



Interview with Cyril Fairfax Maude 6 August 1985

This interview I believe, was undertaken by volunteers at the North Otago Museum. No more details are available. Much of the original transcription was misspelt, or even wrong. I have tried to reflect the correct and original intention of what was being said. Where there is an odd word that I cannot decipher, I have followed it by questions marks (??). GB.

You can read the [original transcription here](#) .

Transcription

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Miles more character than the modern car with a brass radiator, little boys being observant, he had big feet which stuck out sideways, he asked a family gathering why the little boys made fun of him, calling out Charlie Chaplin. There was an embarrassed silence and my father said because of your big feet. Fenwicks all had big feet and asthma which has come down through the family, as one of my sister said "The Fenwicks left us all of their faults but none of their money. Absolutely true", (left out about Evan Blair, the antique dealer).

Tell us about your family?

We lived at 35 Brent St, John Fraser, Madame Fraser, opera singer

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruth_Vincent). He had two sisters, Victorian attitudes. I arrived home and saw the bassinette and that was the first intimation I had that there was going to be an addition to the family.

We came from a place called Elvington in York which is the same as the house here at the end of Maudes Road. My great grandfather was Anglican vicar at Elvington He must have been quite a clever man because he got his M A at Oxford and was reading law, but he had a breakdown in health.

In 1866 my grandfather came out to Oamaru. His cousin was Roxby of Traill?? and Roxby.

Can you explain the Relationship?

You see that woman up there (picture above fireplace) she was a Miss Roxby. She married Thomas Maude (1770-1831). They had 2 sons Henry Roxby Maude and my great-grandfather Thomas Maude.

Henry Roxby Maude inherited the estate (Elvington) so he took the name. So when he came out to Oamaru he farmed for a bit.

What sort of farming?

He grew a crop which came to nothing. We still had droughts in those days. He had some experience in farming he managed church farms around Elvington, then started a commission agency, real estate, in Crombies building. Used to be Lanes he did very well at that. But in the late 1880's or early 1890's series of slumps, lost all his money, couldn't get his money back so he lost his fortune. I was haunted by spectre of grandfather when he returned in 1966. Hope he didn't go the way his grandfather did.

Well after his business failed he was Assisstant Manager of NZ Loan and Mercantile , had breaking of leg had accunlated

Well, my grandfather had written a book on the Tarriff Question called " [Chamberlain Appeals Unto Caesar](#) ".

My father took it round selling it. I guarantee my old man never read it. He seemed to manage to keep himself going with that but eventually he came back to Oamaru.

He went to Australia after the South Africa (Second Boer) War (11 October 1899 until 31 May 1902), he came back and eventually got a job selling insurance for the AMP. He was a quite a successful insurance agent, but he lost all his money on the share market with a foolish investment. He never got past primary school because when grandad lost his money, he couldn't afford to send him to Waitaki.

And was your father the youngest?

No Percy and Visie who died in her 100th years in Havelock North. We didn't get on.

After your father lost his money?

It was only his accumulated capital he lost, he could still get by alright. My mother, her father was the Rev Jamieson, Anglican curate, graduated MA from Berlin University. He never did very well because the poor old boy had a slight drinking problem. My mother looked after him pretty well but he always lived with us. Very interesting old chap because of his educational background. He liked painting and admired [John Ruskin](#) (Art Critic of the Victorian era). He based his sermons on that. Well, he had the interests you'd expect a man who'd taken a degree on the contact?? to have.

One thing that intrigued me was this magazine ' [The Wide World](#) ' which came out once a month he used to read till late in the night to relax his brain a bit. Of course being brought up with horses he could never understand cars. According to my mother the only way he knew he had a puncture was when the tyre came off the wheel and bowled along in front of him. He had no mechanical idea actually he was always having altercations. He finished his days in Oamaru, but before that he was a Vicar Waikouate ?? for a few years in the twenties. We used to go and stay at the old vicarage which has since been demolished. Pubeterahi?? was in the parish, with the Maoris the story about the accident.

I went to junior High School just one or two years after it started in and to secondary subjects like French and Maths. It was alright for the brighter days.

When did this start?

Oh, about 1925, or 1926. I can remember seeing the old craftsmen carving the human figures for the hall of memories. It was just in the course of being erected. We used to go out in our lunch hours and watch these old fellows carve the faces and flowers and that of course the impact Milner on a small town was enormous. ([Frank Milner](#) was the Rector at Waitaki Boys High School)

He did give one the impression that you were honoured to attend the school but the impression was so great that when I went to Invercargill people thought I had gone to a private school. One of the masters at Waitaki told me that they had great difficulty getting grants from the Ministry of Education because the people thought Waitaki was a private school, so that even in those exalted circles, Waitaki was seen as a private school. The nearest it came was that the boarding school was run by Milner. He capped the fees and organised the mals?? and all of course. Milner went for masters with good degrees but they were not necessarily the best teachers or good disciplinarians. There was a master named "Eggs" Hall, he really could contact boys, and it with him I did well at maths, there was never excessive caning. The prefects had the right to cane.

