

Nelson's pre-European landscape

The pre-European landscape of Tasman Bay and Nelson was described by Geoff Park as “a food-rich country of edges - Kahikatea woods, flax swamps, coastal lagoons and rivermouths.”¹ The revered dense forests of Te Matu (The Great Wood of Motueka) and The Wood of Nelson, albeit short-lived after the arrival of the settlers, were significant landscape features in the region which was a patchwork of rich and diverse ecosystems. These included mixed beech-podocarp-hardwood forest, lowland podocarp-broadleaf forest behind the rivers and swamps forests and a number of distinct estuarine, freshwater wetland, coastal flat, bolder bank and dune ecosystems.²

The arrival of the New Zealand Company settlers in 1842 marked the start of the steady biophysical transformation of these ecosystems. This was effected through the removal of native vegetation and the modification of topography. The introduction of European land management practices and the gradual emergence of European ornamental, plantation and orchard trees furthered this transformation.

Early ornamental planting

Some of the earliest and most admired trees in the region were successfully cultivated from seed brought from England. Two of these, “the first ash”, and “the first oak”, as they sometimes referred to, were cultivated by members of Captain Wakefield's preliminary expedition party and were both planted in Nelson. The ash, planted by John Blumforth, was located on the bank of the Maitai at Milton Grove and was considered to be “one of the ornaments of the town.” It was acquired by the Nelson Board of Works in 1860 to prevent it from being felled and was fenced off, ornamented with seats and managed as a small reserve (Ash-tree Reserve) until it blew down in a storm in 1871. At that time it was noted to have been 40 feet in height with a trunk 2 feet in diameter.³ The oak was raised from an acorn which had been transported on the ship chartered for Wakefield's preliminary expedition. It was planted in a garden in Hardy Street and, following the demise of the ash, its relocation to the Maitai bank reserve was suggested, so that it fill the role as a 'memento' of the founding of the settlement.⁴ Other claims of “first oak” status were subsequently attributed to the Seymour Avenue pedunculate oak, (*Quercus robur*) whose planting in 1842 or 1843 was first attributed to Alfred Fell and later, Harry Seymour.⁵

Eucalyptus, particularly blue gum, stringy bark and peppermint gum, were other early and popular species. These were either grown from capsules gathered by the settlers whose sea journey to New Zealand was via Australia, or else ordered from Australia's eastern coast nurseries. Fast growing and easily acclimatised the species was utilised for belt plantings around new landholdings, in ornamental shrubberies, and as single specimen trees where they were encourage to branch from the bottom. In a number of instances eucalyptus were planted to commemorate the establishment of some of the settlements' temporary landmarks and early buildings.⁶ Investigations by the New Zealand Forest Service in the mid 1950s suggest that two eucalyptus planted on Church Hill may have been examples of this practice.⁷

1 Park, G. (1995) *Ngā Uruora - The Groves of Life Ecology and History in a New Zealand Landscape*, p. 241

2 <http://www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz/assets/Environment/Downloads/living-heritage-nelson-native-plants.pdf>
<http://www.tasman.govt.nz/policy/reports/land-types-of-the-tasman-district/>

3 *Colonist*, 3 February 1871, p. 5; *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 4 February 1871, p. 3

4 *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 4 February 1871, p. 3

5 F. G. Gibbs in *Evening Mail*, 4 October 1930; Allan, H. H (1940) *Journal of the RNZIH* Vol 10, No. 1, p. 24

6 Historic trees in Nelson – Nelson forestry- forest botany 1951-1975, BBQI 7496 174/c 48/10, Archives New Zealand

7 This was based on their locations (close to the 1842 location of Bishop Selwyn's tent on the north side of Church Hill and close to the site of the 1843 temporary church known as the 'Barn' on the south side of Church Hill) together with their size when measured in 1955

Willows were another popular 'first wave' species and were frequently planted to ornament water bodies for picturesque effect. They were also valued for their stabilising effect on the banks of streams and rivers, and proved useful as a form of flood protection in shingle-bearing rivers where traditional English practices were employed.⁸ Willows were planted in significant numbers across the region and had reached impressive proportions by 1865, as described by one visitor to the town who observed "magnificent groups of weeping willows which I have never seen equalled elsewhere."⁹

Eucalyptus and poplars continued to be used by settlers as the accepted 'pioneering' shelter species through the 1840s and 1850s but by the early 1860s pines had proved effective for shelter and wind protection. These were described in 1863 as making a "capital shelter" and were considered effective in "breaking the force of the rude [Waimea] winds."¹⁰

