

A REPORT PREPARED FOR:
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PLANNER, CITY PLAN TEAM
CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL
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AKAROA HISTORICAL OVERVIEW



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HERITAGE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

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AKAROA:
AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Section 1
OVERVIEW



SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW

Report Context

This report was commissioned in September 2008 by Keri Davis-Miller, Planner, City Plan Team, Christchurch City Council.

Based on the original request for quotation and subsequent discussions it was agreed that the report would provide a general historical account of change and development in the built and landscape forms and environment of Akaroa, a preliminary identification of extant heritage fabric, a tentative list of themes that could assist with the later identification and assessment of individual heritage items (of all classes) and a tentative definition of the boundaries of discrete parts of Akaroa that could become conservation areas, for which provisions under the District Plan to protect those areas from adverse developments would be developed.

The need was not for a general history of Akaroa but for a systematic presentation of historical information relating to the town's development that would assist later identification of specific heritage items and of general characteristics of the town which would enable protection policies and measures to be developed for eventual inclusion in the District Plan.

The authors were advised that the Council intended to commission a separate report on the Maori history and heritage of Akaroa and were instructed to deal in only a summary manner with the town's history and heritage prior to the arrival of Europeans.

The authors were requested to set Akaroa's surviving heritage fabric, features and items in the context of a general account of the town's development and to note their distribution through the built-up area of the town. They were also to identify other features of Akaroa (particularly its broader setting) which contribute to the present character of the town.

It was also understood that the report should provide a framework for, and contribute information to, a possible contextual historical overview for all of Banks Peninsula.

The report was not to attempt any assessment of the relative significance of individual heritage items or of potential conservation areas or to set any priorities for the preservation or protection of individual heritage items or potential conservation areas.

"Akaroa has the highest density of registered historic buildings anywhere in the country, surpassing even the historic towns of Russell and Arrowtown. Even by this rather clinical measure, Akaroa is a very special place"

Akaroa Civic Trust Newsletter,
November 2008

The authors were not to evaluate any of the listings of individual buildings or features in the current Banks Peninsula District Plan¹ or to propose additions to the lists.

Because of constraints of time and resources, the authors were instructed that this report was to be based mainly on research in secondary and printed sources and on extensive but not systematic or complete examination of the entire town. Although the authors have identified and listed all the extant heritage items and features for which there is already some documentation in various histories, reports etc., some features or items that should be protected or preserved are not mentioned in this report. A comprehensive identification of all extant heritage fabric will only be possible when (to identify the two gaps which struck each of the authors as most serious) research into Akaroa's 20th century domestic architecture has been completed and a detailed inventory of surviving heritage trees and other landscape fabric has been made. One of the report's recommendations is, accordingly, that this additional historical research and preparation of full inventories be undertaken in parallel with the further reports concerning Akaroa's heritage and character which the Council is to commission.

Background

This report is part of an ongoing effort by the Christchurch City Council to devise policies and strategies that will protect Akaroa's historic character and individual heritage items in the town. It was understood by the authors of the report that the ultimate goal of the full exercise was to establish whether there should be a variation to the District Plan to ensure that effective measures (strategies, policies and rules) are in place to protect the existing character of Akaroa and buildings, structures, trees and other items assessed as being of heritage interest or worth.

The report has been preceded by an Akaroa Streetscapes Report, 2006, prepared by Robyn Burgess, Opus International Consultants.

At the time this report was being completed, the Council commissioned from Boffa Miskell an Akaroa Character Study which is to examine the character of Akaroa in great depth, to take the consideration of conservation areas further and to include a rewriting of the present Design Guidelines which have been one of the tools the Council has been using to protect Akaroa's existing character. This report has also been completed at the time the Council is engaged in consulting the public on an Akaroa Harbour Basin Settlements Study. A further report was also about to be commissioned at the time this report was being completed on heritage conservation areas in Akaroa.

Executive summary

This report provides the required general historical account of change and development in Akaroa from before 1840 (the year in which the present town was founded) up to the present. The emphasis in the report is on the surviving heritage of Akaroa.

1 The Banks Peninsula District Plan has two lists of buildings, objects and sites. The first list (Appendix IV Schedule of Protected Buildings, Objects and Sites) includes all those items in Akaroa which have been registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and the second (Appendix V Schedule of Notable Buildings, Objects and Sites) items which are considered worthy of preservation but have not been registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

It draws particular attention to what remains in Akaroa which reflects its history, but also highlights developments and changes for which there is little or no tangible evidence remaining in the town but which have to be understood in order to understand how the town acquired its present character. At the end of each section, a preliminary identification of extant heritage fabric (including buildings, structures, fences, trees, other individual plants and landscape fabric) is provided, but these lists are not exhaustive (for the reasons explained above under the heading Report objectives and limitations). At the end of the report are a tentative list of themes intended to guide the future identification of items of heritage interest in Akaroa and recommendations, based on the understanding of Akaroa's history which has emerged from this study, about the defining of conservation areas in Akaroa and the protection of individual surviving heritage items.

The main body of the report is chronological. The founding of the town of the Akaroa and its first decade of life as a predominantly French village are described in section 1. The history of the town is then presented in three 'bites', covering approximately 50 years each. Through each of these 50-year periods, Akaroa developed in distinct ways which were different for each period. The years 1850-1900 were characterised by significant growth and expansion, the loss of the forest cover from the surrounding hills and the establishment of the gardens and orchards that for long set the town's character. In the following 50 years, 1900-1950, the town grew relatively little, in terms of buildings and population, but changed significantly in terms of its plantings and physical appearance. In the last half of the 20th century, 1950-2000, the number of dwellings in the town expanded significantly while the permanent population grew only slowly. Pressures of development, largely arising from the wish of residents of Christchurch to have holiday homes in what was well-established in previous decades as one of Canterbury's premier resort towns, both changed the town's physical character and provoked sometimes heated discussion about the town's future.

At the end of the section on 'French Akaroa and of the sections covering each of the following 50-year periods, are "snapshots" of Akaroa in 1850, 1900, 1950 and 2000. These have been included to summarise the historical information presented in each of the sections and to give a quick "overview" of the changes recounted in detail in each of the sections.

Authorship

The authors of this report are Louise Beaumont, heritage landscape architect and John Wilson, historian. Each author wrote their separate sections of the report. John Wilson edited the combined texts and Louise Beaumont designed the format and laid out the report.

Acknowledgements

The authors' main debts are to the staff of the Akaroa Museum (Lynda Wallace, Director, Patsy Turner and Cotrina MacLeod). Without their making the resources of the Museum readily available, responding promptly and fully to all manner of specific enquiries and putting their knowledge of photographs and other depictions of Akaroa at the disposal of the authors, the authors could not have written such a full report in the time available.

Assistance was also readily forthcoming from the staffs of the Aotearoa New Zealand Centre, Christchurch City Libraries, of the Documentary Research Centre, Canterbury Museum, of the Alexander Turnbull Library and the Pictorial Collection Library, Te Papa Tongarewa, Museum of New Zealand and the Pictorial Collections Department, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

Jeff Pyle also made his postcard collection available for reference and illustrations, for which the authors are most appreciative.

John Wilson would also like to acknowledge his debt to Victoria Andrews and Peter Beaven for stimulating discussion about Akaroa's development and its character.

The authors are also grateful to Keri Davis-Miller, Planner, City Plan Team, Christchurch City Council, who commissioned the report and was understanding when they encountered difficulties meeting the initial deadlines for its completion, and to Amanda Ohs, Heritage Planner, Policy and Planning Team, Strategy and Planning Group, Christchurch City Council, who offered useful critique on drafts and who organised the supply of certificates of title and deposited plans which John Wilson needed to trace the history of subdivisions in Akaroa.

Pictorial illustrations

Unless otherwise indicated all historical images used in this report are from the collection of the Akaroa Museum.

Ashley Curtis contributed his skills as a photographer to the illustration of the report and other contemporary images are the work of Louise Beaumont.

AKAROA:
AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Section 2

INTRODUCTION



SECTION TWO: INTRODUCTION

“A desirable place to live
and an attractive
place to visit.”

Akaroa Design Guidelines,
October 2007

Introduction

Akaroa is a town of special historic interest and architectural significance. The special historic interest stems from its having been founded as the only organised French settlement in New Zealand. The architectural significance derives from the survival in Akaroa of a larger number of 19th century buildings than have survived in other New Zealand towns of comparable size. Akaroa's character is set by older buildings to an extent greater than is the case for any other New Zealand town. The February 1999 designation by the Historic Places Trust of the Akaroa Historic Area was recognition of Akaroa's unique early history and of its remarkable collection of historic buildings.¹

The fact that Akaroa was founded by settlers sent out by a French colonising company has misled some into thinking that Akaroa today has a French character. But the 19th and early 20th century buildings that set Akaroa's character are of a “Colonial Vernacular” style that owes more to British than to French precedents.

It was also recognised from the 19th century that the town's character depended as much on its wider setting, especially that it was a small town set in a dramatic landscape of harbour and hills, as on its buildings. The existence of gardens and orchards within the built up area of Akaroa has been a key element of its character since the 19th century.

This report presents a chronological history of the development of Akaroa's built environment, gardens and public open spaces and of changes in its streetscapes and landscapes.

The report is *not* a full history of Akaroa. It focuses on the remaining physical record of different periods of the town's history and of different activities and developments that were important in determining the town's physical character today. One aim has been to establish the extent to which the surviving historic buildings and its present street- and landscapes reflect all or most key aspects of Akaroa's history.

A special place

The belief that Akaroa is a special place is deeply rooted. When Lord Lyttelton visited the town in 1868 (travelling from Christchurch via Pigeon Bay and crossing the intervening range to Akaroa Harbour) he noted that Akaroa had “a singular charm.

¹ Akaroa Streetscapes Report, p. 2

It had the appearance of remoteness and isolation from all mankind.” His son observed that if ever he was crossed in love he would return to Akaroa to repair the damage.²

Although the belief is deeply rooted, opinions *why* Akaroa is special have changed over the years. Some of these changes in what have been considered the special features of Akaroa are traced in this report. It has, for example, lost some of the sense of remoteness and isolation from all mankind that Lord Lyttelton considered the main element of its “singular charm”. The town’s *historic* character has, understandably, come to be regarded as a more important element in the town’s special character as years have passed.

One constant feature in people’s understanding of what makes the town special is its setting, on the edge of a magnificent harbour, surrounded by high, craggy hills (refer figure 2.1). Akaroa has also been appreciated by successive generations for the generous gardens and notable trees that have been typical of a town with, until recently, a low density of development.

The question of the extent to which the special character of Akaroa today can be linked to its founding by French settlers in 1840 is given detailed consideration in this report because the emphasis on its supposed French character or even on its French origins has tended to obscure that the town is special for other reasons.

The best summary of what constitutes Akaroa’s historic character today emerged during discussions and consultation in the early 21st century on design guidelines for the town. The town’s historic character was defined as “the visual and aesthetic impact that results from the relationship between a wide range of authentic old buildings, and the impact of, and the relationship they have to, the space around them, adjoining buildings and the streetscape”.³



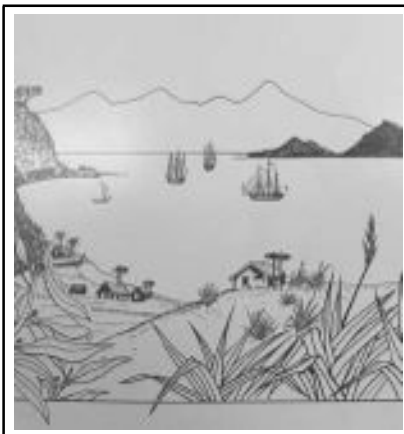
Figure 2.1. General view of Akaroa from top of Brasenose photographed 2009.

² *New Zealand Motor World*, July 1953

³ *Akaroa Streetscapes Report*, pp. 2-3

Section 3

LANDSCAPE & HUMAN HISTORY TO 1840



"The luxuriant vegetation that everywhere fringed the inlets, showed that the soil was of exceeding fruit-fullness, the mighty pines that towered above their meaner fellows gave promise of a vast supply of timber; whilst the innumerable Kakas, pigeons, and other native birds, that woke the echoes of the bush with their harmonies discords, and the fish that swarmed in the waters of the bay..."



SECTION THREE: LANDSCAPE & HUMAN HISTORY TO 1840

“The harbour of Akaroa is an estuary forming a basin which extends about eight miles into a Peninsula, and is surrounded by very high mountains, precipitous at the entrance, and very narrow, but as you advance, the mountains gradually slope into a succession of hills clothed in verdure and timber to their summits and abounding in streams of excellent water”.

Major Bunbury,
June 28, 1840

Geomorphology

The town of Akaroa sits within the eroded crater of an extinct volcano which once towered 3000 metres above sea level and dominated the coastline. Following a series of eruptions spanning many millions of years the cone was eroded to the point where the sea gained ingress. This flooding of the crater formed Akaroa's deep and sheltered harbour.¹

The remains of the Akaroa volcano are a characteristic caldera form with the rim in a remarkable state of preservation. Prominent peaks rise to above 600 metres with one, Flag Peak, rising immediately above Akaroa township.²

Vegetation

Prior to the impact of people, Banks Peninsula was dominated by species-rich indigenous forest, the exceptions to this being areas of steep, exposed rocky ground and wetlands. The specifics of this predominantly podocarp/hardwood forest have been well documented by Hugh Wilson and the following is a summary from one of his detailed papers on the subject. The tallest, grandest forest occupied the valley floors. This was dense podocarp forest with kahikatea as the principal species. Similar species dominated the lower slopes; however, there lowland totara and matai were more common than kahikatea. On the upper slopes totara, broadleaf and other shrubby hardwoods and tree ferns occurred.

Near the coast, warmth-demanding species such as ngaio, nikau palm, akeake, titoki, native passion vine and shining broadleaf were common. On the highest bluffs the shrubland and scrub of non-forest montane species, including snow tussock, fescue tussock, *Dracophyllum* and mountain flax, predominated.³

Wilson notes that probably as much as three quarters of the area was still under old growth forest when the Europeans arrived to settle, the other quarter having been fired and cleared by Maori as part of their traditional cultivation practices.⁴

Rumours of this country's rich marine mammals drew sealers and whalers to the shores of New Zealand from the 1790s. Akaroa Harbour (as discussed below) became a favourite port of call for European and American whalers.

1 Lowndes, *Akaro: a short history*

2 Speight, *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, vol. 74, pp. 232-237

3 Wilson, *The Natural and Human History of Akaroa and Wairewa Counties*, p. 12

4 Wilson, *Banks Ecological Region: Protected Natural Areas Programme Survey Report No 21*, p. 28

However detailed descriptions of Akaroa were not forthcoming until the period just prior to the arrival of the English *Britomart* and the French *L'Aube* and *Comte de Paris* in August 1840.

Settler descriptions of the forest into the 1860s suggest that in physical terms it was dense, vigorous and, according to one visitor, “looked as if the plants had interwoven themselves into a mass for the purpose of resisting all intruders”.⁵ Trees were described as being of extraordinary proportions and the enormity of their girth was still the focus of newspaper stories up until the 1860s, with one totara discovered on the bridle track to Akaroa measuring 37 feet in circumference.⁶ An even larger totara was described by the John Piper of the Cumberland Mill who recorded a felled tree with a girth just short of 66 feet.⁷

Bird and invertebrate life was similarly rich. Descriptions by many settlers record the density of birds living in the forest. One early Peninsula settler reminisced about “the darkening of the sky” when huge flocks of kereru (wood pigeon) came to feed on the matai, kahikatea and miro berries.⁸

The early European response to this largely unmodified natural landscape was documented in memoirs, official reports and bio-prospecting notes. The descriptions of Akaroa in these various documents reveal a strong aesthetic response to the landscape. Seen as an example of primitive, picturesque nature, the landscape was also viewed in terms of its potential economic value and opportunities.

Bunbury, a colonial official, visited Akaroa in June 1840 and in his report back to the Governor, William Hobson, described the setting of Akaroa in some detail noting the hills which he said were “clothed in verdure and timber to their summits and abounding in streams of excellent water”. Bunbury ended his report by noting, “[t]he country has a very picturesque and park-like aspect and seems well adapted for farms where both arable and pasture lands are required”.⁹

Two months earlier, two French botanists under the command of Dumont d'Urville noted, “The pinetree, which furnishes a wood that is much sought after for masts, is fairly plentiful here. In the forests there are a great many of those tree ferns that give such charming effect”.¹⁰

Maori settlement in Paka Ariki

The forests of the Peninsula were one feature of the region that made it appealing to Maori. Akaroa is located on the shores of one of many bays around Akaroa Harbour. French Bay was known to the Maori as Paka Ariki, though it is not clear whether the name was applied to the whole bay or just part of it.¹¹

5 Muter, *Travels and Adventures of an Officer's wife in India, China and New Zealand*, p. 219

6 *New Zealand Spectator and Cook Strait Guardian*, 7 October 1864, p.3.

7 Piper, quoted in Menzies, *Banks Peninsula People and Places*

8 Hay, *Reminiscences of earliest Canterbury (principally Banks' Peninsula) and its settlers*, p. 78

9 Bunbury to Hobson in Jameson, *New Zealand, South Australia and New South Wales: a record of recent travels*, p. 321

10 Quoted in Simpson, *In Search of New Zealand's Scientific Heritage*, p. 66

11 Andersen, *Place Names of Banks Peninsula*, p. 148

Paka Ariki seems to have had a less important place in the history of Maori occupation of the Akaroa Harbour Basin in the years immediately preceding European settlement than other bays, such as Takapuneke and Onuku. Though these bays are close to Akaroa and were the scenes of events that had an impact on the history of the town, their histories are not covered in this report.

The Akaroa Harbour Basin as a whole had a long and important Maori history prior to the arrival of Europeans and the founding of Akaroa in 1840.

The writer of a 1926 editorial in the *Press* observed that with Cook's sighting of "Bank's Island", later found to be a peninsula, "so begins our brief history".¹² In fact Akaroa Harbour, if not specifically French Bay, had a long Maori history. Visible from the town is the peak which was re-named by the French Mount Bossu. Its original name is Tuhiraki, the name of the ko (digging stick) of Rakaihautu. Rakaihautu, of the *Uruao* canoe, is credited with having dug (understood in more prosaic European terms 'discovered') the Southern Lakes. After he had dug out the lakes of the interior, Rakaihautu rejoined the *Uruao* at Waihao in South Canterbury and travelled back on it to Banks Peninsula, where he planted his ko, now identified with the peak Tuhuraki.¹³ The visibility of Tuhiraki from Akaroa is one of the most important features of the town's historic character.

Subsequent to Rakaihautu's settlement on Banks Peninsula after his exploration of the South Island, the Peninsula as a whole had one of the largest concentrations of Maori in Classical times. Traditional oral evidence suggests that Paka Ariki was an important place of Maori occupation in earlier times. This is substantiated by early European reports of extensive areas of fern and scrub in Paka Ariki, an indication of Maori gardens in the bay. But by the mid 1830s, with the Ngai Tahu population of Canterbury seriously depleted by first the Kai Huanga feuds of the early 19th century and then the Te Rauparaha raids of the late 1820s and early 1830s, the nearest Maori settlement of any size to the future site of Akaroa was at Onuku.

By the time Europeans (initially flax traders, followed by whalers) began to frequent Akaroa Harbour in any numbers in the 1820s and 1830s, Maori settlement in the area was concentrated first at Takapuneke then, after the Brig *Elizabeth* incident of 1830 and the sack of Onawe in 1831-32, at Onuku.

Whether there was a Maori settlement of any size in Paka Ariki in the late 1830s, immediately prior to the arrival of the French settlers, is unclear.

Early European records about the presence of a Maori settlement in Paka Ariki/French Bay itself in the late 1830s are conflicting. In January 1840, Louis Thiercelin, the doctor on a visiting French whaling ship, recorded that Maori were living at Onuku. His vessel anchored off from the Maori settlement there. But when he "went for a walk to the bay, where the French colonists were to settle a few months later" he found, after passing the tent in which William Green and his wife were living in Takapuneke, that although in what became French Bay "the mountains had a gentler slope than those opposite our berth" they were "covered with forests just as dense and impenetrable". He ventured a

¹² The *Press*, 28 September 1926

¹³ Lowndes, *Short History*, no pagination

short distance inland into “really primeval virgin forest” and found “not even a track to signal it is used by Maourys [sic]; and if they came to this beach, they had to arrive by water”.¹⁴

When the French explorer Dumont D’Urville anchored in Akaroa Harbour in April 1840, one of those with him, Louis Le Breton, sketched a Maori village which some have suggested was on the shores of Paka Ariki although when artistic licence is taken into consideration it could equally well have been at Onuku. Thiercelin’s account of just three months earlier suggests the village was at Onuku and not Paka Ariki, where Thiercelin found only “impenetrable forests which stopped my walk”.¹⁵

The failure of the French settlers of August 1840 to mention any Maori occupation of Paka Ariki may reflect their reluctance to admit they displaced a resident population of Maori, but is probably further proof that Paka Ariki was uninhabited in the late 1830s. Although Paka Ariki almost certainly had a history of earlier occupation and use by Maori, there is nothing physical in the town today to recall that history, though the views of Tuhiraki and the survival of Maori names for the streams and other features of the bay, not to mention of the bay itself, suggest there was this earlier, now almost lost, history of occupation.

Early contact

Prior to the arrival of the English and French settlers in Akaroa, the bay had been sighted and recorded by Captain James Cook in 1770. Cook's journal documents the sighting of smoke and people at this time.¹⁶ A series of English and French explorers followed Cook, but the first known European to anchor in Akaroa Harbour did not do so until about 1791. This was an English schooner or brig of unknown name. When it anchored near Onuku, the 200 inhabitants of the bay are understood to have initially retreated to their hill-top pa above Paka Ariki Bay (Akaroa). Their chief went aboard and the visit culminated in an exchange of flax cloaks for axes and spike nails.¹⁷

A whaling port

The first Europeans to visit Akaroa Harbour regularly and to settle in the harbour basin were whalers and deserters from whaling ships or shore whaling stations. The European town of Akaroa owes its origins to Akaroa Harbour’s being a favoured port of call for whaling ships.

Prior to its becoming a whaling port, the harbour had been visited by occasional flax traders. Supplying flax to these traders became an important occupation for Maori living in the harbour basin in the 1820s, but the visits of flax traders appear to have been relatively infrequent and brief.

By the late 1830s, French, American and British whaling ships were calling in to Akaroa Harbour in relatively large numbers. They anchored in the harbour between pelagic (open sea) whaling trips to take on water and to replenish supplies.

14 Thiercelin, *Travels in Oceania*, pp. 154-55

15 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 21-22; Maling, *Early Sketches and Charts*

16 Wharton, *Captain Cook's journal during his first voyage round the world made in HMS bark "Endeavour" 1768-1771*, p. 289

17 Stephenson, *Landscape Review*, vol. 11 (2), p. 15

They appear also on occasion to have towed caught whales into the sheltered waters of the harbour to “try out” the blubber to produce whale oil on board their vessels. There is no evidence that try works were established ashore within the harbour basin. Whalers also came to Akaroa from the shore whaling stations in the southern bays for supplies. The demand of the pelagic whalers for food gave the Maori living in the harbour basin a profitable economic activity. The first shore settlements of whalers on Banks Peninsula, from 1837 on, were not in the harbour basin but in the more open southern bays (Peraki, Ikoraki, Oashore and Island Bay) from which whales could be more easily sighted and chased. The whalers in the southern bay shore stations began rudimentary farming, growing potatoes.¹⁸

Although Akaroa was never a shore whaling station, four try pots in the town are reminders that whaling played a key role in the establishment of Akaroa as a European town. These try pots were brought into Akaroa in the early 20th century. The three which are now set in brick close to the French landing site were placed first, in about 1913, near the base of Dalys Wharf. It is thought that one came from Peraki, one from Island Bay and one possibly from Ikoraki. These try pots were moved to their present location in 1970 (refer figure 3.1). The third try pot which stands on its own at the northern end of Beach Road was recovered from its original (unknown) location probably also in 1913. There is a fourth try pot in the Akaroa Museum, where there are also other whaling relics.

The try pots are the town’s only tangible reminders of the importance of whaling in its early history. Their long-term survival is of concern and in 2003, the Director of the Akaroa Museum recommended that the three at the French landing site be removed to the Museum and the fourth on Beach Road be properly conserved.¹⁹



Figure 3.1. The three whaling try pots set in a brick base close to the French landing site are Akaroa’s most conspicuous reminders of the town’s origins as a whaling port.

18 Pawson in *Queen Elizabeth II Trust Essays* (1987), pp. 42-43

19 Report by Lynda Wallace, April 2003; Booklet published by the Akaroa Mail in conjunction with the Akaroa Civic Trust, ca 1975, p. 17; *The Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement, p. III

EXTANT TOWN FABRIC & FEATURES DATING FROM PRE 1840

Vegetation:

Small stands and specimen Kahikatea, Totara and Matai are still visible in a number of properties in the upper valley areas, particularly Grehan Valley and upper Woodills Road. Many of these are understood to be over 700 years old. Specific examples include:

- Tree Crop Farm, upper Rue Greehan - Kahikatea
- Mill Cottage , 81 Rue Greehan - Kahikatea
- Potter's Croft, 57 Rue Grehan - two Kahikatea
- The Herb Farm, Upper Rue Grehan - Kahikatea and Matai

Other properties in the Grehan Valley, including 121 Grehan Valley Rd are also known to have venerable Kahikatea and Totara and gardens in Woodills Road and Watson Street have a range of significant native species which include:

- 67 Woodills Road – a group of 3 Totara and one Kahikatea
- 14 Watson St - A group of 2 Rimu and 2 Tanekaha

There are undoubtedly more surviving ancient specimens on the elevated valley slopes above the town. In the wider Akaroa area there are a number of locally rare and uncommon plants as documented by Hugh Wilson.*

There are also threatened, nationally endangered, vulnerable and critical species in the wider landscape.**

Landforms:

Despite the loss of vegetation, the landforms which provide the town with its dramatic physical setting are unchanged.

Watercourses:

Akaroa's four streams are understood to still reflect their pre-1840 courses. They continue to remain visible landmarks in the town however their names have been changed post 1840. They are now known as:

- Walnut Stream
- Aylmers Stream
- Balguerie Stream
- Grehan Stream

Whaling industry fabric:

Although not directly connected with the Akaroa township the whale try pots are part of the wider Banks Peninsular history and are a tangible reminder of this early industry.

Significant Historical View Shaft:

- views of Tuhiraki

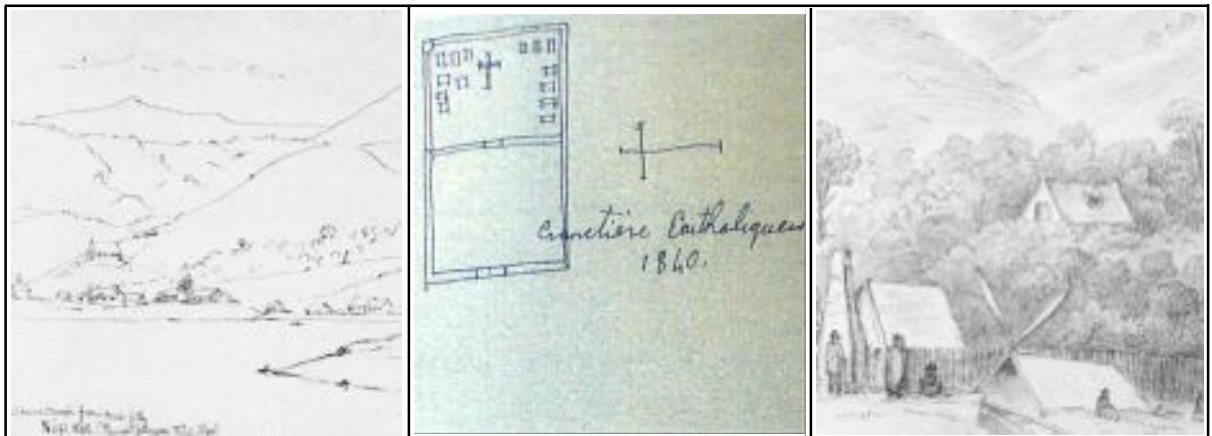
* Wilson, H. (2001) Rare plants of Banks Peninsula, Canterbury. *Botanical Society Journal*, Vol 37, pp. 21-31

** de Lange, P. (2004) *New Zealand Journal of Botany*, Vol 42

AKAROA:
AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Section 4

THE FRENCH VILLAGE 1840 to 1850



SECTION FOUR: THE FRENCH VILLAGE 1840 TO 1850

“The land is being cleared, houses are being built, roads are opened. You would not believe how much this little valley has changed in the months we have been here. There was nothing here before; now a large area of the hillside has been cleared, several buildings are underway; the biggest, which is about fourteen metres long, is finished; this morning I got someone to water the bouquet that the builders placed on its roof”.

Letter from Akaroa,
June 1843

The founding of Akaroa

The story of the founding of the town of Akaroa in 1840 by settlers sent to New Zealand by the Nanto-Bordelaise Company has been told in detail by several historians, notably T.L Buick in *The French at Akaroa* and Peter Tremewan in *French Akaroa*. For the purposes of this report it is not necessary to repeat in detail the story of Captain Langlois’s purchase of land on Banks Peninsula and the founding of the Nanto-Bordelaise Company or of the events leading up to the despatch of the *Comte de Paris* and *L’Aube* to Akaroa. That Langlois was the captain of a whaling ship underlines the connection between Akaroa Harbour’s having become a resort of whaling vessels and the founding of the town of Akaroa.

Also well-known is the story of the British demonstration of sovereignty over the South Island by raising the British flag at Green’s Point on 11 August 1840 and holding courts of law at Akaroa and elsewhere on the Peninsula immediately prior to the arrival of the French settlers. The monument raised on Green’s Point in 1898 is the significant reminder of this key episode in Akaroa’s history.¹

The French settlers were put ashore from the *Comte de Paris* on 19 August 1840. The settlers lived initially in tents on the foreshore of Paka Ariki.² Under their agreement with the Nanto-Bordelaise Company the settlers were entitled to small allotments of land which had to be cleared within five years. Surveying by French naval personnel began immediately. After the surveyors had laid out streets and defined the boundaries of individual holdings, the settlers were allocated their sections, mostly grouped close together along the foreshore of Paka Ariki. Sections were also allocated to settlers up two of the streams that flowed into the bay. The sections of the settlers were mostly long narrow strips, with frontages on streams or the foreshore (refer appendix 9.1 & figure 4.12). A small number of German settlers took up land in the next bay north, German Bay (later Takamatua).³

Some settlers were discouraged from clearing their land because they feared the title of the Nanto-Bordelaise Company to the land might be disputed by the British authorities, but most set about immediately felling the forest and establishing the gardens and orchards discussed in the landscape section of this report.

1 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 20

2 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 135-36

3 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 137, 139, 222; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 24-25

The settlers were given clear title to their land by the agent of the Nanto-Bordelaise Company, Pierre de Belligny, before he returned to France in 1845. In the early 1850s, the French and German colonists were given Crown grants of their land.⁴

A small French village

The French village that Akaroa remained for the first decade of the town's life was small. The land allotted to the French and German settlers totalled less than 50 hectares.⁵ The European population remained below 200, excluding the French naval personnel. (The last French naval ship, *L'Allier*, was withdrawn in 1846.) William Wakefield estimated in 1844 that the resident population of Akaroa (by which he seems to have meant a wider area than just today's town) was made up of 60 French, 20 Germans, 40 British and 97 'Aborigines' [Maori].⁶ Tremewan has calculated that the French and German population of Akaroa (excluding the French naval personnel) peaked at 79 in 1844 and dropped back to 66 the following year. By 1843, a significant number of British settlers were living in Akaroa, but if the naval personnel are included, the French remained a majority. The 'permanent' French population was roughly constant at between 60 and 80 people. Some of the original French settlers quit Akaroa in the 1840s, but most remained.⁷

Although increasing numbers of British people arrived in Akaroa through the 1840s, attracted by the economic opportunities in what was then the South Island's greatest concentration of Europeans, through this first decade of its life, Akaroa was a village where French was spoken, where the buildings looked different from the buildings of other early New Zealand settlements and where French officials exercised significant power and authority, even though New Zealand was a British colony. In the person of Belligny, Akaroa had a *de facto* French mayor. French Catholic missionaries were the only resident clergy and French chapels the only places of worship.⁸

Early French accounts of Akaroa, published in *Magasin pittoresque* in 1843, talked of land being cleared, houses built and roads opened. The accounts noted that a large area of hillside had been cleared and several buildings constructed. The *Magasin* (Company store) and Captain Lavaud's house (see below) had been completed.⁹ The artist Charles Meryon, who came to Akaroa on the second French naval vessel stationed there, *Le Rhin*, spent the years 1843-46 in Akaroa and completed sketches of the infant town.¹⁰

The village economy

By the mid 1840s an extensive area of land was under cultivation in Akaroa. One of the original settlers recollected much later that "in the rich virgin soil fruit and vegetables grew to perfection".¹¹ The British surveyor, Mein Smith, noted in 1842 that "all kinds of vegetables [were] in abundance and some wheat" and that poultry was "increasing

4 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 156, 157, 160

5 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 16

6 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 40; Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 2; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 30

7 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 153-54, 171, 175

8 John Wilson, talk to Akaroa Civic Trust, 30 June 2007; Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. xviii-xix

9 Letter Peter Tremewan to Steve Lowndes, 14 June 1999, including quotations from "Les Européens à la Nouvelle-Zélande", *Magasin pittoresque*, XI, 47 (November 1843), pp. 373-76

10 Mona Gordon, "The Early Artists of New Zealand", *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, vol. 14, issue 12, 1 March 1960; Maling, *Early Sketches and Charts*

11 *The Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement, p. IV; see also Sewell, *Journal*, vol. 1, p. 445

rapidly”.¹²

This garden and farmyard production was important economically to the infant settlement. The settlers supplied potatoes, pork, vegetables and wine to the ships in exchange for flour, sugar, clothes, rum, brandy and tobacco. In 1842 an American whaler reported that the settlers “were exporting grain in considerable quantities to Sydney”.¹³ William Wakefield noted in 1844 that the produce of the land and of the numerous cows and poultry were enabling the settlers to maintain themselves in comfort by bartering a “large portion” of their produce “on board the ships visiting the harbour”. He noted that “numerous” French and American whaling ships frequented the harbour “to refresh after the fishing season”.¹⁴

That Akaroa remained a favoured port for whaling ships through the first half of the 1840s ensured that the settlement got off to a sound economic start.¹⁵

Whaling vessels continued to put into Akaroa until the 1860s, but the industry went into steep decline from about 1845 and by as early as 1850 was virtually defunct.¹⁶ Some descriptions suggest Akaroa itself went into decline in the 1840s, the withdrawal of the French naval vessels coinciding with the downturn in whaling. In 1851, Charlotte Godley observed that some of Akaroa’s houses were out of repair and had a desolate look.¹⁷ But the settlers found alternative markets (Wellington was one) for such products as cattle, pork, butter and timber. In the late 1840s, the prospect of a British settlement on the Port Cooper Plains bolstered the economic hopes of the Akaroa settlers.¹⁸

The growing of wheat by the French settlers from 1841 provided the basis for Akaroa’s first industry. There may have been a watermill operating in Akaroa in 1846. In 1848, the German settler Christian Waeckerle, established a water-powered flour mill on the Grehan Stream, which continued in production until at least 1854.¹⁹

The British presence in the French village

Through the 1840s, an increasing number of British colonists settled on the southern side of French Bay. An Englishman, William Green, had preceded the French settlers. He arrived in Akaroa on 10 November 1839 with about 50 head of cattle, under contract to W.B. Rhodes, Daniel Cooper and James Holt, Rhodes having purchased a deed that was the basis for a claim to a tract of land at Akaroa. The cattle were landed at Takapuneke, the bay immediately to the south of Paka Ariki/French Bay. The Greens lived initially in a tent at Takapuneke, but Green soon built a permanent house on the northern side of the point that now bears his name, that is inside Paka Ariki/French Bay. When his contract with Rhodes and Rhodes’ partners ended, Green built a hotel, the Victoria Inn, on the Akaroa side of Green’s Point. He sold this hotel some time before 1843 and eventually purchased land on the corner of Church Street and Beach Road on which he built the

12 Pawson in Queen Elizabeth II Trust essays (1987), p. 45

13 Fell, *Journal of a Voyage*, p. 102

14 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 40

15 *The Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement, p. IV; Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, p. xviii, pp. 175 -76, 183-185

16 Andersen, *Place Names*, pp. 22-23; Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 17 5-76, 183-85

17 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, p. 204

18 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 31; Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 200-04

19 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 31-32; Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 191-93

Commercial Hotel. (Green sold this hotel to George Armstrong in 1852 and left Akaroa in 1856.)²⁰

Green was not the only British settler to establish a hotel in Akaroa in the 1840s. Captain James Bruce set up the Bruce Hotel on the waterfront at the southern end of Akaroa (refer figure 4.1). He purchased the section from the Nanto-Bordelaise Company in 1843, but may have built his first hotel earlier than this. He had been captain of the ship *Magnet* which was wrecked in 1841 on the southern coast of the Peninsula.²¹

The building of both Green's and Bruce's hotels at the southern end of Akaroa, some distance from the main body of the French settlers, gave the town's division into two parts an original ethnic component. In 1926 it was noted in the *Press* that "for long the French and English settlements remained in distinct villages".²²

In 1845, anxiety about a possible attack on the town by Maori aroused by the Wairau Incident of 1843 prompted measures to defend Akaroa. Blockhouses were built at each end of Akaroa (and a third at German Bay). Part of one of the blockhouses survived for many years, transformed into a shelter in the Akaroa Domain, but even this fragment is no longer extant.²³



Figure 4.1. One of the earliest British settlers in what was, in the 1840s, a French village, James Bruce, established a hotel at the southern end of the village. The hotel (seen here in the late 19th century) was an Akaroa institution for more than a century. Ref: 328-1.

