

GEORGE STEWART O'HALLORAN: A PIONEER PUBLICAN
AND STOREKEEPER AT TE AROHA

Philip Hart

Te Aroha Mining District Working Papers

No. 153

2016

Historical Research Unit
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

ISSN: 2463-6266

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Contact: prhart@waikato.ac.nz



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

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Abstract: *Born in Ireland, O'Halloran and his brothers went to Australia in 1860 before moving to New Zealand a few years later. After fighting against Maori for some years, as a member of the Armed Constabulary he made roads in Maori districts before settling in Thames and investing in mining and taking up a variety of often short-term occupations. He would struggle financially for all his life, both he and his wife becoming bankrupts. In 1875, he settled in Ohinemuri, where he was a director and legal manager for some mining companies as well as being a commission agent and, as well, becoming active in the community. His solution to the Maori 'problem' was for the government to acquire their land.*

At the end of 1878 he moved to the Te Aroha district as a publican and storekeeper, first at the Te Kawana landing on the western side of the river and then settling at the site of the future Te Aroha in early 1880, where he became the licensee of the Hot Springs Hotel. He was a strong advocate for the development of the district, seeking council and government assistance and personally helping to provide and improve roads, punts, and the baths at the hot springs, sometimes leading to conflict with local rangatira. After assisting prospecting, indirectly, he was involved in Te Aroha's first rush, which greatly increased his bar trade, and invested in local mines. In addition to being a publican, he was a storekeeper and had other occupations as well; for a time his wife ran a boarding house. Most of these occupations were short-term and financially unprofitable. During all his years at Te Aroha he and his wife were actively involved in the community.

After leaving Te Aroha, he held a variety of jobs in Australia and then back in New Zealand, but his financial struggles may have been one reason for how he ended his life.

ADVENTURES IN AUSTRALIA

George Stewart (sometimes Stuart) O'Halloran¹ had an adventurous life before settling in Te Aroha. Born in County Antrim, Ireland, the second son of Richard,² an unsuccessful businessman, he arrived in Melbourne in

¹ For photograph of him, in militia uniform, see *New Zealand Home Pictorial*, 21 June 1933, p. 14.

² *Auckland Weekly News*, 27 January 1872, p. 23.

1860 aged 16, along with an elder brother, whose age he recorded as 17 or 18 but whom he did not name in his 1894 memoirs.³ Three other brothers were to come to New Zealand, a younger one, Richard, living in Thames for a time before drowning when crossing a South Island river in 1872.⁴ Another brother was Brabazon Disney, whose life has not been traced, apart from noting his imprisonment for embezzlement in 1891.⁵ His third brother, Gerald Richard Disney (Disney was their mother's maiden name),⁶ stated, when applying for a military pension because of his involvement in the 1860s wars in the Whanganui district, that he had arrived in New Zealand in 1861.⁷ According to his age as recorded when both he married and died, Gerald was 16 in 1860.⁸ His obituary stated that he first went to the Otago goldfields before moving to Thames during the 1870s.⁹ Clearly, therefore, Gerald had accompanied George to Australia and then New Zealand, where Gerald became a brother-in-law of James Mackay,¹⁰ Civil Commissioner for Hauraki and the main official involved with acquiring Maori land for the Crown.¹¹ George O'Halloran's connection with Mackay would make him suspect to some when he tried to get elected to the county council in 1876.¹²

³ George Stewart O'Halloran, untitled manuscript memoirs (1894), p. 1, MS 1345-2, Alexander Turnbull Library; *Auckland Star*, 2 December 1910, p. 5.

⁴ *Thames Guardian and Mining Record*, 28 February 1872, p. 2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 2 March 1872, p. 23.

⁵ Auckland Supreme Court, Conolly J, Criminal Notebooks 1890-1891, p. 268, BBAE A304/120, ANZ-A; Supreme Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 3 June 1891, p. 3, 4 June 1891, p. 3.

⁶ Death Certificate of Gerald Richard O'Halloran, 6 September 1925, 1925/3559, BDM.

⁷ Maori War Benefits, Military Pension 1312, Social Security Department, SS 7, 10/10/2, ANZ-W.

⁸ Notices of Intentions to Marry 1870, folio 181, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 10/15, ANZ-W; Marriage Certificate of Gerald Richard Disney O'Halloran, 9 April 1870, 1870/5319; Death Certificate of Gerald Richard O'Halloran, 6 September 1925, 1925/3559, BDM.

⁹ *New Zealand Herald*, 8 September 1925, p. 10.

¹⁰ Notices of Intentions to Marry 1870, folio 181, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 10/15, ANZ-W; *Thames Advertiser*, 30 August 1875, p. 3.

¹¹ See paper on Maori land in Hauraki.

¹² Letter from 'Elector', *Thames Advertiser*, 21 December 1876, p. 3.

The brothers had gone to Melbourne because a brother had reported he was ‘doing well’ there.¹³ O’Halloran’s first obtained work as a farm labourer, but soon found the work exhausting and his fellow workers, whom he suspected were former convicts, were morally repugnant.¹⁴ He described the 40s he was paid as ‘the hardest earned’ in his life. ‘I have had a holy horror of farming in all its branches ever since’.¹⁵ He next accompanied a friend taking horses to the Yea goldfield, inland from Melbourne, armed with pistols because of bushrangers. Smoking his pipe at night beside their tent in the bush ‘(even thus early had I learned to smoke)’, the only thing that spoiled his ‘thorough enjoyment’ was his fear of snakes. He was also afraid of ‘a great kangaroo dog’ that rushed at him when they went to a homestead for a drink; so afraid that he shot it in the leg, resulting in their being ordered off and denied the water they craved.¹⁶

At Yea, his friend’s father operated a battery, and offered them a job feeding the stampers for a shilling a day. ‘We thought this a splendid offer and although knowing nothing of the work readily agreed’. His first night ‘seemed to me the longest night I had ever passed’, and the engineer ‘found me sitting on my reversed shovel nearly asleep and the stampers hammering away on the bottom of the nearly empty boxes. He was not over pleased I can assure you’.¹⁷ They soon abandoned this job, and tried making charcoal, unsuccessfully.¹⁸ Whilst returning despondently to Melbourne, they met men hurrying to a new gold rush, and joined them, seeking gold in an abandoned shaft on the advice of miners working nearby. After finding only a few pennyweights of gold, they returned to Melbourne.¹⁹

O’Halloran next worked as a clerk for a butcher in a village outside Melbourne, and might have remained there had not his uncle intervened. He had travelled to New Zealand on a ship he owned and ‘wrote glowing accounts of that Country and recommended’ that they travel to Otago to meet him, even sending their passage money. They accepted his advice, for

¹³ O’Halloran, p. 1.

¹⁴ O’Halloran, pp. 2-3.

¹⁵ O’Halloran, p. 3.

¹⁶ O’Halloran, pp. 4-5.

¹⁷ O’Halloran, p. 7 [punctuation added].

¹⁸ O’Halloran, pp. 8-9.

¹⁹ O’Halloran, pp. 9-11.

the 1861 gold rush was on, Gerald giving up his 'Clerkship with a good salary in Melbourne'.²⁰

EARLY YEARS IN NEW ZEALAND

Whilst waiting at Dunedin and then Port Chalmers for their uncle's ship to arrive from Auckland, they observed hundreds of people joining the rush to Gabriel's Gully. When the ship arrived, all its sailors deserted to go to the diggings, and they had to help unload it.²¹ His brother became a clerk in 'a good Mercantile House in Dunedin', but O'Halloran assisted his uncle with his coastal vessel for nearly a year until 'a friend who had been on the Diggings both in California and Australia' convinced him to go to the goldfield at Waitahuna.²² Situated near Gabriel's Gully, this field had been worked steadily since its discovery in 1861.²³ As their first shaft produced encouraging signs, he thought his 'fortune was made right away, but was doomed as I have often been since those days to sore disappointment'.²⁴ Even with the help of another mate, he found the work 'rather too much for me, being as yet quite a youngster'.²⁵ As their claim paid 'only poor wages' and other ground was equally unprofitable, he abandoned the diggings.²⁶

Next, O'Halloran tried his luck in Wellington, shipping cattle and sheep with a friend, soon being promoted to buying and droving animals, which he enjoyed 'immensely'.²⁷ However, a storm meant that one voyage to the South Island ruined the business financially.²⁸ O'Halloran had about 100 sheep, which he placed on a run in the Wairarapa, but his unpleasant recollections of farming in Australia made him abandon his brief thoughts

²⁰ O'Halloran, pp. 11-12.

²¹ O'Halloran, pp. 12-13.

²² O'Halloran, p. 14; see also G.S. O'Halloran to Superintendent, Otago Province, 14 September 1861, 16 September 1861, Department of Internal Affairs, AAAC 707, D500, 135/a, no. 588, ANZ-D.

²³ See J.H.M. Salmon, *A History of Goldmining in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1963), pp. 58, 59, 63, 65, 66, 74, 120 and map on p. 77.

²⁴ O'Halloran, pp. 15-16.

²⁵ O'Halloran, p. 16 [punctuation added].

²⁶ O'Halloran, p. 17.

²⁷ O'Halloran, p. 18.

²⁸ O'Halloran, p. 19.

of becoming a sheep farmer. When a ship's captain offered him a post as cattle buyer,

I very foolishly declined, preferring joining the Wellington Mounted Defence Force which was then being raised, and in which I shortly after became a Trooper. This step was taken strongly against the advice of my friends and I have since regretted it, for although I was lucky and got rapid promotion, I look upon the time, some 9 years, spent in Soldiering as time thrown away. Besides, the life unsettled and unfitted me in many ways for the more sober and peaceful occupations of life.²⁹

He joined the force early in 1863.³⁰

A SOLDIER'S LIFE

His memoirs described living in barracks near Wellington and then protecting country settlers from possible attack because of the war in the Waikato. As these attacks did not occur and the government won the war, the force was disbanded.³¹ O'Halloran then spent a month unsuccessfully attempting to muster 500 wild cattle on a Wairarapa run before starting a business with a friend breaking in horses in the Hutt Valley. For a change, this was profitable for 'some 6 or 8 months'. When war broke out in the Whanganui (as he consistently spelt it) and Taranaki districts, they were 'both seized with the Soldiering fever so we sold out to a man called Jones who by the bye still owes the greater portion of the purchase money. I have never seen him since'.³²

O'Halloran became a corporal in the Wanganui Yeomanry Cavalry. His memoirs cite his diary entries for early 1866, giving details of cavalry life, with some skirmishes, reconnoitering, and catching cattle for food.³³ He later followed the rest of the cavalry to Opotiki, but not till after being placed under 'close arrest' by an officious 'Martinet'.³⁴ Just before leaving

²⁹ O'Halloran, p. 20.

³⁰ G.S. O'Halloran to Defence Minister, 5 September 1871, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8183, 8/15, D48, ANZ-A.

³¹ O'Halloran, pp. 20-22.

³² O'Halloran, p. 23.

³³ O'Halloran, pp. 24-33.

³⁴ O'Halloran, pp. 34-35.

Whanganui he sold an old mare 'for £30 and I must admit I sold the purchaser also'.³⁵ The fighting on the east coast was similar to that near Whanganui: skirmishes, living off the land when on reconnaissance, seizing cattle for food, and capturing some Hauhau.³⁶

After a time, as he explained in 1894, he 'was getting unsettled and a little dissatisfied with the mode of life', and left the force after obtaining a substitute. With a corporal's discharge, free passage to Napier, and 'some money in my pocket I was again a free agent'. He 'eventually' arrived in Wellington, where he spent 'some months amongst my friends who looked on me as quite a warrior'; he had 'no objection to pose as a hero of many Startling Adventures both by Sea and land'.³⁷

After 'something' seemed to compel him to return to Whanganui 'without any special object in view', later in 1866 he met the lieutenant in command of his old troop in Opotiki, who offered him the vacant position of sergeant major if he would re-enlist.³⁸ As the lieutenant did not consider either of the sergeants was suitable, 'he could see no injustice in promoting me over their heads'. After Major Thomas McDonnell approved the appointment, he re-enlisted as a trooper, and on the following day his promotion was announced. He claimed to be 'not much surprised' that this was not 'well received' and that both troopers and non-commissioned officers 'refused duty'. According to his account, some of the latter were court-martialed, receiving 'some nominal punishment', and his position was confirmed.³⁹ According to one trooper, all were court-martialed and 'honourably acquitted'.⁴⁰ (Army records reveal he was promoted to sergeant before becoming troop sergeant major.)⁴¹ 'Not caring to retain the position under the circumstances, seeing that it would be difficult to carry on the duties satisfactorily', he applied to return to the ranks. This was agreed to by McDonnell on condition that he became his 'Special Mounted Orderly, where my duties would be light and I would be withdrawn from the Troop

³⁵ O'Halloran, p. 35.

³⁶ O'Halloran, pp. 37-40; G.S. O'Halloran to Defence Minister, 5 September 1871, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8183, 8/15, D48, ANZ-A.

³⁷ O'Halloran, p. 40.

³⁸ O'Halloran, p. 40; G.S. O'Halloran to Defence Minister, 5 September 1871, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8131, 8/15, D48, ANZ-A.

³⁹ O'Halloran, pp. 40-42.

⁴⁰ C.L. Money, *Knocking About in New Zealand* (Melbourne, 1871), pp. 142-143.

⁴¹ Maori War Index, MW 3768, Army Department, AD 32, ANZ-W.

for a time'. He accepted, and McDonnell treated him 'more as a friend than anything else and we had many an exciting ride and experience in common, and saw a great deal of the Country and some fighting together'.⁴² For 'some months' they harassed their enemy, restoring 'comparative peace' by burning villages and destroying crops. Many troopers were discharged and received land, and although O'Halloran was not discharged he received 'some 60 acres which I sold for £60'.⁴³ (Official records indicate that he received 50 acres near Patea, valued at £10.)⁴⁴

O'Halloran accompanied McDonnell to Rotorua, 'where trouble had arisen between the Arawa and some hostile tribes'. A race between rival Aroha canoes across Lake Rotorua was 'most exciting', and the village of Ohinemutu 'proved to be a most extraordinary place'.⁴⁵ He participated in minor skirmishes.⁴⁶ After conflict died down, he followed McDonnell to Tauranga, nearly drowning when his canoe carrying the baggage was swamped crossing the lake.⁴⁷ At Tauranga, he wore his 'best uniform and laid myself out to Captivate the fair Sex of whom there were some very good Specimens to be seen on the promenade', and impressed men as well, who imagined him to be an officer. 'I felt rather uncomfortable receiving this deference to which I was not entitled'.⁴⁸ He accompanied McDonnell to inspect redoubts near Tauranga until signs of 'further trouble' in the Whanganui and Taranaki districts meant they were ordered to Patea. As the Wanganui Mounted Cavalry had been disbanded, he was appointed a sergeant in the Mounted Militia and 'given charge of some 20 Men, the only Mounted Men in the District at this time'. They carried dispatches, and on one occasion he was nearly drowned when trying to get around cliffs on a rising tide.⁴⁹ As there was no fighting, he obtained his discharge. As he had taken part in all the 'Expeditions' in that area since first enlisting, seen many men killed and wounded, 'and underwent many privations', he was

⁴² O'Halloran, p. 42 [punctuation added].

⁴³ O'Halloran, pp. 42-43.

⁴⁴ Applications by Militia for Land, 1882, no. 1386, Lands and Survey Department, LS 65/5; Commissioner of Crown Lands to H.T. Rowe, 11 September 1893, Applications for Land Grants, 1889-1892, no. 574, LS 66/6, ANZ-W.

⁴⁵ O'Halloran, pp. 43-44.

⁴⁶ O'Halloran, pp. 46-49.

⁴⁷ O'Halloran, pp. 49-50.

⁴⁸ O'Halloran, p. 50.

⁴⁹ O'Halloran, pp. 51-53.

‘getting a little tired of soldiering and not sorry to again resume the life of a civilian’.⁵⁰

O’Halloran established a business carting goods to settlers, and began ‘to work up a nice little business’. As it was compulsory to join either the militia or the volunteers, he chose the latter. At his first monthly parade, the men were informed that the captain had resigned, and that evening an election to replace him was held. ‘Judge of my Surprise when I, the latest joined man, was proposed, seconded, and unanimously elected Captain’.⁵¹ His appointment as captain of the Patea Light Horse Volunteers was immediately confirmed and gazetted, in March 1868.⁵² Seven months later, he was gazetted as a captain in the militia, from the same date.⁵³ He received these commissions when aged only 22.⁵⁴

His memoirs provide a detailed account of the serious fighting that ensued,⁵⁵ In one skirmish he was praised to his ‘gallant example’.⁵⁶ Shortly afterwards, he was present at the September engagement in which Gustavus von Tempsky was killed.⁵⁷ After victory in Taranaki, he was transferred to join the hunt for Hauhau in the Urewera country, which he recalled as ‘one of the roughest’ expeditions of his life.⁵⁸ He was appointed a Sub-Inspector of the Armed Constabulary Force in December 1868, an appointment that a Thames newspaper later stated was made because of his ‘daring’ in one engagement.⁵⁹ In this new role, he assisted to make roads and fortify positions between Matata and Galatea. At Fort Clarke, he commanded ‘some 50 Men and Non Commissioned officers’ of the Armed Constabulary. After a short stay there, he was put in charge of the Transport Corps, responsible for supplying provisions for all the posts on

⁵⁰ O’Halloran, pp. 53-54.

⁵¹ O’Halloran, pp. 55-56.

⁵² *New Zealand Gazette*, 25 March 1868, p. 159.