Prevailing environmental theory

In addition to their desirable aesthetic qualities, the planting of eucalyptus and willows is likely to have been influenced by colonial health anxieties and prevailing environmental theory. In the 1860s and early 1870s settler concern with areas of naturally swampy or low lying ground, or those landscapes deemed 'unhealthy' prompted the planting of particular trees which were considered to have special ameliorative qualities. Blue gums in particular, and mimosas and willows were thought to act like sponges, sucking up and purifying 'unwholesome saturations' while other tall and thickly-leaved species were believed to attract and neutralise 'noxious exhalations' from marshy land with their foliage.¹¹ By the early 1870s, Nelson's landscape with its naturally swampy ground, lack of sanitation and dangerous rank vegetation, was seen as potentially threatening to the health of its residents.¹² These concerns were raised by one the town's medical fraternity in a lengthy report to the Nelson Board of Works and, in addition to recommendations made concerning drainage and sanitation, Dr Williams highlighted the efficacy of "lofty and umbrageous trees" in combating various miasmas. Other literature and scientific papers from Europe were circulated via Nelson newspapers reinforcing the medicinal virtues of Eucalyptus globulus, which it was said gave off odours which had a highly salutary effect on marsh and other fever.¹³

However, this was not the only way trees were believed to modify environments and by the 1870s many Nelson landowners were cognisant of international debates concerning the influence of trees on climate. These debates centred on the value of forest trees in ameliorating climate by attracting rain and moderating extreme temperatures. "Belts of trees across bare plains [were claimed] to cause many a passing shower to fall on them" and trees were believed to cool hot winds, among other things.¹⁴ Now referred to as desiccation theory, this was a driver for a number of landowners to plant blocks and belts of forest trees in exposed situations, shingle beds and in corners of their landholdings. Jas W. Marsden of Isle Park in Stoke was an advocate of this theory and actively promoted it locally lecturing to the local farmer's club in 1872.¹⁵

8 Either incorporated into a system of wattling or planted, as poles, in considerable numbers along the banks of waterways and on shelving gravel beds

9 *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 11 April 1865, p. 3

10 *Daily Southern Cross*, 21 December 1863, p. 4

11 Beattie, J. (2008) Colonial Geography of Settlement: Vegetation, Towns, Disease and Well-being in Aotearoa / New Zealand, *Environment and History*, 14 (2008)

12 1867 Report of the Nelson Sanitary Commission, Letter Dr Williams to Nelson Board of Works, 3 November 1873, pp. 3 - 4

13 *Colonist*, 16 August 1872, p. 4

14 Mr Gammack in a lecture to the Lincoln Farmers Club in 1872, *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 24 February 1872, p. 7

15 Lecture to the Stoke Farmers Club by J. W. Marsden jnr. May 1872

Concurrent with these debates, the Government introduced planting incentives for private individuals in the form of *The Forest Trees Planting Encouragement Act 1871* and its amendments which operated in Nelson. This act awarded planters of trees either a free grant of two acres for every acre of land planted in trees or a land order not exceeding £4 that was redeemable later.¹⁶ Planting prompted by this act favoured fast-growing pines, particularly *Pinus insignis*, which by the 1870s was known as *Pinus radiata*.

Early Nelson Nurserymen

Other early and critical planting activity centred on the establishment of home orchards. Much of this plant material was initially acquired from Parramatta, Sydney by agents who onsold fruit trees to the new land holders.¹⁷ Seeds were also imported from Sydney, and as early as November 1842 garden seed "raised last season in the Valley of the Hutt" was offered for sale.¹⁸ From 1849 Nelson-based nurserymen began to regularly advertise fruit tree stock from their own horticultural endeavours. The first of these, Thomas Epps, of Grove Nursery and John McDonald of Glenco Nursery, sold fruit trees, canes, vines and seeds.¹⁹ Neillann Nursery, which operated from 1850 to 1853, similarly sold fruit trees and canes but also offered Scotch firs, stone pines and *Pinus pinaster* as well as black and white Italian poplars, roses and shrubs.²⁰

William Hale of Clapham Nursery entered the ornamental horticultural market offering newly imported flower bulbs and seeds of English shrubs in 1849.²¹ However, by 1855 he was advertising "38 sorts of pears, some of them quite new, imported direct from France." His other stock included 40 varieties of apples, 2,000 Nelson nursery-grown elms, 2,000 pines and 6,000 other plantation species, fruit trees and flowering shrubs.²² Other nurserymen followed Hale and by the mid 1850s ash, oaks, poplars, holly laurel, lauristina, poplar, willow and stringy bark, peppermint and blue gums were standard lines in Nelson's nurseries.

