



An usual view from the lokey cab as Stan Dawson leaves the Meringa Loop with a rake of logs in 1944.

- photo courtesy Stan Dawson collection (ref: I7885).

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The change from tramway to road was inevitable. The

sleepers in the Whakakaua section were deteriorating and with the shrinkage in log supply meant a change to haulage by logging truck as the best option

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This massive operation commenced in 1954 with the lifting of the Whakakaua, Punga and Taringamotu Valley tramways being done in several stages. George Andrews made devices that "popped the spikes" and lifted the sleepers along with an overhead set of "scissors" to dismantle the bridges and viaducts

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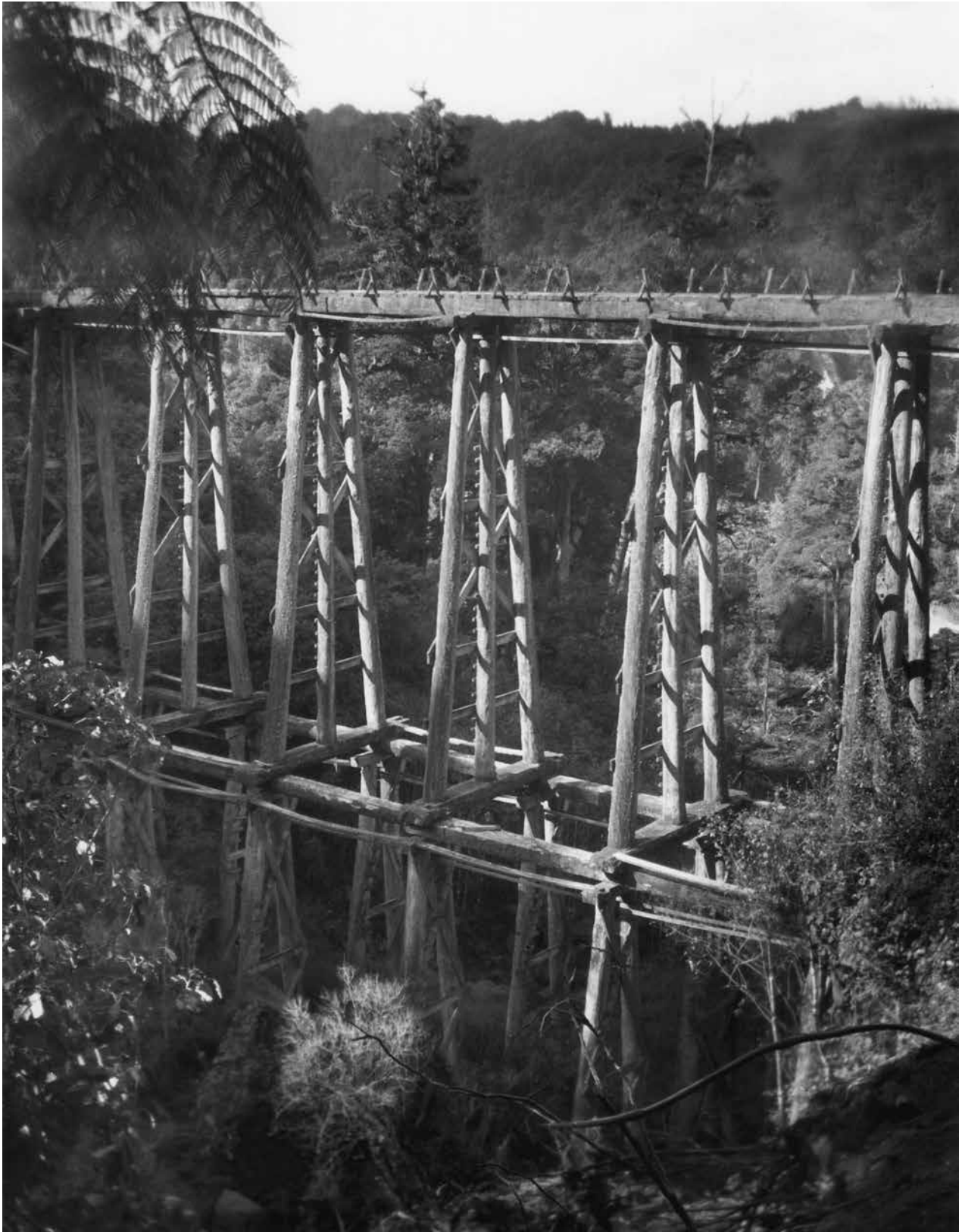
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Every person mentioned is indexed regardless of importance or significance. Basic subject matter is also included