⁵³ *New Zealand Gazette*, 23 October 1868, p. 501.

⁵⁴ O’Halloran, p. 63.

⁵⁵ O’Halloran, pp. 56-91.

⁵⁶ O’Halloran, p. 63.

⁵⁷ O’Halloran, pp. 64-66.

⁵⁸ O’Halloran, pp. 81-91.

⁵⁹ *New Zealand Gazette*, 7 December 1868, p. 593; *Thames Advertiser*, 23 October 1875, p.

this line. 'I remained in this Capacity until the whole force was withdrawn' to Tauranga.⁶⁰

They remained for some months in Tauranga conducting 'continuous drill'.⁶¹ After receiving news that Te Kooti was in the Taupo district, he went with a contingent of the Tauranga force as transport officer.⁶² When based at Opepi, near Taupo, with only seven or eight companions, he feared a repeat of the attack by Te Kooti that had killed nine men shortly before. They were alarmed by noise one night caused by a horse eating the grass on the roof of their whare. After a week there, he 'made several trips to and fro between Maketu and Taupo without anything startling happening', and then was based at Tarawera, on the road to Napier, supervising the transport of supplies. 'The work was tiring and involved a good deal of worry and responsibility, but I preferred it to being cooped up in a redoubt with little or nothing to do'. When provision of supplies was let by contract, he was placed in charge of the Tarawera post.

I had some 50 men, who were not idle as we had roads to make, bush to clear, paddocks to fence in, &c &c, all of which kept us busy. An occasional trip to Napier or Taupo, shooting of pigeons, which were plentiful in the season, or a ride to visit a chum at another Station varied the monotony, so I got along pretty well for about a year.⁶³

That his financial state was not strong was indicated by a lawyer's demand in June 1871 that he pay £12 due on a dishonoured cheque.⁶⁴ Then, as 'the Natives were inclined to peaceable', the government reduced the size of its armed forces.⁶⁵ In July he was informed that, as only 20 Sub-Inspectors would be retained, his services had 'been dispensed with'.⁶⁶ He

⁶⁰ O'Halloran, pp. 91-92.

⁶¹ O'Halloran. p. 93.

⁶² O'Halloran, pp. 94-96.

⁶³ O'Halloran, pp. 97-100 [punctuation added].

⁶⁴ Jackson and Russell to G.S. O'Halloran, 5 June 1871, Jackson and Russell Papers, Letterbook no. 7 (February-November 1871), p. 313, MS 360, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Museum.

⁶⁵ O'Halloran, p. 101.

⁶⁶ D. Scannell (Inspector of A.C. Force, Commanding District of Taupo) to G.S. O'Halloran, 25 July 1871, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8183, 8/15, D48, ANZ-A.

felt this rather hard, as I had literally fought my way up from the ranks, but I had no friends at Court, and we know that kissing proverbially goes by favour. So I accepted the inevitable with as good a grace as possible, and pocketing my pride and the paltry 3 months' pay which they allowed me in consideration of some 8 or 9 years' service, I mounted my horse and said good bye to soldiering for ever.⁶⁷

In fact he did not go quite so quietly. Upon receiving news of his retrenchment, he protested that his commending officers had commended his service, that he had fought in almost every engagement since 1864, and that some junior officers lacking his front-line experience had been kept on. 'Under these circumstances I cannot help feeling that I have been hardly dealt with', and asked for either another appointment or a larger bonus.⁶⁸ Not receiving any response, he wrote again one month later stating he was now 'particularly anxious to obtain an appointment of some kind either in the Civil or Military departments'.⁶⁹ His requests were ignored.

In early 1871 he was awarded the New Zealand War Medal.⁷⁰ Curiously, because he was aged nine when the Crimean War began, he was recorded as also having received the Crimea and Turkish Medals.⁷¹ In the late nineteenth century, he attempted to obtain either extra land or £100 because of his service; having already received some land, his applications were declined.⁷²

1871-1875

⁶⁷ O'Halloran, p. 101 [punctuation added].

⁶⁸ G.S. O'Halloran to Defence Minister, 5 September 1871, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8183, 8/15, D48, ANZ-A.

⁶⁹ G.S. O'Halloran to Defence Minister, 5 October 1871, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8183, 8/15, D48, ANZ-A.

⁷⁰ *New Zealand Gazette*, 31 May 1871, p. 243.

⁷¹ *Roll of Honour, 1840 to 1902: Defenders of the Empire Resident in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1902), p. 37.

⁷² Register of Military Land Claims under Act of 1889, no. 328, Lands and Survey Department, BAAZ 5519/1a, ANZ-A; Applications by Militia for Land, 1882, no. 1386, Lands and Survey Department, LS 65/5; Applications for Land Grants 1889-1892, no. 574, LS 66/6, ANZ-W.

Immediately after being discharged from military service, he rode to Napier, sold his horses ‘and other belongings’, and sailed to Auckland.⁷³ As goldmining at Thames was then ‘pretty brisk’, he ‘went into business as a Sharebroker, in fact every second man you met in those days called himself a Sharebroker. Many of them, like myself, were brokers in another sense before very long’. Appointed legal manager ‘to one or two Mining Companies’, he moved to Coromandel.⁷⁴ He had an interest in one claim in early December, and the following month gave his occupation as legal manager.⁷⁵ He managed at least three companies, holding shares in one of these and in at least two others.⁷⁶ He was involved in share dealings, sometimes unprofitably.⁷⁷ During 1872, he acquired an auctioneer’s license and sold houses.⁷⁸

Thinking that things were now looking up a bit, I took to myself a Wife, bought a couple of Horses, and being very fond of Sailing a half deck boat, and if the Mining boom had only lasted long enough I should have done very well and could have lived there quite contentedly, I believe, until now. Alas it was not to be. Mines and property tumbled in price. Shares became unsaleable, and in a few months the thriving business township was deserted by all but the Old Identities. So I thought it time to move also, sold off my belongings, and again was off to Auckland.⁷⁹

⁷³ O’Halloran, p. 101.

⁷⁴ O’Halloran, p. 102 [punctuation added].

⁷⁵ Coromandel Warden’s Court, General Register of Transferred Shares 1870-1872, folio 56, ZAAAN 160/1a; Register of Mining Claims 1868-1872, no. 338, BACL 14396/1a, ANZ-A; Notices of Intentions to Marry 1872, folio 51, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 20/17, ANZ-W; Marriage Certificate of George Stewart O’Halloran, 22 January 1872, 1872/4119, BDM.

⁷⁶ *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, 26 March 1872, p. 103, 22 April 1872, p. 121, 2 May 1872, p. 131, 17 May 1872, p. 147; *Thames Advertiser*, 16 December 1872, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Coromandel Warden’s Court, Lease Record Book 1869-1874, folios 99-100, ZAAAN 14303/2a; Coromandel Magistrate’s Court, Summonses Issued 1869-1879, AAAE 15120/1a; Minute Book of Magistrate’s Court, 1870-1874, entry for 5 April 1872, BACL 14442/2a, ANZ-A.

⁷⁸ *Coromandel Mail*, 21 May 1872, p. 1; *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, 9 August 1872, p. 255.

⁷⁹ O’Halloran, p. 102 [punctuation added].

In August, he purchased a livery stable in Queen's Street, Auckland, employing one of its former owners as manager.⁸⁰ According to his memoirs, he was not the sole owner but held half the interest in this 'well established' firm. He again broke in horses 'on somewhat a larger scale' than previously.⁸¹

He gave up this business to return to Thames at an unrecorded date and for an unrecorded reason.⁸² Having moved there by December 1872, he ran the Metropolitan Hotel briefly.⁸³ This was not mentioned in his memoirs, which recorded that he 'went into the Wholesale & Retail Wood and Coal business, which I carried on for some time with a fair amount of success'.⁸⁴ In February 1873 he recorded his occupation as auctioneer.⁸⁵ The following month, a newspaper referred to 'O'Halloran's stables',⁸⁶ but it is not certain whether he or Gerald was the owner. In May 1874, he was one of the 'old settlers' who unsuccessfully sought land at Wairakau, near Te Aroha, for a special settlement.⁸⁷

In August 1874, when his occupation was recorded as a clerk, O'Halloran filed as bankrupt.⁸⁸ This was the first of two bankruptcies, neither of which were mentioned in his memoirs. Two months later, he was discharged.⁸⁹

At an unstated date, he accepted an offer from James Mackay 'to oversee some 50 Maories and Europeans' who were making roads near Cambridge.

I made a little money here too, as I took a Contract, (in another person's name of course), a man I could trust, to make some 2

⁸⁰ Agreement between George Lendrum and Robert Baird with G.S. O'Halloran, 3 August 1872, Hesketh and Richmond Papers, box 76, 10/2, MS 440, Auckland Public Library.

⁸¹ O'Halloran, p. 102.

⁸² O'Halloran, p. 104.

⁸³ *Thames Advertiser*, 25 December 1872, p. 3.

⁸⁴ O'Halloran, p. 104 [punctuation added].

⁸⁵ Birth Certificate of Jane Frances Disney O'Halloran, 2 February 1873, 1873/14531, BDM; Thames Baptisms Register 1868-1874, no. 644, Anglican Archives, Auckland.

⁸⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 3 March 1873, p. 2.

⁸⁷ Applications by Thames settlers for special settlement, 29 April 1875, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8170, 1332/75, ANZ-A.

⁸⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 13 August 1874, p. 2.

⁸⁹ Supreme Court, Bankruptcy Minute Book 1873-1876, p. 38, BBAE 5631/1a, ANZ-A.

miles of road. This I completed to the satisfaction of the Engineer in Charge, and did fairly well by it, but I was unfortunate in losing two horses. One died in a swamp, and the other of a strain in the loins. This work being completed, I again returned to Auckland to look for something to do.⁹⁰

While attending a concert in which his wife sang, one of his former troopers tapped him on the shoulder and later, over a glass of champagne, offered him work. As the bookkeeping vacancy he offered was filled by the man's partner, O'Halloran accepted the alternative of driving a four-horse coach between Napier and Taupo. Despite not having driven one before, he managed this new challenge without any accidents.⁹¹ After six months driving a coach, he was 'offered charge of the Hotel and Store at Tarawera, my old Station when in the Armed Constabulary, and as I was getting tired of the road I accepted and remained there for some time'.⁹²

Called back to Auckland in early 1875 because of the death of his child,⁹³ he decided not to return to Tarawera. 'Not seeing anything in Auckland likely to suit me, I once more returned to the Thames, where I commenced business as an Auctioneer and General Agent, buyer of Kauri Gum, &c'.⁹⁴ In June, he had an auction mart in the main shopping area.⁹⁵ 'Finding a good deal of Competition' as an auctioneer and agent,

I determined to go in specially for the gum business and purchased a five ton half decked cutter rigged boat, and arranged with some Natives some 50 miles up the Piako river, where gum was being got, for permission to erect a store, to purchase all their gum and to supply them with provisions &c in return. After personally establishing the business I placed a man in charge and arranged to come up once a month or oftener in my boat for what gum they might have.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ O'Halloran, p. 105 [punctuation added and spelling corrected].

⁹¹ O'Halloran, pp. 105-108.

⁹² O'Halloran, p. 108 [punctuation added].

⁹³ Death Certificate of Jane Frances Disney O'Halloran, 3 April 1875, 1875/3118, BDM.

⁹⁴ O'Halloran, pp. 108-109 [punctuation added].

⁹⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 4 June 1875, p. 2; *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, 30 June 1875, p. 378.

⁹⁶ O'Halloran, p. 109 [punctuation added].

This went on ‘for some time’, but when the planting season came the Maori gave up digging gum. He then took about a dozen Pakeha there with tools and a fortnight’s provisions each, but after a few days they decided it would not pay, stole a Maori canoe ‘and decamped, leaving me in the lurch, and a considerable loser’. As a result, he gave up the business, removed his stores, and sold them in Auckland.⁹⁷

AT OHINEMURI

His memoirs claimed that he moved to Ohinemuri before the goldfield opened in March 1875:

The Upper Thames had for a long time been supposed to be an Eldorado, and as it was about to be opened for mining purposes I repaired to Ohinemuri to await events. Here I built a nice Cottage on the banks of the river on a piece of ground, the title to which I was promised, but unfortunately never got.⁹⁸

After the district was opened ‘with a great flourish of trumpets’, he started storekeeping ‘as near the mines as possible’, meaning at Mackaytown.

Many others did likewise, and the business was soon overdone. As indeed was the rush for Claims, which flourished for a time, but as the precious metal was scarce they one after another were abandoned, and in a short time the place was comparatively deserted, and I struck my tent and decamped also.⁹⁹

He moved to Paeroa at an unrecorded date, and in February 1879 gave up his house ‘with all improvements for less than the House cost me’.¹⁰⁰ According to an 1885 report, he ‘built the cottages and fences on the land, and lived in the house for some years’ before selling.¹⁰¹ It seems his wife remained in Thames until late 1878.¹⁰² O’Halloran regularly visited

⁹⁷ O’Halloran, pp. 109-111.

⁹⁸ O’Halloran, p. 111 [punctuation added].

⁹⁹ O’Halloran, p. 111 [punctuation added].

¹⁰⁰ O’Halloran, pp. 111, 112; advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 11 February 1879, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 30 May 1885, p. 3.

¹⁰² *Thames Advertiser*, advertisement, 1 November 1875, p. 2, advertisement, 7 January 1877, p. 2, 11 October 1878, p. 3.

Thames during these years and perhaps lived there for a time, for in April 1876 he was fined for letting a horse wander in Parawai.¹⁰³ Another child was born at Parawai in March 1878.¹⁰⁴

O'Halloran did not invest in Thames mines during the 1870s; not till 1883 did he hold interests in a company.¹⁰⁵ He was actively involved in the Ohinemuri field as investor, director, and legal manager. Immediately it opened in March 1875, he had shares in two Waitekauri claims, and a month later acquired a share in one at Karangahake.¹⁰⁶ He pegged out another claim at Waitekauri on behalf of others.¹⁰⁷ In July, he held shares in a Tairua company of which he was a director.¹⁰⁸ The following year, he was legal manager of a Waitekauri company and in 1877 of another, having shares in the latter.¹⁰⁹ His wife also held shares; her 25 shares in the Ajax Company were advertised in April 1877 as liable to forfeiture if the eighth call, of one shilling, was not paid.¹¹⁰ The following year he was appointed to the committee of management of the newly formed Ohinemuri Mining Association.¹¹¹ Four months later, he became secretary of the Ohinemuri Prospecting Committee, but resigned after two months,¹¹² because of moving to Te Aroha.

O'Halloran also did some prospecting. Late in 1876, when travelling overland from Thames to Tauranga, he collected quartz samples from the northern end of Waihi beach for testing.¹¹³ As nothing further was reported, they cannot have been of any value.

Early in 1876 he purchased a punt from another Paeroa settler that was supposed to carry 25 tons of firewood; when it sank with a lesser load, he sued, and recovered £3 of the purchase price.¹¹⁴ In August, he advertised

¹⁰³ *Thames Advertiser*, 10 April 1876, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 9 March 1878, p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ *New Zealand Gazette*, 22 February 1883, p. 268.

¹⁰⁶ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Ohinemuri Claims 1875, claims 2, 3, 62, BBAV 11568/1a, ANZ-A.

¹⁰⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 17 August 1881, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ *New Zealand Gazette*, 29 July 1875, p. 511, 2 September 1875, p. 591.

¹⁰⁹ *New Zealand Gazette*, 19 October 1876, p. 715, 10 May 1877, p. 522.

¹¹⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 9 April 1875, p. 2, 1 November 1875, p. 2.

¹¹¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 24 April 1878, p. 3.

¹¹² *Thames Advertiser*, 3 September 1878, p. 3, 4 November 1878, p. 3.

¹¹³ *Thames Advertiser*, 11 December 1876, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ Magistrate's Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 29 April 1876, p. 3.

himself as a 'Legal Manager, Mining and General Commission Agent, Correspondent, etc, Paeroa, Ohinemuri. N.B. – Sales Negotiated, Tradesmen's Books Kept, and Debts Collected'.¹¹⁵ A newspaper reported that he had established himself in Ohinemuri 'within the last few days'.¹¹⁶ The following month he defended himself against a correspondent who opposed his desire for a telegraph office in Paeroa. Stating that he had 'no interest in this township in particular', he claimed to be impartial in recommending Paeroa rather than Mackaytown.¹¹⁷ In November, he sought the renewal of his auctioneer's license, which had expired in April.¹¹⁸ Shortly afterwards, he sold cattle and other items, and the following month advertised a monthly sale.¹¹⁹ The following January, he advertised himself as 'Auctioneer, Commission Agent, &c, Thames and Ohinemuri'.¹²⁰ Also in that month, he applied to be valuer for the county council, unsuccessfully.¹²¹ In that year he had an Ohinemuri agricultural lease, of 50 acres,¹²² but there is no record of his having developed it.

In December 1876 he decided to stand for the Ohinemuri Riding of the Thames County Council.¹²³ 'An Elector' was surprised he was entering public life. 'I think that he must have an axe to grind. O' is too nearly related to Mac' (meaning James Mackay) 'for us to have any faith in his good intentions'.¹²⁴ Despite being described as a 'good' man with support amongst Maori voters, he came bottom of the poll, with only 16 votes compared with the 41 and 57 of the successful candidates.¹²⁵ A local correspondent was surprised, having expected him to win.¹²⁶ Despite this setback, he continued to be involved in local matters, in 1878 being elected

¹¹⁵ Advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 19 August 1876, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 19 August 1876, p. 3.

