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Migration, Identity and Print Culture: Sir David Henry & the Kinleith Paper Mill¹

Introduction

In 1965, Ewen Jardine shipped out to New Zealand for an extended holiday. Born into a multi-generational Scottish papermaking family and living all of his early life next to a papermill, he ended up working for New Zealand Forest Products at their Kinleith mill in the central North Island for the next three years. Interviewed in later life about his experiences there, he remarked:

it is quite interesting that - because when I was out there I went to Kinleith to try to get work and they offered me a job in production scheduling. And they had hostels there for people, staff hostels and there were three camps for the operators and other people. And I was in the staff hostel, which was called Rosyth. And ...in fact walking through Tokoroa which is five miles away from Kinleith, which is where the paper mill is. It was like walking down memory lane. I was in Inveresk, Caddington, Babbington. Em Clyde Crescent and all names from home.²

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² Interview between Ewen Jardine and Sarah Bromage, 6 August 2002, SAPPHIRE archives, Edward Clark Room, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, Scotland.

If names are the linguistic vestiges of memory, street names embody a spatial locatedness which grounds memory in one time and articulates change over many times.³ This paper uses the ritual of naming as a starting point to understand the complex spatial and temporal relationships of migration, identity and print culture between a Scottish industrialist, a New Zealand papermill, and a local community.

Sir David Henry

The key player in this narrative of migration and adaptation is Sir David Henry. He was born David Hendry into a labouring family on 24 November, 1888 in Juniper Green, a small mill town on the south-western outskirts of Edinburgh in the county of Midlothian. His father, Robert Hendry (b.1851), was a stonecutter, originally from Ireland, who married Agnes Stevenson in November 1877 in Chryston, North Lanarkshire, a brick-making, iron-forging, and coal-mining industrial town seven miles north-east of Glasgow.⁴ After leaving school, David worked as a clerk from 3 October 1903 to 24 August 1907⁵ at the Kinleith Paper Mill in Currie, just down the street from his home, and attended night classes in the city of Edinburgh. Sometime between 1901 and 1903, he also changed his surname from Hendry to Henry. In 1907, at the age of nineteen, he emigrated to New Zealand, where he worked as a farm hand

³ See Pierre Nora's work on "lieux de mémoire" in P. Nora and L. D. Kritzman, *Realms of memory: rethinking the French past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

⁴ Chryston was a popular work destination for Irish migrants in the 1860s, many of whom worked in the two fire-clay and brick-making companies nearby.
<http://www.skwebpages.com/chryston/story/p11.shtml>, accessed 11 July 2008.

Of the extended Hendry family there were four surviving children, all born in Juniper Green: Robert (b. 1878; a tailors' cutter), Mary (b. 1881; her father's housekeeper), Agnes (b. 1885; a warper's assistant), and David, who, according to the 1901 Scottish census, was a "scholar." 1901 Scottish Census, ref: 1901 Census 677/00 005/00 016.

⁵ From Kinleith Mill wages bill ledgers, National Library of Scotland, ref: NLS MS. 20742-20743. He worked 60 hours per week, initially paid 1s. per hour; on 14 November 1903, his salary was increased to 1s.2d; 7 January 1904 it was raised to 1s.6d; and finally, on 9 December 1905 he received a raise to 2s. per hour. The sums were in line with standard clerk's wages for the time, and what Kinleith was paying Henry's clerking colleagues.

for a short period of time north of Wellington, then sold subscriptions for *Wise's New Zealand Post Office Directory*. He later moved to Christchurch to establish himself before inviting his two sisters to join him in the classic pattern of chain migration; there, with his future brother-in-law, he founded an engineering firm which subsequently failed. In the 1920s, David moved to Auckland, wed Mary Castleton Osborne⁶, and rebuilt his engineering career, eventually developing a successful plumbing manufacturing and supply firm, D. Henry & Co. Ltd. He also became heavily involved in Auckland social and political work, joining the Auckland Manufacturers' Association and the Rotary Club, becoming affiliated with the local Boy Scouts and Presbyterian Church, and serving for a period on the Auckland City Council.

