

In times of peace the view after sunset may be described thus:

“Then as night the day succeedeth,  
Out towards the sea we gaze,  
Steamers pass with lights abounding  
Moonbeams dance upon each wave.  
Glory in the bright reflections,  
Hovering over sea and sand,  
See o'er hills and in the valleys,  
Twinkling lights like fairy land.”

### REDCLIFFS

Where the cliffs are red and broken and steep,  
And the hills in the background high;  
Where the land-locked waters lie stretched asleep,  
And the sea-birds circle and cry.

In the early seventies this portion of the Borough became known as “Watsonville,” being named after Alfred Claypon Watson, one of the pioneer land owners. The name was changed to Clifton in 1897, but when application was made for a postal agency, the department objected to the name, a post-office named Clifton having previously been established in Southland. In 1898 the district became known as Redcliffs.

The first land transaction I have been able to trace to this area is in respect of R.S. 158 which included what are now Pratt Street, Bay View Road, a portion of the Rifle Range area, and the area fronting Monck's Bay up to Cliff Street. It contained one hundred acres and was sold by the Canterbury Association on the 6th of September, 1851, to George Heath, “heretofore of Romney Terrace, Greenwich, in the County of Kent, but now of Sumner,” for £300.

Another lot of one hundred acres extending from Monck's Spur to “The Cutting” being Rural Sections 261 and 262, was sold by the Association on the 30th of August, 1852, to the “Reverend John Storer of Horton Hall, Birmingham,” for the sum of three hundred pounds.

The next sale by the Association was dated the seventeenth of November, 1852. It comprised R.S. 309 and contained fifty acres, the price being £150. The purchasers were William Sefton Moorhouse, Benjamin Mitchell Moorhouse and Thomas Carter Moorhouse, all of Lyttelton. The area extended from “The Rock” near Moa Bone Cave, to a point opposite Pratt Street and was bounded by the sea on one side and the Main Road to Lyttelton on the other. On the 4th of September T. C. Moorhouse purchased the shares of his brothers, paying them one hundred pounds each.

In September, 1856, the Crown sold R.S. 410 which included a further portion of what is now the Rifle Range and the eastern side of Monck's Spur to Alfred Charles Barker, of Christchurch, Esquire. The fifty acres contained in the area cost him one hundred and fifty pounds.

The selling of the areas fronting the Main Road having been dealt with and Mr A. C. Watson not being one of the original purchasers, it may be of interest to review his connection with the area which was named after him for some years.

Lots 261/262 were sold by the Rev. Storer to Watson on the 29th of August, 1872, the consideration being £400. The reverend gentleman thus receiving one hundred pounds on the original purchase price of the one hundred acres which he had held for twenty years.

Lot 410 containing fifty acres which had originally been purchased by A. C. Barker in 1856 for the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds was sold to Mr Watson on the 22nd of August, 1872, for three hundred and seventy-five pounds. Watson held these areas until the time of his death, which occurred in 1882; letters of administration being granted to John Stanley Monck, of Sumner, farmer, in November of that year as attorney for Charles H. Watson of Winchfield in the County of Hants, England. Mr Monck, acting under his authority, sold the property referred to herein to Robert Fisher Tomes of Woolston, gentleman, in 1883. Lots 261/2 realized £2,400 and lot 410 £850.

The one hundred acre block, R.S. 158, was sold by Heath to McCormack in October, 1860. McCormack sold to Mellish in July, 1868, who eight months later (23rd March, 1869), sold to the late Mr Monck after whom the bay ultimately became named.

Some time elapsed before the surveys were proceeded with and it was not until 1887 that the subdivision of “Watsonville” was completed.

In June, 1889, the Town Board, which had previously prescribed what had to be done in connection with the metalling and drainage of the proposed roads, was waited on by a deputation, the members of which complained that the Board was putting the syndicate to “enormous expense” by insisting on the spreading of grit on the footpaths and sides of streets and the metalling of the blind road leading to section 72. A compromise was ultimately reached, the Board agreeing to delete the reference in the specifications to grit on the understanding that the syndicate would provide more clay where required.

At a later meeting, July, 1889, it was decided, “That owing to drainage difficulties, the road fronting lots 82, 83, 84, 86, 87 and parts of 81 and 85, in all 6 chains 80 links in length, be left unformed and that the Engineer be authorised to draw a plan of Watsonville on the Town Board's map.”

On the 28th October of the same year it was resolved, “That the streets having been formed in a satisfactory manner that datum stones be set in position and the plans of Watsonville accepted.”

Drainage difficulties in Watsonville seem to have been a constant source of worry to the Town Board, culminating in it asking the owners of sections, in July, 1890, to contribute towards the cost of forming a drain “of a permanent character.”

The cost of “stabbing” three chains with totara was estimated to be £30 or with matai or birch £23. It was ultimately agreed “that if the owners of the sections who would derive benefit from the proposed work would contribute £15 a chain, the Board would find the balance.”