

Walker's Bay

Excerpts from the relevant portions of
William Nelson's Diaries - Annotated
in parts.

Written by George Nelson (Reininger)
son of William from the
Diaries of William Nelson.

6 January 1855 "Sam" was probably ^{his brother George} Sam Grace, the Cashman

? 15 Jan 7. "Miss Mollady" was probably Miss Emily Mollady
afterwards Mrs Charles Nelson

"Burbury's" Possibly "Birdingbury Hall" (pro-
nounced "Burbury") near Stockton.

19th January 1855 "Stockley" (?) "Hockley" perhaps, where the Rev.
John Townsend had a school for boys.

27th January 1858 "The Giblins" Alfred & John, who after-
wards came to New Zealand & settled in Hawkes Bay.

28th January 1858 "Maria" = Mrs John Townsend, formerly Maria
Wayne; W.N.'s Cousin.

18th February 1858 "Dick" Perhaps Dick (Alfred) Giblin.

29th May 1858 Mrs. Townsend kept school at ^{Hockley} Knowle. ~~May have~~
~~moved there from Hockley.~~ ("Knowle" is a station on the Great
Western Railway; possibly the station for Hockley?)

W.N.

Fifth & youngest son of G.N. ~~4th~~

Born at Warwick Eng. 1

His early youth. Plum pudding. Wont about doing nothing. Beat George & Mani at tipcat in the street. Bought ginger beer.

24 May 1858. Walked about on the sands & made some holes in it, one particularly, while I was building (it was late made a rasper I never thought of looking behind me) I was surrounded with water & had to run through it, very much to my inconvenience.

? Left school 23rd June 1858

8 July 1858. Turned chisel handles.

20 July 1858. "Had my first day in the office"

1st Jan 7 1860. Started work at Reading

Making bacon toaster. Cleaned clock at night. Oiled clock. ^{Reading in evening, writing, talk?} Drawing in the evening.

Making bullets. "Peweeke supper"

10th March 1860 "My last day's Currying" 19th March 1860 Started at Stockton.

Making bullets. Shooting with pistol. Making pattern for engine frame. ^{working} Reading in evening.

Fitted up my steam gauge. Read "Baby on Cement". Mended blind. Gardening. Shooting.

Drawing plans for engine. Making patterns for engine

4th April 1860. In the office at Stockton

Cutting pea sticks. Tying raspberry canes. Made bench & table for Dick. Got up at 3.20 am to

build duck pen. Moulded some brasses. Made dog kennel. ^{making} Having pigsty in court. Making

frame for greenhouse. Printing. Glazing. Engine patterns. Shooting. Hunting. Mended my boiler. Drawing graphs.

1st January 1860. W.N. went (I think) to one of his Mother's brothers
(a Philbrick) To learn about the Tanning of skins.

2nd January 1860 "Bucklersbury" A lane in the City of London.

3rd January 1860 "Jessie" Perhaps Jessie Philbrick, afterwards
Mrs. Richard Sadler Smith

14th " " "Uncle John" = John Philbrick

15th March 1860 "Shuckburg" ?
30th July 1861
5th Dec: 1861

30th Jan 7 1862
13th Feb " "
27th July " "
29 July "

19th March 1860 W.N. started at the Cement Works of Charles
Nelson & Co. at Stockton Warwickshire.

15th April 1860 "Ludbrooke" ? Ladbroke?
20th May "

19th May

27th June 1861. (W.N. married Sarah Bicknell in 1865)

20th July 1861. "Dad" seems to have been his brother Charlie.
(W.N.'s father died about 1850).

24th July 1861. "Tom Blyth" (Father of Hugh B.) Partner in Charles Nelson & Co.

31st July 1861 I suggest S.B. = Sarah Bicknell; E.B. = Ellen Bicknell.
H.B. = Hetta Bicknell.

21st Decr. 1861 "W. & J. Blackstone" Probably brothers of Mrs Tom Blyth

19th May 1862 "Called at Orford Lodge for Sally" (possibly Sally Bicknell)

14th June 1862. Met S.B. (Sarah Bicknell) in Leamington.

- 22 Apr. Stockton on my horse
1862. 22 Apr. Joe Ward moved out of house.
29. Mother came to work at my house
- 6 May. Took possession of my mansion. Dined at 1: Tea at 7: Bed at 11.
10. Hockley on my horse at 1. Had game of rounds
- Sun. 11. Birds nests in afternoon. Home to Stockton at 10.20. Bed at 12
15. Mrs Goodman to keep house.
17. Went tea with me at Stockton
18. Lying on the grass afternoon
19. Called at Oxford Lodge for Sally & her sister at 12 ... walked home with Sally.
22. My housekeeper came. Mrs Goodman left.
23. Had my carte taken at the Stereoscopic Coy. To Dunmore.
30. Exhibition at 12.

