

The Rangitikei Advocate

October 4, 1928

POMPEII IN THE SAND

Report by County Overseer Arthur Thoms to today's Rangitikei County Council meeting:-

“In company with Cr. Stuart I recently went down to the Koitiatia township. The road was very dry for this season of the year and it would not require much work to put it in fair order. The township itself is in a bad way. All the houses are practically buried with sand excepting three cottages two of which have been recently built further back from the beach.”—
The County Overseer.

Shaky
Start



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Shaky Start

Sand drift became a major issue. When Rapaki street was surveyed, it appears to have been a flat grass area — until the high dunes on the riverbank decided to move inland. Following are extracts from reports and they illustrate the severe problem the sand drift caused for the new village of Koitiata.

November 1924: *"... sand has drifted over sections 23 to 41 which are now practically useless for building or camping sites. Out of 41 sections surveyed there are only a dozen of any use ..."* [Note: the sections 23 to 41 are all the sections on the seaward side of Rapaki street.]

December 1924: *"The site where the township is laid out has as far back as the European Settlers in the district could remember been a grass valley and free from any serious encroachment of sand drift. The place has been a favourite camping ground for years past. During the last two years the position has changed, and the sand has encroached on the seaward side of the township and is threatening to further encroach from this direction and from the north side."*

October 1928: *"... The township is in a bad way. All houses are practically buried except three cottages, two of which have been recently built further back from the beach."*

January 1930: *"... still six cottages intact (in village) and one re-erected on private land just beyond the boundary ... The high sand ridge between ... river and ... grass flats where the township was laid off (surveyed), has now been practically levelled by high winds"*.

An extensive marram grass planting program began and a 1933 report states, *"... marram grass planted 3 years ago has grown well, ... but ... about 1/4 acre needs to be replanted, and we should plant a further 2 acres at the north-western end."*

April 1936 report by the County Council Engineer; *"The marram grass stabilisation work was found in excellent order and the township area is now considered thoroughly safe for building purposes ..."*

While the County Engineer was confident in his report, the section owners had other ideas. Despite all the plans and intentions, it was going to be a slow and shaky start-up for our village!

From the reports it looked like all the Rapaki street area *"was going to be abandoned"*, and that is what happened. There was a long pause in the development of the village from 1917 until the early 1950's. Until then only three of the village's surveyed sections had buildings on them, at 60, 62, and 64 Wainui street.

The aerial photo from 1942 and Rangitikei County Council maps, show another ten or more buildings located on un-surveyed sections, and a few outside the designated township boundaries. No buildings are visible in Rapaki street in the 1942 aerial photo or marked on any of the 1950 era RCC maps. Indeed, a shaky start!

The Rangitikei Advocate

November 28, 1924

DRIFTING SAND ON KOITIATA SECTIONS

A meeting of Koitiata Domain Board committee (which is composed of Rangitikei County Councillors) was held yesterday, when J. P. Morris was granted permission to transfer lease of section 16 of the Domain to Arthur Way. Mr Way waited on the committee and pointed out that during the past few years sand has drifted over sections 23 to 41 which are now practically useless for building or camping sites. Out of 41 sections surveyed there are only a dozen of any use for building sites. It was resolved that Crs. Simpson, Stuart, Dalrymple and Coleman visit the reserve and bring a report before the committee as to the most satisfactory manner of dealing with the drifting sand.

The Rangitikei Advocate

December 12, 1924

KOITIATA TOWNSHIP

A committee of the Koitiata Domain Board visited the township at the mouth of Turakina river yesterday. There were present Messrs A. G. Simpson, A. Stuart, K. W. Dalrymple, H. H. Richardson and A. Thoms. Mr A. Way was present as representative of holders of building allotment leases in the township. The site where the township is laid off had been as far back as could be remembered, a grass valley and a favourite camping ground. During the last two years, however, the position has changed and the sand has encroached on the seaward side of the township. The committee decided to recommend that planting with marram grass or other similar plants be put in hand, also that further sections be laid off on landward side and that lessees of sections on seaward side of Rapaki Street be given opportunity to exchange their sections for sections to be laid off on landward side.

The Rangitikei Advocate

August 20, 1925

DRIPTING SAND AT KOITIATA

The drifting sand at Koitiata, the settlement at the mouth of Turakina River, has caused considerable damage during the last two years, and yesterday Messrs K. W. Dalrymple, A. Stuart, H. H. Richardson and S. A. R. Mair, of Rangitikei County Council, inspected the locality to report on the advisability of Rangitikei County Council undertaking clearance work. It was decided that sand-grass be planted and the cost of this will be borne by money accrued from the rent of sections in the township.