¹¹⁷ Letter from G.S. O'Halloran, *Thames Advertiser*, 25 September 1876, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ G.S. O'Halloran to Reader Wood, 20 November 1876, Auckland Provincial Government Papers, ACFM 8180, 2743/76, ANZ-A.

¹¹⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 27 November 1876, p. 2, advertisement, 15 December 1876, p. 3.

¹²⁰ Advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 3 January 1877, p. 2.

¹²¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 18 January 1877, p. 3.

¹²² Thames Warden's Court, Mackaytown and Thames Letterbook, 1876-1896, folio 151, BACL 14458/1b, ANZ-A.

¹²³ *Thames Advertiser*, 9 December 1876, p. 3, 11 December 1876, p. 3.

¹²⁴ Letter from 'An Elector', *Thames Advertiser*, 21 December 1876, p. 3.

¹²⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 21 December 1876, p. 2, 25 December 1876, p. 2.

¹²⁶ Ohinemuri Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 25 December 1876, p. 3.

secretary of the Paeroa library.¹²⁷ In May, when he spoke against Ohinemuri separating from the county council, the meeting overwhelmingly supported his view.¹²⁸

O'Halloran was appointed to the committee arranging the 1877 New Year's Day Sports at Paeroa and to the sports committee for the following year.¹²⁹ In November 1877 he was elected to chair a meeting to organize a race meeting and sports day, and was one of the two clerks of the course.¹³⁰

In May 1878, he was in charge of a party constructing a road through Rotokohu to Te Aroha.¹³¹ At that time, he was in financial difficulties, a feature of most of his life. Nearly two years previously, his slightly overdrawn bank account was described as 'Small. Always overdrawn. Caution'.¹³² Although James Mackay guaranteed his account, the bank's inspector considered it to be 'Very doubtful'.¹³³ In January 1878 an Auckland solicitor wrote to him about a bank's demand for payment. 'We expected you would have paid the amount due by you in this matter. Please do not put us in the very disagreeable alternative of sending a bailiff into your house – but come up and settle without further delay'.¹³⁴ In June, the same solicitor demanded 'payment of the principal and interest due' upon a mortgage of a Dunedin house: 'Please attend to this at once'.¹³⁵ The following month, he filed as bankrupt.¹³⁶ Three weeks later, his sympathetic creditors granted his discharge, which was confirmed another three weeks

¹²⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 10 April 1878, p. 3.

¹²⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 27 May 1878, p. 3.

¹²⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 25 November 1876, p. 3, 8 December 1876, p. 3.

¹³⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 6 November 1877, p. 3.

¹³¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 3 May 1878, p. 3.

¹³² National Bank, Grahamstown Inspection Report, 7 August 1876, Overdrawn Accounts, National Bank Archives, Wellington.

¹³³ National Bank, Grahamstown Inspection Report, 7 August 1876, Discount Balances, National Bank Archives, Wellington.

¹³⁴ Jackson and Russell to G.S. O'Halloran, 25 January 1878, Jackson and Russell Papers, Letterbook no. 17 (January-October 1878), p. 5, MS 360, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Museum.

¹³⁵ Jackson and Russell to G.S. O'Halloran, 17 June 1878, Jackson and Russell Papers, Letterbook no. 17 (January-October 1878), p. 401, MS 360, Library of the Auckland Institute and War Memorial Museum.

¹³⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 11 July 1878, p. 2.

later.¹³⁷ The modest furnishings of his Paeroa house were sold in February the following year, when he moved to Te Aroha. The only luxuries were a ‘Cottage Pianoforte by Bord, in Walnut (new)’, a ‘Polished Office Desk’, and some engravings.¹³⁸

FAMILY LIFE

In January 1872 he married Frances Ann Drury (commonly known as Fannie)¹³⁹ in an Anglican ceremony; he was 26 and she was 18. She had been born in Tasmania to a seed merchant who later moved to Auckland.¹⁴⁰ Their first child, Jane Frances Disney, was born in Auckland just over a year later.¹⁴¹ In 1873, when he was living in a camp near Cambridge supervising road construction, ‘my Wife, her Sister, and my little girl arrived in Hamilton and took up their quarters, so that I could ride down every Saturday evening, spend Sunday with them, and return early on Monday morning to Camp’.¹⁴² When working away from his family in early 1875, at Tarawera on the Napier-Taupo road, he

received a letter from Auckland saying that my little daughter was very ill and advising my return. My Employers at once gave me leave to go, and very liberally made me a present of sufficient money over and above my wages to pay my passage to Auckland, where I arrived safely, only just in time to see my little girl depart this life 1 1/2 years old. She being at that time our only child, her death was a great blow to both her Mother and myself.

Consequently he did not return to Tarawera but sought work in Auckland and then in Thames¹⁴³ so that he could stay with the grieving

¹³⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 29 July 1878, p. 2, District Court, 23 August 1878, p. 3.

¹³⁸ Advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 11 February 1879, p. 2.

¹³⁹ For example, *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 April 1875, p. 23; *New Zealand Herald*, 3 December 1910, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ Notices of Intentions to Marry 1872, folio 51, Births Deaths and Marriages, BDM 20/17, ANZ-W; Marriage Certificate of George Stewart O’Halloran, 22 January 1872, 1872/4119; Death Certificate of Frances Ann O’Halloran, 15 December 1923, 1923/10216, BDM.

¹⁴¹ Birth Certificate of Jane Frances Disney O’Halloran, 2 February 1873, 1873/14531, BDM.

¹⁴² O’Halloran, p. 104 [punctuation added].

¹⁴³ O’Halloran, pp. 108-109.

Frances. Their daughter was in fact two years and two months when she died at the beginning of April.¹⁴⁴ They were to have several more children. Mary Frances Disney was born in Thames in March the following year, as was Emily Clara, in March 1878.¹⁴⁵ Two more girls were born, at Te Aroha: Eleanor Ethel, in December 1879, and Daisy, on New Year's Day, 1883, who died in convulsions after living for only 14 days.¹⁴⁶ There were two other daughters, whose names have not been traced: as they were aged 25 and 23 in December 1910, they were born when the family was living in Sydney.¹⁴⁷ They had only one son, their youngest child, Arthur, also born in Sydney, in 1889.¹⁴⁸

To assist her to cope with her family responsibilities, Frances advertised for assistance in January 1877. 'Wanted immediately, a First-class General Servant; must be a good cook. Good wages to a suitable person'.¹⁴⁹ In March 1880, by which time she had three small children, she advertised for 'a good general servant'.¹⁵⁰ Another such servant was required in 1883.¹⁵¹

Despite her increasing family, Frances was able to take part in musical life. A good musician, she occasionally performed in public. For example, in October 1878 she opened the first concert in the new Paeroa Public Hall by playing an overture on the piano and singing some songs.¹⁵² When living in Thames, she had assisted the family finances by teaching 'Singing and Music' at her home.¹⁵³

INVOLVEMENT WITH MAORI BEFORE SETTLING AT TE AROHA

¹⁴⁴ Death Certificate of Jane Frances Disney O'Halloran, 3 April 1875, 1875/3118, BDM; *Auckland Weekly News*, 10 April 1875, p. 23.

¹⁴⁵ Birth Certificates of Mary Frances Disney O'Halloran, 20 March 1876, 1876/6322; Emily Clara O'Halloran, 3 March 1878, 1878/7925, BDM

¹⁴⁶ Birth Certificate of Eleanor Ethel O'Halloran, 23 December 1879, 1880/583; Death Certificate of Daisy O'Halloran, 14 January 1883, 1883/1098, BDM [her birth was not registered].

¹⁴⁷ Death Certificate of George Stewart O'Halloran, 1 December 1910, , 1910/6343, BDM.

¹⁴⁸ Birth Certificate of Arthur O'Halloran, 24781/1890, New South Wales BDM.

¹⁴⁹ Advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 6 January 1877, p. 2.

¹⁵⁰ Advertisement, *Thames Star*, 20 March 1880, p. 3.

¹⁵¹ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 21 July 1883, p. 3.

¹⁵² *Thames Advertiser*, 11 October 1878, p. 3.

¹⁵³ *Thames Advertiser*, 23 April 1875, p. 2.

O'Halloran's memoirs of his time fighting Maori made occasional comment about those he fought with or against. He saw Hauhau as formidable enemies, and was appreciative when receiving provisions from 'friendly Natives'.¹⁵⁴ At Rotorua, he participated in an exciting canoe race and was fascinated by the hot springs of Ohinemutu, where he was introduced to local methods of cooking:

A native offered to show me how to cook a piece of pork and some potatoes I had brought for my supper. He procured a native basket, attached a piece of string, and dropped the whole into a boiling spring, telling me I could take a STROLL round and that on my return it would be cooked. He was right. It was certainly cooked and I have no doubt eaten. I went supperless to bed that night.¹⁵⁵

He was most unimpressed with an aborted attack on a Hauhau camp by combined Pakeha and Arawa forces:

The best laid plans sometimes miscarry, especially where natives are concerned. We had not gone far when one of the chiefs of his canoe declared he had had a vision and predicted the failure of the Expedition. Another had seen a star in a position which promised failure and heavy loss to our own party. So impressed were the others that they declined to proceed further or to land at the place agreed upon.

Thomas McDonnell 'used every possible means and I believe eventually called them cowards', which O'Halloran believed was 'the real reason of their refusal to proceed'. They retreated, and then joined another force at dawn to mount an attack.

Here however another hitch occurred. They would not proceed until prayers had been said and breakfast partaken. The whole force consequently knelt down whilst several long prayers were offered up by the tohungas. After breakfast they were apparently in a more valiant mood and moved forward on the Hauhau position. As all the foregoing proceedings had been carried out in full view of the Hauhaus the reader will not be surprised to learn that the enemy decided to make himself scarce, so that when our

¹⁵⁴ O'Halloran, pp. 36, 37.

¹⁵⁵ O'Halloran, pp. 44-45 [punctuation added].

gallant praying native solders reached the pah they found it deserted. The birds had flown, but the natives celebrated a glorious victory by much cheering and letting off of guns.

Whilst Arawa remained there to loot the whare and capture pigs and horses, the Pakeha soldiers pursued the ‘fugitives’.¹⁵⁶ Looking back on the fighting in Taranaki in 1868, he recalled that ‘some of our Native Allies behaved very well indeed whilst others remained in the bush and never fired a shot’.¹⁵⁷ When hunting Te Kooti, his contingent arrived at a settlement at the site of the future town of Taupo:

We were hospitably received by the Natives (friendly) and the Officers were invited by the Chief Pohipi, a great fat monster of a man, to dine with him in a large Whare which he pointed out as his. To our astonishment, on arrival we found everything arranged a la European: a large table, several chairs and forms to sit on, a clean white tablecloth, plates, knives &c. We sat down to a really good feed of pork, potatoes, preserved pigeon (preserved Maori fashion in their own fat and very nice I can assure you), washed down with Tea drunk out of Cups and Saucers. It turned out that these things had been provided many years ago to entertain Sir George Grey when, as Governor, he paid a visit to Taupo, and carefully preserved. Pohipi was a fine good natured fellow, and could put away more rum than any man I think I ever met, and the more he drank the happier he seemed to get and his face became one great smile of satisfaction as he gulped down glass after glass, after each of which he was wont to exclaim good, “Kapai.”¹⁵⁸

In 1875, after unprofitably purchasing kauri gum from Maori living up the Piako River, he told them

I would give up the business and remove my stores to the Thames but they being rather a lawless lot and thinking they had me in their power refused to allow me to do so. I pretended to be satisfied and so lulled their suspicions, but one day when they were all away back some miles planting potatoes and a fair wind blowing right down the river, my man and I got all the stores, some 3 tons, quickly into the boat, set sail, and we were off with a free sheet down the river. They had some splendid whaleboats

¹⁵⁶ O’Halloran, pp. 46-48.

¹⁵⁷ O’Halloran, p. 72.

¹⁵⁸ O’Halloran, pp. 96-97 [punctuation added].

and I thought they might follow and try and overtake me; this I heard afterwards they actually did, but I had too good a start.¹⁵⁹

He sold his stores to Auckland ‘and could now afford to laugh at my world-be capturers’.¹⁶⁰ In mid-1876, when Hone Kuti sued him for £100 for breach of agreement, he admitted the debt, and was ordered to pay it;¹⁶¹ was this the legal response of those he had out-sailed?

At the end of that year, when recounting his trip from Thames to Tauranga, O’Halloran was critical of the delay in erecting the telegraph line beyond Komata. ‘Surely the Government will not allow the country to suffer to the extent of several hundreds of pounds to please a few half-naked savages, who may choose to think themselves aggrieved by the wire being carried over their (to them) useless lands’.¹⁶² Despite this attitude to Maori, in the elections for the Ohinemuri Riding later that month he was reported to ‘stand well with the Maori voters’ who were expected to control the result.¹⁶³ If they did, they did not vote for him: he came bottom of the poll.¹⁶⁴

Early in 1878, he joined a Paeroa committee urging the government to acquire the freehold of Ohinemuri from its Maori owners.¹⁶⁵ In May that year, when in charge of a party constructing the road between Paeroa and Te Aroha, this work was stopped by armed Maori,¹⁶⁶ which cannot have endeared ‘unco-operative’ Maori to him.

MOVING TO THE TE AROHA DISTRICT

Having struggled to provide for his growing family by having a variety of jobs in a variety of places, in late 1878 O’Halloran decided to try his luck elsewhere:

¹⁵⁹ O’Halloran, pp. 110-111 [punctuation added].

¹⁶⁰ O’Halloran, p. 111.

¹⁶¹ Thames Magistrate’s Court, Shortland Plaintiff Book 1870-1884, 10/1876, BACL 13818/1a; Grahamstown District Court, Minute Book 1870-1884, entry for 4 August 1876, BACL 13818/1a, ANZ-A; District Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 5 August 1876, p. 3.

¹⁶² *Thames Advertiser*, 11 December 1876, p. 3.

¹⁶³ *Thames Advertiser*, 21 December 1876, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 25 December 1876, p. 2.

¹⁶⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 5 February 1878, p. 3.

¹⁶⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 3 May 1878, p. 3.

It was suggested to me that, as the Te Aroha Natives were selling land to the Government and, consequently, in receipt of considerable sums of money, that to establish a Store in that part of the Country would be a good speculation. I applied to some of the chief men and eventually leased a small piece of land at what was then said to be the head of navigation for small steamers.... On this land I erected a weatherboard building and opened it as a Store, and after a little while succeeded in doing a fair amount of business with the Natives.¹⁶⁷

Later, he stated that he moved to the district because he 'wanted a quiet life at the time'.¹⁶⁸ He settled at Te Kawana, upstream of Omahu and about two miles below the hot springs but on the opposite bank of the river. He chose to live in a Maori district despite fighting Maori for eight years, conflicts with some gum diggers, and his disapproval of their resistance to Pakeha intrusion. In December 1878 he started to erect the first store for the district at the Te Kawana landing, and early the following year sold his Paeroa furniture in preparation for moving.¹⁶⁹ He retained his store and hotel at Te Kanawa until selling it in February 1880 to William Dibsell¹⁷⁰ because he was moving upstream to be licensee of the Hot Springs Hotel.¹⁷¹

THE FIRST PAKEHA PUBLICAN IN THE TE AROHA DISTRICT

According to O'Halloran's memoirs, after he erected a store at Te Kawana, improved the roads, and provided a ferry, so many people used the ferry 'that I was advised to enlarge my Establishment and to apply for a Hotel License. This I did, and obtained it without any difficulty, although the place was not so large or commodious as under the Act it should have been'.¹⁷² In fact, in December 1878 he had told the council he was 'erecting a store and hotel'.¹⁷³ His first application, in that month, for a license for what he called the Waitoa Hotel was declined because it was outside the

¹⁶⁷ O'Halloran, p. 112.

¹⁶⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1881, p. 3.

¹⁶⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 6 December 1878, p. 3, 19 December 1878, p. 3, 11 February 1879, p. 2, 12 February 1879, p. 2.

¹⁷⁰ See paper on his life.

¹⁷¹ *Thames Star*, 27 February 1880, p. 2.

¹⁷² O'Halloran, p. 114.

¹⁷³ *Thames Advertiser*, 6 December 1878, p. 3.

Ohinemuri special licensing district.¹⁷⁴ There were other difficulties that he refrained from mentioning, caused by the existence since late 1878 of a small hotel at the hot springs,¹⁷⁵ owned and managed by Akuhata Mokena.¹⁷⁶ The hotel that by March 1879 O'Halloran had erected 'at considerably expense' was at first refused a license. The police reported that it was 'commodious' and 'well furnished', and as 'ten respectable residents did not object', the three Pakeha commissioners were willing to grant the license, but as the sole Native Commissioner, Wiropo Hoterene Taipari,¹⁷⁷ said that 'some of the natives did not want another hotel in the district', under the Act he had the power of veto.¹⁷⁸ For an unexplained reason, Taipari soon dropped his opposition, and in late March the hotel was licensed; he may have changed his mind because 'a large number of influential natives of the district' had 'signified their intention not to oppose the license', whereas those Taipari said were opposed were 'men of little or no rank amongst the tribes in the neighbourhood'.¹⁷⁹

In April, writing as the *Thames Advertiser's* local correspondent, he reported that there were three hotels within a radius of four miles: Akuhata Mokena's, the one 'at the landing place, very excellently kept by Mr George S. O'Halloran',¹⁸⁰ and the Te Aroha Hotel at Waihou. After hinting his was the best he wrote that all the publicans deserved 'much credit for their enterprise, and endeavouring to meet the requirements of travellers'.¹⁸¹ In August, he was 'adding to his hotel'.¹⁸² Three months later, he advertised its qualities:

Waihou Hotel, the Landing, Te Aroha

¹⁷⁴ Licensing Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 19 December 1878, p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ Licensing Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 14 December 1878, p. 3.

