

George Chappell

Many of the photographs we are familiar with are George Chappell's. Acknowledgement is due when it can be assigned. Along with Margaret Matilda White, Henry Winkelman, James Douglas Richardson, and others, we are blessed with images, and deeply indebted.

Editorial. Ohinemuri Regional History Journal 9, May 1968

Chief Assayer for the Talisman Mine 1897-1914.

Having trained at the Thames School of Mines, his first important job was in the Talisman Office, near the Tramway Hotel. It was his home for 17 years as, for security reasons, he was required to sleep above the strongroom, although he had his meals at the Hotel.

In his younger days, photography, with a glass plate camera, was his chief hobby and we owe him untold gratitude for many old pictures of Karangahake.

Mr. George Chappell of Waihi from whose 60 year old glass negatives Messrs Alan Beck and Phil Jones have made wonderful enlargements. These have provoked great praise and will continue to hold interest in the years to come.¹

Our Contributors. Ohinemuri Regional History Journal 2, October 1964

Mr George Chappell

of Walmsley Road, Waihi, is the only mining "Official" left in Waihi today. He was trained at the Thames School of Mines and before the turn of the century was an assayer at the Talisman Battery at Karangahake, a position he held until going to the First World War. On his return he spent a year with the National Bank at Paeroa. Mr Chappell spent 35 years as Chief Assayer at the Martha Company's Refinery at Barry Road, Waihi. This was officially closed in 1953, but Mr Chappell was employed by the company for two years after that and retrieved £48,000 worth of gold from the ruins. The position was always one of very great trust and responsibility. It was part of his job, accompanied by police to escort thousands of pounds worth of gold from the Refinery to the National Bank in Auckland. In the old days it was taken via steamer from Paeroa.²

Karangahake at its Peak. KARANGAHAKE the years of the gold 1875 -1935

Some years ago when we were collecting facts about early Karangahake, Mr George Chappell of Waihi, was, to us, a veritable "gold mine". Although he lived to his late 90s, his mind was still vividly clear about the years 1897-1914 when he was Chief Assayer for the Talisman Mine. Having trained at the

¹ <https://www.ohinemuri.org.nz/journals/journal-9-may-1968/editorial>

Editorial. Ohinemuri Regional History Journal 9, May 1968

² <https://www.ohinemuri.org.nz/journals/journal-2-october-1964/our-contributors>

Our Contributors. Ohinemuri Regional History Journal 2, October 1964

Thames School of Mines, his first important job was in the Talisman Office, near the Tramway Hotel. It was his home for 17 years as, for security reasons, he was required to sleep above the strongroom, although he had his meals at the Hotel. On returning from World War I, he held a similar position of trust at the National Bank Refinery in Paeroa, followed by many years at the Martha Refinery at Waihi.



Karangahake in its heyday - 1910.

Mr Chappell handled millions of pounds worth of gold in the days when wages were small. In his younger days, photography, with a glass plate camera, was his chief hobby and we owe him untold gratitude for many old pictures of Karangahake he made available to us, as well as for articles he contributed for the Historical Journal, e.g. the following:



Karangahake in 1909 with Talisman battery in foreground.

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Editorial. Ohinemuri Regional History Journal 9, May 1968

It is good to know that Karangahake's history is being recorded, and that there is now such a wonderful collection of pictures that have been enlarged from the glass-plate negatives taken over 60 years ago by Mr. George Chappell who was Chief Assayer at the Talisman for 17 years. Such a picturesque and once famous locality merits our remembrance, as the forthcoming Jubilee in October will prove.⁴

Mr. George Chappell of Waihi from whose 60 year old glass negatives Messrs Alan Beck and Phil Jones have made wonderful enlargements. These have provoked great praise and will continue to hold interest in the years to come.⁵

³ <https://www.ohinemuri.org.nz/historic-texts/karangahake-the-years-of-the-gold-1875-1935/karangahake-at-its-peak>

Karangahake at its Peak. KARANGAHAKE the years of the gold 1875 -1935

⁴ <https://www.ohinemuri.org.nz/journals/journal-11-may-1969/the-dustpan-at-karangahake>

"The Dustpan" at Karangahake. Ohinemuri Regional History Journal 11, May 1969

⁵ <https://www.ohinemuri.org.nz/journals/journal-9-may-1968/editorial>

Editorial. Ohinemuri Regional History Journal 9, May 1968

Waihi Borough Council Diamond Jubilee Booklet 1902-1962

Mr George Chappell

The only mining "official" left in Waihi today is Mr George Chappell of Walmsley Road. It is difficult to realise that he is 83 years of age, for his sprightly step and extremely alert mind would do credit to anyone thirty years younger. Those who knew him in the past vouch for the fact that he has always kept himself very fit and that he is also very "able" in every way. He was trained at the Thames School of Mines and before the turn of the century was an assayer at the Talisman Battery at Karangahake, a position he held until going to the First World War. On his return he spent a year with the National Bank at Paeroa.

