

TO KARAMEA

WAIMANGAROA

P

RAILWAY LINE

88

TO WESTPORT

P

CONNS CREEK

DENNISTON BRIDLE TRACK

1

BRAKEHEAD

THE CAMP DENNISTON

2

4

FRIENDS OF THE HILL MUSEUM

5

3

MARSHALLVALE

6

2

A LOOK AT DENNISTON DENNISTON COALFIELDS HISTORIC AREA

- 1 DENNISTON INCLINE
- 2 SURFACE ROPE ROAD
- 3 DENNISTON POWER STATION & BATH HOUSE
- 4 BOWLING GREEN
- 5 DENNISTON DISTRICT SCHOOL
- 6 DENNISTON HOSPITAL
- 7 BURNETTS FACE SCHOOL
- 8 IRONBRIDGE MINE MOUTH & WOODEN BRIDGE SHEDS
- 9 COALBROOKDALE POWER HOUSE & BATH HOUSE
- 10 COALBROOKDALE FAN HOUSE

COALBROOKDALE WALK
 Coalbrookdale Walk 1hr return 2 km
 Road Distance Brakehead to Walk Car Park 2.5 km

BURNETTS FACE

7

8

P ATTENTION
Coal Transport Trucks Operating

COALBROOKDALE WALK

9

10



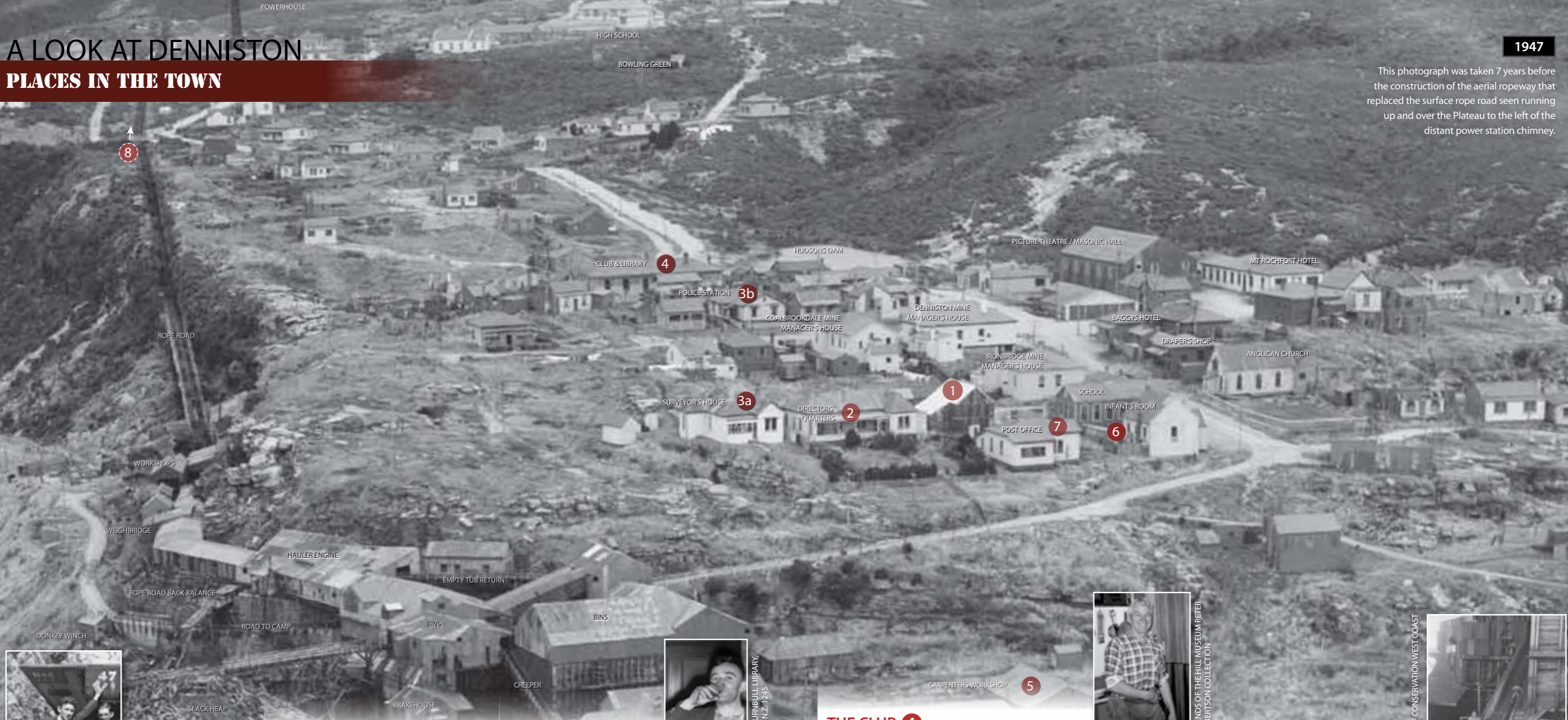
A LOOK AT DENNISTON PLACES IN THE TOWN

1947

This photograph was taken 7 years before the construction of the aerial ropeway that replaced the surface rope road seen running up and over the Plateau to the left of the distant power station chimney.

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FRIENDS OF THE HILL MUSEUM, CATH. ROBERTSON COLLECTION



MINE WORKSHOP 1

This building was constructed in 1945 as an engineer's workshop. The corrugated iron-clad lean-to was a store and office. It was here that Andy Burt and later Jimmy Caldwell and their workers maintained the aerial ropeway and other mine machinery about the Brakehead and Incline. The building across the road was where Company cars were stored and serviced. Jimmy's brother Dave (pictured above with Jack Tinetti) worked for a time as a mechanic using both buildings located here.



FRIENDS OF THE HILL MUSEUM ROBERT ANDERSON COLLECTION

DIRECTORS' QUARTERS 2

The Westport Coal Company's Directors' Quarters once stood on the concrete foundations that remain next to the Mine Workshop. One of the larger houses atop Denniston, it was used by company directors when visiting their investment. The Company went to the trouble of carting soil up the hill to create a lawn out front, although it looks like it could do with a mow. (See photograph below, taken some time after 1947 when the verandah was glassed-in.) Part of the path Len Besset stands on remains today.

POLICE STATION 3

Denniston's first policeman lived here and this Company house later became home to the mines surveyor, Mr Shand (3a). By then the Police Station had moved to the central cluster of Denniston (3b) near The Club.



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One of the most frequent police duties at Denniston was enforcing liquor laws; or not enforcing them. With some "iron men" miners drinking all weekend, enforcement duties could have created enormous friction. Denniston locals Geoff Kitchin and Andy Kerr recalled one policeman who would come into the bar after hours, knowing full well that men were hiding in the toilets and in the hotel's bedrooms, and would chat away to the barman about rugby, the weather, family matters and general chitchat, then conclude with a "Well, I guess the boys will be getting thirsty so I'll be on my way now."