¹⁷⁶ See paper on his life.

¹⁷⁷ See paper on Maori and goldfields revenue.

¹⁷⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 5 March 1879, pp. 2, 3.

¹⁷⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 5 March 1879, p. 3, 26 March 1879, p. 2.

¹⁸⁰ For sketch of this (based on an old photograph), original plan of the site, and photograph of the latter today, see Peter Barker and Kevin Wells, *Te Aroha: Between river and range* (Te Aroha, 2009), pp. 1-3.

¹⁸¹ Own Reporter [G.S. O'Halloran], 'Te Aroha District', *Thames Advertiser*, 9 April 1879, p. 3.

¹⁸² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 11 August 1879, p. 3.

This hotel being in a very central position, offers unusual advantages to travellers and those persons looking for land. The Proprietor, being well posted in district matters generally, will afford intending selectors every information in how power. Steamers trade regularly. Best brands of beer, wines and spirits always on hand. Horses for hire. Securely fenced paddocks.¹⁸³

The *Descriptive Handbook to the Waikato* described his hotel as providing 'first-class accommodation'. O'Halloran, 'the spirited and popular proprietor in the strict sense of the word', had provided a free punt for travellers. 'The premises are being enlarged, and tourists can obtain fresh horses and conveyances'.¹⁸⁴ In January 1880 one of his vehicles was hired to transport people from Hamilton to Te Aroha.¹⁸⁵ Early that year he advertised that he had extended and improved the hotel and had saddle horses for hire. A 15-acre paddock had been fenced, 'affording facilities for persons driving cattle'.¹⁸⁶ A visiting reporter wrote that he had 'a very good hotel and store'.¹⁸⁷ His wife was the postmistress.¹⁸⁸

After visiting Napier to be a witness at the trial a man who had stolen his mare from Thames some years previously, O'Halloran was so impressed with its 'thriving business appearance' that he decided 'to sell out at Te Aroha if possible' and settle there. 'I did sell out at a fair price, but it was not ordained that I should go to Napier after all. I have not hitherto mentioned that about 2 miles further up the river, on the other side, were some hot Mineral Springs, very little known or visited, there being no recognized road to the place'.¹⁸⁹ In fact they were both well known and often visited,¹⁹⁰ but he was correct about the road.

The road had been surveyed, and made a portion of the way, but stopped short at a bad Swamp a mile or so before reaching the Springs. Again there was no way of crossing the river except in a small and very unsafe Canoe, in which, if the Traveller wishing to

¹⁸³ Advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 14 November 1879, p. 1.

¹⁸⁴ *Descriptive Handbook to the Waikato* (Hamilton, 1880), pp. 66-67.

¹⁸⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 29 January 1880, p. 3.

¹⁸⁶ Advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 8 March 1880, p. 1.

¹⁸⁷ Travelling Reporter, 'Around the Piako and Waikato Districts', *Waikato Times*, 27 March 1880, p. 2.

¹⁸⁸ *Auckland Star*, 29 March 1928, p. 8.

¹⁸⁹ O'Halloran, p. 117.

¹⁹⁰ See paper on the Te Aroha hot springs.

proceed to Waikato was lucky enough to cross safely, swimming his horse, he would be again confronted by a swamp, a road over which had been partially constructed and so left a danger to both man and beast. A small Cottage had been built at the Springs by the Native owners, and, although contrary to the law, a Liquor license granted to a Maori named Morgan.¹⁹¹

In fact, Akuhata Mokena's small hotel had not been built 'contrary to the law' but had been approved by the licensing commissioners.¹⁹²

About the time I sold out of my place lower down the river (I had been doing all the trade - Morgan nothing), I was approached as to whether I would not buy or lease Morgan's place, they no doubt thinking I would draw the trade with me. Now I could see that, although I had succeeded in making a business at the place I had just sold, that it was not really on the permanent road between Thames and Waikato, and that eventually it would be cut out and the road go via the Hot Springs, so, all things considered, I determined to make the venture, and leased the Hotel and 2 acres of ground close to the Hot Springs reserve for 10 years; and as things turned out I made a very good bargain, but at first I had very hard up hill work.¹⁹³

In February 1880 he sold his store and hotel and a month later replaced Akuhata Mokena as licensee of the Hot Springs Hotel, although this was not formalized until June.¹⁹⁴ He sought a lease of his four-roomed house and 'about six Acres of Good Ground, Fenced', at the Te Kawana landing in April.¹⁹⁵ His advertisement advised 'old friends and the public generally' that he had taken over the Hot Springs Hotel and intended 'making extensive alterations and additions'. He offered 'good bedrooms; a first-class table and wine; beer and spirits of first quality'. A punt was being constructed and the springs improved. He had horses for hire.¹⁹⁶ At that time it was very modest building; one early settler recalled it as 'a shanty

¹⁹¹ O'Halloran, pp. 117-118.

¹⁹² Licensing Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 14 December 1878, p. 3.

¹⁹³ G.S. O'Halloran, p. 118 [punctuation added].

¹⁹⁴ *Thames Star*, 27 February 1880, p. 2, 29 March 1880, p. 2, Licensing Commission, 12 June 1880, p. 2.

¹⁹⁵ Advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 6 April 1880, p. 2.

¹⁹⁶ Advertisements, *Thames Advertiser*, 27 March 1880, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 29 March 1880, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 4 September 1880, p. 1.

dignified by the name of hotel'.¹⁹⁷ Based on its experience of how he had conducted his first hotel, the *Thames Advertiser* expected 'his new speculation' to succeed.¹⁹⁸ In August O'Halloran advertised that the hotel had been 'enlarged and refurnished' and that a 'Pleasure Boat' was 'kept for those fond of boating'.¹⁹⁹

Despite having the opportunity, as the local correspondent of the *Thames Advertiser*, of boosting his own hotel at the expense of others, he was even-handed. For instance, in October he referred to the three hotels in the district as being 'all well conducted, and excellently appointed'.²⁰⁰ A Thames reporter who visited in June described his 'hostelry' as 'a clean, commodious, and comfortable accommodation house, where the traveller can obtain good meals, beds, and liquors at reasonable charges'.²⁰¹ A Waitoa correspondent referred to his 'snug little hostelry' nestling 'under the protecting shelter of the mountain'. The soda water spring was 'mentioned in the "Visitors' Book" as mixing well with the "excellent PB" provided by host O'Halloran', and in praising the 'neatness and order that 'reigns supreme' Frances was mentioned as presiding over the hotel as well.²⁰² The following month, a visiting reporter described it as 'commodious and comfortable'.²⁰³

ENCOURAGING PAKEHA SETTLEMENT

Early in April 1879, the *Thames Advertiser* published an article about 'Te Aroha District' sent by 'our own reporter'.²⁰⁴ In June, it published the first of many contributions headed 'Ohinemuri Goldfield (from our own correspondent), Te Aroha'.²⁰⁵ In November, these were headed 'Upper Thames (from our own correspondent), Te Aroha'.²⁰⁶ Only in late January

¹⁹⁷ Recollections of Charles McKinley, *Te Aroha News*, 14 June 1926, p. 4.

¹⁹⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 27 March 1880, p. 2.

¹⁹⁹ Advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 20 August 1880, p. 2.

²⁰⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 19 October 1880, p. 3.

²⁰¹ Own Reporter, 'Tour in the Aroha, Waitoa, and Piako Districts', *Thames Advertiser*, 22 June 1880, p. 3.

²⁰² Waitoa Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 19 October 1880, p. 2.

²⁰³ Special Reporter, 'Te Aroha', *Thames Star*, 1 November 1880, p. 2.

²⁰⁴ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 9 April 1879, p. 3.

²⁰⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 10 June 1879, p. 3.

²⁰⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 8 November 1879, p. 2.

1880 did O'Halloran reveal himself as being its Te Aroha correspondent.²⁰⁷ He used these articles to encourage Pakeha settlement and to advocate the needs of the district, one motivation being potential personal benefit. Occasionally they were a vehicle for his sense of humour, as in August 1880: 'Some very high winds lately. Some of us are nearly bald in consequence'.²⁰⁸

In his first article, he complained about the government's 'apparent apathy' about selling land in the district, and praised private farmers creating farms. 'Progress now appears to be the order of the day', and he gave details of breaking in the land.²⁰⁹ In June he reported that settlers hoped to see the district 'thickly populated by the Thames people and others in search of a place to settle down'.²¹⁰ He regretted that one consequence of the shooting of 'Daldy' McWilliams, near Paeroa in late August,²¹¹ would be its 'deterrent effect on settlement generally. We were in hopes of seeing a portion at least of the block offered for sale before this, and other portions being drained and prepared for the market, the roads being constructed, &c'.²¹² In October, he regretted that the government had not surveyed a township on the banks of the river, and praised private enterprise for not being 'so sleepy' by surveying the future Waihou village.²¹³ In his last contribution for 1879, he repeated that settlers were 'looking forward anxiously' to Thames people being able to acquire land, 'as we the pioneers, few in number, are languishing for mates'.²¹⁴

In January 1880, when 'several parties' were visiting with a view to arranging for settlement, 'knowing the clamorousness of the Thames people for land in this district' he could not 'help wondering' at their 'apparent apathy' when some would soon be sold. If they did buy, they 'must buy a pig in a poke, as few, if any, have as yet been to look at it'.²¹⁵ He was critical of the first sections offered because of their small size and the terms of sale; calling 'these lands "suburban" is a farce, as the site of the town is

²⁰⁷ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 29 January 1880, p. 3.

²⁰⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 13 August 1880, p. 3.

²⁰⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 9 April 1879, p. 3.

²¹⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 10 June 1879, p. 3.

²¹¹ See paper on the Daldy McWilliams 'outrage'.

²¹² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 29 September 1879, p. 3.

²¹³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 15 October 1879, p. 3.

²¹⁴ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 1 January 1880, p. 2.

²¹⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 17 January 1880, p. 3.

not yet fixed'.²¹⁶ In May, in reporting that recent settlers all seemed 'satisfied', he commented that 'Thames people will yet regret not having gone in for some of this land'. He cited settlers from the South Island praising the 'position, proximity to markets, and other natural advantages' making up for the lightness of the soil.²¹⁷

When he took over the Hot Springs Hotel, the *Thames Star* wrote that, having lived for so long in the district, he was 'eminently qualified to give advice to intending settlers', and thought he would 'be only too happy to assist gentlemen in want of land on which to settle'.²¹⁸ He was appointed a ranger under the Protection of Animals Act in April 1880.²¹⁹

ASSISTING TO DEVELOP THE DISTRICT: ROADS

Without good access to his isolated Te Kawana hotel and store he would struggle financially, prompting him to improve access for personal and community benefit:

I soon saw that a road was necessary. The Government had surveyed a road from the Thames, and made a portion of it, indeed when I lived at Ohinemuri I had been employed as overseer and in that capacity had constructed a portion of it. It stopped short, however, some distance from the river, and between the road and river there was an almost impassable swamp. To the making of this 1/4 of a mile of road²²⁰ I now gave my attention. This, when made, would enable travellers from the Thames to reach Waikato and vice versa by a short cut, and bring them past my door. I gave the Natives a contract to cut fascines at so much a hundred, delivered on the spot, whilst I went to work with a man, whom I employed for the purpose, laid them, and covered them over with earth wheeled in a barrow from either end where a cutting in the bank was necessary. I worked very hard at this job and had the satisfaction in a few weeks' time to ride my horse safely over this treacherous piece of ground thereby connecting Thames and Waikato for the first time by a direct and safe road....

This was the first but not the last work I carried out at my own expense and partly with my own labour for the benefit of the

²¹⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 29 January 1880, p. 3.

²¹⁷ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 26 May 1880, p. 3.

²¹⁸ *Thames Star*, 29 March 1880, p. 2.

²¹⁹ *New Zealand Gazette*, 22 April 1880, p. 554.

²²⁰ 'Swamp' in the original.

district. Of course I hoped to benefit personally by it also, and I did so, so in this case pluck and “public spirit” was rewarded and the travelling public soon began to appreciate what I had done in the matter of road making.²²¹

In June 1879, he wrote that the settler’s ‘bug bear’ was ‘the want of regular communication’, the roads being ‘simply impassable’, and compared the reasonable state of Waikato roads with the one between Te Aroha and Thames, many portions between Rotokohu and Omahu being ‘positively dangerous to man and beast’.²²² In August, for ‘the want of a few pounds’ expenditure’ the road to the punt was ‘almost impassable’.²²³ He hoped a permanent landing would be established at Te Kawana with a good road to it.²²⁴ In February 1880, he complained that ‘the road and approaches’ to the punt were ‘very bad’.

I have often pointed out the necessity of something being done, as travellers run great risks both to themselves and animals as things are at present. Your correspondent has from time to time patched things up at his own expense, but nothing short of a £20 note will now be of any use if the road is to be kept open.²²⁵

In February 1880, he urged constructing a road over the range to Katikati.²²⁶ Two months later, he was pleased work on this track would start at once, because its rough condition meant it took ‘nearly a whole day’ to ride to Tauranga.²²⁷ There was a good Maori road from Wairakau to the foot of the range, and he believed it would be easy to make the road to Katikati.²²⁸ During this year, he continued to complain about the roads, which discouraged visitors to the springs and his hotel, as illustrated by a mid-April report:

The weather has been glorious for a long time past, and the roads are, consequently, good. No thanks to the Thames County

²²¹ O’Halloran, pp. 112-114 [punctuation added].

²²² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 10 June 1879, p. 3.

²²³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 11 August 1879, p. 3.

²²⁴ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 30 August 1879, p. 3.

²²⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 12 February 1880, p. 3.

²²⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 12 February 1880, p. 3.

²²⁷ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 April 1880, p. 3.

²²⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 15 July 1880, p. 3.

Council, who have not spent a penny in this part of the district for months, and, when winter sets in, if something is not done soon, communication between here and Ohinemuri will be cut off.²²⁹

Later that month, he raised the subject again:

I think the Thames County authorities might do a little for this end of the county, as in many places on this side of the Rotokohu bush, the fascines have rotted, and when the wet weather sets in the road will be impassable if something is not done. Then again between Omahu and the Hot Springs, the road has been surveyed, and a line cut, but owing to the crossings over the small swamps not having been made, the road is virtually closed, as Mr [George] Lipsey,²³⁰ in fencing a paddock, has blocked up the old native track. About £20 would do all that is immediately required to open the new line of road.²³¹

Three days later, having heard that the council was 'in funds' he sent another 'growl' to the *Thames Advertiser* in the hope that his district might receive a share.

This country is lauded by nearly everyone who has seen it, but the one complaint comes from all, You have no roads. I would respectfully ask the authorities how is this thus. The Thames as we know has received perhaps not more than it due share from the General Government in the shape of grants for roads, bridges, &c, but it seems to me that the money somehow never gets this far, except in the shape of a few small contracts here and there, which as they leave gaps between might as well not have been let or the work done; to sum up, the road between Paeroa, the Landing, and the Hot Springs might for all practical purposes never have been made, as the gaps between the made and the unmade portions are only pitfalls to the unwary traveller.

He praised the Piako Road Board for keeping the road from Hamilton in good repair, and urged that work 'of no great magnitude, a few culverts and fascines between Paeroa and Rotokohu Bush', be done. 'Connections made between completed contracts in the bush, a few fascines here and there between the bush and Omahu, and some £20 or £30 spent between there and the Hot Springs to make the swamps crossable is all that is

²²⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 16 April 1880, p. 3.

²³⁰ See paper on his life.

²³¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 April 1880, p. 3.

immediately required'.²³² In June, he described the road to Paeroa was 'simply disgraceful'.²³³ Three months later he twice tendered to form parts of this road, unsuccessfully.²³⁴ According to his memoirs, once again he developed roads especially for his own benefit:

I first applied to the Thames County Council for a small grant to make the road over the swamps on the Thames side of the river to enable persons on horseback to reach the Springs which I had cleaned out and several decent baths constructed. After a good deal of trouble and offering to superintend the work free of cost I succeeded in getting a few pounds for the work, which I completed as soon as possible. Having advertised the fact that the road was now open and several baths in good order I began to receive visitors from the Thames. The Waikato people were as yet shut out owing to the want of a road to the river and a safe means of crossing same. I now approached the Piako Council for a grant towards the road referred to, pointing out the action taken by the Thames County on their side and offering if they would make the road I would place it at the disposal of the public free of charge. They consented, voted the few pounds necessary, and had the work done.²³⁵

The result was that in October 1880, when gold was first discovered, the road being made enabled wagons to be 'driven right to the river bank opposite to the Hotel, where Mr O'Halloran has provided a fine punt and wire rope for crossing'.²³⁶

ASSISTING TO DEVELOP THE DISTRICT: PUNTS

Even before his store and hotel was erected at Te Kawana, O'Halloran asked the council to provide a boat or canoe attached to a wire rope to make a punt, 'and he would act as ferry man free of charge'. The chairman agreed a ferry was needed, and referred his offer to the 'Board of Works'.²³⁷ As it took a while to respond, O'Halloran acted, as his memoirs explained:

²³² Letter from 'G.S.O'H', *Thames Advertiser*, 26 April 1880, p. 3.

²³³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 15 June 1880, p. 3.