Henry's career focus changed in 1935 when he was invited to chair the board of the New Zealand Forest Products, a private company established to convert the Central North Island's vast forestry plantation into a commercially profitable enterprise. Over the next eighteen years he rose to become Managing Director of NZFP, and his life was consumed by a long, drawn-out battle to create a vertically integrated forestry and pulp and paper industry based in the North Island. Throughout the 1940s and 50s, he clashed frequently with government agencies designed to limit the licensing of specific industries. He also had to face the hard realities of potential competition from Tasman Pulp and Paper which, with A. R. [Pat] Entrican, head of the State Forestry Service and considerable government financial backing, was positioned to take advantage of new international markets in the post-war economy.

⁶ Henry married Mary on 28 April 1915 in Hamilton; when Mary died 2 March 1954, shortly after the Kinleith papermill's official opening, David married her younger sister, Dorothy May Osborne on 24 November 1955, again in Hamilton. Roche, Michael. 'Henry, David 1888-1963.' *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 22 June 2007. <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>, accessed 11 July 2008.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, Henry's vision of a commercially viable pulp and paper industry finally came to fruition in 1954, when NZFP opened Kinleith just south of the mill town of Tokoroa. Named and modelled after Henry's boyhood workplace, the mill became one of the largest in Australasia, but its development was controversial and Henry frequently faced criticism and opprobrium from both public and private sectors, in part due to a controlling personality informed by his strong Presbyterian, teetotal heritage. Business contemporaries found him stiff, sombre, intense, driven, and dictatorial, but "with his broad Scottish brogue, Henry could be a charming personality and a fluent and persuasive speaker."⁷

David Henry retained a strong sense of Scottish identity throughout his life, which manifested itself most clearly in the interlinked Scottish industry and town models he adapted when creating Kinleith and Tokoroa. He named his house in Tokoroa Juniper Green after his home town, and returned there in 1955 to attend a reunion at his old public school. Now Sir David Henry, having received a knighthood for his services to the forestry industry in 1954, he was held up as a successful example of the "hard-headed, hard-working Scotsmen."⁸ He died in Auckland on 20 August, 1963.

The Mill

When David Henry was appointed Director of New Zealand Forest Products Ltd. (NZFP) in 1935, he led a company that soon boasted 176,000 acres of forests and assets totalling \$2,694,000, but had no manufacturing facilities.⁹ Given David Henry's

⁷ Brian Healy, *A Hundred Million Trees. The Story of N.Z. Forest Products Ltd.* (Auckland, 1982), 77.

⁸ John Tweedie, *A Water of Leith Walk, with a historical industrial background and Juniper Green its living centre* (Edinburgh, n.d.).

⁹ See Healy for the history of NZFP up to 1982.

background, pulp and paper mills were obvious choices for company expansion. However, while wood pulp had been used successfully for paper in Canada from the 1860s onwards,¹⁰ and some preliminary testing of New Zealand native timbers had been done in Otago in the early 1900s, it was not known whether the fast-growing *pinus radiata* would be suitable. NZFP undertook extensive overseas testing and concluded that New Zealand-grown pine not only proved suitable, but was often a superior material for the production of high-quality pulp, paper and wallboards.

By 1943, NZFP initiated plans to establish New Zealand's first fully integrated forestry operation with a large-scale pulp and paper manufacturing plant. '19 Mile Peg' near the company's Maraetai forestry block in the South Waikato was chosen as the site. This site, five miles south of Tokoroa, was promptly renamed 'Kinleith,' overwriting the Maori landscape with Scottish toponyms. From 1947, both the forestry activity and the boom in the nearby hydro-electric construction industry created a highly productive and prosperous environment with lucrative employment opportunities.¹¹ To meet labour requirements,¹² the Government actively encouraged immigration programmes. In the late 1940s and early 50s, British as well as Pacific Island migrants were employed in state forests and in the massive Kinleith operations.¹³ An offshore advertising campaign also netted hundreds of applications for 71 key operator positions at Kinleith from established pulp and paper mills in Norway, Sweden, England, Australia, and Canada.¹⁴

Henry's plans were not supported initially by the Government, who were in fact developing their own interests through a rival company, Tasman Pulp and Paper

¹⁰ See Bryan Dewalt, 'Printing Technology', in Lamonde, Fleming and Black, eds., *History of the Book in Canada, 1840-1918* (, Toronto, 2005), 98-101.

