

# Francis Hicks Timeline

1839

Born in Cornwall 1 January<sup>i</sup>

1852-1858

Teenager. Worked on his father's farm.<sup>ii</sup>

1858/9 Emigration.

Arrived in Auckland 6 February 1859 on the ship William Watson wearing bell-topper and swallow tails.<sup>iii</sup>

Lived in Auckland about ten months.<sup>iv</sup>

Not much work available. Mainly piece work and hard to get.<sup>v</sup>

Next went to Rotorua. Income as amateur artist capturing local scenes for people (no cameras at this time.)<sup>vi</sup>

1859

Went to Hawke's Bay. Did farm work.

Saw the use of wire fencing instead of boundary riders to contain stock and utilise grass more efficiently.<sup>vii</sup>

After 1859

To NSW Australia – goldfields Lannings Flat inland of Sydney. Not much luck.<sup>viii</sup>

To NZ – goldfields – Gabriels Gully in Otago. Not much luck there either.<sup>ix x</sup>

1863-1864

To Auckland – Waikato War still in progress. (War 12 July 1863 – 2 April 1864.)

Supervised prisoners of Mount Eden stockade while they broke stones for the road between Drury and Mercer.

Next worked as Paymaster for the forces.

1864 after the war.

To Hawke's Bay doing fencing contracts.<sup>xi</sup>

Lived in Clive, a base camp for pastoral contractors. Hard to get work. Long hours. Low pay. Persevered and gradually accumulated money.<sup>xii</sup>



1869 October

Had enough money to lease land in Hastings from Thomas Tanner. Signed a nineteen year lease for 101 acres near Karamu. Annual rental with option to buy. Did buy the land. <sup>xiii</sup>

Strong ideas on farming. Grow root crops, turnips, and keep as many sheep and cattle through the winter as possible. Didn't work as the roots of his swede turnips were wasted when the cattle were put onto the puggy ground. <sup>xiv</sup>

Hicks' farm was no good for fattening stock. <sup>xv</sup>

Used the land for crops although ground very puggy. <sup>xvi</sup>

Opened a store in Napier to sell produce. With nephew Tobias, Hicks successfully applied to run a post office within the store. <sup>xvii</sup>

Prices for farm produce low. <sup>xviii</sup>

Built two roomed building on his land in Hastings (Karamu block) and called the street Hicks Street (later renamed). General store selling food, clothing, drapery, hardware, saddlery, seeds, stationery etcetera. <sup>xix</sup>

His farm had been called Hicksville <sup>xx</sup> Probably because a few buildings there and the street was name Hicks Street. Community name not an official name. <sup>xxi</sup>

1872

Saw a business opportunity. Chance to increase the post office business. News of a planned railway line to go through his land. Donated land for railway station and divided his land up into sections for sale. Caused a lot of interest. A new road was built between Hicks Street and Havelock North although the railway was only in the planning stages. <sup>xxii</sup>

Had no influence over the route of the railway. The route was the cheapest to build and was a government decision. <sup>xxiii</sup>

He subdivided his land into quarter, half and four acre sections. He donated land for a railway station, a school house, market and court house. He paid for free coaches to bring gentlemen from Napier to view the sections before the auction. <sup>xxiv</sup>

Hicks had improved the land by grassing, by planting orchards and by planting forest trees. <sup>xxv</sup>

1873 July 8 and 9

Auctions of sections. Total realised £3,500. <sup>xxvi</sup>

Sold cattle. Now had several thousand pounds. <sup>xxvii</sup>

Travelled along the west coast and up to Cambridge looking for land which was suitable for growing swede turnip crops. <sup>xxviii</sup>



1873-1875

Impressed by farms in Cambridge. Wanted to purchase block of land in Pukekura. Multiple owners from military grants. Began seeking owners to negotiate. Absentee owners in goldfields and elsewhere.<sup>xxix</sup>

1875 December 26

Finally took possession of 800 acres at Pukekura. Named property Trelawney.

Land good for turnip crops followed by grassing.

Burnt off, ploughed and grassed land. Made paddocks smaller. Used sheep, as in Hawke's Bay, to stamp out fern regrowth. Drove mobs of sheep from Napier through Taupo to Cambridge. Used fattening paddocks of grass grown after crops of turnips on the way.

Education of farmers.

Wire fencing – from Hawke's Bay.

Growing root crop before grassing. Cattle in to eat turnip tops. Root crops for winter feed of stock.

Subdivision of land to make money.

Drained his swampy land to improve it. Grew ornamental trees, forest trees and established eight acres of orchard on his property.<sup>xxx</sup>

1875 October

Established a Farmers' Club in Cambridge. Aim was to keep farmers up to date with new practices. Waikato had been somewhat isolated up till then.<sup>xxxi</sup>

1883

Married Mary Allan and had 13 children.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Returned to Hawke's Bay occasionally.

Hicks Road was renamed, but his name was later given to Francis Hicks Street.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

1923

Fifty year celebrations of the founding of Hastings.

Three of Hick's daughters requested recognition of Hicks as the "Father of Hastings."

1968

A daughter of Hicks posted papers and newspaper cuttings to the Hastings Town Clerk as evidence that Hicks was the "Father of Hastings" and asking that the Hicks family be invited to the Hastings 100 year celebrations.<sup>xxxiv</sup>



## **Bibliography**

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## Endnotes for timeline

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- <sup>i</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 126
- <sup>ii</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 126
- <sup>iii</sup> Cited in Boyd (1984) P. 23
- <sup>iv</sup> Cited in Beer & Gascoigne (1975) p. 178
- <sup>v</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 126
- <sup>vi</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 126
- <sup>vii</sup> Cited in Beer & Gascoigne p. 178
- <sup>viii</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 126
- <sup>ix</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 126
- <sup>x</sup> Cited in Beer & Gascoigne (1975) p. 178
- <sup>xi</sup> Cited in Beer & Gascoigne (1975) p. 178
- <sup>xii</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 126
- <sup>xiii</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 125
- <sup>xiv</sup> Cited in Beer & Gascoigne(1975) p. 178
- <sup>xv</sup> Cited in Boyd (1984) p. 23
- <sup>xvi</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 126
- <sup>xvii</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 126
- <sup>xviii</sup> Cited in Boyd (1984) p. 23
- <sup>xix</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 126
- <sup>xx</sup> Beer & Gascoigne (1975) p. 179
- <sup>xxi</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 127
- <sup>xxii</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 127
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 119
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Cited in Boyd (1984) p. 23
- <sup>xxv</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 128
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Cited in Boyd (1984) p. 26
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 128
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Cited in Beer & Gascoigne (1975) p. 177
- <sup>xxix</sup> Cited in Beer & Gascoigne (1975) p. 178
- <sup>xxx</sup> Cited in Beer & Gascoigne (1975) pp. 178-180
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Cited in Beer & Gascoigne (1975) p. 180
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Cited in Wallace (2013)
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Cited in Wright (2001) p. 128
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Cited in Hicks (1994)