20 T.E. Green, pp. 2-4, 6-7, 11, 13-14, 16, 22

21 Mould, *More Tales*, p. 63; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 29

22 The *Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement

23 The *Press*, 28 September 1926, Editorial; Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 10; Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 39; Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 228-29

The buildings of the French village

By the mid 1840s, Akaroa was an established village, with a significant number of buildings – houses, stores, hotels and public buildings. More substantial buildings of weatherboard, with shingled roofs, rather quickly replaced the settlers' earliest huts, which had timber uprights, cob walls and thatched roofs – they were described as “small houses with wooden beams and clay walls ... some covered with planks, others with reeds and rushes”. Tremewan has calculated that by 1844 French settlers owned 28 weatherboard houses with shingled roofs and brick chimneys, but that 23 cob houses, with straw roofs and clay chimneys, remained in use.²⁴

The “French end” of Akaroa had a larger number of buildings than the “English end”, but even in the French village, the buildings were scattered and separated by gardens and orchards and still set against a background of virgin forest. William Wakefield described the dwellings of the French settlers in 1844 as “few and scattered”, though he did also remark that buildings – the residence of the English magistrate and the Company's store (the *Magasin*) among them – filled up the frontage to the anchorage.²⁵

Many of the buildings at the French end of the village were built by carpenters from *L'Aube*. One was Akaroa's first public building, the *Magasin*, erected in 1840-41. (It was completed by March 1841.) This was the store in which the goods owned by the Nanto-Bordelaise Company were held, pending distribution or sale to the settlers. The one-and-a-half-storey building had a symmetrical frontage with a high central gable. As the town's first, and for some years only, public building, the *Magasin* was used as a schoolroom, church, hospital, post office and customs house. The building was already in a decayed state by 1854. It was demolished sometime between 1865 and 1878. The court house now stands on its site.²⁶

One of the longest-surviving of the early French buildings was Captain Lavaud's cottage, built by naval carpenters in the winter of 1842 between the stream which crosses Rue Lavaud and the site of the *Magasin*. (The French naval garden was across the stream from Lavaud's house, on the site now occupied by the town's service station.) Lavaud's cottage had weatherboard walls, a shingle roof, a small dormer, a verandah and a hipped roof. Its louvred shutters may have been a maritime detail. The house survived, in a picturesquely decayed state, until about 1913²⁷ (refer figure 4.2).

One of the larger of the early settlers' houses was the Bouriaud House, in the lower Grehan Valley. The most identifiably French of the early buildings of Akaroa, the house had a steeply pitched hip roof with a high ridge-line and relatively small dormers (refer figure 4.4). The house built by for Aimable Langlois on the corner of Rue Lavaud and Rue Balguerie probably in 1841 was a small, two-room cottage which had, from when it was first constructed, a hipped roof of steep pitch which changed angle slightly at the lower end of each roof slope.²⁸ (The later history of this building is discussed in the following section of this report.)

24 Buick, *The French at Akaroa*, p. 150, quoted in Salmond, *Old New Zealand Houses*, p. 35; Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 3; Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, p. 197

25 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 40

26 Text from Akaroa Museum notice board; elevation and plan of French *Magasin* held by the Akaroa Museum; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 26, 34-35, 37; Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 141-42

27 Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 3; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 26-27

28 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, p. 170



Figure 4.2. The cottage built in 1841-42 for the commander of *L'Aube*, Captain Charles Lavaud, had distinctively French features. It survived into the early years of the 20th century.



Figure 4.3. The cottage built by one of the *Comte de Paris* settlers, Emeri de Malmanche, had such French features as shutters, casement windows and a hipped roof. In later decades a large, two-storey addition was built to one side of the original cottage. Ref: 5171 CM



Figure 4.4. The substantial house of one of the French settlers who came on the *Comte de Paris*, Elie Bouriaud, was clearly French in style. Ref: 1874 CM

Corresponding to the two hotels at the English end of the town was the first French Hotel, built by Adolphe François near the south-western corner of Chemin Balguerie and Rue Joly (as they were then known). It had a steeply pitched hipped roof of shingles, a verandah and a row of three dormers. A second hotel at the French end of the town was Jules Veron's Hotel de Normandie, on the beach front at the corner of Smith Street. Other early commercial premises at the French end of Akaroa were the store established by Jules Duvauchelle and a combined baker's shop and butchery run by Pierre and Hippolyte Gendrot. Both these opened probably in 1842, the same year in which François Le Lievre and François de Malmanche bought land on the corner of Rue Lavaud and Rue Balguerie to establish a blacksmith's business. These businesses were on or near the intersection of Rues Lavaud and Balguerie which remains one of Akaroa's commercial centres.²⁹

Two chapels were built at the French end of Akaroa in the 1840s. The first, built of cob in a timber frame in 1841, was in the vicinity of a house erected for the missionary priests sent south by Bishop Pompallier from his base at Russell. (Pompallier himself visited Akaroa shortly after the French settlers had founded the town.) There were no Catholic priests resident in Akaroa after 1842, but in 1844 Captain Bérard, of the *Rhin*, was "engaged in directing the building of a capacious church". This second church blew down in 1849. The original church was still standing and came back into use until 1864, when the present St Patrick's Church was built.³⁰

The architecture of several of these buildings of the 1840s at the north (French) end of the village was, not surprisingly, influenced by French precedents. The buildings appear, for this reason, different from the buildings of other early European settlements in New Zealand. This is especially true of their roof forms (hip roofs of steeper pitch than was common elsewhere in New Zealand), their dormer windows (smaller than became usual on New Zealand colonial cottages) and a distinctively French feature, the *fronton*, a triangular pediment-like feature in the centre of the facade of a building which has its face flush with the face of the wall of the building (refer figure 4.5).

The double verandah posts seen on many Akaroa houses and cottages of the later 19th century may also be French in origin. Some of these features are not unique to Akaroa but are more prevalent there than elsewhere in New Zealand, which may be because the styles adopted for later Akaroa buildings were influenced by the noticeably French character of the first generation of Akaroa buildings. Both the *fronton* and the double verandah post may have been copied by later Banks Peninsula builders and carpenters from French-built prototypes in the district.³¹

This question of a "carry over" from the French buildings of the 1840s into later Akaroa buildings was considered first and most fully by the late Charles Fearnley. He concluded that Akaroa's later 19th century architecture was "a local variant of the early New Zealand colonial style of architecture, in which the French inspiration may be much less than was formerly thought to be the case".³²

29 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 186-88; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 26

30 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 41; Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 147, 226, 247-49; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 28

31 John Wilson, talk to Akaroa Civic Trust, 30 June 2007. Whether the *fronton* and double verandah posts are definitely more prevalent on Banks Peninsula than elsewhere in New Zealand has yet to be investigated.

32 Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 3

Charlotte Godley, however, observed in 1851 that the houses of the French settlement “are somewhat different in pattern from our English wooden houses. They are rather larger, with larger doors and windows, more pretentious and less snug.”³³



Figure 4.5. This cottage on Rue Balguerrie has a fronton, a feature common on Akaroa cottages which may, in the Akaroa context, be of French origin.

The infrastructure of the village

Akaroa also acquired rudimentary infrastructure in the years it was a French village. When Bérard took over from Lavaud as the French naval commander in Akaroa in January 1843, he continued with the work on roads and bridges which Lavaud had begun. Under Bérard, jetties were built both at the French end of Akaroa and across the harbour at French Farm.³⁴ At the English end of the town, both Green and Bruce built small jetties by their hotels.³⁵

These early wharves or jetties are important in Akaroa’s history because the town’s “interface” with the sea has remained a key feature of Akaroa down to the present. In its first decade, Akaroa’s links with the outside world were almost entirely by sea. The only ‘road’ built in these early years was a track to the head of the harbour constructed by French naval personnel. In 1844, William Wakefield found “a road made under the direction of Captain Lavaud and Captain Bérard” which formed “an excellent communication round the harbour”.³⁶ There were ‘routes’ rather than tracks across the hills from the head of the harbour to Pigeon Bay and from French Farm over the higher hills to the Little River valley. But the sea remained the main highway to Akaroa until well after 1850.³⁷

33 Stacpoole, *Colonial Architecture*, p. 47; Salmond, *Old New Zealand Houses*, p. 83

34 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 227-28

35 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 28

36 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 39

37 Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 10

Akaroa was made a port of entry in 1842, as part of an effort to bring the smuggling of alcohol into the town under control. But the officials appointed to administer the customs did not operate from their own premises until the following decade (see below).³⁸

The lasting influences of early Akaroa

Once the 1850s brought an influx of British settlers to all parts of Canterbury, Akaroa ceased to be a French village. A few of the buildings erected by the French survived for some decades, and the children of the original settlers continued to speak French as well as English, but the children of the next generation, many of whom had only one French parent, lost the language. By the 1860s it was no longer meaningful to describe Akaroa as “a small piece of provincial France”.³⁹

Only two buildings have survived from the 1840s, and both have been so significantly modified that neither is any longer representative of the character of the French village of that decade. The Bouriaud House can just be recognised because of its bulk and general form, but is no longer the distinctively French building it appeared when it was first erected.⁴⁰ The Langlois-Eteveneaux House looks distinctively French, but it owes most of its features to a transformation effected in the late 19th century, the significance of which is discussed in the next section of this report.

Three features of the French village of the 1840s had an enduring impact on the character of Akaroa. The first was the division of the town into two “ends”. The division persists to this day, for purely topographical reasons though it has been many decades since people of 'French' or 'English' origins lived separately at each end. The steep rise of the hills from the shore between the two ends of the town has kept the two “ends” of the town from merging.

The second was that Akaroa began its life as what it remained – a town of small scale. The French settlers came from poor backgrounds, and though some were ambitious and prospered (one or two at least accumulating enough money to send their children back to France for their schooling), many were satisfied to achieve a high level of self-sufficiency supplemented by small-scale trade. That early Akaroa was a community of people of relatively slender means accounts to some extent for the scale of the town today.⁴¹

The third is that the early village was essentially a maritime settlement. Though very few people now come to Akaroa or leave by sea and the commercial fishing industry is almost non-existent, Akaroa still looks to the sea for recreational activity and the sea is still a key element in its setting. In addition to its maritime setting, the town still has a background of high hills, though these are no longer forested. The development of the lower hill slopes after the end of World War II did not significantly diminish the impression Akaroa still gives (as it gave 19th visitors) of being a small settlement, sitting snug between hills and harbour.

38 Mould, *More Tales*, pp. 64-65

39 Brooking and Rabel in Greif, ed. *Immigration and National Identity in New Zealand*, (Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1995), p. 30

40 A thorough examination of this house by a ‘building archaeologist’ might identify surviving features that give it greater significance than its altered form and detail suggest it has.

41 Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 9

THE NATURAL AND PLANTED LANDSCAPE

Plants for the colony

The future horticultural success of its new colony was carefully planned into the Nanto-Bordelaise Company's venture. By the time the *Comte de Paris* sailed from Rochefort, considerable time and effort had been invested in acquiring an impressive list of plants, seeds, animals and agricultural implements. These were to be used to provide rations for the settlers for their first seventeen months and to feed the crews of *L'Aube* and the *Comte de Paris*. They were also to be offered for sale to the colonists for their own gardens. The list included cuttings of mulberry and grapevines, apple, pear, plum, peach, apricots, walnuts and chestnut trees, raspberry and gooseberry canes, hops, grain, potatoes, tobacco and rape, as well as cabbage, carrot, turnip and lettuce seeds and strawberry and asparagus roots.

These were plants common to any French garden and were important not only for their culinary and emblematic values but also for their pharmacological and economic utility. Walnut trees for example were valuable for their nut crops as well as the sugar that could be derived from the tree's sap. Oil from the nuts was used as a medicinal vermifuge and the roots and husks of the nuts were used as a dye. Walnuts were also used to make walnut liqueur and in rural parts of France walnut wood was used by peasants to make clogs. Mulberry trees provided berries for jam and wine and the leaves were used to feed silk worms. As well as their symbolic association with the Emperor Napoléon Bonaparte, the bark and leaves of the willow were used as an analgesic, astringent and as a dye. Willow stem was also used to make baskets and the trees were commonly employed to form a plessage (woven hedge). Chestnuts were used to make flour, paste and as a sweetmeat (marons glacés). Their meal was used to whiten linen, bark and chips were used for tanning and as a dye and the timber of the chestnut was used for making wine barrels and poles. Both walnuts and chestnuts were commonly planted as hedgerow species.

In addition to the seeds and cuttings brought out by the Nanto-Bordelaise Company, a number of the émigrés are understood to have brought their own. This would not have been unusual as early settlers have historically journeyed with tree seed from home as a way of maintaining a symbolic connection with their past lives. Acorns, walnuts, chestnuts and other 'self-packaged' viable species have been successfully grown after lengthy sea voyages while hardy roses and willow slips have survived long periods in water or inserted into potatoes. A number of the colonists brought their own vegetable seeds and the Gallica rose '*Charles de Mill*', (known at that time as '*Bizarre Triomphant*') and the Bourbon rose *Souvenir de la Malmaison* are also understood to have arrived via the *Comte de Paris*.

Less certain, however, is the persistent legend linking Akaroa's willows with slips acquired from Napoléon's grave at St. Helena. This was disputed by Jean-Baptiste Eteveneaux, one of the original party to arrive in Akaroa, who claimed that all of Akaroa's willows came from French stock transported with the settlers on the *Comte de Paris*⁴². Another version of the story, by Etienne Le Lievre, dates their arrival at Akaroa to 1837. Le Lievre's father, François, while working as a whaler in the seas off Akaroa described procuring some slips of willow brought out from St. Helena "by another devoted admirer

42 Buick, *The French at Akaroa*, p. 172

of Napoléon". Le Lievre claimed to have planted these in Akaroa, and on returning to the bay in 1840 moved one to Takamatua".⁴³

Others have attributed their source to a stop made by the *Comte de Paris* in St Helena on the way to New Zealand (subsequently disproved). In any case, *Salix babylonica* and *S. babylonica* 'Napoleona', have been associated with Akaroa since its earliest days and irrespective of their provenance their presence can be clearly read as an expression of French national sentiment. For the first 140 years of the settlement the direct connection between these symbolic willows and the landscape of Akaroa was perpetuated by an ongoing regime of propagation. This propagation history is discussed in more detail in later sections.

The landscape on landing

At the time of landing, the hills which encircled the harbour were densely forested almost to the skyline and the immediate foreshore was heavily vegetated with bracken fern, kanuka and manuka. In places this extended down to the foreshore leaving limited open ground for cultivation and associated housing. In determining the lots for the newly landed settlers, Captain Lavaud noted that Paka Ariki Bay (French Bay), though large enough in extent, did not contain enough 'cultivable' land to accommodate all of the settlers. As a consequence the German colonists agreed to settle in a bay to the north (Takamatua) and two other settlers were located on the hill separating Paka Ariki and Takamatua Bays.⁴⁴

An early sketch of the settlement dated to November 1840 shows a series of small crude buildings mostly concentrated at the base of steep hill slopes. Wide fingers of vegetation extend down the valleys and touch the sea in some places.⁴⁵ This same heavily vegetated landscape is confirmed in the memoirs of Dr Louis Thiercelin, who visited Akaroa just prior to the arrival of the *Comte de Paris*. Thiercelin described an almost impenetrable forest that extended right down to the sea and noted that he could see almost nothing but trees and tree ferns.⁴⁶

Breaking in the ground

With assistance from the seamen and carpenters of *L'Aube* and the *Comte de Paris*, the settler's first task was the erection of a rudimentary dwelling (refer figure 4.6). (These early French dwellings have been described earlier in this report.) Garden making, in particular the laying out and planting of a kitchen garden and orchard became the next priority, and by the end of the year most families had cleared and planted half an acre of land around their huts. By 1841 Pierre de Belligny, the Nanto-Bordelaise Company representative, was reporting the successful cultivation of potatoes, cabbage, salad and broad beans despite the vagaries of the weather and the violent south-west winds.⁴⁷

The fruit trees, most of which had survived the trip from France and had taken root in the Akaroa soil, were under the control of Belligny. Planted at French Farm, Belligny's

43 *Old Days of Akaroa Recalled in Plans for the New Zealand Centennial Celebrations*

44 Buick, *The French at Akaroa* p. 130

45 Anon. Pencil sketch dated November 1840 in Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, p. 141

46 Thiercelin, *Travels in Oceania*, pp. 133-134

47 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, p. 144

own property in Takamatua and the naval gardens beside Wai-iti Stream, they were used as propagating stock, grown on to feed the French seamen and were sold as orchard stock to those colonists who could afford to purchase them. As well as fruit and nut trees, tobacco was trialled which proved to be of mixed success. Early attempts at maize production were initially disappointing and there is no indication as to the success or otherwise of the mulberry trees.

Belligny was noted to have planted several different sorts of grape vines and was, according to Edward Shortland, looking forward to the day when wine might become an article of export.⁴⁸ The vines are likely to have been Chasselas, La Folle and Muscat-Frontignac varieties which were still producing in 1895.⁴⁹

According to period accounts, by November 1840 twenty out of the twenty-five plant species brought from France were flourishing and families had begun to address the more ornamental aspect of their gardens. The plants most commonly observed in these gardens were wallflowers, reseda (mignonette), forget-me-not, anemone, stock, and marigolds. It is likely that the gardens also contained culinary and medicinal herbs as well as *Linum usitatissimum* (brown-seeded flax). This was commonly cultivated on French rural holdings for its hemp which, when processed, provided linen for clothing.

Roses, an important component of mission gardens elsewhere in New Zealand from the late 1820s, began to appear quickly at Akaroa. Cuttings of *Sweet Briar*, *Slater's Crimson China*, *Parson's Pink China*, *Banksia alba* and *Banksia lutea* and others were passed in a seemingly random pattern throughout New Zealand by missionaries and sometimes whalers operating around the Bay of Islands. In this way Bishop Pompallier is understood to have bought 'Fabvier', a red china rose to Akaroa. Another early tree introduction which has been attributed to the French at this time was the necklace poplar (*Populus deltoides* 'Frimley' syn. *P. deltoides* 'Virginiana'). However, no specimens of the requisite age have ever been found to confirm this.⁵⁰

Based on the common layout and plant palette of French peasant holdings of this period, the Akaroa gardens would have presented a very informal appearance. Planted with dual purpose species that were valued for their utility and their appearance these ornamental gardens were productive spaces in their own right. English visitors to the French countryside in the early 19th century described the gardens of the 'labouring-classes' as having a total absence of neatness, elegance and taste, or more kindly, as being of a "gregarious disposition which reflected the wildness of the field",⁵¹ and it can be assumed that the early Akaroa gardens were of similar character. This can be explained to some degree by the necessary practice of leaving plants to go to seed or 'over-mature' to ensure plant material for the following season.

While the wider natural landscape provided useful substitutes for much needed resources, such as manuka, which was used to make 'biddy-biddy tea', and various tree barks as substitute tobacco, there is no evidence that any of the settlers incorporated

48 Shortland, *The Southern Districts of New Zealand: a Journal, with passing notices of the customs of the Aborigines*, p. 3

49 Bragato, *Report on the Prospects of Viticulture in New Zealand, together with illustrations for Planting and Pruning*, p. 6

50 Burstall, *Great Trees of New Zealand*, p. 140

51 Seaton, *Continental Adventuring*, p. 125

native species into their very earliest gardens. The one exception was Belligny who, as well as acting as a leader of the settlement, was also employed as a traveling correspondent for the *Le Jardin des Plantes* (Botanical Gardens), Paris. Attributed with the earliest cultivation of native plants in a European garden in Canterbury, Belligny's Takamatua garden was “laid out handsomely in European style with flower beds” within which he is understood to have experimented with indigenous plants.⁵² Later reports of his property suggest that he incorporated the surrounding bush into his grounds by fashioning walks through it.

Visitors to the settlement from as early as September 1841 recorded the success of the community's horticultural endeavours with Captain Hobson noting that the gardens were reportedly growing more than was needed for local supplies. These comments may have reflected the situation at French Farm, Captain Lavaud's house and the attached naval cultivations rather more accurately than the settler's own gardens where progress was slow because of a lack of capital.

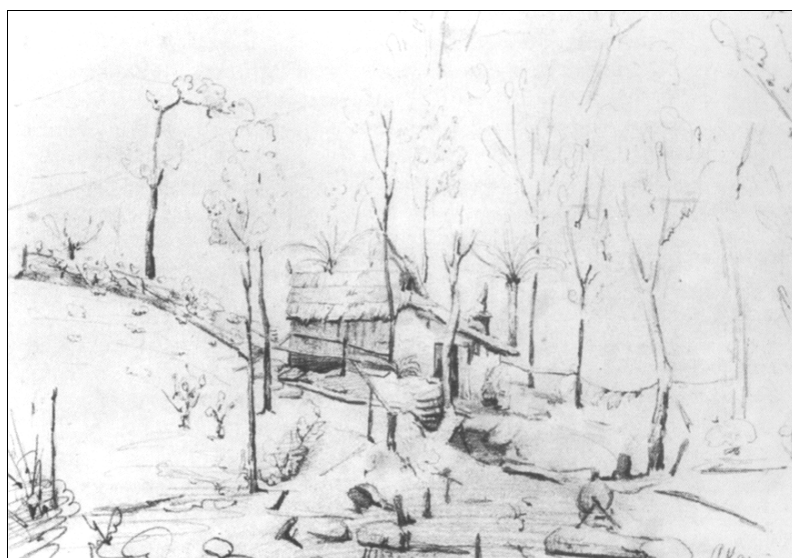


Figure 4.6. Described by Buick as constructed of cob, timber and thatch the temporary dwellings erected by the French were said to be rather 'Irish looking'. Evidence of site clearance for cultivation is visible. Jagersmidt Collection, National Library of Australia

Descriptions of the landscape at this time were still heavily focused on the picturesque nature of the harbour and the sombre beauty of its dense forest backdrop. However, as early as 1843 this sylvan aesthetic was under attack. Much of the vegetation in which the settlement had initially nested had been cleared and more permanent accommodation was under construction. By 1846 a contrasting mantle of lighter and brighter green European vegetation was becoming evident as fruit and nut trees came into production.⁵³

Cultivations of wheat and potatoes were said to be scattered in and about the town giving it a “lively and cheering appearance” and a large area of the hillside, between 40 and 50 acres, was under cultivation.⁵⁴

52 Stongman, In Burrows, C. J. ed. *Etienne Raoul and Canterbury botany 1840-1996*. p. 73

53 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, p. 179

54 *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 30 September 1843, p. 327

By 1847 cropping and stock breeding were coming into their own necessitating the removal of greater areas of native bush. Sketches of the settlement at this time show simply fenced cottages, an open foreshore, basic wooden bridges, shingled roads and small remnant clumps of native vegetation (refer figure 4.7). Timber was readily available so the common settler 'ditch and bank' or thorn boundary systems were never constructed or planted at Akaroa.



Figure 4.7. 1849 sketch showing the first Bruce Hotel, rudimentary bridges and Mr C R Robinson's house nestled in an area of retained native vegetation. This was used by Robinson as a feature in his garden. His first house is visible to the front of his fenced section.
Walter Mantell sketch. Ref B-063-041, ATL



Figure 4.8. This early picture of the home of the Bouriaud family illustrates how the first Akaroa settlers built their houses on cleared ground in a landscape that was still dominated by native forest. Ref: 628

Early reserves and commons

The location of the first common was a consequence of negotiations between the English and French. In determining the location for the French settlement it was decided that a space, common to all, was to be left between the French settlement and Mr William Green's House. (Green, as already mentioned, was an early English settler who had been occupying land at Takapuneke (Red House Bay) since 1839.) This common was bounded on the west by a creek of fresh water (now known as Aylmers Stream) which was noted to supply all the ships in the bay and never ran dry.

The Cimetière Catholiques, or French Cemetery as it came to be known, was part of land allocated to the Catholic Mission in 1840. Situated on the elevated prospect of L' Aube Hill, it was located in close association with the priest's house and the first Catholic Chapel (Chapel of St James and St Philip) as shown in a sketch plan by Father Seon dated 1850 (refer figure 4.10). It is unclear when the cemetery was set-out or planted but by August of 1843 it was described as having been 'constructed' by Belligny and the first burial is understood to have taken place in May 1842. Consecrated by Bishop Pompallier in the first years of the settlement, it can be seen as a modified flat terrace behind the first Catholic Church in an 1848 sketch of the town. In Seon's diagrammatic sketch it is shown as an enclosed area of ground which is divided into two distinct sections, one containing 14 graves.

Early descriptions of the cemetery landscape indicate that it was originally hedged with gorse and ornamented with willows, roses (*Cloth of Gold*, *Solfaterre* and *Pink Briar*) and *Ranunculus ficaria* (Lesser celandine). Native vegetation, including totara, was retained and wooden crosses, artistic chain fences, short unpretending epitaphs and simply formed wooden headboards all contributed to its distinctive vernacular character⁵⁵ (refer figure 4.9).



Figure 4.9. The French cemetery was intensively planted and graves were simply ornamented.
Ref: 262-1

55 *Otago Witness*, 5 February, 1870, p. 6

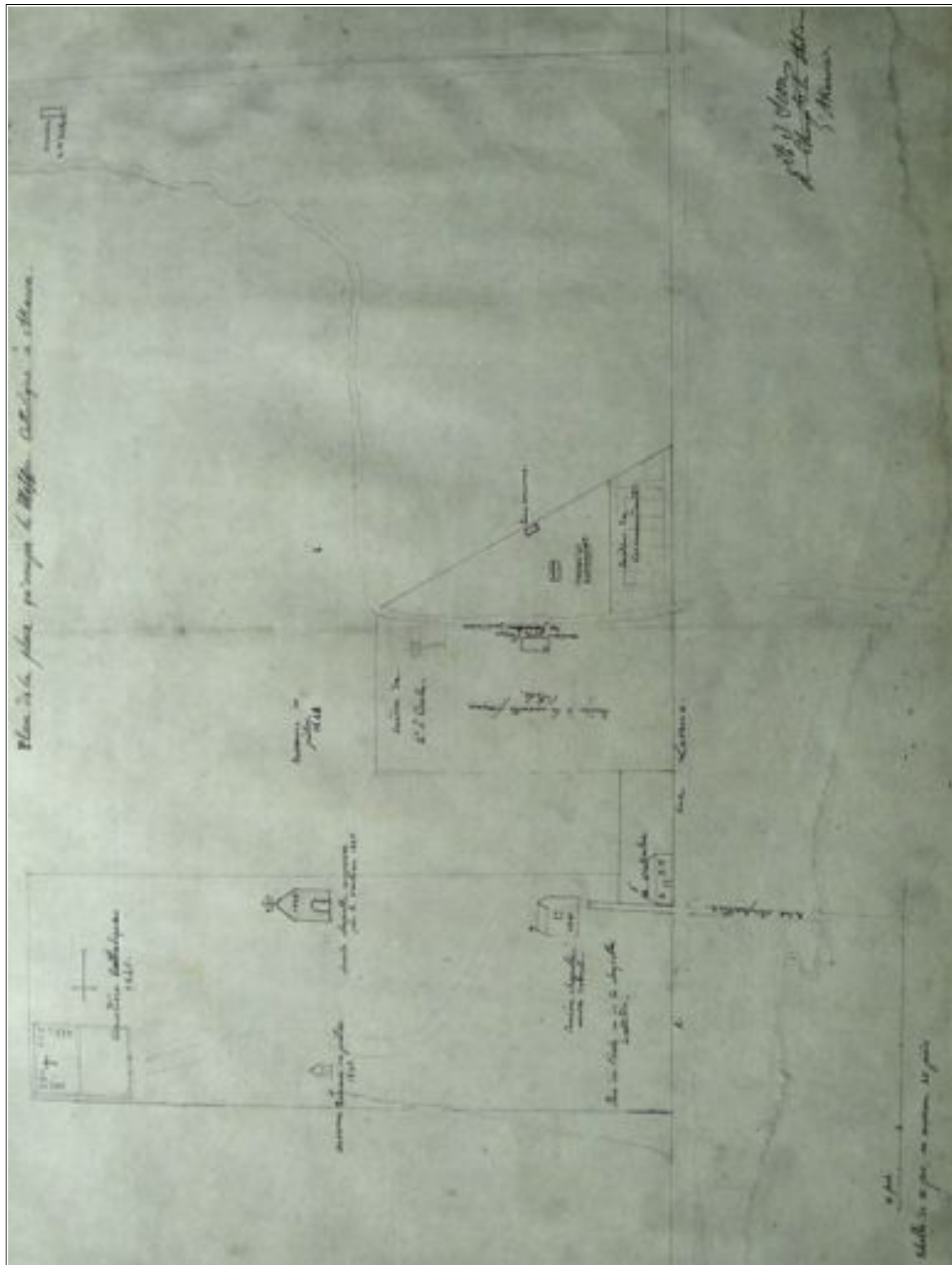


Figure 4.10. Father Sione's plan showing significant landmarks in the settlement in ca 1850.
 Ref: Plan de la place qu'occupe la Mission Catholique à Akaroa [compiled by] H T Seon. [ca. 1850]
 MapColl-834.44eke/[ca.1850], ATL

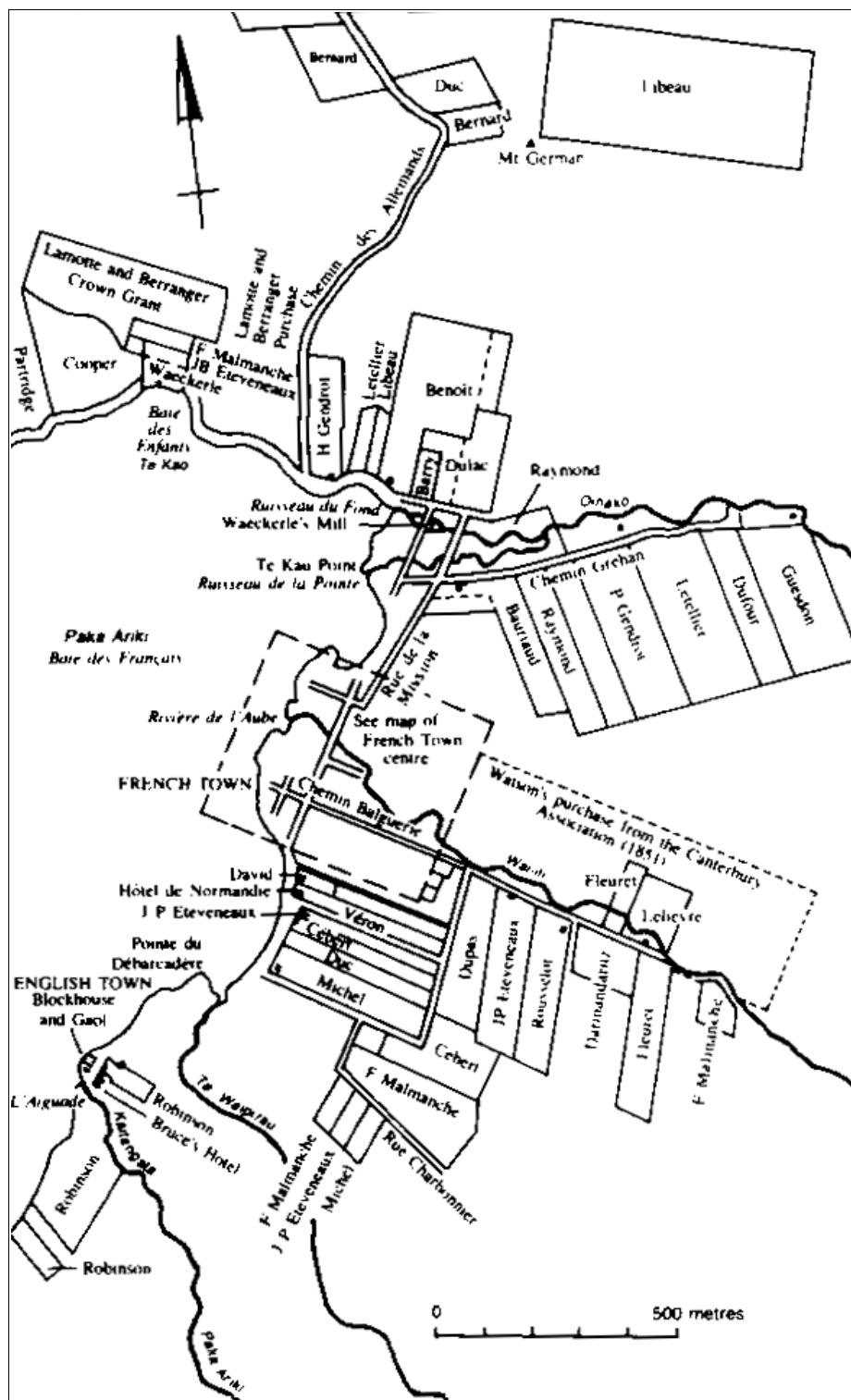


Figure 4.12. Plan of the Akaroa showing early land ownership patterns within the French part of the town. The original land allocation was by lot with the married men drawing first. Seven settlers elected to have their land in Takamatua (German Bay) and another two selected land on the Takamatua side of the hill between the two bays. The early land holdings of the English magistrate Mr C R Robinson can be seen occupying an extensive area within the English part of the settlement. Ref: Tremewan, *French Akaroa*.

SNAPSHOT OF AKAROA IN 1850

After ten years, Akaroa was a village of scattered cottages, most surrounded by gardens, cultivated fields and orchards. Most of these small holdings were along or not far back from the foreshore, but settlement was already extending up the Grehan and Balguerie Valleys (refer figure 4.13). In the settled part of the village European vegetation had already almost completely superseded the native forest, scrub and fern that had greeted the settlers in 1840, but the hills behind the town that formed its background were still bush-clad.

Access to the village was still mainly by sea, and rudimentary jetties served as landing places. The village was in effect, at this stage, two separate villages, a short distance apart. There were already places of business, for example the four hotels, two at each end of the village, and a small cluster at the intersection of Rue Lavaud and Chemin Balguerie. One settler, Waeckerle, had a small water-powered flour mill in operation at the far northern end of the village. There was already a chapel at the French end of the village, where the town's most substantial early building, the *Magasin* of the Nanto-Bordelaise Company, was also located. The two blockhouses, erected in 1845 in fear of an attack by Maori, were prominent features close to the foreshore.

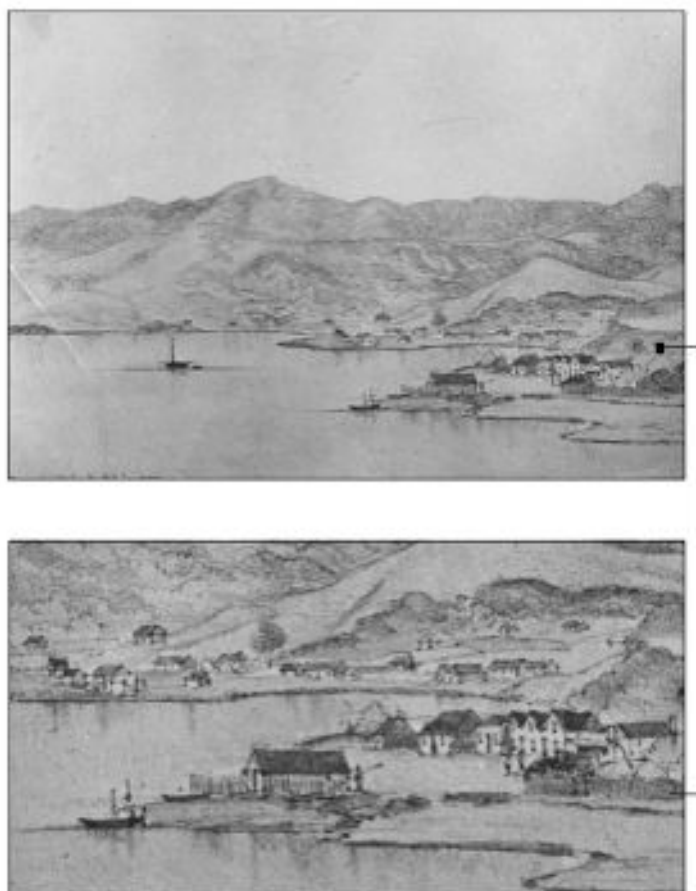


Figure 4.13. For its first ten years, Akaroa was the small village it appears in this 1853 sketch. The bush remains on the hills and Akaroa consists of scattered cottages and a few commercial buildings on the foreshore. Exploded detail of buildings below.

Ref: Leigh watercolour, ATL

EXTANT TOWN FABRIC & FEATURES DATING FROM 1840's

Sites:

- The French landing site (not the existing memorials)

Buildings:

- 71 Rue Lavaud, Langlois-Eteveneaux Cottage, (significantly modified)
- 8 Rue Grehan, Bouriaud House, (significantly modified)

Urban Design:

Evidence of the French settlement remains in

- Streets in the 'French' part of the town surveyed in metric widths
- Beach front properties in the 'French' part of town have their boundary at the low water springs rather than the high water mark favoured by the British system
- Location of French cemetery in relation to Catholic church

Other Urban Design Elements

- Reserved land on the foreshore associated with the blockhouses

Vegetation:

There are suggestions that some of the vines at Mill Cottage were directly propagated from the earliest grape stocks in Akaroa however this remains unconfirmed.

AKAROA:
AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Section 5
THE COLONIAL TOWN 1850 to 1900



SECTION FIVE: THE COLONIAL TOWN 1850 TO 1900

“The harbour at Akaroa is the best in New Zealand. Formerly it could boast of the presence at one time of several French Men-of-War and seven or eight Whalers. Now it is a rare thing to see more than two small vessels at anchor. Had Captain Thomas been assured of the possession of the Peninsula by the Association, he would have made it the port, and then how different its appearance.”

Nelson Examiner and NZ Chronicle, 7 Feb 1852

Exit the French

The founding of the Canterbury Association in 1848 and selection of the Port Cooper Plains as the site for Canterbury’s main town, Christchurch, had a profound influence on the development of Akaroa. The Nanto-Bordelaise Company continued to function through the 1840s and in 1843 was granted title to 30,000 acres of Banks Peninsula land in consideration of the money it had spent sending out the emigrants who had founded Akaroa.¹ Through the second half of the 1840s, the French Government and the Nanto-Bordelaise Company left the French settlers who had founded Akaroa more or less to their own devices. The French naval presence in Akaroa Harbour ended in 1846.