- 14 June Met S.B. in Leamington
19. To the Club at Stockton with Mr Clough at 3.45. Gin & water till 5.30. Looking on at the dancing till 8.30. Dancing till 10. Home at 11.
24. J. M. Oldham's birthday party
25. Had a game of forfeits till 1 (am.) Good one it was. Dancing till 3.15 with a little singing. Greater part of the folk left at 3.20. I stayed behind having two words with the girls. Left at 4.45. Breakfast 5.30. Mill at 6. Lunch at 10. Rode down to Southam to call on Miss Oldham
- 1 July Walked with the Miss Oldhams
13. Cherries in afternoon
- 9 Aug Shot blackbirds after tea
11. Eight games quoits
13. Up at 6. Mill till 6 pm.

(There is a gap here: The diary resuming 20th Oct.)

25th October 1862. Boarded the "Devonshire" for New Zealand.

1^{Nov}. Lay up in mutton etc. 8^{Nov}. Main leg mutton etc. 10th Cow. 24th American ship. Neptune

2nd Jan 7 1863. Sitting with Capt. Hall all afternoon making his aneroid. 21st. Dismissing beautiful young ones to Capt. H. from 8 to 10.30. and again on the 22nd from 8 to 11.

3rd Feb. 1863 Sighted New Zealand

7th Feb " Landed at Auckland

8th " " Wreck of H.M.S. Orpheus on Manakau Bar on 7th
" wrapped ourselves up in blankets & lay down on the floor"

12th " " "To Land office"

13th. Unpacked & brought home our cart: put it together in afternoon.

15th. Feb (Wed) " Inspecting farmland.

17th. Looking about D. Hall's farm at Papakura: learning to drive bullocks &c.

23. Unpacked copper: fixed grindstone. 24 & 25 washing nearly all day.

3rd March " Sailed for Whangarei to inspect properties

6th. Stayed the night, perched up on a shelf in the roof.

14th. " " Returned to Auckland.

16th. " " "Turning up grindstone in afternoon"

" " "Williams spent the evening with us" (J.N. 18)

20th. " " "Fred left for Coromandel by steamer"

21st. " " "Went to tea with Williams at Clemon's House."

1st April " "Reached Raglan ... very tired & glad to see Tom joining us."

6th. " " Back in Auckland

2nd April 1863 "S^t. Mary's in morning & S^t. Matthews in evening"

13th " " "Making work bench all day"

14th " " "Making bedstead all day"

16th " " "Washing all day"

18th " " "Making Table"

23rd " " "Making desk"

26th " " S^t. Mary's in morning. S^t. Matthews in evening. Writing
to Mother in afternoon

28th " " "Cleaned out the well"

3rd May " S^t. Mary's morning & evening. J. Williams to tea"

7th " " "Fred left (by the Lord Ashley) for Napier"

" " "Went to the Flower Show."

13th " " "Building pig sty"

23rd June " with ^{J.C. & J.N.} J. & J. Williams to look over Lynch's farm"

- 12th July 1863 "To the barracks by seven: Sloop into the Militia"
- 13th " " "Took my arms up to the Orderly Room"
- 23rd " " "Left by the Waanga Waanga for Napier"
- 26th " " "Came inside the Iron Pot at 9.30"
- 28th " " "Arrived at Wellington. "Hada Congy" ^(Hadfield) with the Bishop"
- 31st " " "Left by the Ladybird at 7.15 am."
- 1st August " " "Anchored in Nelson at 7.30 am."
- 4th " " "Disgusted with Nelson, I took passage to Wellington"
- 8th " " "Ashore at Lyttelton 2 pm.. Walked over the hill, & to Christchurch by bus"
- 16th " " "To Rangiora"
- 20th " " "To Lincoln"
- 2nd September " " "Reached Akaroa"
- 5th " " "Left Akaroa"

14th September 1863 "Jed came in while I was having my breakfast, having obtained a months leave from Auckland."

21st September 1863 Left Christchurch

24th " " Reached Napier To the Masonic, where we slept

25th " " "Met ^{J.N.} Williams; had a chat; then to bed."

26th " " "Out with Williams in evening"

27th " " "Church in morning. Rode out to Havlock with Williams in evening: Slept there.