Second wave introductions

The diversity of species, initially imported by nurserymen, and then propagated by them and onsold, quickly grew and by 1861 fashionable Victorian and High Victorian exotica and forest trees were a feature of their nursery catalogue. In the case of William Hale, this included *Araucaria imbricata* (araucana), *A. cunninghamii*, *A. excelsa* (heterophylla) and *A. bidwillii*, *Wellingtonia gigantea* (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), *Thuja*, *Yucca*, *Agave*, *Aloes*, *rhododendrons*, etc as well as the more familiar ornamentals and forest trees species.²³ Other forest trees or 'second colonial landscape' species as they have been described by Shepherd (2000) were introduced into the province as part of the Government's New Zealand wide trial of Californian timber / forest trees. At this time there was no State Forest Service, so the seed was directed to Dr (later Sir) James Hector, Director of the New Zealand Geological Survey. Hector was also Director of the Colonial Museum and Manager of the Wellington Botanic Garden, and through these channels used his pervasive influence to distribute the seed throughout New Zealand.

In the case of Nelson, Geological Survey seed (and then young trees) were dispatched in at least seven

16 Certain other conditions applied

17 Shipping Intelligence: Imports -various ships ex Sydney to Nelson from 1842

18 Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, 12 November 1842, p. 141

19 Thomas Epps' 1852 advertisement notes that he had received Nelson custom for the last three years and by 1851 John McDonald had several thousands of fruit trees and claimed to be the largest nursery in the colony

20 Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, 12 March 1853, p. 9

21 Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, 3 November 1849, p. 137

22 Advertisement, Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, 21 February 1855, p. 3

23 William Hale's Catalogue of Trees Shrubs, Seed, etc. IA1: 1861/819, Archives New Zealand

waves. Seed was sent to the Nelson Superintendent in 1871 and probably on a regular basis from then until 1876 when the Provinces were abolished.²⁴ Three years later eighty-six packages of seeds of European, Asiatic and American trees and shrubs were passed from Hector to nurseryman John Hale (Lark Hall Nursery) via the Nelson Association for the Promotion of Science and Industry. These were for Hale's propagation and local distribution.²⁵ American conifer seed (*Pinus*, *Abies*, *Cupressus*, *Tsuga*, *Thuja*, *Sequoia*, *Cedrus*, *Taxus*, *Thujopsis*, *Araucaria*, *Picea* species and *Wellingtonia gigantea*) was sent to the Nelson Public Domain Board in 1879 and again in 1882.²⁶ In 1884 conifer trees and seed including *Juglans nigra* (walnut) and *Carya tomentosa* (North American hickory) was also sent to the Domain Board.²⁷ Three years later a case of young conifers, grown in the Colonial Botanic Gardens, was dispatched for planting in Queen's Gardens.²⁸ Additional trees, also planted in Queen's Gardens were received from Hector in 1889.²⁹

Other plant and tree stock arrived in the settlement from Europe. Some of this material was ordered directly by residents, as noted later. However, by the early 1860s a number of Australian-based nurserymen began advertising in Nelson offering "trees and plants via consignment from Europe", in addition to their Australian tree stock.³⁰ Additional material flowed into the province via the Auckland-based seedsman J. A. Drury who by 1861, was offering seeds of Norfolk Island pine, fern, indigenous plants and Tasmanian trees and shrubs to the Nelson public.³¹

Other sources

Kew Gardens was another direct source of Nelson's early plants and trees. Francis Dillon Bell, in his capacity as Nelson's Resident Agent, is known to have received at least two cases of unspecified plants from William Hooker, Director of Kew in 1849. Writing to acknowledge the consignment Bell wrote "Allow me to return my thanks... to yourself who has contributed so generously to the improvement and ornament of the gardens in New Zealand. Some plants have been given to the Superintendent of Nelson and some to other persons with gardens. The remainder in my own garden waiting to be transplanted..."³²

Kew was also the source of Nelson's early cork oak trees. These were acquired by the Nelson Acclimatisation Society, via the Victorian Acclimatisation Society, Melbourne, in 1865.³³ Three years later the Secretary of the Society visited Tasmania and brought back *Ailanthus glandulosa*, China tea trees (camellia), coffee trees (arabica), two additional cork trees and *Cinchona* (Quinine), as well as seed of the red barberry, camellia, ailanthus and teazle.³⁴ These, together with other species of economic potential and medicinal value were trialled by the Society's members. Some trees, such as the cork oak are believed to have been planted in Albion Square which was the centre of Acclimatisation Society's salmon raising operation at the time.