¹¹ Alex Spence, 'Pulp Friction', *North & South*, vol. 195, June 2002, 45.

¹² D.L. Chapple, *Tokoroa: Creating a Community* (Auckland, 1976), 11.

¹³ Tim Watkin, 'Trouble at Mill', *New Zealand Herald*, 7-8/12/2002, G3.

¹⁴ Healy, *A Hundred Million Trees*, 138.

at Murupara/Kawerau.¹⁵ As a result, NZFP was virtually solely responsible for developing the infrastructure for its new operation: company housing, water supply, railway lines, transport networks, and plant machinery. On 20 February 1954, Prime Minister Sidney Holland officially opened the mill with over 6,500 guests in attendance. The opening of Kinleith signified the foundation of a new export industry which swiftly bolstered the post-war economy¹⁶ and soon replaced the once mighty triumvirate of wool, meat and dairy.¹⁷ Even prior to the mill's completion, the Melbourne-based Australian Newsprint Mills manufacturing plant in Tasmania turned its back on its traditional North American and Scandinavian sources¹⁸ and contracted to import 12,500 tons of Kinleith pulp annually. Henry continued to expand the operation, initiated building works, sought additional overseas markets, and shrewdly negotiated various inter-company agreements amongst local competitors, Tasman Pulp and Paper, and the New Zealand Paper Mills at Maitua, Southland. His empire made everything from cardboard, kraft paper, wrappings, and multiwall bags, to newsprint, fine printing papers, stationery, and specialty papers. Kinleith's kraft pulp mill, pulp dryer and paper machines produced the first run of paper from locally grown trees by September 1953. In its first year of operation, the mill produced a modest 11 tonnes of pulp a day, reaching an annual capacity of 45,000 tonnes pulp and 25,000 tonnes paper. By 1976, annual output was 389,000 tonnes pulp and 285,000 tonnes paper. Tight governmental control of the industry until Labour's 1984 economic reforms ensured a stable and secure domestic market that greatly favoured

¹⁵ see Morris Guest & John Singleton, 'The Murupara Project and Industrial Development in New Zealand 1945-65' *Australia Economic History Review*, 39:1 (March 1999), 52-71 for a detailed analysis of Tasman's role in the post-war NZ economy.

¹⁶ *Kinleith*, NZFP Ltd. Public Relations Department, 31 January 1954, 2. See also Astrid Barker, 'Governments, Firms and National Wealth: a new pulp and paper industry in post war New Zealand', *Enterprise and Society*, 5:4 (December 2004), 669-690.

¹⁷ Morris and Singleton, 'The Murupara Project', 53.

¹⁸ 'New Paper Mill: M.G. Machine has started to roll', *New Zealand Timber Journal and Wood Products Review*, 6:3 (November 1959), 81.

the company's endeavours.¹⁹ By the time of his death, Sir David Henry had put New Zealand on the map in terms of a viable, vertically-integrated, forest-based operation. As the company magazine *March of Pine* [1951-64] suggested after the opening: "What has been happening at Kinleith may well prove as important in the long run to New Zealand's economy as the first shipment of refrigerated beef from Dunedin in 1882."²⁰

The Town

As the town's largest employer, there is a direct and tangible correlation between the "wealth, health and bustle" of Tokoroa and the Kinleith paper mill.²¹ Until the 1930s, only a few hundred people resided in Tokoroa. By the mill's official opening Tokoroa had grown so rapidly that the *New Zealand Herald* remarked: "when the trees reached maturity after the Second World War – boom! ... [there was an] astonishing transformation from insignificant wayside village to turbulent timber town."²²