28th " " "Up at 5.15 ... rode to M. Leavis's ^(Maraakakaho) to breakfast: out to Smith's (Hector Pope Smith) to drill. Dined with Smith; then rode on to Williams's with Herrick by 6.30

("Williams" was James Nelson Williams, who at that time owned the property at Kereru now held by the Durubull family. "Smith" was Hector Pope Smith owner of "Aorangi", later known as "Obriq" which included what is now known as "Mangatahi". "Herrick" was Colonel Herrick, in charge of the local forces.)

29th September 1863 "Down to Herrick's & back"

30th " " "Militia drill from 11 To 1 and from 2 To 4

5th October 1863 "My first days work"

4th November "Williams & I left M. Leavis at 5.30 and got into Port for breakfast

⊗ This property has recently been purchased by Ruth Nelson & another (Ruth is the daughter of Frank Nelson & Minnie Williams - daughter of J.N. 18th Oct. 1841)

6th November 1863 "Left Napier 3.30: Sea'd at Havelock: left again at 6.45 for Te Aute, which we reached at 10.15. Very dark & raining nearly all the way."

9th " " "Rode to the Kereru

17th " " "Marking Herrick's lambs - 1800"

26th " " "Rode with Williams over to Te Aute."

27th " " "Up at 5: rode down to Poi by 10 a.m.; Breakfasting at Havelock. Left Napier for Lord Ashley at 2 p.m."

29th " " "Arrived in Auckland about 11 a.m."

1st December " To Whangamurino ... found Brad there.

4th " " Returned to Auckland

6th " " "St. Paul's in morning: heard Bishop Williams.

8th " " "walked up to J. Williams's. went aboard the Lord Ashley and left at 4.45."

9th " " "Ship so full that we are not able to get anything to eat"

10th December 1863 Anchored in Napier at 11 a.m.

11th " " Up at 7 a.m. Rode out to Clive to break-
fast with Ferguson. He & I then rode on to Mr Lean's to dinner.
I went onto the Kereru about 4 p.m.

12th Decr. " J.N.W. commenced sheep-shearing.

15th " " Rode over Prodrell's place in the afternoon.

24th " " Making target for rifle shooting.

26th " " Williams gone over to Te Tohanga Tohanga
to mark out sheep yards.

31st " " Down at Herrick's playing cards with Smith
till early in the New Year.

- 7th January 1864 Agreed to take Pondrell's place.
- 13th January 1864. Finished shearing today.
- 14th " " Commenced shearing Herrick's flock.
- 15th " " Went up to Pondrell's yesterday took possession of 130 head of cattle.
- 17th " " Walked up to Brown's Lodge with Morecroft & Williams.
- 19th " " Did my first days work at Brown's Lodge: mowing with Saunders all day.
- 23rd " " Haymaking all day. Cards with H.W.P.S. ^(Smith) down at Herricks in evening.
- 25th " " Haymaking for Williams.
- 26th " " Thrashing grass seed at the Lodge all day.
- 2nd February " Rode over to De Whana Whana in the morning up to the Lodge in the afternoon.
- 3rd February " Herrick finished shearing.

8th February 1864 "Putting up 10 colshed on the Maori run with Herricks."

10th " " "Commenced shearing on the Maori run"

17th " " "Started for De Aute at noon, managing to lose my way." Put up at Peter Miller's.

18th " " "Made another start for De Aute, which I reached at 10 am. Walking about with Coleman all afternoon."

19th " " "Left for Poi at 10.30 am. Dined at Havelock. Went onto S^r Hill's place on the Duki Duki and reached Poi about 6.30 pm."

25th " " "Down to the Spit by 10.30. Left Gill's at 12 for Havelock. Rode on to De Aute after dinner with Addie."

26th " " "Looking at some cattle in the morning. Rode up to the Kereru after lunch. Williams out burning."

27th " " "Riding a strange horse ... managed to get pul over his head, not getting damaged. Duff called. Williams gone to the back country to bring in horses."

1st March 1864 "Laying the floor of sitting room at the Lodge.
First day of Napier Races."

2nd " " "After cattle all morning. Everyone away
at the Races."

5th " " "Herrick came home. Went down below
with him for apples & cucumbers."

6th " " "Rode up to the Lodge to get peaches with
Herrick."

7th " " "Left at 7 am. for De Aule, which I reached
at 12.30 pm. Riding about with S. Williams looking at
cattle all afternoon."

8th " " "Walking about all morning with S. W.
& Purvis Russell. Rode down to Port by 9 pm. Spent
a very fine evening listening to Bousfield and old Hunter."

9th " " "Down to the Spil after dinner for letters
from "Lord Ashley". Rode up to Havelock with Hadfield
by 7 pm."

10th " " "Rode onto De Aule with Hadfield & Crichton
Shanks to dinner. Onto Homewood to help Williams
drive sheep. Got back about 7.15. Found Mrs. Thompson
& Capt. Newman at De Aule."

