



Port Waikato School Camp

History

Teacher Guide

PWSC Publication
2007

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From Then Until Now

A Brief Outline of The History of Port Waikato and the River

The early Maori used the river for transportation, exploration, trade and warfare and as an easy source of food and water and over the years, numerous settlements were established along its banks, including that of the Ngati Tahinga tribe at Pututaka, later to be known as Port Waikato.

The earliest known European to visit Pututaka was a mysterious sea captain called John Payne and he apparently lived in the area from at least 1826 to 1830.

The three masted barque *Elizabeth* under John Kent was the first European vessel to sail into the river in December 1826, and as the Waikato basin was a major source of flax, sailing ships became regular users of Pututaka from this time on, especially as a flourishing flax-for-muskets trade developed.

After the early traders, one of whom was a William Spargo, came the missionaries, with Robert Maunsell setting up the Maraetai Mission on the banks of the Maraetai Stream in 1839. At various times he was assisted by Benjamin Yates Ashwell and John Morgan.

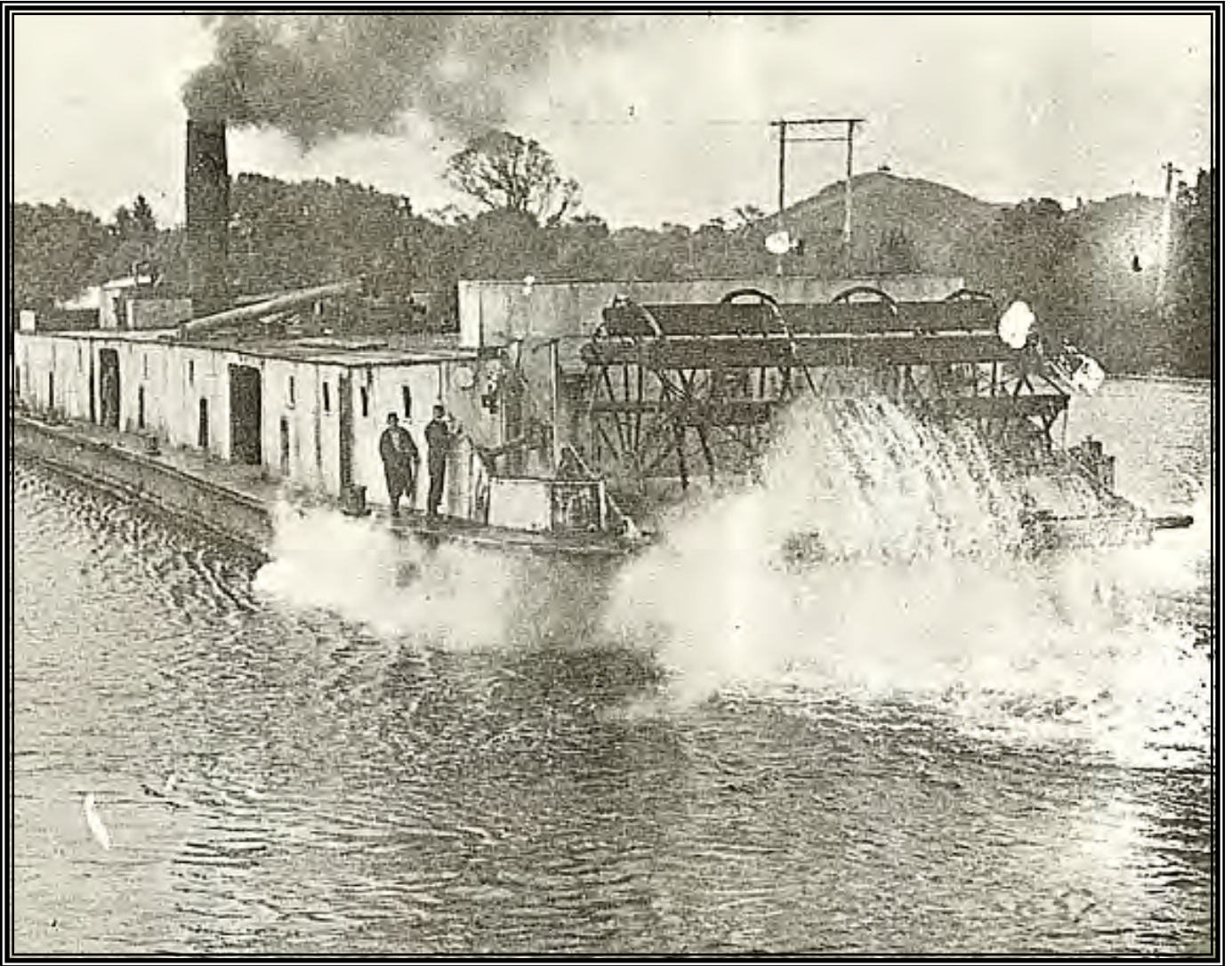
With the advent of the Waikato Land Wars in the early 1860's, naval ships became regular users of the port and about this time, Pututaka be, came known as Port Waikato. In 1863, the gunboat *Avon* became the first paddle steamer on the river and her main job was to tow barges upriver, carrying soldiers, munitions and supplies.

