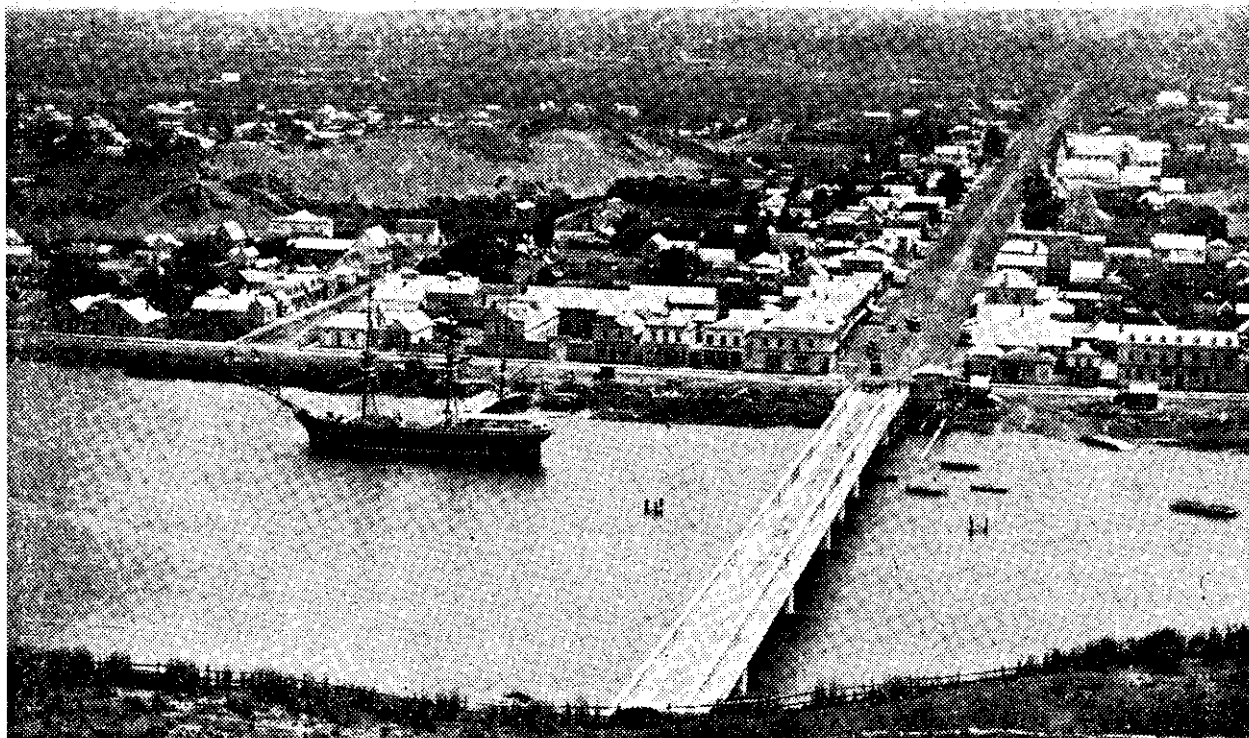




Wanganui as it Was

A LOT of people, hearing the name Wanganui, have an image of the famous river, but the town is also notable—especially historically—as a garrison town in the early days of settlement. In a series of programmes currently being broadcast at 7.0 p.m. each Monday from Station 2XA, M. J. G. Smart, Director of the Wanganui Museum, tells the story of the Wanganui area from the mid-fourteenth century up to the year 1900.

The sale of the Wanganui Block to the New Zealand Company took place in 1840, and early in 1841 the first permanent settlers arrived. The settlement was then called Petre, after Lord Petre, of the New Zealand Company, but in 1844 the name was changed to Wanganui. The early days of settlement were made difficult by Maori dispute to the titles of some of the land. Eventually, in 1847, an accidental gun shot precipitated open warfare, which raged for some months. Seventeen years later, during the Hau-hau uprisings, Wanganui became once more a garrison town, and remained so until peace came in 1871.

It was in these first years of peace that Mr. Smart's family came to Wanganui from the South Island, where they had lived for about ten years. Mr. Smart, senior, was interested in keeping books and records of Wanganui, and

★ THIS view of Wanganui, taken from Durie Hill in 1872, shows the barque Malay, first vessel to come direct from England. The picture at the foot of the page was taken from Durie Hill this year ★

this encouraged his son to do the same. This interest has made the programme *Early Wanganui* possible.

The older of the two photographs shown on this page, gives an indication of what Wanganui was like when the Smart's arrived. It is a year after the bridge was opened, and the barque Malay is tied up at the jetty. She was the first sailing vessel to come direct from England to Wanganui. Three churches can be seen on the right-hand side of Victoria Avenue (ending at the bridge)—the first is the English Church, now St. Peter's, Gonville, to which site it was removed some thirty years ago. The next is St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, which still stands on the same site just above Maria Place, and the last was the Presbyterian Church, which gave way to business premises and was replaced by the new church in Guyton Street. The sand hills of the 1872 photograph have been transformed into the

Cook's Gardens of the 1956 shot. Both photographs were taken from Durie Hill, looking across the river to the city, and afford an interesting comparison.

The series will include stories of tani-wha and ngarara, including the Wanganui River's famous Tutaeporoporo; of some Maori chiefs of the Wanganui River; redoubts and block houses; the Wanganui Gold Rush; the Battle of Moutoa Island; and Bully Hayes and Jock McGregor. The history of street and place names will also be given, and the history of Wanganui's churches.

Mr. Smart started his working life as a clerk in a law office, but after he returned from service in the First World War he went farming up the Wanganui River, and thence to Westmere, where he farmed for thirty years. He has been Honorary Conchologist of the Wanganui Museum for over ten years, and Director for the past five.



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