11th March 1864. "Up at 6.30. Drove 800 sheep as far as Mason's by 6.30 p.m."

12th " " "Up at 7. Drove sheep to Smiths."

13th " " "Drove sheep home by night."

16th " " "Drove Smiths mare over to De Aule"

17th " " "Mustering & drafting cattle."

18th " " "Started with cattle from De Aule at 10 a.m. Reached Smiths at 11 p.m. by moonlight."

19th " " "Drove out to the Kororo by 3 p.m. Stewart & Morecroft up."

21st " " "Cards with Morecroft in evening. McDonald here in evening."

22nd " " "Breakfast at 6.30. Rode down to Poi by 12.30. Down at the Spit for some hours. Playing billiards with Mr. Kinross all evening; then up to sleep at his house."

23rd " " "Playing billiards nearly all day. Richardson in at the Club in evening."

24th March 1864. "Settled matters with Powdrell in the morning. Down to the Spit to dinner. Up with Livross at 10 pm. To sleep."

25th " " "Rode out to Neave's with Richardson & Malby, then on to Kereru alone. Williams driving sheep from McLean's"

27th " " "Walked up to the Lodge with Herrick & Williams in the morning"

28th " " "Threshing grass seed all day. Fishing partly out"

29th " " "Riding after cattle all day."

30th " " "Up to the Lodge in the morning. Selling the house to rights all day. Spent the first night "at home" with Addie."

3rd April " " "Williams & Morgan came up"

5th " " "S. J. Powdrell up"

15th " " "Repairing Stock yard all day"

20th April 1864 "Rode up to Duff's with Morgan

21st " " "Marking out a line for cross fence & chaining grass paddock. Pigeon shooting in afternoon."

22nd " " "Sowing grass seed in morning. Burning Big Hill in afternoon."

23rd " " "Sowing grass seed all day on Big Hill."

29th " " "Digging well & pond"

3rd May " " "Hunting cattle in the Kereru all day."

8th " " "Down at Herrick's all day"

9th " " "Rode up to Duff's with Williams"

10th " " "Making cutting across the Creek"

14th " " "Cutting track through the bush"

22nd " " "Rode up to Duff's with Morgan. M. Cullock up to dinner"

24th " " "Killed & salted pig."

25th May 1864 "Down to drill at Aorangī"

26th " " "Round the Cattle in morning. Killed bullock
down at Williams's in afternoon"

31st " " "Cutting firewood in the bush all day"

3rd June " " "Killing pig + building wheel barrow"

5th " " "Fred came down from Auckland"

7th " " "Rode up from Port with Fred"

12th " " "Herrick's all day"

19th " " "Herrick + Morgan up."

21st " " "Rode with Herrick + Jack to De Aule."

23rd " " "Rode home"

24th " " "Drill"

25th " " "Finished sledge"

7th July 1864 "Built work bench"

Sun. 17th " " "Rode down to M. Leavis with Williams & Jack."

25th " " "Drove to Poi with Herrick & Addie."

15th August " " "Planting potatoes. Red gone to Herricks drafting"

27th " " "Finished safe; gardening."

29th " " "Stumping"

30th " " "Nursing Tom and gardening"

5th September " " "Fencing all day"

12th " " "Making yokes all day"

13th " " "Branding & drafting"

16th " " "Sledging firewood"

20th " " "Rode over to Le Aute with Jack"

21st " " "Went to Russell's Cattle Sale at Waipukurau.
Bought a few cows... Do sleep at Mount Herbert"

28th September 1864 "Ploughing with grey filly. Locke up
& spent the evening with us." (Samuel Locke was a Surveyor)

30th " " " Drill

5th October Killing bullock in afternoon

6th October " " Cutting up bullock. Made stretcher.

7th " " " Dined with Duff. Jack & Williams
home from De Aute.

11th " " " Cutting up bullock. Raining in afternoon.
S. Williams & Leonard Williams here all night

13th " " " Rode up to Duff's with S. Williams.
Back to Williams' to sleep.

15th " " " Home after breakfast. Morecroft &
George with all the Kereru Swells spent the day & night
with us.

21st October To De Aute. Found Aunt Williams & her of my Cousins there.

22nd Riding about with Colman after cattle.

23rd Walking about & talking to Colman.

9th Nov^r " " " Making drag road across Creek all day

11th " " " Planting potatoes all day

14th - Ditching all morning?

15th " " " Taking cows down to Herricks in morning
Cutting firewood in the bush all afternoon

28th November 1864. "Up at 5: got the cattle in: commenced branding at 7.30. Down to Port with Williams at 9 am.

