

John CHAMBERS (1839-1903)

1841 Census Stortford Park, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire

George CHAMBERS	35yrs	Farmer	born in the county
Ann CHAMBERS	35yrs		born in the county
William CHAMBERS	7yrs		born in the county
Ann CHAMBERS	6yrs		born in the county
Caroline CHAMBERS	5yrs		born in the county
John CHAMBERS	2yrs		born in the county
Richard CHAMBERS	1yr		born in the county
Susannah ABRAHAMS	20yrs	Female servant	born in the county
Eliza PATMORE	15yrs	Female servant	born in the county
William TRIGG	15yrs	Male servant	born in the county
John GOATS	14yrs	Male servant	born in the county
George PERRY	14yrs	Male servant	born in the county

1851 Census Stortford Park, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire

George CHAMBERS	Head	47yrs	Farmer 306 acres employing 17 labourers	b Great Hadham, Hertfordshire
Mary Ann CHAMBERS	Wife	54yrs		b Standon, Hertfordshire
George CHAMBERS	Son	20yrs	Banker's clerk [unmarried]	b Stortford, Hertfordshire
William CHAMBERS	Son	17yrs	Grocer's apprentice [unmarried]	b Stortford, Hertfordshire
Ann CHAMBERS	Dau	16yrs	[unmarried]	b Stortford, Hertfordshire
John CHAMBERS	Son	12yrs	Scholar	b Stortford, Hertfordshire
Richard CHAMBERS	Son	11yrs	Scholar	b Stortford, Hertfordshire
Joseph ELLIS		16yrs	Farm labourer [unmarried]	b Stortford, Hertfordshire
Isaac ELLIS		14yrs	Farm labourer	b Thorley, Hertfordshire
James ELLIS		12yrs	Farm labourer	b Thorley, Hertfordshire

1861 Census No.5 King St, Holywell, Shoreditch St Leonard, Middlesex

George S. WESTFIELD	Head	39yrs	Schoolmaster	b Norwich, Norfolk
Anne E. WESTFIELD	Wife	37yrs		b Norwich, Norfolk
William M. WESTFIELD	Son	15yrs	Clerk in Eastern Counties Railway	b London
Annie E. WESTFIELD	Dau	13yrs		b London
Alice R. WESTFIELD	Dau	11yrs		b London
Frank H. WESTFIELD	Son	9yrs		b London
Charles A. WESTFIELD	Son	7yrs		b London
Frederick A. WESTFIELD	Son	6yrs		b London
Florence A. WESTFIELD	Dau	2yrs		b London
Edith M. WESTFIELD	Dau	7 weeks		b London
John W. WARNER	Cousin	31yrs	Assistant in school [unmarried]	b Norwich, Norfolk
Isabella WILSON	Servt	18yrs	House servant [unmarried]	b London
John CHAMBERS	Visitor	22yrs	Ironmonger's assistant [unmarried]	b Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire

Southern Cross 11 Oct 1864 Arrival of the 'Columbus' from London

The ship Columbus, 1,277 tons, Captain Adie, arrived yesterday evening, and anchored off the North Head. She left the Downs on the 16th June, and took her final departure from Ushant on the 24th June. Experienced light N.E. trades, and crossed the line on the 27th July, in 25o 11' W longitude. The S.E. trades proved moderate, and the meridian of the Cape was made on the 23rd August. From thence strong W. and S.W. winds prevailed. She ran down her easting as far as 59o S, and passing to the south of Tasmania, sighted the North Cape on Saturday last. The barque Guadelette, hence, was spoken on the 4th instant, in longitude 163o 10' E, latitude 34o S.

