

A brief history of Henderson

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Pre 1840 History

Timber trees and forests were confined to the Waitakere Ranges with only a few small pockets of forest trees located elsewhere between the Waitemata Harbour and the Waitakere Ranges while the rest of the land thereabouts was a wilderness of scrub and fern.

Early Maori inhabitants had tracks to and from the Kaipara to the Whau Portage and the Waitemata and Manukau Harbours but these tracks were well up the Henderson Valley in the foothills of the Waitakere Ranges, and virtually no attention paid to the headwaters of the Henderson Creek where the Henderson Township was eventually established.

Henderson – History of Henderson’s Mill

Thomas Henderson

November 1845 – Thomas Henderson and his brother-in-law John MacFarlane purchased land through a crown grant and received land for 5000 acres. He did not receive cutting rights but was told the government would not interfere if he cut timber within the boundary of his original purchase.

He later purchased an additional 5,169 acres of waste land which was put up for sale by the government. This land covered either side of the Opanuku Stream and the Henderson Creek. This acquisition of land enabled Henderson to have undisputed ownership of the timber trees and the streams down which he could drive the logs to his proposed mill in Henderson Township.

Henderson’s Mill and township (pre 1900)

1849 – Charles Marsden built the first sawmill in Henderson (called Dundee Saw Mills after his home town).

1854 - John McLeod ('Long John McLeod') became mill manager.

1855 - Henderson and MacFarlane made further improvements and extensions to the mill, with the result that it became known as Henderson’s Mill.

1864 – Henderson’s Mill (the township) put up for sale. 5,000 acres of arable farmland. The remaining 5000 acres consisted of bush land, with Kauri, Rimu and other timber trees. Buildings included a saw-mill, the manager’s residence, and house accommodation for 100 workmen. Store, farm buildings, granary, stables, cowsheds, stock yards, and numerous other out buildings.

1868 – Henderson’s saw mill ceased production.

1880 – Albert Beetham was Henderson’s first manufacturer with his sauce and pickle factory.

1884 – George Pirrit set up a water wheel driven plant on the Oratia Stream to power his heel and toe plate factory.

Oratia Hotel (Falls Hotel)

1873 – Oratia Hotel (named after the Oratia Creek) opened for business on 1 July. The first licensee was “Shepherd” John McLeod. The building was originally built in the 1860’s. It was renamed the Falls Temperance Hotel and Store on 20 December 1890. Name shortened to Falls Hotel on 2 June 1897.

The Hotel was shifted in 1962 so that another block of shops could be erected in the front of the building.

In December 1996, the Falls Hotel was shifted again to the corner of Edmonton Road and Alderman Drive. The building was completely restored and is now a successful restaurant.

Henderson School – Founded in April 1873, originally known as Henderson Mill School. (The name was changed in 1893 to Henderson School by the Education Board). Originally the school was part of the Henderson Mill site. Moved to a new location on Great North Road in 1880. In 1885, 42 pupils attended the school. The school’s centenary was held in 1973, 125th jubilee in 1998.

Railways

29 March 1880 – line between Newmarket and Waikumete (Glen Eden) has been finished and open for traffic. Along the length of the line there were six stations; Mt Eden, Kingsland, Mt Albert, Avondale, New Lynn and Glen Eden., five roads bridges, seven railway bridges and about forty crossings.

1881 – Arrival of the railway at Henderson’s Mill.

18 July 1881 – The line to Kumeu completed. (Kumeu to Helensville completed in 1875)

The first passenger train to run between Auckland and Henderson did so on 17 March 1881, a special train carrying patrons to the annual Henderson’s Mill, St Patrick Day race meeting.

1890 – A passenger platform built at Henderson

1905 – Henderson became an official railway station.

1912 – Henderson Railway Station built.

Henderson Racecourse

1858-1876 – Henderson’s first racecourse built (where the Methodist Chapel is on the corner of Lincoln, Swanson and Great North Roads).

