

Manupirua Springs May - July 1876.

From a transcription by Jill Williamson 1994 from a journal by William Outhwaite.

The Manupirua Club

Admiral Hancock
Commodore Bridman
Captain Outhwaite
Lt Oldham
Midshipman Harrington -known as Middy
Commissary General Warbick
Aunt and later Pitaka

On May 14th 1876 the above named gentlemen travelled from Auckland to Ohinemutu on Lake Rotorua. Their final destination was the Manupirua Springs on Lake Rotoiti for a two month camp with regular bathing in the pools in an endeavour to help cure their physical ailments -arthritis for one and disabled limbs for others. Aunt was brought to manage the cookhouse and was later helped by a young lad called Pitaka. Mr Warbick had arranged with the local Māori, mainly Ngāti Pikiao, for their camp at the Springs and on May 25th at 1.00pm the group left Morrison's boarding house at Ohinemutu and sailed across Lake Rotorua through the channel, as yet *unnamed* - and on to the Springs arriving at about 4.00pm. On arrival they found two whares, a small one near the lake and a larger one higher up against the bank and beside it a small hut to be used as a cookhouse.

Being rather tired after their journey it did not take them long to make sleeping arrangements and after a meal of cold beef and bread with a cup of tea they spent the night in their clothes! As already stated, the plan for their stay was two months and over this time food and fuel was provided by the local Māori, the hard stuff being brought from Ohinemutu, meat, fruit, vegetables and fish from Tāheke. The Māori provided a canoe for fishing and shooting and it proved to be, on the whole, very productive as the Commodore and Middy were excellent shots. Added to this they were helped by Ratima, his wife Te Rerehau and their three children who became very necessary to camp comfort.

Quite early in their stay it was agreed by the Māori people and Captain Moir that 2/6d per person per week should be paid for daily use of the Spring. Amongst other comforts a kerosene lamp was purchased as it was much cheaper than candles, 1/6d for a bottle of kerosene.

Life at the camp settled into a routine with baths, sometimes as long as 3 hours, daily and regular massaging by Matangi who had proved himself very adept at the activity. The ailments they had come with and hopefully cure were Mr Outhwaite's knees, Mr Handcock's disabled legs and Mr Oldham's arthritis and they seemed to be improving and, of course, the beautiful weather helped enormously as they were able to sunbathe for hours in the afternoons. At first the Admiral had trouble sleeping so the Commodore prescribed an opiate which gave him relief and on the whole, apart from the odd cold, good health was maintained by everyone for the duration.

The food was simple but plentiful sometimes improved with a gift of mutton from the Māori. As time at the Spring progressed friendships were made with many of the local Māori who came to share the baths and with them came friends, family, food and entertainment as both the Māori and the group loved to sing. Also the Māori love to barter and a 90 lb pig could be brought for £2/5/6d, a hen for 1/- and a ton of firewood for 6/-

On the surface all appeared to be harmonious but underneath cracks were appearing. It was becoming unclear to whom the bath levies were being paid and other arrangements that had been made by Mr Warbrick were dubious and a feeling of untrustworthiness was becoming evident. It took great tact from the Admiral to settle the matter. Meanwhile the two months were nearly over and arrangements started for their departure.

It was decided the group would return via Otaramarae and Maketu and on Friday 28th July at 4.00pm departure was made on a Man-o-war canoe captained by Warena, the end of a therapeutic two months in beautiful surroundings.