The Columbus was despatched by Messrs Green, Robinson and Co. She is a fine large ship, and has good accomodation. Her commander, Captain Adie, has been presented with a testimonial by the passengers, as a token of their appreciation of his abilities as a mariner, and of the manner in which he has performed his duties. Most of the passengers appear to be in good health, and the ship is in a cleanly state. The following is a list of her passengers and cargo:-

Steerage... John, Martha, John and Agnes Chambers... William, Mary, Ann, William and Henry Chambers

Cargo... 5 packages, Chambers... Chambers, 1 package

Testimonial to Captain Adie

We have great pleasure in publishing the following testimonial to Captain Adie, of the Columbus:- "To Robert Adie, Esq., Captain of the Ship Columbus. "Dear Sir, - We, the undersigned passengers by the ship Columbus, from London to Auckland, having experienced your great kindness, consideration, and gentlemanly behaviour during the passage are desirous of hereby testifying our grateful appreciation of the same; and ere, we part, beg, as a small token of our esteem, to offer you our most sincere and heartfelt thanks. In conclusion, we beg to wish both you and your wife every happiness and all this world's joys. - We remain yours, &c."

The ship 'Columbus' arrived off the North Head last evening from London, with a full cargo of general merchandise and 185 passengers. The following is a list of their trades and occupations:- 13 farm labourers, 28 servants, 14 labourers, 2 ironmongers, 20 farmers, 1 painter, 3 blacksmiths, 1 draper, 4 carpenters, 1 wine merchant, 1 doctor, 1 cook, 1 coal miner. The 'Columbus' has arrived in harbour in good order. The only deaths during the passage were Robert William Blankarn, aged 30, who died on the 29th July, of consumption; and Margaret Paul, aged 2 years, who died on the 27th July, of dysentery.

New Zealand Herald 11 Oct 1864 Arrival of the ship 'Columbus' from London

The fine ship Columbus, Captain Robert Adie, arrived off the Heads yesterday evening, after a pleasant passage of 115 days from the Downs. The following are the particulars of her passage: - Passed through the Downs on the 16th June, taking her final departure from Ushant on the 24th. Passed outside the Cape De Verd Islands, experiencing very light N.E. trades; crossed the Equator on the 27th July, in longitude 25o 11'W., and had very moderate S.E. trade winds; crossed the meridian of the Cape of Good Hope on the 23rd August, running down her easting between the parallels of 40o and 49o; in these latitudes, W. and S.W. winds were encountered with very squally, wet weather. Off Tasmania, had a hard gale from the N.E., which drove her down as far as 50o S.; after that light winds prevailed, and the North Cape was rounded at 11.30am, on Sunday last. The only ship connected with the Colonies spoken during the passage, was the barque Guadalette, five days out from this port, on the 5th inst., in longitude 163o 10' E., latitude 34o S.; wished to be reported. The Columbus brings 189 passengers, all in good health, and the ship has arrived in a clean and creditable condition. There were two deaths on the passage - one a child, and the other a young man named Robert William Blankam, aged 30 years, who died of consumption on the 29th July. There were also two births on the passage. Capt. Adie is well spoken of by the passengers, and seems to have won their highest esteem, as will be seen by the following testimonial, which we have much pleasure in giving publicity to:- "To Captain Robert Adie, Ship Columbus. Dear Sir, We the undersigned passengers by the ship Columbus, from London to Auckland, having experienced your great kindness, consideration, and gentlemanly behaviour during the passage, are desirous of hereby testifying our grateful appreciation of the same, and, ere we part, beg, as a small token of our esteem, to offer you our most sincere and heartfelt thanks. In conclusion we beg to wish both you and your wife every happiness and all this world's joys. Subscribing ourselves, Yours faithfully' (Signed by all the passengers)" The ship will come up harbour this morning.

Passenger List... John, Martha, John and Agnes Chambers... William, Mary Ann, William and Henry Chambers; John Chambers;

1866-1867 Auckland West Electoral Roll

William Wyman Chambers, Pitt Street, Household – Pitt street; dwelling
John Chambers, Pitt Street, Household – Pitt Street; dwelling
John Moginie, Newton Road, Leasehold, Queen street; premises in his occupation

Auckland Provincial Gazette July 1868 page 336

I, the undersigned, John Henry Smith, hereby make application to register the Hape Gold Mining Company, Registered, under the provisions of "The Mining Companies Limited Liability Act, 1865", and I do solemnly and sincerely declare, that the following statement is, to the best of my belief and knowledge, true in every particular, namely:

1. The name and style of the Company is the Hape Gold Mining Company Registered.
2. The place of operations is at the Hape Creek, Thames Gold Fields.
3. The nominal capital of the Company is Two thousand one hundred pounds, in two hundred and ten shares of ten pounds each.
4. The amount, already paid up, is One thousand four hundred pounds.
5. The name of the Manager is John Henry Smith.
6. The Office of the Company is in Lower Queen-street, Auckland.
7. The names and several residences of the Shareholders, and the number of Shares held by each at this date, are as follows:-

Name	Residence	No. of shares
James Taylor	Auckland	10
John Chambers	Auckland	10
John Henry Smith	Shortland	70
Seering Hall Matthews	Auckland	10
Josiah Mallett	Shortland Gold Field	10
Moritz Samuel Leers	Epsom	10
John Fisher	Auckland	10
Henry Sherrard	Auckland	10

Dated this eleventh day of June, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight.

J. H. Smith Witness to signature: Henry Gilfillan, Justice of the Peace.

Daily Southern Cross 1 Aug 1868

John Chambers attended the inaugural meeting of the Parnell Road Board

Auckland Provincial Electoral Roll December 1868

John Chambers, Karangahape Road

New Zealand Herald 14 May 1869

The following persons are objected to as not being entitled to have their names retained on the list of voters for the Electoral District of City West.
208 - Chambers, William Wyman, Pitt Street, household, dwelling, left the premises; William Shanahan, Newton, as elector of the district, objector.
210 - Chambers, John, Pitt Street, household, dwelling, left the premises; William Shanahan, Newton, as elector of the district, objector.

Daily Southern Cross 18 Aug 1871 Notice – Retiring from Business

We have this day disposed of all interest in our business in Auckland to Messrs A. Porter, J. Chambers, and J. Hardie, who will continue the same as heretofore. All accounts due to the firm of E. Porter and Co. to date must forthwith be paid to Mr Edward Porter, as it is our intention to dissolve the Partnership existing between us. Edward Porter. John Southern Porter. By his Attorney, J. Howard – July 1, 1871. We, the undersigned, having purchased the Ironmongery Business of Messrs E. Porter and Co., have this day entered into Partnership, and intend to carry on the same as heretofore. The business will be continued under the same name and style of E. Porter and Co. Alfred Porter, John Chambers, James Hardie. July 1, 1871.

Wises Post Office Directory 1875-1876 – Auckland Part lia page 4

E. Porter & Co., ironmongers, Queen Street; John Chambers, Grafton; Alfred Porter, Parnell and James Hardy, Remuera

Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute 1917 Volume 1 pages 223-230

New Zealand Ironsands: an Historical Account of an attempt to smelt Ironsands at Onehunga in 1883 by John Mogenie Chambers.

Late in 1876 John Chambers "took a parcel of ironsand to England and the United States. He interviewed many ironmasters, but could get none sufficiently interested to experiment seriously with the samples, excepting in laboratories, where a few pounds of iron and steel were produced in crucibles." John went to the Philadelphia Exhibition "and there tried to induce men in the iron and steel trade to test the ironsand; but nothing could be arranged." Before leaving New York he heard that a Mr Joel Wilson, of Dover, New Jersey, "had in 1873 patented a furnace which he claimed would treat ironsand and convert it directly into wrought iron. Mr Guy H. Gardner, of New York, obtained an option on the New Zealand patents, purchasing them jointly with Mr Chambers; and so sanguine was the inventor that he agreed to send out his best man, Mr W. H. Jones, to demonstrate the working of his patent in New Zealand."

Philadelphia Centennial International Exhibition of 1876 – AJHR 1877 H23 p60 – Enclosure No.2 Report on Awards

19 Dec 1876 Product: Pressed Ferns by John Chambers, Auckland. Commend for the beauty and interest of the exhibit, which consists of 54 species of ferns collected in the Auckland province, artistically arranged, mounted and framed. Wm. H. Brewer, Signature of the Judge. Approval of Group Judges: John R. West, J. F. Newberry, Dr Jose de Saldanha, M.R. de Vasconcellos.