24 Shepherd, R. W. (1990) Early importations of *Pinus radiata* to New Zealand and distribution in Canterbury to 1885: implications for the genetic makeup of *Pinus radiata* stocks. *Horticulture in New Zealand*, Part 1: Summer 1990, pp 33 - 38. Part 2, Winter 1990, pp 28 - 35

25 *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, Volume 7, 1874, p. 558

26 IA1:179/534, Archives New Zealand

27 *AJHRNZ*, 1885, H.-23, p. 2

28 Nelson City Council Minute Book, Minutes 16 September 1887 p. 548

29 John Sharp in *The Colonist*, 19 April 1913, p. 8

30 Advertisements were logged in the *Colonist* by the well known nurseryman and entrepreneur John Baptist, 'The Garden' Surry Hills, Sydney from 1864

31 Advertisement, *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 9 February 1861, p. 4

32 Letter Francis Dillon Bell to William Hooker, 1 December 1849, Director's correspondence 1849, Kew Library Archives

33 *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 1 July 1865, p. 3

34 *Colonist*, 4 September 1868, p. 5

Commemorative, memorial and Arbor Day plantings

In addition to the trees and seed the Nelson Domain Board received from James Hector, the region's public landscapes benefited greatly from the largess of a number of Nelson's nurserymen. This was particularly the case between 1860 and 1900 when numerous specimen trees were donated by these men to mark the opening of buildings, the laying of foundation stones and the turning of the first sod. These donations tended to be of 'high status' species and *Wellingtonia gigantea* (*Sequoiadendron gigantea*) were popular event and memory markers. Well known examples include five *Sequoiadendron* gifted by William Hale to ornament the grounds of the Nelson Provincial buildings in Albion Square in 1857.³⁵ William's brother John also gifted a number of *Sequoiadendron* including the Britannia Hill tree in memory of Captain Wakefield in 1900, the 'jubilee tree' as it was known in Queen's Gardens in 1892 and the Church Hill tree marking the marriage of the Duke of York in 1893. Other more traditionally emblematic species (Oak and Elm) were used to mark events associated with significant royal milestones and limes were often donated, particularly by John Hale, to mark other civic occasions and urban improvements.³⁶

Nurserymen were also generous in their support of trees for Arbor Day and from 1892 additional layers of commemorative fabric were planted into the region. The early focus for these planting occasions was public parks, reserves, school grounds and road sides and involved a predominantly exotic palette. However, following the release of an 1895 pamphlet containing suggested native species for Arbor Day commemorations,³⁷ more species diverse plantings occurred. Examples of this in the Nelson region saw the Takaka A & P Association plant a newly acquired recreational reserve in 1896 with "fir trees, native species and weeping willows"; while in Queen's Gardens one of the Government officials planted a large Nikau palm. In 1899 the newly acquired Tahuna Sands Reserve was planted with pittosporum, *Pinus insignis*, *Abies pectinata*, Scotch firs, cypress, oak, beech, a few walnuts and a peach tree while an equally eclectic mix of a macrocarpa and two banana palms were planted at the Basin on Rocks Road.³⁸

Instilling the importance of tree planting in the minds of the young was an important aspect of Arbor Day and to this end pupils of all ages were involved in the days activities which were not limited to their own school grounds. Examples of their arboricultural endeavour included willow plantings near the site of new bridges on the Maitai in 1899 and a plantation planting of approximately 300 trees on Britannia Hill in 1900, both undertaken by the pupils of Nelson Boys' Central School.

Other supporters of Arbor Day included Nelson's Horticultural Society, Scenery Preservation Society, other city councils,³⁹ and in the case of school arbor day plantings, trees were provided by the Education Board nursery. From c.1921 the State Forest Service took over this role providing trees and tree seed gratuitously to schools from their nurseries. Species were confined to the exotics under cultivation for the state plantations at that time. In the early 1920s these were largely *Cupressus lawsoniana*, *Pinus ponderosa*, *Pinus insignis*, douglas fir and eleven species of eucalyptus, some or all of which were planted in school grounds and curtilages.⁴⁰ By the 1930s the list of tree seed dispatched to schools had grown to include *Acacia*, *Cryptomeria*, *Cupressus macrocarpa*, *Sequoia sempervirens*, *Thuja plicata* and five species of pine.