In 1849, with the plan to found the Canterbury Settlement well advanced, the Nanto-Bordelaise Company sold all its rights to land on Banks Peninsula to the New Zealand Company (under whose auspices the Canterbury Association was operating). This transaction symbolised the end of “French Akaroa”.²



Figure 5.1. The north, “French”, end of Akaroa in the mid 1860s. Three surviving buildings, St Peter’s Church (1863), the Town Hall (1864) and Criterion Hotel (1864), have already been built. Centre right is the French *Magasin*, which was demolished about ten years later, and the Langlois-Eteveneaux Cottage, which also survives. Ref: 1

1 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 16

2 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 18; Lowndes, *Short History*, no pagination; Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, pp. 291-96

Surveys and land titles

In July 1850, before the Canterbury Association settlers had arrived in Canterbury, the New Zealand Company surrendered its property, including all the land acquired from the Nanto-Bordelaise Company, to the British Crown. Banks Peninsula then became in effect Crown land, although the purchase of the land from Ngai Tahu had not been completed at that point. (A small plaque on the Beach Road frontage of the Akaroa Village records that the Kemp Purchase, of much of the South Island, was signed at Akaroa in 1848, but Banks Peninsula was not included in that purchase.³) The Crown promised that all purchases of land from the Nanto-Bordelaise or New Zealand Companies that could be substantiated would be recognised.

In 1851, Akaroa was resurveyed by two Canterbury Association surveyors, Thomas Cass and Samuel Hewlings. Although they ignored some old property boundaries and blocked some existing roads and realigned others, these surveyors defined the areas that the French and other settlers already held. They also surveyed four large rectangular blocks that shared boundaries with the existing holdings and included large areas of land that later became part of the built-up area of Akaroa. These four blocks passed, as rural sections, to four English purchasers of land orders from the Canterbury Association, William Aylmer, Daniel Watkins, John Watson and Robert d'Oyly. Aylmer's and Watson's sections were at the southern (English) end of the established village and Watson's and d'Oyly's further north, adjoining the sections held mostly by French settlers. "Great slices" of land that Henry Sewell thought, in 1853, should have been included in the town (and had been included in a town plan which had remained largely on paper because only a few sections of it were purchased) lay within these rural sections.⁴

In early 1855, after some years of complicated debate about land titles in Akaroa, Thomas Cass returned to Akaroa. He made recommendations about reserving land against sale as rural land, and in a new survey laid out sections of one-eighth of an acre between Lavaud and Jolie Streets and the high-water mark and sections of one-quarter of an acre on the east (upper) side of Lavaud Street opposite the rural sections that had been purchased by Watson and d'Oyly. He also laid out small town sections on Crown land at the southern end of the town, behind the Bruce Hotel.⁵

These sections, and subdivisions of land off the four rural sections, once the owners had agreed to lines of roads being run across parts of their sections, provided opportunities for newcomers to Akaroa to acquire small holdings and land on which to establish businesses. The boundaries of the town (which corresponded with the boundaries of the borough created in 1876) were gazetted in 1856 and the town lands offered for sale in January 1857. By the end of March 1859, 163 acres of land within the town boundaries had been freeholded (this total included both town sections and sections cut out of those parts of the rural sections that lay within the town boundaries). Streets occupied 26 acres and reserves a further 4½ acres; 35 acres remained unsold.⁶

3 The plaque gives the mistaken impression that the Kemp Purchase deed was signed ashore, in the Bruce Hotel. It was actually signed aboard the *Fly*, a British vessel anchored in the bay off Akaroa.

4 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 34-35; Sewell, *Journal*, vol. I, pp. 330-31; Allison, *An Akaroa Precinct*, p. 17; Andersen, *Place Names*, pp. 41-42

5 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 37

6 Andersen, *Place Names*, pp. 41-42

Akaroa's transformation from village to town was neither sudden nor swift. In June 1953, Henry Sewell said of Akaroa "it may be an Irish fishing village or ... the first rudiments of an English watering place. One or two bettermost houses perched about on hill-sides amongst trees. A white wooden building, Bruce's Hotel, at the water's edge and one or two little tenements by the side shops or stores."⁷ Returning in January 1854, Sewell described Akaroa as "altogether very like a small seaside village in England".⁸

Louis Thiercelin, who had first visited the harbour in early 1840, a few months before the French settlers had founded Akaroa, returned a decade after Sewell had found Akaroa still a small village. He was astounded by the changes of a quarter of a century. He described Akaroa as having hills "all covered with elegant buildings, half-hidden by decorative shrubs or fruit trees". He recorded a wooden jetty "projecting fifty metres into the sea", a customs warehouse, hotels and shops, and a church.⁹



Figure 5.2. By the 1870s, the hills around Akaroa were denuded of forest. The buildings of the town itself, clearly in two distinct parts, were concentrated on the foreshore.

Ref 1631

The conspicuous feature of Akaroa's demographic history from the 1850s through to the end of the 19th century was that the French became a small minority in Akaroa as newcomers of British and other descent made the town their home. The changing ethnic composition of Akaroa's population was a direct consequence of the founding of the Canterbury Settlement at the end of 1850.

The British population of Akaroa was significantly augmented early in 1850, almost a year before the first Canterbury Association settlers arrived in the province. In April 1850, the *Monarch* limped into Akaroa Harbour for repairs after a difficult voyage from England. Though the *Monarch* was bound for Auckland, around 40 of the passengers, aware Canterbury was soon to be founded, decided to stay in Akaroa.

⁷ Sewell, *Journal*, vol. I, p. 326

⁸ Sewell, *Journal*, vol. I, p. 442

⁹ Thiercelin, *Travels in Oceania*, p. 162

The *Monarch* settlers included Samuel Farr, who lived in Akaroa for 12 years before moving to Christchurch to become one of that city's important early architects, and the Pavitt and Haylock families. Descendants of both families still live in Akaroa.¹⁰

The *Monarch* settlers were a portent of things to come. As settlers, overwhelmingly from Britain, flooded into Canterbury some found their way to Akaroa. The purchasers of the rural sections that adjoined the village of Akaroa – William Aylmer, Daniel Watkins, John Watson and Robert d'Oyly – were the conspicuous examples of these new, non-French settlers.¹¹

Another sign of British settlers taking over in Akaroa from the original French families, was that in 1851 the Hotel de Normandie, on the waterfront, which had been managed by Jules Veron and his wife Marie (née Eteveneaux) was bought by George Armstrong. The hotel later became his family home. (The family is still represented on Banks Peninsula.)¹²

The proportion of people born in France of Akaroa's total population fell dramatically after 1850. By 1878, the 10 people who had been born in France living in Akaroa were only 1.5% of the total population of 642. (There were a further 27 French-born people living in Akaroa County in 1878.) By 1878 the New Zealand-born population of Akaroa, at 307, had already outstripped the British-born population, 273. The New Zealand-born population included the children of French settlers. By 1891, the proportion of French-born people in Akaroa had shrunk to 1.2% of the total and by 1901 to 0.5%.¹³

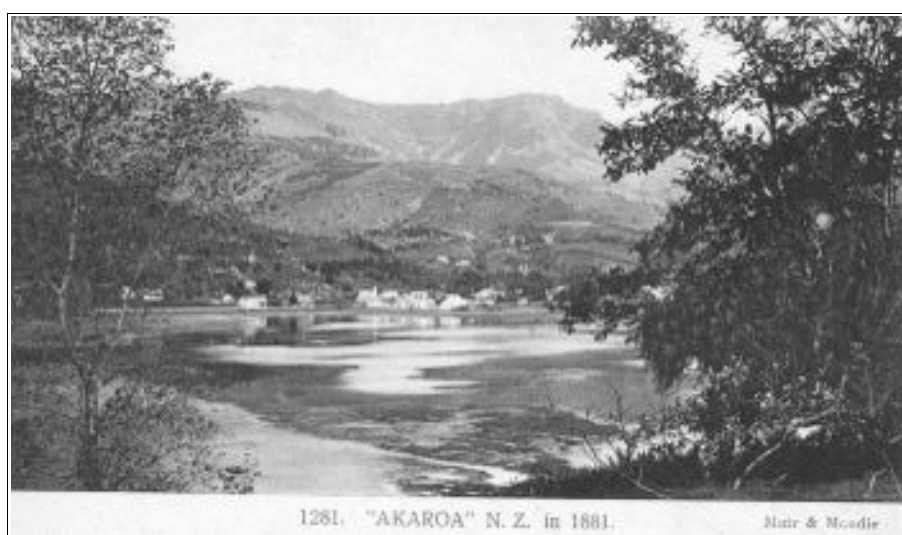


Figure 5.3. In 1881, the buildings of Akaroa were still largely confined to the foreshore or valley floors. A few houses, however, had already been built on the upper hill slopes, which are no longer forested, but cleared, in grass and farmed.

Ref: Muir & Moody 1881

10 Lowndes, *Short History*, no pagination; Ogilvie, *Cradle*. P. 33; Farr in *Canterbury Old and New*, pp. 38, 43; Mould, *More Tales*, pp. 6-7; Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 23

11 Mould, *More Tales*, pp. 47-48

12 The *Press*, 16 February 2006; Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 11. The building later became the Hughes Family Hotel and was pulled down in the 1920s.

13 These figures are all taken from successive Census reports.

Although the proportion of Akaroa's population which had been born in France fell steeply from the 1850s, the French population of the town was augmented by new arrivals from France, notably François Narbey (who arrived in 1850), Lucien Brocherie (who settled on Banks Peninsula in 1866) and Henri Citron (who arrived in 1877). Established French families, notably the Le Lievres and the de Malmanches, brought relatives out from France to join them in Akaroa.¹⁴

Some of the immigrants who settled in Akaroa in the second half of the 19th century were neither French nor British. They included a Pole (Augustus Kotlowski), a Portuguese (Antonio Rodrigues), a Greek (Demetrius Koinomopolos) whose wife, Bodiline, was Danish and an Italian (Joseph Vangioni). Some of these, and other non-British, settlers became prominent citizens of Akaroa.¹⁵

The total number of people living in Akaroa increased significantly, but reached a plateau where it has, more or less, remained ever since. In 1878, the population of the Borough was 642. It subsequently dropped back to 571 in 1891 and to 559 in 1901. The peak reached in the late 1870s reflected development in the Vogel years of heavy borrowing and rapid immigration. In the middle of the 1870s, immigration barracks were built in Akaroa, but they were in use for only a short time and were moved to Takapuneke at the very end of the century and put to other uses.¹⁶

Houses large and small

As the population of the town grew, the number of residences in the town also increased. The survival of relatively large number of these 19th century dwellings in Akaroa is one of the most important elements of the town's present character. Although Akaroa's population had a sprinkling of people of other nationalities, the houses of the non-British residents of the town did not differ from those of British, or French, ancestry. The style of the houses of all the residents of the town, regardless of their origins, was derived almost exclusively from Britain. (The possibility that there was a slight French inflection to Akaroa's colonial architecture was raised in the previous section.)

Because most residents of Akaroa through the second half of the 19th century continued to be people of modest means, cottages and smaller houses predominate over larger houses. At most only a handful of 19th century dwellings in the town can be described as large.

Charles Fearnley believed that the distinguishing characteristics of Akaroa's architecture were "the delightfully intimate scale and the detailing of the buildings"; "the houses on the whole [have] the attractiveness of the miniature" he wrote. He acknowledged that not all of Akaroa's houses "are of this minimal dimension, but by any standards none are large". Even bearing in mind that New Zealand is "built generally on a small scale", Akaroa and its houses, Fearnley concluded, "are tiny".¹⁷ The same point was made more recently in the Streetscapes Report, which noted that "residential buildings are generally relatively small scale".¹⁸

14 Mould, *More Tales*, pp. 39-45; John Wilson talk to Akaroa Civic Trust, 30 June 2007

15 Mould, *More Tales*, pp. 39-45, 66

16 *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1874, D5, p. 40

17 Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, chs 3 & 8

18 Streetscapes Report, p. 48

The single- or one-and-a-half-storey cottage is the norm of Akaroa's 19th century domestic architecture. The use of dormers or small windows set in an end gable meant attic spaces could be used for sleeping. Examples of these cottages are to be found throughout the older parts of the town, notably on Rue Jolie south, on Percy and William Streets and up Rues Balguerie and Grehan. There is also a small cluster of three early cottages at the corner of Bruce Terrace and Aubrey Street (refer figures 5.4, 5.5 & 5.6).

Although Akaroa's cottages and more modest houses were the homes of people of slender means, as the 19th century advanced even these cottages and smaller houses were increasingly decorated or embellished for appearance or prestige rather than utility, though never excessively or extravagantly. The almost universal use of timber for dwellings gave builders and carpenters the opportunity to apply decorations in what Fearnley describes as an inventive, light-hearted manner.¹⁹



Figure 5.4. (Top left) The mis-named 'Curate's Cottage' (because Akaroa never had a curate) on Aylmer's Valley Road is typical of the many surviving 19th century cottages in Akaroa.

Figure 5.5 (Top right) One of the small group of historic cottages at the corner of Bruce Terrace and Aubrey Street. The group is one of the most important, historically, in Akaroa.

Figure 5.6 (Bottom left) This Rue Jolie cottage is one of a number of surviving 19th century cottages that give the street a strongly historic character.

Figure 5.7 (Bottom right) The former Presbyterian manse on Rue Balguerie, built in the 1870s, is one of the larger of Akaroa's surviving 19th century dwellings.

¹⁹ Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 3

The most important concentration of these smaller 19th century homes is on the southern length of Rue Jolie, from the Beach Road corner up to the entrance to the Garden of Tane. The older buildings on the lower section of Rue Jolie south are the subject of a valuable monograph, Barbara Allison's *An Akaroa Precinct*.²⁰ The oldest of the houses in this precinct date from 1860s; the youngest were built in the early 20th century. There are more 19th century cottages on the stretch of Rue Jolie above the Bruce Terrace corner. (The significance of the stretch of Rue Jolie from the Beach Road corner up to the entrance to the Garden of Tane is greater because it also has examples of houses built throughout the 20th century, making the street a remarkably, perhaps uniquely, comprehensive catalogue of New Zealand domestic architectural styles.²¹)

As some residents of Akaroa became wealthier, when the town gained improved transport and access to markets, several medium-sized and even large houses were built. These houses, most of two storeys, were the family homes of people who had done relatively better than some other Akaroa residents.

One early house (possibly 1862) which was not two-storeyed but still larger than a cottage is the house known as The Poplars towards the northern end of Rue Lavaud. A slightly later example, of two storeys, is the house on upper Rue Jolie known as The Maples. The Maples has a twin on Rue Balguerie, the Presbyterian manse of 1872 (refer figure 5.7). Significantly, most of these larger houses were built on sites where they were hidden to some extent by the lie of the land and were located in large grounds and surrounded by trees. They did not dispel the general impression that Akaroa's houses are cottages or medium-sized.²²

Two of the earliest of the surviving larger 19th century houses in Akaroa are among the town's most significant buildings historically. Both were the homes of early Akaroa settlers of greater means than most. The first part of Glencarrig was built in 1852-53 by the Rev. William Aylmer, who took up one of the rural sections adjoining the town. This first part of Glencarrig is a single storey, square house with a hip roof that extends out over verandahs. This building has a plain, symmetrical appearance that gives it a Georgian or Australian Colonial air (refer figure 5.8). Some time in the last 15 years of the 19th century, a later owner added a more elaborate, two-storey wing which made the house larger than was usual for Akaroa.²³

Blythcliffe was built after Augustus White bought five acres of John Watson's 50-acre rural section in the mid 1850s. Blythcliffe had a generous verandah along its frontage and, originally, a flat roof which gave it an unusual appearance for a Canterbury house. A new, pitched roof was built later. Samuel Farr was possibly the architect for the original house.²⁴ Some distance further up Rue Balguerie from Blythcliffe, Arthur Westenra, manager of the Bank of New Zealand in Akaroa, built Linton in 1881. This large, grand Italianate house, which also survives, was designed by a Christchurch architect, A.W. Simpson²⁵ (refer figure 5.9).

20 Allison, *An Akaroa Precinct*, passim. The references in this report are all from the 2008 edition.

21 Wilson, *A Rue Jolie Walk*, passim

22 Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 8

23 Sewell, *Journal*, vol. 1, p. 328; Leaflet prepared for Akaroa Civic Trust AGM, 18 November 2006

24 *The Press*, 3 March 1979;

25 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 39



Figure 5.8. One of Akaroa's oldest surviving houses is Glencarrig, the home of the Rev. William Aylmer. When it was built in the early 1850s, Rev. Aylmer incorporated areas of native bush into his extensive garden.

Exploded detail from Ref: B-K 82-52, ATL



Figure 5.9. Built in the 1880s, Linton, the home of the town's bank manager, was one of Akaroa's larger 19th century houses.

The largest private home built in 19th century Akaroa dates from the very end of the century. Oinako was completed in 1896 for E.X. Le Lievre (a descendant of an early French settler). Designed by the Christchurch architect J.C. Maddison, Oinako still stands on the historic site of Wagstaff's Hotel²⁶(refer figure 5.10).

A larger house which, unlike those already described, has not survived, gave its name to a section of Akaroa. The Glen was built around 1883-85 for a prominent Akaroa businessman, James Garwood. The ten-room house, set on nine acres, had twin gables with a verandah wrapped around them (refer figures 5.11 & 5.34). The Glen was bulldozed in 1971 and the land subdivided.²⁷



Figure 5.10. One of Akaroa's largest houses, known originally as Oinako, was built at the very end of the 19th century for Etienne X. Le Lievre, a descendant of one of Akaroa's early French settlers. The house, designed by the Christchurch architect J.C. Maddison, still stands.



Figure 5.11. The large 19th century house known as The Glen, on the southern side of French Bay, has not survived but has given its name to the subdivision centred on Hempelman Drive and Stanley Place. Ref: 1634

26 *Akaroa Mail*, 8 September 1896

27 Allison, *An Akaroa Precinct*, p. 48

Commercial premises

As Akaroa's commercial life developed after 1850, the town acquired buildings that were the premises of different businesses. Some of these commercial premises were larger than most of the town's dwellings, but some shared with those dwellings the diminutive, miniature character of those dwellings.²⁸ Some 19th century commercial premises have survived, but a significant number have been lost. The commercial premises of 19th century Akaroa were scattered and never formed a tight commercial centre or even "main street". They straggled from the northern end of Rue Lavaud to where Beach Road crosses the Aylmer Stream. There was to some extent concentration along the curve of Beach Road and along Rue Lavaud towards the intersection of Rues Lavaud and Balguerie. These have remained the town's "main streets" to the present, although on Rue Lavaud the commercial premises have never formed the continuous strip they form on the landward side of Beach Road.

Among the commercial premises of 19th century Akaroa were the yards of the town's builders. As building activity in the town increased in the 1850s and 1860s, so did the number of carpenters and builders. By 1864, seven builders were active in Akaroa. In 1877, there was work for two building surveyors and 19 carpenters and joiners. It was a further indication that the French were becoming a tiny minority in Akaroa that of the five most active builders in the town in the later 19th century two were Irish and three English.²⁹

Akaroa was also unusual among towns of its size in the 1850s for having a resident architect. Samuel Farr arrived on the *Monarch* in 1850 and did not move to Christchurch until 1862. His work in Akaroa is not fully documented, but it is thought he designed many houses and other buildings (besides those which can be attributed with certainty to him).³⁰

By the 1860s and 1870s a large number of small businesses were established in Akaroa – a druggist, a butcher, a baker, a nurseryman, a photographer, a tailor, a watchmaker, a cabinet-maker and undertaker, a saddler and many others appear in various Almanacs and trade directories. The vitality of the town's commercial life is confirmed by an 1883 list of businesses on which there are eight general stores, five builders, two bankers, four confectioners, five milk-sellers, four shoemakers, five milliners and five blacksmiths.³¹

No systematic study has been made of the premises occupied by these various small businesses. Two early businessmen had "stores" (that is warehouses) on the waterfront. James Daly's store was at the base of the wharf that still bears his name and Edward Latter's at the base of the first public wharf (refer figure 5.12). Latter's store, in its later days the wharfinger's office, was demolished in 1910.³² Daly's store had been demolished by the early 20th century.

Several businesses built premises in the 19th century on the section of Beach Road at the base of the first public wharf of 1859-60 and the adjoining main wharf of 1888. James Garwood came to Akaroa in 1858, initially to manage Augustus White's store.

28 Streetscapes Report, p. 48

29 Allison, *An Akaroa Precinct*, p. 73; Akaroa Museum display

30 Stacpoole, *Colonial Architecture*, pp. 162-63; Pam Wilson, Thesis on Farr, *passim*.

31 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 37, 42; Allison, *An Akaroa Precinct*, pp. 14, 16, 18

32 Mould, *More Tales*, p. 51

He soon built his own store and coaching stables alongside Bruce's Hotel. He replaced his original simple, plain weatherboard and shingle-roofed building with a more substantial two-storey building some time before 1883. This building still stands, although significantly modified.³³



Figure 5.12. At the base of the original town wharf in the later 19th century, Latter's Store stood on the site now occupied by the Fishermen's Rest. Older buildings occupy the sites of today's L'Hotel and Akaroa Supply Store. Ref: Eliz John's original-1

T.E. Taylor, who became one of Akaroa's most prominent businessmen, went into business in the town in 1889. He had large premises on Beach Road at the corner of Church Street (refer figure 5.13). Closest to the corner was a single-storey block and next to it, north along Beach Road, a two storey, Italianate building. By the early 20th century, the original building of three bays had been replaced by one with two windows on each side of a fifth larger, central window. (It is not known if the original building was extended or demolished and an entirely new building in the same style built on the site.) The single-storey section of Taylor's establishment has not survived, but the larger two-storey block remains. It has through the years housed a large number of very various businesses.³⁴

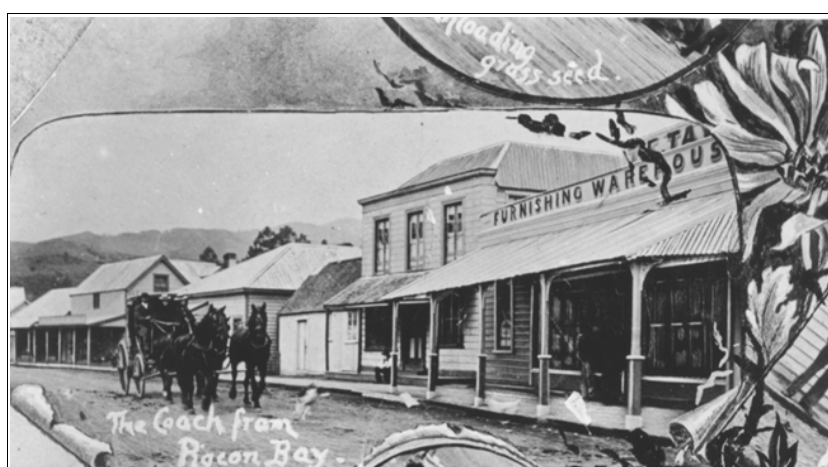


Figure 5.13. One of the major businesses at the south end of Akaroa in the later 19th century was T.E. Taylor's warehouse and store. Taylor's premises stood on the site occupied by the early 20th century Akaroa Supply Store building and the modern L'Hotel development. Ref: 4586, CM.

33 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 39; Allison, *An Akaroa Precinct*, pp. 46-47; Mould, *More Tales*, p. 55

34 Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 10

Other older commercial buildings on the outward curve of Beach Road between the base of the main wharf and the Rue Jolie corner, including another two-storey building that was a drapery for many years, date from the 1870s and 1880s. They are interspersed among younger buildings, though the general appearance of that stretch of Beach Road remains much as it was 100 years ago.

At the other end of town, on Rue Lavaud, Joseph Vangioni established a store in a small, single-storey building with two gables which he replaced in 1878 with a larger, basic but Italianate, two-storey building which was extended in 1881 and survives. Vangioni sold general merchandise and traded in cocksfoot seed from these premises. His business was some distance from most other commercial buildings of the time, which emphasises that Akaroa's businesses were dispersed rather than concentrated.

The other early commercial building to have survived on this stretch of Rue Lavaud is the chemist's shop, a two-storey building with Classical detailing, which was built in 1883 for Henri Citron, the town's first chemist, as a "Medical Hall". It replaced earlier premises on another site. The chemist's shop had a narrow escape from destruction when an aeroplane crashed across the road from it in 1940. The building has, unusually, been a pharmacy from its earliest days to the present. Most of Akaroa's 19th century commercial premises have housed a varied range of businesses in their long lives.

In 1876, Akaroa acquired one of the distinguishing features of a town with any pretension. The *Akaroa Mail* was founded in 1876 (the year Akaroa became a borough). The paper's first premises were in a simple, gable-ended rectangular building with Classical detailing on the corner of Beach Road and Rue Jolie, near the surviving Coronation Library and Gaiety Theatre, both of which were built in the same decade, the 1870s. When this building burned down in November 1897, the paper moved to a new building of similar form and size but less architectural style on Rue Balguerie, at the other end of town. This second Akaroa Mail building has been demolished. The site of the first building is now occupied by a dwelling and the site of the second by a café.³⁵

As Akaroa's commercial life expanded, the need for a bank became pressing. The Bank of New Zealand established a branch in Akaroa in 1863 (refer figure 5.14). The branch was closed two years later, but then re-opened in 1873. After occupying temporary premises in other buildings, the Bank built a single-storey Classical building on the corner of Rues Lavaud and Balguerie in 1875.³⁶ (The replacement or enlarging of this building in the early 20th century is mentioned in the following section.)

Among the earliest commercial buildings in Akaroa were hotels. These were originally, in the 1840s, when Akaroa was still a whaling port, little more than "grog shops". In the 1840s there were two hotels at the French end of the village – the French Hotel and the Hotel de Normandie. At the English end were the hotels of Bruce, Green and Wagstaff. Bruce's Hotel rather early on became more than just a "grog shop", providing accommodation for visitors to the town and becoming, especially from the 1850s on, one of the town's important social centres (refer figure 5.15). Samuel Farr designed the three-gabled addition of the 1850s to the original hotel, a simple, rectangular, weatherboard building. This section of the building was rebuilt with four gables some

35 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 42; Allison, *An Akaroa Precinct*, p. 29; *Akaroa Mail*, 27 July 2001, pp. 9-12

36 Akaroa Database, Rue Lavaud

time after 1884 (probably in 1888) and a rectangular two-storeyed addition built alongside it. By the early 20th century this pair of buildings had been replaced by a two storey building with a verandah and balcony which was not demolished until after a fire which badly damaged it in 1962.³⁷



Figure 5.14. In this later 19th century view up Rue Balguerie, footpaths have been formed, but the roadway is still in a rough condition. The buildings are, right, the original Bank of New Zealand and original Post Office and, left, the Criterion Hotel.

Ref: 702

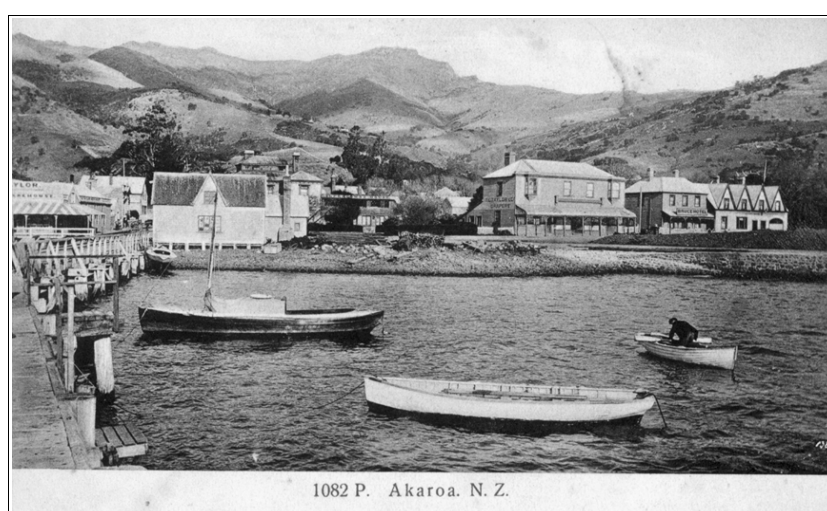


Figure 5.15. The commercial importance of the Beach Road frontage was well established by the later 19th century. To the right of Latter's Store at the base of the town wharf are the Garwood Building (which survives, though greatly altered) and the Bruce Hotel, on the site now occupied by the Akaroa Village. Ref: 323-1

37 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 38-39, 43; Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 11

At the northern (French) end of the town, the Criterion Hotel was built on the corner of Rues Balguerie and Lavaud (refer figure 5.16). The original building was four-square with a hipped roof and regular ranges of double-hung windows. It was extended down Rue Balguerie somewhat later. This building survives, though it has not been a hotel since the early 20th century.

A settler from Madeira who arrived in Akaroa in 1858, Antonio Rodrigues, went into business in the early 1860s, in a building in which he ran a butchery and bakery. In 1871 he established a hotel in this building which he named after his home island. This wooden colonial building, with an appealing line of dormers along one side, survives alongside the “new” Madeira Hotel of 1907.³⁸



Figure 5.16. One of the oldest surviving buildings in the north end of Akaroa is the former Criterion Hotel, built in 1864. This early photograph shows the original building, before it was extended down Rue Balguerie.

One of the original German settlers of 1840, Christian Waeckerle, built a new French Hotel at the far northern end of the town in 1860 (refer figure 5.17). This wooden building was destroyed by fire in 1882. Its replacement, a two-storey, Italianate masonry building, was designed by the Christchurch architect Thomas Cane (refer figure 5.18). This building, the only one in Akaroa of its type, survives, though with a 20th century extension that has harmed its historic character.³⁹

As the 19th century advanced, these hotels became increasingly important as places where people drawn to Akaroa by its growing reputation as an attractive resort town could stay. Akaroa’s reputation as an appealing place to visit (which is described more fully in the following section of this report) underpinned the development of visitor accommodation through the second half of the 19th century. In 1903, for example, Bruce’s Hotel, the terminus of the coach service from Little River and the nearest hotel to the town’s main wharf, had 18 rooms for visitors and a well-kept dining room.⁴⁰

38 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 42

39 Akaroa Civic Trust booklet on Waeckerle

40 *Cyclopedia*, p. 606



Figure 5.17. In this view looking south down Rue Lavaud in the 1870s, Waeckerle's Hotel, which was burned down in 1882, stands on the site now occupied by its replacement, today's Grand Hotel.



Figure 5.18. In this late 19th or early 20th century view looking south down Rue Lavaud, the Grand Hotel has replaced Waeckerle's Hotel, the roadway and footpaths have been formed and the Recreation Ground has been reclaimed. Ref: 712

In that same year, Akaroa had three licensed hotels, three temperance hotels and a number of boarding houses. Two of the boarding houses could have been mistaken for large residences. Windermere built probably in 1877 but possibly earlier, was a large, two-storeyed building with a gable end and verandah/balcony right on the street on Rue Lavaud. It survives and again, after many years as a residence, accommodates visitors.⁴¹ A short distance up Rue Grehan, The Wilderness was built in the 1870s. It has passed most of its life as a boarding house or bed and breakfast establishment. It has at times been a private dwelling, but in the late 20th century reverted to being a bed and breakfast establishment.

⁴¹ The *Press*, 5 January 1991, p. 14

In the last decade of the 19th century, Akaroa gained one business premises of architectural distinction. With the sea an important way into and out of Akaroa, the New Zealand Shipping Company had an agent in the town. In 1895 premises were built on Church Street for the Company. The Shipping Office illustrates perhaps better than any other building the tendency of Akaroa's architecture to be miniature in scale; it is also one of the country's best examples of Classical detailing executed in timber rather than stone⁴² (refer figure 5.19).



Figure 5.19. The Shipping Office, built in the 1890s, is an excellent example of both the small scale of Akaroa's architecture and the mimicking of the forms of stone construction using timber.

Akaroa's commercial buildings which have survived from the 19th century are mostly on two streets – Beach Road and Rue Lavaud. But even on these streets the older buildings are scattered and dispersed, with buildings of later decades and buildings of other uses interspersed among them, making it almost impossible to define commercial precincts in which adjoining buildings are exclusively, or even mainly, older buildings of historical or architectural interest.

42 Fearnley, *Colonial Style*, p. 34

Industry

Industry had less of an impact on the development of Akaroa than commerce. Very few factories were located in Akaroa, but the town's development was influenced by changes in industry on the wider Peninsula. The importance of the whaling industry in the founding of Akaroa has already been discussed. Subsequent industries of importance in Akaroa's 19th century history were timber milling, boat building, commercial fishing, dairy farming and cocksfooting.⁴³

Flour milling was Akaroa's first substantial industry after the decline of whaling. Waeckerle's mill of the late 1840s has already been mentioned. One of the *Monarch* settlers, Charles Haylock, bought land up the Grehan valley and built a water-powered flour mill which began production in January 1853. New machinery was installed in 1860. After flour milling ceased on the site, the large building was used as a brewery and then as a jam factory. The cottage on the property which was built at the same time as the flour mill survives, but not the factory building.⁴⁴

Another early industry in Akaroa was brickmaking. Bricks were made locally in small brickworks in the 1850s and 1860s. One of the kilns longest in use was that of Joseph Libeau Jr, which was in operation from 1864 until 1886. The output from the kilns was almost all used locally, through the years Akaroa was growing and new buildings were being erected.⁴⁵

The natural cover of forest made the milling of timber an important industry on Banks Peninsula between 1850 and the end of the century, but the industry had relatively little impact on the development of Akaroa. The nearest timber mills to the town of Akaroa were at Onuku and up the Balguerie Valley. A certain amount of sawn timber was shipped out over Akaroa's wharves from the 1850s on. It was recalled in the *Press* in 1926 that "Akaroa harbour was a busy port with a large number of vessels engaged in lifting timber for Lyttelton, Dunedin and northern ports". But more typically sawn timber was shipped directly to Lyttelton from the bays (both within Akaroa Harbour and round the outer edge of the Peninsula) in which the mills were located.⁴⁶

Boat building was a natural extension of timber milling. The first vessel built in Akaroa, a cargo punt built by Jean-Baptiste Eteveneaux, was launched in January 1858. He later built double-ended whaleboats for goldminers to use on the Buller River.⁴⁷

On the hillsides cleared of forest a pasture grass, cocksfoot, flourished, "whitening the hillsides". Cutting cocksfoot and processing its seed for export was the pre-eminent Peninsula industry for several decades. Banks Peninsula was the first large forest area in New Zealand to be cleared and sown in grass. When the same process was set in train in the North Island, the demand for cocksfoot seed soared, and was satisfied until the second decade of the 20th century almost entirely from Banks Peninsula. Although the cocksfoot industry was large it was dispersed. The seed was processed on the hillsides or

43 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 6-7

44 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 35-36; Farr in *Canterbury Old and New*, pp. 54, 56; *Lyttelton Times*, 15 January 1853

45 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 37; Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 9

46 The *Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement, p. IV; Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 25; Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 9; Mould, *More Tales*, p. 8; Pawson in Queen Elizabeth II Trust essays (1987), pp. 47-48 and fig. 11; Sewell, *Journal*, vol. 1, p. 444 and vol. 2, p. 132

47 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 26; Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 9; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 38

valley floors, bagged and shipped out from the bays in which the seed had been cut. Significant quantities of bagged cocksfoot seed was shipped out over the main wharf of Akaroa, but each bay had its own wharf through these years and the seed was usually shipped out from the bays, rather than being brought into Akaroa for shipment. Some cocksfoot seed merchants, among them Joseph Vangioni, had premises in Akaroa. A large shed opposite the Gaiety, used in later years as a motor garage but recently demolished, was built originally for the storage and processing of cocksfoot seed. Many of the seasonal and itinerant workers who harvested the seed spent time, and money, in Akaroa, but the industry otherwise did not have a noticeable presence in the town. The cocksfoot industry was, however, of critical importance to the economy of the Peninsula as a whole and had, therefore, a considerable impact on Akaroa's development. "The Monarch Cocksfoot absorbs all interest in the Peninsula this week" the *Akaroa Mail* noted in January 1897, "and nothing else is thought of, talked of, or worked at."⁴⁸

By that time, however, the factory system of dairy production was well established on the Peninsula. From the 1840s, Peninsula farmers had shipped cheese to New Zealand and Australian markets. Dairy production on the Peninsula remained small-scale until the 1890s when co-operative cheese factories were established first (1893) in German Bay (Takamatua) and then (1895) in Barry's Bay. In 1895-96 factories were also opened at Little Akaloa, Okains Bay and Wainui. In the following years a butter factory at Le Bons Bay and a cheese factory at Duvauchelles were added to the Peninsula's tally of dairy factories. By 1900 dairying was challenging cocksfoot as the Peninsula's chief industry. But once again, apart from serving as the point of shipment for some butter and cheese, and from being the location of the businesses of merchants who traded in dairy commodities, the proliferation of dairy factories on the Peninsula at the end of the 19th century had relatively little impact on the development of the town. (The establishment of a butter factory in Akaroa in the first decade of the 20th century is discussed in the following section.)⁴⁹

Commercial fishing began in earnest in Akaroa in the 1850s, but until the end of the 19th century remained small-scale, with the fishermen rowing out to grounds within the harbour or not far outside the heads. After the new main wharf had been opened in 1888, the old town wharf, at the bottom of Church Street, remained in use by fishermen. Well into the 20th century, this wharf, with its litter "of nets and ropes, cray-pots and tar-kegs" remained "sacred to fishermen".⁵⁰

48 The *Press*, 28 September 1926, Editorial; Andersen, *Place Names*, pp. 27-28; Coulson, *Golden Harvest*, pp. 17-18, 20-23, 25, 27, 45-49, 55; *Akaroa Mail*, 29 January 1897

49 Pawson in Queen Elizabeth II Trust essays (1987), p. 45; Andersen, *Place Names*, pp. 27-28; The *Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement, p. II; *Cyclopedia*, p. 603; Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 9

50 Baughan, *Akaroa*, p. 20

Public institutions

As Akaroa grew through the second half of the 19th century, it acquired a number of public buildings where the townsfolk could access various services. A number of local institutions were founded some of which put up buildings of their own. As for the town's 19th century dwellings, a surprisingly large number (in comparison with other New Zealand towns of comparable size) of these public buildings of various descriptions have survived, all within the relatively small area of 19th century Akaroa.

