

Mad bad and dangerous to know

Cornelius Bartholomew Bryan
of Huia

and how he – and the women who knew him -
came to a sorry end

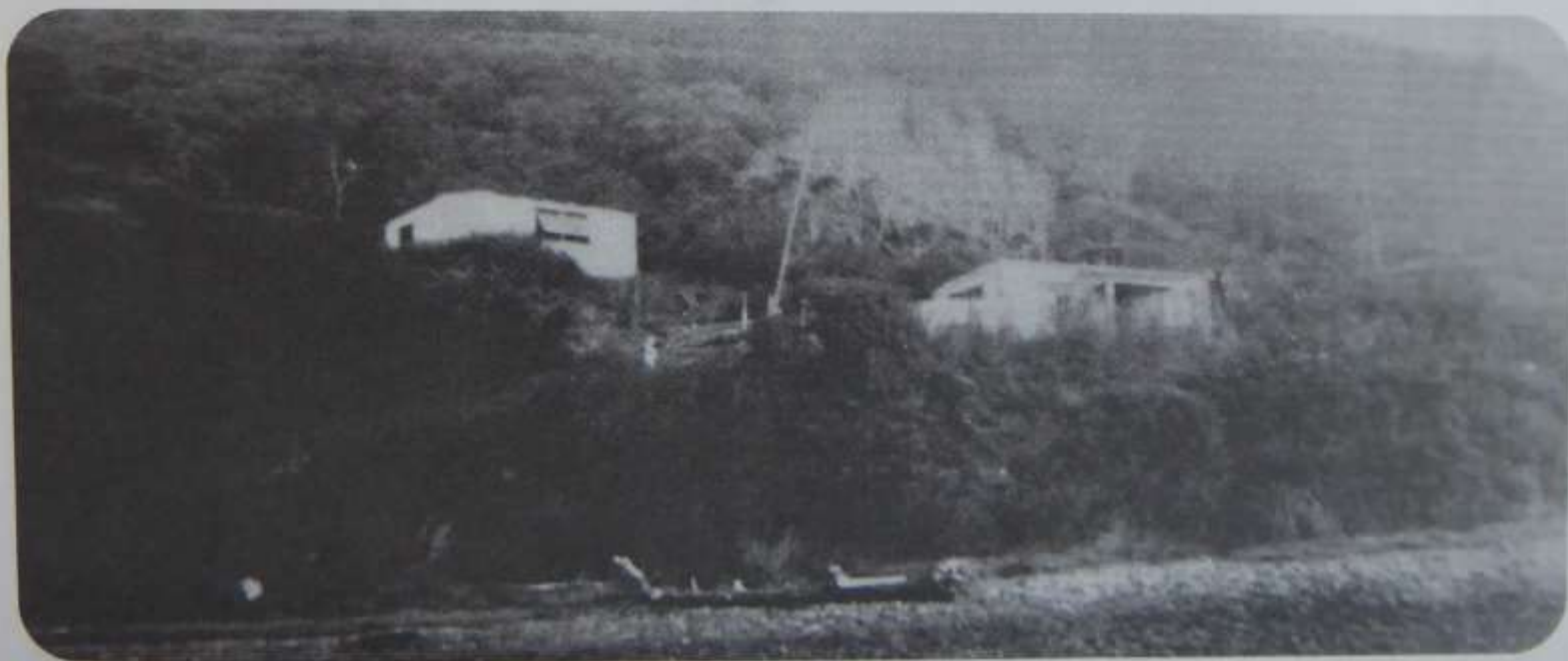






HOUSES AND FAMILIES ABOUT 1920

On approaching The Huia Bay from the direction of Titirangi, the first occupied dwellings were two shacks cosily situated on a sheltered site just above the rocky shoreline and below the present Huia Point lookout. Access was by track from the first corner on the main road, winding down through titree scrub and past a nearby spring, or around the beach when the tide was low enough. This was the home of a colourful character blessed with the illustrious name of Cornelius Batholomew Bryan, or Young Con as he was commonly called as distinct from his father of the same name. Con's stocky white-haired figure clad in bushman's flannel singlet and sandshoes was regularly seen making his way to the old store for pension and provisions. Following incidents described elsewhere, the old shacks, on harbour land, remained deserted except for the occasional illegal campers, gradually fell into decay and now lie buried under the encroaching bush.



"Con Bryans" On Huia Point below the lookout.



