

Great Barrier Island, September 1862



George Frederic Allen wrote the following caption on the back of this painting - which measures around 20 cm x 13 cm:

"Captn. Young and I boarded at the cottage of an old Swedish sailor named Robinson, during the first 3 months we were at the Great Barrier Island in 1860. He was a ship's carpenter till about 50, when he married a London woman of about 40, who was an excellent cook and housekeeper. When we got our first cottages built, Mrs Robinson used to do our washing and bread baking.

This view is sketched from the track leading from Robinson's Cottage, at the head of Kai-arara Bay at Port Fitzroy, Great Barrier Island, to Kiwi-riki Bay.

The highest hill is Hirakimata (2,330 ft.), called on the Admiralty Chart, Mount Hobson, and the sharp peak on the right is Steeple-peak, and the hill with the flat top Tower-peak. In the middle distance, to the right of Tower-peak is double peaked Mount Young, so called after my partner, Mr John Young.

Immediately under Hirakimata is Allen's Peak. The climb to this is difficult and somewhat dangerous. I was glad when I had got down from it. I afterwards climbed Hirakimata, the ascent of which was not dangerous, but very difficult on account of the countless trees and shrubs blown down by the wind. I got to the top at sunset, and made a fire and slept there. - Nothing to eat since breakfast. In the morning there was a magnificent view in all directions. I had a telescope, and could make out the Windmill at Auckland, St. Paul's Church, and (of course) Mount Eden. I got down to where I had left my lunch at 11:00 a.m., and to the Bay by 2:00 p.m. rather hungry. I was accompanied by my faithful Newfoundland, Flora.

The surface of the foreground and middle-distance is stunted bracken (arahue) which to the left has numerous isolated rewarewa trees. The dark 'blobs' in the forest below Allen's Peak are kauri trees many of the 4 and 5 feet in diameter. The green flat below Mt. Young is a raupo swamp."

(Signed:) "Geo. Fred. Allen, Sept. 1862."