

WDC District Plan Review – Built Heritage Assessment

Historic Overview - Huntly & District



HERITAGE
CONSULTANCY
SERVICES

Huntly

Huntly has been known by many names: Rahuipokeka (various spellings), Coal Mines, Huntley Lodge, Huntly Lodge, and then, in 1877, simply Huntly. Prior to the Waikato War, Rahuipokeka was heavily-populated by Maori, with pa, kainga and cultivations along both banks of this stretch of the Waikato River. Rahuipokeka (resting place) 'was where Ngati Mahuta gathered for games and deliberations'.¹ Waahi pa, on the west side of the river, has been the home marae for the Ariki line of the King Movement since at least the 1890s.

In the early part of the 19th century European visitors and traders travelled along the river; the CMS missions were just upstream at Pepepe and Kaitotehe and downstream at Maraetai and Kohanga. In the 1850s James Armitage farmed a short way downstream at Ohinewai. The presence of coal in the vicinity was known for some time before it was mined commercially; Rev. Ashwell reportedly gathering sufficient coal from an exposed face for his household needs. By 1850 Kupa Kupa [Kapakapa, Kupakupa] Mine, across the river from Huntly, was being worked for coal. Ferdinand von Hochstetter made the first official record of coal in the district in 1858.² During the Waikato War, government steamers would be re-fuelled with coal mined from the river banks.

The colonial government used the river during the invasion of the Waikato in 1863-64, but no military engagements took place at Huntly itself. By December 1863 a military camp had been established at Rahuipokeka, and in early May 1864 'whare building was being pushed on vigorously' and there was a hospital treating ill and wounded men.³ The camp was abandoned by August 1864. The Waikato Steam Navigation Company, established by December 1864, built a wharf on the east side of the river.⁴

The land along the east side of the river as far south as the Mangawara River at Taupiri was surveyed into 50-acre parcels as grants for militiamen of the 4th Waikato Regiment.⁵ On the west side the land was surveyed into various-sized parcels, mostly of 50 acres, and granted to Maori owners.⁶ Much of the area (west and east) was swampy but as the land was drained farms were developed, primarily dairying.



Figure 102: An 1866 survey map of the stretch of the east bank of the river (north is to the left) between Kimihia and Hakanoa Lakes showing the 50-acre allotments, a few reserves and the line of the telegraph running roughly parallel to the Great South Road. Part of SO 400. QuickMap.

¹ DME Clark letter to Mrs Ringer, August 24 1978.

² <http://www.huntly.net.nz/history.html>

³ *Daily Southern Cross* 9 May 1864, p. 4.

⁴ *Daily Southern Cross* 22 December 1864, p. 4.

⁵ SO 398, 400.

⁶ SO 358.

Anthony and Margaret Ralph and their family shifted to Huntly in c. 1867 and had built the Coal Mines Hotel by May 1873.⁷ Also by 1873 Anthony Ralph had established the Rahupukeka [sic] Brick Yards and was advertising its lease, stating that its proximity to the Waikato Steam Navigation Company's wharf meant that bricks could be delivered at any point along the river.⁸ The Ralphs' oldest son Robert enlisted in the 4th Waikato Regiment as a substitute in 1866 and received a 50-acre grant from the Crown. The location of this has not been verified, and he may have swapped his land grant for another, but it is presumed to have extended north from the Ralph Street-Upland Road area. Robert Ralph had mining experience and so began prospecting his land, finding a thick seam in 1870.⁹

Robert Ralph married Mary Muir of Ohinewai in 1874 and acquired 200 acres in that area.¹⁰ He helped establish the Kimihia creamery.¹¹ After Anthony Ralph's death in November 1873, Margaret and Robert registered the Taupiri Coal Mining Company to mine the coal on their land and managed the company and their land holdings in partnership. The pithead of Ralph's Mine was in the main street of Huntly. The town consequently developed around the coal mining industry.

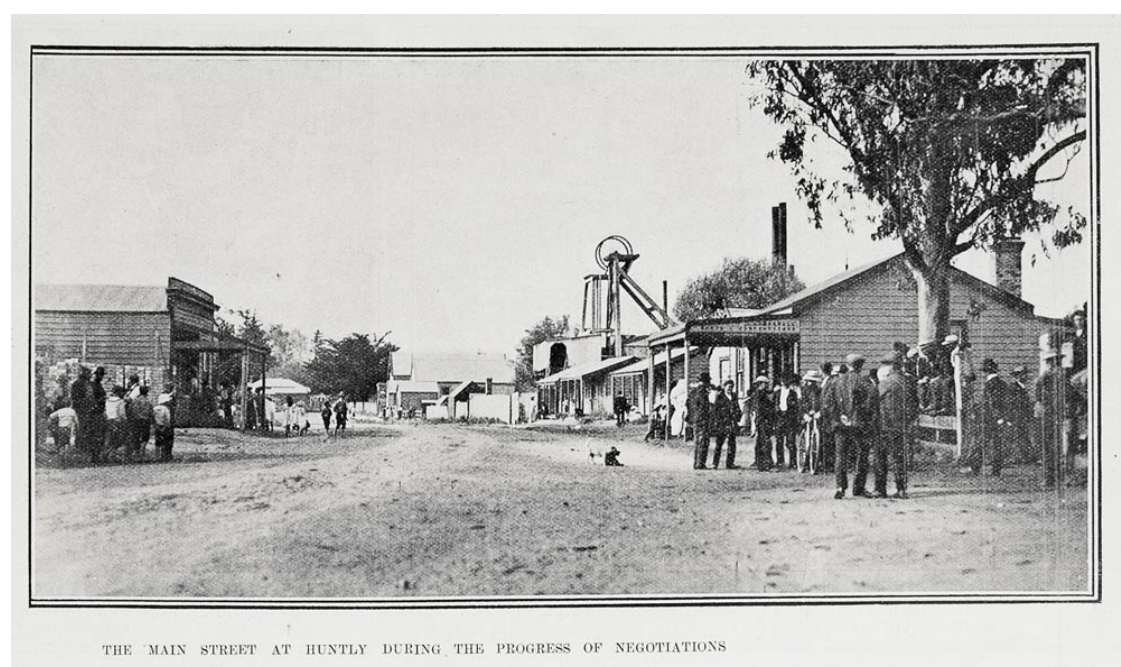


Figure 103: 'The main street at Huntly during the progress of negotiations.' *Auckland Weekly News* 28 January 1909, p. 9. AWNS-19090128-9-2, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

For many decades transport for freight and passengers relied on the river steamers, as even though the Great South Road was surveyed and formed through Huntly by 1868 it was usually impassable for wheeled vehicles and suitable only for horse and rider. The North Island Main Trunk (NIMT) railway line was built through Huntly to Ngaruawahia by 1877.¹² A combined road and rail bridge across the Waikato River was completed in 1913 giving access from the town to the western side. Prior to that, people used a punt or craft to get across. After the opening of the Tainui Bridge in 1959 the old bridge became rail only but with a footbridge attached. A bypass to divert north-south traffic away from the main street was built in the early 1980s.¹³

⁷ *Waikato Times* 3 May 1873, p. 4.

⁸ *Waikato Times* 4 November 1873, p. 1.