Nelson Historical Society Journal Vol 3 No. 5 October 1979

In 1877 John Chambers and Howard Keep took up a 640 acre lease at the "Parapara Subdivision" in Nelson and attempted to smelt iron-ore. The lease was held for ten years when it became the property of the Bank of New Zealand. The Bank, in order to hold the ground, constructed a road and stacked a little ore.

Land Information NZ Auckland Deed Register reference: F3 page 947 Notes 8 May 1877

John Chambers, ironmonger, Auckland and James Morton, auctioneer, Auckland paid 3,074 pounds 4s to the New Zealand Insurance Company. 2,574 pounds 4s now owing by Edwin Torrens Brissenden and Agnes Anna Brissenden his wife.

Land Information NZ Auckland Deed Register reference: G2 page 151; Document 1811G – 17 Nov 1877

Conveyance of Allot 59 (25 acres) of the Parish of Onewhero, County of Rutland between John Chambers ironmonger of Carleton Gore and Thomas Taylor NASEFIELD, ironfounder of Ponsonby of one part and Isaac RAILEY, sawmill owner of Mercer. Bounded on the north by the Waikato River, on the southeast by Allotment 60 and intersected NE-SW by a road.

Wises Post Office Directory 1878-1879

John Chambers, Ironmonger, Carlton Gore road, Auckland

Waitemata Electoral Roll 1879-1880

John Chambers, Carleton Road, Auckland, freehold Takapuna section 56 Woodside

DOCUMENT: 17 May 1880 Conveyance Thomas M. McLaughlin to J. Chambers and another Part of Allotment 2, Section 6, Auckland Suburbs

Wises Post Office Directory 1880-1881

John Chambers (Porter & Co.), Grafton road, Auckland

1881 Auckland East Electoral Roll

John Chambers, Ironmonger, Princes Street

1881 Waitemata Electoral Roll

John Chambers, Ironmonger, Freehold, Section 56, Woodside, Takapuna

Auckland Directory 1882

John Chambers, iron merchant, Princess Street; Chairman of Auckland and East District Licensing Committee

Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute 1917 Volume 1 page 223-230.

New Zealand Ironsands: an Historical Account of an attempt to smelt Ironsands at Onewhero in 1883 by John Mogenie Chambers.

A full-size furnace was erected in 1882 to manufacture 3 tons of iron per day. The furnace was built from a drawing accompanying patent specifications.

DOCUMENT: 27 Jan 1882 Assignment of Matakoho Island to Chambers & others from John Denniston

Waikato Times 9 Mar 1882

John Chambers, Director of newly formed 'New Find' or 'Prospectors Claim' Gold Mining Company at Wairongomai.

DOCUMENT: 27 Mar 1882 Lease for Matakoho Island

Return of Freeholders October 1882

John Chambers, ironmonger, Auckland. Owned less than 1 acre of land in Waitemata County valued at £25. Owned 1500 acres of land in Wanganui County valued at £935. Owned land in Auckland Borough to the value of £400. Owned land in Hamilton Borough to the value of £58.

Archives NZ Wellington Ref: IA 3/1/35 Letter 1882/5074 22 Nov 1882 Colonial Secretary's Office Inwards Correspondence Register

John Chambers wrote recommending "extension of Bonus for Iron to other productions other than that of 'Pig' Iron." He also applied "for a lease of Pilot Station Reserve at North Head of Manukau."

Archives NZ Wellington Ref: IA 3/1/35 Letter 1882/5075 22 Nov 1882 Colonial Secretary's Office Inwards Correspondence Register

John Chambers wrote giving "notice of intention to claim Bonus of £1,000 offered for production of Iron".

AJHR 1884 Section H1 p1 Letters Patent & Letters of Registration

Patent No 762: 8 Jan 1883 G. H. Gardner, merchant of Bourke Street, Melbourne for "improvements in furnaces for reducing iron ores. (Joel Wilson's)."

Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute 1917 Volume 1 page 223-230.