1888 – The last licensed race meeting was held at Henderson’s Mills Racecourse, (located where Henderson High School is today)

Tui Glen, Henderson

1925 – Registered in 1925 as New Zealand's first camping ground, Tui Glen had been purchased in 1912 by Claude Brookes, a successful engineer. His family worked for several years to clear the land, landscaping, planting trees and shrubs. The first holiday cabin was installed in 1921. Throughout the 1920s playgrounds were built, hire boats brought in, fireplaces installed. By 1930 Tui Glen had become one of Auckland's major attractions and among the finest picnic and camping areas in NZ.

1945 – Tui Glen passed over to a company Tui Glen Ltd.

1963 – Henderson Borough Council took over the running of the camp.

2002 – Waitakere City Council closed down Tui Glen as a camp ground.

Churches

The spiritual needs of the people prior to 1889 were attended to by Ministers and Lay preachers who travelled from Auckland.

The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel opened on Christmas Day, 1889 and was the first church to be constructed in the Henderson Township.

St Michael's Anglican Church built in 1914. The original church was moved back to allow the building of a new Anglican Church in 1962. In 1997 the old church was moved to The Corban Estate Arts Centre.

Bridges

1911 - The Coronation Bridge was opened on the same day as George the Fifth was crowned, 22 August, 1911.

1948 – The Opanuku Bridge was built alongside the Coronation Bridge on Great North Road.

1978 – Opanuku Bridge extended and widened.

Buildings

1909 – Assisd Corban built the wine depot at the top of Great North Rd. The depot was used to sell wine from the Corban winery. The no-license boundary ran along the railway line so the depot was able to be used until later boundary changes closed it.

1924 – The first police station opened with one policeman.

1924 – A fire destroyed the town hall, built about 1896. A new Town Hall was built in 1927, which also burned down in July 1967. By then the Town Hall was the Civic picture theatre.

1932 – Steve Ozich built the first block of shops in Station Road opposite the railway station. These were occupied by a chemist, hairdresser, bootmaker and billiard saloon. The second set of shops was also built by Steve Ozich along Great North Road (Williams Corner) in 1956.

1934 -The New Zealand Broadcasting Service transmitter building was built in Selwood Road, Henderson

1953 – Henderson High School opened.

1960's – Waitakere Obstetric Hospital followed by the Geriatric Unit (1970's) and the Mental Health unit, (1980's)

1970's – John Henry Centre built

1983 – Waitemata City Council Civic Centre built (Waitakere City Council after amalgamation in 1989)

1985 – Lincoln Green Hotel and Conference Centre

1987 – Western Area Police Station built

1989 – Henderson swimming Pool built by the Henderson Borough Council for the 1990 Commonwealth Games held in Auckland. Major renovations and extensions were completed in 2003

2001 – Unitec establishes its Waitakere campus in Ratanui St, Henderson

2004 – Trusts Stadium in Central Park Drive

2003 – The first apartment block in the Waitakere Gardens Retirement complex open. Building has been ongoing with the final apartments to be added opening sometime in 2006.

2004 – Mitre 10 Mega and Lincoln Pak N Save stores opened on Lincoln Road.

2003-2005 – Waitakere Hospital extended, and upgraded to become a full working hospital

2006 – Joint Waitakere Libraries and Unitec building completed.

2006 – Waitakere Central (Waitakere City Council civic building) on Henderson Valley Road opens July 2006.

Logging – Waitakere Ranges

The first exports of timber from the Waitakere began in 1836 when Thomas Mitchell shipped from Cornwallis on the northern shore of the Manukau Harbour to Australia. Scottish immigrants settled Cornwallis in the 1840's, intending it to become the major centre of the Auckland isthmus. New Zealand's first steam powered mill was built at Duncan Bay by the Cornwallis settlers in 1842. Once all the timber in the more accessible coastal areas had been harvested, a second stage of working the more rugged inland areas began.

The most significant milling operation was that of Thomas Henderson which processed a huge amount of timber from the ranges. It's estimated that Henderson's Mill cut 45 million superfeet of timber between 1849 and 1868.

The forest around Swanson was being worked by the 1850's by William Swanson. He did not establish a mill there, but drove logs downstream to tidal waters below Birdwood and from there by raft to Auckland. The first sawmill at Swanson was built by Ebenezer Gibbons in 1885, and operated to 1888.