⁹ Innes, p. 77; *New Zealand Herald* 21 October 1870, p. 2.

¹⁰ Innes, p. 78.

¹¹ *Waikato Argus* 31 October 1905, p. 2.

¹² More, p. 177.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 301.

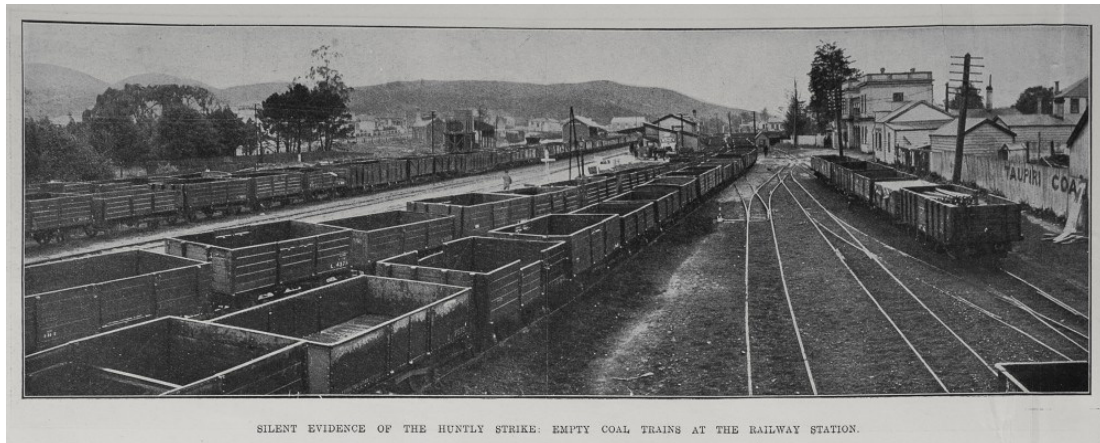


Figure 104: 'Silent evidence of the Huntly strike: empty coal trains at the railway station'. Huntly Hotel is in the distance at right. *Auckland Weekly News* 28 January 1909, p. 50. AWNS-19131030-50-1, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.



Figure 105: 'The staff of the Huntly Railway Station, Waikato'. *Auckland Weekly News* 7 November 1901, p. 7. AWNS-19011107-7-6, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

In 1884 Margaret Ralph subdivided nearly 10 acres of land between the river and the railway into small parcels suitable for residential and commercial development. Some parcels were sold, some leased. In 1900 another son, William Ralph, acquired 15,000 acres near Huntly which he proceeded to subdivide into parcels of between 40 and 1000 acres.¹⁴

¹⁴ *New Zealand Herald* 26 July 1937, p. 13.

In 1893 a visiting correspondent described Huntly as 'a straggling township of some 600 people ... [whose] residents are principally dependent on the staple industry which made it. ... Huntly has had the reputation of being a lively township, but ... the miners were, as a rule, of the settled class, having homes and families, and a number of them were not simply moderate drinkers, but pronounced teetotalers'.¹⁵ by 2013 the town had a population of 6,954.¹⁶

Unusually for the times and for a mining town, there was just one hotel. As such it has always had a monopoly on accommodation and alcoholic refreshments for local residents, employees on temporary projects, and the travelling public. The first Coal Mines Hotel was located to the north of the Huntly Hotel [Essex Arms] site. It burnt down in April 1875 and was rebuilt on the current site and open again for business by January 1876.¹⁷ From 1880 until 1924 the hotel, now the Huntly Hotel, was owned and operated by Lewis B Harris and his wife Louisa (nee Ralph) and, later, by their son, also named Lewis B Harris.¹⁸ After an unsuccessful share float by Huntly Development Ltd in 1927, the hotel was acquired by Dominion Breweries in the early 1930s.

The two-storey wooden building has been extended and modified over the decades so that the premises consist now of two main interconnected buildings, dating from c.1876 and 1939-40, with the main frontage facing Main Street. One of the outbuildings, believed to be the cool store from the hotel's days as a '40-miler' distribution centre, may be the oldest building on the site. The changes in the building's orientation have reflected the changes in transport routes: from facing the only route, Great South Road (Main Street), to facing the new, well-patronised railway station and then back to facing the road when cars became more common and the roads improved.

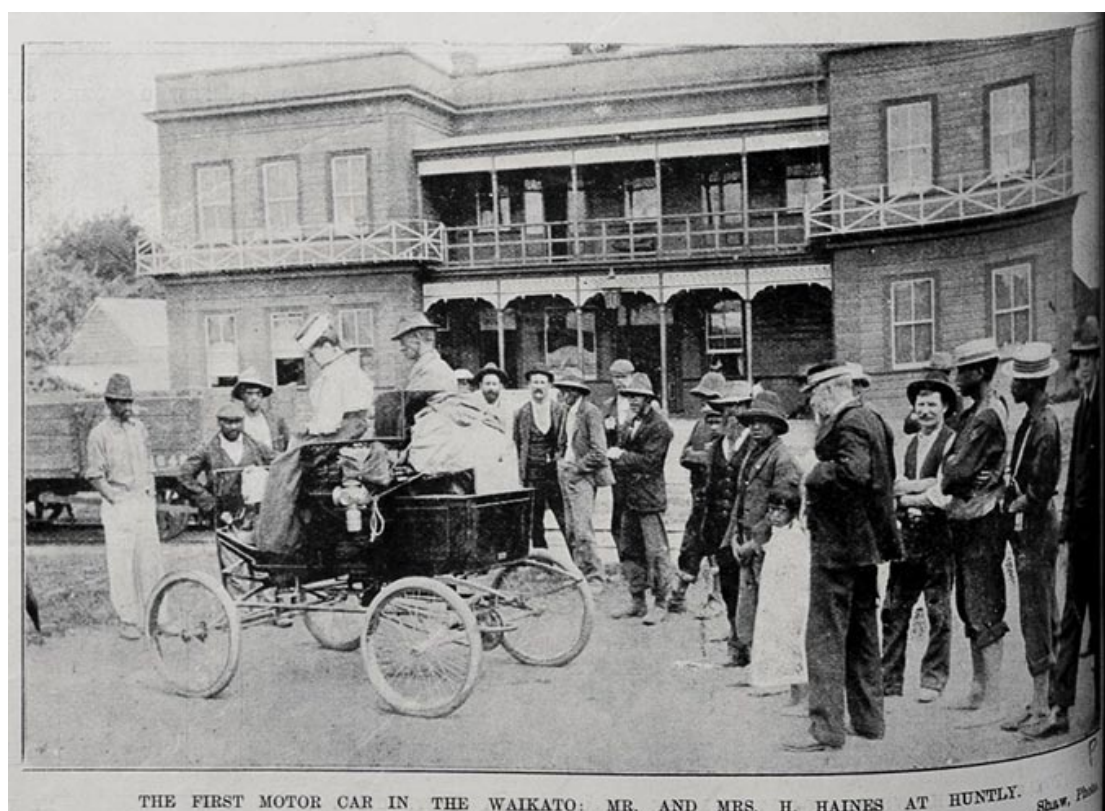


Figure 107: 'The first motor car in the Waikato: Mr and Mrs H Haines at Huntly' in front of the east side of Huntly Hotel, en route from Auckland to Rotorua. *Auckland Weekly News* 8 May 1902, p. 12. AWNS-19020508-12-5, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

¹⁵ *New Zealand Herald* 13 March 1893, p. 3.