²³⁴ *Thames Star*, 6 September 1880, p. 2, 27 September 1880, p. 2.

²³⁵ O'Halloran, pp. 118-119 [punctuation added].

²³⁶ Waitoa Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 19 October 1880, p. 2.

²³⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 6 December 1878, p. 3, 17 January 1879, p. 3.

The swimming of the horses across the river was still a difficulty, so I purchased a Canoe from the Natives and had a wire rope stretched across the river on which the Canoe worked, being carried backwards and forwards by the action of the current in the river. This was the first ferry and was free.²³⁸

As it did not work well, in June 1879 he asked the council to improve it.²³⁹ Two months later he wrote that ‘some small expenditure’ was ‘absolutely necessary to prevent loss of life to man or beast’, because it had never ‘been properly finished’.²⁴⁰ Writing in the third person, in mid-October he reported that the punt had ‘been repaired and put in good order by Mr O’Halloran, who will no doubt be happy to ferry you over’.²⁴¹ At its first meeting in 1880, the council considered his complaint that it was still unfinished and his request for the refund of money he had spent on it, referring the matter to the engineer;²⁴² as it was not mentioned in later reports of council meetings, it is not known if he was paid. O’Halloran complained in February that it had been ‘for a long time’ in a ‘bad state of repair’. When 300 sheep crossed a week previously, ‘several were nearly drowned, owing to there being no rail around the punt – in fact, if nothing is done, the sooner the bridge is agitated for the better, or travelling will soon be impossible’.²⁴³

When encouraging travellers to visit his Hot Springs Hotel in late March, he advertised that ‘A Punt on a wire rope is in course of construction for the convenience of travellers’.²⁴⁴ In July, he ordered a large punt capable of carrying horses to replace the small one already in place.²⁴⁵ His memoirs described how his punt worked:

I purchased a wire rope and a punt at the Thames. It was self-acting, that is a person on the bank had only to push it into the river and the action of the current would take it over to the other side, thereby saving the cost of keeping any person specially to

²³⁸ O’Halloran, p. 114 [punctuation added].

²³⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 10 June 1879, p. 3.

²⁴⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 30 August 1879, p. 3.

²⁴¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 15 October 1879, p. 3.

²⁴² Thames County Council, *Thames Advertiser*, 8 January 1880, p. 3.

²⁴³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 12 February 1880, p. 3.

²⁴⁴ Advertisement, *Thames Star*, 29 March 1880, p. 2.

²⁴⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 15 July 1880, p. 3.

manage it. I celebrated the completion of the work by giving a Luncheon to neighbouring settlers.²⁴⁶

This celebration was early in August, and he invited the county councillors to attend.²⁴⁷ According to one account between 25 and 30 settlers accepted his invitation, and had luncheon at his hotel; according to another 16 were fed, including two members and the secretary of the Piako road board.²⁴⁸ A correspondent described him as ‘the spirited proprietor’ of the hotel whose punt was ‘really a very creditable affair, quite suitable for taking horses across’, and ‘very little effort’ was required to work it.²⁴⁹ It could carry either three horses or from 30 to 40 sheep.²⁵⁰ O’Halloran was thanked ‘in very complimentary terms’ by the chairman of the board ‘for his public spirited liberality’. The chairman was ‘sure now that the public have such a pleasant mode of crossing the river Mr O’Halloran will not lack visitors to his hotel, and the adjoining hot baths’. At the conclusion of this speech, ‘three ringing cheers, with “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow,” &c, were given with a will’.²⁵¹ In 1881, a banquet to celebrate the opening of the mining battery was reminded by the chairman of his ‘gift of the punt, which was so serviceable to them’.²⁵² It was also a great asset for O’Halloran, for when a coaching firm commenced running coaches between Hamilton and Te Aroha shortly before the opening of the goldfield, they used the punt and his hotel was their arrival and departure point.²⁵³ At the end of November, a local carter leased the ferry from him for three months initially, at £9 per month.²⁵⁴

ASSISTING THE DEVELOP THE DISTRICT: THE HOT SPRINGS

²⁴⁶ O’Halloran, p. 119 [punctuation added; last two words in capitals in original].

²⁴⁷ *Thames Star*, 5 August 1880, p. 2.

²⁴⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 13 August 1880, p. 3; A Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 12 August 1880, p. 2.

²⁴⁹ A Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 12 August 1880, p. 2.

²⁵⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 13 August 1880, p. 3.

²⁵¹ A Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 12 August 1880, p. 2.

²⁵² *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1881, p. 3.

²⁵³ *Waikato Times*, 16 November 1880, p. 2.

²⁵⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 27 November 1880, p. 3.

After taking over the Hot Springs Hotel in March 1880, O'Halloran advertised that the springs were 'being improved and houses built over them. It is the intention of the proprietor to make this the sanatorium of the district'.²⁵⁵ He recalled 'working away almost choked by steam digging out a new bath' when, in early 1880, John McSweeney²⁵⁶ came looking for work. As O'Halloran 'had need of some help at the Springs fencing in a garden &c', McSweeney was employed for some months.²⁵⁷ According to a man who visited in June, O'Halloran had, 'at considerable expense, dug out baths, into which the water is allowed to flow, and erected a small shed in which the bather may dress and undress, and a person can now enjoy a luxurious bath in any weather'.²⁵⁸ In August he advertised that the baths had 'been improved, almost any temperature procurable'.²⁵⁹ In October, a Waitoa correspondent wrote that he had made

three nice baths in any one of which a most comfortable bath can be had, and water may be brought to any temperature desired by means of letting in or turning off a stream of pure cold water which runs down alongside the warm ones. Over one bath a neat whare has been built, nicely floored, and with seats round it, in which ladies could bathe with comfort and extreme privacy, and other improvements have now been carried on for the increased demand.²⁶⁰

Other accounts indicated that his first structure was a 'rude shed' and the later ones were 'primitive'.²⁶¹ The only bath not in its original muddy state was a large zinc packing case; as it had contained Frances' piano, it

²⁵⁵ Advertisement, *Thames Star*, 29 March 1880, p. 2.

²⁵⁶ See paper on his life.

²⁵⁷ O'Halloran, p. 120.

²⁵⁸ Own Reporter, 'Tour of the Aroha, Waitoa, and Piako Districts', *Thames Advertiser*, 22 June 1880, p. 3.

²⁵⁹ Advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 20 August 1880, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ Waitoa Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 19 October 1880, p. 2.

²⁶¹ Special Reporter, 'Te Aroha Goldfield', *Thames Star*, 25 October 1880, p. 2; letter from A.B., *Te Aroha News*, 23 May 1908, p. 2.

was called the Piano Bath.²⁶² It was recalled as being covered by ‘a rough frame thatched with raupo’.²⁶³

ASSISTING TO DEVELOP THE DISTRICT: MEETING OTHER NEEDS

In June 1879, O’Halloran mentioned ‘one of our greatest wants – a post-office’ and complained about impassable roads. ‘As I am in a growling humour I may as well have a go at the steamboat proprietors’. As the ‘Riro Riro’ had provided irregular service, he hoped its new owners would be more efficient, ‘although we have been at the time of my writing this, a whole week without a steamer’.²⁶⁴ Two months later, ‘on behalf of the settlers’ he asked ‘some enterprising steamboat proprietor to put a boat on the Waihou River, to trade regularly, at least once a week’. They still needed a post office, roads, bridges, and ferries. ‘Until a liberal spirit is evinced by councillors to deal fairly in this respect the present bad feeling, County versus town, will continue’.²⁶⁵ Three weeks later he reported that settlers seemed ‘well pleased’ with the new post office and that the postmaster (O’Halloran himself) was ‘giving general satisfaction’.²⁶⁶ From a much later account, it seems that Frances was in charge of the post office,²⁶⁷ even though it may have been operated in his name.

Early in November he wanted drainage to commence; the drains had been surveyed, labour was cheap, and ‘numbers of good men are knocking about looking for work’.²⁶⁸ At the beginning of the following year, he was ‘happy to be able to report’ more work being done to complete the survey for the Hamilton to Thames railway line.²⁶⁹ He regarded a police station as ‘necessary to the interests of Europeans living in the district’, and

²⁶² *Auckland Weekly News*, 11 December 1880, p. 15; *Te Aroha and the Fortunate Valley: Pioneers in the Thames Valley, 1867-1930*, ed. F.W. Wild (Te Aroha, 1930), p. 275.

²⁶³ John McCombie, ‘Early Days of Te Aroha’, *New Zealand Herald*, 2 December 1910, p. 7.

²⁶⁴ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 10 June 1879, p. 3.

²⁶⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 11 August 1879, p. 3.

²⁶⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 30 August 1879, p. 3.

²⁶⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 30 March 1928, p. 4.

²⁶⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 8 November 1879, p. 2.

²⁶⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 17 January 1880, p. 3.

applauded moves to appoint local justices of the peace.²⁷⁰ He repeated his call for police protection two months later.²⁷¹

RELATIONS WITH MAORI AT TE AROHA

According to O'Halloran, his success as storekeeper and publican prompted an attempt at extortion in 1879 by an unnamed Ngati Rahiri, clearly Reha Aperahama:²⁷²

I now began to make money and to reap the fruits of my enterprise. My Maori Landlord or one of them, a smart sort of fellow, seeing I was doing well, thought to blackmail me, and applied for an increase of rent. We had some words on the subject. I would not be bounced, so he said, "All right, we shall see. I leased you this piece of land certainly but you have no road to it." This certainly was an omission on my part in not stipulating for a right of road, but the thing never struck me as necessary. Next day, I observed natives pulling down some old fencing and drawing it up close to my place. I did not think anything of it, however judge of my astonishment next morning on going out to find that I was securely fenced in all round with a post and rail fence. This some 20 of them had done quietly during the night. I bounced and stormed to no purpose, and eventually had to consider myself beaten, pay £10 blackmail for my right of way, and the fence was pulled down. I believe I got most of my cash back again before they left. They are good spending men are the Maories.

I recollect another little incident which happened about this time. The Natives had received from the Government a Sum of money, and immediately commenced to knock it down, some of them becoming as a matter of course intoxicated. It was very hard for me to refuse them, even when I knew they had had enough, myself and household being the only Europeans located in that part of the district, and consequently quite at the mercy of the Natives.²⁷³

O'Halloran had exaggerated the extent of his isolation. George Lipsey was living with his family and his Maori in-laws about two miles away at

²⁷⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 12 February 1880, p. 3.

²⁷¹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 23 April 1880, p. 3.

²⁷² See paper on his life.

²⁷³ O'Halloran, pp. 114-115 [punctuation added].

Te Aroha, and three other Pakeha Maori, Joseph Harris Smallman, William McClear, and William Nicholls, also lived in the vicinity.²⁷⁴

On this occasion, [at] about 10 at night I managed, with the assistance of Mick [Te Meke Ngakuru] the Native Policeman²⁷⁵ to get them all out and the house shut up. They were very excited, and would not go home, but kept prowling round.... As it was a clear moonlight night, I could see all their movements and hear what they said. One great hulking fellow, who had no good feeling towards me, having had a personal tussle with me some time previously and getting the worst of it, swore that if he could find an axe he would break the door in. I determined to do a bit of bounce. So, putting my revolver in my pocket, I took an axe in my hand and, much against the wish of my wife and others who said I would be murdered, I sallied out amongst them, told them I had heard all that had been said, threw down the axe, and told my valiant friend to go to work, but that at the first stroke of the axe he was a dead man. He did not pick it up, and they shortly afterwards dispersed, at which I felt very much relieved. I merely mention the foregoing as a little incident. Similar experiences are daily or rather were of daily occurrence to pioneers in frontier districts.²⁷⁶

As the government wished to avoid conflict after the shooting of Daldy McWilliams at the end of August 1879, it did not attempt to arrest his assailants at once, a policy O'Halloran felt was unwise:

In the opinion of your correspondent, all this trouble is owing to the vacillating policy of the head of the Native Department, who ought at once not only have demanded the surrender of a would-be murderer, but have given orders for his immediate apprehension.... I do not pretend to be a fire-eater myself, but nevertheless I cannot help feeling ashamed when the natives ask me the news as to whether or not the government have arrested the Ngatihako Maoris for the attempted murder, and when I am driven to confess that they have not, a contemptuous smile illuminates their swarthy countenances.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ See papers on their lives.

²⁷⁵ See Maori Land Court, Hauraki Minute Books, no. 10, p. 357; no. 19, pp. 40, 102, 165, 167; no. 28A, pp. 18, 52; no. 59, p. 372; no. 61, pp. 19, 108.

²⁷⁶ O'Halloran, pp. 115-116 [punctuation added].

²⁷⁷ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 29 September 1879, p. 3.

Five days later, 'without wishing to be considered an alarmist', he fancied that the present calm portended a storm. 'People on the spot cannot help seeing and noticing the difference in the demeanour of some of the natives. No doubt, on the other hand, there are many loyal and well-disposed natives in the district'. He agreed with some settlers that 'a force of armed men' should be sent 'to protect our wives and families in the event of an outrage being attempted'. The 'feeling of insecurity' created 'not only affects one's sleep at nights, but if allowed to continue will affect the pockets of owners of property' (such as himself). The government should at once indicate whether there was 'any danger to those settlers and their families, who are living, as it were, in the power of hostile natives'.²⁷⁸ O'Halloran did more than urge government action; on 13 September he enrolled in the Thames No. 2 Scottish Rifle Volunteers, but his enrolment was cancelled because 'This man resides at Waitoa', a geographical confusion.²⁷⁹

He had a personal reason for being alarmed after hearing of the shooting, as was recalled in an obituary of Thomas Grattan, a surveyor and former member of the Armed Constabulary:²⁸⁰

The whole of the Goldfields became greatly alarmed and preparations were made at Waihou, Te Aroha and Paeroa for a general rising of the natives. The white population feared for the safety of Mrs O'Halloran, who was postmistress.... She had gone to Thames and it was feared that hearing of the rising she had undertaken to walk back to her post. To do so she would have to traverse dense ti-trees. Any tracks there were those made by the Maoris. From among those who volunteered, Thomas Grattan was chosen to make a search and incidentally to carry the mails through to Paeroa. The journey as far as the lady was concerned was in vain. She had returned to Thames on hearing of the arising.²⁸¹

In June 1879, O'Halloran blamed the irregular steamer service on 'the native element', meaning its Maori owners.²⁸²

²⁷⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 4 October 1879, p. 3.

²⁷⁹ Thames No. 2 Scottish Rifle Volunteers, Capitation Roll, May 1880, Army Department, ARM 41, 1882/1n, ANZ-W.

²⁸⁰ *Auckland Star*, 29 March 1928, p. 8.

²⁸¹ *Te Aroha News*, 30 March 1928, p. 4.

²⁸² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 10 June 1879, p. 3.

In January 1880, rival punts caused O'Halloran to have a petty squabble with Mokena Hou,²⁸³ prompted by praise for Mokena providing a ferry near the hot springs, 'a labour of love' done at 'all hours' and in difficult conditions.²⁸⁴

I see that someone, on behalf of Morgan (a native), claims any amount of kudos for that individual through your columns, for conducting his ferry so ably. "Credit where credit is due," is my motto, and I cannot let your local slip without correcting an error. Morgan (the native referred to) has a private ferry across the Waihou river, opposite the Hot Springs Hotel, of which his son is part proprietor, and no doubt ferries persons over for his or their own benefit, but, to my own knowledge, not often without charge. On the other hand, there is a County Council punt on a wire rope on the shortest road between Thames and Waikato, which has for the past twelve months been managed by myself, free of charge to either the County or people who are travelling in considerable numbers, and often takes up valuable time, for which I receive no remuneration. I mention the above facts in justice to myself.²⁸⁵

Mokena responded that, as he had ferried O'Halloran across 'several times, I would like to ask him how much I charged him for my trouble'. He was 'not in the habit' of charging, and even if he did, 'what business is it of Mr G.S. O'Halloran. It will perhaps give him enough to do to mind his own business, keep his temper, and prevent the Maori owners of the land on which he is squatting from fencing him in',²⁸⁶ a reference to his conflict with Reha Aperahama.

In May that year, when writing about confusion amongst surveyors over Maori attitude to surveying their reserves, he implied having a deep understanding of Maori generally and Ngati Rahiri in particular:

I can vouch for the fact that the natives are only too anxious to have *all* their reserves properly defined so they can amongst themselves allot certain portions to each hapu, or a section of a tribe. In many cases they would take up their residences and live on the land which at present they own but cannot fix their boundaries. Most persons who know anything of the natives are

²⁸³ See paper on his life.

²⁸⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 21 January 1880, p. 3.

²⁸⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent [with initials 'G.S.O'H' at end], *Thames Advertiser*, 29 January 1880, p. 3.