35 Alan Hale to Nelson Conservator of Forests, 1 March 1956, Historic trees in Nelson – Nelson forestry- forest botany 1951-1975, BBQI 7496 174/c 48/10, Archives New Zealand

36 Twenty limes were donated by John Hale in 1898 for the ornamentation of the Port Road between the Saltwater bridge and Auckland Point. At least 3 limes were donated by John Hale for the commencement of planting Victoria Avenue in 1906. Limes were also included in other large plant donations John Hale made to Council for Trafalgar Park

37 Species list prepared by Thomas Kirk, Chief Conservator of Forests for the Department of Agriculture publication

38 *Colonist*, 20 July 1899, p. 2

39 In 1892 Whangarei Council provided 500 free trees to Nelson for arbor day planting

40 Planting by School Children - Arbor Day, 1921-1932, F1 29/7/1; Archives New Zealand

As an adjunct to their support of Arbor Day the Forest Service, in conjunction with the Department of Education was also involved in a programme to assist rural schools to establish and operate their own exotic forest nurseries/ plantations. This was inaugurated in 1924 and exotic seed and guidance was provided by the Forest Service. Seen as an opportunity for schools to generate revenue through firewood sales and also as a tool for horticultural and arboricultural instruction, the programme attracted an initial 765 schools. Hillside School, Wakapuaka was one of 765 schools who were part of this scheme, and at the time of its forced closure in 1926 had 11 acres in plantations.⁴¹

Emphasis on the planting of native species was further underscored by centennial tree planting projects which saw new waves of planting by schools and individuals who were encouraged to mark the event with "a living memorial". One of the projects specifically aimed at school landscapes was the Centennial Native Plant Scheme. The aim of this scheme was to encourage the growth and cultivation "of as many representatives as possible of the native flora as it existed in the school district 100 years ago."⁴² It was claimed that in the majority of schools, a replica of the local plant community had been planted in the school grounds by 1940.

Another layer of Nelson's school, reserves and highway plantings date from the 1938 beautifying efforts undertaken to celebrate the coronation of King George VI. A large number of the trees planted as part of this celebration were documented in the 1939 publication *The Royal Record*.⁴³ Although oak species predominated some Nelson schools broke with tradition and planted Norfolk pines (two at Mapua School), a fan palm (Pigeon Valley School), a judas tree (Tahunanui School), Italian cypress (Tadmor School), and a number of kowhai and other native species were planted across the region. The largest single project was undertaken by the Nelson Rotary Club who planted a row of 50 pohutukawa alongside the Nelson- Blenheim Highway and between it and Nelson Haven. Nelson's efforts also included acorns from Windsor Great Park which were distributed by the Nelson Automobile Association for planting.

Other important tree planters and tree planting advocates

A number of regional organisations as well as special interest groups played a valuable role in shaping Nelson's early planted landscape and protecting remnant pockets of native bush. This was particularly true of the Nelson Scenery Preservation Society. This group formed in 1894 to prevent the unnecessary destruction of native bush, as well as to encourage tree planting and the general beautification of parks and reserves in the region. Among its members were some of Nelson's leading figures including Charles Fell, Colonel Branfill, the Mayor at the time Francis Trask, the photographer, W. Tyree, the explorer, Dr J. Hudson, Percy Adams, H. Cock, shipping company manager and his friend, F. G. Gibbs, headmaster of the Nelson Boys' Central School.⁴⁴ Many of these men had impressive gardens and donated native trees and plants from these to Nelson city's public planting projects. In addition, the Society instituted a subsidised scheme from 1898 to make bank Monday (the first Monday in August) a day for planting ornamental trees.⁴⁵ They were however, most successful in their mission to protect stands of native bush and a number of council reserves were created as a result of their lobbying efforts.

The Nelson Reserves Beautification Society was a short-lived group focused on the improvement of

41 *AJHRNZ 1925*, C.-03, p. 21; Report of the Dominion Bush Preservation and Amenity Planting Conference, Parliament House, 2 April 1937

42 *New Zealand Centennial News*, 15 September 1938, No. 2, p. 8

43 This can now be accessed at <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/PublicFiles/index.html> New Zealand tree plantings begin on page 386

44 Gibbs was also an amateur botanist of some renown, who had collected for Thomas Kirk and would later collect for Cockayne, Cheeseman and Petrie

45 *Nelson Evening Mail*, 28 July 1898, p. 2

Church Hill and other reserves through the planting and cultivation of trees and shrubs. This society formed in August 1901, and having set up their first committee - the Church Hill Improvement Committee, secured nurseryman John Hale as their expert advisor. Despite being unable to raise the necessary money to fund their full work programme for Church Hill the group managed to cut down a large number of trees which were obstacles to their refurbishment programme.⁴⁶ Three years later they began replanting the hill and by 1906 the cathedral landscape was described as “a place of beauty.”⁴⁷

The Nelson Beautifying Society formed in 1911, with the objective of “making the city and its neighbourhood more beautiful and attractive.” Within its first two years of operation it had carried out projects in all parts of the city with the exception of the Woods. Examples of their early projects included the ploughing and planting of the Trafalgar Street South Cemetery (now Fairfield Park) in 1911. This was planted with native species sourced from Wangamoa. The same year Waimea Road from the Nelson College to the city was planted with plane trees, and limes were planted on the town side of the college. Brook Park was ploughed and 200 trees were planted.⁴⁸ In addition to the traditional plane, lime and oak palette, the society favoured period fashionable species and also planted scarlet gums, Japanese cherries, silver birch, pink and white chestnuts and laburnums. Evidence of some of their work can still be seen in remnant street and reserve plantings in the city.