Sir David Henry sought to impose an Edinburgh-inflected vision of town planning and mill operations in a remote New Zealand setting. The strategic integration of mill and town, and the assumption of the interdependency of working lives and living spaces, was bound up in Scottish paternalistic beliefs about ensuring the social responsibility of corporate organisations to their workers. Kinleith mill's relationship with Tokoroa's development is overtly evident in David Henry's involvement in town planning, in the establishment of schools, churches, and sports

¹⁹ Stuart McCaw and Raymond Harbridge, 'The Labour Government, Big Business and the Unions: Labour relations at Kinleith in the 1980s', *New Zealand Journal of Business*, 12 (1990) 121.

²⁰ In Healy, *A Hundred Million Trees*, 138-9.

²¹ Chapple, *Tokoroa*, 18. Research informing the radical restructuring of the early 2000s indicated that were the mill to shut, the local economy would immediately decline by 25%.

²² Watkin, 'Trouble at Mill,' G3.

fields, in funding scholarships, and encouraging social and cultural activities in the community. He also ensured that key positions for mill representatives were reserved on the local council, thus linking the mill to decisions on all aspects of the town's growth, development and activity.

Ebenezer Howard's socialist vision of the "Garden City" inspired the model industrial towns of Port Lever, New Lanark, and Bourneville whose very architecture proclaimed the utopian combination of workplace productivity and sustainable, community benevolence. David Henry transplanted the spirit of these social engineering experiments to a post-war New Zealand increasingly accustomed to a 'cradle-to-grave' welfare system, the envy of the world over.

Although the NZ government refused to build or subsidise state housing for Tokoroa (as they did for Tasman Pulp and Paper), David Henry directed NZFP to build standard tract houses to be offered at attractive rates to mill workers – their simple rectangular shape and format reflecting a vision of workers as part of a nuclear family unit – with 2-3 bedrooms and an enclosed back garden enabling workers to grow veggies and for their children to play. Managers lived in larger houses situated at the corners of streets, the epitome of benign surveillance. As workers moved up the industrial ladder, they were expected to relocate, even if it was just down the same street.²³ David Henry himself initially lived at Juniper Green, a gracious, tree-filled enclave on a slight knoll overlooking the unmarried women's accommodation, part of the executive housing development, and adjacent to the railway line where he could assess the mill's daily productivity from his own back yard. To seal the relationship between old world and new, the first NZFP residential subdivisions all bear names reminiscent of Henry's childhood: Leith Place, Colinton Place, Currie Road, Pentland

²³ Gareth Roderick is currently completing a Master's thesis at McMaster University, Canada on the Tokoroa housing project and its socio-economic implications.

Terrace, Torphin Crescent, Balerno Road, and Strathmore Park, to name but a few.²⁴

As *March of Pine* remarked in 1953, “some of these places commemorated at Tokoroa have today largely lost their old individual identity and ancient historical association ... In years to come Tokorovians will doubtless feel gratified that many streets in their towns are endowed with simple, pleasant-sounding Scottish names providing an imperishable link with the personality who has played a dominant role in the development of N.Z. Forest Products Ltd and the founding of a great industrial community at Tokoroa.”²⁵

At the height of Kinleith’s construction phase, five single men’s camps at both the mill site and in Tokoroa accommodated approximately 1000 men. Upon the mill’s completion the camps, familiarly named Rosyth, Glenside, Braemar, etc., remained open to house the largely transitory workforce, including people like Ewen Jardine. The company also commissioned and built a community centre near the mill at a cost of £12,000. By 1967, it contained a recreation hall, billiards room, reading room, post office, cafeteria, as well as football and tennis arenas. As David Henry noted in 1952:

The Company's Community Centre and buildings have already provided an excellent centre, especially for women, children, and youth activities...Tokoroa is rapidly expanding into a well-ordered town, possessed of all amenities ...It is a healthy pleasant town with good natural surroundings and your Directors consider that the foregoing conditions will attract and hold the very best type of contented workers to the Company's service.²⁶

²⁴ South Waikato District Council, ‘Selected Street Name Choices’, *South Waikato District Council* website, available from <http://www.swktodc.govt.nz/district/history/index.asp>, 2004. accessed 17 November 2005.

