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E D W A R D B A I G E N T

A Pioneer Nelson Settler, Businessman, and Politician

A thesis presented in partial
fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of
Arts in History at Massey
University.

NEIL DOUGLAS NELSON
1981

PREFACE

Edward Baigent arrived in New Zealand almost 140 years ago, and except for a few months in Nelson, spent his entire life in Wakefield. Unfortunately neither Edward Baigent nor any of his children seem to have kept diaries, or been prolific letter writers. The information this thesis is based upon, does thus come almost entirely from early newspaper articles, diaries of Baigent's contemporary settlers, and old ledgers and journals, dating back to 1870, which were found by chance last year in the demolition of an old building on Baigents' Rutherford Street property.

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible if not for the willing assistance I have had from a number of people.

Special thanks must go to Mr John Bush, who began collecting information relating to the Baigent family several years ago, with the intention of eventually writing a family/company history. With characteristic unselfishness, Mr Bush passed on to me all the material he had accumulated, and I am extremely grateful for the initial help he provided.

To Mrs M. Palmer, a great grand-daughter of Edward Baigent, I also extend my special thanks. Mrs Palmer has always taken a great deal of interest in the Baigent family, and wherever possible, has been of great assistance to me.

Nelson is fortunate that early events were faithfully recorded by newspaper reporters almost immediately settlement was commenced. The Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle which began in 1842 and continued until 1874, provided much valuable information on the early years of settlement in the Nelson Province. An almost complete file of this paper is available at the Nelson Public Library, and to the staff of the Library I wish to record my thanks.

Nelson's other two newspapers, The Colonist, 1857-1920, and the Nelson Evening Mail, 1866 to the present day, are stored at the Nelson Evening Mail Offices, and to the Lucas family, I extend my thanks for allowing me to spend many weeks going through these immaculately preserved papers.

Diaries and journals of early Nelson settlers also provided much valuable background for my thesis, and in this area, the staff of the Nelson Museum have always provided friendly and extremely helpful information. Special thanks must go to Mrs N. Russell, who spent several hours suggesting early diaries and journals which she felt would be of assistance, and always were. To Mr Steven Bagley, Director of the Museum, and Mr Maurice Watson, for his excellent photographs, I am also very grateful.

To my supervisor, Professor W.H. Oliver, I wish to record my sincere thanks. Professor Oliver's useful criticism and helpful suggestions have proved of considerable assistance in the writing of my thesis.

For the typing of this thesis, all credit must go to Miss Margaret Denby, and to her I extend my thanks for an excellent job.

After having written and re-written this thesis some six times, the task of proof-reading becomes very difficult, and to Mr John Harvey, I am indebted for the thorough job he did on the train journey to Auckland.

Finally, I wish to thank the company of H. Baigent & Sons Limited, particularly Mr Harry Baigent, for the assistance they have given me in the writing of my thesis.

To all the above people, plus the many others with whom I have talked, I wish to record my sincere thanks.

N.D. NELSON

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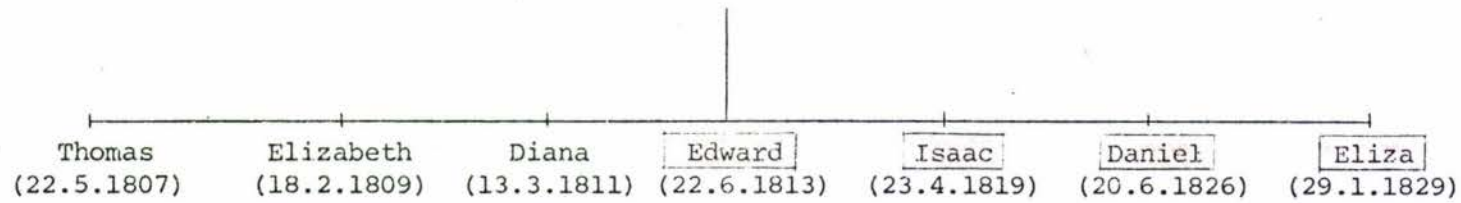
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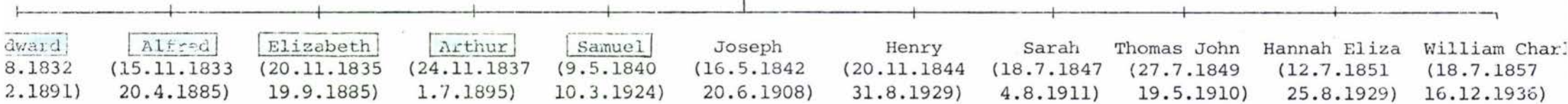
(All photos gratefully acknowledged to the Nelson
Provincial Museum)