The Nelson Forestry Society formed in 1918 with objectives modelled on those of the New Zealand Forestry League. These were namely, the preservation of the bush and encouragement of [tree] planting. Members appear to have focused more on the promotion of 'scientific' forestry through discussion and the delivery of papers on the commercial and environmental benefits of forest plantations, rather than having any hands-on landscape development involvement.

In Nelson's more recent history other groups such as the Jaycees, Rotary, Tahuna Women's Institute, the Nelson Native Forest and Bird Protection Society and other public service and special interest groups are noted to have planted a tremendous variety of trees and shrubs around the city and in the region's reserves.

Other tree-minded individuals

Trees were planted by Nelsons' residents for many reasons – for fuel, food, construction materials, climatic control and soil quality, wind protection and revenue. Many were also planted to make their 'foreign landscape' less alien, and others were planted purely for reasons of aesthetic appreciation. A number of these ornamental plantings survive in Nelson's private gardens, parks, reserves, schools and cemeteries, and in some cases some details of their provenance is known.

One such example is Father Antoine Garin, a French Priest and keen arborculturalist. Garin imported seed of unusual conifers and shrubs from Europe such as *Pinus contorta*, *P. muricata* and others and planted them in the various institutions he was associated with between 1850 and 1889. He was also renowned for distributing seeds to his friends. One of Garin's trees, planted in the grounds of St Mary's Catholic Church, was perpetuated through a sport which was planted in the Boys' orphanage cemetery in 1934, and in seeds from cones gathered by the Forest Service and given to the Rai Valley school to propagate in the 1950s.

The Marsdens, both father and son, of Isel Park in Stoke also had a great interest in trees. Thomas Marsden is understood to have begun planting in 1845, prior to the construction of his home.⁴⁹ Much

46 *Nelson Evening Mail*, 16 August 1901, p. 2; 5 September 1901, p. 4

47 *Nelson Evening Mail*, 26 January 1906, p. 2

48 *Colonist*, 20 August 1913, p. 3; *Colonist*, 15 October 1913, p. 4

49 Douglas, B.(1990) Isel Park- a Woodland Garden, *Horticulture in New Zealand*, Vol 1, Number 1 Summer 1990, p. 29

of the plant material that was subsequently added was described as having been acquired during overseas travels.⁵⁰ At the time of their visit to the plantation in 1919 the Nelson Forest Society noted an impressive pine collection in the grounds surrounding the Marsden residence. This they recorded as including *Pinus strobus*, *P. canariensis*, *P. sabiniana*, *P. longifolia*, *P. insignis*, *P. lambertiana*, *P. pinaster* and *P. jeffreyi* as well as many other ornamentals of significant size.

Another early settler, Henry Redwood of Redwood's Valley, is also understood to have been an important, but overlooked contributor to Nelson's tree stock. Henry imported Sequoia seed, which he planted on his property 'Hednesford' and circulated around the region. In writing about Redwood in 1955, the Conservator of Forests noted "The district generally owes much more to Henry Redwood than is generally appreciated for his unsparing efforts to make the province of his adoption a treasure-house of imported arboreal wealth."⁵¹ Henry is believed to have gifted Wellingtonia seed for the planting of a row of *Sequoiadendron giganteum* at St Joseph's Church, Wakefield⁵² and is also thought to have been the seed source for a number of the region's redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) including the Foxhill Redwood.⁵³

Percy Adams was an active member of a number of Nelson's tree-orientated Societies but was also a significant tree planting force in his own right. He was responsible for forming a native reserve on Trafalgar Street south in the vicinity of his home Melrose, which was described as "one of the first demonstrations of city beautification in Nelson." Many of the city's surviving Phoenix palms, fan palms and cabbage trees can be attributed to his regular and large plant donations to Council for reserves and river bank planting. Percy was equally generous to the wider community and it was claimed that by 1911 he had supplied citizens with about 18,000 [cabbage] palms. In 1903 he donated fan palms (*Tracycarpus*) and cabbage palms (Cabbage trees) for planting on Church Hill. The following year he planted palms in conjunction with the council on the Haven Road footpath and cycle track. In 1914 he gave a large and valuable donation of kowhai, Monte Carlo palms (Phoenix palms) and fan palms to the city for distribution to the Botanical Reserve, Maitai Bank, Milton's Acre and Church Hill,⁵⁴ and in 1918 he donated palms which were planted in Anzac Park.⁵⁵

Other dedicated planters included John Sharp, former Mayor of Nelson, who ornamented his home Fellworth with an impressive array of exotic trees and Thomas J. Harley, whose *Araucaria bidwillii* (Bunya Bunya) and *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (giant sequoia), survive in the ground of the Cawthron Institute.