By the 1870's, steam powered tramways were used to haul logs to the timber mills which had been established at Huia, Whatipu and Karekare.

Vineyards, Wineries and Orchards

Corbans Winery

Assid Abraham Corban migrated from Lebanon to New Zealand in 1892 and set up the first west Auckland winery and vineyards in Henderson in 1902. By 1974 Corbans held two million gallons of wine stored at its Henderson winery. The Corban family owned the winery until 1972 when Rothmans purchased 25% of the company. By 1975 Rothmans owned 78 %, eventually buying out the ownership of AA Corban and Sons Ltd. The Corban family have long been associated with West Auckland and many descendants still live in the Henderson area.

The wine cellar at Corbans was built in 1907 and is the oldest industrial building in Henderson.

The Corban homestead on the Corban Estate was built by Assid Abraham Corban in 1923.

The Corban family home at 56 Sturges Road was started in 1930 but not completed until the late 1930's.

Vineyards and Wineries in the Henderson area

Babich Wines – established 1916 Babich Rd, Henderson

Balich Estate Wines – established 1912, Sturges Rd, Henderson

Britannia Vineyards – established 1936, Edmonton Rd, Henderson
 Collard Brothers – established 1910, Great North Rd, Henderson
 Delegats Wines – established 1947, Hepburn Rd, Glendene
 Eastern Vineyards - established 1938, Sturges Rd, Henderson
 Fairhaven Wines – established 1942, West Coast Rd, Glen Eden
 Fino Valley Wines – established, 1966, Henderson Valley Rd, Henderson.
 Fullers Wines – established 1961, Candia Rd, Henderson
 Grandview – established 1968, Don Buck Rd, Massey
 Hughes and Cossar Limited – established ?, Sturges Rd, Henderson
 Kurtes Wines – established 1942, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Lincoln Vineyards – established 1937, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Mayfair Vineyards – established 1946, Sturges Rd, Henderson
 Mazurans Vineyards – established 1938, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Mothers Cellars – established 1964, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Nova Wines – established 1968, Metcalfe Rd, Henderson
 Old Railway Winery – established 1961, Henderson Valley Rd, Henderson
 Orbrossa Wines – established 1972, West Coast Rd, Oratia
 Pacific Vineyards – established 1936, McLeod Rd, Henderson
 Panorama Vineyard – established 1937, Awaroa Rd, Henderson
 Penfolds Wines New Zealand Limited – established 1944, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Peters Vineyard – established 1945, Norcross Ave, Henderson
 Pleasant Valley Wines – established 1902, Henderson Valley Rd, Henderson
 Public Vineyards – established ?, Bruce McLaren Rd, Henderson
 Sapich Wines – established 1945, Forest Hill Rd, Henderson
 Sea View Vineyards – established 1926, Simpson Rd, Ranui
 Soljans Vineyard – established 1938, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 St Jerome Wines – established 1965, Metcalfe Rd, Henderson
 Ti-Toki Company – established 1977, Tram Valley Rd, Swanson
 Tony's Vineyard – established 1965, Rosier Rd, Glen Eden.
 Vodanovich T. & A. & N. & Sons vineyard – established 1949, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Windy Hill Winery – established 1935, Simpsons Rd, Henderson
 Western Vineyards – established ?, Vineyard Rd, Henderson Valley

Orchards

1854 - Thomas Pass and his son John established the first commercial horticultural nursery and orchards in Oratia.

29 Dec 1896 – Waikumiti Fruitgrowers Association received first subscription payment.
(Became Oratia Fruitgrowers Association in May 1922)

1900 - Vella family, Marinovich family and Borich family become commercial growers.

