

THE OLDEST IDENTITY.

DEATH OF MR JOHN LANDER,
A VETERAN COLONIST
FIFTY-NINE YEARS IN NEW

ZEALAND.

A STIRRING CAREER

IN our obituary notices will be found an announcement of the death of one of Auckland's oldest pioneer colonists, Mr John Lander, Harbour Board signal master at Mount Victoria, North Shore, who died last evening at his residence, the signal station, after a brief illness at the ripe old age of 83 years. Mr Lander was one of the oldest local identities. He was a native of Kent (England) and led a seafaring life from his boyhood. He arrived in New Zealand in the large yacht *Acquilla*, from Sydney, about 1834. Owing to the yacht being wrecked he joined the schooner *John Dunscombe*, and for a time he traded between the Bay of Islands and Sydney. He also made visits in this vessel to Whakatane, where he often acted as pilot, and narrowly escaped being killed and eaten on one occasion, by the natives who surrounded the schooner. He was one of the earliest Auckland residents, as he came on here in 1836, long before there were any signs of settlement. After serving on board the *John Dunscombe* for about two years he left the sea for a time, and went to Coromandel, where he was storeman for Mr White. He afterwards became master of Mr White's schooner, the *Pumungu*, bringing Dr. Campbell, Messrs Brown, James, George and others to Auckland to await the arrival of the *Herald*, man-of-war, with Governor Hobson, on or about January 26th, 1840. Mr Lander was present at the hoisting of the British flag in Auckland at Soldiers' Point, and thus witnessed the first scene in the settlement of the Auckland district.

On one occasion, in the "fifties," Mr Lander formed one of an expedition which left Auckland in the s.s. *Governor Wynyard* (the first steamer built in Auckland) for the Hen and Chickens on a gold-hunting expedition, which, however, as might have been imagined, turned out fruitless.

The deceased had a stirring career in the old war-time, for he served during the Waikato war in 1863-64, both at Thames and in the Manukau. He had the contract of mail carrier in his smart smacks for the Government and had many narrow escapes from being captured by the Maoris, especially when off the *Miranda*, when rowing canoes captured from the Maoris for the British forces. Mr Lander had been awarded the medal and certificate of the Humane Society for rescuing lives from drowning in this harbour. He also held the New Zealand war medal for services during the war.

The deceased had been in the employ of the Auckland Harbour Board for thirty years, and was for many years assistant wharfinger, on the Queen-street Wharf. He had been thirteen years at the signal station at Mount Victoria as signal master, and his duties were carried out until as late as Wednesday last.

In former days at the regattas held in Auckland Harbour, the deceased was a great aquatic enthusiast, he being very successful, carrying off many choice prizes with his cargo boats, the *Lizzie* and *Diamond*.

Mr Lander was married at old St. Paul's Church, Auckland, 48 years ago, by the late Rev. Mr Churton. He leaves a widow, 3 sons and 5 daughters, all of whom are grown up. Two of his sons and four of his daughters are now married, his grandchildren being 36 in number and his great-grandchildren, 4. Mr Lander was very highly esteemed by all who knew and came in contact with him, and his very wide circle of friends will no doubt receive the account of his death with general regret. Mr Lander's death makes another gap in the gradually thinning list of pioneer settlers.