The Rangitikei Advocate

May 3, 1928

BETTER ROAD NEEDED FOR KOITIATA

At the annual meeting of the Koitiata Domain Board to-day the annual report disclosed that the year commenced with a credit of £27 and concluded with £24. Further planting of grass to counteract sand drift had been carried out but further activity was still necessary to deal with this problem. The Domain was used as a seaside resort but better road access is necessary.

The Rangitikei Advocate

October 4, 1928

POMPEII IN THE SAND

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"In company with Cr. Stuart I recently went down to the Koitiata township. The road was very dry for this season of the year and it would not require much work to put it in fair order. The township itself is in a bad way. All the houses are practically buried with sand excepting three cottages, two of which have been recently built further back from the beach."—
The County Overseer.

The Rangitikei Advocate

October 5, 1928

A Peculiar Choice.

"Personally I would rather be in the middle of a grass paddock than at the seaside, but there are many who like a day at the beach, and we should try to make the Kaitiaki township as attractive as possible," said Cr. A. Stuart at yesterday's Council meeting, in referring to the problem of sand drift.

The Rangitikei Advocate

January 31, 1930

At Turakina Beach

Reporting to the Kaitiaki Domain Board yesterday with reference to the state of affairs at Turakina beach a sub-committee set up for the purpose stated: "The sand-drift has further encroached upon the portion of the Domain which was laid off for the erection of seaside cottages. There are, however, still six cottages intact in the locality and one cottage has been re-erected on privately owned land just beyond the boundary of the Domain. The high sand ridge which lay between the Turakina River and what was formerly the grass flats where the township was laid off, has now been practically levelled by high winds."

The Rangitikei Advocate

January 26, 1933

MARRAM GRASS AT KOITIATA

The monthly meeting of the Koitiata Domain Board was held at the County Chambers to-day, all members with the exception of Cmr. Stuart and Dalziel being present.

Mr H. S. C. Morrison (Fern Plats, Marton) donated £5 towards improving the road to the seaside resort and a hearty vote of thanks was accorded Mr Morrison for his donation.

Mr S. A. R. Mair (engineer) reported that as Mr Stuart was unable to accompany him he made a personal inspection of the above.

The road from end of metal is in very fair order. The claying recently carried out by residents with council's assistance has considerably improved the smoothness of the long grassy flats.

The maram grass planted three years ago has grown well. That planted last winter has, on the whole, also taken well, but in several patches has been destroyed by the sand blowing away. He recommended that in the proper planting season, early in the winter, these patches be made good, in all amounting to about half an acre. It would also be an advantage to plant a further two acres at the north-western end.—The report was adopted. **11**

The Rangitikei Advocate

May 3, 1934

KŌTIATA DOMAIN

ANNUAL REPORT

Meeting as the Kōtiata Domain Board to-day Rangitikei County Councillors adopted the annual report presented by the engineer, Mr S. A. R. Mair.

This Domain lies at the mouth of the Taranaki River and for many years the problem of sand-drift had been a very real one, but the report indicated that the position was greatly improved.

"The access road has, as necessary, been maintained by filling rats and fascining sand drifts, and is now in fair order," said Mr Mair. "The marram grass planted during the last three winters has taken very well, and the main portion of the township area is now fairly well stabilised. The Taranaki River is now flowing along the south shore, and is forming a large flat sand bank of several acres adjacent to the township. This is becoming covered with marram grass, and if stabilised will be a valuable addition. I would recommend further planting of grass during this winter to the full extent of the funds available."

The balance-sheet showed a credit of £17 and it was decided to adopt the recommendation of the engineer.

KŌTIATA DOMAIN

Possibilities As Seaside Resort

The following report on Kōtiata Domain (Tarakina Bench) was submitted to to-day's meeting of the Rangitikei County Council by the Engineer, Mr S. A. R. Mair:—

With Councillor Stuart an inspection was made of Kōtiata Township. Messrs Waiwright and Wilkie also attended.

The marram grass stabilisation work was found in excellent order and the township area is now considered thoroughly safe for building purposes and reforestation. There are a few small blanks of a few square yards requiring planting, and this will be done during the winter.

The road down, owing to the abnormal weather, was found in worse condition than I have previously known it, and necessary repairs will be put in hand when conditions are suitable.

With the improved conditions obtaining at the township a demand is setting in for sections, and it is considered advisable to have the sections occupied on temporary lease and further allotments surveyed so that proper titles can be granted to present and future occupiers.

In the meantime the exact requirements of the Lands Department regarding the township sections is being obtained. When this information is to hand with the cost of the proposed survey, I propose to submit a more comprehensive report as to developmental work embracing all the available funds.