²⁸⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 16 February 1880, p. 2.

aware that a very few acres is sufficient, when cultivated, to supply the whole tribe with kai, or food, and they bitterly complain, and think it an injustice that although the government have made liberal reserves of land for them they might as well not really have any, as the law does not allow them to lease or sell even what they cannot in any way utilize themselves. This really seems a hard case, and ought to be taken up by some of our representatives, and brought before parliament.²⁸⁷

His apparent sympathy for Ngati Rahiri probably had more to do with his desire for speedy Pakeha settlement than a genuine interest in their welfare. The statement that they needed 'a very few acres' to live on implied that they should lease or sell the remainder.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE TE AROHA GOLD RUSH

In early February 1880, O'Halloran for the first time reported gold existing at Te Aroha. 'As there is every indication of gold in this locality, it seems a pity that no prospecting is going on. There is any amount of loose quartz knocking about, and I have no doubt but that gold will be discovered if only looked for'.²⁸⁸ In late July he wrote about the 'impression' held for years that gold existed but had not been found because prospecting was prohibited:

I recollect a party of a few adventurous spirits on prospecting bent being deprived of their swags, tents, &c, and marched ignominiously off the ground. From experience gained of the Thames and Ohinemuri, our dusky brethren have changed their minds, and having received substantial advantages from gold mining in the past, are now only too anxious that the pakehas should find the precious metal in the Te Aroha, so that they may replenish their ever diminishing coffers.... As a great proportion of the land is now the property of the Crown, the obstacles formerly existing are nil, and I should thank that no better field exists in the North Island, at any rate for prospectors, than this – an untried country, every indication of gold, plenty of wood and water, and provisions cheap. The double prospect of a Government reward, and a good claim ought surely to start some of your practical but perforce idle men up this way.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 26 May 1880, p. 3.

²⁸⁸ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 12 February 1880, p. 3.

²⁸⁹ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 30 July 1880, p. 3.

Later, when seeing Hone Werahiko prospecting,²⁹⁰ in his most important contribution to this early prospecting he arranged for his employee, John McSweeney,²⁹¹ to assist him with the hard physical work involved.²⁹² When gold was discovered, his first report was notably cautious:

So far as I have been able to find, no payable gold has yet been struck. There is a reef about four feet wide, but, on crushing, it barely shows the colour of gold. The stone is white, hard and hungry looking. One or two small promising-looking leaders have been met with, but no gold. Some isolated stones have been found on the Spur showing gold. There is also a section of the ground of a kindly sandstone formation.

He anticipated ‘a nice complication’ because the discovery was on Maori land outside the Ohinemuri goldfield.²⁹³ He was involved in its development even before opening day, through investment not prospecting, which was not possible because of the large increase in his hotel trade. On 1 November, as secretary of the Waitoa Gold Prospecting Association, he applied for government aid for prospecting.²⁹⁴ Meetings of this association were held in his hotel.²⁹⁵ He continued to assist it in 1881, and when it formed the Waitoa Company he acquired scrip shares and was elected a director.²⁹⁶

His wife was sufficiently interested in mining to climb, along with another woman and ‘crowds of men’, to the site of a new find in the Prospectors’ Claim²⁹⁷ in mid-November 1880.²⁹⁸ She would not take up any shares in it, whereas O’Halloran acquired a quarter of one share shortly

²⁹⁰ See paper on his life.

²⁹¹ See paper on his life.

²⁹² O’Halloran, pp. 120-121.

²⁹³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Thames Advertiser*, 19 October 1880, p. 3.

²⁹⁴ G.S. O’Halloran to Under-Secretary, Goldfields, 1 November 1880, Register of Inwards Correspondence, Mines Department, MD 3/1, 80/1035, ANZ-W.

²⁹⁵ *Thames Star*, 4 November 1880, p. 2.

²⁹⁶ *Thames Star*, 7 January 1881, p. 2, 4 March 1881, p. 2; *New Zealand Gazette*, 9 June 1881, p. 744.

²⁹⁷ See paper on this claim.

²⁹⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 15 November 1880, p. 3.

before the field was declared open.²⁹⁹ In December he was an owner of one claim.³⁰⁰ When gold was first found in the Tui district, he bought a quarter of a share in one claim but sold it one month later.³⁰¹

At a meeting held in January 1881 to discuss the erection of a battery, he 'said he had had a resolution placed in his hands. He did not know why, unless that he was the oldest hand here, with the exception of Mr George Lipsey'. It suggested the names of provisional directors.³⁰² He acquired scrip shares in the subsequent company and unsuccessfully proposed his name as a director.³⁰³

Even after the initial claims were proved to be unpayable, O'Halloran continued to invest in the Te Aroha part of the field. In June 1882, he had an interest in one of the original claims,³⁰⁴ and was registered as an owner of the Bonanza. Three months later he sold half of his one share for £10, two days later bought a quarter of a share for £10, which he sold, another two days later, for a profit of £2 10s. The receiver took the other half share when the claim was abandoned in February 1883.³⁰⁵ In the following August, he obtained the forfeiture of unworked ground, reputedly containing silver ore, that was awarded to him.³⁰⁶ In October, he also became sole owner of another claim, having managing to sell six of its 24 shares for £80 before registering it.³⁰⁷

²⁹⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 22 November 1880, p. 3.

³⁰⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 354, issued 25 November 1880, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1880, BBAV 11533/1a; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 207, BBAV 11457/1a, ANZ-A.

³⁰¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 189, BBAV 11457/1a, ANZ-A.

³⁰² *Thames Star*, 8 January 1881, p. 2.

³⁰³ *Waikato Times*, 8 February 1881, p. 2; *New Zealand Gazette*, 28 April 1881, p. 476.

³⁰⁴ *Waikato Times*, 29 June 1882, p. 2.

³⁰⁵ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 254, BBAV 11567/1a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, nos. 583, 602, 605, BBAV 11581/2a, ANZ-A.

³⁰⁶ Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 1 September 1883, p. 2; Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaintiff Book 1880-1898, 23/1883, BBAV 11547/1a; Register of Applications 1883-1900, 126/1883, BBAV 11505/1a; Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 169, BBAV 11500/9a, ANZ-A.

³⁰⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 170, BBAV 11500/9a, ANZ-A.

In April 1881, O'Halloran made his only investment in the new Waihi field, having one of the 30 shares in a claim that would be forfeited the following year.³⁰⁸

INVOLVEMENT IN WAIORONGOMAI MINING

Shortly after gold was discovered at Waiorongomai, O'Halloran invested in some of the best claims. On 10 November 1881, he bought half of one share in the Diamond Gully for £20, selling this interest seven months later for £35. The following month he purchased a quarter of one share for £10, later selling it for a profit of £20.³⁰⁹ In December, he owned one of the 16 shares in the New Find No. 1. Possibly as part of a 'dummy' scheme to protect her husband's financial interests, in February 1882, just before the New Find Company was formed, Frances bought half of his share for a presumably notional £20, which meant she was allocated 500 shares in the company.³¹⁰ O'Halloran sold a quarter of his share for a non-notional £20 almost immediately afterwards.³¹¹ He then sold his remaining interest, for he was not a shareholder when this company was registered.³¹² He subsequently purchased another interest, in September 1883 being successfully sued by Hone Werahiko's executor for £98, 'balance of cost of shares sold in New Find'.³¹³

O'Halloran was joint owner of the Virginia City in September 1882, with seven and a half shares. He managed to sell all but one share for £30

³⁰⁸ Thames Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1875-1882, folio 131, BACL 14397/10a, ANZ-A.

³⁰⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 4, BBAV 11500/9a; Transfers and Assignments 1881, no. 16, BBAV 11581/1a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, nos. 423, 458, 613, BBAV 11581/2a, ANZ-A.

³¹⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 30, BBAV 11500/9a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, no. 32, BBAV 11581/1a, ANZ-A; *New Zealand Gazette*, 23 March 1882, p. 490.

³¹¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 30, BBAV 11500/9a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, no. 63, BBAV 11581/1a, ANZ-A.

³¹² *New Zealand Gazette*, 23 March 1882, pp. 489-490.

³¹³ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Plaintiff Book 1880-1898, 24/1883, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A; Warden's Court, *Te Aroha News*, 29 September 1883, p. 2.

before it was transferred to the Waiorongomai Company.³¹⁴ He held scrip shares in the Premier, Waitoki, Waiorongomai, and Lady Ferguson Companies.³¹⁵ In December 1884 his 40 shares in the Waiorongomai were liable for forfeiture if he did not pay a call.³¹⁶ He became a shareholder in the Colonist Company, and in August the following year was warned that his 33 shares could be forfeited for the same reason.³¹⁷

TRADING IN RESIDENCE AND BUSINESS SITES

Immediately the Te Aroha field was opened, O'Halloran acquired sites either for his own use or sale. Only one application for a business site was refused.³¹⁸ Immediately after opening day, his 'small' holding was laid off in business sites and taken up.³¹⁹ At the end of the month, he was granted two more sites.³²⁰ One, converted into a residence site, along with an adjacent residence site acquired in 1882, was mortgaged to a brewer in that year 'to secure repayment of money'.³²¹ One residence site, granted in December, was forfeited six months later.³²²

With the revival of the township after the Waiorongomai discovery, he was granted another business site, which was forfeited ten months later.³²³ In February 1882 he was granted allotment 21 and Frances was granted

³¹⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Licensed Holdings 1881-1887, folio 118, BBAV 11500/9a; Transfers and Assignments 1882, no. 771, BBAV 11581/2a; Transfers and Assignments 1883, no. 30, BBAV 11581/3a, ANZ-A.

³¹⁵ *New Zealand Gazette*, 23 March 1882, p. 490, 27 April 1882, p. 647, 31 May 1883, p. 722, 22 November 1883, p. 1675.

³¹⁶ Public Notice, *Te Aroha News*, 20 December 1884, p. 7.

³¹⁷ Public Notice, *Te Aroha News*, 1 August 1885, p. 7.

³¹⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folio 5, BBAV 11505/3a, ANZ-A.

³¹⁹ *Thames Star*, 27 November 1880, p. 2.

³²⁰ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folios 67-70, BBAV 11505/3a, ANZ-A.

³²¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Residence and Machine Sites, Water Races, and Tramways, 1880-1882, folios 14-17, BBAV 11537/2a, ANZ-A.

³²² Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folios 53-54, BBAV 11505/3a, ANZ-A.

³²³ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folios 85-86, BBAV 11505/3a; *Plaint Book* 1880-1898, 80/1882, BBAV 11547/1a, ANZ-A.

allotment 22, both in Lipsey's Block, as residence sites.³²⁴ In September 1883 the former was transferred to Frances as trustee for their daughter Mary.³²⁵ As joint owners they mortgaged the latter for £100 in December 1883, and the following May both allotments along with their house and other buildings were mortgaged jointly for £212 10s.³²⁶ Both sites were sold in May 1884.³²⁷

In October 1882, he applied for a business site on allotment 6 of block 6, which was granted the following month; it cost him £150.³²⁸ It was sold in September 1884, after he left the district.³²⁹ After a local merchant, Thomas William Carr, became bankrupt in March 1883,³³⁰ O'Halloran purchased one of his business sites, allotment 11 of block 6, which he retained until selling it at the same date as allotment 6.³³¹ Immediately after purchasing it, he mortgaged it for £50; when the land and building were sold for £26, the purchaser took over the remainder of the mortgage.³³² In December 1883, he was reported to be buying a section at the southern end of the township, but was not registered as an owner.³³³

³²⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folios 91-92, BBAV 11505/3a, ANZ-A.

³²⁵ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Rent Register, Residence and Business Sites, 1881-1900, folio 69, BBAV 11492/1a, ANZ-A.

³²⁶ Mortgage by G.S. and F.A. O'Halloran to Thames Land, Building and Investment Society, 13 December 1883, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Transfers and Assignments 1883, BBAV 11581/4a; Mortgage by G.S. and F.A. O'Halloran to John Illott, 22 May 1884, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Transfers and Assignments 1884, BBAV 11581/5a, ANZ-A.

³²⁷ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Rent Ledger, Residence and Business Sites, 1881-1900, folios 69, 70, BBAV 11492/1a, ANZ-A.

³²⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Register of Applications 1880-1882, folio 222, BBAV 11505/3a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, 4 November 1882, p. 3.

³²⁹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Rent Register, Residence and Business Sites, 1881-1900, folio 326, BBAV 11492/1a, ANZ-A; *Te Aroha News*, 21 June 1884, p. 2.

³³⁰ See paper on his life.

³³¹ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Rent Register, Residence and Business Sites, 1881-1900, folio 413, BBAV 11492/1a, ANZ-A.

³³² Mortgage by G.S. O'Halloran to Thames Land, Building and Investment Society, 4 December 1883, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Transfers and Assignments 1883, BBAV 11581/4a; Mortgage by G.S. O'Halloran to John Abbott, 21 August 1884, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Transfers and Assignments 1884, BBAV 11581/5a, ANZ-A.

³³³ *Te Aroha News*, 8 December 1883, p. 2.

Apart from his dealings over the Hot Springs Hotel, explained below, his only other land transaction was to purchase a business site for £10, which he later sold for £25 for a cordial factory.³³⁴

PUBLICAN DURING THE RUSH

Because of its site close to the discovery, the hot springs, and at the hub of the new goldfields township, O'Halloran's hotel was well patronized. In late October 1880, prospectors were using it as a base; as a correspondent noted, 'if the spirited proprietor of the Hot Springs Hotel drives a strictly cash trade, the present turn of events will conduce greatly to his benefit'.³³⁵ In mid-November, 'the claims giving the best returns at present' were O'Halloran's hotel and the Waihou one. 'At both houses you wonder how, being so far away from butchers, bakers, and greengrocers, they manage. We had a splendid dinner at O'Halloran's, and ... it certainly could not pay him at the price'.³³⁶ That visitors climbed the mountainside to inspect the discovery was good for his trade, as many required 'refreshers' afterwards.³³⁷

One correspondent noted that, after the 'fatiguing operations of pegging out' on opening day, 'the miners came into the township, and many visited the hostelry of Mr O'Halloran, which did a roaring trade all day'. Some miners were 'so excited over meeting old faces on the new field that they forgot the chief business that brought them together, and did not peg out at all. O'Halloran's beer seemed to have such an effect upon them that they were oblivious to everything else'.³³⁸ Not all those attending the opening went prospecting, many just hanging around the settlement 'and occasionally drinking at the hotel. Mr O'Halloran must have done an exceedingly good business. He has had his bar considerably lengthened, and

³³⁴ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Rent Register, Residence and Business Sites, 1881-1900, folio 54, BBAV 11492/1a, C.C. Dignan to G.S. O'Halloran, 30 November 1882, Transfers and Assignments 1882, BBAV 11581/2a; G.S. O'Halloran to Mary Peel, 13 February 1884, Transfers and Assignments 1884, BBAV 11581/5a, ANZ-A.

³³⁵ Waitoa Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 26 October 1880, p. 2.

³³⁶ *Waikato Times*, 16 November 1880, p. 2.

³³⁷ *Waikato Times*, 18 November 1880, p. 2.

³³⁸ Own Correspondent [John McCombie], 'Te Aroha Goldfield', *Thames Advertiser*, 27 November 1880, p. 3.

the demand for refreshers kept four men hard at work'.³³⁹ In early December, 'the best claim on the field at present is undoubtedly O'Halloran's hotel. The bar is crowded as on Saturdays in the old busy times at Grahamstown, and although shakedowns were made for a large number, and every effort to accommodate used, numbers had to go elsewhere'.³⁴⁰

In mid-December, it was rumoured that Louis Ehrenfried, a Thames, and later Auckland, brewer,³⁴¹ had bought out O'Halloran for £1,000.³⁴² This was incorrect; he later recalled having 'several offers for my business but declined to sell'.³⁴³ The *Observer* called his hotel 'the best-paying claim' because 'whether people are getting gold or whether they are not, they *will* drink'.³⁴⁴

By the time of the rush, O'Halloran had 'added several rooms' but 'now found it necessary to still further increase the accommodation'.³⁴⁵ In late December, 'extensive alterations and additions' were announced; when completed, the hotel would be 'the largest and one of the best hostelries' there.³⁴⁶ In the first week of January 1881, a tender was accepted for erecting 'a new frontage' containing a bar, sitting rooms, and bedrooms.³⁴⁷ The modest size of the additions meant they would take only two weeks to complete.³⁴⁸ By the beginning of February, they were 'almost completed, and the appearance of the edifice is much improved, while the internal accommodation and conveniences are greatly increased. The pioneer publican cannot be accused of want of enterprise'.³⁴⁹ When O'Halloran provided the 'excellent spread' for the banquet to celebrate the opening of the battery in April, the chairman mentioned it 'was not the first time' he

³³⁹ *Thames Star*, 26 November 1880, p. 2.

³⁴⁰ *Auckland Weekly News*, 4 December 1880, p. 11.

³⁴¹ See *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol. 2, pp. 332-333.

³⁴² *Thames Star*, 13 December 1880, p. 2.

³⁴³ O'Halloran, p. 122.

³⁴⁴ *Observer*, 1 January 1881, p. 147.

³⁴⁵ O'Halloran, p. 122.

³⁴⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 28 December 1880, p. 3.

³⁴⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 6 January 1881, p. 3.

³⁴⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 15 January 1881, p. 3.

³⁴⁹ *Te Aroha Miner*, 3 February 1881, reprinted in *Thames Star*, 3 February 1881, p. 2.

'had distinguished himself in this way', the previous one being when his punt started.³⁵⁰

O'Halloran had a problem forcing at least one customer to pay for his drinks. When one prominent local was charged with failing to pay, as liability was denied under the Tippling Act the magistrate 'had no other course but to dismiss the case'. O'Halloran 'stated that he expected as much but his object was to test the case for the benefit of other confiding publicans, who, it appeared, as far as the law is concerned, can be robbed with impunity'.³⁵¹

As another way of increasing his trade, O'Halloran advertised in 1881 that he provided guides to Katikati, Tauranga, and the Rotorua district.³⁵² In mid-year, a correspondent reported that his *table d'hote* reminded him 'of the dazzling days of the rush'.³⁵³ As part of his attempts to attract custom, he advertised his hotel as a 'holiday and health' one.³⁵⁴ In August, he was referred to as a 'popular Boniface',³⁵⁵ a common term for a publican.³⁵⁶ The *Observer* understood he had 'made £1000 at Te Aroha: "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good" '.³⁵⁷

In mid-November, an advertisement appeared: 'For Sale, the Hot Springs Hotel, Te Aroha: One of the Best Hotel Investments in the North Island'.³⁵⁸ The *Thames Advertiser* explained he was selling because of his wife's health. 'The manner in which this favourite hostelry has been conducted by the present proprietor and his amiable wife has deservedly resulted in acquiring an extensive lucrative business'.³⁵⁹ Either because Frances' health improved, or mining revived with the development of Waiorongomai, it was not sold. Instead, at the beginning of April 1882 he purchased the hotel and other buildings along with the acre on which they

³⁵⁰ *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1881, p. 3; *Waikato Times*, 26 April 1881, p. 2.