THE CLUB 4

The Westport Coal Company Employees' Club and Institute – built by the Company in 1880 – was registered as a Mutual School of Arts and Sciences, as this guaranteed it a liquor licence. The large building housed the School of Mines where regular classes were held, often attracting a visiting lecturer. Originally located at the Brakehead, The Club survived the 1909 fire which razed a few surrounding buildings to the ground. In 1923 many Brakehead buildings were demolished to make way for new bin extensions, with the Club being demolished but rebuilt on Jamieson Street to incorporate the Library. The Library included a games room, billiard tables and the caretakers' living quarters.

"On the 23 November last, I went to Denniston, where the coal mines had formed a School of Mines with Mr Brown Manager of the coal mine as President and Mr Boswell as Secretary and about 50 members. They had a very good stock of chemicals there, worth over £25. I lectured every evening during my stay, and also held classes in testing minerals, assaying and blowpipe. The usual attendance was about 40, all members of their School of Mines and I must say I never met a more intelligent lot of men, or any men more anxious to learn than the Denniston Coal Miners. When I left to go to Westport they made me promise to return again which I did, from the 4 to 14 January."

Report of Mr Thomas F. Fenton to Professor Black, Otago University, Dunedin, April 30 1887.



FRIENDS OF THE HILL MUSEUM PETER ROBERTSON COLLECTION

CARPENTERS' WORKSHOP 5

The Westport Coal Company's carpenters were based in the large workshop at the Brakehead. They worked both above and below ground. All timber came up the Incline. At the top it was lifted by crane either to the creeper that took it to the surface rope road and on to the mines, or it was railed to the carpenters' workshop. Above ground work included maintaining the Company houses. Many of these were built in 1920 after the Company was criticised by a Government Enquiry and a Royal Commission for its sub-standard accommodation. In fact 200 new houses were recommended but only 40 were ever built. Another carpentry job was making coffins, for which a store of special timber was reserved. The rocky ground was too hard to dig graves and before a road was built, coffins were lowered down the Incline atop a coal wagon. Denniston local Frank Robertson left school at 14 and became an apprentice carpenter. He recalled making everything from finely-crafted coffins to huge coal storage bins requiring 200mm x 250mm beams.



