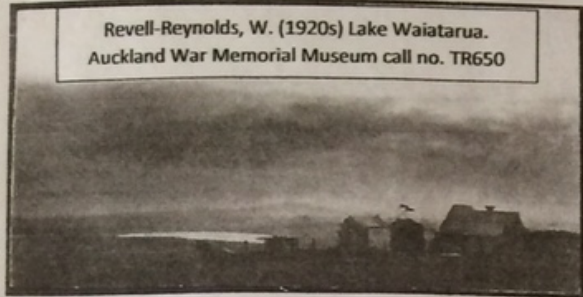


Revell-Reynolds, W. (1920s) Lake Waiatarua.  
Auckland War Memorial Museum call no. TR650



## Brief History of the Waiatarua Reserve

### Pre and early history.

Approx. 9,500 years ago Mt Wellington/ Maungarei erupted and a lava flow dammed a creek that ran down the valley so the lake formed behind it.

Waiatarua (water of double reflections) was formed

In pre European times provided sites for food cultivation and collection

1844 Land sold by local Iwi to Thomas Cleghorne for: £5, 3 coats, 3 prs 'trowsers' and 1 watch.

1884 An advertisement for property sales around the lake mentioned "boating and fishing"

### Draining the Swamp

1912 In times of prolonged rain the lake depth reached 17ft & flooded much of the surrounding land and the Waiatarua Drainage Board gained provisional approval to drain the swamp lands around the lake.

1916 Work began on a tunnel from the lake under today's St John's Rd and into Orakei Ck & Basin. Aim was to keep the lake depth at 5ft and prevent flooding.

1918 Tunnel completed and 9 acres of "beach" reclaimed (5 \*chains in width around the lake)

1920 Parts of land planted in maize, orchards & in 1922 a road from Ladies Mile along the lake built through Mr Abbott's property. (Abbotts Way?)

### Draining the Lake (An application to drain the lake had been turned down by Parliament in 1917)

1925 Govt approved permits to drain the lake and build a grand drive, promised in 1918, around the area. Proposed to provide 155 acres of playing fields including the lake bed.

1929 In October a Herald article claimed "in a few weeks it will be perfectly dry." The shaft and manhole through which the water enters the now improved tunnel had now been lowered below the projected lake level. Unfortunately below the water was 24ft of soft ooze to within 1 chain of the lake perimeter. However the projected grand drive had been constructed but not metalled.

1930 5 miles of drains dug to "speed up the process."

1943 Lucy Cranwell, (appointed Curator of botany at Auckland museum in 1929) observed "St John's Lake, once a gem of pale blue water in a setting of green raupo and tall reeds was, until recently, the mecca of botanists, but now it is nothing but an unsightly waste of weed-rushes and blackberry."

1981 Lucy again wrote: "The lake is now a level green park, surrounded by houses. If Auckland grows even larger, as it is bound to, it will someday remember that lakes are beautiful and will remake them at great expense,"

2004 After 16 yrs planning and construction the restored Waiatarua Reserve and wetland was reopened by the Auckland City Council at a cost of \$5.9 million. The objectives were to provide for:

- Stormwater treatment and prevent around 130 tons of sediment and contaminants being washed out of Waiatarua Park into the Orakei Basin each year.
- Community recreation
- A refuge for native wildlife



M. Galbraith 2009

*"Waiatarua Reserve, the largest urban constructed wetland in New Zealand, took 16 years to complete and has just won the Arthur Mead Environment Award awarded for excellence in sustainable environmental engineering, as well as the inaugural New Zealand Contractor's Federation Environmental Excellence Awards for best practice in the field of environmental management of civil construction and related projects." Wet & Wild, Issue 12, Winter 2006.*

\* 1 chain=22ft, approx. 20 metres