¹⁶ <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-4>

¹⁷ *Waikato Times* 3 May 1873, p. 4; 8 January 1876, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Waikato Times* 19 June 1880, p. 2.

The Ralph family's Taupiri Coal Company progressively subdivided more and more land for residential and commercial purposes.¹⁹ In 1910, for instance, the company subdivided 'Town of Huntly Extension No. 6', comprising 24 acres in northern Huntly divided into 76 quarter-acre (approximately) sections, and surveyed the northern part of Hakanoa and Bailey Streets.²⁰



Figure 108: Hakanoa Street, Huntly, c. 1910. ½-001752-G, WA Price Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

A further subdivision and re-alignment of boundaries in the commercial area was undertaken by siblings Sarah and William Ralph in 1913. A survey plan shows the buildings at that time, including (from south to north and west of the main road) houses in the southern strip, the railway bridge, three shops, the hall, post office, the *Press* office, the landing punt. On the east side of the road only a few buildings are shown: a butcher's and baker's but not the hotel or the Ralph Mine pit head, though Ralph's Mine property is marked at top right.

On the west side of the river, Louisa Jane Harris purchased 102 acres in 1889 and a further 50 acres in 1890; these became the heart of a 500-acre holding backing onto Lake Waahi on which the Harrises built a large homestead on their farm 'Harrisville'.²¹ By 1914 Louisa Harris owned over 1000 acres in Huntly West.²² Other members of the Ralph family owned adjoining land and the mining rights under the Harris land.

Underpinned by the success of the coal mining industry, Huntly developed as a tight-knit working-class community. Many miners came from the South Island's West Coast, and the north of England and Scotland. Local Maori also entered the industry in large numbers.

¹⁹ E.g. DP 1012, DP 4860, DP 7648.

²⁰ DP 6680.

²¹ Innes, pp. 90-93

²² Ibid, p. 97.



Figure 109: 'Plan of Town of Huntly Extension No. 17', drawn September 1913. Structures are shown as cross-hatched shapes. 'BNZ' is written but not shown as a building. DP 8976 (part). QuickMap Enterprise.

The Ralph brothers owned a hall in the town by 1891, which was available for public meetings and socials.²³ In late March 1898 a large hui was held at Waahi, some 2000 Maori gathering there for political discussions; a few days later Premier Richard John Seddon arrived at Huntly by train, visited Waahi then in the evening addressed a public meeting at Ralph's Hall.²⁴

The Miners' Union Hall was also an important venue in the town. From October through to December 1913 over 500 Huntly miners went on strike. In January 1914 a minority group of workers, wanting to end the strike, formed a new arbitrationist union with the support of the Taupiri Coal Mine Company. On 6 January 1914, as the strike breakers started work, mounted police clashed with striking miners from the older union. On 14 January the striking miners voted to return to work. The next day strike breakers from the new union seized the Miners' Union Hall, evicting striking members of the old union.²⁵ In another vain entirely, the Lyceum company was showed motion pictures in the Miners' Hall in 1915.²⁶

²³ *New Zealand Herald* 13 March 1893, p. 3.

²⁴ *Auckland Star* 24 March 1898, p. 5; *Auckland Star* 2 April 1898, p. 5.

²⁵ <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/huntly-miners-union-hall>

²⁶ *Maoriland Worker* 17 November 1915, p. 7.



Figure 110: The Premier's visit to Huntly 'The Dancing Warrior Maori Band' outside Ralph's Hall, 5 April 1898. Hocken Collections, University of Otago, Dunedin.

On 15 November 1958 the Huntly War Memorial Hall (also known as the Huntly Memorial Community Centre) was opened in Wight Street, adjacent to the Huntly Domain. It was designed by White, Leigh, de Lisle and Fraser of Hamilton. Rolls of Honour listing Huntly's fallen in both world wars were unveiled in the foyer of the hall. Previously the town's World War I memorial, which was designed, built, and largely financed by members of the Huntly RSA, had been unveiled by Governor-General Sir Charles Fergusson on 27 May 1927. The 5.5 metre obelisk was originally positioned between the main street and the banks of the Waikato River, not far from the post office and the town hall.²⁷ It was relocated to the grounds of the War Memorial Hall around the time the new building was completed.

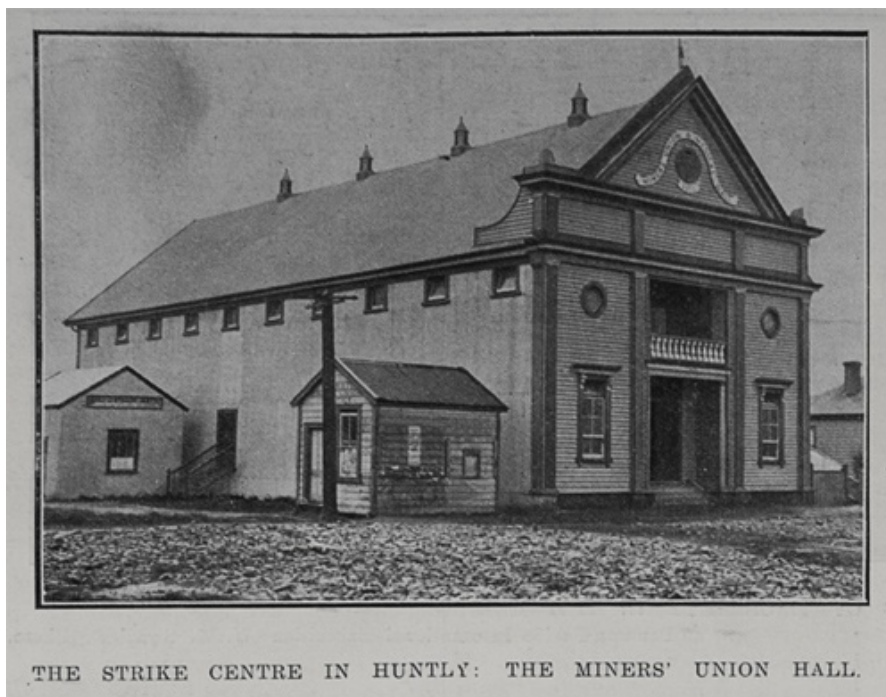


Figure 111: 'The strike centre in Huntly: The Miners' Union Hall.' *Auckland Weekly News* 30 October 1913, p. 54. AWNS-19131030-54-1, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

²⁷ <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/media/photo/huntly-first-world-war-memorial>



Figure 112: Huntly South, 1910s. 1/2-001753-G, WA Price Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Government educational and commercial buildings

Huntly Courthouse was built, at the south end of Main Street, in 1905. The building was the venue for the enquiry into the Ralph mine disaster in 1914. It was used as a courthouse until 1967, thereafter as government offices (until c.1991), and has been a café since 2006.



Figure 113: The courthouse in 1911. WCM HM 21, Waikato Coalfields Museum.