That's an extra large load for single axles! The hard working 1938 Bedford is obviously overloaded as it approaches the Company's 1935 Chevrolet on maintenance work on the Meringa-Waituhi Deviation. This logging truck was not registered for the road as its job was to save wear and tear on tractor by hauling logs from Eastward Road to a nearby skidway for transfer to the tram.

- photo courtesy Barbara Butler collection (ref: 18163).



This view of Frank Ward's double-deck viaduct was one of Ken Anderson's favourite photos, hence being used in this spot. Photographer Ted Lattey found a vantage point that showed the full height of the structure, a feat that few others achieved—the only thing missing was a bush lokey hauling a full set of logs! Built over an extended period, it was 300 feet long and 105 feet high. It is really two bridges in one. The lower section of bents was 50 feet high and the upper section another 55 feet. The best of totara was specially selected by Frank Ward from nearby standing timber and for the stringers he broadaxed them down to a uniform thickness of 18 inches from end to end commencing at the butt. With the sap edges left on the fullest possible strength was sustained by retaining the natural strength of each tree's grain. There were no chainsaws operating in those days so the tools used were confined to a crosscut saw, mauls, axes, wedges, files, marking line and chalk for line marking. Machinery used was limited to a hand winch and one of the Vulcan steam haulers, identified as "Ward's hauler" and always operated by himself. A truly magnificent structure built by a man with very little formal education.

- photo courtesy Ted Lattey collection (ref: 17957).



Henry McHattie told historian Ron Cooke that this snapshot he took of Jack Allen on his horse outside his sawmill office at Taringamotu was his favourite. The original print was slightly singed around the edges along with a handful of others that survived the disastrous fire of 1935 when the sawmill was burnt to the ground.

Henry's caption was simple: "The man from Taringamute!" but added later for use in this book that Jack Allen was "a well-known celebrity who used to frequent the district often, in particular doing business with the Maoris. A crack shot with his gun in his younger days. Never wore a hat, coat or socks."

According to those who knew him, Jack Allen was a living legend and was known to all and sundry from Auckland to the Coromandel coast and throughout the King Country. He was a colourful personality who once lived and worked the goldfields around Thames, Paeroa and Waihi. He originally hailed from Australia where he was known as "Cockatoo

