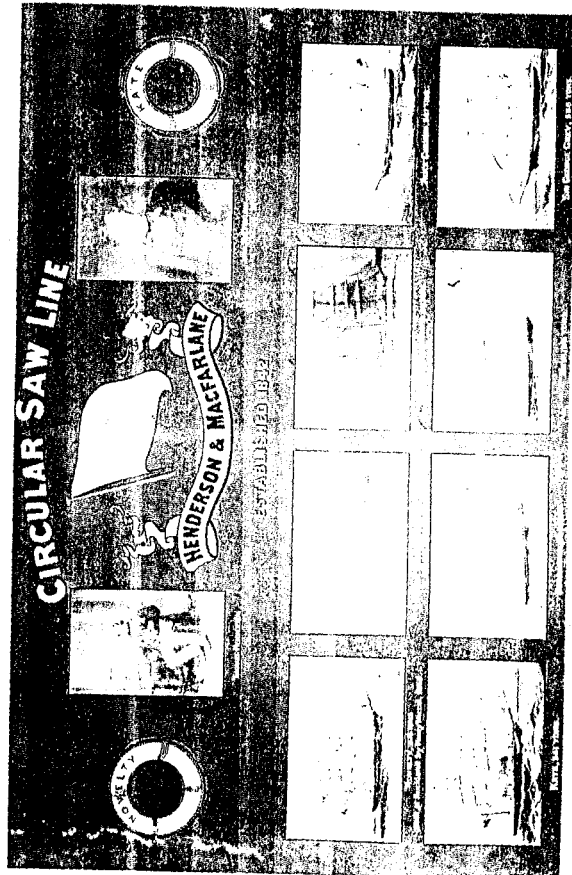


HENDERSON

Henderson has a long and interesting history, having started as a settlement for workers in the timber mill operated by Henderson and Macfarlane from 1849 to about 1860. This firm, the owners of the once well-known Circular Saw Line of sailing vessels and steamers, were felling trees up the Henderson Valley and driving the logs down the stream to their sawmill at the head of the tidal waters. John McLeod 'Long John' was the mill manager, while another John McLeod 'Shepherd McLeod' managed the farm attached to the mill and was later the first storekeeper in Henderson.

Thomas Henderson, after whom the settlement was named, had arrived in Wellington in 1840 in the ship 'Londoner' but came to Auckland in time to purchase a town section at the first land sale. In partnership with John MacFarlane he purchased (in 1843) 17,784 acres which included practically all the land bounded by a line from the mouth of the Whau Creek to the Waitakere Ranges along the coast and back through Swanson to the Waitemata. At first he had gangs of pit sawyers breaking down the logs, but later started the mill which was for several years driven by water power before changing to steam. Thomas Henderson also took an interest in politics representing the City of Auckland in the Provincial Council from 1855 to 1857 and the Northern Division in Parliament from 1855 to 1870. In 1878 he was called to the Legislative Council, of which he was a member until his death in 1886. He was well liked and respected in the community and several times gave financial aid to the Government and to the district which bears his name.



The Circular Saw Line established by Henderson and Macfarlane. The picture shows eight of the many vessels owned or chartered by them that sailed between their trading stations in the Pacific Islands and Auckland.

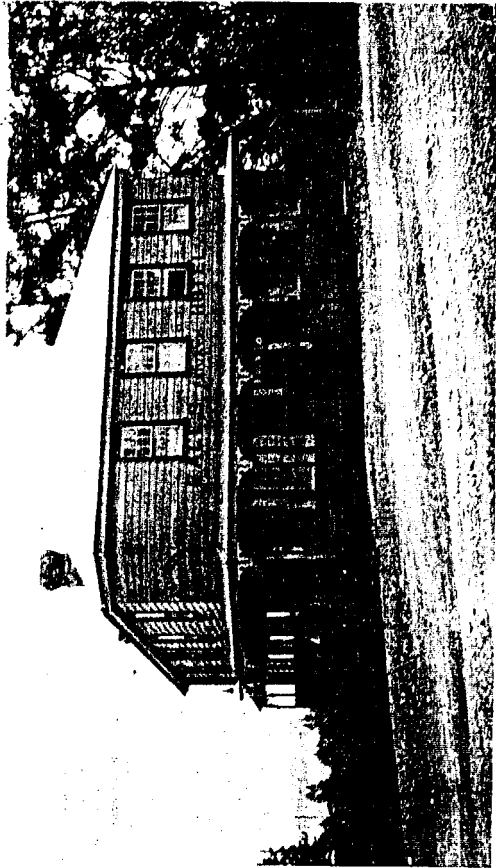
While there was a substantial settlement around the mill at Henderson prior to 1881, it was not until the railway was completed that sections were put up for sale. On Tuesday, March 22, 1881, business and residential sites went on sale for the first time in the Township of Henderson. It was a most successful land sale, the attendance numerous and the bidding spirited. Most sections sold for prices ranging between \$13 and \$16 while the highest paid was \$26 and the lowest \$7. The main buyers were von der Hyde (a son-in-law of Thomas Henderson), Fred Baxter, James Hepburn, James Laurie, Richard Finn, G. Isaacs, E. Freeman and J. Taylor who was the largest purchaser with a total of 14 sections.

The public pound that was built caused no little trouble from the time of its introduction. First it was built out on to the road and had to be shifted back and then the signwriter who was doing the notice board "had two lines to finish when Detective Jeffery pounced on the painter and took him into custody on a charge of arson. The detective, however, allowed his prisoner to complete the job and a very pretty job he made of it. If the Waitemata County Council does not wish to remain a laughing stock the sooner the spelling in the lower portion of the board is altered the better. Some wag has suggested that the board be left in its present state as a tourist attraction."