Huntly's military post office was replaced by a civil one on 12 August 1864.²⁸ In 1906 it was still attached to the railway station but in September 1909 a new building was opened.²⁹ It was made of Huntly brick, faced inside and out with cement and was considered so substantial that 'other buildings in the neighbourhood seem dwarfed'.³⁰ Extensive alterations and additions were made in 1939 and the building was later demolished.³¹



Figure 114: Main Street [Great South Road], Huntly with the hall and post office. ½-001757-G, WA Price Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Huntly School opened in 1879, with two rooms added a decade later.³² The school burnt down in 1906 but was soon rebuilt, larger than before in acknowledgement of the town's growth.³³ The new school building was extended in 1926.³⁴ Another school, Huntly West, opened in 1956 to cater for the new suburbs on the west side of the river; today it has eight classrooms and includes an early childhood centre.³⁵

A school opened at Kimihia in 1897 but later closed.³⁶ A second Kimihia School was established after 1966 in Tamihana Avenue to provide for children in the suburbs that have developed in that area.³⁷

Huntly College was established in 1953 in Huntly West; its roll has fluctuated from more than 800 in the early 1980s when the power station was under construction, to approximately 350 students in 2015.³⁸

²⁸ Drummond, p. 26

²⁹ *Auckland Star* 18 September 1909, p. 5.

³⁰ *Waikato Argus* 20 September 1909, p. 2.

³¹ *New Zealand Herald* 23 January 1939, p. 6.

³² More, p. 159; Kellaway, p. 52.

³³ Kellaway, pp. 52, 129.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 178.

³⁵ <http://www.huntlywest.school.nz/1/pages/4-our-school>

³⁶ Kellaway, p. 116.

³⁷ <http://www.kimihia.school.nz/main.cfm?id=8236>

³⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huntly_College



Figure 115: The public school at Huntly, c. 1910s. 1/2-001750-G, WA Price Collection. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

The Huntly School of Mines was established in 1913, covering subjects such as coal mining, land and mine surveying, geology, chemistry and applied mechanics.³⁹ By August 1913, 32 students had enrolled, although the building had not then begun.⁴⁰ It was near completion in August 1914 and still in operation in the early 1950s.⁴¹ A hostel for miners opened in November 1948, with single rooms for 100 men, plus some rooms for married couples.⁴²

Huntly's commercial centre grew with the advent of large stores such as Farmers, Wilson and Shaw's, the Kosoof family's 'The Economic', and Yarrow's. The town also hosted its own newspaper, the *Huntly Press* (est. 1910), and the Lyceum Theatre. By 1951 businesses included Plumbing Works, a funeral director, NZ Soluble Slags Ltd and the Huntly Engineering and Welding Co. which made farm machinery. There were several retail stores, including a jeweller's, electrical goods and repairs, and vehicle sales. In the post-war period there were several local sports clubs for canoe, bowling, croquet, tennis, and gun enthusiasts, as well as a Horticultural and Beautifying Society and five Masonic lodges.⁴³ People would come to Huntly from outlying settlements and farming districts for their entertainment, meetings, banking, medical and dental appointments and shopping.

Churches and hospital

Fire has had a major impact upon the town's church architecture. In 1893 Huntly still had no churches, although services were held by various denominations in the school. The Taupiri Extended Coal Company donated a parcel of land for an Anglican church, St Paul's, to be built.⁴⁴ The wooden church with a roof of kauri shingles and a belfry opened in February 1894.⁴⁵ It burnt down on 17 October 1933

³⁹ *Auckland Star* 9 June 1913, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *New Zealand Herald* 9 August 1913, p. 5.

⁴¹ *New Zealand Herald* 12 August 1914, p. 11. <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/1966/science-and-technology>

⁴² Bradbury, 1951, p. 47.

⁴³ Bradbury, 1951 p. 47.

⁴⁴ *New Zealand Herald* 13 March 1893, p. 3.

⁴⁵ *New Zealand Herald* 21 February 1894, p. 6.

and services were then held in the parish hall across the road.⁴⁶ The replacement church was constructed in brick on the site of the vicarage, at the corner of Glasgow Street, the vicarage having been moved to make room for it.⁴⁷



Figure 116: First St Paul's Church, c. 1910s. ½-001761-G, WA Price Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.



Figure 117: Second St Paul's Anglican Church, 6 May 1935. 4-6051, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

⁴⁶ *Auckland Star* 18 October 1933, p. 10.

⁴⁷ *New Zealand Herald* 9 July 1934, p. 11.

Huntly's Anglican church was not the only one of the town's early churches destroyed by fire. Knox Presbyterian Church was dedicated in December 1899.⁴⁸ It burnt down in December 1924. The Methodist Church opened on Main Street in July 1898, again on land donated by the Ralph family.⁴⁹ It was almost burnt down in 1916. The timber building was later replaced by a brick church in Onslow Street, which is now the home of the Huntly Co-operating Church, serving both Methodist and Presbyterian congregations.

The first Catholic Church established in the Huntly area was founded by Antoine Pompallier, who set up a mission in 1861-62 at Ngaruawahia but vacated it in 1863 in advance of the government's military forces. After the Waikato War a church was built at Ngaruawahia, but it was not until 1903 that a priest was stationed there.⁵⁰ Mass was celebrated at the public school in Huntly until the same year. On 3 August 1903 Bishop Lenihan laid the foundation stone for St Anthony's Church, which opened in December of the same year.⁵¹ The foundation stone was later incorporated in to the footing of the second church situated to the north. Margaret Schlinker (formerly Ralph) had earlier 'sold' a parcel of land to the Auckland Catholic Diocese for five shillings.

A Catholic presbytery, in the form of a timber villa, was built in 1909 on the site of the current church.⁵² In 1914 Margaret's daughter Sarah Ralph gifted a convent and school to the church and four Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions arrived from Christchurch to live in the convent and teach at the school.⁵³

St Anthony's Convent School opened for the new term on 2 February 1914 with 62 pupils. Sarah Ralph had equipped the school with kauri desks and other furniture and equipment, and had also furnished and stocked the convent.⁵⁴ At the official opening on 22 February by Bishop Cleary, it was stated that this was the first time the Auckland Diocese had received from one donor the unsolicited and unconditional gift of a school with its site and furniture. Bishop Cleary bestowed an Episcopal blessing upon Sarah Ralph.⁵⁵ The convent in Huntly was also known as St Genevieve's.

The school participated in the war effort during World War I, including entering a pupil in the Queen's Carnival. During the influenza epidemic in 1918 the school and rooms in the convent were used as a hospital with the nuns tending the sick.⁵⁶ On 20 June 1931, whilst five Sisters and the Mother Superior were living there, the wooden convent burnt down.⁵⁷ By September 1931 the first draft of three sets of plans for a new convent had been prepared by architect Henry E. White of Auckland.⁵⁸ The church building was moved to the south and the convent built over the summer of 1931-32.

In 1967 a new church was built to the north of the convent and the Convent of St Genevieve closed on 15 January 1979.⁵⁹ In 1986 St Anthony's School shifted across Huntly to Bailey Street, with a roll of 140 pupils. The original school buildings were removed and a new presbytery was built in Russell Road. The convent is now privately owned.

