

**CRIME OF THE 'FORTIES  
RECALLED**

**CALLOUS MURDER AT SEA.**

[BY TELEGRAPH—SPECIAL TO THE POST.]

AUCKLAND, This Day.

A vivid story of the 'forties has been recalled by the recent death of Captain Joseph Kennedy, a pioneer of Poverty Bay. His father was murdered, and the discovery of the authors of the crime forms a strange story, related by Mr. A. A. Preece, of Coromandel.

The motive of the murder was callously mercenary. About the year 1848 Kennedy built a small cutter at the bay ten miles from Coromandel which now bears his name. He manned the *Three Bees*, as the craft was named, with a crew of fugitive convicts from Botany Bay—a Frenchman, an Italian, and "Red-headed Geordie," a picturesque character who maintained a reasonable reticence regarding his legal name. The cutter was sailed to Auckland, where Kennedy found profitable employment in lightering a ship. The venture realised £40 clear—a respectable sum in those days of cheap living. A return was then made to Kennedy's Bay, where a cargo of native produce was secured, and the vessel sailed again for Auckland, but without the company of "Red-headed Geordie."

The second voyage was uneventful until the Hauraki Gulf was reached, but the crew had meditated longingly upon the skipper's profit from his lightering contract. Off Tiritiri Island the Frenchman and the Italian fell upon the master and murdered him. They scuttled the cutter and then made their way in a dinghy to Whangaparaoa, thirty miles north of Auckland. The boat was hauled ashore and set on fire, but it was not completely burned. The remains of the boat were afterwards found and formed a clue to the fate of Kennedy.

The strangest chapter of this story is in the sequel. About thirty years ago, and many years after the murder on the *Three Bees*, a waterman waited for a fare on the Sydney waterfront. He was approached by a foreigner, who bargained for a passage to the North Shore. In his hand he carried a box, from which came a strange odour that raised suspicion in the mind of the boatman. Making an excuse that he had forgotten his rowlocks, he left his passenger waiting while he went to fetch them. Presently the boatman returned instead with a policeman, who asked to see the contents of the box. This request the passenger refused, so the policeman opened the box himself. Its contents were portions of a human body that had been partially smoke dried. The man was arrested, tried, and hanged for murder. From his confession the story of Kennedy's death was learned. He was the Frenchman of the *Three Bees*. The box contained portions of his Italian accomplice, and he admitted that they were the authors of the murder off Tiritiri Island.



The main streams were used by the lumber companies to float the huge kauri logs into the estuary and then into Kennedy Bay's deep north end where the tall ships were anchored for loading. The bay's beach is larger, with long expanse of sandy shoreline. - Photo by Alan Duff

**Kennedy murder  
details revealed...**

(continued from page 12)

**KENNEDY MEETS VIOLENT END**

In 1843, aboard *The Three Bees*, Kennedy was robbed and then killed by three convict crewmembers (a Frenchman, an Italian, and a "Red-headed Geordie"). His body was dumped overboard near Tiritiri Island and the cutter scuttled. The killers escaped in a dinghy and set it afire on the beach. However, it did not burn completely, and when discovered, it became evidence of wrongdoing and the disappearance of Kennedy and his cutter.

His wife Katerina was home with the children, and when he did not return, she apparently left her sons to be raised by others, and it is assumed she returned to her tribe.

Back at Kennedy Bay, this tragedy did not bode well for his family's inheritance. Because of Kennedy's death, his land purchases could not be verified. Eventually though, after some time, the Kennedy boys were ceded some 1250 acres at the north portion of the bay, land they eventually sold.

One of John Kennedy's sons, Joe, became quite the master seaman, and in 1874, was appointed harbour master and pilot at Gisborne. He also founded the firm of

Kennedy, Evans & Co, the "company comprised of Timber Merchants, Carriers, Lightermen, Shipping and Insurance Agents."

In fleshing out the history, we stumbled upon an *Evening Post* 1913 article about details of Kennedy's murderers, published upon the death of John's son Joseph. (See left.)

**LATER KENNEDY BAY  
LUMBER AND GOLD**

Mechanized lumber mills were built in the region for sawn lumber rather than just masts and yard arms. In 1862, a mill complex at the deep water north side of the bay was built by Alexander McGregor (of McGregor's Bay in Coromandel Town), Frederick Atkinson and Charles Broadbent. The operation changed hands a few times, eventually landing with the Kauri Timber Company in 1888.

Milling ceased in early 1891, and after working out the remaining trees, the tramway and machinery up the Mataiterangi Creek were removed, though a few kauri timber operations still continued along the south side of the bay.

There were some gold mines in the Kennedy Bay Block, but they do not seem to have paid out much; and certainly the area did not develop the complex of hotels, government, and commercial buildings that sprung up around Thames, Kuaotunu and Coromandel.

Today, Kennedy Bay is a laidback remote non-commercial area, with strong Maori presence. The region's industry now? Harvesting mussels.



**Kennedy Bay lumber operations  
reveal gold deposits**

"Messrs. Smyth brothers' tramway" at Kennedy Bay around 1898. Another photo of the bay shows the tracks running above the shoreline. In 1904, they found gold in one of their driving streams, Omoho Creek, exposed by the action of the floating kauri logs.

**THE GOLDFIELDS.  
EXALT CLAIM.**  
(By Telegraph.—Own Correspondent.)  
COROMANDEL, this day.  
A new leader showing strong gold in the stone has been discovered in the northward of the claim, about four miles cently Messrs. Smyth Bros. mine. Retoward Kennedy Bay, and the creek channel has in consequence been scoured clean, thus revealing many fine reefs and leaders. Just below one of the dams and is striking in a north and south direction, dipping slightly to the eastward. Strong gold is visible in the stone for over thirty feet, the size of the reef being up to six inches in thickness. The find has been visited by a number of practical miners, who are thoroughly satisfied that the outlook is very promising. Operations are being conducted under the direction of Geo. Jamieson, who is an experienced prospector.