

## **THE VINING FAMILY STORY**

### **Kaiaua Road Mangatangi**

In July 1886, the Vining brothers, Thomas and Sydney, aged 18 and 16 years, left the East India Docks in London on the ship "Ida Zeigler" to arrive in Auckland on 23 October 1866.

They worked as farm cadets for a Mr Graham at Tairua for five years, to gain experience, and then in 1871 the brothers purchased part of the Mangatangi Block at one pound an acre. All goods came from Thames by sailing boat as Thames had a larger population than Auckland.

In 1898, a second bush block was purchased in a liquidation sale from the Mineral Prospecting Co. for 10/- an acre. This took their acreage up to 2900 acres. (1160 hectares)

In 1900 Mr Thomas Vining (Thos) married Miss Susan Lyons of Mangatawhiri. Syd Vining never married. Thos and Susan had four children, two boys and two girls. The eldest son, Lew, died 1938 aged 30. The original brothers both passed away in 1939 whilst Mrs Vining survived them by 22 years. The Vining family then consisted of Amy, Aileen and Jack (Huia John) who continued farming this property. Jack passed away in 1980, aged 72. Amy then carried on with the farming side while Aileen looked after the house etc. They always had a great vegetable garden and plenty of fruit from the old established orchard. Aileen was always noted for her scones, about the size of a small loaf, plus her roasts of mutton. It was said that no one was ever hungry, especially the shearers.

The Kauri Homestead was built in 1900, the timber rafted over from Thames, as the original one had burnt down. At the front of the once spacious grounds is a Deodar Cedar, an Indian Cypress and a Crimean Pine, approximately 150 years old.

Jack was a very keen Acclimatisation man as can be seen as you walk around the farm. Lots of ponds and little reserves fenced off for waterfowl. He brought in different types of waterfowl that were pinioned breeding pairs.

The Hunua Ranges were extensively logged, particularly for Kauri and the property was used for access and extraction of logs. These were sent to Kaiaua by a bush railway or bullock trains and then barged or rafted to mills at Auckland.

In 1981, Amy and Aileen gave the bush block (about 1000 acres) back to the people of New Zealand, on three conditions,

1. It would be ring-fenced
2. There would be no roading
3. No timber dead or alive was to be removed from the area.

Finally and sadly, life became too much for them and a farm manager was employed. Amy died 1983, and Aileen in 1985. They were a family that kept very much to themselves.

A big solid Kauri hay barn was built about 1975, all made from timber out of the bush. It could hold about 5000 traditional hay bales.

The farm today, 1900 acres, carries approximately 5000 sheep and 1500 head of cattle. This changed in March 2000, the Vining trust was wound up and the farm was sold to Mr Hugh Green and renamed Emerald Downs.