⁴⁸ *New Zealand Herald* 18 December 1899, p. 7.

⁴⁹ *Waikato Argus* 28 July 1898, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Latta, pp. 213-4.

⁵¹ *Turanga Ngatahi: Standing Together* p. 43. *New Zealand Tablet*, 17 December 1903, p. 6.

⁵² "A Brief History of Ngaruawahia-Huntly Parishes" ms on file Waikato Coalfields Museum.

⁵³ "Huntly. St Genevieve's, Jan.28 1914" ms notes from House History on file St Anthony's Parish Church Centre.

⁵⁴ *Evening Post* 4 February 1914, p. 7.

⁵⁵ "Huntly. St Genevieve's, Jan.28 1914" ms on file St Anthony's Parish Church Centre; handwritten ms Waikato Coalfields Museum.

⁵⁶ Notes on file, Waikato Coalfields Museum.

⁵⁷ *Evening Post* 24 June 1931, p. 10.

⁵⁸ Three sheets of original plans, including a blueprint, are in the Waikato Coalfields Museum collection.

⁵⁹ Smith p.73; "Huntly. St Genevieve's, Jan.28 1914" ms on file St Anthony's Parish Church Centre



Figure 118: St Anthony's Catholic Church at Huntly, ca 1910s. The presbytery is to the right of the church, the convent behind and to the left. 1/2-001755-G, WA Price Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

In 1909 a large conference for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints was held at Waahi; over 500 local and visiting Maori being present. A Mormon chapel was already at Waahi, but it was too small for the meetings which were held in a large marquee.⁶⁰ There is also an LDS church on Riverview Road in Huntly West.

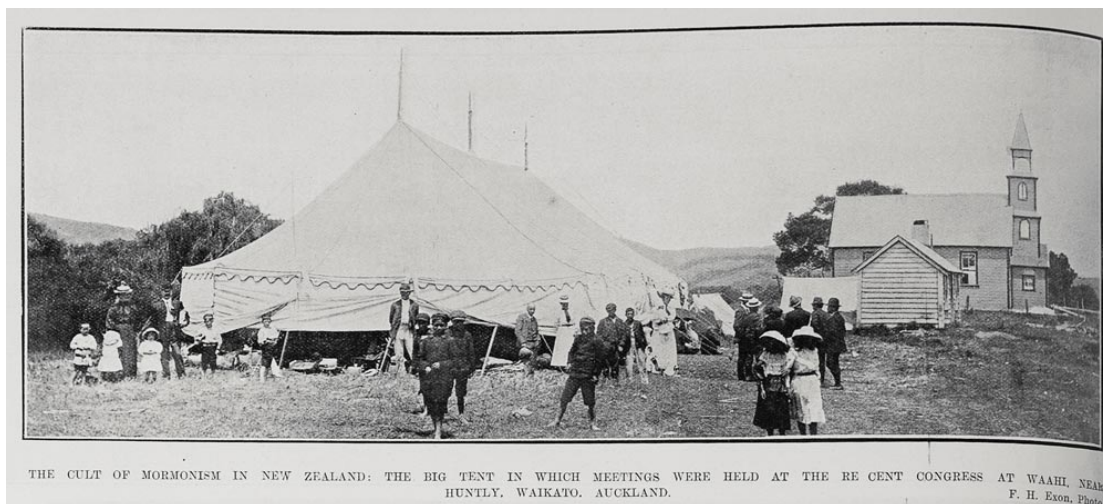


Figure 119: 'The cult of Mormonism in New Zealand: the big tent in which meetings were held at the recent congress at Waahi. Photographer: FH Exon, *Auckland Weekly News*, 18 February 1909, p. 14. AWNS-19090218-14-1, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

Approval for the establishment of a cottage hospital at Huntly was given in August 1919.⁶¹ The government agreed to subsidise the Waikato Hospital Board to allow for a women's ward for urgent maternity cases but funding remained an issue and the hospital did not officially open until April 1926.

⁶⁰ *New Zealand Herald* 11 February 1909, p. 6.

⁶¹ *King Country Chronicle* 28 August 1919, p. 7.

The Huntly Cottage Hospital and Maternity Home included accommodation for the matron and nurses and five wards. It cost £12,000 and was designed by Warren and Reid of Hamilton.⁶² Once again the land was donated by Sarah Ralph.⁶³ Extensions and further facilities were added in the 1940s; from 1995 it was run by Birthcare Auckland for about two years but was eventually sold. In 2006 it underwent renovations and began a new role as Manor Views Hotel.⁶⁴



Figure 120: Former Huntly Hospital.

Huntly was constituted a town district in 1908 and in 1931 it became a borough. From about 1943 Huntly West was being subdivided into residential parcels, and 200 state houses were built. Huntly West was initially within Raglan County but in 1944 it was officially transferred to Huntly Borough.⁶⁵ In 1944 the borough boundaries were also extended to include Staratown and Kimihia.⁶⁶

Coal and clay

By April 1864 Waikato Coal was working drives situated about halfway between Ngaruawahia and Rangiriri and 'about 500 yards back from the west side of the river'.⁶⁷ A tramway on an incline took loaded wagons held by a drum and rope down to a chute, then into a depot on the river bank, and from there a smaller chute delivered the coal into the steamer. 'Associated with the mine was a camp with a manager's house and four houses for the approximately 30 men working there in August 1864.

⁶² *New Zealand Herald* 24 April 1926, p. 13.

⁶³ *New Zealand Herald* 26 April 1926, p. 6.

⁶⁴ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/life-style/459404/Hill-top-hospital-ity>

⁶⁵ Vennell & Williams, p. 238.

⁶⁶ Bradbury, p. 47.

⁶⁷ *New Zealander* 6 August 1864 p. 3.