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WEST COAST

A LOOK AT DENNISTON

PLACES IN THE TOWN

1940s When this photograph was taken in the 1940s no houses remained on the cliffs below the bins known as The Camp.

BURNETTS FACE

9

MARSHALLVALE

6

DENNISTON SCHOOL

BOWLING GREEN

SURFACE ROPE ROAD

SURFACE ROPE ROAD

HUDSONS DAM

WORKSHOPS

WEIGHING & CLIPPING SHEDS

site of THE CAMP

DENNISTON SCHOOL 1883 – 1941 **6** (ALSO SEE PREVIOUS PAGE)

Denniston's first school was at the Camp while the second one (1883-1941) sat to the far right of this image. If you were to start the Brakehead Walk you would walk across the old school playground.

A school opened at The Camp in 1881 and just two years later the one near here opened. It had a separate building for infants while the senior school (standard 1-6) operated with three large classrooms. Burnetts Face had its own school by 1891. When Denniston's 'large school' opened in 1941, it combined the schools on the Plateau and children travelled by bus. Part of that school now houses the Friends of the Hill Museum.

DENNISTON POST OFFICE 1883 – 1971 **7** (SEE PREVIOUS PAGE)

Denniston's first Post Office opened in a private home with mine manager Mr Elliot as postmaster. Until 1896 all mail was carried up and down the Incline on the coal wagons. After a telephone exchange opened in 1913 the Post Office shifted, taking over the large Denniston mine manager's house.

Denniston School Boswell Street



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COALTOWN MUSEUM



Present day bucket and tower



GRAHAM & KRYS RADCLIFFE

Parts for the aerial ropeway were made both on and off site. The wheels that held and turned the rope on each tower were made in Greymouth at Dispatch Foundry. Their shape was carefully designed and engineered for strength. Much of the ropeway was assembled on site and according to the recollections of Max Higgins, it was carried out during winter in freezing conditions. Photograph: the aerial servicing the Whareatea Mine.

DENNISTON AERIAL ROPEWAY 1954 – 1968 **8** (SEE PREVIOUS PAGE)

Some of the first relics encountered on the Brakehead Walk are those of the aerial ropeway that dominated the skyscape for 14 years. The sound of the buckets travelling to and from the distant Whareatea Mine was rarely noticed as by 1954 only a few homes remained at Denniston and fewer still at the Brakehead; most workers lived off the Hill. Where the ropeway passed over the road, an overhead cage was built to catch falling coal (see photograph below).



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WEST COAST

BURNETTS FACE POST OFFICE 1891 – 1953 **9**

Burnetts Face became large enough by 1891 to have its own postal service. One long-serving postmistress there was Mary Meadows. Her husband died from mine injuries in 1920 and to survive with her young daughter she took over running the Post Office from a small room attached to her equally small corrugated iron-clad home.

Mary took an interest in everybody's business. To counter this, one family whose daughter was living away from home and expecting a baby arranged for a telegram to be sent in code when the baby was born. It was a boy. The telegram read 'Parcel arrived safely. String attached.' It took Mary less than ten minutes to break the code and spread the news throughout Denniston even before the telegram had been delivered. Mary Meadows served 19 years until the Post Office finally closed.

PLATEAU PLACE NAMES

DENNISTON

Named after Robert Blair Denniston who first realised the potential of the district.

THE CAMP

Where the first settlers built their homes, overlooking the Gorge.

MARSHALLVALE

Named after Alexander Marshall, Mine Manager; locally known as Pommy Town after the British immigrant miners who settled here in the 1920s, into higher-quality company houses that were built in response to a Government Royal Commission of Enquiry into housing.

BURNETTS FACE

Named after James Burnett, a member of Haast's 1860 exploratory party.

COALBROOKDALE

Named by Haast after an English mining village.

POVERTY POINT

Part of Coalbrookdale. So called because single men in early days lived there in shelters built of manuka and canvas, owing to lack of timber.

CEDAR VALLEY

So called due to a large stand of these trees found there.

CONNS CREEK

Named after an early gold prospector.

DENNISTON STREET NAMES

BOSWELL STREET

After James Boswell, first Head Clerk and Paymaster.

BROWNS ROAD

After J.C. Brown, Mine Manager.

CHURCH STREET

Led to the old Roman Catholic Church.

DICKSON STREET

After W.H. Dickson, the first General Manager of the Company.

