



Fig 10. 146
Charles Blomfield, Karekare Valley, 1880, showing the old farmhouse and outbuildings. The paddocks are fenced with posts and rails. In that year the Murdoch brothers from Dunedin bought the valley from Silas and John Shaw, 'Waitakerei South'.
West Auckland Historical Society Inc.

Fig 11. 146
Map of western Waitakere Ranges about 1866 showing Parish and Highway Board District boundaries.
Jen Barnes collection

could get fruit and vegetables from the Kawerau families at Piha and Waitakerei. There were few shops. Butter, eggs and gum were taken into Waikomiti, Henderson or Swanson by packhorse and sold to the storekeeper. Basic food supplies were taken back the same way.

From the late 1870s many of the small unoccupied properties were bought up by timber companies and also by a few enterprising individuals who farmed a portion of their land but kept the majority in bush. On the west coast were O'Neill, Bethell, McElwain, Stockwell, Ussher, Murdoch and Gibbons.

Typical of these was Thomas Ussher, who came from England as a boy, with his mother and Edward Lovett. After helping to break in the farm he set up in business as a land agent and bought blocks from absentee owners, some of which he resold to the Guthrie and Lamach Timber Company. With the money he made, he was able to buy up most of the land surrounding the family farm between Karekare and Piha (which he shared with his wife). When the road was improved in the late 1890s he diversified into tourism, building the first of the big boarding houses