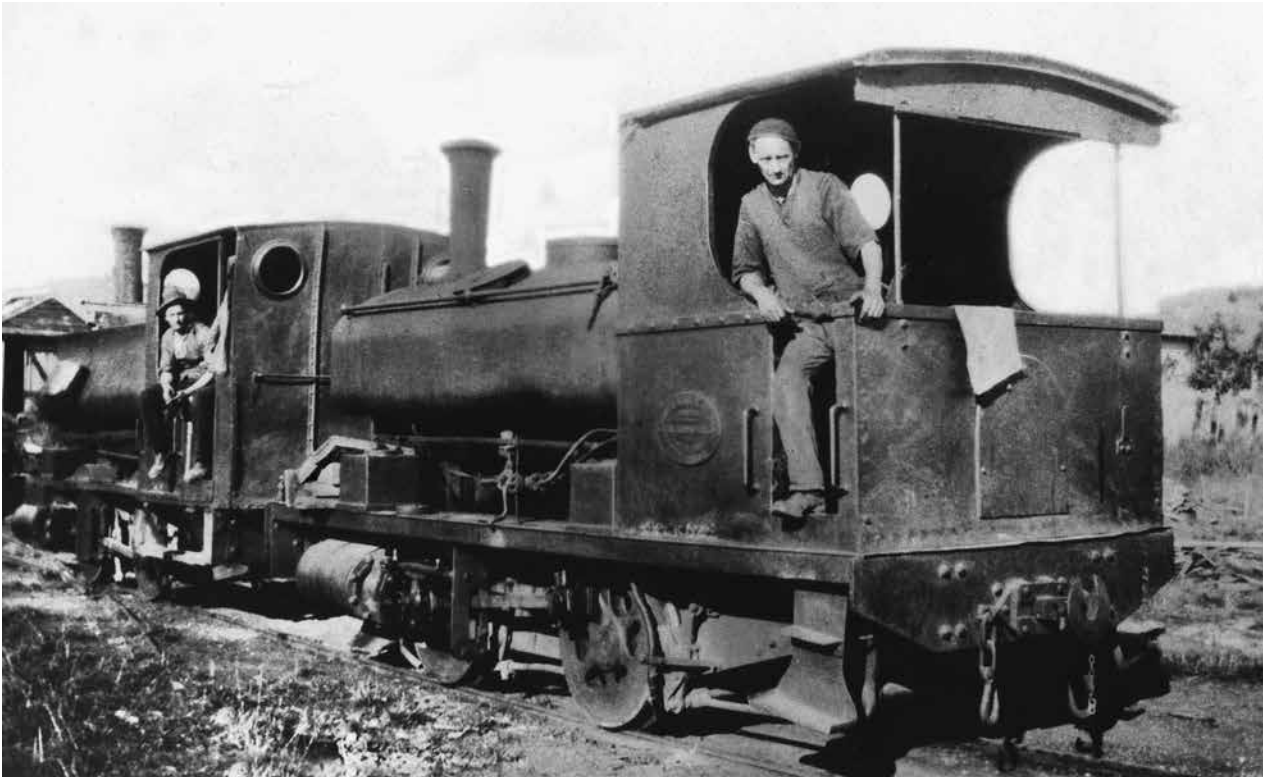
Jack" but from all accounts did not arrive in the King Country until around 1900.

He won notoriety for many feats including a challenge to walk barefooted to the top of Mt Egmont to prove his stamina as a veteran, a purpose he carried out with grim satisfaction.

Although a smallish man he was very tough and active as a youth. He was always ready to challenge anyone his age to ride a horse, to run a race, to fight, shoot, play billiards or walk long distances. Despite his age he was considered a remarkable shot with a rifle or shotgun and accounted for many rabbits, hares, pheasants and quail in the King Country.

He died at the age of 86 on 19 April 1937 after being found in a sorry state near the Taumarunui Railway Station. On his way to hospital by ambulance he said: This will be Jack Allen's last ride. I am done!"

- photo by Henry McHattie (ref. 10851).



These two of the three Barclay locos owned by the company were used "fortnight on fortnight off". The one nearest the camera is No 2 with Jack Wackrow in the cab whilst Bill Burkett is on No 1. Both locos are pictured on the track with the cabs toward the bush—No 1 is pushing No 2 up the short hill so that No 1 can get off the engine house track. No 2 will then be run dead back into the shed for any repairs or the regular washing out of the boiler.
 - photo courtesy Wackrow collection (ref: 17976).

Bush locomotives

THE COMPANY HAD a total of four steam locomotives and numerous jiggers operating on the tramway over the years.

The first purchase was a Barclay 0-4-0 saddle tank type manufactured in 1878. It was purchased by Taringamutu Totara Sawmills Ltd in the early part of 1908.

Brownlee & Co of Havelock, a sawmiller in the Marlborough Sounds in the north of the South Island, was the first owner. Brownlee & Co owned the loco for two years before selling it to a road metal contractor in Gisborne.

After a period, it went into the Auckland area for use on reclamation work. Its next move was to Wellington to work also on reclamation work in Oriental Bay.

This loco operated at 180psi steam pressure and had 10¼" diameter cylinders which were later bored out to 10½". In 1912, it was necessary to replace the boiler in this loco so A & G Price made a new one. Upon withdrawal from service of the loco in 1951, the boiler was still serviceable.

