

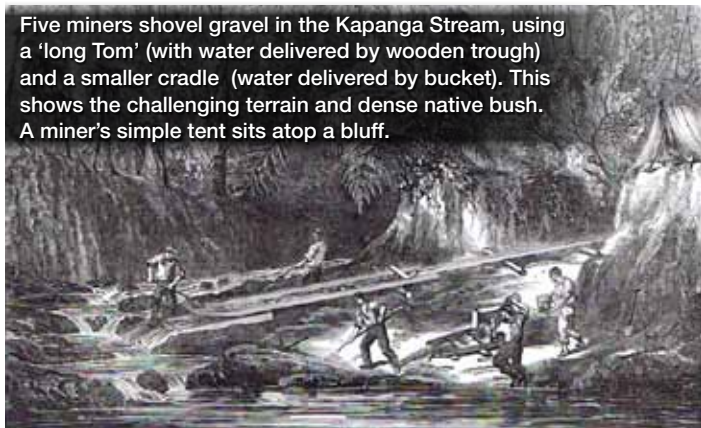
GOLD

of the Kapanga region

(continued from p.13)

flooded with miners. Over 3,000 had claims in the region, working the alluvial gravel deposits with pans and sluice boxes, but generally the area was not lucrative. Within six months, the rush was over, but the Kapanga mine itself was successful, and its stamping battery can be seen drawn on the Kennedy Bay gold fields map at bottom.

Five miners shovel gravel in the Kapanga Stream, using a 'long Tom' (with water delivered by wooden trough) and a smaller cradle (water delivered by bucket). This shows the challenging terrain and dense native bush. A miner's simple tent sits atop a bluff.



In 1857, Charles Heaphy surveyed the region and reported that gold was in the quartz reefs, which meant digging, tunnels, roads, stampers, etc. All needing major money investors. (Heaphy's illustrations are shown on two previous pages and above.)

All these years, adventurous North Island prospectors played 'cat and mouse', trespassing on land owned by local Maori. It was not until 1867, after the 'Maori Wars', that much of this area was officially opened to gold mining. This gave the beleaguered Auckland area relief from the unemployed men, as they streamed onto the Coromandel looking to prospect, work for wages in the mines or other support services like road building, supplying stores, etc.

An ironic twist to this tale of the mining agreement with the Maori is that the pre-existing land use agreement for the Rings' kauri operation gave them rights to the stream to power their sawmill, thus preventing other miners from using the creek's water. Miners having affected claims then sued the government. Well, as they say "it's complicated".

Frederick's funeral notice mentions that mining continued at Kapanga until 1863, when 'troubles with Maori' broke out. Even Coromandel town was deserted. However, mining operations resumed again in 1865.



The Ring brothers lived primarily in Auckland, where both were held in high esteem as founding pioneers and because of their innate decency. Frederick died in 1887, with Charles (shown) passing in 1906 at age 90.

Travelling the region, you will find Rings Road, Driving Creek and Kapanga Road (the original name of Driving Creek). Going northeast is Kennedy Bay Road, named for kauri merchant John Kennedy. (See Road Trip this issue.)



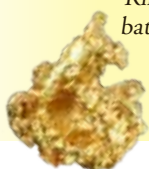
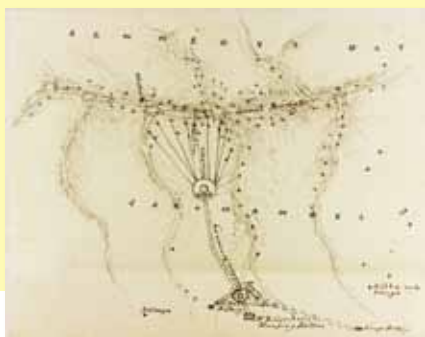
Mine Maps

New Hauraki Gold Properties Map

The small grid lower left says Bay View Township and Rings Road.

Kennedy Bay and Coromandel mine maps

Ring's stamping battery is shown lower right



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