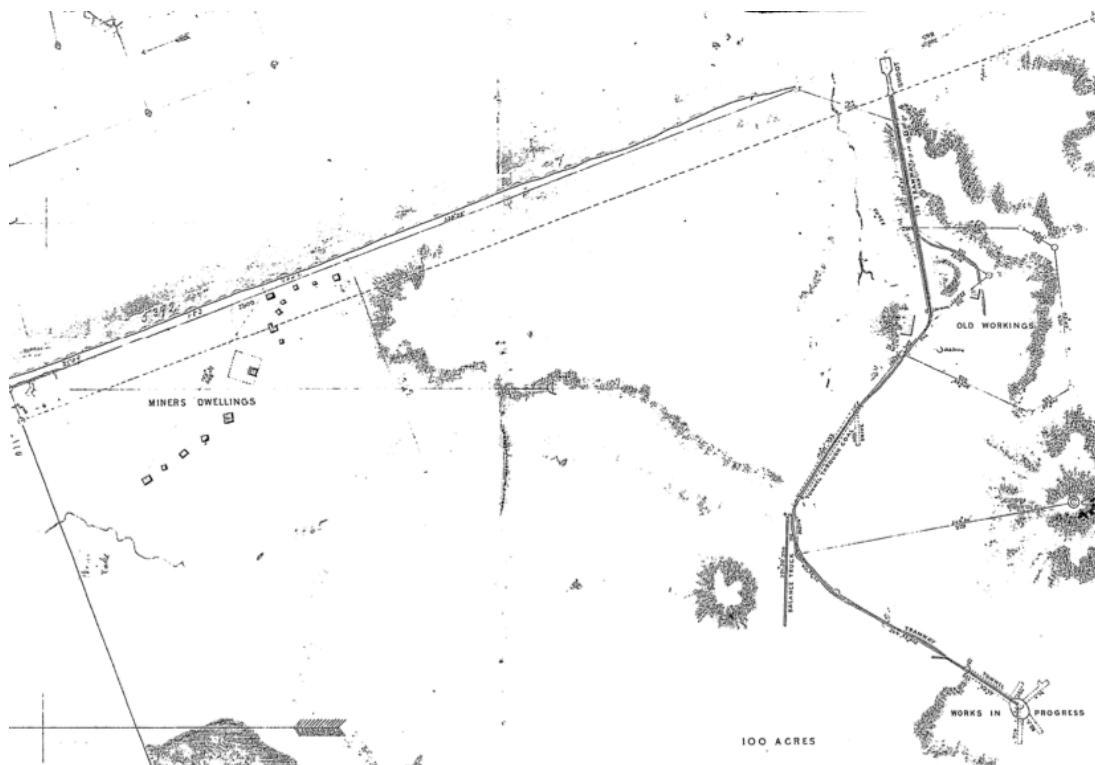


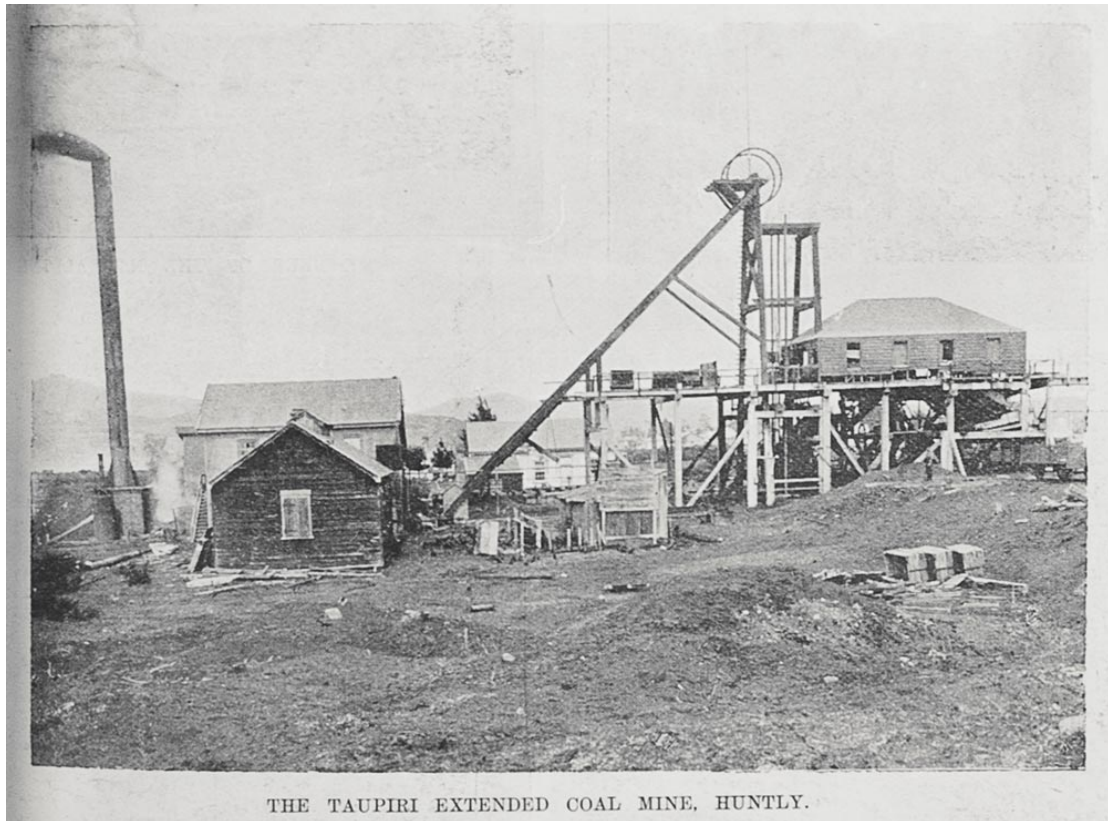
Figure 121: 'Survey of coal mines at Kupa Kupa', 1865, shows the Waikato River at top (north is to the left), miners dwellings, old workings (centre left) and works in progress (lower right). The tramway is the line from the works in progress to the shoot [sic] on the river (top right). Area is to the west of Rotowaro Road, not far south of the Tainui Bridge. SO 1336 (part), QuickMap.

In 1870 the Waikato Steam Navigation Company underwent a change of name; the newly formed Waikato Steam Navigation and Coal Mining Company bought the Waikato steam boats and plant and leased the coal mines, solving the problem of getting the coal to its main market by delivering it by river to Port Waikato.⁶⁸ The company mined the Kupakupa Mine, later renamed Waikato Mine, which was taken over by Roose in 1916.⁶⁹

The Ralph family's Taupiri Coal Mine Company expanded its operations to the west side (and under) of the river, with drives and shafts connecting to the pithead in Main Street. On 12 September 1914, 43 miners were killed in an explosion in Ralph's Mine. Huntly's population at the time was only about 1000 and the loss of so many men had a great impact; 100 children lost their fathers. The Huntly Town Board launched a public appeal for funds to relieve the hardships of the widows and families, and communities, institutions, businesses and local bodies from around the country responded with contributions.

⁶⁸ *New Zealand Herald* 28 May 1870, p. 2.

⁶⁹ Vennell & Williams, p. 217



THE TAUPIRI EXTENDED COAL MINE, HUNTLY.

Figure 122: 'The Taupiri Extended Coal Mine, Huntly' *Auckland Weekly News* 7 November 1901, p. 7. AWNS-19011107-7-4, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

The strong unions went on strike from time to time asking for better and safer conditions, notably in 1909 and 1913. As mentioned earlier, Huntly miners stopped work for three months during the 1913 general strike.⁷⁰



SOME OF THE UNEMPLOYED MINERS FROM THE TAUPIRI COAL COMPANY'S MINE AT HUNTLY.