1908 – Henry Stratton Izard buys 52 acres in Oratia

1913 – Philip and Dick Sunde purchase land for orchards in Oratia

Babich & Sons – established 1920, Babich Rd, Henderson
 Beauty Spot Orchard – established 1930, Holden's Rd, Henderson
 Borich, M.F. Limited – established 1900, Rathgar Rd, Henderson
 Deans Golden West Auckland – established 1915, Holdens Rd, Henderson
 Green Acres – established 1920, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Izards Orchards – established 1908, Parrs Cross Rd, Oratia
 Jugum M. Orchard – established 1948, Metcalfe Rd, Henderson

Kurtes Orchard – established 1940, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Lendrich Orchards – established 1925, Moire Rd, Massey
 Mazuran Vineyard & Orchard – established 1938, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Miro Orchards – established 1930, Parrs Cross Rd, Henderson
 Mothers Cellar – established 1964, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Nola A.C. & Sons – established 1954, Sturges Rd, Henderson
 Nola Wally Orchards – established 1954, Bruce McLaren Rd, Henderson
 Rakich, W.J. – established 1954, Metcalfe Rd, Henderson
 Sapich Brothers – established 1947, Forest Hill Rd, Henderson
 Soljan Orchard – established 1930, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Sumichs Orchard – established 1930, West Coast Rd, Glen Eden
 Sun Haven Orchard – established ?, Seymour Rd, Sunnyvale
 Sunnywest Orchards – established 1935, Forest Hill Rd, Henderson
 Tara Orchards – established 1940, Parrs Cross Rd, Henderson
 Tui Orchards – established 1940, Bruce McLaren Rd, Henderson
 Vela Hill Orchards – established 1950, Holdens Rd, Henderson
 Vodanovich T. & N. – established ?, Lincoln Rd, Henderson
 Ward Brothers – established 1900, Sturges Rd, Henderson

North Western Motorway

Planning undertaken during the late 1950's.

Work on the motorway commenced in 1960.

Construction of the bridge at the Henderson inlet, Early 1960's, The bridge at Rosebank was completed in 1960 and the Royal Road extension bridge started in August 1960.

The motorway was widened in 1969. During this construction 160,000 yards of clay were placed in tidal areas on either side of the motorway in preparation for the widening of its lanes.

Henderson Square / WestCity

The Henderson Borough Council was trying to establish a commercial centre in Henderson in 1963. The first stage of Henderson Square was built in 1968 and included a Woolworths store. The second and third stages were built in 1970. By October 1974 Henderson shopping complex was as big as LynnMall. Redevelopment of the complex and a change of name to WestCity took place in the 1996/1997. Further major redevelopment has taken place since Sept 6 2000 when the name was changed again to Westfield WestCity

Henderson Town Board and Henderson Borough

Henderson Town Board was constituted in June 1922.

The Borough of Henderson was constituted as from 7 November 1946.

Population figures for Henderson (1929-1975)

| | |
|------|------|
| 1929 | 1070 |
| 1936 | 1140 |
| 1951 | 2050 |
| 1958 | 2750 |
| 1966 | 5605 |
| 1975 | 6690 |

November 1989 – Amalgamation of West Auckland Councils. Waitemata City Council, New Lynn Borough Council, Glen Eden Borough Council and Henderson Borough Council amalgamated to form Waitakere City Council. This came about as a Government initiated reform of the concept of local government in December 1987. The purpose of amalgamation was to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local government. The amalgamated areas would consist of four wards – Henderson, New Lynn, Massey and Waitakere.

Other interesting information

Fire Brigade - The first Henderson volunteer fire brigade was formed in 1926, It lasted a few months. In 1929 the present brigade was formed, but it wasn't until March 1932 that the first appliance was purchased (a 1916 Chase, from the Newmarket Fire Brigade)

Waitemata Electric Power Board – constituted in 1924.

Prior to 1922 the nearest Doctor was in Auckland and later Avondale. The first Doctor in Henderson was based in Lincoln Road, 1922. Another Doctor was listed by 1927.

The 1927 telephone list was: 3 general stores, 2 butchers, 4 carriers, 1 motor garage, 1 draper and tailor, 1 dentist, 2 land agents, 1 chemist, 1 vet, 2 doctors.

The first bus service to Auckland was begun in 1928 and until the concrete road (Great North Rd) was completed had to run through Glen Eden.

Henderson's first permanent policeman was appointed in 1924. Prior to this the nearest policeman was at Avondale.