I feel sure, and Councillor Stuart concurs, that now the sections have been stabilised, if the road was improved and suitable trees planted, the sections would become very popular and would be a boon to the sea-loving public over a very wide area even beyond the confines of this country.



Above: 1920's: Looking towards the sea from the Omanu street area, the bach on left is at 25 and on right at 27 Rapaki street.

Below: 1920's: Buildings being buried by the sand drift. Precise location unknown, probably somewhere in the area of the sea end of Wainui and Rapaki.

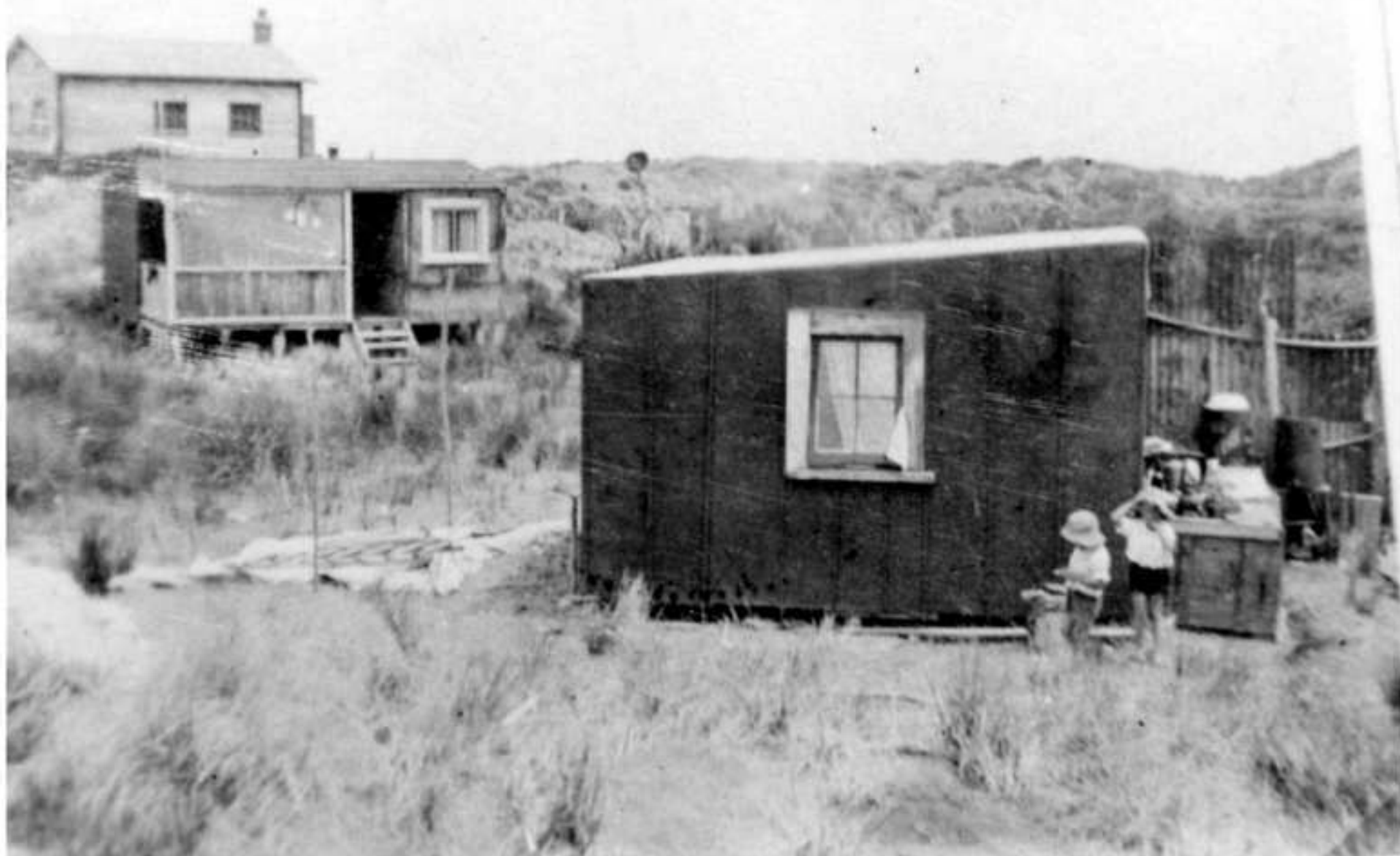




Above: 1920's: Wainwright's bach at 25 Rapaki street, looking south with the sea to the right side of location. Bach was relocated to 68 Wainui street late 1920's or early 30's.

Below: 1930's: This is the bach above, relocated to 68 Wainui from 25 Rapaki street.