The scrapping of the loco in 1954 saw the boiler sold to the Taumarunui Hospital Board. The Board also purchased the boiler from the Little

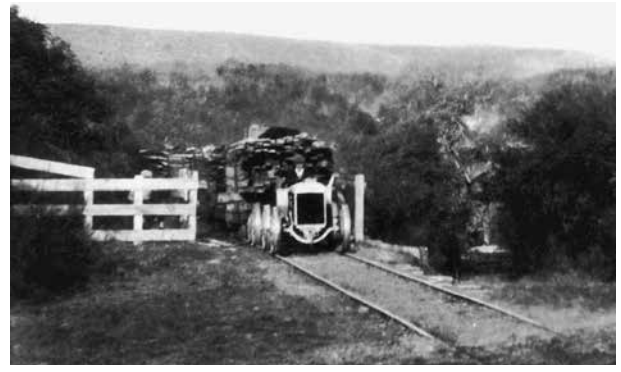
Judd hauler, scrapped in 1957.

During the early part of 1909, the company had a breakdown with the No 1 loco and faced the prospect of being without a loco for a period.

The new No 2 loco had not yet arrived. They were able however to hire a loco from the newly formed Pukuweka Sawmills and this carried them over the period whilst No 1 was being repaired. For the use of the loco Taringamutu paid Pukuweka, £126 that was £3 per day for the 42 days the No 1 loco was out of action.

George Andrews said that this loco (No 1) was much liked by the drivers, being faster and more powerful than Barclay No 2, due no doubt to its having bigger cylinders and larger wheels than No 2. George said however, that it had a bad habit of breaking rails in wintertime due to its greater overhang behind the rear drivers.

With its greater speed, the loco set up a fore and aft rocking motion as it moved along and any ice build up between sleepers and rails in swampy areas of the line caused the rails to become brittle. The hammering of the wheels broke the rails easily. The constant breakage of rails in wintertime led the mill workshop staff to delay repairing of the loco if it broke down. This forced the drivers



A Nattrass Patent Rail tractor operated on the Taringamutu Totara tramway in 1925 but according to Henry McHattie, it was a failure. This photo shows the machine hauling some sawn timber to the railway station and whilst it moved a considerable amount of timber, the hierarchy at Taringamutu Totara Sawmills were not impressed.

- photos courtesy McHattie collection (refs: 17927, 17936).

The reason for this was because the tractor had been in a fire and consequently the cylinder block was badly warped. Arthur Andrews was never able to cure satisfactorily this problem, but for all its faults, the Avery performed quite well and was much more economical when used to get to Waituhi than the loco.

NATTRASS RAIL TRACTOR

As a result of heavy promotion and live demonstrations to sawmillers during the early part of 1925, Howard Nattrass duly arrived in Taumarunui to show off his professionally designed rail tractor powered by a Fordson engine.

A small advertisement appeared in the *Taumarunui Press* on 29 July 1925 inviting interested sawmillers to attend the trial of a Nattrass patent rail tractor, with its eight-wheel drive, at the Taringamutu Totara Sawmill's yard

the next day at 3:00pm. The result of the trial was not reported although the two photos on these pages show that a demonstration did take place.

According to a photo published on page 148 of Paul Mahoney's book, the tractor shown in our photos being trialled happened in February 1925.

Paul writes that an improved rail tractor concept was built in August 1925 for Taringamutu fitted with a V8 Cadillac engine. He goes on to say that this tractor was not accepted and was subsequently demonstrated on the Pukuweka Sawmills Ltd tramline at Ngapuke.

A photo published on page 42 of the book *Ngapuke-Facing the Challenges* shows the Cadillac model which was distinctly different in design to the model earlier trialled at Taringamutu.

The Nattrass rail tractor was made by a company from Wellington called Rail Tractors Ltd.



THE WAY IT WAS! One of our favourite photos is this horse drawn ballast truck, usually used for maintenance of tramways, being transformed as a novel way of catching a ride to a picnic at Waituhi during the late 1920s. Girls on tray are Rema Scott, Thelma Walsh and Rae Tuck. The others in front are not known.

- photo courtesy Dorothy Roger collection (ref: 18117).