New Zealand Ironsands: an Historical Account of an attempt to smelt Ironsands at Onehunga in 1883 by John Mogenie Chambers. Construction of the furnace was completed in February 1883 at a cost of £500. The first iron was made into billets on 27 February "and it was shown that the quality exceeded all expectations." George Fraser and Sons made "three bars, 8ft long, 2in. square, of perfect quality" on 5 March.

AJHR 1884 Section H1 p1 Letters Patent & Letters of Registration

Patent No 818: 23 Apr 1883 G. H. Gardner, merchant of Bourke Street, Melbourne for "improvements in furnaces for the manufacture of bar iron and blooms."

Wises Post Office Directory 1883-1884

John Chambers, Princes St, Auckland

Wises Post Office Directory 1885-1886
John Chambers, Princes St, Auckland

New Zealand Gazette 18 Mar 1886

I, the undersigned, hereby make application to register the Amaranth Gold-mining Company as a Limited Company, under the provisions of "The Mining Companies Act, 1872," and Amendment Act, 1883.

1. The name of the company is to be the Amaranth Gold and Silver-mining Company (Limited).
2. The place of intended operations is at Waihi.
3. The registered office of the company will be situated at Queenstreet, Auckland.
4. The nominal capital of the company is fifteen thousand pounds, in thirty thousand shares of ten shillings each.
5. The number of shares subscribed for is thirty thousand, being the entire number of shares in the company.
6. The number of shares paid up is nil.
7. The amount already paid up is nil.
8. The name of the Manager is Francis Angus White.
9. The names and addresses and occupations of the shareholders, and the number of shares held by each at this date, are as follows:-

... John Chambers & J. E. Banks (in trust for sundry shareholders) 12,000 shares

Dated this 25th day of February, 1886. F. A. White, Manager. Witness to signature - Joseph Newman, J.P.

The Waikato Times 25 Mar 1886 p2 c2 - Reference from newspaper index Hamilton Public Library - not found?
John Chambers of Morrin & Co., Auckland, visiting Karangahake to arrange for start of the La Monte furnace.

The Waikato Times 27 Apr 1886 Latest from the Goldfields [by Telegraph - own correspondent] - Karangahake, Paeroa, Monday

The new battery and Mackay pan plant is now fairly started. Mr Chambers of T. & S. Morrin & Co., has sent carpenters and other workmen from town, and the machinery, which is not already here, will follow almost immediately. The Karangahake furnace, according to Col. Fraser will, whether Mr La Monte consents or not, be in full blast in a week's time. The manager, Mr W. Littlejohn, informs me, however, that if La Monte does not put his own experts on, that the Woodstock Smelting Company will have to send to California for them. At present both mine and furnace are at a total standstill, the hoppers and furnace platform being choked up with ore. It seems a great pity that such should be the case, especially as the ore is of such grand quality. Mr Montgomery, M.A., who is at present in charge of the district branch of the school of mines, assayed on Saturday last a piece of quartz from the Woodstock, from which a mortar prospect could not be obtained, not even a colour being visible in the dish. The fire assay, however, returned a value in bullion at the rate of £940 14s per ton. Mr D. H. Bayldon, mining surveyor, made a survey on Monday of the mine, which showed that the level south had been driven over the Kenilworth boundary.

The Waikato Times 19 Jun 1886

Arrangements are being made to light the Woodstock furnace, Karangahake, by the beginning of July.

Wises Post Office Directory 1887-1888

John Chambers, Princes St, Auckland

Wises Post Office Directory 1890-1891

John Chambers, Ironmonger, 137 Queen St, Auckland

Wises Post Office Directory 1892-1893

John Chambers, St Stephen's road, Parnell, Auckland

1893 Parnell Electoral Roll

John Chambers, Merchant; Martha Chambers Chambers, household duties; John Moginie Chambers, Engineer; Marion Fannie Chambers, domestic duties – all resident at St Stephen's road

Wises Post Office Directory 1894-1895

John Chambers, St Stephen's road, Parnell, Auckland

John Chambers & Son, Auckland, N.Z., engineers & importers, sole authorised vendors in New Zealand for goods manufactured by Tangyes Lim. Cornwall works, Birmingham, viz:- steam engines, pumps, boilers, cranes, blocks, hydraulic machinery, wool presses, machine tools, gas engines; Sole agents for:- Askham Bros. & Wilson Limited, Sheffield, manufacturers of special cast steel, miners drill steel, crucible steel castings, tramway material, pulverisers, stonebreakers, separators, mineral export brokers; indents executed. See advert opposite Machinery Merchants.