After the wars ended, and with the spread of European settlers, the river and port became a very important highway for ships and barges bringing in building materials, agricultural supplies and the necessities of life for the newcomers and for carrying out the goods they produced, - timber, coal, flax, flour and agricultural produce. For the next three decades, Port Waikato became a vital port for loading and unloading cargo and an important ship servicing and ship, building yard.

By 1900, with the development of roads and railways, and the rampant growth of willow trees causing the narrowing and silting up of waterways and floating hazards to craft, the use of water transport began a dramatic decline.

However, river trade was successfully revived by Caesar Roose from 1910 to the 1940's but after World War II, with the further silting up of the river as a result of hydro dams being built and tougher competition from road and rail transport, the era of riverboats was drawing to a close, to be stifled completely when the waterfront disputes in 1951 stopped Port Waikato being used as a coastal port.

Few commercial ships work the river today although Tuakau Sand Ltd. operate two tugs, the *Alice* and *Lady Bevllynn*, to service their sand dredges, and the *Waipa Delta* acts as a floating restaurant on the river in Hamilton.



One of Caesar Roose's early Paddle Steamers on the Waikato River



The trip from Hamilton to Port Waikato by the *Manuwai*, provided free by Caesar Roose, took 12 hours

History of Port Waikato

1500 to 1800's

Maori settlement of Port Waikato (or Putu-taka as it was known then) and of the areas along the river all the way to Ngaruawahia.

Port Waikato was a popular summer resort and hundreds of canoes came down river each summer to fish and whitebait.

The river used to go where the road to the surf beach now is, but a huge landslide pushed the path of the river away from there to where it now is. There used to be a wreck of a ship right in the middle of the sand hills, as that was once the sea.

1829.

Mr Charles Marshall was the first white trader to New Zealand. He came from Sydney, Australia and lived in the local Port Waikato district for 60 years.

Early 1830's.

Ships used Port Waikato as a trading port, the old wharf and cargo shed still stands today. Many ships continued on up river as far as Ngaruawahia, with passengers and cargo.

1938.

Reverends Maunsell and Ashwell set up a Mission Station and a school. The Maoris sold the land for these to the mission. The first mission buildings were built by the Maoris out of flax and ponga, and these were built on the flat land to the left of the creek below the camp. There is still a monument there to mark it.

1840.

Governor Hobson visited Port Waikato and asked Rev. Maunsell to speak to the Maori Chiefs and get their signatures for the Treaty of Waitangi. The mission work continued, with Rev. Maunsell educating the Maori children and teaching them about Christianity and the Bible. He also taught the Maori people better ways to cultivate their land, and ways of trading with the white settlers.

1853.

Because the land at Port Waikato was poor and growing crops was difficult. Rev Maunsell moved the mission Station to Te Kohanga, 20 km away.

1863.

Maori Wars made Port Waikato a busy small town. It had a large wharf, storage buildings, 2 hotels, a courthouse, 2 trading stores, a refitting yard for the ships and a military garrison. At one time there were 2000 soldiers camped at Port Waikato. A naval steamship called the Eclipse was the first naval vessel to come into the mouth of the Waikato River. During the Maori Wars, Reverend Maunsell once watched a war party cross the river from the Waiuku side, perform a war dance on the beach and after a fight with a neighbouring tribe, indulged in a cannibal feast.

Early 1900's

The first oil-fired boats and launches were seen on the Waikato River, enabling settlers to trade and have contact with the outside world. At this stage the River was still the only means of travel. Caesar Roose Shipping Company was set up.

1903

First bridge over the Waikato River was built at Tuakau. It finally collapsed in 1931 and a new concrete one was built, (the same one that stands today). Now travel between the Port and Tuakau was much faster and easier.