29th " " " Rode out to Pakowhai, then on to De Aute with Williams by 5 pm. Gainsford there.

30th " " " Up at 3.45 am. Rode home by 10 am. Packing up for England in afternoon."

1st January 1865 " Church in morning. On board the
"Northam" at 2 p.m. Weighed anchor at 5 p.m. and
sailed for Galle.

14th " " " Dropped anchor in Galle at 5 p.m.
Astore at 5.30. Walked up to Blyth's to dine.

17th " " " Aboard the "Nubia" at 8.30 a.m.

25th " " " Arrived in Aden at 6 a.m. ... Drove out
to the Dawks ... Sailed at 4 p.m.

30th " " " Arrived at Suez 11 p.m.

31st " " " ... went aboard the train for Cairo
at 2 p.m. ... Put up at Shepherds.

1st February " " " ... "Did the Pyramids" ... Drove up to
the Mosque at night to see the illuminations.

2nd " " " To see the Mosque by day light. Drove out
to the Shubra Gardens + through the Turkish Bazaar.
To a ball + a Theatre in the evening.

3rd " " " Left ... Cairo at 7.15 a.m. and reached
Alexandria at 3 p.m. ... Not a bed to be had ... Could not get
aboard steamer ... a concert in evening.

- 4th February 1865. Did Pompey's Pillar & Cleopatra's Needle on donkeys. Went aboard the "Poona"
- 5th Left Alexandria 5.30 pm.
- 10th Ran into Malta at 4 pm.
- 11th Left Malta at 7 am.
- 13th Passed between Sardinia & Corsica at 12.00
- 14th Reached Marseilles at 8 and left at 11.30 for Paris: reached Lyons at 7.30 pm.
- 15th Arrived in Paris at 7 am. and left at 8 am for Boulogne, which we made by 1 pm. Crossed the Channel in the "Lord Wood". Left Folkestone at 4.30 for London and got in at 7.
- 16th Left Paddington at 12: Stayed at Reading with my mother till 4.45: went onto Warwick: drove to the lawn to spend the night.
- 17th (The "Sammy" here referred to would be his brother George)

5th October 1865 W.N. married Sarah Newcombe Bicknell at Llandrillo Church, North Wales.

14th December 1865 "Mother died at 9.15 p.m."

17th " " "Walked down The Park (London) with J.N.W."

19th " " "Buried my Mother at Milverton"

3rd March 1866 On board the "Kaikoura" at 1 pm.
our party consisting of Mr. & Mrs. W. Nelson; Mr. & Mrs.
Townsend; Alfred & John Giblin.

4th March 1866 Sailed at 10.20 am. with a most splendid
day.

5th " " Reached Plymouth at 3 pm.

8th " " Sailed from Plymouth at 2 pm

12th " " Dining under difficulties: Seal carried
away at dinner time with Jim Williams & five others
aboard.

16th " " Reached St. Vincent at 7 pm. Averaged
Eleven knots an hour on the run from Plymouth.

20th " " Sailed at 5 pm for the Cape.

29th " " Detention of six hours to clean boiler tubes.

30th " " Lost one blade of screws during the night

7th April 1866 Reached Capetown 3.15 p.m. Parkes Hotel to
Tea & bed.

10th " " Sailed at 6.15 p.m.

18th " " Engines stopped for four hours to clean boiler tubes.

21st " " Engine stopped seven hours - pump broken.

3rd May " Lost another blade of screws sometime
during the gale.

4th " " Working with only one blade to the screws.

5th " " Sighted Cape Otway at noon

7th " " Berthed alongside wharf by breakfast time.
Spent the day between the "Otage" & "Kaikoura". Met Miller
on the "Lincolnshire".

8th " " Between the Kaikoura & Melbourne all day.

14th " " Sailed at 7 a.m. for The Bluff.

19th May 1866. Reached Bluff at 4 am. + left for Dunedin at 6 am.

20th " " Anchored alongside the "Auckland" and transferred luggage: left in her at 2 pm.

22nd " " Left Lyttelton at 12.30 pm.

24th " " Left Wellington at 4 pm.

25th " " Reached Napier at 5 pm. Went on shore with Fred at 7.30 + up to Kinross's to sleep.

28th " " Left for De Aule at 4.15 with Fred + Moorson: Reached De Aule at 10.10. Sent on our family by Carl in the morning.

29th " " Rode over to Arlington with Fred in afternoon.

31st " " Rode back to De Aule in afternoon.

4th June " Left De Aule with Sally + servants at 11.45 am. in Mr. Williams's cart: Reached Arlington at 3.40 pm.

