

A U C K L A N N D B O T A N I C A L S O C I E T Y

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Christmas is a time of memories. Consequently we are most happy to be able to publish an article by Dr. L.H. Millener on Historic Trees of Auckland.

Dr. Millener is our representative on the Historic Places Society and since historic trees form an important part of local history a commencement has been made of a study of this fascinating subject. The Tree Society have already collected some data which they handed to Dr. Millener who has since been at pains to add to it.

Dr. Millener feels there must be many "trees with a story" of which he has not yet heard. We hope that our members will do their best to ferret out any information they can. Unfortunately with the growth of the city many splendid old trees are doomed. It is more important then that historic trees should have their stories recorded since in some cases at any rate this might result in saving them from the axe. We feel sure we can count on members to co-operate in this matter.

HISTORIC TREES OF AUCKLAND.

The story of Auckland's trees is an extraordinary one. Our climate as you all know, is a tree climate. In 1840 in fact, when Auckland was founded, the North Island as a whole was mantled almost continuously in luxuriant forest. But over the Auckland Isthmus, where once kauri forests had grown almost to the waters edge, as on the sites of Ponsonby and Parnell, the Maori had fought bitterly for 500 years. When the white man came "the fires were dead, and the hearthstones cold." The landscape was a wilderness of fern and almost impenetrable scrub -- in the words of the Rev. Walter Lawry, a landscape of "appalling baldness."

Nevertheless, there must have been, here and there, especially in valleys and other sheltered places, the remnants of forest. Among our most historic trees, then, will be those few that have survived from pre-European days -- pohutukawas along the shore, and a few elsewhere -- puriris in Grafton Gulley -- these, with karakas, rewarewas and other trees in parts of Parnell, Remuera, Mt. Eden (Almorah Rd. for example) and elsewhere -- puriris, tarares and white pines in Smith's Bush, Takapuna -- kauris at Northcote and Birkenhead -- and a few more are all