Figure 123: 'Some of the unemployed miners from the Taupiri Coal Company's mine at Huntly' *Auckland Weekly News* 28 January 1909, p. 9. AWNS-19090128-9-4, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

In 1883 the Waikato Coal and Shipping Company was formed; it was a merger of the Waikato Coal Company and the Waikato Steam Navigation and Coal Mining Company, with its directors being the

⁷⁰ <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-4>

Hon. F Whitaker, Thomas Russell, James Williamson and others. At the time the company owned 14,202 acres on the west bank plus 150 acres adjoining Huntly railway station and the Taupiri Coal Mine.⁷¹

An underground mine was opened at Kimihia in about 1887 by the Waikato Coal Company, with about 45 men employed.⁷² An opencast mine opened at Kimihia in 1943 is still operating on East Mine Road, and another, Sunnypark at Kimihia, operated from 1957 to 1964.⁷³

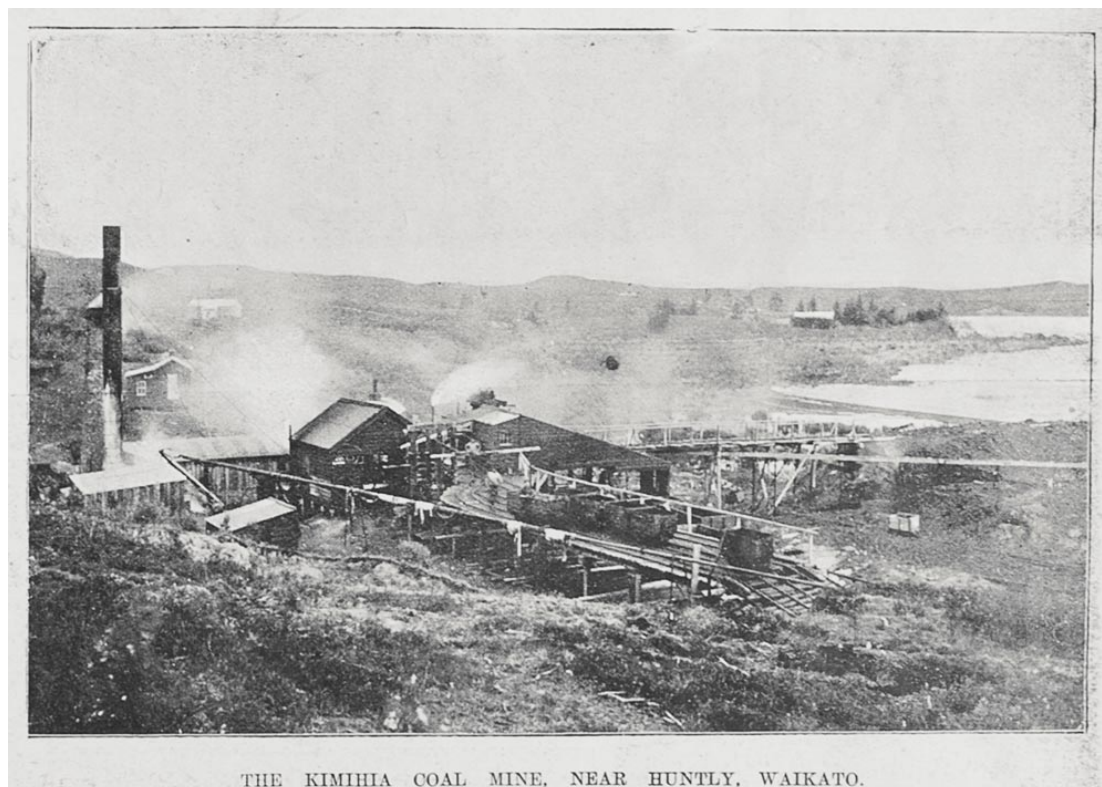


Figure 124: 'The Kimihia Coal Mine, near Huntly, Waikato' *Auckland Weekly News* 7 November 1901, p. 7. AWNS-19011107-7-5, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

Lake Puketirini, previously known as Weavers Lake, is located west of Huntly and is a newly formed lake developed from a disused coal-mined pit; it was opened for recreation in 2007. The Huntly Railway Station building has been placed there as part of plans to relocate the Waikato Coalfields Museum. Lake Hakanoa on the town's east is popular for boating and has a walkway around it.

On the west side, Pukemiro, Glen Afton, Rotowaro, Waikokowai and Renown were established as underground mines. Opencast mining began west of Huntly during the Second World War.⁷⁴ In 1966 there were both underground and opencast mines along the branch railway at or near Weavers Crossing, Mahuta, Renown Siding, Rotowaro and at Glen Afton. Coal is mined by opencast methods from the drained portions of the bed of Lake Kimihia (about 7 miles north-east). Carbonettes were manufactured at Rotowaro from slack coal between 1931 and 1987.

Huntly thermal power station is New Zealand's largest power station, situated on the west bank of the Waikato River. Commissioned in 1983, the station belongs to Genesis Energy. It runs on local coal and gas, and uses water from the Waikato River for cooling.⁷⁵

⁷¹ *New Zealand Herald* 19 February 1883, p. 8.

⁷² *New Zealand Herald* 13 March 1893, p. 3.

⁷³ More, p. 146.

⁷⁴ <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-4>

⁷⁵ <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-4>

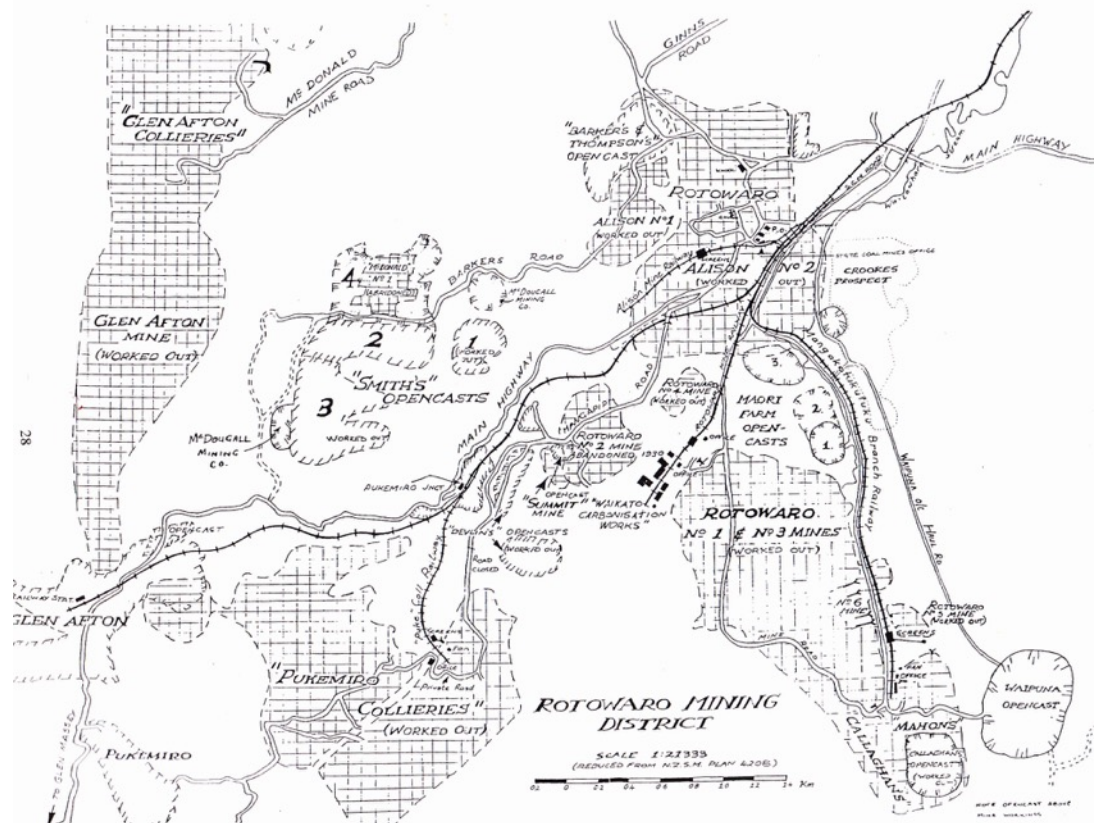


Figure 125: A sketch map of the Rotowaro mining district, showing the several mines in the district. Gwyneth Jones *When Coal Was King*, p. 28.