Before the tunnel could commence, a substantial bridge was necessary to cross the gully. In this photo, the work on the far bank of the gully is visible. This was the preparation for the foundations of the bridge and the digging of the tunnel. This work started in 1922. The bridge built was 120 feet long and 80 feet high.

- photo courtesy GA Carter collection (ref: 17965).

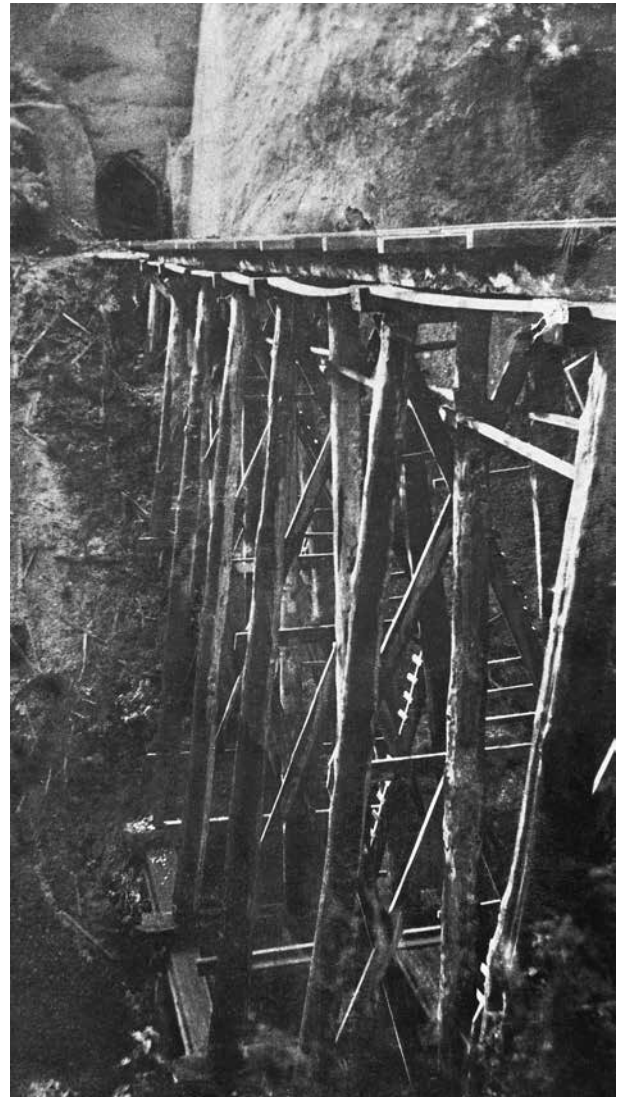
driving tunnels on the Thames Coromandel goldfields. However Bob McIndoe did not recall Mr Joyce but remembered “a fella named Ryan” doing the tunnelling.

AIR COMPRESSOR HIRED

Henry McHattie said it was necessary to hire an air compressor from the Public Works Department (PWD) as it was found necessary to resort to blasting, as the rock encountered was far harder than expected.