WILLIAM NELSON, 1843 - 1932*

*Unless otherwise indicated this chapter is based on information supplied by G. Nelson, Havelock North, 16 December, 1955.

As the founder of the freezing industry in Hawke's Bay, only two years after the first experimental shipment of frozen meat had left New Zealand, William Nelson ranks among the province's outstanding pioneers; indeed he was one of the great pioneers of the Dominion. It is important therefore to examine those personal qualities which lay behind his success.

William Nelson, born in Warwick in 1843, came from a comfortably-off, middle-class manufacturing family. "The Lawn", the family's home, was a two storied building surrounded by five or six acres of parkland and gardens. G. Nelson, his father, was the proprietor of G. Nelson, Dale and Company, manufacturers of gelatine and cement. In all probability G. Nelson was a typical example of the rising manufacturing classes of the 19th Century England - one of those enterprising, self-made men who had found their chance during the Industrial Revolution.

William Nelson was one of the many people who emigrated from Europe to the Colonies and the New World after 1830. For the most part these emigrants were men of initiative and ability, who were not afraid of hard work, and who were inspired by the idea of improving their fortunes overseas. Nelson's particular ambition was to become a sheepfarmer, and he came to New Zealand with the idea of taking up sheep farming. To some extent this interest in the land had been foreshadowed by his boyhood interest in gardening* - an unusual hobby for a lad of 12 to 15 years.

Nelson, W., Diary, 1855, 1858, passim.

He was only a youth of 19 when, with his brother Frederick, he arrived in Auckland on the 7 February, 1863.* He remained

*ibid., 7 February, 1863.

in and about Auckland for some five months, inspecting various farm properties and generally adapting himself to life in the colony.* He visited Whangarei and went as far south as

*ibid., 7 February to 25 July, 1863.

Mangatawhiri, only the hostility of the Maoris preventing him from continuing his journey to Raglan.

Nelson's parents were apparently people of some substance. At any rate they were well-connected, for Jane Williams,* wife of the missionary William Williams, was William Nelson's

*Nee Nelson

cousin. Thus on his arrival in New Zealand, Nelson had the advantage of possessing relatives who were already influential members of the colony's society. While he was in Auckland he met William Williams' son, J.N. Williams i.e. his second cousin. This was the beginning of a life-long friendship which culminated in their joint commercial venture of 1880,*

* Vide supra p.

and which was further cemented by Nelson's second marriage to Williams' sister, Caroline, in 1884. No doubt it was due to the influence of J.N. Williams that the Nelson brothers finally settled in Hawke's Bay - but not before William had visited Nelson, Christchurch, and Rangiora, and examined the surrounding country.*

* Nelson, op.cit., 23 July to 21 August 1863, passim.

Nelson arrived in Napier in September 1863,* and for a

*ibid., 9 September, 1863.

few months he stayed with Williams on his station at Kereru. He worked on the estate, visited neighbouring properties and met some of the Province's most prominent pastoralists, including J.L. Herrick, the MacLeans and Samuel Williams,* son of Henry Williams.

*ibid., 9 September to 29 December, 1863, passim.

Thus Nelson's connection with the Williams family proved very valuable: it gave him an immediate entry to a select social group - that of the Province's leading pastoralists.

Early in 1864 the Nelson brothers purchased from Joseph Powdrell a property adjoining Kereru, which they named "Brown's Lodge" -* now known as Poporangi.

*ibid., 17 January, 1864.

After farming "Brown's Lodge" for a year William returned to England to marry Sarah Newcombe Bicknell, the daughter of Henry Bicknell, Bangor, North Wales.* With his wife he

*Clyclopedia of New Zealand, Vol.VI, p.388.

sailed again for Napier in March, 1867.*

*Nelson, op.cit., 8 March, 1867

During his absence, Frederick had purchased Arlington, a station of some 14,000 acres near Waipukurau, and it was there that William Nelson and his wife settled on their return. After spending a week with Samuel Williams at Te Aute, they moved into Arlington in June 1866.* Their stay

*ibid., 4 June 1867.

was shortlived, however, for the two brothers were soon faced with financial disaster: a serious fall in wool prices, aggravated by a plague of grass-hoppers virtually robbed them of their inheritance. They were unable to meet their interest payments, and when the mortgagee foreclosed on the estate, they had to walk off the property and abandon their equity.

With the financial assistance of their friends, the brothers immediately launched out on another farming venture. Early in 1869 they took over the Mangateretere East block, a property of some 2047 acres within a few miles of Hastings. This new undertaking so soon after such a severe set back, illustrates some of the qualities which made for Nelson's success: a venturesome spirit and the determination to succeed. It was characteristic of the man that he should regard his losses at Arlington merely as a misfortune and not as a disaster, and that he should immediately set about to retrieve his position. The fact that he was able to obtain financial assistance from his friends at such a time emphasises his personal integrity as well as showing the value of his connections.