1928.

Mr Spargo, the local harbour master and farmer gave 51 acres of land to the Health Camp. His only stipulation for the land's use was that the native trees on the property were to be preserved for all time. Later on the camp also acquired a further 70 acres of land on the other side of the road (most of which is now owned by a local farmer).

The camp was established as a Health Camp for sick or underprivileged children, and their very first camp was all under canvas with the children traveling by boat from Hamilton; a journey which took 14 hours. Dame Hilda Ross organised fund raising and had the camp buildings erected, with the camp children planting trees in the grounds.

1933.

The School Camp was officially opened and named Kohukuia after a local Maori chief, by Dame Hilda Ross. The same buildings are being used today. The buildings have been named after the early settlers or benefactors of the camp.

1934.

The first pine trees were planted in the area over the river, now known as the Waiuku State Forest.

1955.

Harbour Board for Port Waikato abolished as shipping trade was no longer using Port.

1958.

Because most N.Z. children were now well fed and looked after, there was no longer any need for a Health Camp, so its name was changed to Port Waikato School Camp and it was developed as an Outdoor Education Centre for all school children.

Time Line of Port Waikato

A vertical timeline for Port Waikato. The central axis is a vertical line with arrows at both ends. Six yellow rectangular boxes are placed along the axis, each containing a date or time period. From top to bottom, these are: '2007', '1500 - 1800', and four unlabeled boxes. Each date box is connected by a horizontal line to a larger rectangular box on the right side of the page. Each of these larger boxes contains five horizontal lines for writing. At the bottom of the timeline, there is a yellow circle containing a black upward-pointing arrow.

Read the information on the History of Port Waikato School Camp. Put the most important dates in chronological order on your time line and add the summarised information in each box
3/12/2007

The Creed of the Waikato Childrens Camp.

(1932)

If I want to be a happy, useful citizen must have: -

COURAGE AND HOPE.

I MUST be brave - this means' I must be brave enough and strong enough to control what - I think, what I say and what I do, and I must always be hopeful, because hope is power for improvement.

WISDOM.

I must act wisely in school, at home, playing, working, reading or talking. I must learn how to choose the good, and how to avoid the bad,

INDUSTRY AND GOOD HABITS.

I MUST make my character strong my character is what I am, if not in the eyes of others, then in the eyes of my own conscience. Good thoughts in my mind will keep out bad thoughts, When I am busy doing good I shall have no time for evil. I can build my character by training myself in good habits.

I MUST be truthful and honest - I must know what is true. In order to do what is right. I must tell the truth without fear. I must be honest in all my dealings and in all my thoughts. Unless I am honest I cannot have self-respect.

KNOWLEDGE AND USEFULNESS.

I MUST make my mind strong the better I know myself, my fellows, and the world about me, the happier and more useful I shall be. I must always welcome useful knowledge in school, at home, everywhere.

HEALTHINESS AND CLEANLINESS

I MUST make my body strong my eyes, my teeth, my heart; my whole body must be healthy so my mind can work properly. I must keep physically and morally clean.

HELPFULNESS AND USEFULNESS

I MUST use my strength to help others who need help - if I am strong I can help others, I can be kind, I can forgive those who hurt me, and I can help and protect. the weak, the suffering, the young and the old and dumb animals.

CHARITY

I MUST love I must love God, who created not only this earth but also all men of all races, nations, and creeds, who are my 'brothers'. I must love my parents, my home, my neighbours, my country and be loyal to all these.

HUMILITY AND REVERENCE.

I MUST know that there are always more things to learn What I may know is small compared with what can be known. I must respect all who have more wisdom than I and have reverence for all that is good. And I must know how and whom to obey.

FAITH AND RESPONSIBILITY.

I MUST. do all these things because I am accountable to God and humanity for how I live, and how I can help my fellows, and for the extent to which my fellows may trust and depend upon me. .

*The one restriction on entering Camp was:
None may enter who can pay, none may pay who enter.*



The first camp at Port Waikato December 1928. The weather was initially so bad that every one had to shelter in the large marquee.
(Waikato Museum of Art and History)

The Naming of the Dormitories.

Spargo: Named after Mr Edward Spargo who donated the land on which the camp is built.

