



A most disastrous fire broke out at Green Island on 22 May 1889, resulting in the total destruction of Mr H. Harraway's flour and oatmeal mill, which with its big water wheel was such a prominent object to those passing by either road or rail, and also one of the workmen's cottages close by the mill. The building was at the time almost as full as it could hold with wheat, oats, flour, and oatmeal, so that the value of the property destroyed is very large.

The building itself has been erected for a good many years, and though the machinery was scarcely of the latest description it was valuable, and, as is well known, a very good article was turned out from the mill. Mr Harraway's friends, and they are numerous, will learn with regret that the loss to him will be very severe indeed. The property was leasehold. Some of the furniture from the cottage destroyed was saved, but from the mill nothing was rescued. It may be mentioned that though the water wheel was used during the winter months, steam had to be resorted to during the greater portion of the year, the body of water in the Kaikorai stream having, through being utilised higher up the valley, steadily decreased of late years.

The fire, it appears, broke out at about a quarter to 11 o'clock. At this time only two of the mill hands were at work. One of them was working in the kiln, and the other — a boy named John Gray— was engaged in oiling the bearings of a machine known as the duster, which is used for cleaning oats. He was carrying a lamp at the time, and it dropped from his hand and set fire to some bagging which was used in connection with one of the shoots. He made some effort to put out the fire, but failed in his attempt, and seeing there was great danger he rushed off for Mr Harraway. The latter (who had not left the mill) was soon at the fire, and

endeavoured to pull down the blazing woodwork, at the same time giving instructions to have water carried from the creek. The fire, however, had by this time obtained too great a hold of the building, and all efforts to put it out proved unavailing. Mr Harraway and the few who were with him soon had to leave the building. There were seven trucks filled with grain on the railway siding close to the mill, and these were pushed along to a place of safety. Two of Mr Harraway's sons— James and George-- had meanwhile broken into the office and succeeded in getting out the safe which contained most of the books and papers relating to the business. Several books and documents that were overlaid, with grain could not, however, be got out.

A cottage of five, rooms, which stood close to the mill, also caught fire, and was totally destroyed. This building was occupied by one of the workmen named Thomas McCaughan, and though his family were got out safely, he lost nearly, all his furniture, which, unfortunately, was not insured. The mill was a very old one, and once the flames got a good hold the building was quickly demolished. A strong south-west wind which was blowing at the time also increased the difficulty of subduing the flames. All the flour-milling machinery has been destroyed, and the engine has been greatly damaged. The boilers, however, have escaped damage owing to their isolation from the main building. The kiln, too, is but slightly damaged.

The building, plant and stock were covered by some insurance but Mr Harraway will also lose heavily by the destruction of a large quantity of grain and flour and oatmeal with which the mill was stocked. In addition to this, serious loss will be caused in consequence of the cessation of operations at a time when business was unusually brisk and some 13 hands will be temporarily thrown out of employment.

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Henry Harraway, who founded the Company in 1877, had 21 children.

Three of the 21 children died in infancy, 6 married and didn't have children and the other 12 married and had families.

Henry married Catherine Hodgkinson in Geelong, Melbourne on 28 March 1863.

As she was only 20 at the time of her marriage her father Charles Fleetwood Hodgkinson gave his consent to the marriage. Henry and Catherine left for New Zealand on 16 June 1863, settling in Green Island where he established a flour mill in 1867.

The need for wheat flour to feed the growing population and oats for horse fodder was encouraged with the change in the size of regulated land available for purchase, making the new farm sizes affordable and manageable. The Taieri plains and other land to the North and South of Dunedin as well as areas of central Otago yielded good quality wheat, in the 1880's wheat was exported to the UK and was of superior quality. A rail tunnel from Kaikorai Valley to Caversham was opened in 1875 which allowed the transport of goods from the Taieri and beyond into Dunedin to export at Port Chalmers. The tunnel was replaced in 1910 by a larger dual carriageway and the original tunnel used mainly by people living in South Dunedin and employed in Kaikorai Valley, Green Island and the greater Dunedin area.

In 1893, Henry Harraway replaced stone grinding (powered by use of the Kaikorai stream) with an oat roller milling plant and processed 1000 tons of oatmeal in its first year. This

heralded the commencement of breakfast cereal production for Harraways, however the production of flour remained important to the Company during the 1900's.

Harraway and Sons Ltd was purchased by Charles Hudson son of Richard Hudson being the founder of R Hudson and Co (baker, confectioner and first person to patent and produce self raising flour latterly this was known as Cadbury Schweppes Hudson in Otago.

In 1958, and after the purchase and consolidation of a number of competitive flour and stock feed processing plants, Harraways became the largest mill in Otago and Southland.

Henry Harraway, and many other family members, are buried in the Green Island Cemetery near Dunedin.