Witnesses who gave evidence to Commissions & Committees 1858-1935

John Chambers, Auckland AJHR 1895 H2 p348

1896 Parnell Electoral Roll

John Chambers, Merchant; Martha Chambers Chambers, household duties; John Moginie Chambers, Engineer; Marion Fannie Chambers, domestic duties – all resident at St Stephen's road

Wises Post Office Directory 1896-1897

John Chambers, St. Stephen's road, Parnell, Auckland
John Chambers & Son, engineers & importers, Fort street, Auckland. See advert.

Wises Post Office Directory 1898-1899

John Chambers, St. Stephen's road, Parnell, Auckland
John Chambers & Son, engineers & importers, Fore street, Auckland. See advert – facing preface.

Wises Post Office Directory 1900

John Chambers, St Stephen's road, Parnell, Auckland
John Chambers & Son, engineers & importers, Fort street, Auckland. See advert facing preface.

New Zealand Herald 07 Mar 1901 Federation Commission – Third Day's Proceedings

Mr John Chambers, importer of machinery, said he was a firm believer in federation and free trade, but as regards New Zealand federating with Australia, he thought the balance of reasoning was against federating. A confederation of the British Empire or even a Pacific confederation, including all the islands, would be more reasonable. He thought New Zealand could hold her own in manufactures on account of the natural resources of the country. New Zealand had one of the finest iron deposits in the world – at Parapara – and could manufacture iron almost as cheaply as anywhere. The deposit had not been worked, because the demand was not sufficient to warrant the necessary outlay of capital. In the matter of freights, New Zealand got cheaper rates than Australia, owing largely to the country exporting more largely than she was importing, and pig iron was a cheap here as in Sydney. There were as good ironfounders in New Zealand as in any part of the world. Considering the disadvantages, however, he was against federation.

Wises Post Office Directory 1901

John Chambers, St Stephen's road, Parnell, Auckland
John Chambers & Son, engineers & importers, Fort street, Auckland. See advert facing preface.

Witnesses who gave evidence to Commissions & Committees 1858-1935

John Chambers, Auckland AJHR 1901 A4 p415

Wises Post Office Directory 1902

John Chambers, St Stephen's road, Parnell, Auckland
John Chambers & Son, engineers & importers, Fort street, Auckland. Cumberland st, Dunedin; & Wellington. See advt facing preface.

Wises Post Office Directory 1903

John Chambers, St Stephen's road, Parnell, Auckland

Chambers & Son Ltd (Jno), engineers & importers, Fort st, Auckland; Cumberland st, Dunedin; & 20 Customhouse Quay, Wellington

Auckland Star 28 Sep 1903 Obituary

The death is announced of Mr John Chambers, at his residence, St Stephen's road, Parnell, this morning. About three years ago Mr Chambers' health began to fail, when he was at Dunedin. He returned to Auckland, and recovered sufficiently to again attend to business for a short while. Failing health, however, forced him to practically retire from active business altogether, and yesterday morning the end came, as is often the case under such circumstances, somewhat suddenly. Mr Chambers had attained the age of 66 years, and during his long residence in Auckland enjoyed the well-deserved reputation of being a man of his word, and a thoroughly upright gentleman. Deceased leaves a widow, one son (Mr John Chambers, jun.), and one daughter (Mrs Keep.) Mr Chambers came to this colony over 40 years ago. In 1871 he joined Mr E. Porter and Mr Hardie in taking over the business of Mr Porter's father, under the style of E. Porter and Co. In 1882 Mr Chambers joined T. and S. Morrin and Co. Ltd. He was at one time greatly interested in the ironsand industry, and had a good deal to do with the establishment of the works at Onehunga, which unfortunately did not prove a success, and resulted in heavy loss to the shareholders. Later on Mr Chambers founded the firm of John Chambers and Son, and during the mining boom about eight years ago built up a good business, which has latterly been mainly carried on by his son.

