

## Gabriel's Gully once again a centre of industry

### 1861

Gold has been discovered by Gabriel Read near Lawrence.

That was the beginning of a gold-rush which flourished furiously for a while but is now merely a memory.

### 1946

Bruce — The People's Mill, with headquarters at Milton, establish a branch in Lawrence.

Here, near the location of once famous Gabriel's Gully, is the start of an industry with a lasting future, providing happy and interesting employment for the people of Lawrence.

It's employment with a future,  
because More and More people insist on

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# Hollywood Rocks Us

(Written for "The Listener" by ALAN FULTON)

IT is fine to witness tragedies and catastrophes from the comfort and safety of a cinema seat with the realisation that no worse harm can result than a cold sweat. It is fine, too, to believe that in such a position of safety and comfort one is being educated in the mysterious happenings of the universe, in the past as well as in present times. However, this means of education cannot be taken too seriously for, fortunately, or not, the aim of the motion picture is to entertain rather than to educate, so that when an exaggeration or twisting of the facts can produce a more striking, more dramatic, or more spectacular effect, the true story is discreetly pushed aside. Many examples of this treatment of history by the cinema could be given, but the latest and perhaps the greatest is what concerns us now.

Of particular interest to New Zealanders is the forthcoming film *Green Dolphin Street*, because it includes very spectacular scenes of early Wellington and its earthquakes of 1848 and 1855. According to a recently-published cable message from Hollywood, in a scene lasting three minutes the stars of the film totter on the lips of a crevasse which opens before them and which, as it shuts, swallows one unwary Maori. But that is not all. On a half-acre set, four water geysers and five mud geysers spout into the sky to heights ranging from 35 to 65 feet, while steam billows from openings in the earth. Not in all Geyserland, nor even in the whole of New Zealand, were there ever so many geysers. It is strange that no one living in those troublesome times left a record of such wonderful events as these—if they occurred. In fact, of course, they did not occur as Hollywood has depicted them: they were apparently not sufficiently awe-inspiring by cinema standards, though from all accounts—the authentic ones, that is—the earthquakes of 1848 and 1855 were interesting and exciting enough in all conscience.

[T may, therefore, be just as well to give the true story, even though this can only be done for New Zealand itself. The unfortunate effect of this film in other parts of the world will probably be to confirm in the minds of millions of people the already well-established myth that New Zealand is a place which practically shakes itself to pieces and is submerged beneath the ocean every few years.

According to accounts in newspapers of the time, the 1848 earthquakes began at 1.30 a.m. on Monday, October 16, with what was described as a hollow roar, the sound travelling at a rapid rate. Almost immediately the whole town was rattling and groaning from the worst shake ever felt by the settlers or remembered by the Maoris. The shocks continued at intervals until 7.30. When daylight broke the place presented a melancholy appearance. Most of the brick stores and dwellings, together with many of the solid clay buildings, had received a severe shock and in about two-fifths of the town the chimneys were destroyed. The Wesleyan Chapel, the

jail, and other public buildings were seriously damaged, and the damage to glassware and other property was very great. Many people had narrow escapes but no one was killed.

During Monday three or four light shakes were felt. The weather cleared off in the evening and the stars appeared, but few slept during the night and at four o'clock, and again at seven, more tremors occurred.

ON Tuesday business was at a standstill, though the shops were open as usual. At 3.30 another severe shake did considerable damage. In Farish Street the wall of Fitzherbert's store collapsed on top of Sergeant Lovell and his two children as they were passing below. They were dug out immediately, but the two children were dead and the father so badly injured that he died a few days later. The hospital was severely damaged, so the patients were transferred to Government House. The patients of the Military Hospital, which was near Sturdee Street, were removed to the wooden barracks at Mt. Cook, and the prisoners were taken from the jail and placed in the custody of the military forces.

Tuesday night passed and Wednesday came slowly. Many walked about all night and did not trust themselves in any place of shelter; others found tents and coverings in the open air. Then, to add to the trouble, the tide rose to an unusual height, overflowing part of Lambton Quay and all the sections at the head of the bay fronting the water.

The homeless were sheltered by those who were fortunate enough to be living in wooden houses, and the ministers of the several denominations likewise performed good services, and prayers were offered morning and evening in all the churches left standing, and in most of the private houses of the settlers.

On Wednesday, October 18, two or three light shocks were felt, and on the following day Rhode's brick bonded store, the Wesleyan Church, and other brick buildings fell to the ground. Friday, October 20, was, by special proclamation of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, set apart as a day of public fast, prayer and humiliation; and to prevent alarm the services were held in the open. The congregations were unusually large, unusually attentive, and unusually devout.

A number of settlers, after this series of phenomena, decided that they had "had" Wellington, with its land and native problems, its bush-fires and its earthquakes, and lost no time in making their way on to the barque *Subraon* which promised to take them at full speed to Sydney. However, fate was against these stout-hearted pioneers, because the vessel, when hurrying out of the Heads, ran on the rocks and became a total loss. All those on board reached shore and suffered the indignity of having to return on foot to Wellington for food, shelter and safety.

THE earthquake of 1855 seems to have been every bit as severe as its predecessor, but because of the fewer brick  
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