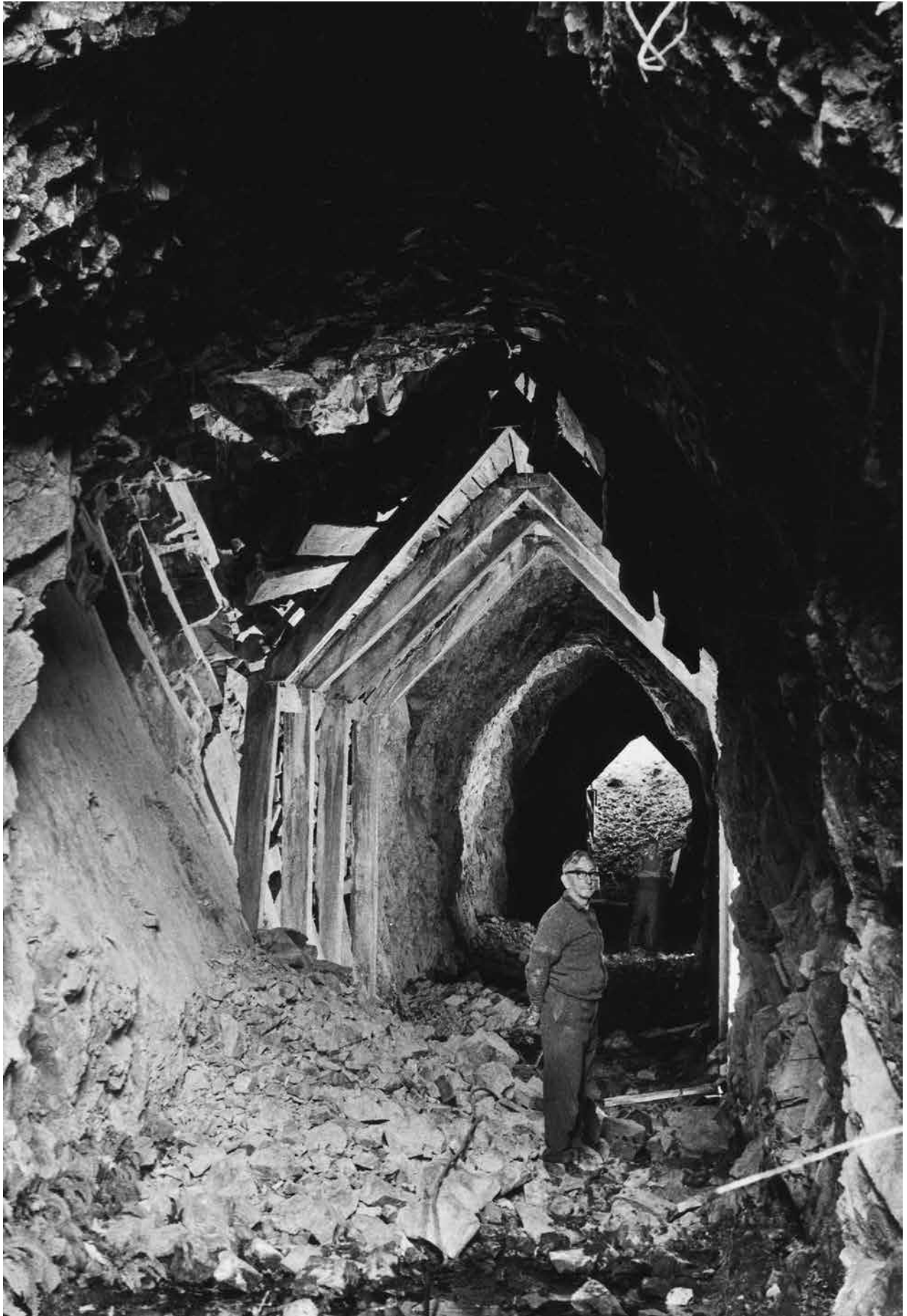
At this stage PWD were unable to supply the motive power to drive the compressor but fortunately John Woodham, who was running the picture theatres in Taumarunui for the Simmons family, had a spare kerosene powered engine which was expected to fill the bill.

Henry was not impressed when it seemed to suffer from whooping cough and failed. Trial and error followed and after experimenting with a mixture of kerosene and benzine (it wasn't called petrol in those days), it also failed to provide



The finished product. The trestle viaduct was the largest built at this stage with the tunnel being a new adventure for the Company.

- photo courtesy Alan Meredith collection (ref: 17893).



When Barry Brickell and friends visited the area, this photo was taken inside the tunnel from the uphill end. Some of the supporting roof has collapsed but otherwise the hole is still open. Barry is at the downhill end and George Andrews is nearest the camera. The photo, taken 21 August 1971 is by courtesy of Steve Rumsey.