³⁵¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 2 June 1881, p. 3.

³⁵² Advertisement, *Waikato Times*, 8 February 1881, p. 4.

³⁵³ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 4 June 1881, p. 3.

³⁵⁴ Advertisement, *Waikato Times*, 30 June 1881, p. 3.

³⁵⁵ *Thames Advertiser*, 17 August 1881, p. 3.

³⁵⁶ Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8 ed., ed. Paul Beale (London, 1984), p. 114.

³⁵⁷ *Observer*, 13 August 1881, p. 546.

³⁵⁸ Advertisement, *Thames Advertiser*, 17 November 1881, p. 2.

³⁵⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 17 November 1881, p. 3.

were erected from his landlords, Mokena Hou and his son Akuhata, for £255.³⁶⁰

After obtaining ownership, he made big extensions estimated to cost £700. The frontage would be an ‘imposing’ 96 feet and the depth 100 feet, and eight more bedrooms made a total of 17. The bar was removed ‘to the extreme end’ of the building, allowing ‘the proper hotel trade’ to be carried on at the other, where ‘a room for ladies’ would be set apart. A dining room, 40 feet by 16, would be erected, and enlarged stables erected behind the building.³⁶¹ O’Halloran recalled his larger premises being used for a variety of purposes:

I had a large dining room or hall run up as quickly as possible, and this when not required for feeding purposes served to hold meetings in. Indeed it was put to all sorts of uses, to hold Church Services in, Concerts have been given, and even a Theatrical entertainment has taken place within its walls.³⁶²

Despite an increasing number of people visiting because of the hot springs, the fortunes of the hotel were particularly dependent on the fortunes of the goldfield. In April 1882 visitors walked to the hotel on the evening of the day it was announced that a battery was to be erected at Waiorongomai:

One of our party remarked there seemed to be a strong trade of axe grinding going on here; a “cutler’s shop” replied another. On entering the hotel we found “All sorts and conditions of men,” from the Mayor of Auckland [James McCosh Clark] and J.C. Firth³⁶³ in the parlour down to Billy Dewar, the packer, and his mate in the bar. The place was crowded, drinking was rampant, and Scotch champagne [whisky] was ready chorus. Everybody was perfectly sober, and every person was in a whirl of excitement. The barman wanted to be hammered out into four to supply the demand.... As the night advanced, the numbers

³⁶⁰ Agreement between Mokena Hou, Akuhata Mokena and G.S. O’Halloran, with approval given by Harry Kenrick, 1 April 1882, Te Aroha Warden’s Court, Transfers and Assignments 1882, BBAV 11581/1a, ANZ-A.

³⁶¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 19 April 1882, p. 3.

³⁶² O’Halloran, p. 122 [punctuation added].

³⁶³ For these two men, see paper on the Battery Company.

thinned down, and by 11 o'clock the house was shut up and silence reigned.³⁶⁴

In late October, as several large hotels were erected 'and the business consequently divided', O'Halloran sold his hotel to John Coleman³⁶⁵ 'for something under £2,000'.³⁶⁶

STOREKEEPER DURING THE RUSH

Because of the rush, O'Halloran 'added a general store to the Hotel, was appointed Postmaster, and was ably assisted by my wife and brother' in running it.³⁶⁷ Gerald helped him when in Te Aroha during December 1880.³⁶⁸ Immediately after opening day, the post office was established in his store, although he was not appointed sub-postmaster until the following March.³⁶⁹ In that month a correspondent recorded confusion in the mail service because of different instructions being received from Thames and Auckland, with the contractor delivering the main saying O'Halloran 'objected to receiving mail [on] off days'.³⁷⁰ O'Halloran agreed there was confusion but denied refusing to receive mail on these days. 'I am always anxious to consult the public convenience. As to handing post letters to the driver indiscriminately that is too absurd to require comment', and he objected to a 'personal' matter being made public.³⁷¹ The correspondent hastily explained that he was not being criticized. 'Indeed, this would be impossible as his urbanity, and willingness to oblige has earned the thanks of the whole of the miners and business people here. The Post-Office has

³⁶⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 20 April 1882, p. 3.

³⁶⁵ See section on publicans in paper on the drink problem in the Te Aroha district.

³⁶⁶ O'Halloran, p. 123; Agreement between G.S. O'Halloran and John Coleman, 23 October 1882, Te Aroha Warden's Court, Transfers and Assignments 1882, no. 695, BBAV 11581/2a, ANZ-A; *Thames Advertiser*, p. 28 October 1882, p. 2.

³⁶⁷ O'Halloran, pp. 122-123 [punctuation added].

³⁶⁸ Te Aroha Warden's Court, Miner's Right no. 702, issued 6 December 1880, Miners' Rights Butt Book 1880, BBAV 11533/1f; Register of Applications 1880-1882, folios 53-54, BBAV 11505/3a; Register of Te Aroha Claims 1880-1888, folio 177, BBAV 11567/1a, ANZ-A; District Court, *Thames Advertiser*, 8 December 1880, p. 3.

³⁶⁹ *Thames Star*, 29 November 1880, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 5 March 1881, p. 2.

³⁷⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 1 March 1881, p. 2.

³⁷¹ Letter from G.S. O'Halloran, *Waikato Times*, 3 May 1881, p. 2.

been open from early morning till late at night, far beyond the hours [during] which a Postmaster is supposed to deliver letters'.³⁷² Later that month, another man was appointed as postmaster.³⁷³

As O'Halloran later explained, being a storekeeper quickly became unprofitable:

Had the rush only been a more genuine one and sufficient gold had been got to assure the permanence of the field I should soon have amassed a fortune. As it was, the returns from the claims were anything but satisfactory. The miners were deeply in my debt for stores and tools supplied, and I could only see one way of putting an end to the Credit business: viz, to close the Store and resign the Postmastership. This I did, losing a considerable sum thereby.³⁷⁴

In mid-April 1881, he sold his store.³⁷⁵ O'Halloran later wrote that he sold it and its contents for £250, 'eventually', implying a long time after establishing it. The new owners 'carried on the business for a time', but 'also in the end had to succumb and the building as a Store ceased to exist'.³⁷⁶ The man who took over the store abandoned both the business and district in April 1884.³⁷⁷ The building still belonged to O'Halloran, for in March that year it was reported that his large store in Whitaker Street had been leased.³⁷⁸

ATTEMPTS TO LEASE THE HOT SPRINGS

In late April 1881, O'Halloran told a gathering celebrating the opening of the battery that 'he scarcely knew whether he was on gold or hot water, because he intended at the first to turn his attention to the springs, but had been prevented from doing all he could wish to them by the gold rush'.³⁷⁹ He

³⁷² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 8 March 1881, p. 2.

³⁷³ *New Zealand Gazette*, 19 May 1881, p. 639.

³⁷⁴ O'Halloran, p. 123 [punctuation added].

³⁷⁵ *Waikato Times*, 16 April 1881, p. 2, 26 April 1881, p. 2.

³⁷⁶ O'Halloran, p. 123 [punctuation added].

³⁷⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 17 April 1884, p. 2, advertisement, 20 May 1884, p. 2; *Thames Star*, 29 September 1884, p. 3.

³⁷⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 8 March 1884, p. 2.

³⁷⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 25 April 1881, p. 3.

‘applied over and over again’ to lease the hot pools, intending to erect a proper bathhouse, but ‘red tape’ had ‘turned up its clerkly nose at him and that good thing amongst others has been choked’.³⁸⁰ In July, O’Halloran wrote a long letter to the press wanting the Waste Lands Board to pay attention ‘to a genuine public want, for which I have long endeavoured in vain as a private individual to obtain the recognition, though I have acted as much in the desire to promote the benefit of the settlement generally as my own’. After praising how ‘marvellously efficacious’ the springs were for a great number of ailments, he explained that upon arriving ‘as the pioneer hotel keeper’,

I at once saw something could and ought to be done to make this a sanatorium, and offered the Government £50 per annum for the lease of the ground on which the springs were situated, leaving them, if they pleased, to fix a scale of charges for the use of them. Had my offer been accepted I would have laid out the grounds surrounding them in pleasure grounds, and built comfortable bathing rooms, and as the attractions of the place became appreciated, I could have increased my hotel accommodation according to the requirements of my visitors. In this way I was under the impression that Te Aroha might have become a well known and attractive little town by surer means than by gold digging. However, to my repeated applications for permission to carry out my idea, I received no reply at all for a long time, and was finally informed briefly that the spring would only be leased on condition of the immediate erection of a large hotel and buildings that would require an outlay of £2,000. I was perfectly willing to lay out some hundreds to make the place attractive, and then to have put up a hotel proportionate in size to the number of my visitors, but to request me to absorb all my capital on starting in the erection of a building what would have been useless without further outlay to make it attractive seemed to me to be putting the cart before the horse. Comfortable bathhouses over the springs, surrounded by pleasant grounds, with the beautiful scenery of the wooded mountain ranges in the background, would have soon made the erection of a large hotel a necessary and easy addition to the natural attractions, and this much I was prepared to undertake. But the noble army of red-tapists scorned my offer simply because they thought it might suit some friend or supporter to make any profit out of the place that might be made, or because they do not care to trouble themselves about poor people like those at Te Aroha. I only ask now that even if it is my unfortunate lot to be sat upon, the place

³⁸⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 21 May 1881, p. 3; see also 14 June 1881, p. 3.

may not be neglected and the natural advantages thrown away. If I must take up my cross I am quite prepared to be a martyr to stupidity as cheerfully as any of the other sufferers, but if the place could be made famous, as it deserves, I should rejoice, even if I were refused my just share of the benefits as the first and most persevering of its supporters, though in justice I should be allowed to work out my own scheme, and reap the fruits of it if successful, instead of being in all probability robbed of my suggestions, and made to pay for any good I have worked and paid for.³⁸¹

At a meeting of the Waste Lands Board in November, he offered either to lease the springs for £25 a year or ‘act as curator for the use of the paddocks and one bath’. After the chairman noted that one condition of leasing was ‘the erection of a suitable accommodation house’, the board ‘agreed to apply to the Government to remove this restriction, and not to enter into any private negotiations in regard to the place’.³⁸² Shortly afterwards the government took control of the reserve and turned it into a public domain.³⁸³

TRYING TO EARN A LIVING IN A VARIETY OF OTHER WAYS

In October 1881, O’Halloran unsuccessfully tendered a drainage contract.³⁸⁴ Two months later, with another man he successfully tendered to make a ‘walking track up Whakapipi Spur’, otherwise Bald Spur, being paid £82 17s 6d for its construction.³⁸⁵ There was no report that O’Halloran himself worked on it; being too busy running his hotel, he employed labourers.

In January 1882 he announced he would run a coach between Te Aroha and Paeroa.³⁸⁶ ‘My trap will leave the Hot Springs Hotel, Te Aroha, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8 o’clock a.m., returning same

³⁸¹ Letter from G.S. O’Halloran, *Thames Advertiser*, 4 July 1881, p. 3.

³⁸² *Thames Advertiser*, 28 November 1881, p. 3.

³⁸³ See paper on the Te Aroha hot springs.

³⁸⁴ Piako County Council, Minutes of Meeting of 14 October 1881, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha; Piako County Council, *Waikato Times*, 15 October 1881, p. 2.

³⁸⁵ Piako County Council, Minutes of Meetings of 14 December 1881, 1 February 1882, Matamata-Piako District Council Archives, Te Aroha.

³⁸⁶ *Thames Advertiser*, 20 January 1882, p. 2.

day'.³⁸⁷ In June 1883 a heavy gale destroyed his stables; after re-erecting 'commodious' stables, a storm one month later meant they 'had vanished when the morning dawned'.³⁸⁸

In the only recorded example of his owning shares in non-mining companies, in 1882 he sold his 25 shares in the Thames Newspaper and Printing Company.³⁸⁹

With the money obtained by selling his hotel in October 1882, O'Halloran 'built an Auction Mart and Horse Bazaar together with a nice Cottage to live in'.³⁹⁰ He announced on 1 November 1882 that he had 'resumed the business of an auctioneer' and would hold his first sale three days later.³⁹¹ He held weekly sales of produce and merchandise every Saturday morning in his auction rooms, and sold horses and goods on commission.³⁹² This business 'not being as brisk as I had hoped for, we let the cottage furnished' while Frances took one child to stay with friends in Wellington for three months.³⁹³ With another child, he boarded in his former hotel; it 'was destroyed by fire whilst I was there', but he did not mention any personal loss.³⁹⁴ In June 1883 a heavy gale blew the front of his auction house 'completely out'.³⁹⁵ By then, in addition to being an auctioneer he was a house, land, insurance, mining, and general commission agent.³⁹⁶ In October that year he was refused permission to use the Waiorongomai school on Saturday afternoons for auctions because of fears of damage.³⁹⁷

With the first flush of enthusiasm for Waiorongomai mines renewing interest in local share trading, in June 1883 he became the third broker in

³⁸⁷ Advertisement, *Waikato Times*, 11 February 1882, p. 3.

³⁸⁸ *Te Aroha News*, 30 June 1883, p. 2, 28 July 1883, p. 2; *Te Aroha Correspondent*, *Thames Star*, 25 July 1883, p. 2.

³⁸⁹ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 38 no. 240, ANZ-A.

³⁹⁰ O'Halloran, p. 123.

³⁹¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 1 November 1882, p. 2.

³⁹² *Waikato Times*, 16 November 1882, p. 2.

³⁹³ O'Halloran, p. 123 [punctuation added].

³⁹⁴ O'Halloran, p. 124.

³⁹⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 30 June 1883, p. 2.

³⁹⁶ Advertisements, *Te Aroha News*, 14 July 1883, p. 1, 25 August 1883, p. 3, 8 March 1884, p. 2.

³⁹⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 6 October 1883, p. 2.

the district, and joined the Te Aroha Brokers' Association.³⁹⁸ With the decline in the fortunes of mining his financial fortunes fell also, and in March 1884 'removed his Office to the small Building next [to] the Public Hall'.³⁹⁹

On his wife's return from Wellington 'we rented and furnished a large house close to the Springs and opened it as a first class Boarding House'.⁴⁰⁰ This was in December 1883, when they took over the large house erected by a merchant,⁴⁰¹ Edward O'Brien Moore, who had become bankrupt.⁴⁰² Named Thermal House, it was erected on his two allotments in Lipsey's Block, had seven rooms, a 'most extensive view', a good garden, and was fenced.⁴⁰³ The local newspaper described it as a first-class boarding house with a 'charming' situation.⁴⁰⁴ A local correspondent reported that O'Halloran and his wife provided 'exceedingly comfortable lodgings' close to the hot baths in 'the large house on the hill'.⁴⁰⁵ It is likely that Frances ran this venture, as her husband had so many other businesses, and this was suggested by another report by the same correspondent: 'At Mrs O'Halloran's boarding-house, situated close to the springs, private families and others receive the very best attention'.⁴⁰⁶

O'Halloran recalled that they 'were doing very well when in an unlucky moment I was induced by a Brewer', the owner of the rebuilt Hot Springs Hotel, 'to go back to it as a tenant of his'. The brewer believed 'that I would be able from my long association with the house to bring back the business which had been lost owing to the fire and the time it had taken to erect the new Building'.⁴⁰⁷ Accordingly, his boarding house and furniture were sold. 'On the whole' the sale of the latter was 'a most successful one' for him, 'prices ruling high throughout, and in several instances equalling first cost'.⁴⁰⁸

³⁹⁸ *Waikato Times*, 28 June 1883, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 3 November 1883, p. 2.

³⁹⁹ Advertisement, *Te Aroha News*, 8 March 1884, p. 7.

⁴⁰⁰ O'Halloran, p. 124.

⁴⁰¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 18 December 1883, p. 2.

⁴⁰² Supreme Court, *New Zealand Herald*, 23 October 1883, p. 6.

⁴⁰³ *Te Aroha News*, 26 April 1884, pp. 2, 7.

⁴⁰⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 15 December 1883, p. 2.

⁴⁰⁵ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 December 1883, p. 20.

⁴⁰⁶ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 2 February 1884, p. 7.

⁴⁰⁷ O'Halloran, pp. 124-125 [punctuation added].

⁴⁰⁸ *Waikato Times*, 3 May 1884, p. 2.