Mr Chappell then spent 35 years as Chief Assayer at the Martha Company's Refinery at Barry Road, Waihi. This was officially closed in 1953, but Mr Chappell was employed by the company for two years after that and retrieved £48,000 worth of gold from the ruins. The position was always one of very great trust and responsibility, and Mr Chappell told us how it was part of his job, accompanied by police, to escort thousands of pounds worth of gold from the Refinery to the National Bank in Auckland. In the old days it was taken via steamer from Paeroa.

Mr Chappell has always been a keen photographer, using an old time plate camera with great success. He has between six hundred and eight hundred stereoscopic photographs of great scenic beauty, true evidence of his love of Nature and particularly of the less accessible places. Some shots taken in the

various gorges and others in the bush or on the coast are most outstanding.

Nowadays he confines his interest mostly to his home and his begonia glass house, but he still drives his car, though he has persuaded his wife to learn. There are two sons, George married at Dannevirke, and Maurice still at home.

We would like to record that Mr Chappell's article was given to us in beautiful copperplate hand-writing and he had it ready for us a day or two after seeing him.⁶

Self portrait George Chappell. Date unknown. Note that he is using air release; the squeeze-bulb is in his right hand.

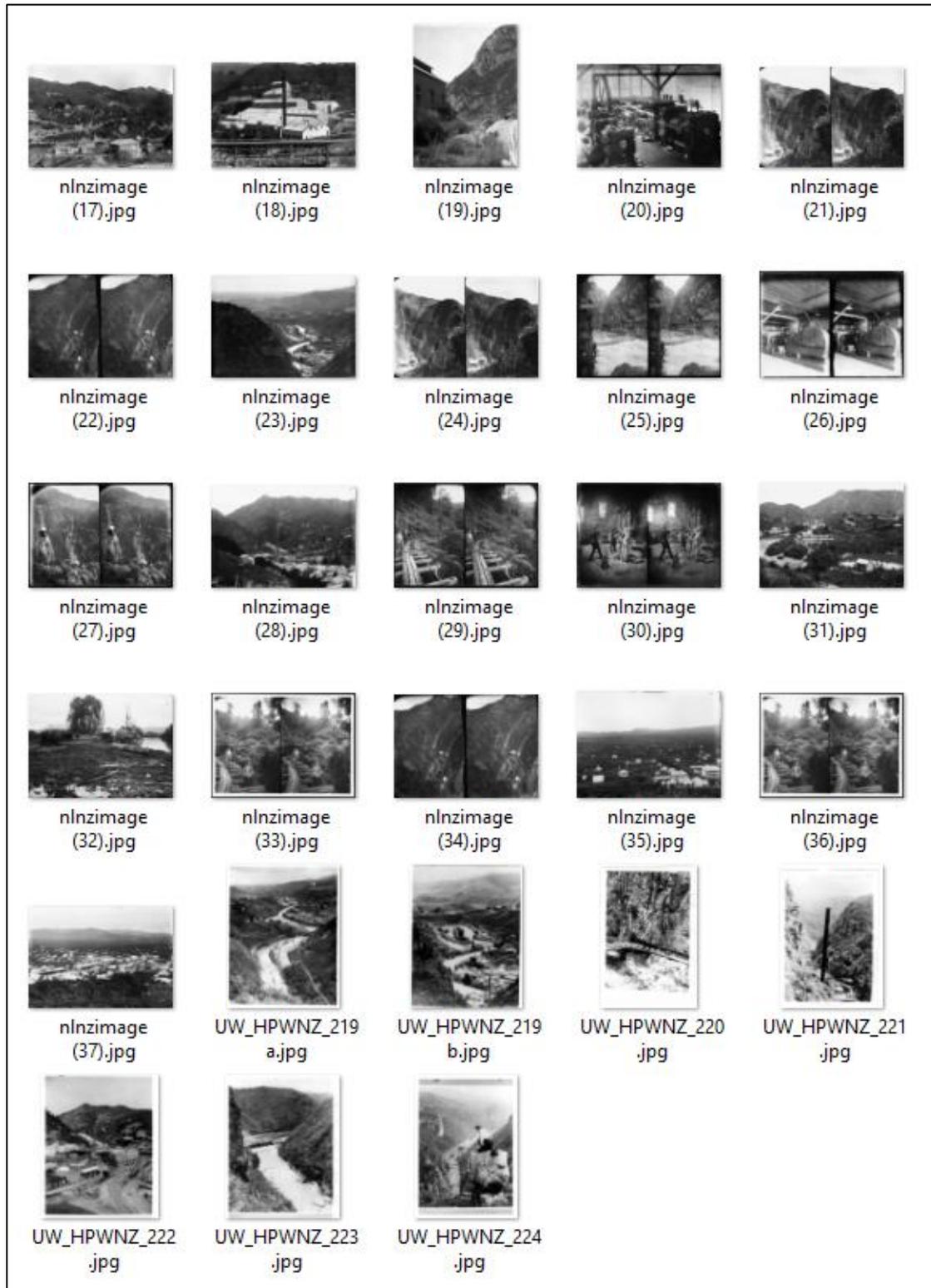
Image via George Capper.