DIXON ROAD

After Jonathon Dixon, Mine Manager.

GILLIES STREET

After Robert Gillies, first Chairman of the Board of Directors.

JAMIESON STREET

After Jamieson, the Company's first agent in Westport.

ORMISTON STREET

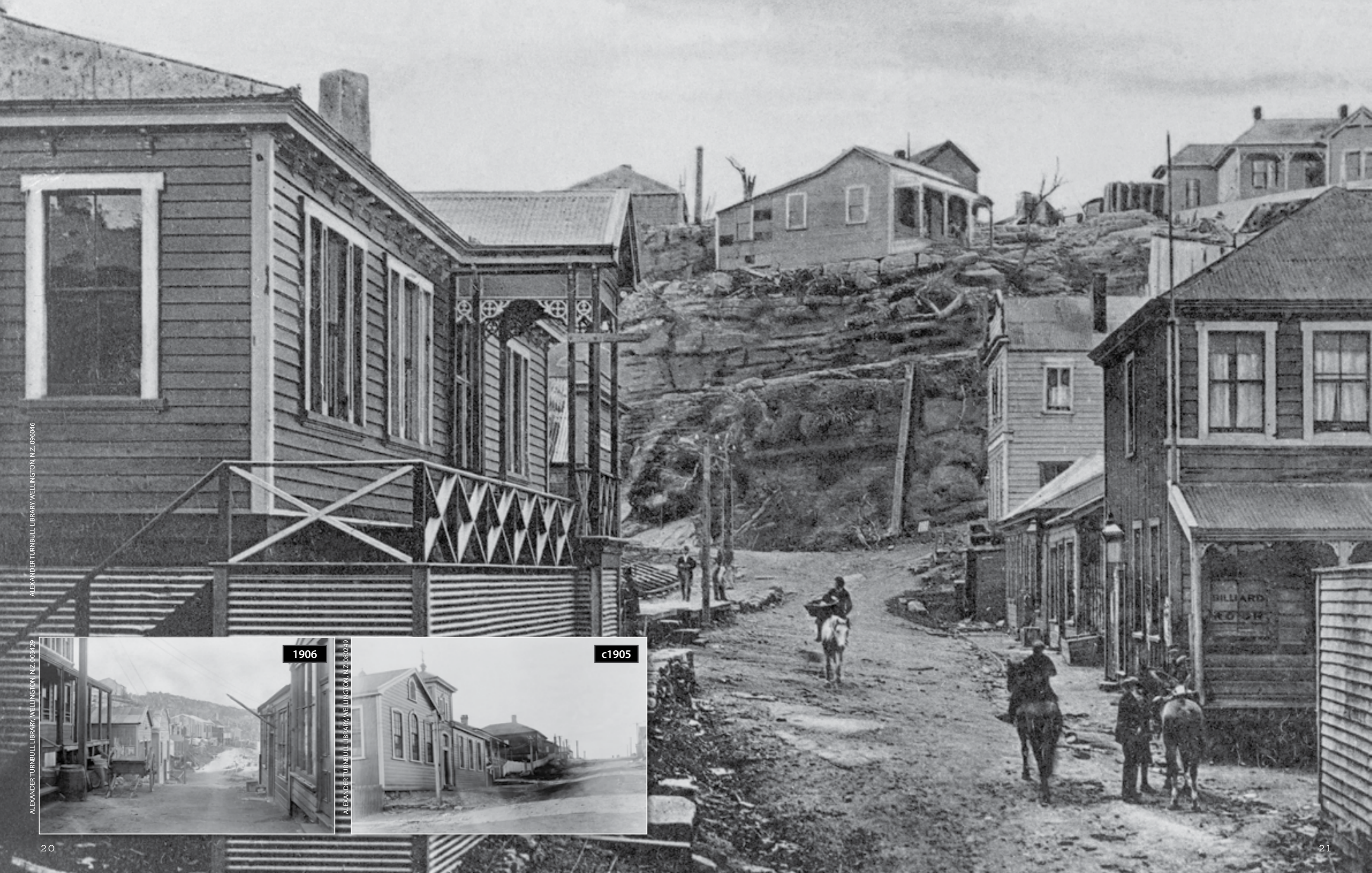
After Ormiston, the first haulage engineer.

YOUNG STREET

After Young Bros, Surveyors and Engineers of the Incline.

A LOOK AT DENNISTON
PLACES IN THE TOWN – AT THE BRAKEHEAD

c1890



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1906

c1905



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