He took over the hotel again in late April 1884 from John Coleman, who had bought it from him.⁴⁰⁹ Under Coleman's management the hotel was reportedly 'second to none in the district', but because of 'depression in business, and very heavy losses sustained by the fire at the old hotel', he had decided 'to give up business, and leave the district'.⁴¹⁰ At the end of the year Coleman filed as bankrupt, principally because of the loss incurred from the fire.⁴¹¹ A local correspondent believed 'many old residents of and visitors to Te Aroha' would be 'glad to learn that their old friends, the O'Hallorans', had returned 'to their old quarters', now 'a large and handsome building, containing all the conveniences and comforts of a modern hotel'.⁴¹² His return was a mistake: 'I tried it for a few months but found it no easy business, in fact for many reasons it was impossible, and after loosing both money and time I gave it up in disgust'.⁴¹³ In mid-June, 'after a trial of about two months', he had 'arranged to give up possession' of the hotel.⁴¹⁴

In mid-March 1884, the *Te Aroha News* reported that 'our local Knight of the Hammer', meaning auctioneer, had 'gone into the gum business with a whirl. Not only has Mr O'Halloran set a large number of Maoris to work gumdigging for him, but he has started a general store at the diggings and put on a team of pack horses to bring in the gum'. The gum, in the ranges about 16 miles from Te Aroha, was fetching good prices; 'We heartily wish Mr O'Halloran success in his new venture'.⁴¹⁵

His memoirs incorrectly dated his decision to return to 'the Gum purchasing business' to after giving up being publican of the Hot Springs Hotel for a second time. Becoming a gum merchant required

a considerable outlay for Horses, Saddles, Stores, &c. The latter as is usual in the trade I had to give the Natives Credit for, trusting to be paid in Gum, which I had to pack from their Camps in the bush. In this I was also unlucky, losing several Horses

⁴⁰⁹ *Waikato Times*, 26 April 1884, p. 2.

⁴¹⁰ Te Aroha Correspondent, *Waikato Times*, 26 April 1884, p. 2; *Thames Advertiser*, 28 April 1884, p. 2.

⁴¹¹ *Thames Star*, 17 December 1884, p. 3; *Thames Advertiser*, 4 February 1885, p. 3, 22 April 1885, p. 3.

⁴¹² Te Aroha Correspondent, *Auckland Weekly News*, 26 April 1884, p. 21.

⁴¹³ O'Halloran, p. 125 [punctuation added].

⁴¹⁴ *Te Aroha News*, 21 June 1884, p. 2.

⁴¹⁵ *Te Aroha News*, 15 March 1884, p. 2.

owing to the almost impassable state of the tracks and the Natives not obtaining sufficient Gum to pay me for Stores &c advanced. So I was reluctantly compelled to give it up.⁴¹⁶

This decision was made in mid-June, at the same time as he abandoned the hotel again. He had decided 'to leave the district altogether, as soon as he can arrange his business affairs'.⁴¹⁷ With the failure of this last attempt to make a living, he

resolved to leave a district where, although I had made money and worked very hard, I had, by a series of misfortunes over which I had no control, lost it all again. My Horse Bazaar, which with the ground &c had cost me about £350, I was glad to get £100 for, and so shook the dust of the place off my feet.⁴¹⁸

When O'Halloran announced he was leaving, the local newspaper regretted he 'should find it necessary to take this step'.⁴¹⁹

INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

O'Halloran was a prominent member of the local community. Indeed, according to his son, his parents were 'two of the best known and highly respected of the early residents'.⁴²⁰ At the beginning of December 1880, he was elected to a committee charged with obtaining a recreation park and a telegraph service.⁴²¹ In February 1882 he was elected to a deputation that was to explain local needs to the Premier.⁴²² In mid-1883, when a meeting was held to discuss establishing a borough, he moved that a committee collect signatures in support, and was elected to it.⁴²³

In February 1883, he stood for the licensing committee, but as his nomination was informal it was withdrawn.⁴²⁴ The following year, he was

⁴¹⁶ O'Halloran, p. 125 [punctuation added].

⁴¹⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 21 June 1884, p. 2.

⁴¹⁸ O'Halloran, p. 125 [punctuation added].

⁴¹⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 21 June 1884, p. 2.

⁴²⁰ Letter from Arthur O'Halloran, *Te Aroha News*, 5 December 1930, p. 5.

⁴²¹ *Thames Advertiser*, 2 December 1880, p. 3.

⁴²² *Waikato Times*, 23 February 1882, p. 2.

⁴²³ *Te Aroha News*, 7 July 1883, p. 2.

⁴²⁴ *Waikato Times*, 20 February 1883, p. 3, 22 February 1883, p. 3.

the last to be elected, with 52 votes; the highest polling candidate received 73.⁴²⁵ In 1882 he took up five shares in the Te Aroha Public Hall and Reading Room Company.⁴²⁶ Two years later, he was elected to the committee of the public library, and later presented 'two useful scientific books' to it.⁴²⁷

In January 1882, he was elected as the first secretary of the school committee.⁴²⁸ In mid-1883, he was honorary secretary of a picnic held to celebrate the opening of the school, but was unable to attend the celebration because in tripping over a stump in the dark he had injured his knee badly.⁴²⁹ When he resigned as secretary and from the committee in August, his departure was regretted.⁴³⁰ Why he resigned was not stated. In seeking re-election the following year, he obtained 47 votes; the last person elected received two more.⁴³¹

Both O'Halloran and his wife were active in the Church of England. At a meeting in his hotel in mid-December 1880, he was elected to the vestry, and was re-elected in future years.⁴³² At a concert to raise funds, Frances 'very nicely sang'.⁴³³ In an ecumenical spirit common amongst Te Aroha Protestants, she had sung at the soiree celebrating the opening of the Wesleyan church, played the harmonium for its services, 'and kindly lent her piano for the entertainment'.⁴³⁴ They remained Anglicans.⁴³⁵

The only time O'Halloran was recorded playing sport was when he was in the Waitoa cricket team against a Thames side in February 1880.⁴³⁶ Three years later, he was a judge for the Boxing Day sports.⁴³⁷ He was more

⁴²⁵ *Te Aroha News*, advertisement, 16 February 1884, p. 7, 1 March 1884, p. 2.

⁴²⁶ Company Files, BADZ 5181, box 41 no. 259, ANZ-A.

⁴²⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 2 February 1884, p. 7, 24 May 1884, p. 2.

⁴²⁸ *Waikato Times*, 28 January 1882, p. 3.

⁴²⁹ *Te Aroha News*, 30 June 1883, p. 2, 7 July 1883, p. 2.

⁴³⁰ *Te Aroha News*, 25 August 1883, p. 2, 8 September 1883, p. 2.

⁴³¹ *Te Aroha News*, 2 February 1884, p. 7.

⁴³² *Church Gazette*, January 1881, p. 3, October 1882, p. 94, April 1883, p. 37; *Waikato Times*, 27 February 1883, p. 3; *Te Aroha News*, 5 April 1884, p. 2.

⁴³³ *Te Aroha News*, 21 July 1883, p. 3.

⁴³⁴ *Waikato Times*, 11 August 1881, p. 2.

⁴³⁵ Death Certificates of George Stewart O'Halloran, 1 December 1910, 1910/6343; Frances Ann O'Halloran, 15 December 1923, 1923/10216, BDM.

⁴³⁶ *Thames Star*, 13 February 1880, p. 2.

⁴³⁷ *Te Aroha News*, 15 December 1883, p. 2.

active in horse racing, presumably out of genuine interest but probably also because it suited the persona of a publican. In January 1881, he was a steward for the first race meeting, and was a steward in the following two years.⁴³⁸ In 1883, he was elected to the first committee of the Te Aroha Jockey Club.⁴³⁹

IN NEW SOUTH WALES

After leaving Te Aroha, O'Halloran returned to Thames, 'took a Cottage for the family and looked round for some kind of employment'. As business 'in general was bad and I could not see my way to anything likely to prove remunerative', and Auckland was 'somewhat in a similar state', he 'determined to seek fresh fields'. As New South Wales 'was reported to be in a flourishing condition', he decided to return to Australia. 'Leaving a portion of my small remaining stock of Cash' in Thames with his wife and family, he sold his 'last horse, saddle, & bridle at a ridiculously low figure' and went to Sydney, arriving on 1 September 1884.⁴⁴⁰

'Determined not to be idle longer than I could possibly help, especially as my funds were low', he became a travelling salesman for a piano and sewing machine firm. Although he found travelling around the suburbs difficult, he did make from 40s to 50s a week. 'Getting tired of City work', he applied to go to the country, and was sent to Wagga Wagga, where his family joined him. After 'a couple of months', because of the 'excessive heat', lack of water, and his employers not keeping faith 'in respect to remuneration and other matters', he resigned and returned to Sydney. 'With Wife and family and a very few pounds in my pocket', he became a travelling book salesman. 'Book Canvassing is not a pleasant occupation', and as it did not pay was soon abandoned.⁴⁴¹ A friend arranged for him to see the manager of a large carrying firm, but instead of becoming a tally clerk or an agent in the country he was told to collect goods from the wharf. 'Taken aback', but remembering he had 'hardly a cent in the world', he did as ordered, sticking to this work 'for nearly 3 weeks, at the end of which time I was more dead than alive and was compelled to give it up' and

⁴³⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 26 January 1881, p. 3, 3 March 1882, p. 2; *Waikato Times*, 1 March 1883, p. 3, 27 October 1883, p. 2.

⁴³⁹ *Thames Advertiser*, 12 February 1883, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁰ O'Halloran, p. 126.

⁴⁴¹ O'Halloran, pp. 127-130.

become a travelling insurance agent.⁴⁴² After doing ‘fairly well’ for a few weeks, the same friend then arranged for him to become a temporary clerk in a government department. O’Halloran concluded his memoirs on 23 November 1894 by writing that ‘this was nearly 10 years ago and I am still here’.⁴⁴³ The rumour reported in New Zealand in April 1885 that he was a member of the New South Wales forces sent to fight for the British Empire in Sudan⁴⁴⁴ cannot have been correct; he would certainly have mentioned this in his memoirs!

He revisited Auckland in 1890, and made yet another unsuccessful attempt to receive more land for his military service.⁴⁴⁵ In 1896, he claimed to have had years of experience in Australian mining;⁴⁴⁶ apart from his extremely brief experience as a teenager, there is no evidence of this.

FINAL YEARS IN NEW ZEALAND

The mining boom of the mid-1890s brought O’Halloran back to New Zealand, to live in Thames and then Auckland. In April 1896 he had an office in Thames and was an agent for the steamer ‘Te Aroha’, running between Thames and Paeroa.⁴⁴⁷ In October he was appointed a returning officer in a county council election, and two months later unsuccessfully applied to be the county valuer.⁴⁴⁸ He had set himself up as a mining expert:

George Stewart O’Halloran (25 years experience in Mining Matters in Australia and New Zealand) will Furnish Information by Letter or Report to Persons interested in mining matters. References, and terms moderate. Communications confidential.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴² O’Halloran, pp. 130-131.

⁴⁴³ O’Halloran, p. 132.

⁴⁴⁴ *Thames Advertiser*, 4 April 1885, p. 2; *Te Aroha News*, 11 April 1885, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁵ G.S. O’Halloran to Commissioner of Crown Lands, 15 October 1890, Applications for Land Grants 1889-1892, no. 574, Lands and Survey Department, LS 66/6, ANZ-W; ‘Unsubstantiated Claims under the Naval and Military Settlers and Volunteers Land Acts, 1889, 1891, and 1892’, *AJHR*, 1894, H-23, p. 18.

⁴⁴⁶ *Mining Standard and Financial News*, 18 September 1896, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁷ *Thames Advertiser*, 28 April 1894, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁸ *Thames Advertiser*, 8 October 1896, p. 3, 10 December 1896, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁹ Advertisement, *New Zealand Mining Standard and Financial News*, 18 September 1896, p. 2, and subsequently.

He became a member of the Associated Stock and Mining Brokers, but by May 1897 his advertisement was no longer published,⁴⁵⁰ indicating that this venture was as unsuccessful as so many of his attempts to earn money. In May 1896 he was involved in a controversy over the Kauri Timber Company obtaining mining leases at Tairua, referring to a New South Wales precedent that would give existing lessees justice.⁴⁵¹

Presumably because of her husband's fragile finances, in August 1897 Frances obtained an 'instrument' whereby she received £20, at ten per cent, 'affecting yacht "Yvonne" and gear'.⁴⁵² She conducted a boarding house at Thames until leaving for Auckland in July 1899.⁴⁵³ In that month, the following appeared in the *Thames Star*:

Mrs O'Halloran, late of Te Aroha House, Thames, and Te Aroha House, Pitt street Auckland, notifies in our advertising columns that she has removed to more commodious premises, having taken over the River View House in Upper Nelson street, where she will have pleasure in seeing her Thames friends. The house is well situated and has every convenience – trams pass the door.⁴⁵⁴

As this venture was unsuccessful, at the end of the following March she was adjudged a bankrupt.⁴⁵⁵ She explained that she had kept a boardinghouse at Thames during the mining boom of the 1890s, but 'owing to the depression after the boom and sickness in her family, she had been unsuccessful in the business, and had come to Auckland in July last, but had found herself unable to recover her position. She still owed £120, debts contracted before she left Thames'. Unsecured debts were £158 17s 6d, with another debt of £45 secured by a bill of sale on the furniture, which she valued at £70. The only other assets were book debts of £30, owed by former boarders.⁴⁵⁶ She was discharged at the end of 1901.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁰ *New Zealand Mining Standard and Financial News*, 9 January 1897, p. 13, 5 May 1897.

⁴⁵¹ Letter from G.S. O'Halloran, *Thames Advertiser*, 7 May 1896, p. 3.

⁴⁵² *Mercantile and Bankruptcy Gazette of New Zealand*, 16 September 1897, p. 495.

⁴⁵³ Auckland Correspondent, *Thames Star*, 31 March 1900, p. 2.

⁴⁵⁴ *Thames Star*, 24 July 1899, p. 2.

⁴⁵⁵ *New Zealand Gazette*, 5 April 1900, p. 691.

⁴⁵⁶ *Auckland Weekly News*, 6 April 1900, p. 15.

⁴⁵⁷ *New Zealand Gazette*, 28 November 1901, p. 2304.

In 1899, when living in Pitt Street, Auckland, O'Halloran gave his occupation as an agent.⁴⁵⁸ He had the same occupation in 1902, when his family lived in Anglesea Street.⁴⁵⁹ In 1908, when living in Parnell, he was an insurance agent.⁴⁶⁰ When he died, his occupation was given as commission agent, but he had recently been working in the office of the *New Zealand Herald*.⁴⁶¹ According to one obituary, he had worked for the Mines Department for some years before resigning 'owing to the delicate state of his wife's health';⁴⁶² the state of health may well have been correct, but the appointment was not.

DEATHS

O'Halloran's 'distressing suicide' occurred at Parnell in December 1910, when he cut his throat with a razor:

The sad event was discovered by Mrs O'Halloran at about 2.30. Deceased had been speaking to his wife and daughter in the kitchen at about one o'clock, and had afterwards gone to a room in which he sometimes slept. This was next to a room which his son occupied, and on Mrs O'Halloran entering her son's room about 2.30 she noticed a piece of cardboard placed over a small mirror. On this was written a message to deceased's son as follows:- "Dear Son, - God bless you. You have been a good son to me. Good-bye to you all." Underneath this message deceased had written his initials.

Thoroughly alarmed, Mrs O'Halloran called her daughter (Mrs Cotton), and they forced the door of deceased's room. Drs. Milsom and Kinder were called in and a number of stitches were put in the wound, but deceased was then in a dying condition, and at about half-past four he passed away.

No reason can be assigned for deceased's act, except that he had suffered lately from influenza, and as a result had been somewhat despondent.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁸ *City of Auckland Electoral Roll, 1899*, p. 142.

⁴⁵⁹ *City of Auckland Electoral Roll, 1902*, p. 209.

⁴⁶⁰ *Parnell Electoral Roll, 1908*, p. 97.

⁴⁶¹ Death Certificate of George Stewart O'Halloran, 1 December 1910, 1910/6343, BDM; Inquests, Justice Department, J 46 COR, 1910/1233, ANZ-W.

⁴⁶² *Auckland Star*, 2 December 1910, p. 5.

⁴⁶³ *New Zealand Herald*, 2 December 1910, p. 5.

The inquest revealed that he had never hinted he would take his life, but a doctor believed influenza could cause severe depression.⁴⁶⁴ ‘The acuteness of the despondency was not realized by his family’ before his wife found the message ‘which caused her to suspect that her husband’s mental state had suddenly become serious’.⁴⁶⁵ Accordingly, the coroner’s jury decided that he had died from a self-inflicted wound ‘whilst temporarily insane’, thereby permitting his burial in consecrated ground. He was 65.⁴⁶⁶ A ‘large number of friends’ attended his funeral.⁴⁶⁷ One report of his death described him as ‘a well-known and highly-esteemed resident of Auckland’.⁴⁶⁸

Frances did not die until December 1923, aged 69, after suffering from heart disease for two years.⁴⁶⁹ Neither left a will and no value of their estates was recorded in the testamentary registers, implying that they died in poverty.

CONCLUSION

O’Halloran and his wife struggled throughout their lives to provide for their family, with only occasional, short-lived, successes. In this they were typical of many middle class people of their time, trying to avoid bankruptcy and preferring to be self-employed, but with circumstances usually being against them. O’Halloran’s chief claim to fame was as a pioneer of Te Aroha, where he was popular but ultimately not successful financially for reasons mostly beyond his control.

⁴⁶⁴ Inquests, Justice Department, J 46 COR, 1910/1233, ANZ-W.

⁴⁶⁵ *Auckland Star*, 2 December 1910, p. 5.

⁴⁶⁶ Death Certificate of George Stewart O’Halloran, 1 December 1910, 1910/6343, BDM.

⁴⁶⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 4 December 1910, p. 8.

⁴⁶⁸ *Auckland Star*, 2 December 1910, p. 5.

⁴⁶⁹ Death Certificate of Frances Ann O’Halloran, 15 December 1923, 1923/10216, BDM.