

## Oral History: Stories of old recorded and preserved

In 1988 James Hartstonge, broadcaster, Village Radio volunteer, and founder of the Tauranga District Museum Oral History Unit, wrote 'Already too much time has elapsed for us to collect invaluable material firsthand, but that is all the more reason to press on and make sure we capture what still remains in the memories of our older citizens'.

Determined not to waste time the Unit recorded 75 interviews in three years, quite an achievement for a small team of volunteers. Many prominent Tauranga residents shared their memories including, Miss Joan Merrielees, Mr. Duff Maxwell, Reverend Poole, Mr. Jim Lever, Mr & Mrs Denniston and Miss V. Simons.

Stories retold range from school lunches and family picnics to early recollections and important events that have shaped the city. In this transcription Mrs Vera Cross remembers her father's reaction to the rail being built along The Strand. Her father was historian and Bay of Plenty Times owner Mr. William Gifford.

**"My father was so mad, so angry he wrote leaders and leaders and he said, what a crime to put the rail along the front of the town, anyhow they didn't take any notice of that...I think his ideas were a bit ahead of them and they regretted it afterwards but on the other hand there wasn't any money to have it anywhere else to make new roads and bring it around some other way, although it was a shame that it went along the waterfront. So anyhow nothing was done about that. But oh yes it was quite a thrill when the railway came, I went to the opening of the railway I think he did too. Yes I suppose he did."**

In 1992 the last interview was recorded and the Tauranga Library was given copies with the hope they would be well used by local residents. The originals became part of the Tauranga Museum Collection.



The Strand, Tauranga. Photo: Tauranga Heritage Collection