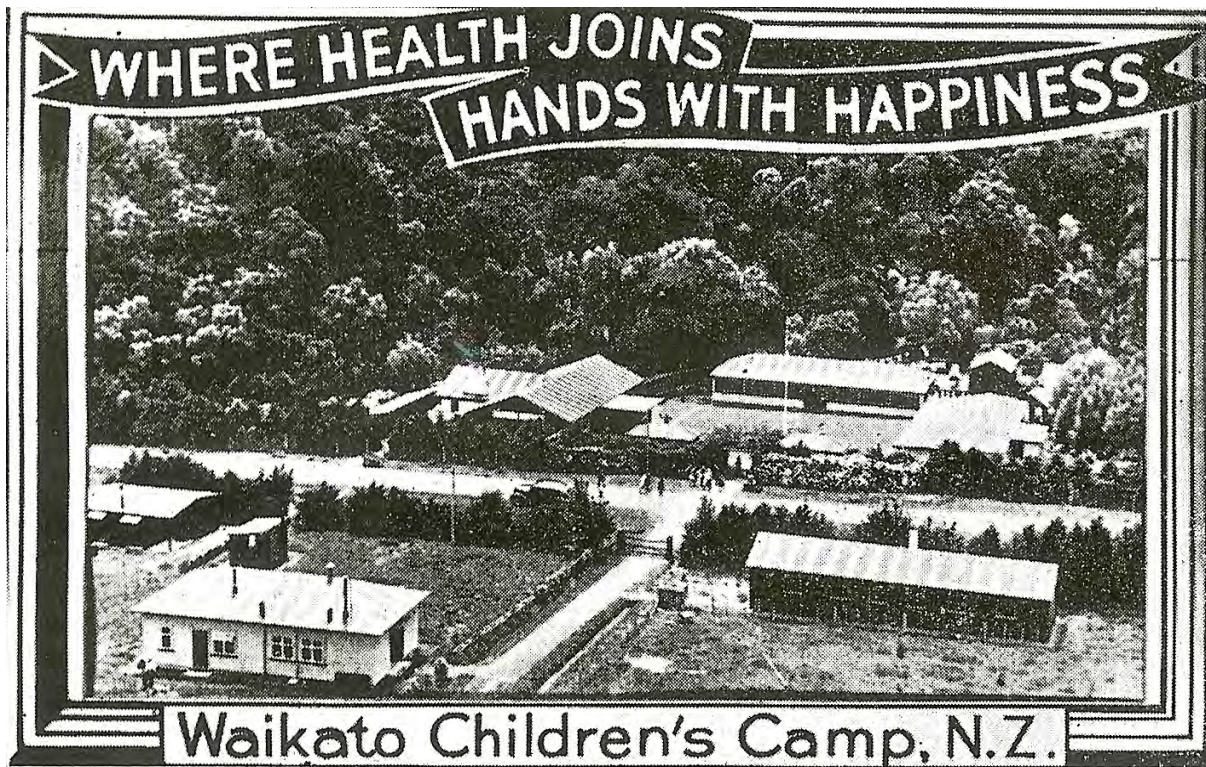
Maunsell: Named after the Wesleyan missionary the Rev. Robert Maunsell who conducted the mission station at Port Waikato and Te Kohanga.

Ashwell: Another Wesleyan missionary the Rev. Benjamin Yate Ashwell first established a mission at Taupiri in 1843 across the river from where the town now stands. Rev Ashwell taught the Maori to sing. Unfortunately this mission station was destroyed during the Maori war.