Away around the eastern shore of Huia Bay, just above a stony beach on a sheltered shelf of land, now covered in bush and rubble, are the remains of two shacks slowly decaying in the undergrowth. These were the home of Cornelius Bartholemew Bryan and sometimes other occupants. They were also the scene of two violent deaths. First Jane Coster, then Daisy, both lady companions of Con's. Both were also victims of his drinking excesses. Con was a colourful character of Huia, his family can claim to be one of Huia's pioneers. They owned and farmed what is now Foster Bay from the 1800s and the old home is still there. His father, Con Senior, was a noted bushman, having built a number of driving dams in the Big Huia Valley. In later years however, "young" Con drifted into a life of dissolution sadly leading to the tragic deaths mentioned, and he spent his last days in poor health in prison confinement.

Old Bill Coster, who was killed by the store was another victim of misadventure some years ago.



BRYAN, CORNELIUS BARTHOLOMEW.

P.G. 19/483.

F.P. Class $\frac{17}{1}$ $\frac{0}{OI}$ 10.



BRAYAN, CORNELIUS BARTHOLOMEW.
P.O. 19493. F.P. Class $\frac{11}{7} \frac{8}{10}$ 10.

BRAYANT, HELEN.
P.O. 19491. F.P. Class $\frac{1}{10} \frac{10}{10}$ 2.



CHADWICK, WILLIAM JOHN, alias FIELD, JOHN,
alias CHADWICK, JOHN WILLIAM.
P.O. 19496. F.P. Class $\frac{10}{14} \frac{10}{10}$ 8.

CONWELL, FLORENCE MARY, alias HUNTER, alias
HILL, ETC.
P.O. 19444. F.P. Class $\frac{1}{11} \frac{11}{11}$ 2.



CONNIS, JAMES, alias WHESTER, WILLIAM JAMES,
alias ATKINSON, ETC.
P.O. 19498. F.P. Class $\frac{8}{17} \frac{10}{10}$ 8.

DEWAR, ERNEST THOMAS.
P.O. 19400. F.P. Class $\frac{17}{17} \frac{10}{10}$ 18.



GREVITHS, GRACE PRETORIA.
P.O. 19431. F.P. Class $\frac{1}{11} \frac{10}{11}$ 10.

HUXY, WILLIAM.
P.O. 19428. F.P. Class $\frac{8}{17} \frac{10}{10}$ 18.





Jane Costar
D 25 April 1936
B Waikumete Cemetery
Presby Div E Row 17 Plot 33





...the wreckage they salvaged a bundle of rags to tie around Mr Rose's feet, because he had left his gumboots in the launch. Soon after the trio reached Whatipu Lodge they were picked up by a search party and taken back to Huia.

Throughout yesterday the search for Mr Osborne and the dinghy went on. Police from Henderson organised parties of local residents soon after dawn. Several miles of the coast near the heads were searched without success.

RETIREB BUSHMAN REMANDED ON MURDER CHARGE

Charged with the murder of Mrs Martha Constance Daisy King, aged 66 about January 10, Cornelius Bartholomew Bryan, aged 68, a retired bushman, appeared before Mr M. C. Astley S.M., in the Auckland Magistrate's Court yesterday morning. Mr G. Skelton appeared for accused.

Mrs King was found seriously injured in an isolated cottage at Huia on Saturday morning and died in the Auckland Hospital the same afternoon.

Bryan, a cripple, had to be helped into the dock by two constables. On the application of Detective-Sergeant B. G. Goldfinch, accused was remanded until next Monday.

The inquest on Mrs King was opened before the coroner, Mr A. Addison, at the Cornwall Hospital mortuary yesterday morning. A sister of accused, Mrs Catherine Oliver, a widow and apartment-house keeper, of 99 Grev Avenue, gave evidence of identification and said she had known deceased for about 12 years.

"During most of that time she was housekeeping for my brother at Huia," said Mrs Oliver. "I believe she was a widow and that she had no relatives in New Zealand."

Senior-Detective J. B. Finlay said he did not propose to call further evidence at this stage and the coroner adjourned the inquest sine die.

ALLEGED MURDER AT HUIA

A woman found injured in a house at Huia died in Auckland this afternoon. An elderly man who lived in the same house has been charged with murder.

The woman was

Mrs Martha Constance Daisy King,
aged 66.

A police party left the city at 9.30 to investigate a report that a woman was seriously injured at Huia.

An ambulance left Auckland later in the morning. It returned at 1.20 p.m. and Mrs King was admitted to the hospital. She was unconscious and had severe head injuries.

The police party consisted of Senior Detective J. B. Finlay, Detective-Sergeant B. G. Goldfinch, Dr F. J. Cairns, pathologist, and a photographer.

Mrs King was taken from a remotely-situated four-roomed house some distance from the Huia beach. She was carried in a stretcher some 400 yards from the house to the nearest road.

Senior Detective J. B. Finlay this afternoon took into custody Cornelius Bartholomew Bryan (68), a retired bushman, charging him with the murder of Mrs King.

The accused will appear on the charge in the Police Court on Monday.



