

James Andrews, Viticulturalist

Senor Romeo Bragato trained at the Royal School of Oenology in Conegliano, Italy. He was appointed Resident Viticulturalist for the Victoria State Government in Australia. The New Zealand Government invited him to visit in 1895. Subsequently he was appointed as their Viticulturalist and Oenologist to head the new Viticultural Branch of the Biology and Horticulture Division of the Department of Agriculture in Te Kauwhata. He held the position from 1901 to 1908 and had the wine cellar and laboratory built. It was designed by Hamilton architect T H White. Romeo Bragato married Laura Condon in Auckland in 1907. They had a daughter Miriam who married Scott Colville and in turn had a daughter, Jan Colville, but there are no further descendants.

Meanwhile, the Andrews family of Beeston in Nottinghamshire, with two sons and two daughters, had booked to emigrate to New Zealand. Henry died suddenly but wife Emma decided they would continue with their plans in 1891. They had contacts in her relatives the Draper family, across Lake Waikare from Rangiriri. Draper Road's name comes from them.

One of the Andrews sisters, Annie, married Robert Watson, a quarryman at what is now Belcher Road. Her sister Helen married his brother William. Meanwhile, their brother James Benjamin Andrews got a job at the Experimental Farm in Te Kauwhata in 1895. He worked there until 1932, and was cellarman for the first 1902 wine vintage under Romeo Bragato. He then progressed to being winemaker and vineyard overseer with expert tuition from Bragato, who did not choose to also tutor the younger cadet Tom Rodda*. James Andrews was respected by Tom Rodda, who became the Farm Manager 1924-33.

When Te Kauwhata was subdivided in 1913 James Andrews bought several sections along Mahi Road, bordering Te Kauwhata Road, to near the Scott Road intersection. He built a villa at 1 Hori Street, in the environs of what is now 1 and 3 Te Kauwhata Road. It was sold to Downeys, then in 1953 to Lloyd Carley, whose Carleys Transport base was there until the 1990s. The villa was replaced with a 1980s house, now 1 Te Kauwhata Road.





May and James Andrews on their wedding day

James Andrews (also known as Jimmy or Jim) planted vineyards on the surrounding sections and made his own wines - port, madeira and apple wine in the 1920s. He used the label of "Clinton," possibly from the name of the street he grew up in. He married Alice May Brooks, known as May, from Huntly in 1923. He had met her when she was staying with his sister Annie and Robert Watson at 20 Mahi Road. James and May Andrews had four sons in the years 1924 to 1927. Tony and Bill spent their lives in Te Kauwhata until Tony retired to Hamilton in 1975 while Bill stayed on. Merv became a jockey and lives in Palmerston North and Ron died in his 60s in Tauranga. James Andrews' occupation at his death in 1934, aged 62, was given as viticulturalist. He is buried in Waerenga Cemetery. May always remembered her husband of only 11 years as a kind man.



James & May Andrews' sons, from left to right: Merv, Tony, Bill, Ron.

Tony and Bill Andrews established a garage on Mahi Road, which was sold to Warren Moorfield in 1975. It is now Te Kauwhata Auto Super Shoppe owned by Warren's son Jason and his wife Tarina. James Andrews and Jason's great-grandfather, Cornelius Moorfield, would have known each other, being respectively involved in winemaking and using the still to make fortified wine, in the now heritage winery during the 1920s. Like James Andrews, Cornelius Moorfield grew grapes on his property on Moorfield Road and made his own wine under the label "Bluebell."



Bill Andrews had started work as an apprentice at Te Kauwhata Service Station on Waerenga Road. By 1948 he had built a two-bay fibrolite building on family land, now 5 Mahi Road. His brother Tony joined him as a partner in 1949. A house was built on Mahi Road for their mother, who had remarried Jack McAughtrie, a builder. Then houses were built on neighbouring Andrews' sections for Tony and Marie and Bill and Dawn and their families. It is interesting to note that May never drank. Bill and Dawn Andrews and children lived at what is now 3 Mahi Road, Tony and Marie and family at 7 Mahi Road, and the McAughtries were at 11 Mahi Road. The houses were distinctive, standing on their own in the 1950s and 1960s before subdividing became a trend. Tony and Marie's family have moved away but Bill and Dawn's daughter Jan married Brian White of Scott Road. His parents had moved there in 1947 and his great-grandfather was the Hamilton Architect, T H White, who designed the winery. There are family still in the area with new dimensions being added to Te Kauwhata's viticultural history.

Compiled by Jenny Kelly.
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*Rodda Road is named after Tom Rodda's family whose farm from 1884 to 1953 is now bounded by Hall Road and the Expressway.

References:

Vintage Memories of Te Kauwhata compiled by the Te Kauwhata & District Historical Society Inc. to the year 2000. Te Kauwhata, NZ, 2003.

Sherson, Charlie. *Kahikatea, Cabbage Trees & Koromiko; a history of the pioneering and early days in the Waerenga Valley.* Te Kauwhata, NZ, Waerenga School Board of Trustees, 2006.