Edward Baigent : Brief Family Tree

Thomas Baigent m. Dorothy Anne Coule

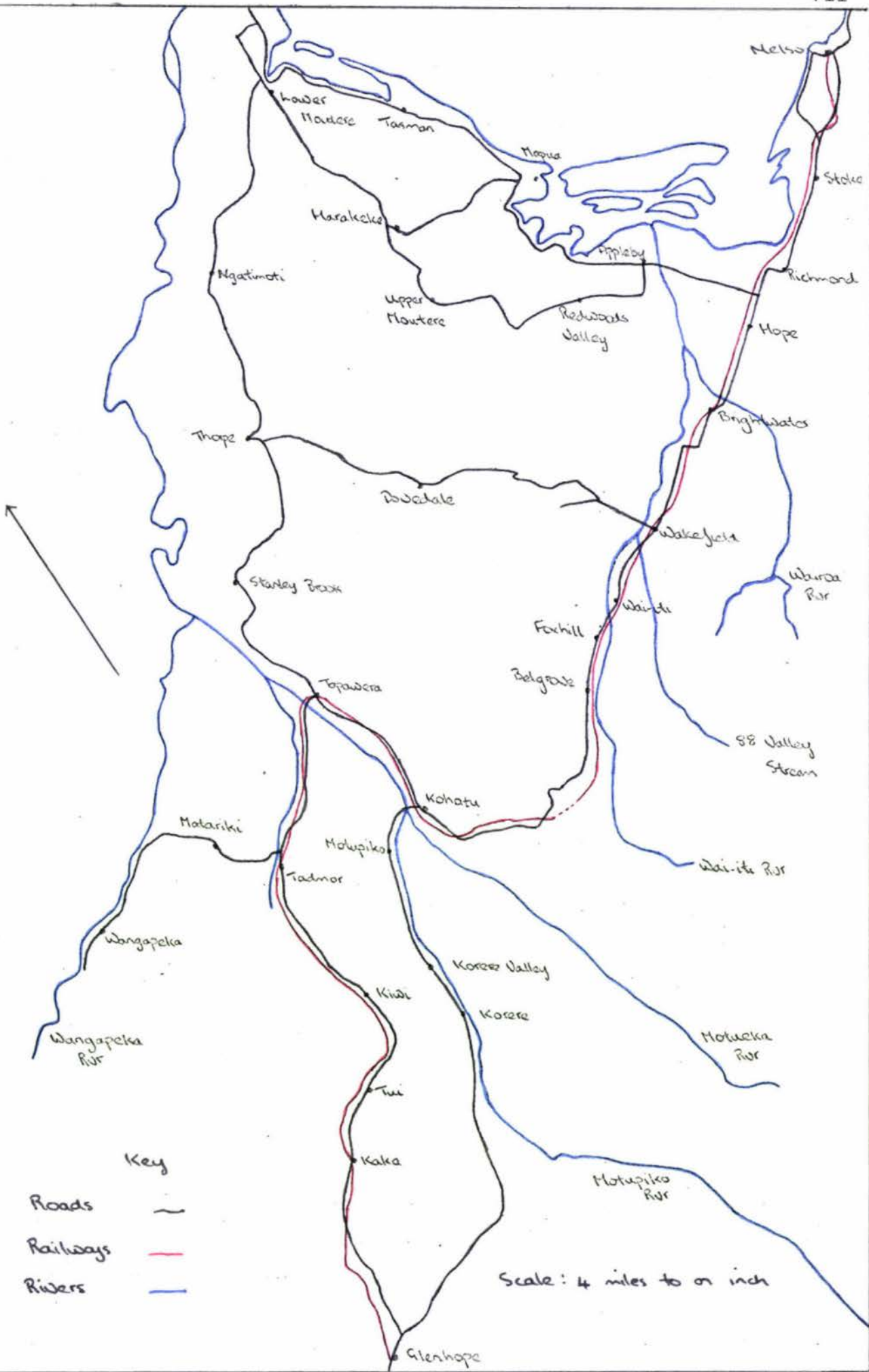


m. Mary Ann Hern



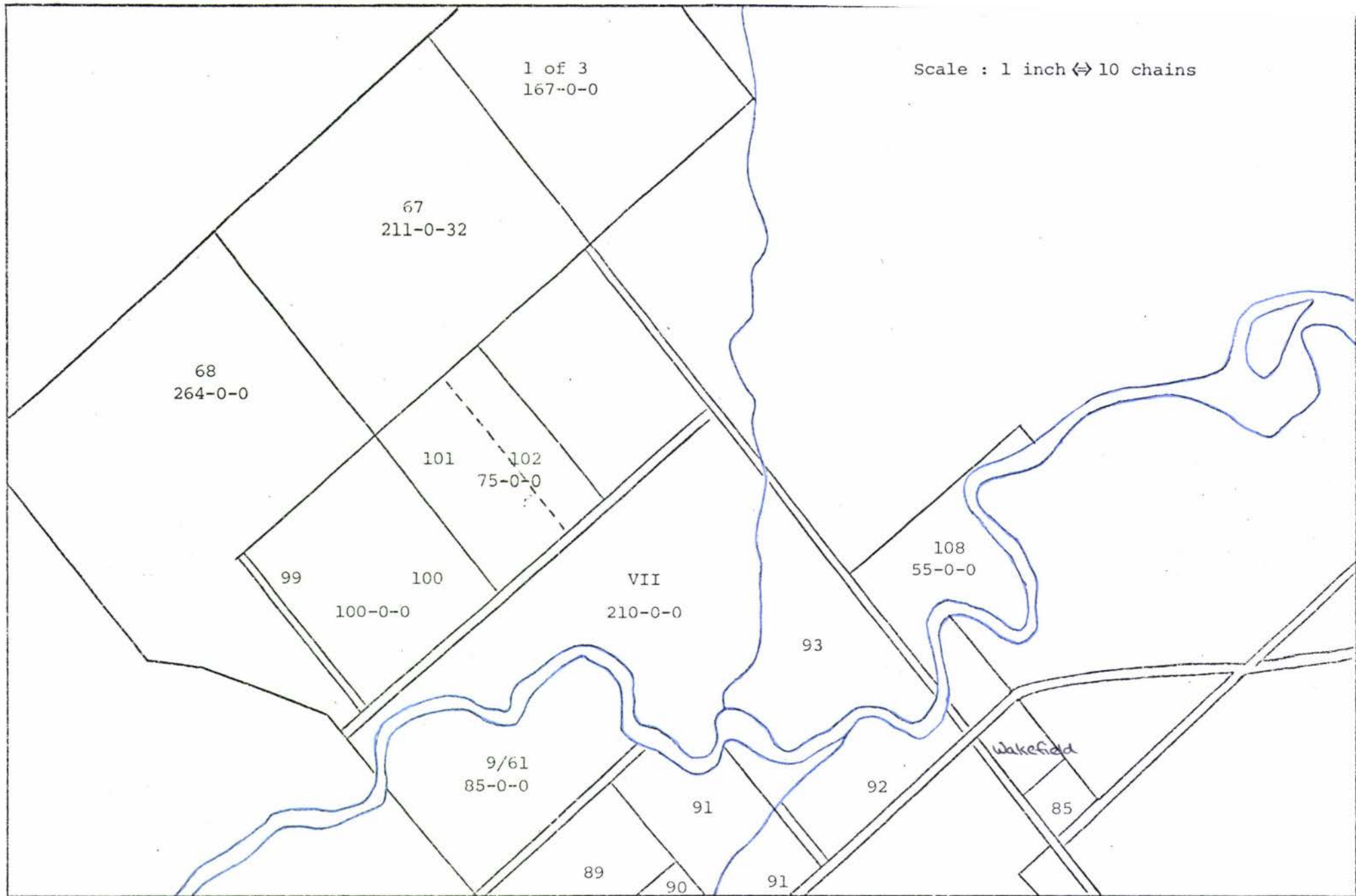
Came out to New Zealand

Born in England



Key
Roads —
Railways —
Rivers —

Scale: 4 miles to an inch



SURVEY MAP SHOWING PROPERTIES EDWARD BAIGENT OWNED DURING THE 1870s.