TRAGEDY: It was in this hut that detectives found Mrs. Martha Constance Daisy King suffering from severe chest and head injuries in the room on the extreme left on Saturday of last week.

SDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1953 13

AGED CRIPPLE FACES MURDER CHARGE

Incidents in Bach At Huia

Assisted by two constables who carried him up a flight of stairs, a 69-year-old cripple, Cornelius Bartholomew Bryan, appeared in the Auckland Magistrate's Court before Mr M. C. Astley, S.M., yesterday to face a charge of murdering Martha Constance Daisy King, aged 66, at Huia on January 10, and was committed to the Supreme Court for trial.

Eight witnesses for the prosecution told how Mrs King had been found unconscious in the house she had occupied with accused for 16 years and died later from multiple injuries. The prosecution was conducted by Sir Vincent Meredith and Mr George Skelton appeared for the accused.

Hoori Tarawa Simons, a war pensioner who lived in a bach about 45 to 50 feet away from accused's house, said the day before Mrs King's death accused had gone to witness' bach about 8 a.m. and asked if he had any "home brew" left. Witness went down to the store and bought two bottles of brandy and six bottles of beer. It was after 10 a.m. when he arrived back and from then until about 1 p.m., witness, accused and deceased sat in accused's home and drank. During the remainder of the afternoon witness was visiting friends, but he returned to accused's home about 5 p.m. He took three bottles of beer from his own bach across to Bryan's home.

"Drank All My Brandy"

Witness knocked on the back door of accused's home and called out. He was greeted by accused who said: "Come and have a look at this." Witness entered the house and saw Mrs King lying on the bedroom floor between the two beds. She was "paralytic drunk" and half naked. Accused turned to witness and said: "The old drunk all my brandy while I was asleep."

A few minutes later while witness had his back turned he heard a bump. Looking round he saw accused lift deceased by her upper arms and bang her head on the ground. Witness told him to stop it and "come and have a drink."

It was later that night when witness had returned to his own bach that he heard two bumps in accused's home. He walked outside and heard Bryan say: "I'll teach you to drink my brandy." Witness heard his own name mentioned and there were more bumps. He heard accused say in a coaxing voice: "Come on, Daisy, get up off the floor and get into bed." Later that night witness heard other noises which could have been made by accused walking around the house with the aid of his two walking sticks.

Statement By Accused

Shortly after 8 a.m. the following day accused arrived across at witness house and told him that Daisy had been knocked about by two women. Accused's singlet and dungarees were covered with blood. His hands were also stained. Accused stated that he had heard one of the women say: "We have been after you for a long time and now we have got you."

Senior-Detective J. B. Finlay said that when he arrived with the police party accused said: "Now we will be able to do something for Daisy. There has been some dirty work here."

In a statement which witness produced, accused stated that he and deceased had gone to bed about 8 p.m. About midnight he awoke. He heard a woman's voice out by the front door and went into the living room. There accused said he found Mrs King lying on the floor by the bedroom door. He heard a woman's voice outside saying: "We have been after you for years and now we've got you."

Bryan said he did not look out to see who the women were. It was dark at the time and he could only see two figures. Accused added that he got the

blood on him when he held on to Mrs King trying to give her a drink of brandy. He heard no commotion during the night.

Dr F. J. Cairns, pathologist at the Auckland Hospital, who went to Huia with the police party, said he found deceased unconscious. Later that day she died. Death was due to shock and multiple injuries.

Huia Case to End Today

ALLEGED MURDER BY CRIPPLE

The trial of Cornelius Bartholomew Bryan, a 69-year-old cripple, on a charge of murdering Martha Constance Daisy King, aged 66, in his cottage at Huia on or about January 10, 1953, will end in the Supreme Court at Auckland today. The case, which is being heard before Mr Justice Stanton and a jury, has continued for three days.

Mr G. S. R. Meredith, who is conducting the prosecution, and counsel for the defence, Mr G. Skelton, made their final addresses to the jury yesterday afternoon. His Honor will sum up this morning and the jury will then retire.

Mr G. D. Speight is appearing with Mr Meredith and Mr C. B. Mead with Mr Skelton.

The last witness for the prosecution, Dr F. J. Cairns, pathologist, said that in his opinion death was due to shock as a result of multiple injuries. A blood analysis indicated that at the time of the alleged assault Daisy King was considerably under the influence of alcohol. Six ribs on each side of her body had been broken and she had apparently received a blow on the eye.

"Impossible Not to Know"

Cross-examined by Mr Skelton, the witness said that he had examined accused on January 10 and could find no evidence on his hands or knuckles of recent abrasions.



Martha Constance Daisy King
D 10 January 1953
B Waikumete Cemetery
Nonconform Div C Row 29 Plot 9