One of the oldest of these surviving public buildings is the customs house. Akaroa had been made a port of call in 1842 and customs officials were posted to the town in that year. In 1853 a simple, gable-ended building, with restrained decoration, was built at the base of the jetty at the northern ("French") end of the town (the site of the later Daly's wharf). The customs house became part of the Akaroa Museum in 1970, after many years of use as a garden shed by the Akaroa Borough and then County Councils.⁵¹

The town's first post office was also built at the northern end of the town (refer figure 5.20). A postmaster was appointed to Akaroa in the early 1850s. The 19th century post office building was domestic in appearance and scale. It had eventually two gable ends facing the street with a verandah with fretted posts on the frontage between the gables. This post office building was replaced, on the same site, in the 20th century.⁵²

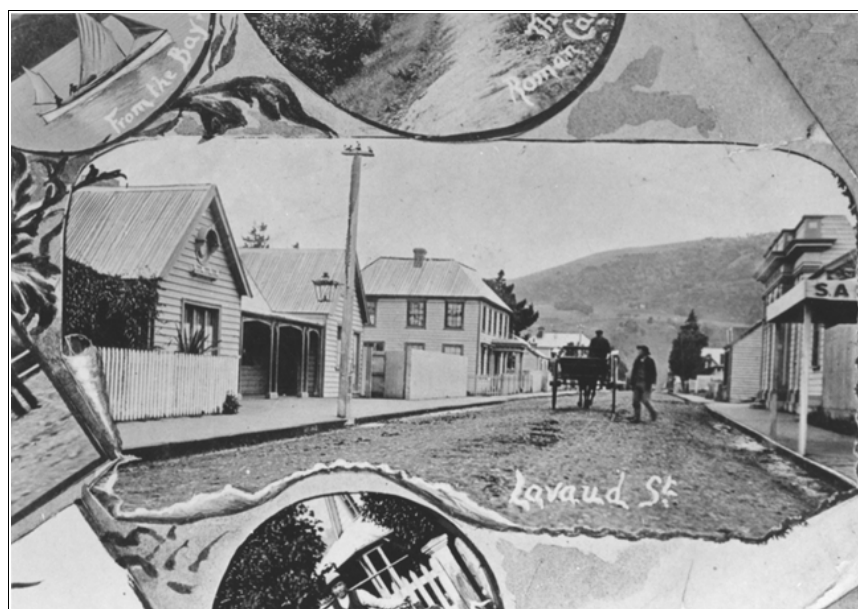


Figure 5.20. In the late 19th century the surviving Criterion Hotel building was conspicuous at the intersection of Rues Balguerrie and Lavaud. The roadway and footpaths had been formed and the original Post Office, left, had been extended.

Ref: 4586 CM

51 Mould, *More Tales*, pp. 64-65

52 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 42

In the same general area of town a police station and lock-up were built, probably in 1863. So, in 1864, was a town hall. When the *Lyttelton Times* reported in May 1864 that the Town Hall building was “rapidly approaching completion”, it declared that the building would “be a handsome as well as a useful ornament to the town of Akaroa”. C.M. Igglesden of Lyttelton was the architect of the Italianate building which had such Classical details as round-headed windows, some of them Palladian, a pedimented entry and pilasters⁵³ (refer figure 5.21).

The Town Hall survives as commercial premises. The 1876 lodge building which became the Gaiety Theatre superseded the Town Hall as the town’s main meeting place and in the early 20th century the Town Hall building was moved a short distance and turned through 90 degrees to make it more suitable for alternative uses.



Figure 5.21. One of Akaroa’s early public buildings, the Town Hall of 1864, was in the Italianate style then thought proper for public buildings. It survives, though repositioned and substantially altered. Ref: 97



Figure 5.22. As society became more sophisticated in Akaroa in the 1870s, the town’s Literary and Scientific Institute built premises which still stand, with a frontage altered in the early 20th century, as the Coronation Library. Ref: 114

53 *Lyttelton Times*, 3 May 1864

One of the organisations which met for some years in the Town Hall was the Akaroa Literary and Scientific Institute, founded in 1860-61. In 1873, the Institute was given land at the southern end of town and a building designed by S.C. Farr was erected on it. The opening was on 22 May 1875. The building was a hybrid, with some classical detailing – window hoods, pilasters and eaves brackets – but also a steeply pitched roof, a fretwork hood over the door and finials (refer figure 5.22). The building survives, with a near contemporary, the Gaiety Theatre, as its neighbour, but was substantially remodelled in 1911 (see below).⁵⁴

Several clubs and societies were formed in the 1860s. The Bowling Club and Horticultural Society both began their lives in 1864. The following year a Glee and Dramatic Club was founded and in 1866 a Musical Society. The Town Hall accommodated several of these clubs and societies in their early days.

In the 1870s, Akaroa also acquired a new court house. An original court house and gaol was completed in 1858. When it needed replacement an entirely new building, designed by William Clayton, the Colonial Architect, was erected on the site of the old French *Magasin*. Its Italianate design was a variant of a design Clayton used for a number of court houses erected in small towns in the 1870s (refer figure 5.23). Although Akaroa's last resident magistrate died in 1885, the court house remained in use for court sittings until 1979. The building survives as part of the Akaroa Museum.⁵⁵



Figure 5.23. A court house was built in Akaroa in the late 1870s, to a design similar to that used for court houses in several other small towns. It is now part of the Akaroa Museum. The building to the left, which has not survived, stood approximately on the site of today's butcher's shop. Ref: 130-1

54 Allison, *An Akaroa Precinct*, p. 29; Pam Wilson, Farr thesis, pp. 74-75; Leaflet available in Coronation Library

55 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 42; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 43

Lodges were first established in Akaroa in the 1840s and two lodge buildings which have survived were erected in the town in the second half of the 19th century. The foundation stone of the Phoenix Lodge was laid in December 1876. The simple, rectangular, gable-ended building has spare Classical detailing on its street frontage. It was built in an area that was then and still is (except for the nearby hospital built in the 1920s) residential. It remains in use as a lodge (refer figure 5.24).



Figure 5.24. At the upper end of Rue Jolie in (probably) the 1890s, the Phoenix Lodge (left) stood behind a picket fence. In the distance down the street is Akaroa's other surviving 19th century lodge building, now the Gaiety Theatre. Ref: 700

The much larger Oddfellows Lodge was built in 1877-78. The architect was A.W. Simpson of Christchurch. This too was a simple, rectangular building, but it was very much larger than the Phoenix Lodge and its frontage was another essay in Classical detailing executed in wood comparable to that of the later Shipping Office. The building has been a public gathering place for longer than it was ever a lodge and still serves the Akaroa community as the Gaiety Theatre.⁵⁶

These public and institutional buildings, like the town's commercial buildings, were dispersed, some being built at the "French" and some at the "English" end of the town. There does not appear to be any rational reason for some being at one end of town and some at the other. Like the town's commercial buildings, they are widely dispersed, reinforcing the sense that the town does not have a single, clear centre.

The town's public and commercial buildings were almost all designed in Classical styles or were at least given Classical detailing. By contrast the town's three surviving churches, all dating from the 19th century, are Gothic and all in the northern ("French") end of the town, though this shared location appears to be accidental and the buildings are some distance from each other.

⁵⁶ Allison, *An Akaroa Precinct*, pp. 37-38

The first Anglican church was built at the “English” (southern) end of the town in 1852 on reserve land. Sewell described it in 1853 as “a small, neat wooden building ... very plain, but as good as a plain village Church in England”. The only reminder of its presence at that end of town is the name Church Street.⁵⁷ The congregation quickly outgrew this original building and in 1863 the new church, St Peter’s, was built on Rue Balguerie. Designed by A.G. Purchas, and having affinities with the Selwyn churches of regions further north, St Peter’s was consecrated in November 1864. Transepts were inserted between the nave and chancel in 1877.⁵⁸

Akaroa’s Roman Catholic Church, St Patrick’s, occupies the historic site of the chapels and dwellings of the French missionaries of the 1840s. The present church was built in 1864, to a design of Mountfort and Bury. The distinctive bell tower, however, was not added until 1893. The date of the cockscomb barge moulding is not known.⁵⁹

The most recent of the town’s three surviving churches, the Presbyterian Church, was opened in June 1886. Its simplified Gothic design was the work of a Christchurch architect, John Whitelaw. It replaced an earlier church of 1860.⁶⁰

Although three 19th century churches have survived, they do not tell the full story of church building in 19th century Akaroa. Neither of the two original Roman Catholic chapels nor the original Anglican church of 1851-52 have survived; nor has the Ebenezer Congregational Church, built in 1885-86 on a section just off Rue Jolie south, which was moved to become the Convent school in the early 20th century but was subsequently demolished. However, the original Presbyterian Church was removed from the site and survives as commercial premises on Rue Lavaud.

The three surviving churches are significant reminders of the place of religion in the lives of people living in Akaroa in the 19th century and constitute, architecturally, an interesting group. Their size and simplicity are further reminders that Akaroa in the 19th century was a small, self-contained community of unpretentious people of modest means.

Several school buildings were erected in Akaroa in the 19th century, but none have survived. In early surveys of the town the site now occupied by the War Memorial was set aside for a school. A school was erected on the site in 1857-59. Some time later, a simple, gable-ended wooden building with a distinctive bell turret was erected on the site (refer figure 5.25). This building remained in use until the early years of the 20th century. The high school remained in the area, in another later school building, until the 1930s. In 1881, Parliament passed legislation authorising the establishment of a high school in Akaroa. This school opened in 1883. It was housed in the Garwood’s Store building and just saw out the century before being closed.⁶¹

A hospital, a small, cottage-like building, was built on the Bruce Terrace frontage of what is now the site of the Akaroa School before 1880. It has not survived.

57 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 35-36; Sewell, *Journal*, vol. I, pp. 329, 442

58 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 39; Akaroa Museum notice board; Booklet produced by Akaroa Mail and Akaroa Civic Trust, p. 14

59 Stacpoole, *Colonial Architecture*, p. 50; Booklet produced by Akaroa Mail and Akaroa Civic Trust, p. 14

60 Booklet produced by Akaroa Mail and Akaroa Civic Trust, p. 13; Presbyterian Parish centennial booklet, not paginated; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 39

61 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 38; *Area School 150*, pp. 2-4



Figure 5.25. In this late 19th or early 20th century view from Beach Road, the principal building visible is the old Borough School, which stood on the site now occupied by the War Memorial. A start has been made on the seawall which eventually extended from Aylmers Stream in the south to beyond Dalys Wharf to the north. Ref: 1896 CM

General comment on Akaroa's 19th century architecture

The buildings erected in Akaroa from the 1850s onwards were not to any significant extent different from similar buildings erected in other 19th century New Zealand settlements of similar size. Almost all were built of timber with, at least from the 1860s on, corrugated iron roofs. Almost all were in styles that followed common, New Zealand-wide patterns. This is as true of the town's houses as of a 19th century structure that was moved into town in the late 20th century, the Akaroa Lighthouse. The town's churches are varied, but all within the common Gothic idiom of 19th century New Zealand church architecture. Similarly, variants of the Classical style were used for commercial premises and for public buildings of various descriptions.

Akaroa's buildings are almost all conventional, typical structures which do not tell a story peculiar or unique to Akaroa. The architectural historian who first made this point in a compelling way was Charles Fearnley. His views on a supposed "French" style in Akaroa architecture have already been discussed. Fearnley concluded that Akaroa's buildings followed common New Zealand colonial forms, with perhaps a few decorative variants (the use of double verandah posts and of certain forms of verandah brackets) which may, but probably did not, derive from the noticeably French in style buildings of Akaroa's first decade. He dismissed the notion that Akaroa's buildings generally had an "elegance" that was "truly French". "French or English end to the town," he wrote "it makes no difference to the Colonial style." Akaroa's 19th century buildings can all be fitted comfortably within the "Colonial Vernacular" architectural style, characterised by the use of timber, the derivation of decorative features and forms from a variety of European sources, but predominantly from Britain, and by innovation on the part of colonial carpenters and builders.

What makes Akaroa unusual, and possibly unique in New Zealand, is that a large number of these 19th century, Colonial Vernacular, buildings have survived in the relatively small area occupied by the 19th century town. (Akaroa did not spread significantly beyond the boundaries of the old borough until after the end of World War II.) This, rather than any

distinctively Akaroa style of architecture, is what gives the town its special atmosphere and character today.⁶²

A New Zealand colonial, not French, town

These conclusions about the architecture of Akaroa in the later 19th century underline the extent to which, after the 1840s, Akaroa ceased to be a French village. From the 1850s Akaroa became “a small town with French connections in a British colony”.⁶³ In 1864, Thiercelin declared that the “best thing” about his return visit to Akaroa was “seeing and hearing French people” in the town.⁶⁴ But the 1860s were the last decade in which French was heard regularly in Akaroa’s streets and by then most of those who were still speaking the French language and conscious of being French by descent had already been British subjects for more than a decade.

The notion that Akaroa is, nevertheless, still in some way French more than 150 years after the French settlers gave up their nationality of birth remains strong. It is not uncommon to read of Akaroa being “a beautiful and tranquil piece of New Zealand that is forever France” or that “Akaroa retains a hint of France, the feel of something different”. Claims are made that its older buildings are in “the Gallic style” and that “Akaroa gives the impression of being a sleepy, provincial French fishing village” with “little weatherboard cottages in the French manner” and a “French colonial architecture” of “amazing” quality. In the 1970s, even the Akaroa Civic Trust subscribed to the belief that the presence of the French colonists “has undoubtedly influenced the character of the town and its people”.⁶⁵

Better informed observers recognise that if you “scan Akaroa today for signs of any influence from the early days of French settlement ... there is little to find”. More bluntly, the Director of the Akaroa Museum has written that “the reinvention of Akaroa as a little piece of France ... needs to be recognised for what it is – faux”.⁶⁶

The strange case of the Langlois-Eteveneaux Cottage

The Langlois-Eteveneaux Cottage is probably the main reason why claims that Akaroa in the early 21st century is still a French village gain any credence at all. Fearnley described the cottage as the main cause of all the mistaken ideas that Akaroa’s architecture is French rather than a local variant of New Zealand Colonial.⁶⁷

The cottage was built by Aimable Langlois probably 1841, the year he purchased the land from the Nanto-Bordelaise Company. Langlois returned to France in 1842, but received, in his absence, a Crown grant of the land in 1856. His cottage was purchased in 1858 by one of the original French settlers, Jean-Pierre Eteveneaux.

62 Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, chs 1, 3; Fearnley, *Colonial Style*, pp. 49-50, 54 (Fearnley titled chapter 4 of this book “The Legend of Akaroa”); John Wilson, Talk to Akaroa Civic Trust, 30 June 2007

63 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, p. xv

64 Thiercelin, *Travels in Oceania*, p. 162

65 *Sunday Star Times*, undated clipping; McGill, *The Other New Zealanders*, p. 13; Priestley in *Christchurch New Zealand*, no date; Temple, *Christchurch A City and Its People*, p. 102; *Air New Zealand Magazine*, August 2006, pp. 32-35; Booklet produced after 1975 by the Akaroa Mail in conjunction with the Akaroa Civic Trust, p. 1

66 D. Reynolds, “Made in New Zealand”, *New Zealand Historic Places*, November 1997, p. 14; Lynda Wallace to the Historic Places Trust, 3 April 2007

67 Fearnley, *Colonial Style*, p. 57

In the earliest photo to show the cottage, it can be seen clearly enough to establish that its roof – typically French with its steep hips and slight upturn at the eaves level – is original. But other detail cannot be seen.

Fearnley was one of the first to suggest that elements of its style – the pilasters, the fanlights, the side-hung louvred shutters, the entablatures over the door and windows and the mouldings below the eaves -- are too sophisticated to date from the 1840s. There is strong, though not conclusive, evidence that the cottage was redecorated in the 1890s by Jean-Baptiste Eteveneaux, a son of Jean-Pierre Eteveneaux. Jean Baptiste Eteveneaux, who had arrived in Akaroa in 1840 as a young boy, perhaps remodelled the cottage “in the French style” as an assertion of French identity in a town that was by then overwhelmingly British, in its population and architectural styles.

The cottage was owned after 1869 by another of the *Comte de Paris* settlers, Christian Waeckerle, and his daughter Caroline Bayley. These owners may well have been sympathetic to Eteveneaux’s wish to create a memory of his homeland by giving a distinctively French look to one of the few buildings that had, by the late 19th century, survived from the early days of French settlement.

This account for the present appearance of the Langlois-Eteveneaux Cottage is given added credibility by the fact that Jean-Baptiste Eteveneaux was a skilled carpenter. (He made a model of one of the Akaroa blockhouses of 1845 at about the turn of the century.)⁶⁸ Structural examination of the building has largely substantiated the belief that it was significantly remodelled at the end of the 19th century.⁶⁹

In 1940, the bootmaker’s shop which had stood in front of the cottage, on the corner of Rues Lavaud and Balguerrie, was taken down. In the 1960s, at the time the Akaroa Museum was established (see below), the cottage was stripped of additions, mainly lean-tos at its rear, and refurbished and refurnished as a French settler’s cottage.

19th century roads, bridges and infrastructure

In 1876, on the abolition of the provinces, Akaroa became a borough, surrounded on its landward sides by Akaroa County. Through its 80-year history (the borough merged with the county in 1957) the Borough Council had two homes. Both were humble buildings. The second Borough Council building, erected in 1897 on what was then known as Balguerrie Street, was large enough to accommodate a council chamber, a mayor’s room and the town clerk’s office, but was still small and simple. Neither this building nor its predecessor has survived on site.⁷⁰

The establishment of the borough in 1876 saw a burst of activity in improvements to roads and bridges, evidence for which can still be found in the town. Responsibility for roads, bridges and other infrastructure had previously been held by the Akaroa and Wainui Roads Board (which met for the first time in 1864) and the Canterbury Provincial Government.

68 Tremewan, *French Akaroa*, p. 170; Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 3; Fearnley, *Colonial Style*, p. 57; D. Reynolds, “Made in New Zealand”, *New Zealand Historic Places*, November 1997, pp. 14-16; John Wilson talk to Akaroa Civic Trust, 30 June 2007; Salmond, *Old New Zealand Houses*, p. 83; Stacpoole, *Colonial Architecture*, p. 47

69 Pers. comm., Lynda Wallace. The examination was made by conservation architect Ian Bowman.

70 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 40-41; Andersen, *Place Names*, pp. 42-43; *Cyclopedia*, p. 604

The *Akaroa Mail* greeted the formation of the borough with exuberance: “Ring out wild bells, for Akaroa has been proclaimed a borough. Ring out the Road Board and ring in the Municipality; ring out mud and ring in asphalt, ring out ruts and ring in rates.”⁷¹

There are (if any) only “archaeological” remains of the street surface improvements undertaken by the Borough Council in the 19th century. But above ground several of the bridges across the small streams which flow down to the sea through Akaroa which date from the early years of the borough remain in use and are important elements of several Akaroa streetscapes. These older bridges include the two bridges with cast-iron balustrades on Rue Lavaud which were erected in 1879. They are known as the “Waeckerle bridges” because they were erected while Christian Waeckerle was mayor and bear his name. Other surviving 19th century bridges are the bridge which carries Beach Road over the Aylmer Stream at the southern end of the town (1886, A.I. McGregor mayor) and the brick-balustraded bridge on Rue Jolie south (1878, H.G. Watkins mayor).⁷²

The port of Akaroa in the 19th century

Akaroa was born of its connection with the sea and the sea remained an important if not the main way people and goods arrived at or left the town until the end of the 19th century.

The French settlers came ashore at an open beach at what became the southern (“English”) end of the town, but most took up land at the northern end of French Bay and it was at that end that the town’s first jetty, the French jetty, was built in the 1840s, very near the site of the surviving Daly’s Wharf. Little information is available about this jetty. It may have been little more than short causeway of rocks. Ogilvie suggests that by 1854 the French jetty was “dilapidated” and that around 1859 Charles Haylock started to rebuild it, but then died. James Daly took over whatever jetty was on the site in the early 1870s and probably built today’s Daly’s wharf. Daly had a store at the jetty’s end.⁷³

In the meantime, the first public jetty had been built at the southern (“English”) end of the town in 1859. The jetty was designed by Samuel Farr and largely paid for by the Provincial Government. This wharf was located at the end of Church Street⁷⁴ (refer figures 5.26 & 5.27).

Regular shipping services between Akaroa and Lyttelton began in the late 1850s, about the time the first town wharf was built. A wooden paddle steamer, the *Planet*, owned by the Canterbury Steam Navigation Company, paid its first visit to Akaroa in March 1858, before the new wharf had been finished. The regular service linking Akaroa to Lyttelton was subsequently maintained by other vessels.⁷⁵

A new main wharf was opened, a short distance to the south of the first town wharf, in August 1888 (refer figure 5.28). Subsequently, the first wharf remained in use for many years, partly, as already noted, as a fishermen’s wharf. But it was poorly maintained and

71 *Akaroa Mail*, 4 August 1876

72 Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 5

73 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 38

74 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 38; Andersen, *Place Names*, pp. 42-43; Akaroa Museum notice board

75 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 38; Andersen, *Place Names*, pp. 42-43

the remnants were finally removed in the 1930s.⁷⁶

The main wharf remains an important element in Akaroa life and is the most conspicuous and important reminder of Akaroa's history of interaction with the sea and of its role as the Peninsula's main port. (Another reminder of Akaroa's past as a port, the Shipping Office, was discussed above.)



Figure 5.26. The building of the town's first substantial wharf in 1859 was an important step forward for Akaroa in an age when its connections with the outside world were mainly by sea. Ref: 82-1

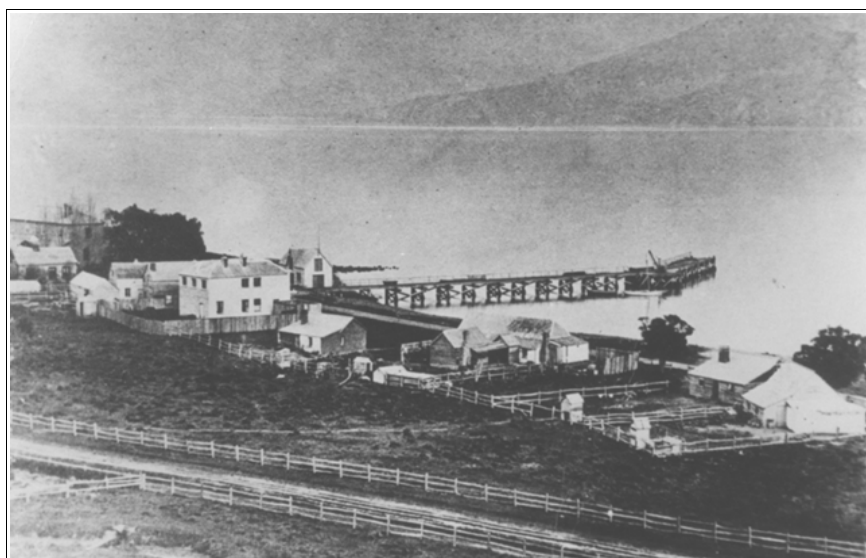


Figure 5.27. A wharf was built at the southern end of Akaroa, at the foot of Church Street, in 1859. This original wharf was superseded in 1886-87 by the main wharf but survived in an increasingly dilapidated state until the 1930s. There are business premises around the curve of Beach Road, but Rue Jolie, defined by a post-and-rail fence still has no buildings on its western side. Ref: 7352 CM

⁷⁶ Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 43



Figure 5.28. For a time in the late 19th century and early 20th century, Akaroa had two wharves side-by-side at its southern end. By this time, Beach Road had an almost continuous line of business premises and there were houses on the east side of Rue Jolie above the Gaiety Theatre (lower right) but there is only a single villa (which has survived) on the west side of the street. Ref: 2231-1

Access to Akaroa by land

The sea was the main way Akaroa maintained contact with the rest of Canterbury through the 19th century, but people started coming and going overland in the 1840s. While French naval personnel were stationed at Akaroa from 1840 to 1846 they built some roads, including a bridle track from Akaroa round to the Head of the Bay (Duvauchelle).

By the early 1850s, it was not unusual for travellers from Christchurch to Akaroa to take a boat from Lyttelton to Pigeon Bay, walk over the relatively low saddle to the Head of the Bay by way of a foot track, then walk on round to Akaroa or take another boat from the Head of the Bay to Akaroa.⁷⁷

Henry Sewell made his way to Akaroa in 1853-54 by this route. On one of his later visits, Sewell took an alternative route over the hills on the far side of the harbour from Akaroa down to the Little River valley near the shore of Wairewa (Lake Forsyth).⁷⁸

From the mid 1850s on, the Provincial Government started providing funds to improve the “Akaroa bridle road” around the head of the harbour. By 1864, the road was good enough for the ferry service between Akaroa and Duvauchelle to be discontinued.⁷⁹ Work began on the road over Hilltop in 1858. But it was not until February 1872 that the coach road linking Akaroa to Christchurch was completed. Cobb and Company coaches began providing a service over the road immediately after the road had been completed, but traffic by boat between Akaroa and Lyttelton continued.⁸⁰

77 *Lyttelton Times*, 31 January 1852

78 Sewell, *Journal*, vol. I, pp. 328-29, 444-45

79 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 42

80 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 41

The opening of the railway from Christchurch to Little River in 1886 led to an increase in overland passenger traffic between Akaroa and Christchurch. Coaches which made the run over Hilltop and round to Akaroa connected with the passenger trains.⁸¹ In 1903 coaches were making the Little River-Akaroa run three times a week, and the Pigeon Bay-Akaroa run on alternating days. But the two wharves at the southern end of the town remained busy and there was “constant communication” by steamer between Akaroa and Lyttelton. A small steamer also maintained a regular service to the smaller bays within the harbour.⁸²

Recreation on the sea

The harbour was important to 19th century Akaroa not only because it served as a highway into and out of the town but also because it offered opportunities for recreation. A boating community has long been part of Akaroa life and both sailing and rowing clubs were founded in the 19th century. The rowing club’s first boat shed was near Daly’s Wharf at the northern end of the town. In 1893 a new shed and slip were built on a site south of the main wharf. This site is still occupied by a boat shed, although the 1893 building burned down in 1913.⁸³

The first significant alteration to Akaroa’s shoreline dates from the same years that the present main wharf was built. In 1886-88, a shallow section of foreshore at the northern end of the town was reclaimed and the Recreation Ground formed. A grandstand was built in 1909 on the seaward edge of the reclaimed land and remained on that site until a new pavilion was erected to serve the “Rec Ground”. In 1991, the old grandstand was removed to the Okains Bay Museum.⁸⁴

Most of the sea frontage of the town remained open beach until the first significant stretch of seawall on Beach Road, from the Rue Jolie corner round to the main wharf, was built in 1901-04. The wall was soon extended right round the main curve of Beach Road to the start of the northern end of the town, where Beach Road merges into Rue Lavaud (refer figure 5.29).



Figure 5.29. The extension of the Beach road seawall created a popular promenade for tourists as seen in this 1909 photograph. Ref: G140553 1/2, ATL

81 Lowndes, *Short History*, not paginated

82 *Cyclopedia*, p. 603

83 Akaroa Museum display

84 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 43

THE COLONIAL LANDSCAPE

The disappearing bush

When Samuel Farr arrived in Akaroa in 1850 he and six traveling companions were so enamoured with the landscape that they climbed the hills behind Akaroa, every day for a week to appreciate the “luxuriant and romantic country”. Farr's descriptions of the wider landscape at this time suggest that much of the forest cover was still intact and for him at least the natural beauties of the wider setting were beyond improvement.⁸⁵ These thoughts were echoed by Henry Sewell who described the forest on the hills surrounding Akaroa as “[e]vergreen woods such as would have thrown Capability Brown into an ecstasy”.⁸⁶

It was ironic then that the arrival of Canterbury Association settlers later in the same year that Farr arrived marked the start of the destruction of the Banks Peninsula forests. As the largest wooded area close to Christchurch, Banks Peninsula quickly became the town's source of firewood and timber. Timber cutting licenses were granted by the Provincial Government from as early as 1851. However, the wholesale assault on the forests did not begin in earnest until the 1860s when, as Wood and Pawson have noted, the Canterbury economy was boosted by high wool prices and infrastructure development. During the mid-1860s the amount of timber shipped out of Akaroa was consistently between 1.5 and 2 million super feet per annum.⁸⁷

Every type of timber extracted from the bush had a use. Totara, described at this time as being “as thick as the hairs on a cat's back in places” was prized for boat building, wharf piles, bridging, fencing, house construction and shingles. Matai was used for house frames, flooring and wharf piles; kahikatea for bench tops and butter or cheese boxes; and miro for weather-boarding. Low rate trees were either used to run the saw milling machinery or were shipped to Christchurch for firewood.

The second major assault on the Akaroa landscape came as a consequence of unintended fires which spread either from settler's attempts to fire the cut-over bush or from fires inadvertently left burning in sawyer's huts and encampments. Fueled by the north-westerly föhn winds and dead wastewood, these were regular and extensive, and effectively completed Banks Peninsula's deforestation. The great fire of 1863 is thought to have been the most devastating for the Akaroa landscape.

A first-hand account of this was recorded by Elizabeth Muter, an English visitor to New Zealand, who documented the extent of the fire and the severity of the threat it posed to the town's residents. “Since my first view the fires had not only continued to rage, but to increase; and now from every side down the great basin they were in full march to the sea. The harbour seemed a mere funnel for the escape of the smoke and the heated air; while around the furnace glowed square miles of forest in flames... “[W]e walked to the house of our friends, where every preparation was in progress to turn or check the flames advancing towards their property, or, if unsuccessful, to carry away their most valuable effects. For the two last nights they had watched the direction taken by the fires with the keenest interest, and now nearly all hope had left them. The flames were

⁸⁵ Stevenson, *Canterbury Old and New*, p. 40

⁸⁶ Sewell, *The Journal of Henry Sewell 1853-7*, p. 323

⁸⁷ Wood and Pawson, *Environment and History*, pp. 453-454

absolutely roaring up the glen, and down the fern hills, progressing on both sides towards the town... The inhabitants could be seen in lines beating out the flames with large boughs of trees, or hurrying in groups to check the inroad of their foe in some new and unexpected quarter.”⁸⁸ Fortunately the fires burnt themselves out before they reached the town. However, Muter noted, all of vegetation around the town was 'devoured' leaving the settlers resolved to leave more extensive clearings around their homes in the future.

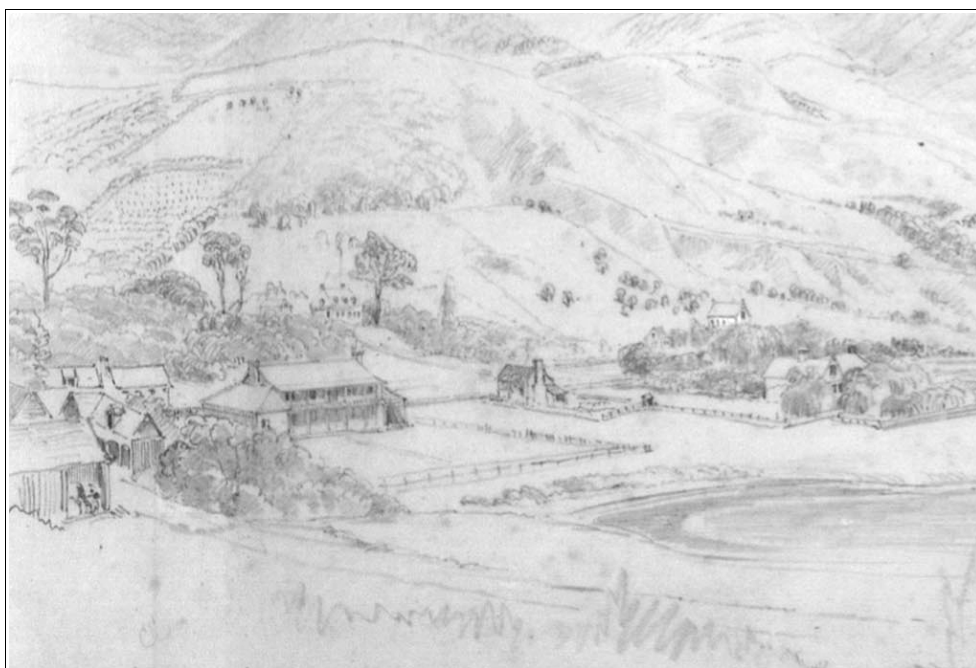


Figure 5.30. At the north end of Akaroa on Rue Lavaud gardens and hillside cultivations were well established by 1866 when this sketch was completed. The familiar form of willows is observable in a number of properties together with remnant native specimen trees.

Ref: Nicolas Chevalier, 1912-0044-89, Te Papa

At this time, and up until the coach road was formed in 1872, Akaroa was connected to the outside world primarily by sea so most visitors' first experience of the town was strongly shaped by their view of the settlement from the harbour. As a consequence most visitors in the first thirty years of the colony consistently described Akaroa in pictorial terms, with a foreground of sea, the settlement in the mid-ground and the heavily vegetated, dark olive green hills as background. With the erasure of its forested backdrop, the aesthetics of this composition were significantly impacted.

Returning visitors like Louis Thiercelin were shocked to find that the imposing forests that had so captivated him in 1840, had, in the space of 24 years, been reduced to a few patches of green on the mountain slopes and some clumps of trees in the valleys. Akaroa he noted had taken on the appearance of "a European countryside, ... with an air of youth, vitality and rich disorder". Now a working landscape "of immense wheat fields and pasture supporting numerous cows and thousands of sheep", it had for Thiercelin lost its local flavour.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Muter, *Travels and Adventures of an Officers wife in India, China and New Zealand*, pp. 217-218

⁸⁹ Thiercelin, *Travels in Oceania: Memoirs of a whaling ships doctor*, pp.133-134

By 1900 the forest was virtually gone and only a few bush remnants survived in the valleys. A new agrarian landscape of pasture and cocksfoot grass had taken its place and was thriving on the hills behind the town. (The importance of the cocksfoot seed industry to Akaroa has already been discussed.)

Gardens and placemaking

In 1855 the Rev. Robert Bateman Paul visited Akaroa and recorded his impressions of the town. Consistent with newspaper commentary at that time, the Rev. Paul noted that “the houses of the French settlers, with their vineyards and gardens, form a prominent feature in the scenery of Akaroa”.⁹⁰ In fifteen years the cultural landscape of Akaroa had taken on a significance perhaps equal to that of its natural setting. Reports of the fecundity of the gardens were contrasted with vistas of “curiously injured vegetation” on the hills. Houses were now 'embedded', 'embosomed' and 'half concealed' in exotic vegetation rather than the native species which had once covered the town. Fruit trees, vines and walnuts had become source material for Christchurch's nursery trade and Akaroa gardens “particularly Rev. W. Aylmer, Mr Robinson and Mons. Beauriou [Bouriaud] were considered well worth a visit”.⁹¹

The Rev. Aylmer's residence Glencarrig on Percy Street was sketched by Janetta Cookson in 1853, and was the port of call for most official and semi-official visitors to Akaroa. Henry Sewell praised it highly, calling it the nicest residence he had seen in New Zealand and provided the following description. “A stream rushes down forming one side of the grounds, and behind and above him is Forest stretching up to the top of the Mountains. Then the native trees and shrubs scattered about us are as ornamental as the best dressed shrubs and trees in England. The Naya [ngaio] is as good as the laurel and not unlike it. Plenty of Tree ferns and Ti-palms [Cordyline]. Mr Alymer is making a nice place, with gardens and lawn.”⁹²

Similarly, when Mr Robinson's seaside estate adjoining Bruce's Hotel was advertised for sale in 1859 it was described as being “bounded on two sides by rivulets of the purest water and chiefly laid out in gardens, orchards and paddock”.⁹³ The Rue Balguerie garden of Mr Watson, the chief magistrate, was also considered noteworthy. Charlotte Godley visited the property in 1851 and noted that “you go through a very neat gate up a nicely kept little path of lawn, a beautiful stream on one side, and on the other a high hedge of roses, the monthly [Chinese] ones in full blow, and the cabbage *Provence*, just about to flower”.⁹⁴ A watercolour of the garden painted the following year shows a suggestion of a shrubbery to one side of the cottage with ferns as part of the planting.