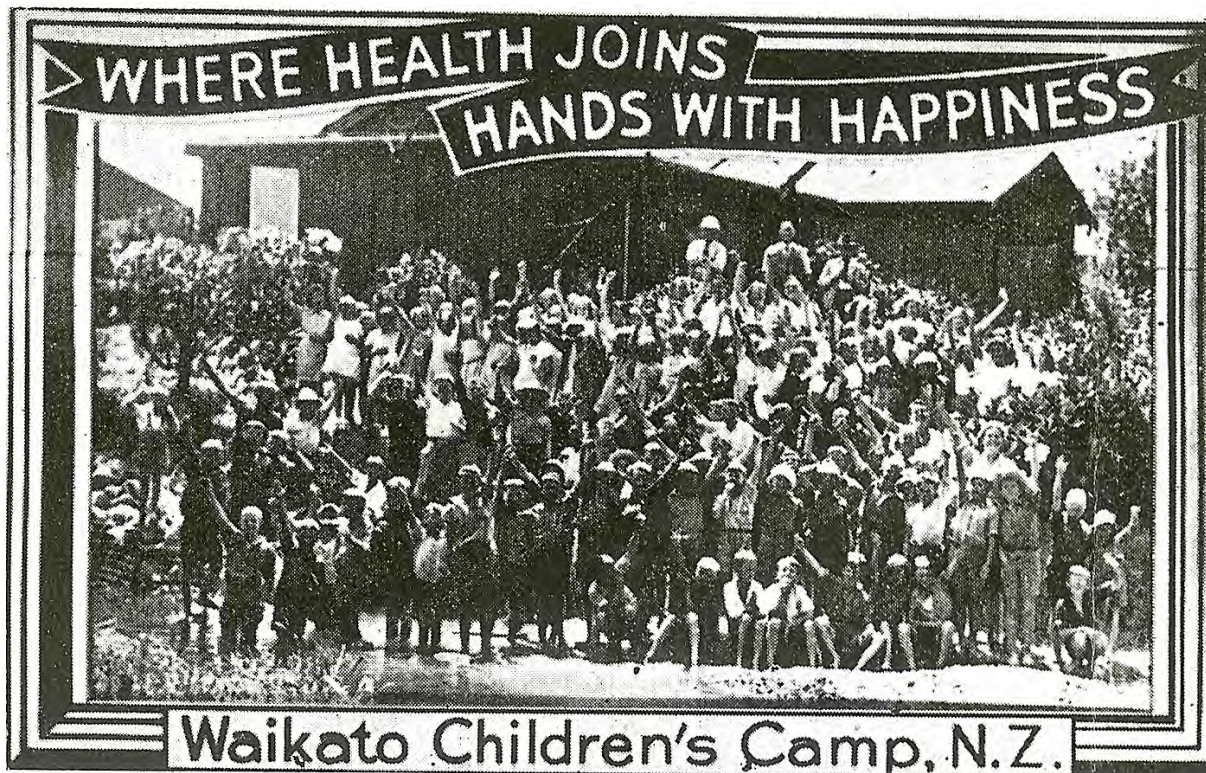
Morgan: Named after the missionary John Morgan.



Dormitories being inspected by Dame Hilda Ross and Billy Paul.



Waikato Children's Camp, N.Z.



Waikato Children's Camp, N.Z.

Discipline of Children

A noticeable feature of the camp is the excellent discipline that is observed at all times. The children respond instantly to the sound of the assembly bell or to the call for silence, and their behaviour generally is admirable. One reason is to be found in the excellent system of prefects adopted by the camp authorities. The prefects are selected senior secondary school pupils who have a certain number of children allotted to their care. The prefects recognise the responsibility that is placed on their shoulders, and by their example and precept they teach the children how to behave. The children have learned the simple grace that is sung before meals, and all enter heartily into the tuneful rendering of the prayer. While at meals the children are supplied with ample wholesome food, and they are allowed to eat as much as they will. After a meal they rest a while, and are then taken out in charge of the prefects for a stroll, a swim, or for games.

-Auckland Weekly News

(Taken from The Waikato Children's Camp League News letter 1944.)

Port Waikato Children's Camp

Notes from Mrs Wilson (nee Sanders) original Caretakers Daughter 1932

(May - June 1987)

Kitchen

a great big cavernous room with wood stoves and ovens. Mrs Sanders helped Mrs Troup in the kitchen - from mid morning. Mr Sanders helped with breakfast. and breakfast dishes. Other helpers also - from Hamilton.

Camp Food

Relied on supplies, gifts - over all "terrible". Lots of bread and butter, oatmeal porridge without sugar (some sugar added in cooking).

Mainly stews - nearly all fat.

"I wouldn't eat it - so went hungry. But they made you eat it. No food was allowed to go back to the kitchen."

Farm

Mr Paul did everything cheap - when he was setting up the farm he got in unsaleable heifers with tiny teats - so Dad had terrible trouble. The ducks at the farm all came from Hamilton Lake. Mr Sanders hand cleared the farm of scrub and ti-tree.

While the camp was on we children had to live with the others and not have contact with our parents. We were expected to be Camp Children.

We went to Te Kohanga School rode there on horse back. Mrs Ross came down once a month to give piano lessons to the Sanders sisters. Then had to practise the same thing over and over for a month till the next visit.

Father's wages £2.10 per week plus free house, milk and firewood.