After the establishment of the freezing industry, Nelson widened his activities as a grazier. Nelson Bros. Ltd., or Nelson by himself or in association with friends, bought and leased a large number of properties in various parts of the Province. In all, he was associated in the control of some 100,000 acres.* These included fattening properties on the Heretunga Plains, and hill-country tracts which provided the stores.

* Properties farmed by Nelson at various times included Titoki near Waipawa, Tuki-tuki near Havelock North, Dartmoor, Hakowhai, Mt. Cameron, Omatua, Eskmount, Glengarry, Otaharao, Waipuria, Hukanui, Chesterhope, Oakleigh, Papakura, Waima,

While Nelson gained prominence as a pioneer pastoralist, his greatest undertaking and his most notable success was the establishment of the Tomoana works and the pioneering of the freezing industry in Hawke's Bay. In 1872, leaving his brother, Frederick, to manage the Mangateretere property, he returned to England and rejoined his brothers, George and Edward Montague, in the family business in Warwick. He remained in and about Warwick for the next eight years, returning to the Hawke's Bay in 1880 to establish the boiling down and meat processing works at Tomoana.

As a pastoralist, Nelson had experienced the difficulties of marketing livestock, but it is uncertain whether he returned to England for the express purpose of making arrangements for, or interesting his brothers in, establishing a meat canning works in the Province. Possibly his return was prompted by the desire to rejoin his father's firm and recoup his losses, or perhaps he felt that he had a greater future in the family business. In any event, it is most probable that plans to establish Tomoana were not made until Nelson had been in England for some time, since it is unlikely that the necessary arrangements would take as long as eight years.

The establishment of the Tomoana works and much of its success can be attributed to Nelson's natural interest in engineering and practical pursuits. This interest in machinery had been revealed early in his life when as a youth of 19, he spent many of his evenings and weekends tinkering with the engine which heated his father's greenhouse. *

*Nelson op cit., 1862, passim.

When he visited a London exhibition shortly before his emigration to New Zealand, he spent all his time wandering about the machinery display. * His liking for carpentering

*ibid., 30 May 1862.

is another example of his interest in practical activities. Carpentry had been one of his activities as a boy,* and while he was in Auckland he spent his spare time making articles of furniture for his future pioneer home.*

*ibid., 1855, 1858, passim.

*ibid., 7 February to 25 July 1863.

Meat-preserving was not the only industrial concern with which Nelson was associated in Hawke's Bay: for example, he pioneered flax-milling in the Province when in 1869 he purchased three mills from Auckland to work the sixty acres of flax swamp on his property at Mangateretere.* Nelson's

*Hawke's Bay Herald, 29 October, 1869.

introduction of the flax-milling industry was hailed enthusiastically in the Province as "the dawn of a brighter and new era."* But these high hopes were not realized;

*ibid., 12 November 1869

prices slumped; the industry failed.

Timber milling was another of Nelson's interests which revealed his essentially practical and constructive mind. Trading under the name of Wilding and Company, he established a saw-mill on his 7000 acre property of bush land at Whenuahou.*

*Wilson, op.cit., p.374.

Another mill was erected on the Mangateretere property to work the "Big Bush", 100 acres of White Pine.*

*Information supplied by R. Sunderland, Havelock North.

While the establishment of the Tomoana works represented the consummation of Nelson's life-long ambition to succeed, it was typical of the man that he was not prepared to remain idle and quietly enjoy the fruits of his enterprise: he immediately found additional pursuits. Characteristically these were again of a practical nature, and illustrate some further qualities which assured his success: energy and resourcefulness. Like the successful Puritan business man, Nelson was essentially a man of action: he enjoyed being busy, and was never happier than when grappling with the problems of his numerous undertakings.

In his fifties, he interested himself in river control and the prevention of flooding, and for some years was a member of the Clive River Board. It was largely due to his financial backing and encouragement that a swampy area bordering the south of Napier - now known as Napier South - was drained and reclaimed. In 1900 he joined C.D. Kennedy and G. Latham in a scheme to lease 1800 acres of the Whareomaraenui Reserve from the Napier Harbour Board, with an undertaking to reclaim 300 acres of swamp. Nelson supplied the largest share of the capital, and gained the controlling interest in the partnership - known as C.D. Kennedy and Company. From January 1901, he employed his son, G. Nelson, as engineer, and the reclamation was completed in 1906.*

*The first sale of sections was made in April 1908.