Another important property, Augustus White's Blythcliffe, was visited by the American Mary Lawrence in 1860. Although the property was only two years old it was described by her as being the best house in Akaroa (refer figure 5.31). In her travel journal she described it as “adorned with lawns, walks, arbors, waterfalls, brooks, caves etc.”. The orchard she noted was equally impressive, containing an abundance of peaches.⁹⁵

90 Paul, *Letters from Canterbury, New Zealand*, pp. 67-68

91 Paul, *Letters from Canterbury, New Zealand*, pp. 67-68; Samuel Farr's recollections in the *Akaroa Mail*, June 20, 1913

92 Sewell, *The Journal of Henry Sewell 1853-7*, p. 328

93 *Nelson Examiner and NZ Chronicle*, 21 Sept 1859

94 Godley, *Letters from Early New Zealand, 1850-1853* p. 264

95 Garner, *The Captains Best Mate : The Journal of Mary Chipman Lawrence on the Whaler Addison*, pp.



Figure 5.31. The ornamental grounds at Bythcliffe. Willows featured prominently in the grounds. Ref: 1760-1

Not all visitors to Akaroa saw the town and its landscape as a picturesque idyll and their alternative readings of the site are valuable indicators of the ambiguities of visitor's attitudes to the settlement at this time. Henry Sewell, after being so charmed by the Rev. Alymer's garden and the scenic qualities of Akaroa's land-locked harbour was singularly unimpressed with the state of the French settlement, writing in 1853 that they had hardly advanced beyond the first stage of settlers.⁹⁶

The 1860 journal of Mary Lawrence offered a contrasting view to Sewell's and showed how successful some of the French settlers had been in establishing themselves and their gardens. Taken to visit the garden of "Madam Rosello" [Rousselot] in Rue Balguire, Mary wrote "we went there more particularly to visit their orchard, which consists of four hundred peach trees all borne down with fruit. Such a sight I never saw before... We were feasted with peaches, currants, raspberries and strawberries. They were engaged in making peach wine." The following day she visited two more orchards laden with fruit and wrote in her diary "[n]ature has bestowed her gifts with a lavish hand in Akaroa. Every view is delightful". Throughout her stay she was given boxes of fruit, cuttings of a geranium and a fuchsia, both in bloom, as well as herbs of various kinds, prunes, huckleberries, peach jam and a bottle of cherry wine.⁹⁷

Four years later and similarly impressed with the fecundity of the landscape, Elizabeth Muter recorded her astonishment at seeing vegetables and plants profusely flowering despite the "wildest neglect". The fruit trees she noted "were all standards, and the boughs weighed down by a quantity of the finest fruit, greater than they could carry, however careless the cultivation of the garden".⁹⁸

219-220

96 Sewell, *The Journal of Henry Sewell 1853-7*, p. 325

97 Garner, *The Captains Best Mate : The Journal of Mary Chipman Lawrence on the Whaler Addison*, pp. 220-223

98 Muter, *Travels and Adventures of an Officers wife in India, China and New Zealand*, p. 225



Figure 5.32. Walnut Avenue was the approach to Dr Watkins home which ran from Walnut Drive between 109 Rue Jolie and 113 Rue Jolie. Dr Watkins and his nurseryman son Stephen planted an avenue of walnuts in 1861. Three of these survive today.
Ref: 2165



Figure 5.33. Late 19th century view of Percy Street with its mix of hedges and picket fences. Ref: Postcard, private collection, J. Pyle

New lots and new landscapes

Houses for sale and rent, and sections for lease in the town in the 1850s and 1860s all advertised well-stocked gardens, with some noting native shrubs as an added feature. Conversely, the large joint property leasing opportunity offered by the Rev. Alymer, Dr Watkins and John Watson in 1852 advertised town sections in close proximity to plenty of 'firing' and water.⁹⁹

As well as this land lease opportunity other lots were made available as a consequence of various town surveys between 1851 and 1855. (These surveys were mentioned in the previous section of this report.) The surveys saw the creation of a number of eighth of an acre and quarter acre sections on Lavaud and Jolie Streets between Mill and Balguerie Roads, and in the Selwyn Street- Church Street- Bruce Terrace block. The houses that were built on these lots and the others that followed in the 1870s were characteristically positioned forward on the section, favouring space for a kitchen garden and home orchard over public ornamental display. Front gates were generally placed directly opposite the front door and simple white picket fences marked the property boundary but were less successful in containing the vegetation, which from descriptions matured into full-blown and vigorous gardens.

New plant species arrived with the new immigrants, which by that time included Scotch, Irish, Chinese, English, French, German and Portuguese. Figs were recorded in Waeckerle's Hotel garden in the 1860s and olive trees were successfully growing in a number of properties along with lilies. A plantation of filberts and a *Magnolia grandiflora* was noted in Dr Watkins' Rue Jolie garden along with a *Sequoia gigantea* (Californian Big Tree) at his stables on the corner of Selwyn Avenue and Rue Jolie. An 'Alligator Pear' (avocado), possibly located in German Bay, was recorded by Robert Dawber in the 1860s. A catalpa tree brought back from Rio de Janeiro was a feature of Mr Watson's Rue Lavaud garden and loquats, violets and spring bulbs were planted by the magistrate, Mr Robinson, in his garden on the south side of Bruce Terrace.¹⁰⁰ Other 19th century plants included Mr Nalder's *Araucaria bidwillii* (Bunya Bunya Pine), *Magnolia grandiflora* and Cornus (Dogwood),¹⁰¹ *Eucalyptus globulus* and *Eucalyptus gillii* in Charles Haylock's mill garden, as well as lilacs, laurel, aquilegia, ivy and paeonies in other gardens.

A number of Akaroa's roses have been identified as dating from the 1850s, many of which are attributed to Robert D'Oyly who arrived in the town in 1857. These include the pink *Old Blush*, the red *Cramoisie Supérieure*, *Félicité et Perpétuée*, *Rosa 'William Lobb'*, *Gloire de Dijon*, the yellow *Rosa spinosissima* and the English tea rose *Devoniensis*.¹⁰² In the early Le Lievre gardens the Banksia rose was used as a dye to stain fishing lines.¹⁰³

The profusion of roses which was so frequently commented on by visitors were also a notable feature of Akaroa's cemeteries. Some of the earliest graves were smothered with *Rosa Indica major*, an old rose traditionally used as root stock, and roses were also planted on pauper's graves in place of memorial stones.¹⁰⁴

99 *Lyttelton Times*, 12 January 1852

100 *Akaroa history : newspapers extracts 19.11.37 -22.6.40; The Lelievre Family: Akaroa; Burstall, Forest Mensuration Report No 22*, p. 13

101 *New Zealand Gardener*, April 2005 pp. 72-76

102 Steen, *New Zealand Gardener*, July 1 1957, pp. 777-785

103 Lelievre, *The Lelievre Family, Akaroa: the story of Etienne François and Justine Rose Lelievre*

104 Mould, *More Tales of Banks Peninsula*; Mould, *New Zealand Gardener*, March 1996, pp. 57-59



Figure 5.34. Charles Haylock's property, mill and mill manager's house were built in the 1850s. Now subdivided into Potter's Croft, Grehan Lea, Mill Cottage and the Herb Farm many of Haylock's early fruit trees, walnuts and Eucalyptus species survive in these gardens. This image shows the property now known as Mill Cottage in 1919. Ref: A-157-007 ATL

Evidence of new plant introductions and fashions was documented in an exhibits list from the Akaroa Horticultural Society Show of 1869. Impressive in the variety of fruit and vegetables entered, these records illustrated the diversity of fruit species in the town by this stage. Included in the list are pears, apples and plums all originating from America, English origin peaches and French apples and crab-apples. This diversity was also observable in the ornamental plants that were exhibited. Fashionable new plant species appeared centre stage among the familiar lilies, sweet william, arums, verbena, roses and stock. These new species included popular plants like pelargoniums, begonias and zonal geraniums as well as fuchsias, clematis, phlox drummondii, arabella, ferns, picotees, pinks, ivy and pansies.¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, other than potted-plant or conservatory ferns, no native species were exhibited.

By the 1880s, specimens of native vegetation were being noted in gardens. Previously featured in clumps or stands in Akaroa's larger gardens, single or paired ferns, cordylines, flax and nikau were now considered to add a touch of the exotic to what was a predominantly an English garden aesthetic (refer figure 5.35). *Sophora* (kowhai) and kanuka were also found mingling with camellias, large walnuts, willows, London plane trees, Tasmanian bluegums and macrocarpas. Today the remains of this planting can still be seen in the substantial cabbage trees, kowhai, pohutukawa, gums and other species that have survived in many of the gardens, particularly on Rue Balguerrie, Rue Grehan and Aymers Valley Road.

¹⁰⁵ Akaroa Horticultural Society Centennial Schedule 1875-1975



Figure 5.35. The garden at The Glen. Paired Cordylines signal the formal entrance. A second path separates the orchard from the kitchen garden and a glasshouse is visible to the right of the house. Climbers are fashionably draped along the verandah and a pine shelter belt can be seen behind the house. Ref: 2124



Figure 5.36. Part of the garden at Haylock House, (now known as Akaroa House) 13 Alymer Valley Road. Built in 1883 for the Mayor the garden still contains a number of original plantings including a Norfolk pine of significant proportions, a kowhia and a cabbage tree.

The resort garden and the seaside holiday

A resort hierarchy which had developed in the mid 19th century saw Akaroa become the destination of choice for Canterbury and Otago working class families. Organised excursions to Akaroa and other Peninsula bays began very soon after Christchurch had been founded at the end of 1850 and by the 1860s Akaroa was being referred to as “the Brighton of Canterbury”.¹⁰⁶ In 1870 the *Illustrated Australia News* described it as “one of the pleasant summer retreats for the hardworking merchants and tradesmen of Christchurch and Dunedin, by whom and their young families it is annually crowded”. The sea voyage from Dunedin, it was said, added to the enjoyment of the vacation.¹⁰⁷

Associated with this burgeoning tourist industry, the hotel and the guest house garden emerged as a new and distinct garden type in Akaroa. A blend of private and public landscape, these were often extensive gardens with carefully laid out walks through impressive orchards and ornamental shrubberies which often included native species. Their commanding views of the harbour and the salubrity of the location were important elements of the garden and their aesthetic and health giving properties were marketed to invalids and convalescents as well as family groups. This had much to do with contemporary environmental theory that held that the stale air of cities was potentially harmful whereas areas located near the coast which were 'cleansed by sea breezes' were beneficial to one's health. This view was echoed by William Dawber when he decided to make Akaroa his home in 1869: “Christchurch is not a healthy place, Banks Peninsula is very healthy”, he wrote.¹⁰⁸

In the resort gardens of Akaroa, 'seekers of health or pleasure' were able to breathe fresh sea air mingled with the perfume of the surrounding flowers. They dined on local butter and Peninsula cheese; fresh flounder, oysters and crayfish were caught daily in the harbour and vegetables were provided from the establishments' gardens. Guests were encouraged to help themselves to fruit and nuts in the orchards which for many, including Dawber who was staying at Waeckerle's Hotel on Rue Lavaud, was a novelty. “We are to help ourselves to what fruit we like to eat out of the garden... We eat dozens of peaches daily, we go into the garden and help ourselves” he wrote.¹⁰⁹

It is likely that the grounds of many of these hotels and guest houses were professionally laid out by the nurserymen or gardeners working in Akaroa at this time. Certainly promotional material for Wagstaff's Family and Commercial Hotel on Beach Rd suggests that by 1875 the garden was designed as an attraction in its own right with built-in recreational facilities as well as passive amenity. “The grounds to the Hotel extend one-sixth of a mile along a sea beach, and from every part beautiful views of the Harbour of Akaroa can be entertained. They are tastefully laid out and contain beautiful shrubberies, Flower Borders, Croquet Lawns, Archery Grounds, Shady Walks, Cool Arbours and one of the best orchards in Akaroa”.¹¹⁰

106 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 7-8, 39

107 *Illustrated Australia News*, 1870 as quoted in Hargreaves & Hearn, *New Zealand in the Mid Victorian era*

108 *Diary of Robert and Rebecca Dawber*, p. 85

109 *Diary of Robert and Rebecca Dawber*, p. 79

110 *Southern Provinces Almanac*, 1875



Figure 5.37. Hughes Family Hotel was one of a number of facilities that provided tourist accommodation in landscaped grounds. Ref: 1683-1

Horticultural ventures: “villainous wines and uncertain cheeses”

Akaroa's well established gardens were seen by new immigrants as an indication of rich and productive soil and for many this was the encouragement they needed to settle in the town. From the late 1870s a number of Chinese market gardeners had established themselves at the entrance to Akaroa near Waeckerle's Hotel on Rue Lavaud. It is unclear whether these sites were already cultivated or were operating as commercial gardens. One, the garden of Sing Chow, was located on the edge of the Wai-iti (Balguerie) Stream in the area previously occupied by the naval gardens and it is possible that Chow worked a portion of this remnant cultivation.

As well as the market garden landscape within the town there were specialist orchards and other equally impressive private orchards like those of the Rev. Alymer and of Dr Watkins and his nurseryman son, Stephen. These men, along with others from Takamatua (German Bay), were exporting much of their fruit as confirmed by advertisements appearing in Dunedin and Christchurch papers for Akaroa fruit, jam and butter from the 1860s. Dr Watkins' other son, Henry, Akaroa's dispensing druggist, was also a wholesale and retail dealer in jams, jellies and fruits and raspberry and other syrups as well as grafted fruit trees.¹¹¹ A number of the French settlers were sending large quantities of their walnuts and grapes out of the bay. Wine was made locally with peach wine a specialty of the town, although 1880s reports of Akaroa's “villainous wines and uncertain cheeses” suggest that these may have been an acquired taste.¹¹²

The potential for other revenue streams for the Akaroa economy was investigated in the late 1870s and a number of new horticultural initiatives were proposed. The first of these, a sericulture trial, was promoted by the Government in 1881 and two-hundred and fifty white mulberry trees from Sydney were planted around the boundaries of properties and paddocks in the town. Although no white mulberry trees are known to have survived from this trial, three black mulberry trees are noted in the town, two on William Street and one on Seaview Avenue. Their size suggests that they may date from the 1880s if not earlier.

¹¹¹ Advertisement, *Southern Provinces Almanac*, in Allison, *An Akaroa Precinct*, p. 12

¹¹² *Taranaki Herald*, 7 September 1882, p. 2 ; *Otago Witness*, 10 July 1880, p. 6

The re-invigoration of the town's early wine and brandy trade was encouraged by Romeo Bragato in 1895, as part of his investigation into suitable viticultural prospects for the New Zealand Government. During his field visit to Akaroa, Bragato identified several early vineyards but commented that the French settlers had failed to pass on their enthusiasm for vine cultivation to their offspring.¹¹³ Later newspaper reports noted that “the most valuable vines for wine or brandy-making was found to be thriving [in Akaroa], a discovery of much importance as vines of this sort have been urgently wanted in Victoria”.¹¹⁴

Anecdotal accounts of the Mill Cottage grape vines (on Rue Grehan) being propagated from cuttings taken from original 1840s French grape vines remain unconfirmed by the property's new owners.¹¹⁵

Akaroa's Public Open Spaces : “for those who do not care to ramble far”

In the various surveys of 1851-55, land had been reserved for different purposes. A survey map of 1852-56 (refer figure 5.45) shows the area corresponding to the town's cemeteries already reserved, although the division into areas for different denominations and the gazetting of the land as cemetery reserve was not made until a few years later.¹¹⁶ L'Aube Hill was also made a reserve from an early date. The land that became Stanley Park was also an early reserve which was taken over by the Borough Council in 1887 and named Stanley Park in 1908.

By 1880, the virtues of a more English landscape aesthetic were being appreciated and English grass and English trees were identified as one of the town's many charms, reflecting, as one reporter noted “the old Country”.¹¹⁷ Beautiful and romantic walks were possible in all directions and for those who did not care to go far there were the public foreshore reserves, L'Aube Hill, the Akaroa Domain, the reserve later named Stanley Park and Lover's walk (refer figure 5.38).



Figure 5.38 The stretch of Beach Road known as Lover's walk was a popular foreshore stroll path. Edged with ngaio it led to Green's Point. Ref Buckland 211

113 Bragato, *Report on the Prospects of Viticulture in New Zealand, together with illustrations for Planting and Pruning*, p. 6

114 *Otago Witness*, 14 March 1895, p. 6

115 Pers.comm, Rosie Smith & Alistair Cocks, March 2009

116 Pers. comm., Lynda Wallace, December 2008

117 *Otago Witness*, 10 July 1880, p. 10

Other interesting historical structures around the town proudly recorded Akaroa's early French and English origins as well as its infrastructural progress. These included:

- the town's bridges; Rue Jolie bridge erected 1878, two Waeckerle bridges erected in 1879, and the Beach Road bridge 1886, all with prominent markings recording the mayors during whose term they were constructed
- the main wharf with its plaque recording the opening in August 1888
- the Britomart Reserve which was originally the site of the English Blockhouse. This 'New England' style, fenced blockhouse was constructed in 1845 but eventually blew down and the area was gazetted as an historic reserve in 1856
- the Akaroa cemeteries were laid out on reserve lands adjacent to the Domain. Land was set aside for a cemetery on behalf of the Church of England (Anglican) and the Dissenter Cemetery. The Roman Catholic community was allocated ground as part of an exchange involving land previously allocated to the Catholic Church on L'Aube Hill. The reserves appear in an 1862 plan of the town but are not featured in the 1852-56 survey. Although the cemeteries were denominationally distinct there is no evidence that they were individually fenced.

The abolition of Provincial Government in 1876 saw Akaroa proclaimed a borough and other public open spaces were gazetted in this early phase of local body stewardship. Some reserves were developed for public recreation while others were leased for grazing or held as firewood reserves, their revenue generating funds for future development. Two of the most prominent public open spaces created in this period were the Akaroa Domain and the small area around the Britomart Monument of 1898.

The Akaroa Domain

Although the Akaroa Domain appears in plans as reserved land from 1873 its development seems to have been prompted by its transfer from the Provincial Government to the Akaroa Domain Board in 1874. The area was possibly a site of earlier Maori cultivations and had at some time in the past been cleared of its original vegetation.¹¹⁸ An 1876 photograph shows it largely covered in regenerating scrub, kanuka and the occasional kahikatea. It was described as “hardly better than a mass of impenetrable scrub”.¹¹⁹

However, an acre of it, running from Beach Road to almost the corner of Rue Jolie and Aylmers Valley Road, had been part of Mr C. B. Robinson's extensive property. This had been purchased by Mr Latter in 1862 and then sold for £100 in 1873 as recreation reserve, to be added to the Domain grounds.¹²⁰ Photographs which show this block of land confirm that it was well planted with trees so it is possible that some of the extant trees in this area of the Domain were associated with Robinson or Latter, and may predate the development of the Domain by up to 20 years.¹²¹

The Domain was set aside for the recreation and amusement of the people of Akaroa and, by 1899, it was, according to one newspaper report “thought to be the prettiest

118 Recreation Reserves - Akaroa Domain, AANS 6095 W5491/164 1/265, ANZ Wellington

119 *Akaroa Museum, Garden of Tane Files*

120 Recreation Reserves - Akaroa Domain, AANS 6095 W5491/164 1/265, ANZ Wgt

121 Mundy photograph PA1-f-040-21, ATL

public gardens in the colony”¹²² (refer figures 5.39 & 5.40). Reflecting the landscape fashion of the Victorian era, the domain was designed as a promenade and pleasure ground with walks, shrubberies, plantations of forest trees and two lookouts offering carefully presented views of the harbour and the town. Its overall design appears to have been a joint effort by James F. Roberts and the Rev. Alymer “whose good taste and experience was considered invaluable”.

The Rev. Alymer supervised the tree and shrub placement and Roberts and Alymer conferred together on the form and location of the numerous walks and the shingle promenade path. Roberts was responsible for the design and construction drawings for the lattice bridge, the turnstile and the fountain and pond combination. Exotic trees and shrubs including oak, beech, sycamore, ash, conifers, rhododendrons and hydrangeas were selected and provided by the Government Gardener, Canterbury Provincial Government Gardens. *Pinus ponderosa* (Ponderosa pine) and possibly *Pinus radiata* (Monterey pine) was acquired from James Hector, of the Wellington Colonial Botanical Gardens, in 1877.¹²³ This was part of Hector's national distribution programme which trialled seeds and plants of potential economic merit. It was noted by the Board that if all of the seed was successfully germinated surplus should be distributed throughout the district. Extant large pines in the Domain (now the Garden of Tane) are believed to date from these plantings.¹²⁴

As early as 1877 the Domain was described as providing a constant source of pleasure to the residents of Akaroa and an additional attraction to visitors.¹²⁵ Further plantings were carried out in 1896 and *Retinospora spp.*, *Wellingtonia gigantea*, *Cryptomeria*, *Cedrus spp.*, *Thugas* etc. were added to the grounds to give it a more 'park-like appearance'. These species were obtained from Nairn and Son, Christchurch nurserymen.

A detailed description of the grounds in 1899 notes that comfortable seats with footboards were positioned at intervals along its 240 chains of walks and a pavilion with seats and tables was located on higher ground. A fountain with a 12-foot basin and a drinking fountain were fed by a well. Totara, manuka, kowhai, konini, titoki, nikau, tree ferns and supplejacks were noted, together with numerous deciduous and evergreen exotic species. A feature of the Domain at this time was the small wooden name tags on the more uncommon trees, recording their English and Latin names, and the lack of flower borders.¹²⁶

A macrocarpa hedge was planted around the entire Domain in 1899 and further development occurred in the early 1900s with the addition of part of the 1845 French blockhouse.

122 *North Otago Times*, 6 May, 1899, p. 1

123 *Akaroa Museum, Garden of Tane Files*

124 Recreation Reserves - Akaroa Domain, AANS 6095 W5491/164 1/265, ANZ Wgt; Rooney, Patterns of Tree Planting in Central Canterbury since 1852, in *Horticulture in New Zealand*, Vol 4, pp. 4-6

125 *Akaroa Mail*, 25 September 1877

126 *North Otago Times*, 6 May 1899, p. 1



Figure 5.39. The Domain summerhouse. For some years the caretaker lived in the rear of this structure, the Board having installed a chimney and windows to make it habitable in winter. Ref: 10378, CM



Figure 5.40. The Domain featured in numerous tourist publications and postcards during this time and was, according to the *Akaroa Mail* "a powerful inducement to visitors and invalids to prolong their stay". Ref: Buckland image 4-1

Britomart or Green's Point Monument

The monument on Green's Point was unveiled in June 1898 by Lord Ranfurly to commemorate the raising of the British flag on the point immediately prior to the arrival of the French settlers in 1840. Designed by Samuel Farr, who had known Akaroa since 1850, and constructed by J. Tait, monumental masons of Christchurch, the granite obelisk was erected as part of Queen Victoria's 60th Jubilee celebrations. The building of the monument was another demonstration that by the end of the 19th century, the people of Akaroa recognised that the town's history was an important component of its special character.¹²⁷

Located on the headland of a rural property above Beach Road, it was not until 1926 that the Council finally acquired 12.8 perches around the monument and were able to have it gazetted as land of historic interest. For its first twenty-eight years the monument sat in an expansive paddock, unfenced and surrounded by stock (refer figure 5.41). Following its acquisition by Council it was enclosed in a wirewove fence (refer figure 5.42). This was subsequently replaced by a concrete wall and rail system in 1939. Access to the monument was via the popular foreshore stroll path known as Lover's Walk, a stretch of Beach Road which ran from the main wharf to Green's Point.



Figure 5.41. (Top) Green's Point memorial before 1926. Ref: Postcard, Private collection, J Pyle
Figure 5.42 (Bottom) The fashionable crimped wirewove fence lasted until 1939. Ref: 2055-1

127 Akaroa Civic Trust *Newsletters*, 2006-08, passim

Streetscape

By 1859 Akaroa was said to be assuming more of the appearance of a town. Government employees had cleared the stumps and bushes for roads and levelled the most uneven areas and by 1867 wooden telegraph poles were a feature of the town. Masonry bridges had replaced early wooden structures and a wide breakwater, running the length of the bottom of the bay had been constructed. Ngaio lined the Beach Road foreshore and were used in other reserve situations.

Contrasts between the topographical layout of the original French and English areas had become less evident. The imposition of a standardising survey grid of repeated one-eighth and one-quarter acre lots had contributed to a greater sense of order in the town and what in the first ten years had been described as a 'promiscuous scattering of houses' had assumed a more cohesive streetscape. This was strengthened by a uniformity of fencing styles and materials. Simple post and threaded 2, 3 and 4 rail fences framed paddocks and cultivations while picket fences bounded much of the housing stock from the 1850s onwards. Thorn, holly, privet, sweetbriar and broom hedges were popular boundary treatments from the late 1870s and 1880s.

The repeating form of mature walnuts, poplars, willows and fruit trees did much to tie the town together. However, differences in garden style were apparent up until the 1860s at least, with visitors to the town making much of the French horticultural practices that were still in evidence despite the dwindling number of French residents. The exuberance of these cottage gardens, vines trained over trellis work or as plessaged low hedges, poplar and chestnut boundary hedges and the 'quaintly cut trees'¹²⁸ were all indications of vernacular French practices.

Contrasting this were the larger established gardens left by the French officials and the more recently developed grounds of the British officials. Gardens like those of the Rev. Alymer, Mr Watson, Augustus White and Mr Robinson and many of the resort gardens reflected a designed refinement in keeping with the style of the buildings. The size of these properties, 50-acre blocks in some cases, allowed for separate areas for orchards, kitchen gardens, shrubberies, picking gardens and walks. Their size also allowed for the development of pictorial compositions which retained clumps and stands of native bush (kahikatea was especially favoured). Walks were fashioned through native groves and regenerating bush and picturesque views of the wider landscape were carefully framed.

The streams which ran through the town had always been important topographical features and these were now layered with new European landscape histories. Not only did they carry the name of the major property owner whose land they bisected, displacing their original Maori name, but they were bridged with structures which bore the names of town's various mayors. Historically these streams had been used to define the boundaries of the early settlement and meet the functional water requirements of the town; now they had acquired an additional value as a desirable garden element.

128 This is likely to be a reference to the quenouille system of fruit tree training commonly used in all parts of France at this time. Trees were pruned into a pyramid form to reduce shade cast in orchards and gardens. Horticultural Observations, *Transactions of the Horticultural Society of London*, 1839

Names on the landscape in 1900

The original Maori names of the town's waterways, bays and hills had been erased by the settlers who sought to record and express their own relationships with the landscape (refer figures 5.43 & 5.44). This had been a two-fold process which first saw French names applied to streets and topographical elements. Using names which recorded particular moments and expressions of personal presences these new French names (Rivière de l'Aube, Rue Lavaud, Chemin Balguerrie, Rue Pompallier, Rue de la Mission, Ruisseau de la Pointe, Baie des Français, Pointe du Débarcadère, Benoît Peak, Mont Bérard etc.) effectively 'de-scribed' existing Maori cultural landscapes.

A second phase of renaming occurred in the mid 1850s as French street names were re-inscribed in English terms and the names of many French landmarks were erased, as observed in the survey plans produced at this time. For the most part the prefix 'chemin' and 'rue' had been dropped. Chemin Grehan, for example, had become Grehan Road, Rue Lavaud was Lavaud Street and Rue Pompallier became Pompallier Street. Rivière de l'Aube disappeared from the maps along with Rue de la Mission and Place du Marché and new English street names like Brittan Street, Short Street and Cross Street had been inserted into the original French town centre.

By 1900 many new English and other modified French names were well-established, both in written and mental maps of the town, and in daily conversation. Waipirau Stream had become Walnut Stream, Hine Pakarariki was renamed Aylmers Stream, Wai-iti Stream had become Balguerrie Stream, Oinako Creek was renamed Grehan Stream, Kaitangata – the name of the main beach – and Paka Ariki were both replaced by French Bay; Takamatua was now German Bay; Takapuneke became Red House Bay. In the wider landscape; Rautahi had become French Farm, O Te Patotu was Purple Peak and Pa Whaiti became Glen Bay.¹²⁹

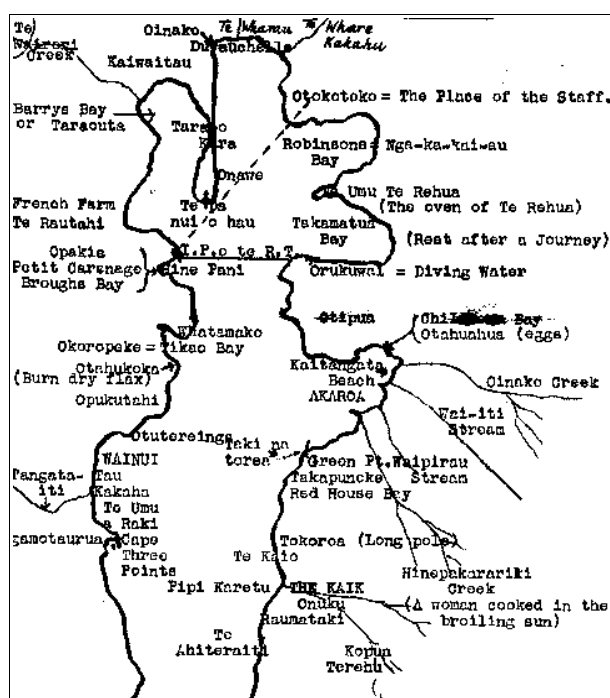


Figure 5.43. Part map of old Maori place names around Akaroa harbour as recorded by Louis Vangioni, 1950.
Ref: Vangioni, *Maori Names and Traditions: Points of interest around Akaroa Harbour*.

129 Vangioni, *Maori Names and Traditions: Points of interest around Akaroa Harbour*

SNAPSHOT OF AKAROA IN 1900

The 1903 *Cyclopaedia of New Zealand* described Akaroa as a “long favourite holiday haven not only for New Zealanders but visitors from Australia and the Old World”. The landscape offered scenery, salubrity, history and 'difference' and the town was said to have an “arcadian character almost peculiarly its own in New Zealand”.¹³⁰

The town's relative isolation and the vestiges of French influence continued to strongly inform its image as a sleepy hollow and a novelty. Visitors were enchanted by the remaining French street names,¹³¹ the use of French measurements for road widths (instead of chains used in the English part of the town) and the legacy of the French orchards and vineyards. This certainly contributed to its success as an early tourist destination and by the end of the 19th century Akaroa's role as North Canterbury's premier seaside resort was well-established.

In 1900 Akaroa was still largely a waterfront town, with some cottages and houses scattered up the small valleys but little building yet apparent on the spurs and hillsides. Many cottages and houses still sat on large sections and there were still empty spaces between groups of buildings. The town began, at its northern end, at the start of Rue Lavaud; to the south it did not extend past Cemetery Point. It already had the two centres that remained until the end of the 20th century. There was a line of commercial premises around the curve of Beach Road and up Church Street and another at the intersection of Rues Lavaud and Balguerie, where the post office and bank were located in older buildings that were soon to be replaced.

The town's three churches were all at the northern end of the town, but the southern end had the main public meeting place, the Oddfellows Lodge building, and the town's library. There was coming and going over the coach road to Little River (where connections could be made with trains to and from Christchurch), but the town's three wharves remained busy.



Figure 5.45. Bruce Hotel 1890s with Christchurch coach.
Ref: Carte de visite. Private collection, J Pyle

¹³⁰ *Cyclopaedia of New Zealand Volume 3: Canterbury and Provincial Districts*

¹³¹ Original street nomenclature was anglicised as French predominance waned.

EXTANT TOWN FABRIC DATING FROM 1850-1900

Planted Fabric

- 42 Rue Grehan, The Wilderness - *Araucaria bidwillii*, *Magnolia grandiflora*, *Cornus sp.*, *Olea europaea*, *Kunzea ericoides*, *Meterosideros excelsa*, roses, and camellias. Part of the Nalder's c.1880s garden
- 81 Rue Grehan, Mill Cottage – *Eucalyptus globulus*, *Eucalyptus gillii*, remains of 1850s orchard including Damson plums, pear, peach, cherry, hazelnut and many other varieties of plum. Three walnuts said to be planted by the Haylock sons.
- Rue Grehan, Herb Farm - *Cupressus macrocarpa* (Part of Haylock property)
- **Millbrook Cottage, Grehan Lea** – *Laurus nobilis*, cherry tree, camellia, grapevine, *Rhopalostylis sapida* (part of Haylock property)
- 25 Rue Lavaud - in front of St Patrick's church. *Cedrus sp.* possibly planted by Mr Nalder in c.1880
- 81 Rue Lavaud – Eidon Thalassa – *Quercis robur* c1898, possibly post 1900
- 64 Rue Balgerie – *Rhopalostylis sapida* in old Rousselot property
- 37 Rue Balgerie - Camellia at Blythcliffe
- Walnut Avenue (Between Rue Jolie and Beach Road) 3 x walnut trees planted by Dr Watkins and his son Stephen in 1861
- 115 Rue Jolie – *Rhodendron ponticum*, *Camellia japonica* 'Variegata', *Camellia japonica* 'Alba Plena' and *Olea sp.* (olive) Stephen Watkins' plantings
- 13 Alymer St, Haylock House – *Araucaria heterophylla*, *Sophora microphylla*, *Cordyline australis* planted 1883
- 7 Percy St – Pohutukawa, likely to be part of Rev Alymer's garden
- Beach Rd – 4 x *Cedrus libani* – likely to be part of early Glen plantings based on size
- 71 Rue Lavaud, Langlois-Eteveneaux Cottage – *Koelerutaria paniculata*, *Brachychiton acerifolius* x *populnea*

Built Fabric

- Green's Point- monument erected in 1898
- Rue Jolie south - bridge erected 1878
- Rue Lavaud - Waeckerle Bridges (two) erected 1879
- Beach Road - Bridge erected 1886
- Main Wharf
- Daly's Wharf, rough stone sea wall and other remnant fabric believed to be part of the salt water baths (refer Opus streetscape Report)

Reserves, Parks etc

- Garden of Tane – *Pinus radiata* and *P. ponderosa* planted throughout reserve extending into cemetery and an extensive collection of exotic species planted between 1877 and 1900
- Recreation grounds reclaimed 1886/87

Other

- 42 Rue Grehan, The Wilderness - Remains of the servants quarters

Public buildings and structures

- 69 Rue Lavaud, Court House
- 60 Rue Lavaud Former Town Hall (Pot Pourri) (relocated and modified)
- 1 Rue Balguerie, Customs House
- 105 Rue Jolie, Gaiety Theatre (former lodge)
- 160 Rue Jolie, Phoenix Lodge
- 103 Rue Jolie, Coronation Library (later remodelled)
- Cemetery Point, Beach Road, Lighthouse (relocated)
- 22 Woodills Road, Former Borough Council Building (relocated and modified)
- 10 Rue Balguerie, St Peter's Church
- 25 Rue Lavaud, St Patrick's Church
- 39 Rue Lavaud, Presbyterian Church
- 63 Rue Lavaud, Original Presbyterian Church (Bon Accord) (relocated & modified)

Commercial buildings

- 81 Beach Road, Garwoods/Brassells building
- 53 Beach Road, Drapery
- 65 Beach Road, Shop
- 67 Beach Road, Shop
- 69 Beach Road, Shop
- 40 Rue Lavaud, Vangioni Store
- 58 Rue Lavaud, Chemist Shop
- 6 Rue Lavaud, Grand Hotel
- 50 Rue Lavaud, Chez La Mer (original Madeira Hotel)
- 74 Rue Lavaud, Former Criterion Hotel (Turenne Dairy)
- 42 Rue Lavaud, 'Mrs Eteveneaux's Sweetshop
- 54 Rue Lavaud, Faultline Gallery/former butcher's shop (possibly post-1900)
- 17 Rue Lavaud, Windermere
- 42 Rue Grehan, The Wilderness
- 9 Church Street, Shipping Office
- 6 Church Street, 'Fire and Ice' Building (Brown family bakery)
- 14 Rue Balguerie, Former photographer's studio

Houses and cottages

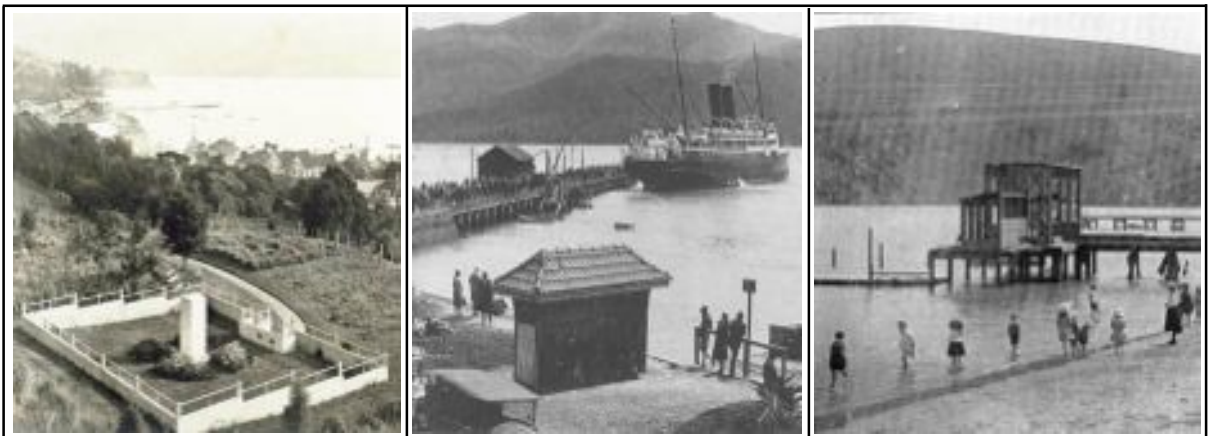
- 158 Rue Jolie, The Maples
- 73 Rue Balguerie, Former Presbyterian Manse
- 18 Rue Lavaud, The Poplars
- 7 Percy Street, Glencarrig
- 37 Rue Balguerie, Blythcliffe
- 68 Rue Balguerie, Linton
- 99 Beach Road, Oinako
- 81 Rue Lavaud, Eidon Thalassa (possibly post-1900)
- 2 Rue Lavaud, Waeckerle's cottage
- 6 Aubrey Street (early cottage)
- 9 Bruce Terrace (early cottage)
- 11 Bruce Terrace (early cottage)
- 23 Bruce Terrace (early cottage)

Houses and cottages (continued)

- 4 Percy Street (early cottage)
- 10 Percy Street (early cottage)
- 20 Percy Street (early cottage)
- 22a Percy Street (early square villa)
- 11 Rue Balguerie (two-storey cottage)
- 12 Rue Balguerie (Stratton cottage)
- 15 Rue Balguerie (Chaney's cottage)
- 17 Rue Balguerie
- 18 Rue Balguerie (Banksia cottage)
- 21 Rue Balguerie (Rodrigues cottage)
- 23 Rue Balguerie (Vangioni cottage)
- 36 Rue Balguerie
- 38 Rue Balguerie ('Mrs Hoppy's' house)
- 42 Rue Balguerie (Elizabeth Brown's cottage)
- 43 Rue Balguerie ('Branthwaite')
- 44 Rue Balguerie
- 46 Rue Balguerie ('Caroline's cottage')
- 55 Rue Balguerie
- 15 Williams Street (Staples cottage)
- 29 Aylmer's Valley Road ('Curate's cottage')
- 54 Rue Grehan
- Rue Grehan, Libeau cottage
- Rue Grehan, Millbrook cottage
- Rue Grehan, Mill cottage
- Rue Grehan, Rose cottage
- 70 Woodills Road ('Daisy cottage')
- 40 Rue Jolie ('Yew cottage')
- 109a Rue Jolie
- 113 Rue Jolie (Naumai)
- 114 Rue Jolie (early square villa)
- 115 Rue Jolie
- 117 Rue Jolie ('Widow Munn's cottage')
- 130 Rue Jolie (Nikau cottage)
- 147 Rue Jolie
- 147b Rue Jolie
- 153 Rue Jolie ('Mona Lisa')
- 154 Rue Jolie (dormered cottage)
- 162 Rue Jolie (dormered cottage)
- 10 Rue Lavaud
- 12 Rue Lavaud
- 31 Rue Lavaud
- 33 Rue Lavaud
- 35 Rue Lavaud (Penlington house)
- 41 Rue Lavaud
- 43 Rue Lavaud
- 47 Rue Lavaud

AKAROA:
AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Section 6
YEARS OF STABILITY 1900 to 1950



SECTION SIX: YEARS OF STABILITY 1900 TO 1950

“Akaroa is celebrated for its scenery, its salubrity, and its historic associations. The harbour is one of the finest in New Zealand, and abounds in fish; the town, with its population of 600 persons, has an arcadian character which is almost peculiarly its own in New Zealand; and the district, with its beautiful bays, its picturesque hills, its pastoral industries, idyllic valleys and pieces of bush, is dotted with well managed farms and pleasant homesteads.”