²⁵ *March of Pine* 2:4 (June 1953), 7.

²⁶ NZFP Annual Report 1952, 7.

NZFP also supported recreational and social activities for workers, their families and the local community by creating sponsored clubs (rugby, cricket during business hours on Wednesday nights,²⁷ and running were the most popular), hosting dances and organising various annual celebrations. The Pulp and Paper Workers' Social Association (Inc.) started in 1969 with 300 members and organised social events for local mill workers and their wives. By 1971 membership reached 1,500. People also "made their own entertainment." Ewen Jardine became an electrician for the local operatic society and the little theatre and helped to light imported acts like David Whitfield and Kenny Ball. He also recalled:

really there was little else to do but work and they used to bus us the 5 miles or 8 kilometres to the factory. ...And if you were trying to get fit as I was and playing soccer at the weekends you used to run back rather than take the bus back. And run through the forest as well. And quite a lot of the people at Forest Products were in fact very skilled athletes and long distance runners. I used to work alongside Mike Ryan who won medals in the Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games.

To ensure his workers remained 'contented' as well as educated, in true Scottish fashion, David Henry asked the NZFP board to establish adult night classes; cadets were invited to undertake on-site training, and managerial skills were taught in-house to encourage retention and advancement. From 1954, the David Henry Scholarships were awarded to mill employees to further their study overseas and bring

²⁷ Rachel Atkins, *Old Friends* www.oldfriends.co.nz, accessed 9 December 2005.

back competitive intelligence. They are now awarded for Tokoroa youth development projects.

Theorising Social Identity

The story of Kinleith Mill and Tokoroa is a co-dependent one, involving an uneasy implantation of a social model adapted from Scottish contexts. It is also an important New Zealand case study into cultural importation, social adaptation and organisational culture. Social identity theory [SIT], derived from information technology and management studies, argues for a more holistic view of culture than is currently common in studies of nationalism, ethnicity, migration, or skills transfer. In particular, its governing metaphor of the ‘virtual onion’ addresses the complexities of human interaction, including personal identity, national culture and organisational culture; that is, it views culture and social identity as a complex set of layered, overlapping practices that are not fixed or monolithic, but ‘reflect the multiple, complex forces that shape individuals’ beliefs and behaviour.’²⁸ Such an approach helps map out the multiple subcultures operating within the Tokorovian context, registering both the logic of place and the logic of time. The ‘virtual onion’ also helps to explain the effect of skilled, international migration to NZ in the print and paper industry. For example, there is evidence of both short-term mobility flows and multi-generational labour patterns amongst Pakeha and indigenous/Pacific Island skilled and semi-skilled workers that inevitably had an impact on David Henry’s original vision of interlinked and stable community and work spaces. Furthermore, as David Chapple notes, an unwanted importation was a vigorous NZ-inflected trade unionism,

²⁸ Michael Gallivan and Mark Srite, ‘Information technology and culture: Identifying fragmentary and holistic perspectives of culture’, *Information and Organization*, 15 (2005), 302.

which he attributes to the mill traditions under which migrant British and Scottish workers had trained and learned.²⁹

Our initial foray into Kinleith's history reveals that Henry's model fractured in ways he could not have predicted nor, perhaps, given the contemporary social, cultural, and economic problems of the town, ultimately been responsible for. After the Labour government came to power in 1984 and abolished trade protectionism, Kinleith, much like its deceased counterpart in Scotland – which closed in 1966 following lifting of trade barriers and the influx of cheap Scandinavian produced imports – changed dramatically. Today, after several owners, radical restructuring, maintenance and engineering outsourcing, and the development of a new business culture and work ethic, the Kinleith papermill remains an essential component of the Tokoroa landscape as the town strives to reinvent itself for the twenty-first century.

