

back saw, hack saw, coping saw, flush cut saw and keyhole saw, mostly used in carpentry.

Forty Mile Bush was the southern part of the Seventy Mile Bush. It extended from Kopuaranga near Masterton to Woodville. Hence the strong focus on bush felling, as the settlers cleared the land for farming. R H



The bushmen in the photo rest after scarfing the tree, then they will use the saw to fell it.



### Woodville Pioneer Museum.

Situated at 62 Ormand Street, Woodville, the museum is open monthly, on the third Sunday, from 1-3 pm. It is an interesting, small museum, which reminded Brian and I of the beginning years at Bowen Street. We were met by friendly volunteers, one of whom was completing family history research for Brian.

They have displays of the Manawatu Gorge, Maori, photographs, pioneer clothing, World War 1 display and

pioneer families. Out the back is a shed of interesting items associated with farming, bush felling and establishing the Woodville settlement.

We were directed to the Old Gorge Cemetery with a map to find relatives burial sites.

If you have spare time and are interested in settlement history, a little different to ours, you would be made very welcome.

There is a small entry fee.

Thanks to Tom Stoneley for sharing his knowledge of blacksmith's names in the Feilding area. One correction should have read, George Sauer, not George Sewer. Thanks Tom. R H

# Coach House Chronicle

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**Feilding & Districts Community Archive**

A collection of interesting items for friends and supporters of 'The Coach House'

## Recollections of Early Cobb and Co Days

In 1861 Charles Cole came to New Zealand from Victoria, Australia, where he had been a driver on the Ballarat route of the Australian Cobb and Co company.

The Otago firm Cobb and Co, in 1867, was in the hands of Hoyt, Chaplin and Co. Charles Cole had the intention of beginning a coach service to Gabriel's Gully goldfields. He chartered a steamship and brought one Concord stagecoach, five wagons, a buggy and fifty-four horses. In 1862 an agreement was reached between Cole and the Hoyts and a partnership followed. The firm became known as 'Cobb and Co's Telegraph Line of Coaches'.

In 1866 the author, Murray Gladstone Thomson, began his apprenticeship as a coach builder with Cobb and Co. Their headquarters were extensive and well built, including harness rooms, feed lofts, and large sheds for housing the coaches. Adjacent was a forge where smiths were kept busy making

shoes and shoeing horses, spare horses and vehicles being required to be ready at any moment to take to the road. A well-equipped factory, where the coaches were built and repaired completed the block of buildings. It was a two-storied structure. On the upper floor facing the street was a large paint shop, at the back of which was the trimming shop where they made all the curtains, cushions, leather springs and harness; here also was the repair shop. There was a staff of twenty and a considerable amount of work was put through, and at one time orders from the fire brigades in different parts of New Zealand kept them exceptionally busy. In all branches the highest-grade materials were used; the timber



Drivers had to cope with a full range of passengers.

being oak, ash and hickory which were imported from America. The work had to be as light as possible in weight and all employees in the factory had to be competent and reliable. The body makers, wheelwrights, coach smiths, etc., were picked men, the best tradesmen obtainable.

These men were always ready to impart their knowledge to me, as an apprentice.

To ensure that all was right with both horses and harness, all teams and vehicles were inspected by a staff of grooms and the manager before leaving the yard. With this completed, the driver would take his coach round to the point of departure and pick up the mail and passengers. From here the coaches left every morning for the north and south, connecting with other coaches plying to further outlying districts. Through tickets could be obtained to both Christchurch and Invercargill.

The coaches used by Cobb and Co were built to the American pattern. Many of them were known as 'Jack' coaches. They derived this name from the fact that their rounded bodies rested upon braces held fore and aft, held in position by 14-inch-high curved iron supports called 'jacks'. The braces were built up of layers of leather strapping and acted in the capacity of springs.

The coaches were various sizes.

The largest coach in the firm's possession was an 'Abbot Jack' capable of carrying twenty-nine passengers. It was a fine specimen of the old coach building craft. The timber used for the body gear and the wheels was the best. The inside accommodation was both comfortable and convenient. The seating was upholstered in red plush and the pockets and racks were placed in suitable places. The exterior painting was red and gold and the door panels were decorated with hand painted pictures. The original cost of the vehicle was about 500 pounds.

The last advertised Cobb and Co coach operations in the South Island were in February 1925, when motorized transport led to the decline in stage-coach travel.

Excerpts from: *'A Pakeha's Recollections'*. By Murray Gladstone Thomson 1944, an apprentice coach builder.

With thanks to Marilyn Wightman for supplying this interesting article. R H

## Opening the Blacksmith's Shop

The clanging of the hammer on the steel of the anvil, and the rattling of the heavy chain, signified the opening of the Blacksmith's Shop display at the

Coach House Museum.

Greg and Ali Lang, from the Wheelwrights Shop in Gladstone spoke of the significance the blacksmiths' held in our communities in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Greg congratulated Brian Schnell and the team of volunteers who had sourced the tools and associated materials and machines that had been stored away, waiting to create this replica.

Greg and Ali Lang have had a long association with the Coach House as they completed their Wheelwright and Carriage Builder apprenticeship in England. There they learned the traditions and



A view looking past the apprentice to the busy interior of the Blacksmith Workshop.

skills, passed down from forebears, from centuries before. They have restored a lot of vehicles at present in the museum. Greg said the display held stories for generations to come.

One of the first blacksmiths in this area was thought to be a Danish Naval blacksmith who emigrated to New Zealand in 1874 and later established his Blacksmith's business on Halcombe Road, Stanway.

The bellows, the bricked forge and anvil all have their special uses, along with the large number of tongs and rods. The grinder, drill and hacksaw are driven off a line shaft. Some of the materials came from MOTAT many years ago, especially the tools in the Wheelwright's display.

But, preceding the Opening of the Blacksmith's Shop, we had a celebratory morning tea, with Bryan Guy, Trust Chairman welcoming 112 guests - volunteers, Smoko attendees, and others who gathered for

the first time in four months, due to Covid-19.

So many spoke of how they had missed their Thursday musters and were looking forward to them being reinstated on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July. R H



Brian Schnell Designer and Greg Lang at the Official Opening.

## Saws of the early Days

Displayed in the Woodville Museum were a variety of saws that may have been used during the bush felling years. I thought a 'saw was a saw', but there were many different varieties used in this time.

Firstly, the teeth on the blades had names: four finger fish tooth, M tooth saw, plain tooth, lance tooth, champion tooth, and perforated lance tooth. Some of these were used for cutting along the grain of the timber and others to cut across the grain.

Cross cut saws could be up to six-foot-long: they could be used by one man or two, and always cut on the pull stroke.

There was a felling saw, used to fell the trees. It was a narrow saw, allowing wedges to be more easily inserted; and a bucking saw was used to cut felled trees into logs or firewood and they were stiffer saws and weights were added to aid swift cutting. A pit saw was used by two people, one standing above the timber and one in the pit below. It was used for sawing planks of timber from the tree trunks which would then be cut into boards, pales, or posts.

A bow saw was a wood working tool, used for cutting timber straight or curved. It was a type of frame saw which used a thin blade held in tension by the frame. Then of course there was the carpenter's saw, the