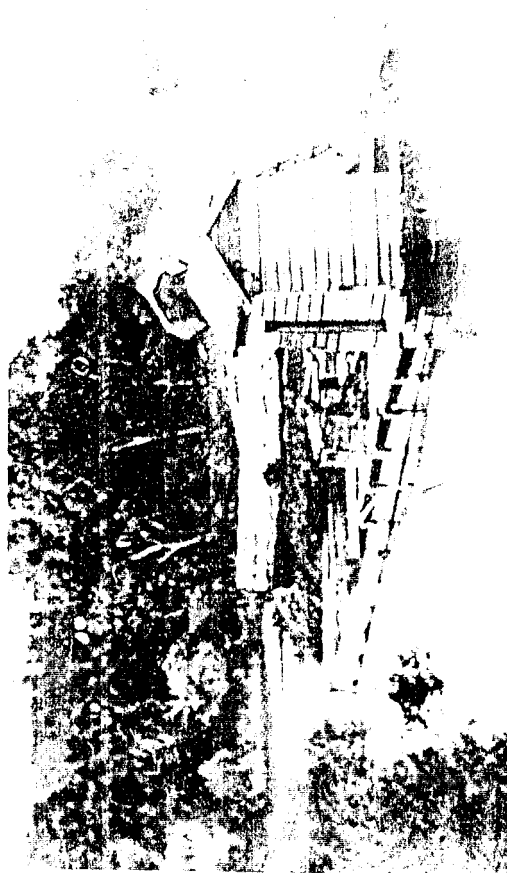
The Henderson Races were held on St. Patrick's Day and residents from Auckland and surrounding districts flocked to the course. Started in 1876 as the Henderson Mill Turf Club, it was free from debt by 1879 and from then on until it closed in 1888 it attracted good attendances and entries for the six races usually run. The feature race was the Henderson Mill Handicap Cup of 120 sovereigns run over 1 1/4 miles. Here is an extract from an account of the meeting held in 1879:

"The stewards were Mr J. Smyth, Mr J. Malam, Mr T. Henderson, jnr., Mr J. Dignan and Mr A. Hepburn. Mr A. Dilworth officiated as judge in his usual satisfactory and impartial manner. Mr J. Suiter was clerk of the seats, and although the appliances for weighing at his disposal were rather primitive — an antiquated spring balance with a loose unruly right digit and a piece of rope slung off the hook forming the only seat — he performed his duties well and afforded satisfaction. Mr Vercoe was clerk of the course and Mr W. Percival handicapper. The races were well contested and in no instance did the favourite win. The bookmakers did a fair business so also did those who carried on the usual racecourse games and Mr Duance of the Crown Hotel, Grey Street, who leased the grandstand bar."

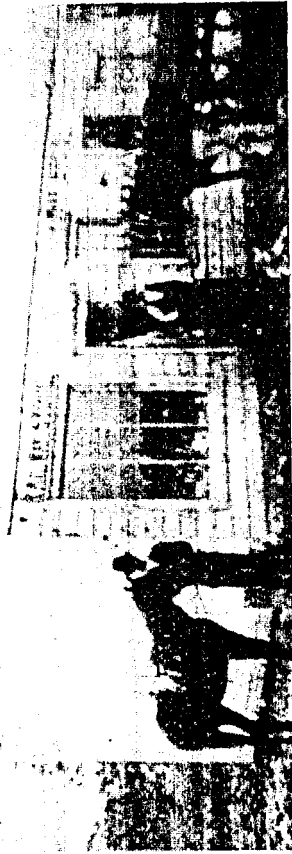
No other district race meeting in the province of Auckland was more popular than that held at Henderson's Mill. Life in Henderson was much the same as the neighbouring townships. Dances went on until four or five o'clock in the morning, concerts were organised, complaints about the roads were frequent and the birds in 1887 were 'eating the apples, fairly scooping the fruit out'."



THE HENDERSON HOTEL on its original site at the corner of Rallicside Avenue and Great North Road. It lost its licence when the western districts went 'dry' in 1909. Built about 1862, its first licensee was John McLeod who managed the Henderson and Macfarlane farm. This building now stands behind the shops fronting Rallicside Avenue having been moved back to make way for commercial development.



THE HENDERSON LANDING situated at the junction of the Opanuku and Oratia Streams dating from the earliest days of Henderson's mill and used for passenger and supply boats before the coming of the railway. The logs in the background have been brought down from the Waitakere bush, they will be rolled into the tide and towed to Auckland for milling.



Laurie brothers' Railway Store, Henderson, 1881, was opened opposite the new station when the railway from Auckland was completed. Other business people in the town in the early years included Mr Poppleton, Henry Stebbing, Samuel la Trobe and Mrs Hepburn; while of the early settlers William Leighton, Ben Cranwell, James Wilson, Richard Vercoe, George Duncan and the Smyths are best remembered.

To Let,

The ROOMY and CON- VENIENT FACTORY

at Henderson, lately used as a heel tip factory. Has 10 h.p. turbine installed, and more power is available. Water power is the cheapest on earth. Good opportunity to flaxmillers or manufacturers to obtain water power that is unequalled in the colony for handiness to rail and salt water and proximity to the city. Will lease or sell. Apply

G. PIRRIIT,

In 1884, George Pirritt moved his heel and toe plate factory from the Bombay Hills to Henderson, where until 1905 he ran a successful enterprise in conjunction with a hardware business in Auckland. Until recently the weir across the Oratia Stream was still intact as was the drive shaft from the water turbine set in the bank below the factory floor.