turnip.

The next morning we started for Nelson, about thirty miles distant, which we reached about seven o'clock in the evening and thus closed our eleven days' wandering. Although the distance we travelled the last day was considerable for us, I cared little for it, as my thoughts were on home, my wife and little ones.

John Kidson did not name his other companions. None of them could have had the slightest experience of the bush and the rivers. John himself appears never to have gone to sea again, although his descendants included lighthouse-keepers, boat-builders, sailors and yachtsmen.

Perhaps, with those fearsome memories, he relished the humble life of a gardener with a blossom for a pipe.

Elsie Locke

THE OLD GUN

"A gun now on exhibition in a window of E. Buxton & Co's premises in Trafalgar Street has a most interesting history. The firearm, which is now in the possession of Mr George Hall of Brightwater, was originally a flintlock made in 1745 and was used at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 by Thomas Tyrell senior, a great-grandfather of Mr Hall. In 1834 it was converted into a nipple gun, and was brought to New Zealand by Thomas Tyrell in 1842. In 1843 Tyrell was amongst those killed at the Wairau Massacre, the gun being accidentally discharged and killing the chief's daughter. This accident, it is said, brought about the massacre. The stock of the gun was burnt in a fire at Thorpe in 1916."

Editor's note. This is an extract from an undated clipping taken from the *Nelson Evening Mail*. It is understood that this weapon is the treasured possession of some of the descendants.

See cutting at end. I don't like some of