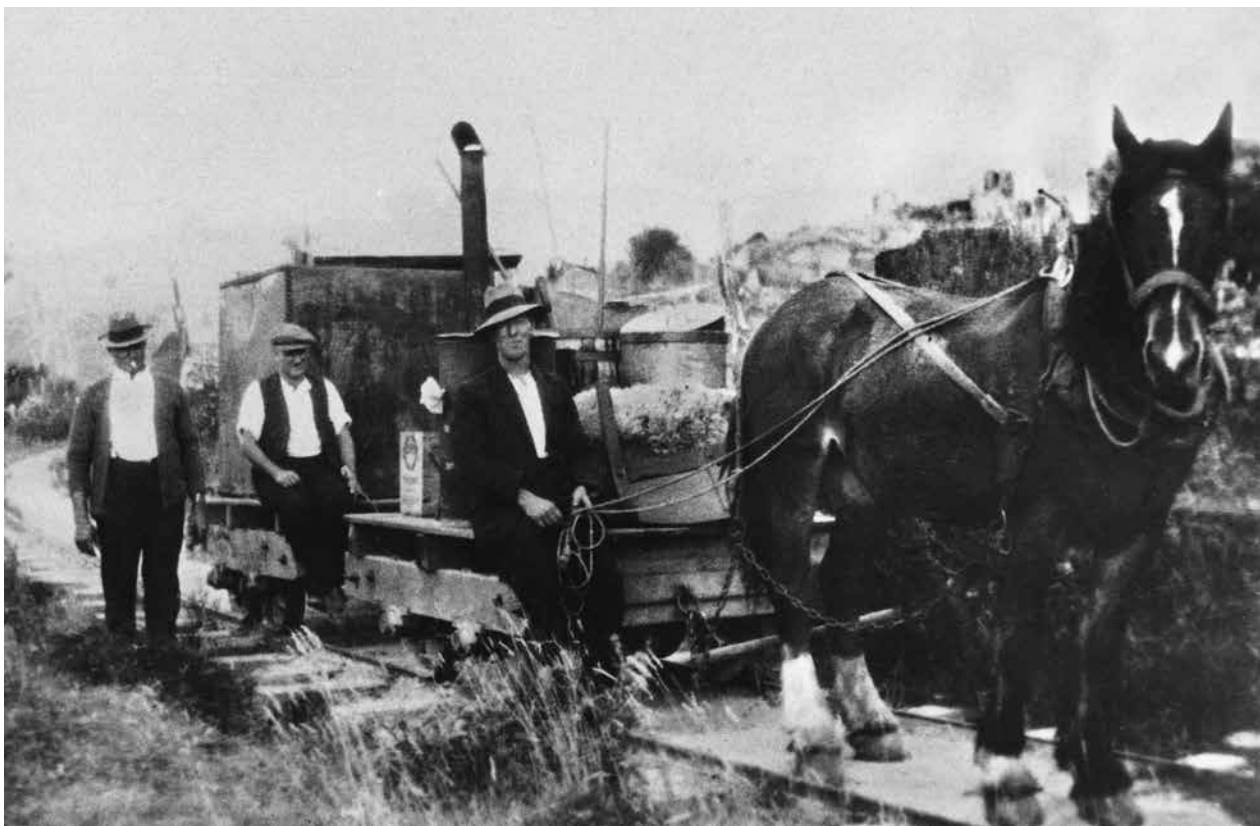
- photo by Steve Rumsey (ref: 14235).



If haulers or boilers could not be repaired in the bush then it was only brought into the workshop for major repairs or an overhaul. The reason for the No 1 Barclay bringing the Big Judd in with a rake of logs (above) is not mentioned with this snapshot while below the Big Judd, easily recognisable by its steam clutches (on right), is taking a breather while working in the Whakakaua. The men from left are George Hirst, Tom Urwin and Walter McIndoe. The Company had two Judd haulers—No 1 was christened “Little Judd” and naturally No 2 as “Big Judd”. No 1 was purchased in January 1924 and was double-g geared and powerful enough to break the rope if injudiciously operated while No 2 was fast but not as powerful. There were five other Vulcan haulers which were lively and very serviceable within certain limits. They did not require a certificated driver and until the first Judd was acquired they did the whole of the log hauling.

- top photo courtesy Ingram family collection (ref: 18349). Bottom photo courtesy Carter family collection (ref: 17963).