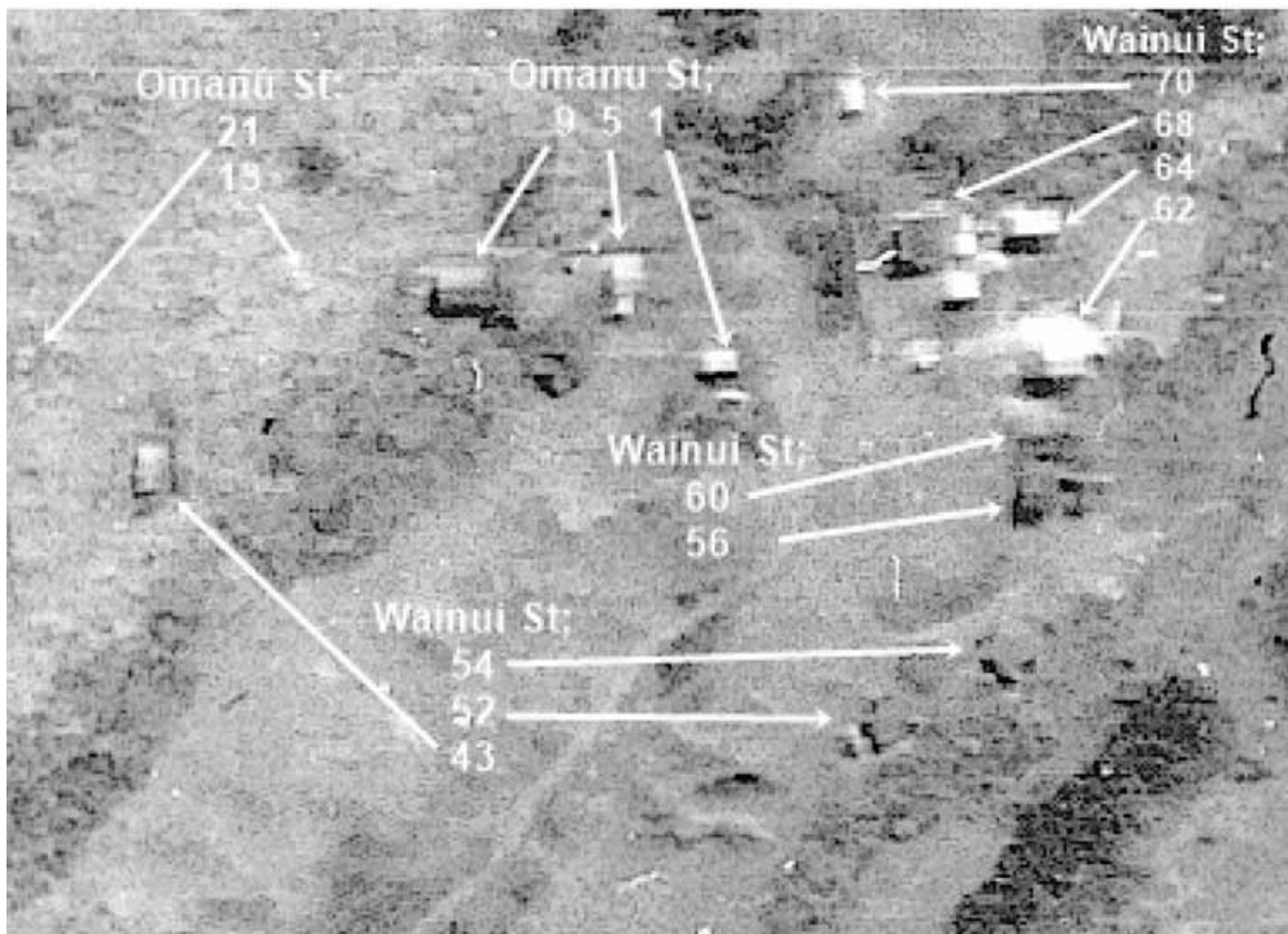


1930's: The sand-drift problem shifted the village from Rapaki street to the Wainui and Omanu street intersection area. These baches are located in Wainui street, from left to right at 64 (Cameron), 62 (Carter), 60 (Heidrich/Kelly).

(Please note shared satellite dish in the background.)



The aerial photo above was taken by RNZAF in December 1942. The buildings shown are all located in the Wainui/Omanu street area; no buildings existed in Rapaki street at that time. The track going into the village from the bottom of photo is now Wainui street.



Above: 1942: This has been cropped from the RNZAF aerial photo. Localities of the buildings in the photo above are marked using current property numbers. This was Koitiata until building started again in Rapaki street in the early 1950's.