New Zealand Herald 29 Sep 1903 Obituary

A widely-known and highly respected citizen of many years' standing passed away on Sunday night in the person of Mr John Chambers, who died at his residence, "Oakdene," St. Stephen's Road, Parnell, at the age of 66 years. Some three years ago, when in the Otago district in connection with the gold dredging industry, the deceased gentleman contracted influenza, and a slight paralytic stroke following, he was compelled on his return to Auckland to devote less active attention to business, but continued to attend regularly at the firm's premises in Fort-street, and to take a prominent part in the affairs of the concern up till eight or nine weeks ago. He was from that time confined to the house, and though it was not expected that he would last very long, the end came rather suddenly. Mr Chambers was born in Bishop-Stortford, Hertfordshire, England, and received his education in the Old Country, where, after leaving school, he served his apprenticeship with a firm of Greenwich engineers. On the completion of his term the deceased entered into the engineering business on his own account in Nottinghamshire, remaining there for some three years. He then came out to New Zealand, arriving in this colony in 1863. After visiting various parts, Mr Chambers, who was then about 26 years of age, settled in Auckland, and entered into business as a partner in the ironmongery firm of Messrs E. Porter and Co. He remained in the firm till 1881, during which year the business of Messrs T. and S. Morrin was converted into a limited liability company, Mr Chambers joining the firm in the capacity of managing director. On the reconstruction of this firm the deceased retired from office, and commenced business on his own account in the old Herald Office Buildings. This was in 1886. Under his guidance the business went on increasing, until in 1892 Mr Chambers found it necessary to remove to Fort-street, where he was instrumental in building up the flourishing engineering and mining machinery importers' business, known under the style of John Chambers and Son, Limited, the son being Mr J. M. Chambers, who remains in the business. The deceased also devoted considerable time to other industries, including gold mining, coal, flax, ironsand, etc., and he was ever ready to lend his assistance in developing and pushing forward industries calculated to benefit his fellow colonists and the colony in which he had made his home. When not engaged in his own business matters or interesting himself in the promotion of industries, he spent the greater part of his time in the family circle. It has been said of him that had he not devoted so much time to others he would himself have been a wealthier man, but it was not like Mr Chambers to miss an opportunity that offered to give his fellow man a lift along on the road to success. For several years the deceased was a director of various local gold mining companies, but relinquished office, as opportunity occurred, after his first illness at Dunedin three years ago. Mr Chambers leaves a widow, one son (Mr J. M. Chambers) and one daughter (Mrs Howard Keep, of Birmingham) to mourn their loss. A surviving brother, Mr Richard Chambers, resides at New Plymouth. The remains will be buried at the Purewa Cemetery this afternoon, the interment being private.

Evening Post 29 Sep 1903 Death

On the 27th September, 1903, at Parnell, Auckland, John Chambers aged 66 years.

Taranaki Herald 1 Oct 1903 Personal

The New Zealand Herald announces the death on Sunday of Mr John Chambers, a well known and highly respected citizen of Auckland, at the age of 66 years. He was a brother of Mr Richard Chambers, of New Plymouth.

Alexander Turnbull Library Biographical Index - NZ Biography 1962 Volume 2 p84 - Humble start led John Chambers to foremost place

The New Zealand-wide firm of John Chambers and Son Ltd., has demonstrated its confidence in Hawke's Bay by investing thousands of pounds in land, buildings and stock in Hastings. The company's newly-erected premises in Heretaunga street will be opened on Monday. From small and humble beginnings almost 70 years ago, John Chambers and Son Ltd., now holds a foremost position in the selling and servicing of some of the finest engineering equipment, heavy machinery and agricultural plant for New Zealand's primary automotive and industrial needs. The founder, Mr J. M. Chambers, first had his thoughts turned towards New Zealand when, as a lad of 16, he was apprenticed as a coppersmith to a firm involved in servicing vessels engaged in the Crimean War. While thus employed he met many travellers and in particular, sailors who told glorious tales of the land "down under". These tales of early New Zealand led Mr Chambers to resign his position and emigrate to this country. He arrived in Auckland in 1864 after an eventful voyage lasting almost six months.