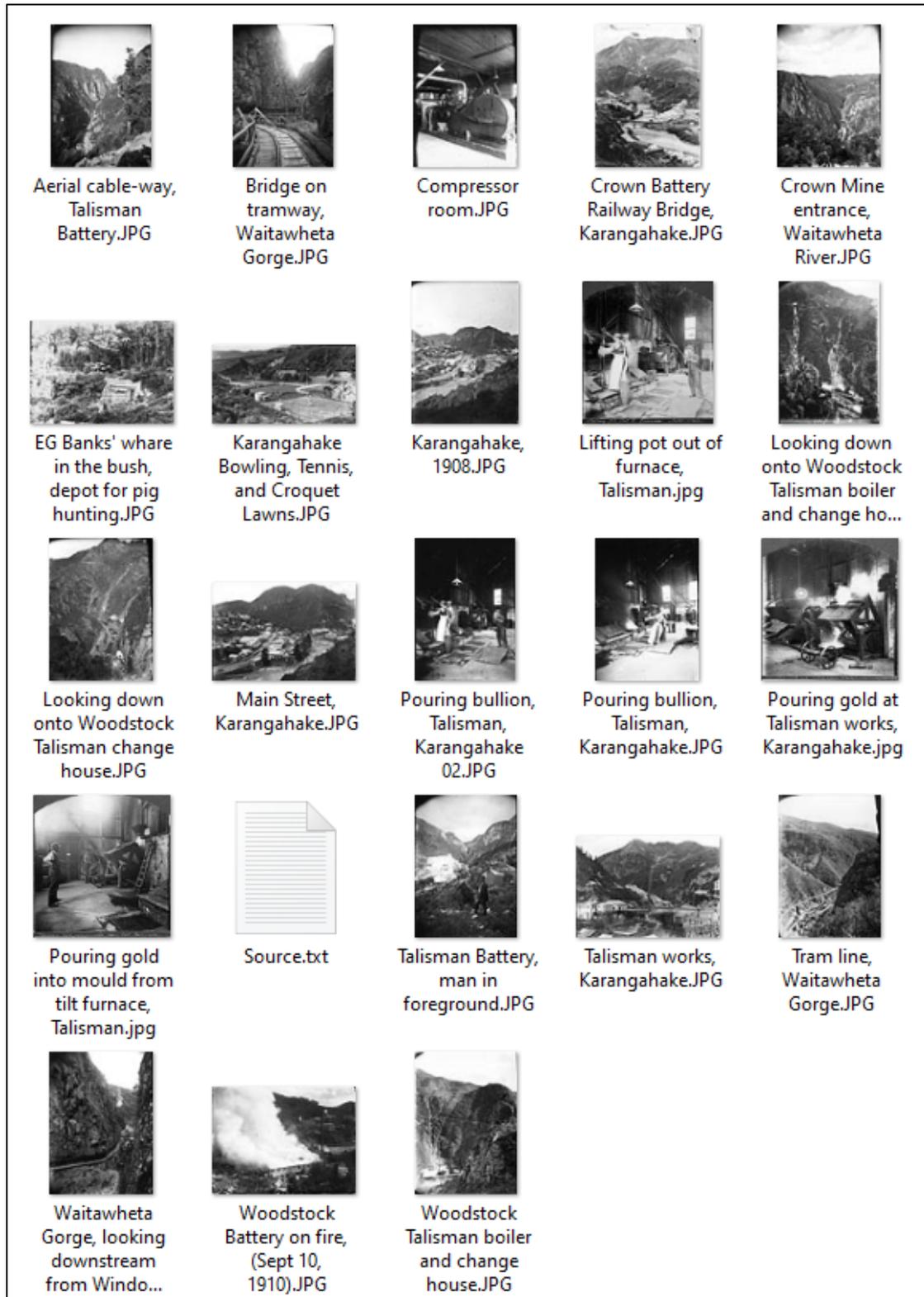
⁶ <https://www.ohinemuri.org.nz/historic-texts/waihi-diamond-jubilee-book/mr-george-chappell>

Mr George Chappell. Waihi Borough Council Diamond Jubilee Booklet 1902-1962

The images so far discovered are shown here as thumbnails. They can be found in the folders accompanying this document. Many more may exist, or may be identified over time as Chappell images.



Images from the National Library, and from University of Waikato.



Images from AM Bowater and Waihi Historical Society.



Images from Audrey Young/Alan Beck.

Alexander Turnbull:

https://natlib.govt.nz/items?i%5Bcategory%5D=Images&i%5Btag%5D=natlib%3Aonline_item&text=george+chappell

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