Walter McIndoe (right) with his workmates, Jack Snoswell and George Hirst are heading out on an important mission with their fully loaded horse-drawn maintenance trolleys. Walter's youngest son Jack thinks they could be going to a picnic as a large water tank and copper are clearly visible. Jack said his father was born in 1888 and looks to be in his mid 40s which would date the photo some time during the early 1930s.

- photo courtesy Selwyn Wood collection (ref. 17996).

The McIndoes of Waituhi

WALTER CRAWFORD McINDOE came to the area in 1916 to build a house for the manager of the then Waitangi Estate in the Taringamotu Valley.

On its completion, he was employed by the Taringamotu Totara Sawmills to construct a flume to carry water to the "Top" mill to provide water to carry the sawdust away from the saw benches. This was to be a temporary position but resulted in him working for that firm for the next 38 years.

He was employed in bridge construction, building maintenance and machinery installation. He also built and maintained the bogies which were used for the transportation of timber and logs. He moved to Taringamotu in 1934 after fire engulfed the planing mill and other buildings there.

He took a large part in the construction of a new sawmill and ancillary buildings there and in his time off, built a new house for the family. For part of this time he was assisted by son, Walter (known as "Macky") and they bached in the single men's huts. The rest of the family moved into the new house in 1936.

Conditions were very basic in those days in that area and when they first got there, access was by service car to Kaitupeka (Ngakonui) and then in a van behind the timber trains to the mill site. Eventually a pumice road was pushed through and the day of the motorcar arrived and made living there much less onerous.

The accommodation was typically bush sawmill-unpainted houses with the barest of essentials. Certainly no hot water laid on and mostly, the laundry in the backyard. One thing, there was no shortage of firewood for the huge open fireplaces most of the houses had as the sole source of heating.

McINDOE CHILDREN

There was a daughter (Hilda) and a son (Robert) when they arrived in the valley and over the next eight years the family was enlarged by Walter, Ngaere, Colleen, Jean, Douglas, Ronald and Jack (the only survivor). Jean died at the age of 12 from spinal meningitis.

All of the family received their primary education at the Waituhi School and due to the

of room to entertain his guests. It was nothing to see 20 or 30 people sitting around his back yard sampling his brew. Even some of the farmers from the area often turned up for a drink.

Jack Eisenhut and Bill Burkett on the Price loco paid an old pensioner, who lived in the Dead House, to make home brew for them. When they came in on the Saturday, the beer would be waiting.

One time Lou, Trevor and some mates were playing on the loco, Jack parked it near the Dead House in those days, and Jack and Bill were inside having a few. The loco was simmering away quietly when suddenly the safety valve blew off and scared the daylight out of the boys. Lou

ran over to the cabins and called out to his father, "Dad come out quick the loco is going to blow up."

"All right, all right I will be out in a minute," said Jack. He came out shortly after and pumped some more water into the boiler. He was not concerned.

GOOD BREW

Charlie Ranahan had a contract with the company to supply firewood for the locos and he had several men including Tom Leslie working for him on contract. Charlie was a great maker of home brew and he would put down twenty gallons at a time. As Tom said it was



The only details Rex Sullivan gave were the names of those testing the brew: From left: Rae Swanson, Noel Gussey, Joe Haines, Reg Marshall, Charlie Swanson Jnr. From the number of kegs on the jeep, it was obviously going to be a major "shindig" at Waituhi or more accurately, some fearsome headaches next morning.

- photo courtesy Rex Sullivan collection (ref: 14581).



- photo courtesy J K Purdie collection (ref: 18017).



ABOVE: Parts of the top layer of the “double-decker” can be identified. The three uprights are called “legs” and the top cross member is the cap and the three together (with the cap) is called a set. That upon which they rest is the sill with the braces being the X.

LEFT: With the assistance of an unidentified helper (in the shadows), Frank Ward is securing one of the bents in position after placing it in the correct spot. This is not a job for the faint hearted.

- top photo courtesy J K Purdie collection (ref: 18019).



In this view the upper bents are all in place and there remains only the installation of the stringers between the three bents to the right of the photo. Frank Ward had no fear of heights and scrambled around these bridges like a spider.

- photo courtesy Sister Elizabeth collection (ref: 18146).