The Cyclopedia of New Zealand Canterbury Provincial District, 1903

A steady population

For Akaroa, the first half of the 20th century was a period of stability. The town did not expand significantly, although there were some small subdivisions. The residential population was more or less steady throughout the period and although the town became increasingly popular as a holiday resort, the visitors mostly did not have holiday homes in the town but stayed in hotels or boarding houses, or used campgrounds.

In 1926, in the middle of the period, the *Press* ran a special supplement to mark the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Akaroa Borough. The paper noted that “after its stormy past, Akaroa settled down to a more peaceful youth” and that despite communications having become easy and speedy, “the town for many years has grown little, if at all”.¹ The town’s population had held more or less steady, between 600 and 700, from the mid 1870s until the 1890s, then dipped in 1901 to 559.

The borough’s population rose again to 622 by 1911, only to fall slightly to 615 by 1926. Andersen noted in that Akaroa was “standing still as regards population” and the observation remained true a quarter of a century later. In 1951, the borough’s population was 557, almost the same as it had been 50 years before. (A further 103 people were recorded as living “in the vicinity” of Akaroa in 1951; this included the more than 20 Maori living at Onuku.) The stability of the Peninsula’s population in the first half of the 20th century reflects that by 1900 the region had its “boom” years behind it.²

Houses large and small

With the population stable through the first 50 years of the century, the number of houses in the town did not increase markedly. Akaroa had 124 houses in 1901 and only 140 in 1926.³

There were some new residential subdivisions in these years. In the early 1920s, the Narbey family subdivided a block of land up Selwyn Avenue, creating more than 30 sections on the middle stretch of Selwyn Avenue itself and up the newly formed Seaview Avenue (refer appendix 9.2). Most other subdivisions between the two World Wars were small. In 1935, four building lots were subdivided on the uphill side of Aylmers Valley Road above the hospital (refer appendices 9.3 & 9.4).

¹ The *Press*, 28 September 1926, Editorial

² Andersen, *Place Names*, pp. 29, 43

³ Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 43

During and just after World War II, two new subdivisions anticipated what was to come after the Second World War. In 1943-44 there was a small subdivision towards Cemetery Point between Beach Road and the short dead-end section of Aubrey Street (refer appendix 9.5). This was followed by a much larger subdivision in 1946 of the block of land between Muter and Watson Streets, which created almost 40 sections⁴ (refer figure 6.1 and appendices 9.6 & 9.7).

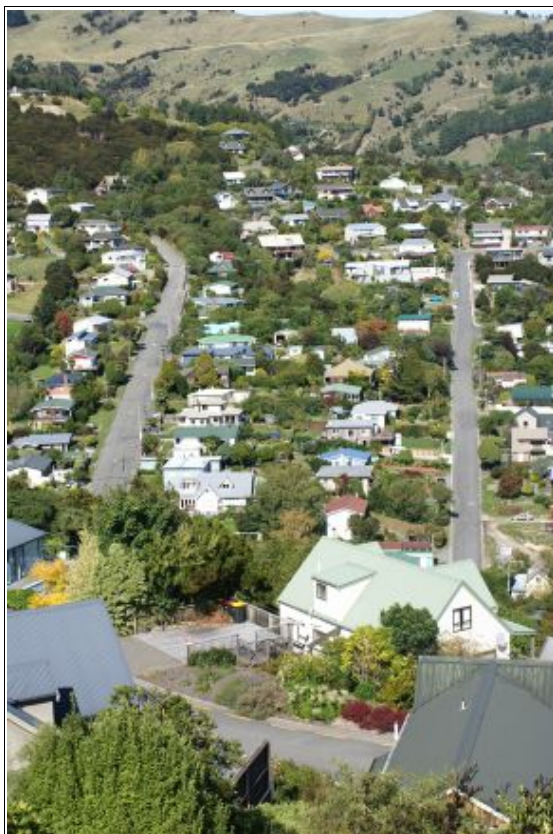


Figure 6.1. Looking from L'Aube Hill, over the houses of the late 20th century Settlers Hill subdivision, to the area between Muter and Watson Streets, which was one of the first post-World War II subdivisions in Akaroa.

None of these subdivisions before 1950 broke significantly the pattern of Akaroa's earlier development – that it was confined to the foreshore and the town's three valleys. A tourist guide book published in this period noted that "after leaving the seashore the town runs into three valleys, viz: Grehan Valley at the north end of town, Balguerrie Valley in the centre of the town, and Aylmers Valley at the south end. ... Each has its creek and winding road, its gardens, hedges and trees and beyond the farmlands."⁵

Apart from the houses in subdivisions, new houses appeared in Akaroa when older houses in the established parts of the town were replaced. The pattern was set in these years of newer houses mixed indiscriminately with the old. By 1950 there were already no parts of Akaroa beyond very small enclaves where 19th century cottages and small houses were not sharing their streets with cottages and houses put up in the years after 1900.

⁴ Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 49, and several DPs (deposited plans)

⁵ *Akaroa Tourist Guide Book I*, p. 11

This pattern of the older residential areas of Akaroa having houses of various ages was maintained through the second half of the century. It has important implications for understanding the character of Akaroa today. It is almost impossible to define areas containing more than just two or three houses in which all the houses are of the 19th century. On the lower stretch of Rue Jolie south there is the row of four 19th century houses whose histories are covered in Barbarara Allison's book *An Akaroa Precinct*. These houses face across the street a row of four more houses two of which – a square villa and an early bay villa – date from the early 20th century.

Later dwellings are quite as important in setting Akaroa's character as the earlier ones which are generally considered to contribute most to the town's character. Together, the houses of decades from the 1860s into the present, tell the full story of the development of New Zealand's domestic architecture. Nowhere else in New Zealand tells the story of that development as interestingly and completely as Akaroa.⁶

For the first half of the 20th century, examples can be found in different parts of Akaroa of all the major domestic styles of the period – from bay and square villas of the years before World War I (as on Rue Jolie south), through to the transitional villas and earlier and later bungalows of the 1920s and 1930s. The only style used for New Zealand houses between the wars which appears not to be represented in Akaroa is Art Deco. There are relatively fewer houses of the five decades from 1900 to 1950 than for the decades before (1850-1900) or after (1950-2000). These houses have not yet been properly studied or the best examples of them located.

There are individual houses of several styles built between 1900 and 1950 throughout the town. Although they have not, as already noted, been studied to the same extent as the town's 19th century cottages and houses, some are clearly buildings of interest. The vicarage built on Julius Place in 1914 is a good example of an early bungalow, influenced by both the Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau movements.⁷

The lack of any large precincts dominated by 19th century cottages and houses and the inter-mixing of dwellings of different ages is illustrated by Percy Street. From William Street to Aylmers Valley Road, of the 19 dwellings on Percy Street only four (including Glencarrig) are 19th century buildings and only three (two square villas and a bungalow) from the period 1900-1950. The remaining 12 were all built after 1950. (The post-1950 subdivisions in this area of Akaroa are discussed in the next section.)

On Rue Jolie from Church Street to Bruce Terrace, the 19th century Nikau cottage and a square villa of the period 1890-1910 flank three late 20th century houses. Had the older cottages and houses on the sections on which these new houses were built survived, a significantly larger group of 19th and early 20th century dwellings would have remained. The building of houses and cottages in the first half of the 20th century cemented in place the most important feature of Akaroa's older residential areas – that in addition to having a remarkably large number of 19th century dwellings, the full chronological range of New Zealand domestic architecture is represented.

Relatively few larger houses were built in Akaroa in the years 1900-1950, in comparison

⁶ John Wilson talk to Akaroa Civic Trust, 30 June 2007

⁷ *Akaroa Mail*, 7 September 2001, pp. 8-10

with the previous half century. Two two-storeyed houses on elevated sections above the point where Rue Lavaud curves into Beach Road, south of the Rue Balguerie intersection, date from the early 20th century and reveal Arts and Crafts influences and elements of what became the New Zealand bungalow style. (A third house beside these two, known now as Eidon Thalassa, dates probably from 1898 but it belongs stylistically to the 20th century rather than the 19th.)

A town of special character

Through these years of stability and relatively little growth, there was growing recognition that Akaroa was a town of special character. The claim that the town was special was made most frequently in promotional booklets and articles. It was not significantly related at this time, as it became later, to concerns about threats to the town's character.

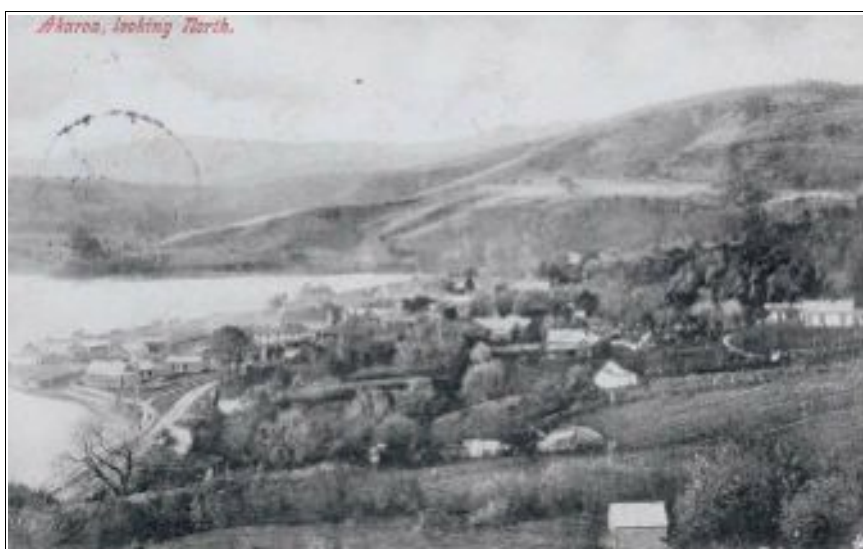


Figure 6.2. In this view over the north end of Akaroa just before World War I, the Criterion and Metropole hotel buildings are left of centre. The new, two-storey Bank of New Zealand (1905) has been built, but the old Post Office still occupies the site of its 1914 successor and the old Borough School, demolished in 1914, stands where the War Memorial was built after the War. Ref: 818

In its 1926 supplement on Akaroa, published to mark the Borough's jubilee but also to promote Akaroa as a visitor destination, the *Press* observed that "The old-world atmosphere of romance and charm is rarely to be found in our New Zealand towns and villages. Yet there are exceptions and for Canterbury the most notable one is the tranquil little town of Akaroa, nestling by the waters of its beautiful harbour. Here there is nothing crude and new. In the tangled gardens with their riot of flowers, the white of the almond blossom and the flush of the peach by the sides of the streets, the simple little cottage homes half-hidden in greenery with the great shadow of Purple Peak over all, we have the New Zealand counterpart of many a lovely English village. Yet this now peaceful village has had its scenes of bloodshed and lawlessness and behind it is a storied past such as few New Zealand townships have had. ... Its beautiful harbour set with winding bays and curving beaches, its rough mountain peaks and rock-studded ridges, its ferny dales and tree-clad streams, its peaceful valleys and quaint gardens, but above all its

atmosphere of peace and old-fashioned beauty make it unique among our Canterbury townships. We hope that it will never lose its enchantment.”⁸ (Later landscape sections discuss the town’s gardens and plantings in greater detail.)

Elsewhere in the same issue, the paper noted that from Hilltop, “tucked away on the farther shore nestles lovely Akaroa” and quoted the description of a novelist, Ethel Turner: “On the edge of the blue, blue waters the village could be seen nestling its red roofs in bosky groves of green while sentinel over it rose two coppery mountains – Brasenose and Purple Peak.”⁹

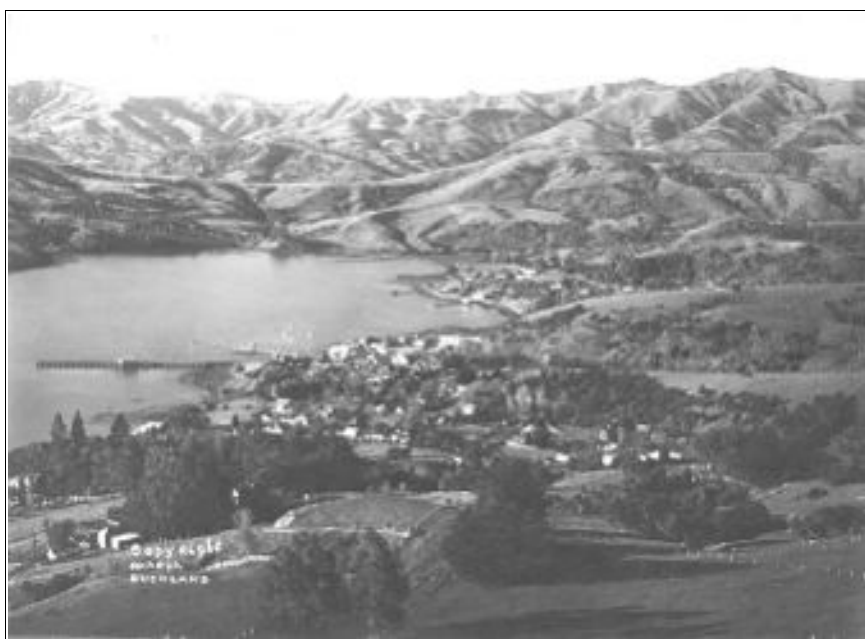


Figure 6.3. In around 1914, Akaroa looked much as it did until the burst of residential subdivisions after World War II. Before that War, the town was largely confined to the flat land along the foreshore and to the lower reaches of its three valleys. Ref: 2008

A little over ten years later, a journalist described Akaroa in the *New Zealand Railways Magazine* as “the quaint old town, one of the most romantic in the Dominion’s history” and wrote that “this charming old-world town with its people from another land and another century ... is as close to anywhere to the New Zealand of the early days. The hand of progress has touched Akaroa, but lightly.”¹⁰

These statements about Akaroa from the 1920s and 1930s establish that the belief Akaroa was a town with a special character has deep roots. They are also important because they attribute that special character to features apart from its old buildings that have been identified in many later claims that the town is special: that the town has a romantic past and an impressive setting and that its plantings and gardens (discussed fully in the landscape section) are key elements of its special character.

8 The Press, 28 September 1926, Editorial

9 The Press, 28 September 1926, Supplement, p. I

10 Stuart Perry, “France in New Zealand Historic Akaroa”, *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, vol. 12, issue 9, 1 December 1937

The unveiling of the monument on Green's Point in 1898 (see the previous section of this report) was an early acknowledgement of the town's special history. In the early 20th century, George Thomas, Akaroa's town clerk from 1909 to 1922 set up a museum in the Borough Council Chambers, though its fate when he left office is not known.¹¹

In 1926, the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Akaroa Borough saw particular efforts made to celebrate the town's past. The *Press* in that year declared that "the beautiful little township bears still many marks of its origin and early history" and drew attention specifically to the Old French Cemetery, the (then surviving) blockhouse, the trying-out pots on the beach and other relics which told "of the early days of adventure". In 1925-26, the Old French Cemetery on L'Aube Hill was "tidied up" and a concrete memorial and enclosing wall built. (The changes at the French Cemetery in these years are discussed more fully in the landscapes section of this report.)

The resort town

The recognition in the first half of the 20th century that Akaroa had a special character underpinned its development as a holiday or resort town and reflected the increasing importance of domestic tourism in the town's economy. People from Christchurch came to Akaroa on holiday through the second half of the 19th century, and hotels had offered visitors to the town accommodation since the 1840s. But as Akaroa acquired the reputation of being Canterbury's Riviera and playground it attracted more and more holidaymakers.¹²

A 1914 guide to Canterbury declared that Akaroa had "the enviable distinction of being the premier holiday resort in North Canterbury". Twelve years later, the *Press* headed its supplement on Akaroa the "Riviera of Canterbury" and claimed that "no better, no more satisfying description than Lovely Akaroa can be imagined. It is not one attraction but many that is the secret of the little town's irresistible appeal". Akaroa, the article continued, cast a "greatly insinuating spell" over prince, peasant, jaded city man or much-travelled and blasé globe-trotter. A year later, Andersen wrote that "Akaroa has never, since its busy early days of whaling, milling and shipbuilding, shown any active desire to be other than a holiday resort; and for this it is eminently suited".¹³

In the first decade of the 20th century (as in Christchurch) pressure from the Licensing Commission led to new hotels and boarding houses being built in Akaroa. The old Criterion ceased to be a hotel when the imposing Metropole Hotel was built next door to it in 1907 (refer figure 6.4). The Metropole took over the Criterion's licence. The two-storey building with high gables facing the street, was the largest building ever erected in the town, but it later burned down (see below).¹⁴

A new Madeira Hotel was built in the same year, 1907, as the Metropole. The new Madeira was a two-storey building, with a balcony running the full length of the street frontage. The old wooden building was retained, next to the new. Both survive.¹⁵

11 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 46

12 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 7-8

13 *The Canterbury Guide*, p. 148; the *Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement, p. I; Andersen, *Place Names*, pp. 43-44

14 Akaroa Museum display

15 Akaroa Museum display; *Cyclopedia*, p. 606

Two older hotel buildings, the Bruce at the southern end of the town (refer figure 6.5) and the Grand at the northern end, retained their licenses.



Figure 6.4. Akaroa's largest accommodation building ever was the Metropole Hotel, built in 1907. It was built just as automobiles were beginning to edge out the old horse-drawn coaches. It burned down in a fatal fire in 1962. Ref: 1912-1

The rebuilding of the Bruce Hotel in the early 20th century has already been mentioned. There were, in addition to the licensed hotels, a number of boarding or guest houses which offered accommodation to holidaymakers. They included Ilfracombe, on Beach Road at the corner of Church Street (refer figure 6.6), and Garthowen, also on Beach Road, near the corner of Smith Street. Ilfracombe was damaged by fire in 1928, but rebuilt and continued to offer accommodation until the 1960s. The 19th century boarding house The Wilderness, on Rue Grehan, remained in business. One of the older houses on Rue Jolie near the Gaiety Theatre, Naumai, was a boarding house for part of this half century and the notable house, The Glen, at the far southern end of the town became a boarding house. So did Oinako, the large house on Beach Road near the Aylmer Stream bridge. It was renamed Beverley House. Blythcliffe on Rue Balguerrie also accommodated guests. Other boarding houses that came and went included the "centrally situated" Benoit House on Jolie Street (later renamed The Gables), Burnside Gardens on Percy Street and Milton House, on Jolie Street south.¹⁶

Typically for Akaroa, these various establishments that offered accommodation to visitors were scattered randomly about the town rather than concentrated in one or two areas.

16 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 46; *The Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement (advertisers); *Akaroa Mail*, 22 September 1928; Pers. comm., Akaroa Museum, December 2008; *Akaroa Tourist Guide Book II* (1947), (advertisers); *Akaroa Tourist Guide Book I*, (advertisers)



Figure 6.5. James Bruce established a hotel at the southern end of the village. The hotel (seen here in the late 19th century) was an Akaroa institution for more than a century.

Ref: 3587 CM



Figure 6.6. Through the first half of the 20th century, Ilfracombe on Beach Road was one of Akaroa's premier boarding houses. The original building of Ilfracombe is the part slightly to the rear, with a prominent belvedere. The Le Voyageur Motel now stands on the site.

Ref: 1315-1

In 1930, a prospectus was issued inviting investors to support the building in Akaroa of a very large, four-storey hotel (designed by H. Francis Willis in a Spanish Mission style). This hotel was to have been built of reinforced concrete and brick in the northern part of Akaroa at the corner of Cross and Jolie Streets. The site had a 250-foot sea frontage. A building of this size and design (it would have been much larger than any building ever erected in Akaroa) would have had a significant impact on the character of the town. But the plan was launched when times were not promising (at the start of the Great Depression) and failed to attract sufficient support for it to proceed.¹⁷

¹⁷ Hotel Akaroa Ltd prospectus (held by Akaroa Museum)

Many who came on holiday to Akaroa in the first half of the 20th century camped. Taylors camping ground, described as the “official motorists’ camping ground”, was established on a sloping site on Rue Balguerie. It became the town’s official Automobile Association campground. In 1947, this camp ground offered penny-in-the-slot electric meters and plug-ins for caravans. In that year, camping visitors had the option of using the Progress Association’s camp ground behind the Post Office, but this seems not to have been a long-lived venture. There was also, for a time in the middle of this period, a camping ground up Aylmers Valley, near Fyffe’s boarding house.¹⁸

Various activities were promoted to draw people to Akaroa. A golf course was laid out immediately beyond the reservoir of the power station (see below). In 1926, the course had nine holes and was described as being within 15 minutes walk of town. By 1947 it was a “splendid” 18-hole course with a good motor road to the club house. It remained until after 1950. There were tennis courts in the Domain and behind the Grand Hotel, where the Akaroa Lawn Tennis Club was based. On or near the Recreation Ground were three croquet courts, a basketball court and a bowling green.

Apart from these sports, Akaroa was promoted as offering many beautiful walks, places of historic interest, abundant fishing, boating and bathing, launch trips and “hundreds of picnic places”. All these activities, the promotional literature promised, could be done in beautiful surroundings under unusually favourable climatic conditions. By 1926, it was already possible to take a trip that remained a popular activity for tourists into the early 21st century. The *Press* told its readers in 1926 of the Eastern Bays trip with Read’s Royal Mail motor service that “the ... glories of this marvellous trip are simply indescribable”.¹⁹

The sea remained important because it provided opportunities for recreation not readily available elsewhere in Canterbury. “From a yachtsman’s viewpoint” the *Press* declared in 1926, Akaroa “is a paradise”. Launches were available to take visitors on pleasure trips to “all the most picturesque places of interest around this beautiful harbour” or out fishing. The fishing included red cod which could be caught “almost anywhere a line is dropped” and blue cod towards the heads. Crayfish could be taken “in large quantities” in season. Bathing was also popular, the town’s “lovely sloping sandy beach [being] safe for the smallest infants to paddle”.²⁰

In 1913, fire consumed the building which the Akaroa Rowing Club had erected on Beach Road at the far the southern end of the town after its earlier boat house by Daly’s Wharf had burned down. The Club’s third (surviving) boat house, on the same site as the second, was opened in 1914. For swimmers, a bathing shed and enclosure for swimming were built in 1910. It survived until the 1960s. (This facility is discussed more fully in the following section of this report.)²¹

During the Great Depression, private donations and labour made available under unemployment schemes enabled the Borough Council to erect, near these baths, “a handsome and ornamental building in keeping with its surroundings” to serve as a Ladies’ Rest Rooms. The building, erected right on the sea wall, behind the War Memorial

18 Akaroa Tourist Guide Book II (1947), p. 27

19 Akaroa Tourist Guide Book II (1947), pp. 17, 27; Akaroa Tourist Guide Book I, pp. 1, 18-19, 36; The *Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement, p. I

20 The *Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement

21 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 45;

grounds, was dedicated to the wives of the old pioneers²²(refer figure 6.7).

The waterfront through these years was a popular place to promenade and rest. It was well-maintained by the Borough Council. “Well cared for garden plots and flower-beds adorn the waterfront and Britomart reserves” one guide book told prospective visitors. (The plantings on and use of the waterfront are discussed more fully in the landscape sections of this report.)²³

Daly’s Wharf, which was used mainly by pleasure boats and launches taking visitors out on the harbour, was re-opened after it had been reconstructed in February 1915.²⁴



Figure 6.7. The popularity of swimming and sunbathing among visitors to the resort town Akaroa became in the years between the two World Wars is evident in this photo of the main beach, probably just before World War II. The Ladies’ Rest Rooms on the foreshore, visible close to the bathing shed, were built in the early 1930s. Ref: 2182

Industry

It was acknowledged as early as the 1920s that visitors were the economic lifeblood of Akaroa. “The cocksfoot still sometimes waves on the field” the *Press* declared in 1926 “though it no longer brings wealth; but the township itself now depends largely on the tourist for its resources.”²⁵ That industry has never played a significant role in Akaroa’s development has often been celebrated. Andersen wrote in 1927 that “[i]t is a pleasure ... to know that there is a place of such natural beauty where the ambition is not to mar it with useful but unbeautiful industries, but rather to preserve such of the natural beauty that remains, and add to it the parks and gardens of man.”²⁶

But tourism was far from the sole, or even overwhelmingly important, means of support Akaroa relied on in the first half of the 20th century. Industry continued to have a small

22 *Akaroa Mail*, 25 October 1933

23 *Akaroa Tourist Guide Book I*, p. 5

24 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 45

25 *The Press*, 28 September 1926, Editorial

26 Andersen, *Place Names*, pp. 43-44

place in Akaroa's development in those years.

Cocksfooting was an important Peninsula industry until the 1930s, but Akaroa continued to play its part in the industry only as the place where many traders in cocksfoot seed had their places of business and the place through which some of the seed was shipped.²⁷

The decline of the cocksfoot industry on the Peninsula began in the 1920s, when production on flat land elsewhere in Canterbury increased. Although cocksfoot was still being cut south-east of the town in the early 1950s, by 1945 poorer crops and higher wages (in a labour-intensive industry) had reduced the contribution the industry made to the economic well-being of Akaroa.²⁸

The building industry supported small factories, producing entirely for the local market, in the first half of the 20th century. In 1908, John James Walker went into partnership with Louis Vangioni and S.C. Le Lievre to establish a brick kiln at the northern end of the town, but it was in operation for only a few years, closing down in 1916. In the same year, 1908, George Henry Haylock set up a joinery factory on Jolie Street which supplied "all carpenters' requisites" and avoided the "importing" into Akaroa of such items as doors and window sashes.²⁹

Up to (and beyond) World War II, Akaroa was a fishing port. Between the wars "a fleet of oil launches [was] engaged in the fishing industry at Akaroa and regular supplies [were] sent to the Christchurch market".³⁰ One important reminder of the former importance of the fishing industry to Akaroa, the Fishermen's Rest, dates from around 1910. The small shelter, with a covered seat, was built as a memorial to a sea captain who was employed by the merchant Latter and the Borough Council. It stands on the site of Latter's store at the base of the (now gone) old town wharf, which was used by fishermen for several decades after the "new" main wharf had been built in 1886.³¹

For some years crayfish canning factories were located in Akaroa. The first factory, established by a Dunedin firm, Messrs Irvine and Stevenson, began production in 1895 on a site up Selwyn Avenue. It had closed down by 1903. In 1898, a local businessman Graecen Black bought the old immigration barracks which had been built on the corner of Jolie Street and Bruce Terrace in 1874, but been used as a barracks for only a short period. Black had part of the old barracks re-erected on the foreshore of Red House Bay (Takapuneke) for use as a crayfish canning factory. In 1901, Black sold this factory to Irvine and Stevenson who re-opened it in 1905. In 1935 another crayfish canning factory opened in Akaroa on Rue Jolie north (where the Balguerrie Stream flows into the sea). It continued in operation after the end of World War II and closed only when a freezing plant was installed on the main wharf. Until the 1940s, the crayfish were taken using ring pots, placed at sea using dinghies.³²

27 Coulson, *Golden Harvest*, p. 16

28 *Tales 1940-1990*, pp. 10, 13, 16, 28; Coulson, *Golden Harvest*, pp. 63-64, 79-86, 96

29 Akaroa Museum display

30 Akaroa Tourist Guide Book I, p. 39; Akaroa Tourist Guide Book II, p. 35

31 Akaroa Museum notice board

32 *Cyclopedia*, p. 605; *Akaroa Mail*, 28 December 2001, p. 17; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 43, 47; *Tales 1940-1990*, pp. 50-51

Building a dairy factory in Akaroa was discussed in 1893-95 and again in 1902, but it was not until September 1914 that a butter factory was finally opened, in the same part of town as the crayfish canning factory of 1935. The large brick building, described when it was opened as “commodious and substantial” stood on the corner of Balguerie and Jolie Streets, next to the customs house. Production of butter ceased in Akaroa in the 1930s, the decade which saw a noticeable decline in dairying on the Peninsula. The building stood for several years after that, but was demolished some time before flats were built on the site in 1969.³³

One other factory used a raw material produced on Peninsula farms. In 1938, the Akaroa Tweed factory opened on the corner of Church and Jolie Streets, opposite the school, in utilitarian buildings that had probably been first erected in the early years of the 20th century for an aerated water bottling factory. The tweed was woven from local wool and found markets throughout New Zealand, as made-up garments or sold by the yard. The factory, which employed between 10 and 14 hands, closed in 1949. The buildings it occupied still stand. They housed a motor garage for some years, and then a laundry, but have been recently converted for retail uses.³⁴

Although the farming industry did not impinge directly or physically on Akaroa dairy and then sheep farmers of the south-east Peninsula supported local service industries and shops and joined local sports clubs and cultural societies.³⁵

Commerce

Through the first half of the 20th century, Akaroa’s retail businesses were oriented towards serving residents of the town and those who farmed on the hills around Akaroa and in the smaller bays where there were no shops. In 1926, a Minister of the Crown visiting Akaroa expressed the hope that Akaroa would not degenerate into a “mere tourist resort”.³⁶

In 1926 the businesses in Akaroa included a saddler and upholsterer, a chemist, photographer and stationer, a ladies and gents tailor, draperies and clothing shops, footwear shops, general merchants (who sold a wide range of goods, including drapery, furniture, hardware and garden supplies) and butcheries. There were local builders, plumbers and electricians and also hairdressers. These businesses that served the local community outnumbered those which depended mostly on the tourist trade. There was always, however, a sprinkling of businesses that served visitors rather than locals.³⁷

Much the same mix of businesses existed through the 1930s and 1940s, though there was a turn-over of proprietors. The local souvenir industry (which was continued in later years by a succession of artists and craftspeople) began with the establishment of a native wood souvenir maker, who used “genuine Banks Peninsula timber” to produce various items.³⁸

33 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 43; *Akaroa Mail*, 30 December 1902, Editorial

34 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 46; *Akaroa Tourist and Guide Book*, II, (1947); *Akaroa Database*

35 *Tales 1940-1990*, pp. 12-13; *The Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement, p. III

36 *The Press*, 27 September 1926

37 *The Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement (advertisers)

38 *Akaroa Tourist and Guide Books I & II*



Figure 6.8. Of the buildings visible in this early 20th century view looking over the south end of Akaroa, the two villas on Rue Jolie in the foreground still survive. So do a number of the buildings on Beach Road, seen here from behind. Ref: 1482

Most of these businesses continued to operate out of premises built in the 19th century. One of the major establishments was T.E. Taylor's on Beach Road. His two-storey building was extended (or rebuilt) in 1903 and survives as commercial premises. At the other end of the town, the old Criterion Hotel building was converted in 1907 (at the time the Metropole Hotel was built) to provide a shop on the Balguerrie Street corner (occupied initially by a tailor and outfitter), an office on Rue Lavaud and a residence at the rear. The building has remained in a similar, but varying, mix of uses for more than a century.³⁹

The Bank of New Zealand maintained its branch in Akaroa. In 1905 the Bank extended its building by adding a second storey (or possibly building an entirely new larger building in the same Classical style). The Bank still (in 2009) has a branch in the building, which is a classic example of New Zealand small-town bank architecture (refer figure 6.9).



Figure 6.9. The Bank of New Zealand has stood in its present form at the intersection of Rues Lavaud and Balguerrie since the early 20th century.

³⁹ *Akaroa Mail*, 19 November 1907, 30 June 2006, p. 6

Community Life

Between 1900 and 1950, Akaroa was a socially self-sufficient community. Local people supported a network of clubs and societies. A local businessman, T.E. Taylor, began showing movies in the Oddfellows Hall (later the Gaiety Theatre) on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The Gaiety Theatre and the neighbouring Coronation Library were the main places of meeting for the people of Akaroa through these years. The three churches all had halls, the Presbyterians building a new hall in 1916 adjoining their 1886 church. The Anglicans built their church hall on Julius Place, away from the church on Rue Balguerie, in 1916. Sunday school classes were held in the hall until the 1970s. It was subsequently converted into a residence. A Temperance Hall built on Rue Jolie in 1908 later burned down.

For some entertainment, Akaroa people made the still relatively long journey into town. Some teachers at the school made it a point to take children to performances in Christchurch.⁴⁰ But generally, with long stretches of the road to Christchurch still shingle, people living in Akaroa made or found their own entertainment in the town. A number of sports clubs had large memberships through these years. There were both rowing and sailing clubs, with separate facilities, both on the south side of French Bay.⁴¹ Tennis and bowls remained popular. The Bowling Club built a pavilion by its greens in 1925.

The August 1945 peace celebrations were an indication of the town's vigorous community life in the years leading up to 1950. The celebrations extended over several days and included a thanksgiving service, a children's party, a victory ball and a grand procession.⁴²

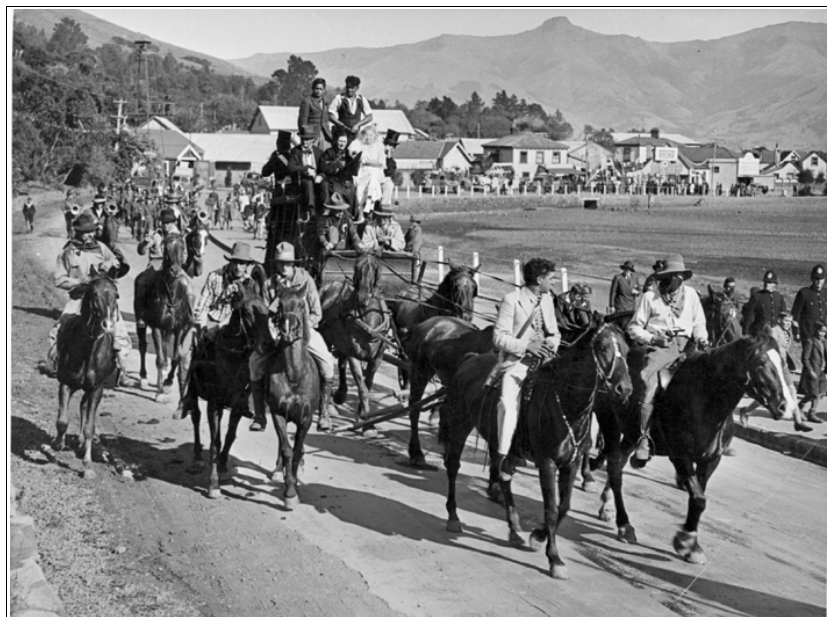


Figure 6.10. Akaroa was home to a vigorous local community through the first half of the 20th century. The town turned out in 1940 to mark the Centennial of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (and of the founding of Akaroa). Ref: 2007.16.3-1

40 *Area School 150*, p. 18

41 *Tales 1940-1990*, pp. 5-8

42 *Tales 1940-1990*, p. 9

Public buildings

The pattern of there being relatively few new buildings in Akaroa for businesses or clubs and societies through the years 1900 to 1950 is also evident in the history of the town's public buildings.

Only two significant new public building erected in Akaroa through those five decades have survived. The new Post Office was erected on the site of the old Post Office in 1914-15 (refer figures 6.11 & 6.12). The building was almost grand in its Akaroa context, but was in a domestic style, unlike the Baroque style used for small town post offices in the immediately preceding years. A mail room was added to the side of the Post Office in 1993, but its exterior appearance is otherwise much as it was when it was opened in 1915, although it now serves as a local body service centre and tourist information office and not as a post office.⁴³

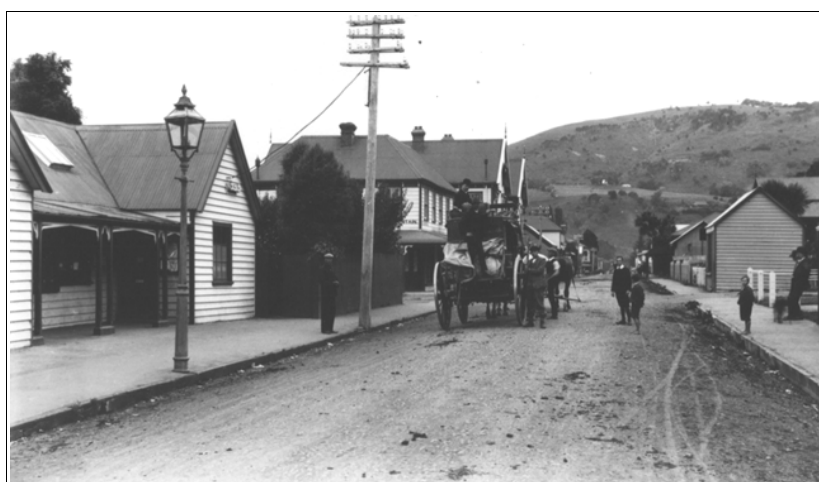


Figure 6.11. Looking north up Rue Lavaud between 1907 and 1914. The Metropole Hotel (1907) has been built, but the old Post Office still occupies the site on which the new Post Office was built in 1914. In these years, travelers to Akaroa by land reached the town by coach from Little River. Ref: Private collection, J. Wilson



Figure 6.12. In 1914, Akaroa gained the imposing new Post Office which still stands on the corner of Rues Lavaud and Balguerie. By 1914, the town's street poles were carrying electricity wires and not just telegraph lines. Ref: 2188-1

43 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 45

The building of the Post Office was the last significant change to the buildings at the intersection of Rues Lavaud and Balguerie (apart from the 1940 demolition of the bootmaker's shop in front of the Langlois-Eteveneaux Cottage and the changes to the cottage itself associated with its becoming part of the Akaroa Museum in the 1960s). The Director of the Akaroa Museum, Lynda Wallace, pointed out in 2006 that it is rare in any New Zealand town for a business centre to remain intact for such a long period, making the intersection "a very special historic precinct".⁴⁴

Also visible from this corner is the War Memorial, which is described in the following section of this report.