The other important natural resource at Huntly was fire clay. The Ralphs were utilising the clay on their property by 1873. Early in 1893 William Collins took over the plant used by the Onehunga Iron Works for a time, and made fire and ordinary bricks, pipe drains and tiles, and large arched firebricks for the fireboxes of locomotives.⁷⁶ Isaac Coates of Hamilton, trading under the name Coates Ltd, used Ralph's site from 1904 with new machinery imported from England, until the clay source ran out. Coates purchased Collins' site which had an ample supply of coal, but involved more cartage of coal to the plant and of the bricks to the station, whereas Ralphs' brickmaking site was adjacent to the railway line.⁷⁷ Coates sold up in 1911 to a Huntly syndicate.

Huntly Brickworks, later the Huntly Brick and Fireclay Company (from 1911), was established by Isaac Coates of Hamilton in c.1905. The company's products became synonymous with the township.⁷⁸ The company was taken over by Winstones in 1961 and renamed Winstone Refractories in 1975. It is still operating in the 2010s as Shinagawa Refractories.⁷⁹ Many buildings in the town were built from Huntly brick, including the former Huntly Hospital (1924-25), the Masonic Lodge (1930), and St Paul's Anglican Church (1934), and it is a widely-used building material throughout the region.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ *New Zealand Herald* 13 March 1893, p. 3.

⁷⁷ Coates, pp 154-157.

⁷⁸ <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-4>

⁷⁹ More, p. 344.

⁸⁰ <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-4>



A VIEW OF COLLINS' MINE. HUNTLY, WAIKATO. FROM WHICH
 SPLENDID CLAY IS OBTAINED FOR POTTERY MAKING.

F. H. Exon, Photo.

Figure 126: 'A view of Collins' Mine, Huntly, from which splendid clay is obtained for pottery making'. *Auckland Weekly News* 1 November 1906, p. 14. AWNS-19061101-14-1, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.

Pukemiro

Prospecting was under way in earnest at Pukemiro by 1909 and, this having been successful, Pukemiro Collieries was formed in 1910 with shares being advertised in January 1911.⁸¹ Pukemiro was the first coal settlement established on the west bank of the Waikato River. In 1913 the railway line over the new bridge linked Pukemiro (and nearby mining settlements) to Huntly, the government assisting with the cost of the railway. Mining ceased in 1967.⁸² In 1905 a school was established in what had previously been solely a farming district. It was enlarged in 1950.⁸³



Figure 127: Pukemiro Collieries in September 1967 at the time of the mine closing. Photo courtesy of JAT Terry, reproduced in Gwyneth Jones *When Coal Was King*, p. 41.

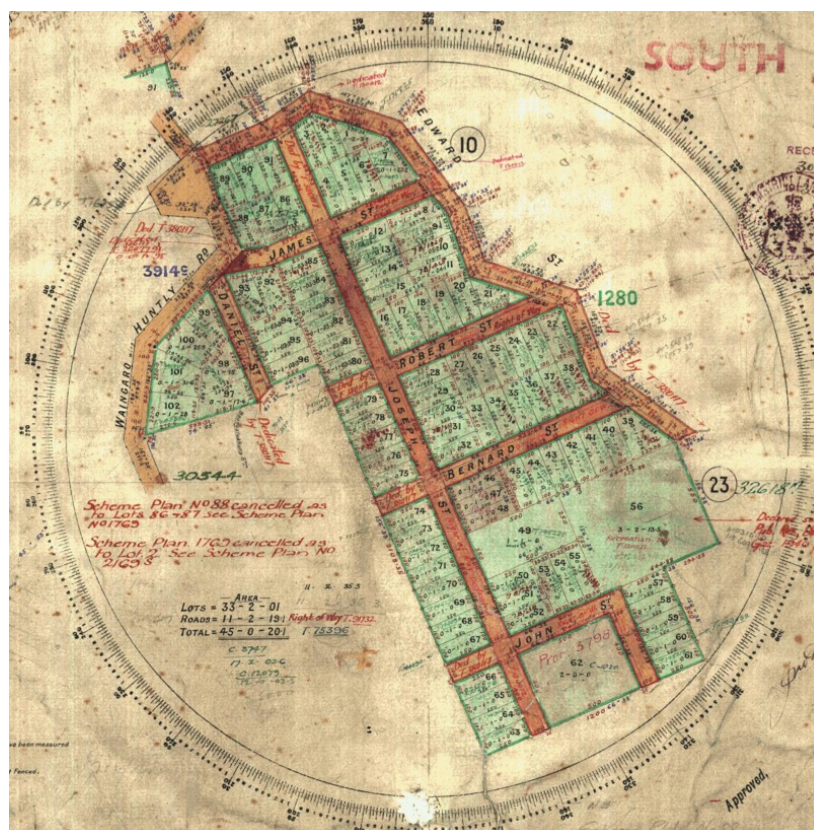


Figure 128: 'Town of Pukemiro', subdivision on behalf of Pukemiro Coal Co. July 1912. DP 8585, QuickMap.

⁸¹ *Auckland Star* 14 January 1911, p. 10.

⁸² <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-4>

⁸³ Kellaway, p. 128, 203.



Figure 129: An aerial view of Pukemiro taken on 5 April 1955 shows residential housing, the coal mining area and farmland beyond. WA-38774-F, Whites Aviation Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Glen Afton

The small settlement of Glen Afton developed close to Pukemiro in order to service two coal mines which opened on 25 July 1923 'in the presence of 2000 interested farmer shareholders'⁸⁴. The mines were owned by the New Zealand Co-operative Dairy Company, which needed coal to power its Waikato dairy factories. The company built a model town, including miners' houses, a boarding house, school and roads. On 24 September 1939, 11 Glen Afton miners died of carbon monoxide poisoning caused by a mine fire.⁸⁵ The last underground mine at Glen Afton closed in 1971.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Jones, p. 25.

⁸⁵ <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-4>

⁸⁶ Jones, p. 59



Figure 130: Rural settlement of Glen Afton, Huntly between 1945-1950. WA-05022-F, Whites Aviation Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Rotowaro

Land in the Rotowaro area was purchased by the Ralphs after the 1914 disaster in Ralph's Mine; they shifted plant from there and began mining at Rotowaro.⁸⁷ A settlement developed from 1915. In 1930 the Waikato Carbonisation factory was built there to process coal slack into heating briquettes. The 'Carbo', as it was called locally, closed in 1987, and is now listed as an industrial heritage site.

In 1979 State Coal Mines announced plans to demolish Rotowaro township to create a huge opencast mine, and by 1987 all the residents had been relocated. This caused great bitterness, as many had lived there all their lives. In the 2010s the Rotowaro opencast mine was run by state-owned Solid Energy.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Jones, p. 26.

⁸⁸ <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/waikato-places/page-4>