One of the reasons we left. Mr Paul always wanted fresh cream for his porridge in the morning, but he never sent over his jug so every morning Dad had to hold up the cream lorry for Mr Paul. This caused friction. Eventually one morning Mr Sanders let the lorry go - there was a big fight and he didn't milk that night. After finishing at the Camp the Sanders family lived in the old barracks for a while.

Caretaker Role

Throughout the year Mr Sanders made sure things were OK at the camp. While camp was on he acted as general handyman - attended to rubbish, slops etc. Helped with breakfast and dishes etc as well as running farm. During camp Mrs Sanders helped in kitchen.

Camp Administration

Mr Paul and Mrs Ross ran the camp - stayed there throughout Camp 'season'. Mr Paul attended to administration, talked to kids etc.

Sundays

More of a rest day. Dinner at midday (ordinary) and a better tea at night, e.g. jellies etc. A minister used to come to Port Waikato once a month, but not to camp - Sunday School held on marae.

Farm

Ran 15-20 cows - hand milked and used hand-operated separator. Cream picked up by lorry. Skim milk went to camp in summer, and fed to pigs. As well as cows we had ducks, fowls a bull and pigs).

Recreation for kids

We all went out to the breakers and to the caves in the cliffs on the ocean beach. You had to be very careful with the tide coming in. There was the wreck of a sailing ship in the dunes. Part of the mast was still standing up in the 1930s Samson, an Australian packet which got done in on the bar.

Bedding

Mr Paul would send straw up to Port Waikato before kids arrived and the Sanders family had the task of filling 200 palliases with straw. But there was never enough so farm hay was used instead. No sheets used. Children brought own blankets and pillows. Also no washing (laundry - clothes) done at camp.

"Aunts and Uncles"

Training College and University students (Waikato/Hamilton students enrolled at Auckland University and Teachers College).

Mr Newton

He did the gardens at camp. Came throughout year at odd times and would bring his family. They camped in a tent. Mrs Sanders recalls him being washed out when creek flooded.

Madaline Cobb (from newspaper obituary)

Born 30 June 1886. Came to Hamilton 1912 - gave dedicated service to various sporting and welfare organisations.
Mrs Cobb joined the St John Ambulance Association in 1927. She was later appointed as District Officer in charge of nursing division. For 16 years she was Nursing Sister at Port Waikato Camp. Since 1962 she has had the honorary position of Vice-Patron Hamilton Centre of St John.
(Daughter Mrs Turnwald lives in Hamilton.)

Daily Routine 1930

- 6.15 a.m. **PREFECTS RISE**
- 6.30 a.m. **CHILDREN RISE**
Personal hygiene under supervision of Prefect
Mattresses turned
Wash in creek -free running, and clear, pebble bottom
- 6.45 a.m. **DRINK OF MILK**
Mug of scalded milk
- 7.00 a.m. **FLAG SALUTE - LORD'S PRAYER**
- 7.10 a.m. **DRILL**
Physical Jerks
- 7.30 a.m. **BREAKFAST**
Oatmeal porridge with sugar cooked in it
- none on tables.
Bread and Butter. Grace always said
- 8.15 **TIDY DORMITORIES**
Fold up blankets
- 8.30 **DISPENSARY**
Sick Parade
- 9.00 **INSPECTION**
Each child standing by bunk
- 9.10 **BEACH. WALKS ETC**
Walk to beach or some place of interest. Programme organised by Aunts and Uncles the night before.
- 11.30 a.m. **PREPARE FOR LUNCH**
- 12.00 **LUNCH**
Soup. bread and butter, jam, milk
- 12.30 - 2 p.m. **REST**
- 2.00 p.m. **BEACH WALKS ETC**
- 4.45 p.m. **PREPARE FOR TEA**
- 5.00p.m. **TEA**
Dinner: Stews. potatoes. cabbage, swede, plum duff, rice or sago. milk
- 5: 30 p.m. **FLAG DOWN**
- 6.00 p.m. **DISPENSARY.**
- 6.00 p.m. **RECREATION OR CONCERT**
Sing song, items by children.
Mrs Ross played the piano.
- 8.00 p.m. **DRINK OF COCOA THEN TO BED**
- 8.30 p.m. **LIGHTS OUT**



Saluting the (British) flag, 1932. After rising at 6.30 a.m. and washing in the stream, the children, supervised by the older 'uncles' and 'aunties', assemble for the flag-raising ceremony before breakfast.
(J.F. Loudon photo, Waikato Museum of Art and History)

Camp Swimming Pool



"This was a concrete swimming pool with an earth base, and water was pumped in from the stream alongside. Girls and boys were not allowed to swim together as it was regarded as "not appropriate". Most of the girls wore rubber bathing caps and their togs were made of wool! This concrete pool is still standing today, with concrete changing sheds 30cm thick, which look like world war bunkers. It is surrounded by bush and most people don't even know it is still there, but it is no longer operational. You can still have a look at it if you ask the caretaker as it is in the "out of bounds" area.