Apart from the "new" Post Office, the only other significant surviving public building of the years 1900-1950 is the "new" hospital. Akaroa's first hospital was on Bruce Terrace, on land now occupied by the school. The new hospital was opened in June 1924. The relatively large building is also domestic in style, which reduces its apparent scale (refer figure 6.13).

One other change to a public building in the early years of the 20th century was the remodelling of the Literary Institute's building. The project, supported by the Government to mark the coronation of King George V, saw the building given a new frontage, influenced by the Arts and Crafts style.⁴⁵



Figure 6.13. One of the major buildings erected in Akaroa in the first half of the 20th century was the town's new hospital, constructed on the rural edge of the town in the early 1920s. It is now more or less surrounded by houses. Ref: 983-1

Akaroa's schools 1900-50

Several school buildings were erected in Akaroa in the first half of the 20th century but none have survived.

The old Borough School, on the site now occupied by the War Memorial, remained in use

⁴⁴ *Akaroa Mail*, 28 July 2006

⁴⁵ Leaflet available from Coronation Library

until World War I. In July 1901 a District High School was opened in Akaroa, taking the place of an earlier high school which had been closed down not long before. The new high school occupied rooms on the Rue Jolie side of the old Borough School. Evening classes of a community technical college began in July 1906 in the Garwood building. In 1908, a grant was forthcoming from the Government for a new Technical School building by Daly's Wharf. The building was opened in May 1909. It was designed by George Penlington, a Christchurch architect who had grown up in Akaroa. For a short time, both the town's public schools and the technical college were together in this area. When the old Borough School building was demolished in 1914, the District High School moved into the Technical School building.⁴⁶

The Borough School was demolished after the Education Board had acquired town section 17, adjoining Stanley Park above Beach Road, from the Charitable Aid Board. A new brick primary school was built on this land, which remained the site of the primary (later junior) school until the early 21st century, although the original brick building was demolished in 1975-76.⁴⁷ The year 1914 saw the start of a long period when the junior and senior schools (as they came to be known) were on separate sites.

In 1930, the Education Department acquired a property on the corner of Bruce Terrace and Jolie Street. The acquisition was made at the instigation of the school committee because the old technical school building by Daly's Wharf had no playing fields. (This building appears to have remained in use as a manual block until at least the 1940s and was not demolished until the 1970s. Its demolition saw the last educational building disappear from the area in Akaroa where public schooling had begun.) The new site was levelled in 1931-32 and a new high school opened on the site in 1936. In 1945 the old hospital building on the site was sold for removal and the high school's playing fields extended. Various extensions were made and buildings added to the high school in the late 1930s and through the 1940s.⁴⁸

In the late 1940s, the high school was drawing pupils from the Akaroa primary school, from the small schools in various bays and from the convent school. Only a few Peninsula pupils went to boarding schools in Christchurch. This was a further indication of the "local self-sufficiency" of Akaroa in the years before 1950.⁴⁹

At the very end of the 19th century, in 1898, the Sisters of Mercy came to Akaroa and founded a convent school. In 1902-03, the former Congregationalist Ebenezer Church was moved onto the Roman Catholic land on Rue Lavaud to serve as a schoolroom. A convent was built in 1907. The convent school did not close until 1969. The school was subsequently demolished, but the convent building retained. It is now the hospital of a retirement village.⁵⁰

Access to Akaroa 1900-1950

The first half of the 20th century saw a significant shift in how people travelled between Akaroa and Christchurch. Travel by sea from Lyttelton declined in favour of travel by land

46 Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 42; *Area School 150*, pp. 5-8; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 43-44

47 *Area School 150*, p. 9

48 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 46; *Area School 150*, pp. 9-12, 15-16, 20, 32

49 *Area School 150*, pp. 18-20

50 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 44

through Little River and over Hilltop. But at the end of the period, the road to Akaroa was still slow and rough.

Much of the town's freight continued to come and go by sea. Blanche Baughan wrote between the wars that "once or twice a week a coast-wise steamer may be seen, taking aboard Peninsula cheese and grass-seed, or discharging a freight of flour, sugar, drapery etc. for the railway is 20 miles away at the other end of the coach-road".⁵¹

Symbolic of the town's continuing reliance on sea transport was the replacement, in 1910, of the old wharfinger's office, which was in the building at the base of the first town wharf that had served as Latter's store, by a new wharfinger's office at the base of the town wharf. The new office had a weighbridge in front of it. The rough-cast building with a Marseilles tile roof was utilitarian but had a somewhat sophisticated, Arts and Crafts, look. The building survives, now in use as a shop.

Although travel by land became the usual way for people to get to Akaroa after World War I, sea travel remained important. In the 1920s and 1930s, various vessels of the Union Steam Shipping Company brought large numbers of visitors to Akaroa on day excursions.⁵²

At the start of the 20th century, those travelling to Akaroa by land usually took the train to Little River and then a horse-drawn coach over Hilltop. In 1910, the first motor service between Little River and Akaroa began (refer figure 6.14). The horse-drawn coach services had ceased by the time World War I broke out. By that time the main road to Akaroa was metalled over its full length.⁵³



Figure 6.14. In the early 20th century, service cars replaced horse-drawn coaches for the journey to Akaroa from the Little River railway station. Some of the service cars did the full run into Christchurch. Behind these early service cars is Ilfracombe, a popular boarding house. Ref: Ilfracombe with service cars , Postcard -1

51 Baughan, *Akaroa*, p. 20

52 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 45; Akaroa Museum notice board

53 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 45; *The Canterbury Guide*, p. 152

Between the wars New Zealand Railways offered a through rail and motor service from Christchurch to Little River, with a connection at Little River with Pilkington's service cars. By the mid 1920s, several Akaroa-based firms were offering sedan car services. Some of these services connected with the trains at Little River; others provided a through service, by road all the way from Christchurch. The journey in the mid 1920s took about 2½ to three hours – a far cry, the *Press* noted in 1926, from the three days it took in the 1850s to get from Christchurch to Akaroa overland. By 1926, the paper noted, with a good macadamised road, the journey which took three days to accomplish "can be done by motor in as many hours". When passenger trains were withdrawn from the Little River line in 1951, a through service by New Zealand Railways motor coaches, taking 2¾ hours, was inaugurated.⁵⁴

Increasing amounts of freight also began to travel to and from Akaroa by road. By 1914, the regular service offered by Union Company boats since the 1880s was withdrawn. A small bi-weekly steamer from Lyttelton was sufficient to meet the requirements of the Akaroa business community, over and above the road services provided by local freight firms.⁵⁵

The increasing use of cars to get to and from Akaroa led to the establishment of entirely new businesses in Akaroa – garages and service stations. There were garages and petrol pumps at different times on Rue Lavaud, just north of the Rue Balguerie corner at the corner of Beach Road and Rue Jolie (on the site later occupied by the Akaroa Bakery) and on William Street. Of the older garage or service station premises, only the building on William Street, outside the town's established commercial areas, has survived.⁵⁶

Utilities and infrastructure

The early years of the 20th century saw marked improvements in Akaroa's public services and utilities. A loan for a high-pressure water system, fed from the Aylmer Stream, was authorised in 1900 and the system was inaugurated in 1902. This was followed, in 1903-04, by the building of a new sewage system, the loan for which was authorised in 1902. The system had three large septic tanks and was described in 1914 as being "in point of success ... second to none in the Dominion".⁵⁷

Akaroa's first fire brigade had been formed in 1877. In November 1902, a station for the fire brigade was opened on land in front of the Council quarry, at the foot of Stanley Park. This first station was replaced in 1923, and the second station replaced in turn in 1982 by the present building. Though the present building is not historic, on the site is a metal fire bell tower which was commissioned in January 1903.⁵⁸

In 1911, Akaroa became one of the first Canterbury towns to have a public electricity supply, when the generator of the town's power house was commissioned. Water was fed from a concrete reservoir on L'Aube Hill down a pipeline to a generator in a small, brick power house of attractive pavilion design. A larger, plainer brick extension was added to the original power house probably in 1915.

54 The *Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement (advertisers) & Editorial; Akaroa Tourist Guide Book I

55 Akaroa Tourist Guide Book I (advertisers); *The Canterbury Guide*, p. 152

56 Akaroa Tourist Guide Book I & II (advertisers)

57 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 43; *Cyclopedia*, p. 604; *The Canterbury Guide*, p. 155; Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 43

58 Akaroa Database, Beach Road

Power from the Lake Coleridge power station reached Akaroa in 1923, when the reticulation of the Peninsula was completed, but the plant and equipment in the power house were retained as stand-by until 1955, when they were sold. The plant was later returned to Akaroa from Maruia Springs and re-installed in the power house, which now doubles as a small museum of technology and an exhibition gallery. The Orion Power House Gallery building is the town's most important relic of improvements to its infrastructure in the early 20th century⁵⁹(refer figure 6.15).



Figure 6.15. Orion Power House Gallery 2009.

⁵⁹ Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 45; tablet on the former Electric Power Board building, Akaroa; Andersen, *Place Names*, p. 43

AKAROA'S LANDSCAPE 1900 TO 1950

Akaroa as pleasure resort: “getting fat on oysters and prohibition”

Akaroa had grown steadily through the second half of the 19th century and by 1900 was an established town and popular holiday destination. Promoted variously as a recreation resort, a sanatorium and a honeymoon retreat over this period the landscape's natural and constructed features were valued as much for their 'health camp' properties as they were for their aesthetic charms. As Ogilvie has pointed out, Sir Thomas McKenzie, the Minister of Tourism, and Blanche Baughan, author and poet, both spoke and wrote eulogistically of its scenic and historic uniqueness.⁶⁰ Other Tourist Department promotions and the town's accommodation industry built on the previous century's idea of the restorative landscape and marketed the town as the “Riviera of Canterbury,” and “the premiere seaside tourist resort of Canterbury” with a climate that was said to equal that of the Mediterranean. (Akaroa's role as a resort has already been discussed in terms of the impact of this role on the history of the town's buildings in these decades.)

As part of the resort experience there were endless ways for the tourist to experience the landscape. This is highlighted in the postcard commentary that flooded out of the town from 1900. In these missives Akaroa is described as both a playground and a respite, with the landscape supporting each of these roles. Some examples include:

“... Getting fat on oysters and prohibition. Chrysanthemums out. Children well” postcard 1910

“The weather so far has been perfect. We are enjoying ourselves very much indeed and like Garthowen alright. The food is excellent we are doing little else but eat and sleep and are feeling all the better for it” postcard March 1918

“Akaroa is a very pretty little place just suited for honeymooners so it doesn't suit Gib...” postcard ca 1918

“Rhonda and I are having a most enjoyable time ... We walked up Walnut Grove and now are sitting up on the hill overlooking the harbour which is a very pretty site[sic]. We have been ... tennis in the afternoon, pictures at night. On Thursday went out in the launch... saw numbers of porpoises out towards the heads... The bathing pools and sheds are nearly opposite Garthowen so that is very handy” postcard 1920

The hotel, guest house and camping industry flourished with honeymooners, family groups and the camping public all drawn to the well-packaged amenity on offer. For anyone seeking rest, recuperation and romantic scenery, Akaroa was considered to be “simply perfection”.

The changing face of public open space

The sea-baths were high on the list of attractions that contributed to the town's success as a holiday location. Sea bathing in the early 20th century was considered extremely beneficial for its invigorating influences and medicinal properties, and was also considered a wonderful tonic for the liver, stomach and kidneys (if inadvertently swallowed).

The Akaroa sea-bath as it was known, allowed visitors to take to the sea in an enclosed

60 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 45

area without the fear of currents and was an extremely popular if somewhat risqué amenity (refer figure 6.16). Operating close to Daly's wharf on the foreshore from 1910, the baths contentiously allowed mixed bathing, attracting comment from other parts of New Zealand. One newspaper wrote that “Banks Peninsula – plain Canterbury's rugged nose – is chiefly known to the outside world for two things, which are grass-seed and Akaroa's mixed bathing”.⁶¹

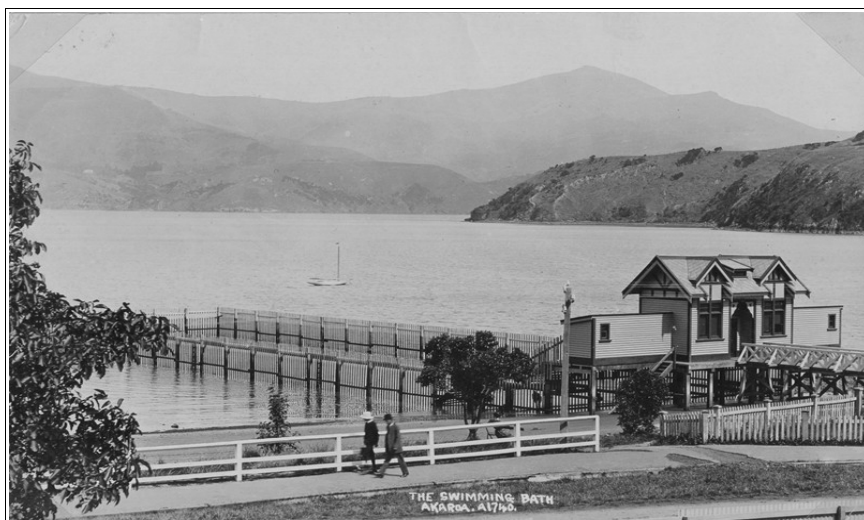


Figure 6.16. In the early 20th century a raised bathing shed and enclosed area for swimming was built at the north end of the town's main swimming beach, not far from the base of Dalys Wharf. Sea bathing was a popular activity for the increasing numbers of visitors flocking to a town. Ref: Postcard, private collection, J, Pyle.

The harbour was a key amenity area providing opportunities for boating, fishing, porpoise spotting and trips to the other bays. It also allowed visitors scenic views of the town from the sea. Daily pleasure cruises were offered by a number of companies operating in Akaroa (refer figures 6.17 & 6.18).



Figure 6.17. Scenic harbour trips and porpoise spotting were popular activities through the 20th century. Today's contemporary harbour attractions such as swimming with Hector's Dolphins and wildlife catamaran cruises build on these earlier tourist ventures. Ref: 1936-1

⁶¹ *Evening Post*, 23 January 1911, p. 1



Figure 6.17. One of the highlights in the 1930s was the launch trip to Dan Rogers Rock and the Lighthouse, which at that time was in Damon's Bay. Cruises to the coloured volcanic rock terraces known as Scenery Nook were also popular excursions. Ref: Postcard, Private collection J. Pyle

New attractions in the Domain also added to its popularity. These included the addition of the upper portion of the French Blockhouse and the formation of two asphalt tennis courts. Members of the public are noted to have given a significant amount of plant material including shrubs. Rhododendrons came from M. O'Connor of Okains Bay, bulbs were donated by Mr R. H. Rhodes and Councillor Longden offered wild anemones and English bluebells. In 1908 it was described as a "soft, sleepy, delicious wilderness, where English laburnum and lilac nestle among the dark leafage of ancient bush"⁶² (refer figure 6.18).

By 1920 the 'wilderness' was becoming problematic and attempts by the Council to raise funds for additional gardening assistance saw the sale of Domain acorns and also stands of manuka for firewood. Compounding the problems associated with upkeep was the ongoing challenge of would-be plant thieves, vandals and invasive weed species. Reports show that the Domain was well used up until the war years. At this point it is noted to have fallen into neglect in areas away from the main drive with gorse, blackberry, broom and grass invading the walks.



Figure 6.18. By the 1920s the early exotic plantings in the Domain were of considerable size and although the grounds were under threat by encroaching weeds a walk in the Domain was still a popular activity. Ref: Postcard, Private collection J. Pyle

62 *Otago Witness*, 11 November 1908, p. 77

Land reclaimed on the northern beach in 1886-87 for a recreation reserve was developed into a sports ground offering tennis, croquet and hockey facilities within a gorse boundary hedge. Some of the excess pines that originated from James Hector's donation were planted along the western side of the reserve in June 1900 as a shelter or wind break.⁶³

Items that referenced the town's early European biography were used as landscape features on the foreshore. In the case of the Britomart Reserve this was a cannon of the type which would have been on the English naval vessel the *Britomart*. Sent out to New Zealand for the 1906-07 exhibition in Christchurch at the instigation of Akaroa's mayor Etienne Le Lievre, the canon was sent to Akaroa following the exhibition and has been a feature of the Reserve for over 100 years. The 1808 Kinman cannon was placed in the reserve in 1908 and the reserve grounds were developed by the Akaroa Beautifying Society who erected a post and chain fence, planted trees and laid out shrub and flower beds⁶⁴ (refer figure 6.19).

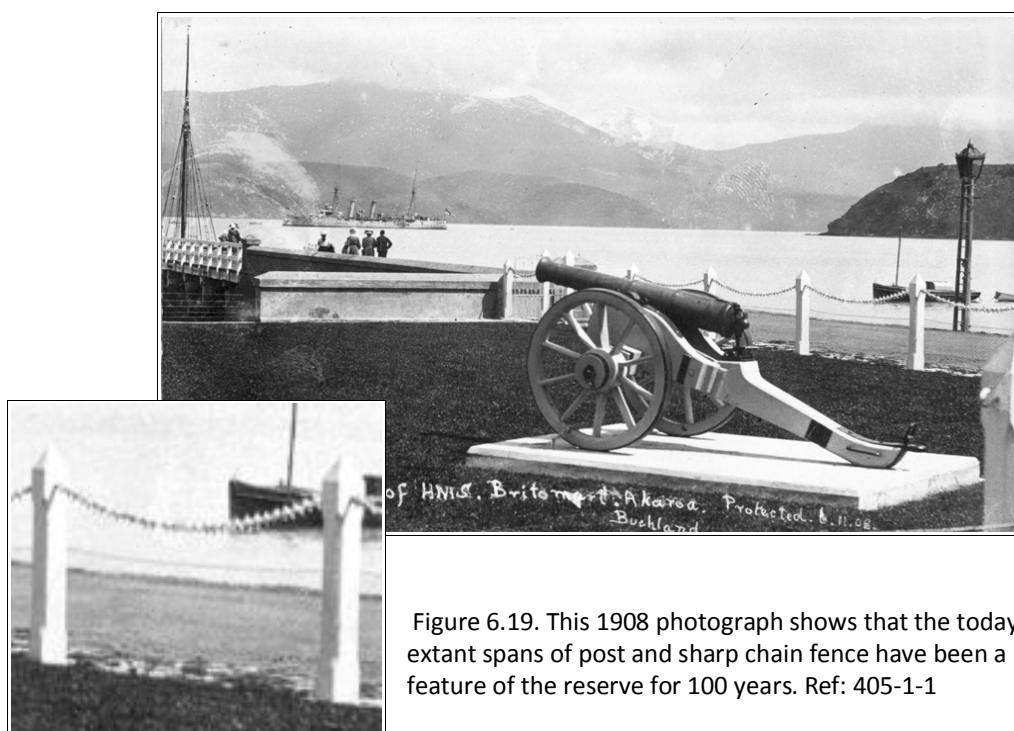


Figure 6.19. This 1908 photograph shows that the today's extant spans of post and sharp chain fence have been a feature of the reserve for 100 years. Ref: 405-1-1

South of the War Memorial a single trypot from one of the southern whaling bays was positioned under newly planted ngaio, referencing the area's early whaling history. Further trytops from the shore whaling stations of the southern bays were located in the children's playground area on the foreshore near Dalys Wharf. These three trytops were relocated in the 1970s to the other end of the town and incorporated into a brick display feature. Norfolk pines purchased from the Christchurch nursery firm of Nairn and Son were introduced along Beach Road in the 1920s and 1930s and foreshore seating was

63 *Akaroa Mail*, 1 June 1900, p. 2 quoted in *Akaroa Museum: Garden of Tane files*

64 Akaroa Civic Trust website <http://www.akaroacivictrust.co.nz/fastpage/fpengine.php/templateid/1>

added in 1927⁶⁵(refer 6.20). These pines are still a feature of the Akaroa foreshore together with the four whaling tryposts.

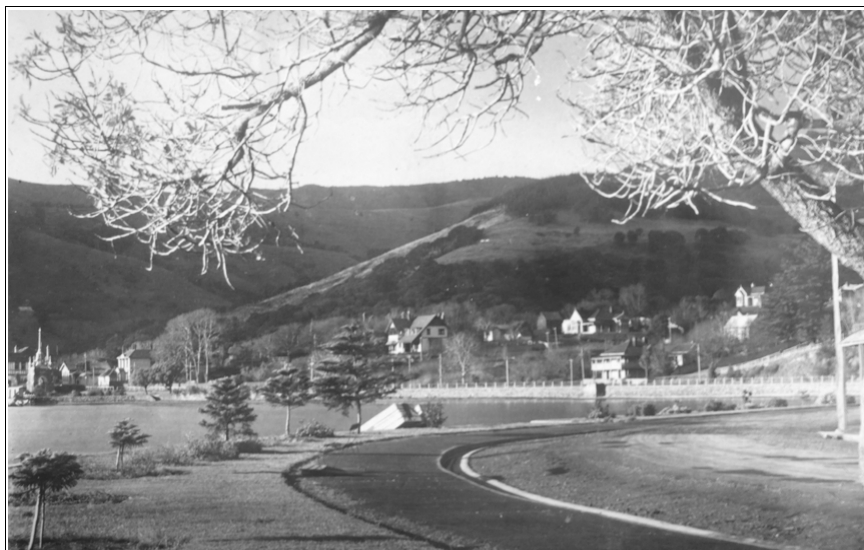


Figure 6.20. Norfolk pines were a fashionable seaside planting in New Zealand in the first part of the C20th century. These were planted in the late 1920s however Council minutes from 1913 discuss long term plans to ornament the foreshore with Norfolk Pines.

Ref: Postcard



Figure 6.21. Akaroa's reserves were, according to 1930s tourist guide books, of exceptional beauty. Owing much of their appeal to the Akaroa Beautifying Association, they were ornamented with flower beds and shrubberies. Australian pepperwood trees (*Schinus molle*) donated by Mr Pool in 1910 were a feature of the Britomart Reserve.

Ref: 2167

The large block of land now known as Stanley Park was leased by Council as a horse paddock until at least 1939 and improvements were made to a number of the town's other foreshore reserves.

65 Akaroa Borough Council Minute Books : 1924-1930

Akaroa cemetery: “the most inviting kind of long-sleeping ground”

Akaroa's cemeteries were popular places to visit and their elevated aspect allowed expansive views of the town and harbour (refer figure 6.22). Not only of interest to tourists, they were featured in poems and prose during this time and these works describe their experiential qualities as well as their physical attributes, offering an alternative reading from the usual genealogical record.

Blanche Baughan, in her ca 1918 poem *God's Acre*, wrote of the cemetery, “Lo, a field of white crosses, a garden of grief, - and a riot of roses, Of red and white roses, Rich Death! All in blossom...”⁶⁶ while Ursula Bethell, in *The Long Harbour*, ca 1936, wrote “... sea-answering pine-groves garrison the burial-ground. It should be very easy to lie down and sleep there in that sequestered hillside ossuary, underneath a billowy, sun-caressed grass-knoll...”⁶⁷

In a similar vein the writer James Cowan, a noted historian and journalist, waxed lyrical about the Dissenter's Cemetery in 1932, writing “there is a cemetery at Akaroa that I thought was really the most inviting kind of long-sleeping ground I had ever seen. It ought to be the perfect ending to the round of life to be laid to rest in so idyllic a spot, on that sunny slope of land lying to the glass-smooth sea, with the tui making its immemorial deep rich music in the branches overhead.”⁶⁸



Figure 6.22. Akaroa's cemetery contains a remarkable number of fully intact wrought iron railing surrounds as well as unusual coloured ledger stones and painted railings. The roses which grew with such abandon over the graves were removed in the late 20th century.

66 Baughan, 'God's Acre' in *The Oxford Book of Australasian Verse* p. 126

67 Bethell, *Time and Place*, pp. 13-14

68 Cowan, *The New Zealand Railways Magazine*, Vol 6, Issue 8, 1932 p. 38

The old French Burial Ground: “Ici repose le corps...”

The old French cemetery was perhaps less highly regarded at this time. From as early as the 1870s the upkeep of the graves had been an issue and by 1906 the interior of the cemetery was described as being in a most disgraceful state of neglect. As part of the 50th anniversary of the constitution of the Akaroa Borough, the cemetery was given a total face lift. Funded by the War Graves Commission, all existing plant fabric and remnant grave material was cleared from the grounds in favour of a new landscape of concrete and carpet bedding. Bodies were reburied in a central plot and two coffin inscription plates were salvaged and included as memorial fabric mounted on a central burial feature (refer figure 6.23).

The grounds were laid out by the Council Gardener in 1925/26 and trees were provided by the Department of Internal Affairs. A central memorial block was erected and the site was renamed the Old French Burial Ground. Descriptions of this new landscape were not all favourable: “the dear old cemetery had been raked bare and clean and tidy” wrote one critic. Pines were said to have been planted with military precision and the surrounding fence was a ‘severe’ iron railing.⁶⁹

The unveiling of the memorial by the Hon. J. G. Anderson, Minister of Marine on 25 September 1926 was a grand occasion, with the dignitaries and populace walking in procession through the streets and sitting down to lunch at the Metropole Hotel. There were speeches at both the Borough Council chambers and at the cemetery, where the Little River band played the *Marseillaise* before afternoon tea at the Recreation Ground, an afternoon football match and an evening ball.⁷⁰

In 1939, a willow tree was sent from Jerusalem on the Wanganui River to the Borough Council for the grounds of the French Cemetery. Sent by a former resident of the town, Mr William Bruce, and planted by Mr E.X. Le Lievre, the occasion was felt to be symbolic on a number of levels. The willow was said to be descended from Mr Le Lievre's father's original St Helena plantings. Cuttings from these had been taken by Bishop Pompallier on one of his visits to Akaroa to plant in the North Island, including on the banks of the Wanganui River. Mr Bruce, having left Akaroa as a child to live in Wanganui, had encountered these and knowing of their association with Napoléon's grave at St Helena and then Akaroa, had propagated from them. Hearing that the Akaroa willow had died he had thought it important that the connection between the early French colonists and this plant line be continued. It was also felt fitting by the mayor, that the bond between the French and the English in the settlement was being recalled in the planting of the willow at this time as England and France were preparing to go to war together against an aggressor in Europe.⁷¹

Two totara, an oak and a kauri in the wider cemetery area outside of the enclosure suggest that the cemetery has been used as a site for commemorative or memorial plantings. It is thought that the Oak may be one of two Coronation Oaks planted in 1911 (discussed later in this section). The provenance of one of the totara is likely to be the 1932 planting by the Akaroa Girl Guides who commemorated Girl Guide week in May that year.⁷² At the same time the Brownies planted a Kahikatea in the cemetery grounds.

69 Letters to the Editor, *Akaroa Mail* various between 1926 and 1937

70 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 46; *The Press*, 27 September 1926; *The Press*, 28 September 1926, Editorial

71 *Akaroa Mail*, 5 September 1939

72 *Akaroa Mail*, 7 May 1932



Figure 6.23 The central memorial feature lists the names of those who were buried on L'Aube Hill as far as it was possible to ascertain them. Ref: 2082-1



Figure 6.24. By the 1940s the cemetery had lost its central planted beds and roses were ready to claim the burial ground again. Ref: 8219 1/2 CM

The War Memorial Gardens

The War Memorial and its associated garden were constructed on the site originally occupied by the old Borough School, where many of those whose names appear on the memorial had been educated. The foundation stone for the imposing Gothic memorial, which was designed by a Christchurch architect, H. St.A. Murray, was laid in March 1922 and the completed structure unveiled on 12 March 1924.⁷³

Both the memorial and its surrounding wall were constructed from stone from Bob Bruce's farm at the top of Alymers Valley. The grounds for the memorial are likely to have been designed by the Council Gardener who generously gave 50 rose bushes for the garden. His design followed the conventions for public grounds in the 1920s with various geometric shapes cut into the turf, rose beds and bedding annuals which provided

⁷³ Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 45-46; Fearnley, Unpublished manuscript, ch. 5

seasonal interest and high colour. Permanent structure was provided by four *Phoenix canariensis* (Canary Island date palms) which were fashionable seaside plantings at that time but were also often associated with memorial structures. These were not part of the original landscape scheme but appear in the grounds in the 1930s(refer figure 6.25).

The landscape was slightly modified in later years with the addition of a trellised boundary on its northern edge. Historically the memorial was physically connected to the foreshore and the adjacent women's rest room by a cruciform pathway system and views of the sea were possible through the site from Rue Lavaud. These views and the visual relationship between the site and the foreshore were closed down when the *Metrosideros excelsa* (pohutakawa) hedge bounding the reserve on its western edge was allowed to reach its current height. The form of the planted beds and the use of roses in these beds has remained a consistent feature of the Memorial Gardens through time(refer figure 6.26).



Figure 6.25. The War Memorial garden is an interesting blend of native and exotic planting and has changed little over time. The Plunket Rooms behind the memorial were constructed in 1933 and it is assumed that the palms date from around this time.

Ref: Postcard, Private collection, J. Pyle



Figure 6.26. Akaroa's War Memorial grounds in 2009.

Centennial celebrations

In preparation for the 1940 celebration of the centennial of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi much of Akaroa's public landscape was enhanced or upgraded. The Green's Point monument was 're-conditioned', which included a re-worded plaque, correcting historical errors in the original text. A new fence, in the same style as the French Cemetery, was designed by Paul Pascoe, a Christchurch architect, and access to the site from Lover's Walk (Beach Road) was improved. This fence is still a feature of the memorial site today (refer figure 6.27).



Figure 6.27. Green's Point monument still sits within its 1939 fence.

Other significant events were inscribed into the fabric of the town as part of the Centennial. A granite memorial and plaque combination was placed on the road reserve on Beach Road to mark the location of the site where the French colonists spent their first night ashore in 1840. Less formal inscriptions document other Centennial projects and the low rock wall below Stanley Park on Beach Road, with its associated plantings of red gums, was part of the Akaroa Beautifying Society's centennial project. A simple '1940' inscription on the front of a contained culvert associated with this wall is thought to reference the event (refer figure 6.28).



Figure 6.28. This date and decorative detailing is thought to be linked to the 1940s town improvements and planting regime that preceded the Centennial celebrations.

A decorative stone border demarcating the road edge and the grass verge along the esplanade is also believed to have been part of the Council's Centennial foreshore improvements programme (refer figure 6.29). A small section of this border remains near the French landing site (refer figure 6.30).

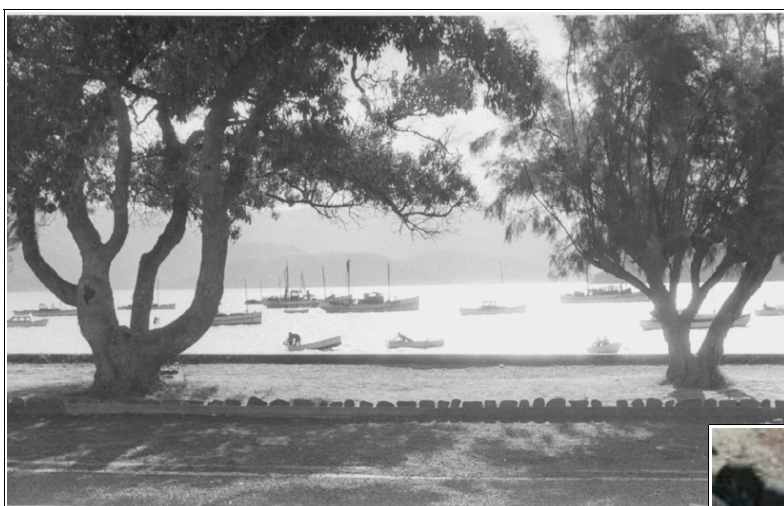


Figure 6.29. (Top) A small portion of this stone edging is still in situ near the French landing site. Ref: 758

Figure 6.30 (Right) Remnant stone edging border around a pohutukawa adjacent to the French landing memorials., 2009



In addition to built landscape elements there was also much associated planting in the town. Residents were exhorted by the Council to tidy their gardens and street frontages for the celebrations and in the spirit of 'local differentiation' they were encouraged to plant species that could only be grown in Akaroa (and not Christchurch). Discounted plants, grown by the Council Gardener were offered for sale to residents to help enliven the appearance of the town. It is not known what these species were.⁷⁴ Concurrent with this the Akaroa Horticultural Society promoted the idea of garden competitions to stimulate interest in gardening with the desired outcome being "an improvement in private gardens and a more beautiful town for the centennial celebrations".⁷⁵

The native section of the Canterbury Education Department's Tree Nursery was especially developed to provide native species for planting at provincial schools during the Centennial celebrations. This was not limited to trees. Shrubs, hedges and shelter belt species were all considered worthy memorials for the occasion. It is likely that other tree planting activity was associated with the Centennial and more specifically the re-enactment ceremony in April 1940. Among the long list of politicians and church hierarchy who were in attendance at the event was the Governor-General, Lord Galway, who was an inveterate commemorative tree planter.⁷⁶

Historic Trees

As part of the planning for New Zealand's Centennial celebrations a list of historic trees around the country was compiled by the Centennial authorities. The trees proposed by the Akaroa Borough Council for inclusion included loquat trees in the grounds of Mr E.X. Le Lievre's residence, which had been planted by Mr C.B. Robinson, and the large gum in Mr Bruce's property in Percy Street, under which the Rev. Alymer was said to have held the first church services in the 1850s. A catalpa tree brought back from Rio de Janeiro by Mr Watson in the 1860s was also proposed, as well as Mr F. Le Lievre's willow from St Helena (although this would have been the 'Jerusalem' progeny).⁷⁷

None of these trees with the exception of the willow (discussed in following section) are understood to have survived.⁷⁸ This is likely to have been the consequence of later subdivision activity. However, there were undoubtedly more trees, both native and exotic in the town at this point with a direct link to the 1840s than there are today.

Arbor Day, Commemorative and other plantings

Arbor Day was instituted primarily to encourage the re-vegetation of bare and waste areas. It was promoted as a patriotic activity which variously cultivated community spirit, addressed a raft of conservation issues, helped to ameliorate a number of perceived environmental concerns and had an aesthetic and utilitarian motive. In Akaroa the day appears to have been rather erratically observed with school children taking centre stage in the early 1890s – 1920s, then members of the Akaroa Council in the 1930s.

74 Borough Council Minutes: Special Meeting, 9 March 1939

75 IA 1 B2028 Record 65/52, Part 1. Centennial Records, Akaroa, ANZ

76 *Centennial News*, No 14, 1941, p. 3

77 *Akaroa Mail* in Centennial clipping file, Alexander Turnbull Library, undated clipping

78 Time constraints precluded investigation of all of the gardens which now cover these originally extensive sites.

Early plantings occurred to the rear of L'Aube Hill in connection with the development of the power house reservoir site in 1912. The grounds of the power house are thought to have been developed between 1912 and 1916. Remnant plantings of *Rhopalostylis sapida* (nikau palm), *Alectryon excelsis* (titoki), *Pseudopanax crassifolium* (lancewood), *Phoenix canariensis* (Canary Island date palm) and two *Trachycarpus fortunei* (Chusan palm), together with an unusual fountain dated 1916, are still a feature of these grounds (refer figure 6.31).



Figure 6.31. Still in working order this unusual fountain in the grounds of the Orion Powerhouse Museum is dated 1916 on the exterior of its bowl.

The 1912 Arbor Day plantings were concentrated around the reservoir and native veronicas, (hebe) ngaios, and other native shrubs were planted. A number of these Ngaio are still evident around the old reservoir. Two years later two hundred and thirty trees, including pines, were planted over the greater site by school children.⁷⁹

School grounds were also the focus on Arbor Day commemorations and it is likely that the large cedar, gum and spruce trees removed from the Akaroa Area School in the 1940s were markers of early Arbor Day observances. Other Arbor Day plantings by the Women's Institute occurred in the War Memorial grounds, where four roses were planted, in Selwyn Avenue and the Britomart Reserve in 1936 and in Jubilee Park in 1939.⁸⁰

In addition to Arbor Day, school children were active with other planting campaigns across the town. The most significant of these occurred in 1907 when rows of ngaio trees were planted in Bruce Terrace and along the waterfront, to commemorate the founding of the Dominion.⁸¹

79 Akaroa Borough Council Minutes 1914-1916

80 *Akaroa Mail* in Centennial clipping file, ATL, undated clipping

81 Burstall, *Forest Mensuration Report No 22*, p. 7

Coronation Oaks were planted on L'Aube Hill in June 1911. Lengthy newspaper coverage of the event noted that the Mayoress planted the King's Oak not far from the old French Cemetery and the wife of the County Chairman planted the Queen's Oak a little lower down. Plaques were associated with these plantings.⁸² Neither of these plaques have survived however an oak is noted in the grounds of the French Cemetery.

A peace tree, marking Armistice Day, was planted by Mayor Armstrong in 1918 in the Domain, near the playground. This oak and its associated plinth and plaque are still a feature of the grounds (refer figure 6.32). Other Oaks were planted to celebrate the royal wedding in 1947 however their location and fate remains undetermined.

A bid in 1926 by one of the Councillors to plant L'Aube Hill in macrocarpas with the word 'Akaroa' spelled out 'Hollywood style' in silver birch trees was narrowly beaten and Council improvements turned to the removal of the mature pines on the hill. These, it was proposed, would be replaced one for one with a native shrub, particularly bird-attracting species.⁸³ It is unclear if this occurred. However, later Arbor Day plantings continued with this native planting regime.

