

Algies Bay History:

By Marion Tickle (nee Algie) December 2014

In March 1867, **Alexander Algie** and his wife **Jemima** settled in the bay, although others, of whom we have no records, had been living in the area.

Newlywed **Alexander** who had come to New Zealand from **Glasgow, Scotland**, had taken shelter from the rain in a tin shed in **Queens Street, Auckland** in December 1866.

An Auction was being held and he decided to help out with the bidding. No one bid against him and he found himself the owner of a piece of coastal land north of Auckland.

After boarding a sailing ship to view his purchase, he subsequently returned with this wife, **Jemima, nee Deerness**, who had come as a child with her parents from the Orkney Islands to live in Pukekohe, NZ.

Firstly they lived in tents while a large Nikau whare or hut was built, followed by the building of a wooden house.

They had two sons, **William James (Will)** and **John Deerness (Jack or JD)** and four daughters, **Sarah, Amy, Maude** and **Lina**.

Some of their descendants are still living in the bay and some own holiday houses here.

Alexander was appointed Post-master on the 1st May 1877, when the **Mullet Point** Post Office opened at the bay, and held office to the 31st December 1923, when the position was taken over by his son **Jack**, and held by him until the post and telephone exchanged office was permanently closed on the 20th September 1949.

Thus the office had been in charge of these two members of the **Algie** family for a continuous period of 72 years.

Alexander and his sons continued breaking in the land for dairying and later for sheep.

After purchasing more land in the bay from a **Mr Mountgomerie**, land which was previously owned by **Captain Kasper**.

A boarding house was built by the sea on the original piece of land in 1893, to provide employment for the daughters.

It was a family type holiday place, and was so popular that it was enlarged several times.

The guests mostly arrived by steamer from **Auckland** and were met out in the bay by the men and rowed ashore with their belongings in the family punt and dinghies.

At this stage roads in the area were not well formed. The road from Algies Bay to Warkworth was metalled in 1934, making a huge improvement.

The boarding house was open for guests from **Christmas** to **Easter** each year, but provided round the year accommodation to boarders, such as teachers, local workers, family members and friends needing a home.

Entertainment offered to the guests, many of whom returned year after year, included beach and farm walks and picnics, boating and fishing trips on the family launch, a tennis court, and for just one season a croquet court which was quickly abandoned after guests who had hitherto been great friends became very competitive and consequently had a serious falling out.



Evening entertainment took the form of dances on the veranda and concerts with items provided by locals, family members and guests. Fancy dress competitions were popular.

Kerosene lamps and candles provided all the lighting, as electricity did not come to the **Mullet Point** area till the mid **1950's**.

A moonlight cruise to **Matakana** via the **Matakana River** was always enjoyed.

The boarding house continued to be packed every summer until the **Second World War**, when for many reasons it had to be closed down. After the war, **Alexander's grandsons** turned it into holiday baches which were rented out for the summer, and many of the tenants having come to the boarding house as children, now bringing their own young families for an **Algies Bay** holiday experience.

The building was closed down in the **1970's** as it was beyond restoring to council standards.

Several homes and holiday homes in the bay are now owned by these children.

The site of the boarding house is now occupied by **Bethshan Motel and Camping ground**, built and owned by grandsons of **Will**, offering waterfront accommodation and great facilities to **New Zealanders** and travelers from all over the world.

The little post office is still there as are the two remaining old oak trees grown from a handful of acorns given to **Alexander & Jemima** from **Governor Sir George Grey** when he was living at **Kawau Island**.

In the early 1950's, their first subdivision of part of the land was done by **Mervyn** and **Steve**, sons of **Jack Algie**.

There have been subsequent subdivisions by **Athol**, son of **Will James**, and his sons whom all still live at the bay and more recently by sons and daughters of **Merv** and **Steve**.

The **Maori name** for this beach is **Horahora Wai**, which means "encroaching waters".

It should be pointed out that the northern end of the bay, next to **Snells Beach**, has never been in ownership of the **Algie family**.

Six generations of **Algies** have called this place home.

Algies Bay – Northern end:

1927 to 1928 – **Frank Bell** bought land from **Charles Kasper**.

Late 1950's – Sold property to **Bob Penniket**

Sold to **Murrays** who subdivided some of this land.

Part was bought by the **Roberts**, now known as **Highfield**.

Remainder sold to **David Morrison** in the late **1970's** and subdivided.