Gold Mining

Unfortunately, in 1866 a trade depression set in; business in general became paralysed and the firm of ironmongers he was employed by in Auckland was forced to close down. In these circumstances, Mr Chambers turned his efforts to gold mining and with a party of friends, took to digging in the Thames area. Their efforts, however, met with little success. At the same time it brought home to Mr Chambers the need to introduce mechanisation of some kind to implement mining since he was convinced vast quantities of the elusive metal could be obtained with suitable mining equipment. He therefore spent the ensuing years designing mining and general contracting equipment. In 1876 he visited Great Britain, the United States and Canada, to arrange for the manufacture of some of his equipment, and at the same time he took the opportunity of securing for himself the New Zealand Agency for many engineering and industrial lines. Incidentally, some of the agencies then secured are still held by the Company.

Mineral Resources

On his return to New Zealand Mr Chambers resumed his interest in mining as well as in other businesses and concerns being established in the country. He was one of the first at the goldfield at Ohinemuri and was one of the original share-holders in the Martha mine, which later became known as the Waihi Gold Mining Co. He did much for the development of this, especially in the Karangahake area, where he erected the first smelting furnace. Later he pegged out the Ohinemuri river for tailings. This river was subsequently worked by the Waihi-Paeroa Gold Extraction Co. Ltd. Mr Chambers, whose knowledge of the mineral resources of the country was extensive, was instrumental in the development of the coalfields at Kamo and did much to assist with the assembly of one of the largest cement works in New Zealand. In 1893, his son, John Chambers Jun., having returned to New Zealand after being six years in Australia and Great Britain undergoing training as an engineer, joined his father and they established the firm of John Chambers & Son Ltd.

Company's Fortunes

For the first three years of operation the company confined its activities to selling mining and contracting equipment in the Auckland area, but in 1896, when New Zealand enjoyed a mining boom, the firm really prospered. This boom brought many orders to John Chambers & Son Ltd. For two years the company was exceptionally active in contracting for the supply and erection of pumping and winching machinery, stamp batteries, and even electric lighting for existing mines and mills. The firm contracted to deliver and erect machinery of all kinds and even the construction of buildings. The latter were built of wood or iron framework, the timber in most cases being cut from the virgin forest growing near the battery sites. The company became firmly established in New Zealand as mining and contracting engineers for it made a success of every job undertaken. When the boom collapsed, the firm resolved upon stocking, contracting

and engineering requirements and machinery of all kinds, including equipment for the rapidly developing primary industry. In 1903 Mr J. M. Chambers died and the business was carried on by his son until his death in 1918.

Abreast of Times

In the 70 years of its history, the business has changed in its character with the development of the country, and perhaps in no way has it shown its vitality and versatility more than in meeting such changes. Today the company operates 19 sales branches with more than 600 employees. While the founder and sales assistants first covered the country by horseback, followed by the use of bicycles, the company now has a fleet of more than 60 modern vehicles to enable its engineers and sales representatives to call at regular intervals on all engineering, industrial and automotive concerns throughout the length and breadth of the country. Today the firm of John Chambers & Son Ltd. is headed by Mr G. N. Roberts as chairman and Mr Douglas L. Smith, M.I.Mar E., M.I. PlantE., as general manager. Mr J. R. Graham, A.M.I. Mech E., A.M.N.Z.E.E., A.M.I.MarE., heads the newly-formed engineering sales division.

1911 Parnell Electoral Roll

Martha Chambers Chambers, widow; John Moginie Chambers, Engineer; Elsie Gertrude Chambers, married – all resident at St Stephen's road