Other commemorative trees are likely to have been planted during this period and there are suggestions that some events in the 1930s and 1940s were marked by plantings in the Akaroa Domain.⁸⁴



Figure 6.32. Surviving commemorative planting and plaque from 1911 in the Domain / Garden of Tane.

82 *Akaroa Mail*, 26 June 1911

83 Akaroa Borough Council Minutes 1920s-1945

84 Ericson, *Gardens of Tane*, undated manuscript p.1

School Gardens, experimental orchards and other horticultural endeavors

The new District High School building was completed in 1936 and horticulture became part of the School Certificate syllabus. A small orchard was established in the grounds and thrived. Peach, pear, nectarine, three plums and two apples along with cane fruits, a lemon and a grape vine were an important part of the school landscape, along with the ornamental gardens which had been planted by one of the teachers.⁸⁵ No fruit trees are understood to have survived.

As part of the Department of Agriculture's encouragement of New Zealand's agricultural resources a succession of experimental stations, farms and orchards were set up throughout New Zealand from the 1890s. Mrs Porter's property in Aylmer Street was selected from a number of potential sites in 1912 and by 1913, 96 apples and 40 other sorts of fruit trees had been planted. Used as a site of instruction for commercial and home orchardists, it was an intensively cultivated and well-ordered landscape.⁸⁶ This was recently converted to a citrus operation however a number of aging fruit trees are understood to survive in the grounds(refer figure 6.34).

Reports of the Government Inspector of Orchards suggest that the town was still continuing to supply significant amounts of fruit and walnuts for the Christchurch market (refer figure 6.33).⁸⁷



Figure 6.33. Captioned “Walnut growing in Akaroa” these images from the *New Zealand Farmer and Stock and Station Journal* in August 1910 show walnut threshing (1), drying (2). The sacks of walnuts illustrated (5) were said to be worth about £2.00 per sack.

85 *Akaroa Area School 150th Year celebration*

86 *Akaroa Mail*, 18 July 1912; *Akaroa Mail*, 19 February 1914; *Akaroa Mail*, 17 December 1914

87 *New Zealand Department of Agriculture, Commerce and Tourism, Annual Report*, 1913



Figure 6.34. Aylmers Valley Road in the general area of the government orchard.
Ref: 2006

Private Gardens: “a town of groves and gardens”

Gardens in Akaroa at the beginning of the 20th century were a reflection of the romantic eclecticism that characterised gardens throughout the rest of the country. Despite the town's relative isolation, residents had no difficulty accessing the wide range of plant material that was available in Christchurch. As well as having its own nurserymen, Akaroa was receiving visits from Christchurch's large nursery firms. A.W. Buxton was one such firm and a travelling representative from Buxton's Opawa Nursery was a regular visitor to Akaroa. Primarily concerned with taking orders for plant material and garden ornamentation, it is possible that some of the wirewove fences that are still visible in properties in Rue Balguerrie (Banksia Cottage and along part of the Blythcliffe boundary) were sourced from Buxton's. Certainly these appear in his catalogues from 1905.⁸⁸

It is also likely that Buxton's traveling salesman's role extended to soliciting for landscape commissions. T.E. Taylor, one of Akaroa's most prominent businessmen, is known to have been one of Buxton's clients between 1910 and 1926⁸⁹ and it is possible that his property, 1 Rue Benoit (now known as the Maison de la Mer), may retain some of Buxton's trade mark plantings and design elements. Mr Taylor was reported to have a much admired fernery,⁹⁰ a feature common in Buxton's gardens at this time.

Akaroa gardens were said to “nearly conceal the creeper-covered houses, blending their cultivated beauty with that of the more sombre bush”.⁹¹ Flowers were described as growing in profusion and many gardens were noted to contain scarlet geraniums, heliotrope, creamy tea roses, thick fuschia hedges and small, rich, dark French lilac. In prose as romantic as the gardens she described, Ethel Turner, the Australian novelist, recorded a visit to Akaroa in 1926, and noted houses with close-clipped macrocarpa hedges, grass-grown streets and “thin aloof poplars”.⁹²

88 *Buxton's Catalogue of Wire and Iron Work*, 1905

89 Tipples, *Colonial Landscape Gardener: Alfred Buxton of Christchurch, New Zealand 1872-1950*, p. 160

90 *Akaroa Mail*, 17 December 1914

91 *Canterbury Times*, 29 April 1900 p. 5

92 *Christchurch Press*, 28 September 1926, Supplement p. 1

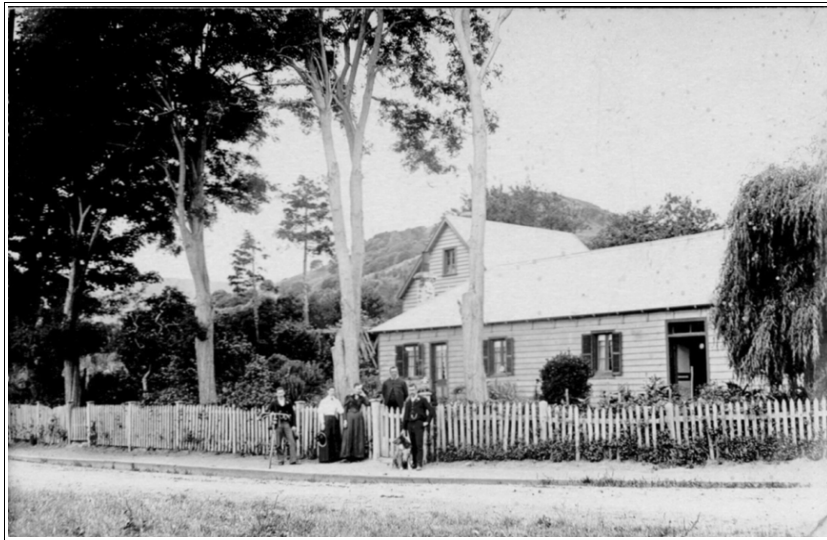


Figure 6.35. The de Malmarche house framed by eucalypts. Ref: 104

The same year Blanche Baughan, author and Akaroa resident, described the significant seasonal drama and the ephemeral qualities of the landscape in spring. This was particularly impressive because of the extensive orchards of fruit tree blossoms (peach, plum, pear, cherry and quince) which were bounded by flowering hedges of hawthorn and broom and backgrounded by hills covered in bright green spring grass.⁹³ Baughan also described the town's cottage gardens in some detail. Lining every lane, these were variations on the same general theme of "artless loveliness and effortless growth". Characterised by their informality and potager style, Baughan described them as full to overflowing with columbine, stocks, scented pinks, wallflowers, tulips, polyanthus, ranunculus, purple honesty, Jug-lilies (arum lilies), snapdragons and larkspur, planted alongside currants, gooseberries and purple and white lilac. In November, roses claimed the town. Hedges were festooned with *Provence* and *Cloth of Gold*, the *Seven Sisters* rose climbed through the trees. This was reiterated by Cowan in 1930 who described Akaroa as "one great flower garden".⁹⁴

Two years later Cowan expanded on his description of the town in more detail. Akaroa he felt had a peculiar attractiveness to the visitor which he believed was derived from its landscape, the town's still tangible French associations and the native birdlife. It was "a town of groves and gardens, of leafy old lanes, of lovers' walks and little parks, of scented hedgerows and orchards that dangled their fruit-laden branches within tempting reach of the footpath stroller". Some of the properties on Aylmers Valley Road, he noted, were "em-bowered in grape vines and climbing roses, and apricot trees are trained along cottage walls". Immense old eucalyptus and oaks were noted along with hedgerows of alders and hawthorns⁹⁵ (refer figure 6.35). Charles Brasch, another visitor to the town in 1938, was struck with the "wiry manukas" on the hill slopes and described ngaio trees which "grew out of the land rather than weighting it down" and of the town itself he recorded, "ngaio and Norfolk Island pines grew along the curving line of little old wooden shops, white and red, with veranda roofs over the pavement".⁹⁶

93 Baughan, *Glimpses of New Zealand Scenery*, p. 303

94 Cowan, *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, Vol 5, Issue 3. p. 51

95 Cowan, *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, Volume 6, Issue 8, 1932, p. 36

96 Brasch, *Indirections: a memoir*, p. 138



Figure 6.36. The Narbey family home at 115 Rue Jolie ca 1910.

Streetscape

One of the most striking aspects of Akaroa's streetscape at this time was the visual dominance of its trees. Many of the fastest growing species like the eucalyptus and poplar shelter belts and the plane and walnut trees had begun to tower over the predominantly single and one-and-a-half-storeyed cottages. This disparity in scale had become quite extreme by 1910 (refer figure 6.37). The introduction of 50 power poles throughout the town in 1911 also added another strongly vertical element to the streetscape.

Akaroa's residential and reserves fencing at this time appears to have been overwhelmingly white, simple and open, allowing views into gardens (refer figure 6.36) and across reserve lawns to the harbour. Hedges seem to have been planted around houses away from the main street and by the 1950s these had reached maturity and contributed an English village aesthetic to some parts of the town (refer figure 6.38).

There was an observable mosaic quality to Akaroa's backdrop as surviving native species and patches of regenerating bush extended into former pasture lands and merged with planted gardens and orchards which were slowly moving up the valleys.



Figure 6.37. Lavaud Street property showing mature Cupressus, possibly part of an early hedge or shelter belt. Ref: 108



Examples of boundary treatments 1900-1950:

Figure 6.38 Some of the Percy Street hedges are thought to be part of the original boundary plantings of earlier larger properties (see also figure 5.32).

Figure 6.39. Remnant post and rail fence in Percy Street.

Figure 6.40. 1920s crimped wirewove fence 18 Rue Balguerie.

SNAPSHOT OF AKAROA IN 1950

Descriptions of the town in the years after 1900 document its gradual creep up into the hills. "All of Akaroa that does not lie at the edge of the sea is gently traveling up the soft grassy ridges of the harbour basin" one journalist noted in 1908.⁹⁷ But the significant growth of the town onto the hill slopes and ridge lines came after 1950. By that year, building had only just started on the first major post-war subdivision, between Watson and Muter Streets. The relatively small change in the extent of the town in the first half of the 20th century reflected the small growth of the town's population through those years.

References to the town's earliest European role as a productive French settlement were still visible in some of the mature trees but these were now part of rich amalgam of plantings that included Chinese market gardens, a Government experimental orchard, fashionable sea-side plantings, greater use of native species in public landscapes and growing tracts of regenerating bush on the hill slopes.

Many of the properties had acquired a landmark quality within the town by virtue of their particular plantings, e.g. The Poplars on Rue Lavaud, The Maples at 158 Rue Jolie and The Willows on Rue Lavaud, while new street names e.g. Walnut Avenue and the more recent Kowhai Grove directly referenced plantings in their vicinity.

By 1950 the town's public open spaces had been significantly refashioned as memorial fabric was added and commemorative activities were played out in the town. The War Memorial was the most conspicuous example of this new fabric. New events were inscribed into the towns streets and planted into the landscape while other historic elements, like the grounds of the French Cemetery were erased, or in the case of some of the town's early memorial trees, were removed, died or were forgotten.

Some larger new buildings appeared in the town through these years: the Metropole and Madeira Hotels, the new hospital, school buildings on three sites and the butter factory near the base of Daly's Wharf. But the town remained mostly one of small scale.

Fishing was still an important economic activity, though the original town wharf of 1859, which had been used by fishing boats until the 1930s, had disappeared by 1950, and the fishing boats were using the main wharf. Most people were coming and going by road, in private vehicles and public service cars, all the way from Christchurch after 1951, when passenger trains were finally withdrawn from the Little River branch line.

⁹⁷ *Otago Witness*, 11 November 1908, p. 77

EXTANT TOWN FABRIC DATING FROM 1900-1950

Planted Fabric

- War Memorial Gardens- 4 x *Phoenix canarensis* and *Meterosideros sp.* hedge planted btw 1926 and 1930s
- Garden of Tane - 1918 Peace tree (Oak) at entrance to reserve. It is also possible that some of the 1920s donated bulbs may have survived in some areas
- French Cemetery - Coronation Oak (Kings Oak) unconfirmed
- Beach Road- under Stanley Park 12 x *Eucalyptus ficifolia* ca 1939/1940
- Alymers St - remnant fruit tree from Government Experimental Orchard
- 1 Rue Pompallier - Orion Power Station Museum - *Rhopalostylis sapida*, *Alectryon escelsis*, *Pseudopanex crassifolium*, *Phoenix canariensis*, *Tracycarpus fortunei* planted ca 1912-1916
- 5 Seaview Ave - *Morus nigra* (possibly earlier)
- 9 William St - *Morus nigra* (possibly earlier)
- 14 William St - *Morus nigra* (possibly earlier)
- 130 Rue Jolie (Nikau Cottage) - 2 x *Rhopalostylis sapida* planted 1900
- Percy Street - some hedges are likely to date from this period

Built Fabric

- 18 Rue Balguerie (Banksia Cottage) - wirewove fence
- 37 Rue Balguerie (Bythcliffe) - remains of wirewove fence
- Rue Lavaud - Lamp placed at the junction of Rue Lavaud and SH 75
- 1 Rue Pompallier - fountain in the grounds of the Power Station museum below L'Aube Hill (1916 detailed on fountain bowl)

Reserves, Parks etc

- Britomart Reserve – Cannon , post and chain fencing and some planting
- Beach Road Reserve – Norfolk Pines and other foreshore plantings late 1920s
- Beach Road Foreshore– set of three tripods. Originally placed in 1913 near children's playground, subsequently relocated
- Beach Road Reserve - French landing site memorial
- Beach Road- under Stanley Park ornamental culvert dated 1940
- Decorative stone border (remnant) near French landing site ca1939 / 1940
- Some of the oldest Ngaio on the waterfront date to 1907
- French Burial Ground - fence and memorial structure 1925/26
- Beach Road Reserve - French landing site memorial
- 84 Rue Lavaud - War Memorial structure 1924
- French landing memorial on Beach Road Reserve placed 1940
- Britomart / Green's Point Memorial – fence and steps from Lover's Walk – 1940
- Beach Road - Fisherman's Rest
- Beach Road - Weighbridge building
- Beach Road - Fire bell tower
- L'Aube Hill - Ngaio plantings

Public buildings and structures

- Beach Road - Boat shed
- Rue Jolie - Former Ladies' Rest Room
- Rue Jolie - Coronation Library (remodelling of)
- Rue Lavaud - Presbyterian church hall
- Julius Place - Former Anglican church hall (now a residence)
- 6 Rue Viard - Former Convent building
- 62 Rue Lavaud - Former Police Station lock-up (Snuggle Inn)
- Onuku Road - Hospital
- 78 Rue Lavaud - Former Post office (now Council Service Centre)
- Rue Jolie - Bowling Club pavilion
- 1 Rue Pompallier - Power House

Commercial buildings

- 46 Rue Lavaud - Madeira Hotel
- 45 & 47 Rue Lavaud - Artisans' Gallery & McCrosties
- Cnr Rue Jolie & Church Street - Former Akaroa Tweed factory
- 73 Beach Road - Akaroa Supply Store
- 73 Rue Lavaud - Bank of New Zealand
- 67 Rue Lavaud - Butcher's shop
- 6 William Street - Former garage

Houses and Cottages

- 5 Julius Place - Vicarage
- 83 Rue Lavaud - Lavaud House
- 47 Rue Balguerie (bungalow)
- 51 Rue Balguerie
- 65 Rue Lavaud (villa)
- 16 Aubrey Street (villa)
- 14 Percy Street (square villa)
- 4 William Street (bay villa)
- 9 William Street (Arts and Crafts bay villa)
- 110 Rue Jolie (villa)
- 116 Rue Jolie (villa)
- 136 Rue Jolie (villa)
- 155 Rue Jolie (cottage)

Other houses in various subdivisions

Lower Selwyn Avenue

Seaview Avenue

Aylmer's Valley Road - immediately above the hospital

Section 7

CHANGE AND GROWTH 1950 to 2009



SECTION SEVEN: CHANGE AND GROWTH 1950 TO 2009

“Akaroa's topographical setting is unique – the splendid harbour, the eroded crater of an ancient volcano, on which the town sits and the steep hillsides behind are not matched anywhere else in New Zealand or overseas. When the history of the French settlers establishing their community here is added in, we have a place that has a history combining Maori, French and English strands like nowhere else.

The remarkably well presented built environment is a further unique characteristic of Akaroa, with the setting reinforcing the cultural experience of its history.”

Alun Wilkie, 2005
Akaroa Civic Trust AGM

Introduction: the road over Hilltop

Through the second half of the 20th century Akaroa changed and grew. The permanent population of the town remained almost static, though by the 1990s the permanent population was a little higher than it had been in the 1950s. Paradoxically, the number of dwellings, and the built-up area, expanded dramatically. This expansion of the built-up areas is the most conspicuous evidence of far-reaching changes that altered the economic basis of the town and its social structure.

These were years, mostly, of rising prosperity through which increasing numbers of Christchurch residents acquired second, holiday, homes. What made Akaroa a natural choice for some of those wanting holiday homes – especially those interested in recreational boating and fishing – was the improvement of the road to Akaroa.

The full length of the road from Christchurch to Akaroa was sealed in the 1960s.¹ The commonest way to travel to Akaroa became the private car. The Railways Road Services maintained a daily bus service to Akaroa from Christchurch into the 1980s and had a depot in the later years of the service on Aubrey Street. Subsequently, shuttle and bus services were run by private companies. These services carried mainly overseas tourists to and from Akaroa. Akaroa people wanting to go into “town” (as Christchurch was universally described) and Christchurch people wanting to spend time in Akaroa, many now in their own holiday homes, almost all travelled by car over the excellent road that State Highway 75 had become by the 1970s.² “Progress” came to Akaroa, it was noted in the *New Zealand Listener* in 1970, “when the road from Christchurch was upgraded”.³

Politically, the Akaroa Borough became part of Akaroa County in 1957. The County, in turn, was absorbed into the Banks Peninsula District in 1989. Then in 2006, Banks Peninsula became part of Christchurch City. Presciently, in 1876, when the Borough was formed, a writer in the *Akaroa Mail* anticipated that when Akaroa had grown into womanhood she would be “wedded to the Plains”, an apt description of the amalgamation of 2006.⁴

1 Lowndes, *Short History*, not paginated

2 *Akaroa Mail*, 31 May 1976, p. 2; Booklet published by the Akaroa Mail in conjunction with the Akaroa Civic Trust, no date

3 *New Zealand Listener*, 26 March 1970

4 *Akaroa Mail*, 4 August 1876



Figure 7.1. In the early 1960s, at the southern end of Akaroa, there was still open space between Rue Jolie and the Beach Road waterfront. By the end of the century, this area was much more densely developed. Ref: 1125



Figure 7.2. At the north end of Akaroa in the 1950s, building was going ahead up the Balguerie Valley on the land between Muter and Watson Streets which was subdivided immediately after the War. Otherwise, Akaroa is still mostly a foreshore town Ref: 934

Population

Having hovered around 600 from 1870 until 1950, the population of Akaroa crept up through the following decades to reach 722 in 1986 (with another 130 living outside the town boundary but close to it). The town's population increased while the population of the Peninsula as a whole fell – to half what it had been in the late 19th century.⁵

⁵ Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 7-8

When the Akaroa County first drew up a planning scheme in the 1970s, it was thought that the permanent resident population would rise from 638 in 1971 to an estimated 930 20 years later, but that the temporary residents (that is those owning dwellings in Akaroa but not living permanently there) would leap from 772 to 1,800 .⁶

Neither the permanent nor temporary residents increased to the extent expected in the early 1970s. The permanent population reached 834 in 1996, then sank back by 2001 to 795. But the number of holiday homes rose inexorably. The expectation that the town would double in size between 1972 and 1991 was not too far off the mark.⁷

The modest increase in the town's permanent population was due in part to the popularity of Akaroa as a place to retire to. Pensioner flats were built on Rue Viard in 1975 and in 1980 the Pompallier Village development was completed. The architect, Don Donnithorne, designed the development to respect the historic architecture of Akaroa without slavishly imitating it. As part of the over-all project, the old convent building was converted into a ten-bed geriatric home.⁸

The physical expansion of the town was due primarily to the increase in the number of holiday homes owned mostly by Christchurch people. To a limited extent, the town was protected from development pressures by "the hill"; but countervailing this, Akaroa Harbour was, after Lyttelton Harbour, the best expanse of relatively sheltered water for boating close to the city.⁹

The proliferation of privately owned holiday homes in the last quarter of the 20th century was a novel development in the town's life. It marked a shift from Akaroa's being a significant service centre for a local fishing and farming community to its being primarily a holiday town. Akaroa remained a town for local residents as well as visitors, but the shift of emphasis was marked.

From the late 1960s the number of building permits for holiday homes began to steadily outstrip the number of permits for permanent residences. In the first four years of the 1970s, permits were issued for 39 holiday homes and just eight permanent residences. By 1980 it was estimated that 60 per cent of the homes in Akaroa were holiday homes. In 1990, Gordon Ogilvie described Akaroa as "a semi-suburban, week-end commuter village", implying that the town "belonged" by then as much to non-resident week-enders as to local, full-time residents.¹⁰

Symptomatic of the change was that in 1980, the Anglican church hall, which had been built in 1916 near the vicarage on Julius Place, was sold and converted to a holiday home. Later, the stables of the vicarage were also converted to a holiday home.¹¹

Many of the holiday home owners were also boat owners. The town gained a concrete boat ramp at the seaward end of Rue Balugerie and another south of the main wharf. In the second half of the 1970s, a third slipway was constructed off Rue Brittan, with parking and picnic facilities on reclaimed land on the seaward side of the Recreation

6 Akaroa County District Scheme, 1972

7 2001 Census

8 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 48; *Tales 1940-1990*, p. 11; the *Press*, 12 December 1977

9 Akaroa Civic Trust *Newsletter*, May 2006, pp. 3-4

10 Akaroa Civic Trust *Newsletter*, May 2004, p. 4; the *Press*, 17 September 1980; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 7-8; Akaroa County District Scheme, 1972

11 The *Press*, 17 September 1980; *Akaroa Mail*, 7 September 2001, pp. 8-10

Ground (which had been reclaimed in 1886-87).¹²

Once the town's rubbish dump behind the Grand Hotel had been closed, its former site was reclaimed and part of the area enclosed as a secure boat parking area. In the 1990s, the demand for boat storage led to the building, as a commercial venture, of boat storage sheds behind the petrol station. These sheds were large, but their placement against the base of the hill helped ensure they were not overly conspicuous.

Some facilities continued to serve visitors as well as locals. The tennis courts in the Domain fell into disuse, but those behind the Grand Hotel were retained. The golf links on L'Aube Hill were closed, requiring golfers to go to Duvauchelle to play. The bowling green on Rue Jolie north, near the Recreation Ground, remained.¹³

Changing tourist accommodation

Although Christchurch holiday makers increasingly had their own holiday homes in Akaroa, other visitors, especially those from overseas, still needed places to stay. In the second half of the 20th century, the nature of holiday accommodation in Akaroa changed from hotels and boarding houses to motels and back-packing establishments.

Two hotel fires in 1962 contributed to the change. The Metropole burned down on 5 January, with loss of life, and the Bruce Hotel on 2 November. The site of the Metropole has been used ever since as carparking for the new supermarket which was built over part of its site. On the site of the Bruce, a new development, the Akaroa Village, went ahead, with the first part completed in 1981 (refer figure 7.3). The holiday apartments in this large development, built in two stages, were in differing architectural styles. Both represented attempts to design new buildings for Akaroa which were compatible with the town's existing older buildings, but both were also larger and covered more of their sites than was usual for Akaroa.¹⁴



Figure 7.3 The Akaroa Village is one of the new breed of larger holiday accommodation buildings which were built in Akaroa from the late 20th century on. Its two parts reflect different approaches to efforts to design new buildings that fit into the historic town.

12 Booklet, Akaroa Mail in conjunction with Akaroa Civic Trust, no date [post 1975], p. 8

13 Booklet, Akaroa Mail in conjunction with Akaroa Civic Trust, no date [post 1975], p. 9

14 *Tales 1940-1990*, p. 9; Akaroa Museum display; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 48;

The Metropole and Bruce fires left Akaroa with just two “traditional” hotels – the Grand and the Madeira (known for some years as Hotel Akaroa). They continued to offer some accommodation, but increasingly concentrated on serving drinks and food. They remained as significant historic buildings on Rue Lavaud.¹⁵ Other private hotels and boarding houses which had operated before World War II disappeared, including the Holiday Inn, McNabs and Sea View. (Little is known about these.)

New visitor accommodation came to Akaroa in the form of motels. In 1972, though there were five motels they were all small and offered only 20 units in total.¹⁶ These early smaller motels were the start of a steady succession of new motels in Akaroa. Le

Voyageur Motel on Beach Road, designed by Peter Beaven and considered by Charles Fearnley to be “in scale with and in sympathy with the other buildings of the township”, was completed in the early 1970s. Brassells Motel, in the historic Garwood building on Beach Road, opened in 1974. Other motels built in the following two decades were Akaroa Motels on Rue Jolie, the La Rive Motel at the start of Rue Lavaud and the Wai-iti Motel on the waterfront. The Club Lavaud time-share development was built near the Grand Hotel in 1988.

Building of new motels continued into the last years of the 20th century and first of the 21st. These more recent motels included the Criterion Motel on Rue Jolie north, the La Rochelle Motel at the corner of Rues Lavaud and Grehan and the Tresori Motor Inn on Rue Jolie south. The designs of all of these new motels provoked debate in the town. Like almost all other classes of buildings, these motels were dispersed around the town.

Bed and breakfast accommodation was offered in Akaroa throughout these years. One early bed and breakfast establishment was Chez La Mer (the original Madeira Hotel) which later became a backpackers. The house Oinako became White Rose Lodge (in 1987).

Two old private hotels disappeared. Ilfracombe, on the Beach Road waterfront, repaired after being damaged by a fire in 1928, was finally demolished in 1969 and the Le Voyageur Motel built on its site. Garthowen, also on Beach Road and also damaged by an earlier fire (in 1937), ceased for several years to be a boarding house. In 2005-06 the forlorn remains of the old Garthowen were demolished and a new Garthowen built on the site, respecting the old building’s size, scale and general appearance without being a replica (refer figure 7.4). Blythcliffe, Windermere and The Wilderness all became for a time private homes, then resumed their roles as bed and breakfast establishments.

The main campground remained some distance up Rue Balguerie until 1984, when a new holiday park was developed on a hillside site above the north end of the town, with cabins and holiday flats as well as serviced sites.¹⁷

15 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 48; Fearnley, *Colonial Style*, p. 54

16 Akaroa County District Plan, p. 46

17 Booklet, Akaroa Mail in conjunction with the Akaroa Civic Trust, no date [post 1980], accommodation directory; Ogilvie, *Cradle*, pp. 48-49; Booklet, Akaroa Mail in conjunction with the Akaroa Civic Trust, no date [post 1975], accommodation directory; Fearnley, *Colonial Style*, pp. 54-55; *Akaroa Mail*, 20 May 1969; *Tales 1940-1990*, p. 49; *Area School 150*, p. 17; *Akaroa Mail*, 13 January 2006, p. 26; the *Press*, 23 January 2006



Figure 7.4 When a new Garthowen, a long-established boarding house on Beach Road, was built in the early 21st century, the new building reflected the proportions and general appearance of its predecessor.

Changes in the town's businesses

Changes also overtook the town's other businesses. Shops began to stock goods for visitors rather than (or as well as) goods that supplied the day-to-day needs of local residents. Some of these shops began to stock local arts and crafts. One side-effect of the emergence of businesses oriented towards visitors was the growth of an artistic community in Akaroa (and on the Peninsula generally).

One of the first of these resident artists was the Swiss-born jeweller Kobi Bosshard, who lived in Akaroa from the late 1960s to the mid 1970s. Kobi and Patricia Bosshard were largely responsible for the use of the old power house (then still owned by the Central Canterbury Electric Power Board) as a gallery and performance space. The Bosshards eventually left Akaroa, but the Gallery continued under an incorporated non-profit body.¹⁸

In the 1970s, the Beaux Arts Gift Shop on Beach Road (one of the first new businesses which sought visitors rather than locals as customers) advertised "locally hand-crafted wares". Similar businesses were established from the 1970s on. Most of these visitor-oriented businesses were located in historic buildings of different descriptions. Examples of businesses that gave a new lease of life to older commercial and other buildings include Pot Pourri (in the old Town Hall), the Faultline Gallery (in a small older shop), the Weighbridge (in the old building that once housed a weighbridge at the base of the Main Wharf), the Picturesque Gallery (in the old Vangioni Store) and La Folie Jolie (in an old villa on Rue Jolie south).

Other new small, and larger, businesses which catered to the needs and demands of visitors built on earlier foundations. There had long been launch services on the harbour. The Canterbury Cat operation built on these foundations. Horse riding and trekking were

¹⁸ Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 48; paper held in Akaroa Museum

offered from the 1970s and more recently the Banks Peninsula Track became a major attraction.¹⁹

Restaurants and cafés proliferated, on Beach Road and at the northern end of the town. One of the earliest restaurants, L'Auberge Suzette, was established in a 19th century cottage a short distance up Rue Balguerie. Chez Nico on Rue Lavaud advertised in 1976 that it was now fully licensed. There were still milk bars and tea rooms and a coffee shop that offered home-cooked lunches and crayfish salad.²⁰



Figure 7.5 In the 1980s, the commercial buildings around the curve of Beach Road looked much as they had for the past 80 years, and much as they still look today, although redevelopment of the waterfront has altered the relationship of the buildings to the street. The large building on the right dates from the early 20th century, when T.E. Taylor had his business there.

Many of these new eating places also occupied older buildings, several converted from different original uses. The Old Shipping Office on Church Street was for a period a coffee house. A cafe and restaurant has found a home in an important early cottage on Rue Lavaud. The Turenne tea rooms are in part of the old Criterion Hotel building.

The 1863 Criterion Hotel building is an important example of the re-use, for alternative commercial purposes, of an older building. When it ceased in the early 20th century, under pressure from the Licensing Commission, to be a hotel, it was converted to commercial and residential uses (see above). In 1972, the building was repiled and refloored and a general store opened in it. When the new supermarket was built next door, the Criterion became a milk bar and dairy, which it remains.²¹

19 Booklet, Akaroa Mail in conjunction with the Akaroa Civic Trust, no date [post 1975]

20 Booklet, Akaroa Mail, no date [pre-1975]

21 *Akaroa Mail*, 30 June 2006, p. 6

This practice of new businesses finding accommodation in old buildings is important in accounting for Akaroa's having retained a larger stock of older buildings than other towns of its size. Significant changes in the nature of the town's businesses had relatively little impact on its built form.

Exceptions to this pattern of new businesses finding premises in older buildings were L'Hotel, on the corner of Beach Road and Church Street, and the Bully Hayes Restaurant, also on Beach Road, which was essentially a new building, though strictly a rebuilding of an existing smaller building on the site. Both buildings were modern in style and materials, but in compatible styles and scale with their historic neighbours. A new building was erected for the supermarket next door to the old Criterion building.²²

Shops continued to serve local customers, but the tendency from at least the 1980s on was for even some locals to shop for groceries, clothing, footwear and the like in Christchurch. This resulted in some established businesses ceasing to trade and others changing in nature.

In the second half of the 1970s, Akaroa still had shops selling men's, ladies' and children's wear, footwear, hardware, groceries, crockery, pharmaceutical supplies, electrical appliances and meat. Stationery could be bought at either the Akaroa Mail office or at the chemist's shop.

In 1990 it was lamented that in the previous 50 years Akaroa had lost its three drapers, the blacksmith shop and the boot repairer and that most small businesses in the town now catered to tourists.²³

Some services, such as building, plumbing and electrical work and lawnmower servicing and other property maintenance services were needed by the holiday home owners as well as the local residents and farmers.²⁴

Many of the goods and services offered in previous years are still available in Akaroa. The chemist's shop remains and a local butchery has continued in business (though with interruptions). Both of these are in buildings that have remained in the same use for many decades. The supermarket at the northern end of the town still offers a full range of groceries. A single garage still sells petrol and repairs vehicles. Banking services are still available at the Bank of New Zealand. But these continuities cannot mask a fundamental shift in the nature of Akaroa's businesses from around 1970 through into the early 21st century.

One impact of the changes in Akaroa's businesses that accompanied its growing role as a tourist resort was the re-establishment of a distinction between the northern and southern ends of the town which originally, in the 1840s, had an ethnic dimension. Now the distinction became that almost all the businesses at the southern end of the town became visitor-oriented (cafés, gift and souvenir shops and the like) while at the northern end were, along with more visitor-oriented businesses, the shops and other facilities locals needed to serve their everyday needs – the bank, post office, supermarket and butcher among them.²⁵

22 *The Press*, 27 July 1996, Weekender, p. 1

23 *Tales 1940-1990*, p. 10

24 *Akaroa Mail*, 31 May 1976; Booklet, Akaroa Mail in conjunction with the Akaroa Civic Trust, no date [post 1975], directory and advertisers

25 Pers. comm., Lynda Wallace

By the late 20th century, a town which had been a fishing port, a rural service centre and a holiday town for families had become overwhelmingly a holiday resort for different sorts of visitors and part-time residents from those who had come to Akaroa 50 years before. But the built character of the town was remarkably unaffected by this critical shift.

Industry in Akaroa from 1950

In 1970, a teacher appointed to the Akaroa District High School was told he had made a mistake accepting the appointment because “Akaroa was a fishing town, it was a hard town and the kids were worse.”²⁶ The teacher found things in Akaroa much different from what he had been led to believe, but the remark underscores that Akaroa remained a fishing town until well into the second half of the 20th century. A 1970 handout of the newly founded Civic Trust noted of Akaroa that although tourism was becoming “increasingly important”, “the main industry is fishing.” At the time around 40 trawlers and line-fishing and crayfishing boats were still using the main wharf. In 1973, Peninsula Fisheries were planning to extend the refrigeration plant on the wharf.²⁷

Through the following 20 years, however, the Akaroa fishing industry declined. As late as 1990 there were still 11 boats crayfishing off the Peninsula, but by the early 21st century there was no commercial fishing out of Akaroa and the freezer on the wharf was no longer in use.²⁸

Some boat building continued in Akaroa in the years after World War II, mostly the building of fishing boats in local sheds. This industry ceased before the fishing industry itself.²⁹

Changes in farming on the Peninsula in the second half of the 20th century decreased the need for Akaroa to be a rural service town. In the years immediately after the end of World War II, labour-intensive dairying declined in favour of running sheep and cattle on larger farms employing fewer workers. In 1940, Red House Bay (Takapuneke) was a dairying unit, but after it had been purchased by the Akaroa County Council, dairying ceased and the land was used as a Council yard, a rubbish dump and as the site of a sewage treatment plant. Dairying ceased on two farms at Onuku soon after the end of World War II. Dairying had completely disappeared from south-east Banks Peninsula (Akaroa’s small farming ‘hinterland’) by 1970.³⁰

These changes resulted in Akaroa’s decline as a local farm service centre, just as its importance as a holiday resort was increasing.

Akaroa had an industrial past, but by 2000 it had no active industries. It lost the most important evidence of its industrial past with the demolition of the old brick dairy factory.

26 *Area School* 150, p. 36

27 Akaroa Civic Trust leaflet, no date [1970]; *Akaroa Mail*, 28 August 1973, p. 1; Akaroa Museum notice board

28 *Tales 1940-1990*, pp. 50-51

29 *Tales 1940-1990*, p. 50

30 *Tales 1940-1990*, pp. 14-15, 28-29

The town becomes aware of its history

Akaroa had been recognised since at least 1898 (when the monument was built on Green's Point) to have a particularly interesting history. This had been reinforced by the 1926 celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Akaroa Borough and by the 1940 celebration of the centennial of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and the founding of the first organised European settlements in New Zealand, of which Akaroa was one.³¹

The town's acknowledgement of its special past was given tangible expression with the founding of the Akaroa Museum. On the initiative of W.J. Gardner, a member of the Board of the Historic Places Trust, the Langlois-Eteveneaux Cottage was purchased in 1961 and eventually vested in the County Council. The museum opened in 1964, with the cottage transformed into, in effect, a large display case. A new museum building was erected behind the cottage in 1967. Ten years later the museum was further extended.³²

The extension designed by Colin Pilbrow, which provides the main entrance between the Langlois-Eteveneaux Cottage and the court house, is considered by many to be a model of new design sympathetic to historic neighbours.

Two important historic buildings were added to the Museum. In December 1976, the restored customs house, near the base of Daly's Wharf, was re-opened as part of the Museum. From the 1920s it had been used as a gardener's shed before being given, in 1970, by the County Council to the Museum Trust Board.³³

After the court house (on a site adjacent to the Museum) closed in 1979, it was used, in 1980-81, by the Lands and Survey Department for a photographic display of the Peninsula, but it was not until 1990 that it became part of the Museum.³⁴

A place of special character

Closely associated with an increasingly widespread perception that Akaroa was a place of special historic interest was the perception that it was also a place of special character, with old buildings and other historic remnants contributing significantly to that character but not the only reason Akaroa was special. By the early 21st century it was commonly held that the town's character derived from its unique topographical setting and gardens and trees as much as from a history that blended Maori, French and English strands and a remarkably well-preserved built environment. (The town's setting, gardens and trees in the second half of the 20th century are discussed in the following section.)³⁵

Direct consequences of this growing perception that Akaroa had a special, distinctive character were the founding of the Akaroa Civic Trust in 1969-70 and the drafting of an "environmental plan" for the town. Both these developments had a profound effect on the development of Akaroa in the following four decades.

A booklet put out later in the 1970s stated: "The character of Akaroa is at once unique and fragile. Conscious of this, residents and visitors have formed the Akaroa Trust [sic] to

31 *New Zealand Centennial News*, 1938-41, passim

32 Ogilvie, *Cradle*, p. 48

33 *The Press*, 7 December 1976

34 *The Press*, 1 December 1980, 9 January 1981, 22 July 1989; Akaroa Museum notice board

35 Akaroa Civic Trust *Newsletter*, May 2006, pp. 3-5