Our longer-term project adopts the virtual onion metaphor as well as Michael Gallivan and Mark Skrite's polycentric (ethnographic), geocentric (management and national culture study) and synergistic ('intercultural exchange' study) research strategies in a comparative analysis of Scottish-derived organisational cultures, print culture technologies, and book trade practices reshaped in foreign settings, whether Australasian, South African, Indian, or Canadian. For example, other Scottish emigrant entrepreneurs founded New Zealand's Otago Paper Mills and the Maitua Mill in Southland from 1876 and were instrumental in shaping the print culture and business infrastructure of early Dunedin.³⁰ And Tokoroa's Kinleith Mill was not the only overseas mill inspired by its eponymous Scottish antecedent. Evidence exists of a similar exportation of the Kinleith mill model overseas by a band of brothers born and raised in Currie, Scotland. The Finlay brothers, members of the close-knit Water

²⁹Gallivan and Skrite, 'Information technology and culture,' 34-35.

³⁰ See John Angus, *Papermaking Pioneers 1876-1976. A History of New Zealand Paper Mills Ltd. and its predecessors* (Maitua, 1976).

of Leith papermaking community, were involved in the establishment in 1900 of the Kinleith paper mill in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.³¹ Did these Scots, like David Henry, transplant and transmit their tacit knowledge³² to a new environment and have the same kind of local, regional, and international effects?

Conclusion

Scottish emigration and attempts to implant Scottish based social and organisational culture into New Zealand was still occurring well into the 1950s. New Zealand has older examples of towns turned into little Scotlands, but Tokoroa is unique in being part of a larger construct and experiment in ‘high pressure pioneering.’ As a curious grafting of nineteenth-century paternalism onto twentieth-century industry, it functioned flexibly enough for a period to accommodate a range of both short-term and long-term working groups. Exposure to late-twentieth century globalised economies decisively demonstrated weaknesses in such social models that have since had negative impacts on community identity and aspirations. Yet Henry left a legacy behind, not only physically in the names of the streets he designed, the buildings he

³¹ Three brothers, Edward (b.9 October 1846), James (b.9 June 1848) and William Gilroy Finlay (b.1851), were involved in setting up and managing paper mills in Canada, including the Kinleith Paper Company Ltd. in St. Catharine’s, Ontario; the Montrose Paper Mill in Thorold, Ontario, subsequently known as The Provincial Paper Company which became Canada’s largest bond and book paper mill; and the Toronto Paper Manufacturing Company, stationers in Toronto. They were born and resided at Esk Mill Bank, in the Water of Leith area. Their father, Richard Finlay, a mason, was born in Haddington, Chester; their mother was Ann Anderson, born Edinburgh, Newton. Edward as well as his sisters Agnes (b.1843) and Helen (b.1845) were listed as “worker at papermill” according to the 1861 Scottish census [1861 Census 682/00 001/00 015]. Their brother Frank (b.1857) was listed as a “mill worker” in the 1871 census, then in the Kinleith wages ledgers as a machine assistant from 15 May 1875 to 12 May 1877 [NLS MS. 20737 Kinleith Mill Wages Bill 1875-1880]. Public records of the Finlay brothers’ connections with the Canadian Kinleith Mill are very few, but they are mentioned briefly in George Carruthers, *Paper Making*, (Toronto, 1947), 703-7, where he notes that the mill operated until 1927, its demise determined by slackening demand for Canadian paper products and intense competition from U.S. rivals.

³² See Charles Sabel and Jonathan Zeitlin, ‘Historical alternatives to mass-production. Politics, markets and technology in nineteenth-century industrialisation,’ *Past and Present* 108 (August 1985), 133-76.

opened, and the communal infrastructure that still exists to this day, but also in the multi-generational and multi-cultural work force he drew to the New Zealand interior. For Scottish born workers such as Ewen Jardine, what they found on emigrating to Tokoroa was both strangely familiar and excitingly different – while reminding them of past cultural links, it also challenged them to adapt and change to fit new circumstances.