Nelson was also actively associated with the pioneering of two Napier engineering firms which have since opened branches throughout the country. In 1908, at the request of J.H. Edmunson*, Nelson interested several Hawke's Bay residents* in forming a syndicate to provide the capital

*This paragraph is based on information supplied by C.D. Edmunson, Lower Hutt, 27 April 1956.

*J. Chambers, (Capt.) R. Todd, C.A. Hawkins and one Rome.

for the promotion of the oxy-acetylene welding industry in New Zealand. In 1911 the business was formed into a liability company, the Acetone Illuminating and Welding Company Ltd.,* As chairman of Directors, Nelson was largely

*Now New Zealand Industrial Gases Ltd.

responsible for guiding the policy of the Company, from 1911 until 1927. A very large share of the Company's early success was due to his zeal. Nelson was also one of the founders of the well-known engineering firm of J.J. Niven and Company Ltd., Napier, and for a number of years he was chairman of the Company's Board of Directors.*

*Hawke's Bay Herald Tribune, 18 October 1951

Apart from his practical mind, strength of character and an indomitable will to achieve were important factors in Nelson's success. As a youth he had carefully built up a philosophy of life and more particularly, firm views on what were the qualities which a successful and worthy life demanded. For example, when he was 21 he copied into his diary* several verses portraying the ideals and qualities which lie behind a successful career. In his admiration for these verses are foreshadowed the self-reliance and initiative, the courage and determination, the honesty and dependability which were to characterise his own life of achievement.

*Nelson, op.cit., 21 December 1864.

His self-disciplined character was founded on a genuine piety, for Nelson was a man of firm religious convictions: above all, a trust in God was the guiding principle of his life. He always claimed that the 15th Psalm influenced his whole life; so much so that he made sure his own children knew it. His piety was the result of his Christian upbringing, for as a boy he regularly attended church twice each Sunday*; he even attended a service in Auckland on the

*ibid., 1855, 1858-66, *passim*.

day after his arrival in New Zealand.* He never lost his

*ibid., 8 February 1863

early faith in Christianity, and right up to his last days he was a loyal supporter of St. Matthew's Church, Hastings.

Nelson's Christian outlook explains much of his success for piety was a characteristic of the successful middle-classes of Victorian England. As in the case of the early Puritans from whom it had been inherited, it inspired the whole of their lives; for like the early Puritan, too, the middle-class manufacturer and merchant of 19th century England believed that commercial success was the direct reward of their piety. It was accompanied by the doctrine of hard work, a regularity of life and conduct, and a singleness of purpose which little could undermine. This was the atmosphere in which Nelson was reared, and his character and career reflect its influence.

Other important factors in Nelson's success were his ability as an organiser, and his natural gift for enlisting the services of energetic and efficient subordinates. He gained his first experience of men and machines in his father's business, where he was employed from the time he left school at the age of 15 until he sailed for New Zealand.* Later as an

*Nelson, op.cit., 20 July 1858-30 May 1862 *passim*.

employer of labour himself, he displayed the paternalism that was characteristic of the enlightened manufacturer of the 19th Century England. He consistently sought to promote cordial labour relations at Tomoana by a friendly acquaintance with his men and a fatherly interest in their welfare. In his philosophy, these were the real basis of harmonious industrial relations - not governments regulations and trade union activity. For example, in June 1883, he established a recreational and reading room at Tomoana for his employees, and allowed them to control it through the Tomoana Social Club formed as a result.* Later, in recognition of the

*Hawkes Bay Weekly Courier, 9 November 1883.

services rendered by his employees in combating a fire at the works, he instituted a system of Annual Sports at Tomoana, on a day set apart as a paid holiday.*

*Hastings Standard, 20 October 1905

Nelson's paternalism was typical too of the humanitarian outlook of the 19th Century. It is reflected in his generosity also, and to his close associates he was regarded as something of a philanthropist. Many a young man and woman in Hawke's Bay had reason to be grateful to him for a start in life or for assistance in times of adversity, but the details of his generosity were usually known only to those who were directly concerned. His outright gifts included an annual donation of £500 to the Salvation Army during World War 1, and a bonus of £10,000 to Ignatuis Loughnan, the manager of his Tuki-tuki property, on the occasion when the estate was sold. Further, he was always a liberal contributor to the funds of St. Matthew's Church.

The key to Nelson's success lies in his background. He was bred of a successful middle-class industrial family of early Victorian England and he himself possessed qualities that were characteristic of the class: a practical outlook genuine piety, ambition, ability and enterprise. He was thus a true representative of the Victorian era, and typical of those Englishmen who turned to the colonies to satisfy their natural ambition.