Some members of the provincial government and later the city council were also actively involved in directing and sometimes planting Nelson's first public landscape. Alfred Domett, the Colonial Secretary, who along with Joseph Webb, a member of the Board of Works was responsible for the first layout and planting of Church Hill in 1860.⁵⁶ Similarly, Councillor Jessie Piper, undertook the first planting on the Britannia Hill Domain in c. 1884, the boundaries of Queen's Gardens in 1891 and the Gardens proper with John Hale in 1892.⁵⁷

50 Visit to the Isel plantation by the Nelson Forest Society in 1919 recorded in *Colonist*, 10 March 1919, p. 3

51 Memo, F. Allsop, Conservator of Forests, 22 September 1955, BBQI 7496 174/c 48/10, Archives New Zealand

52 This was germinated by a parishioner in his window box and it is speculated that the young trees were planted in 1869 at the time the foundation stone was laid, as noted in *Historic trees in Nelson – Nelson forestry- forest botany 1951-1975*, BBQI 7496 174/c 48/10, Archives New Zealand

53 BBQI 7496 174/c 48/10, Archives New Zealand

54 *Colonist*, 12 September 1914, p. 2

55 *Colonist*, 24 August 1918, p. 5

56 *Colonist*, 3 August 1860, p. 2

57 *Nelson Evening Mail*, 14 July 1900, p. 2; Beaumont, L. (2012) *Queen's Gardens Conservation Plan*

Place-making

Much of Nelson's earliest public planting was dishearteningly lost through neglect, uncontrolled cattle weather events and vandalism. Residential and estate plantings suffered a similar fate and many mature trees were prematurely removed because of changing horticultural fashion, subdivision, urban development and various tree 'nuisance' legislation which has operated through time.⁵⁸

However, important representative examples of single species, woodland lots and tree groups can still be seen across the region illustrating period waves of planting, horticultural fashions and environmental practices. Other surviving trees, imbued with a symbolic freight which is no longer recognised, reference occasions of civic pride and commemoration and mark historical moments in time, while others are a record of the plant catalogues and generosity of Nelson's early nurserymen. Taken as a whole they are the planted record of early place making in the Nelson region.



Residence in the Nelson district by G C Gilbert [1861 or later]

This painting by G Gilbert is believed to show house of Sir Edward W Stafford, who was Superintendent of Nelson Province between 1853-1856. A pine belt is visible behind the house, a willow far left and young conifers and other fashionable trees and shrubs are planted in the circular ornamental garden fronting the house.

Source: A-263-015. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wgt, New Zealand. <http://beta.natlib.govt.nz/records/22838873>

⁵⁸ Country Roads Act 1856 and subsequent amendments, Nelson Board of Works and other public utility legislation etc

N. M'VICAR, in thanking his numerous patrons for past favours, begs to announce that he is prepared to offer this season the following NURSERY ARTICLES, all in good order:—Apples, 31 named sorts, at £6 per 100; Plums, and Cherries, at £6 per 100; Moorpark Apricots, 2s. per plant; Pears, 2s. and 2s. 6d. per plant; Vines—Black Hamburg, Black St. Peter's, Royal Muscadine, white Musque Chasselas, Pink Champagne, Millers's Burgundy, Early Black July, at 1s. per plant; Gooseberries, 4s. per dozen; Currants—red, white, and black, 3s. per dozen; Figs, 1s. 6d. per plant; Ash, £4 10s. per 100; Stone Pine, £4 10s. per 100; Scotch Fir, £4 10s. per 100; Pinus Pinaster, £4 10s. per 100; Elm, 1s. per plant; black and white Italian Poplars, 1s. per plant; English Lilac, 1s. per plant, Syringa, 2s. per plant; Gildrose, 2s. 6d. per plant; Roses in variety 1s. per plant. The most strict attention to orders in rotation. The above for cash only,
Neillann Nursery, South Trafalgar Street,
Nelson, March 12, 1853.