Setting off in an orderly fashion for an afternoon walk
(E R Booth photo SAEB)

"Camp Call"

When the children were on a tramp or walk they marched in time in single file and chanting the Port Waikato Camp Call.

*Alligator mincemeat, Crocodile Stew,
I - S - E - E - Y - O - U
Who's the best? Us I guess
Port Waikato, YES, YES, YES!*



Goodwood School setting out from Port Waikato School Camp for an overnight camp.

Outdoor Education Camp

In 1955 William Paul and Dame Hilda Ross were ageing and looking for successors to take over the running of the camp. John Marshall, a specialist teacher in PE wanted to take classes of primary school pupils on what he called "school camps". This was a very new idea in NZ and was finally approved by the South Auckland Education Board. In 1956 the very first school from Fairfield in Hamilton spent 7 days at camp. In 1957 six more schools went to camp at Port Waikato, but the summer health camps still operated under the guidance of Billy Paul. It took till 1963 before a formal agreement was drawn up leasing the camp to the South Auckland Education Board "for the purposes of fostering the educational, physical and social development of the children of the South Auckland district.

A newspaper article from those times stated "The Port Waikato Children's camp is healthy, but it is not a health camp, nor is it a holiday camp. It is not a camp for undernourished, underprivileged or unhealthy children. It is not run on charity, as it was in bygone days." Physical Education and Nature Study advisers made the camp work. They lived at Port Waikato School Camp running the camps for teachers.



Which way do I go now? Learning how to use a compass.
(South Auckland Education Board Collection)

Standard Programme of Activities

A standard programme of activities for school camps at Port Waikato was soon developed. In 1964, after school camps at Port Waikato had been going for eight years, Physical Education Adviser Barry Cowley described the routine:

An average intake is about 80 children organised into six groups. After six days' work, half of the children are occupied away from the camp proper on all-day hikes, overnight camps or on coastal treks lasting up to three days. While "at home" (at Port Waikato camp) a typical daily round might be:

6.45 a.m.	Wake, wash, clean and tidy dormitories.
7.15 a.m.	Dormitory inspection
7.30 a.m.	Breakfast, followed by camp chores
9.00 a.m. to 12 a.m.	Instruction period: Group 1. Map and compass; Group 11. Seashore study (all day); Group 111. Campfire cooking; Group IV. Roping techniques; Group V. Tent pitching; Group VI. Bald Spur climb.
12.30 p.m.	Lunch, followed by chores.
2 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.	Instruction period: Groups rotate activities similar to those of the morning instruction period.
5.00 p.m.	Recreation
6.00 p.m.	Tea, followed by chores
7.00 p.m.	Entertainments.
8.30 p.m.	Bed.



Campcraft learning how to pitch a tent.

Rejuvenation

In 1989, with the advent of "Tomorrow's Schools", the control and management of the camp was passed to a committee of voluntary supporters who were determined not to let the Port Waikato Camp die. In 1992 an occupancy agreement was signed with the South Auckland Education Board, and the Port Waikato School Camp Trust now maintain and operate the camp.



Key

A—Bald Spur

B— Caretakers House

C— Dining Room

D— Boys Dormitories

E— Girls Dormitories

F— Ensor

G— To camp out & abseiling sites

H— To beach and wharf

References

Happiness, Health, & Outdoor Education—Ross Galbreath 2003 available from the camp caretaker.

A computer CD is also available at a cost of \$10.00 form the caretaker.

Useful Links *(All links valid at the time of publication)*

<http://www.waikatodhb.govt.nz/WDHB/default.asp?Content=279>

http://english.unitechnology.ac.nz/resources/units/kamp_kapers/home.html

<http://www.answers.com/topic/port-waikato>

http://www.dreamland.co.nz/camps/Port_Waikato_School_Camp.pdf

<http://www.edgazette.govt.nz/articles.php?action=view&id=7217>