Advertisement, Neillann Nursery, 12 March 1853
Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle

WILLIAM HALE, Nursery and Seedsmen, calls the attention of the settlers of Nelson and the surrounding settlements to his NURSERY STOCK, which he begs to offer FOR SALE the ensuing season, consisting of upwards of ten thousand fruit and forest trees, flowering shrubs, &c. Eleven hundred Apple trees, consisting of forty of the best keeping sorts. Thirty-eight sorts of Pears, some of them quite new, imported direct from France, and have never been offered to competition in any of the colonies. Cherries, Plums, Peaches, Nectarines, Apricots, &c., all of the finest kinds. Grapes of the choicest sorts. Filberts, three sorts. Rough red Gooseberries. Black, white, and red Currants. British Queen and Black Prince Strawberries. Early red buck, scarlet, and Myatt's Victoria Rhubarb. 2,000 Elms, from one to four feet high. 2,000 Pines, in good planting order. Ash, Poplars, &c. Holly, from one to two feet high. Laurels, English. Laurelotina, Guelder Rose, Pyrus Japonica, &c. &c., &c.
W. H. takes this opportunity of informing the public that his trees, &c., are all of the finest growth, and at moderate prices; the apple trees warranted never to have been infected with the American blight.
In lots to suit purchasers, ten pounds fine Deptford Onion Seed, quite new, and true to sort,
Clapham Nursery, Feb. 16.

Clapham Nursery, 21 February 1855
Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle

SATURDAY, MAY 30.

LARGE AND UNRESERVED SALE
OF
FRUIT AND FOREST TREES, PLANTS,
FLOWERING SHRUBS, &c., &c.

MESSRS. N. EDWARDS and CO. have received instructions from Mr. THOMAS EPPS, to SELL by public AUCTION, at their Warehouse, Trafalgar-street, on SATURDAY, the 30th instant, commencing at Twelve o'clock precisely—
The following choice assortment of NURSERY TREES, FLOWERS in pots, SHRUBS, &c., namely—
Choice and well-grafted varieties of FRUIT TREES, consisting of—
Apples, Pears, Cherries, Peaches and Plums, Apricots, Nectarines, Mulberries, Damsons, Almonds, Medlars, Quinces, Raspberries (red and white), Currants (black, white, and red), Gooseberries, Nuts, Filberts, &c., &c.

FOREST TREES, and TREES and PLANTS in pots—
Mountain Ash, Acacias, Longifolia, Armata, Caltriforma, Vestata, Pondula, and Florida, Araucaria Excelsa, Bidwellii, Aster Argophyllus (Musk Tree), Citridora, Aucuba Japonica, Azaleas, Alba Major, and Smithii, Bignonias (four sorts), Cratagus (Flowering Hawthorn, four sorts), including the Rosea Superba and Double Pink; Cuptea Platz Centra, Daphne Laureala, Diptams Glutinosa, Kuonymus (three sorts), Chinese Elms, Hydrangea Japonica, Variegated Hollies, Jasmines (three sorts), Kennedias, Laurestinus, Common and Portugal Laurels, Myrtles, Sweet Gale and Broad-leaved; Magnolias, Gracilis and Conspicua; Nerium Splendens, Pines, Pinasters, Halypensus, and Stone; Polygulas, Boxifolia and Grandiflora; Pyrus Japonica, Salvia Patens, Swainsonias, Thuja American, Assulus and Guelder Roses, Roses all sorts, Veronicas, Weigelas Rosea, Wisteras Fruticans, and Chenensis; Yews, Common; Arbovitæ, Cypress, &c., &c.; Gums of various sorts.

100,000 well-grown HAWTHORN PLANTS.

The Auctioneers beg to call attention to the above carefully grown and well assorted Nursery Stock, being one of the best selections ever offered at Public Auction. The late rains make the period for transplanting most seasonable, and most of the flowering Shrubs and Forest Trees are potted, and very fine and strong.

Without reserve. Terms at Sale.
Nelson, May 19. 3112

Stock held by Thomas Epps, 21 May 1863
Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle

CITY OF NELSON.

Town Clerk's Office,
16th June, 1891.

CONTRIBUTIONS of ORNAMENTAL TREES and SHRUBS for Planting the Botanical Gardens and the Reserves are invited.

H. V. GULLY,
Town Clerk.

1791—2

IN reference to the City Council Advertisement,
J. HALE, of the LARK HALL NURSERIES, offers to any person wishing to contribute TREES for the above purpose, the following ORNAMENTAL TREES, at HALF the usual price, delivered to any part of town free of charge:—

50 ALBIES FRASERII (Silver Fir)	
50 " EXCELSA (Norway Spruce)	
50 AMERICAN RED WOOD	
50 RETINOSPORA	
50 CRYPTOMERIA ELEGANS	
50 " LOBBII	
50 CUPRESSUS TORULOSA	
50 " ERECTA	
100 MAOROCARPA	
100 PINUS INSIGNIS	1808—1 0

Call for donations and John Hale's list of subsidised trees, 17 June 1891
Nelson Evening Mail