It was quite a stimulating school in this respect, that he (Milner) was before his time in realising that education was not just for passing exams but for life once you left school, so the walls were adorned with old master prints and of course we had art lessons once a week and musical appreciation once a week.

Geordie Williamson, our music master, used to play classical records to us and explain them, I found later on in life when I had the chance of attending concerts, the seed shown began to flower.

Janes Bertram writing about Waitaki, they attempted to create a rugby ball out of local, rather intractable material. Milner was very strong on international affairs and especially imperial affairs, he must be turning in his grave now with what's happened to the British Empire.

Returned to Oamaru in 1966, shortly after [Michael Trotter](#) ([Maori rock art](#) - Michael Trotter and Beverley McCulloch's 36-year-old Prehistoric Rock Art in New Zealand) , a group of us went on an outing with him a group called the North Otago Scientific and Historical Society. I found the title slightly embarrassing, at any rate that's the title. We did a bit of excavation under supervision and at the end of the outing he suggested that our society adopt as a project the searching and recording of the Maori rock drawings. There were about sixty sites that they knew about they suspected there would be a lot more. So we got stuck in. The winter was a good time to go, no thistle or long grass. He suggested an area south of Ngapara. It was quite astonishing the success we used to go out in group of four and go up a limestone valley like musters on the beat, and I say it was quite astonishing every time we went up we found something there.

What were the signs that where the sites were?

I can't case??, a rock overhangs facing north-west and near water. There are exceptions to that rule, but in general that was the indication.

Why east?

It was for draining. At that stage North Otago was bush covered 500 years ago or more and they (the Maori) roamed the country in family groups, camping in the limestone shelters baiting originally for the moa and then bird life??, staying over in these limestone shelters. I don't know how long they drew with charcoal from the fires. Considering the passage of time it is quite surprising how permanent this charcoal has proved to be. (the red ochre is called haemite)

What's the red?

That's, what do they call it, haemite a red ochre, a sort of rock that they used to carry around with them and I think those ones up at Takaroa?? were done with the local red ochre stone and fish oil, but the charcoal was usually just put on dry. There has been grave deterioration we were really doing a major salvage job because with increased stocking and top-dressing the rate of deterioration has accelerated considerably in the last few years. But we traced over them with clear polythene and china-black pencils.

Deterioration you mean deterioration of the limestone?

No, really, deterioration of the rock drawings. They've got less clear as time goes on, then we'd make out a site report, map locations, property owner, how you got. Purpose was that if you were looking for that site fifty years hence then with the aid of the map reference and our description of the prominent landmarks, they could get to it and where the drawings were suitable we also took photographs. It was great, most enjoyable.

What were the drawings about?

There is a lot of controversy about this, some said they had some religious significance, others think as I do, they draw to while away the time. They vary in the degree of excellence but the best of them are quite fantastic.

He started off with 60 known sites, we have more than doubled that. I was living on the premises at the bank, no garden, gave us something to do on the weekends with a purpose.

We sent all our reports to the Canterbury Museum where they were given official numbers. Now archeological sites, the records are kept in Dunedin.

Joined the Union Bank in August 1930. The depression was looming up.

How were jobs advertised?

Actually I got an approach from the Manager of the Union Bank under the erroneous impression that I'd be a good banker. Mr Foulinson was the name of the manager of the Bank. Had to fight with his parents to take the job, They wanted me to stay at school. I didn't like the restraints of school. I seemed to think that life would be much freer away from school. I seemed to think that life out of school would be like a glorified musical comedy, but I was soon disillusioned with cigarettes.

Would you describe the bank for us?

Well, we had these big wooden partitions. The idea was to intimidate, to create the impression that the bank was a dignified and important place the bank was, but you know it wasn't so bad. There were more outside for instance you'd go around and collect the notes and take them to their banks two or three times a day. It was different then, each bank issued its own notes, not like the reserve banks today. One of my jobs was to deliver the notes, cheque and draughts.

Quite a bit of variety. Tragic thing was that he remained junior until his transfer to Dunedin in 1937 because of the depression or because of their experience with me, they didn't take on any other junior.

When did the union bank close down?

They amalgamated to form the ANZ. That had the effect, in any case, can block your promotion. They closed, one for reasons of economy, but also have the misfortune to strike some one from the opposition bank who doesn't know you, never heard of you, and tends to promote the people he knows well. This is not confined to banking, it happens everywhere. Army, Navy, Airforce "The old boy network". But the bank in the main is a pretty good employer so, that's what you did.

Of course this was terrible days of the slump. There was a firm called C. Hedges Ltd. He used to buy wool around North Otago and scour it, which is washing it and at one stage the old Union Bank was one of the biggest exporters of wool in Australia or New Zealand. We used to do this for old Charlie Hedges and I showed his son, where more than once, he'd bought the wool here, gone to the expense of scouring it, gone to the expense of shipping it over to London and they'd send a polite note back. But Charlie Hedges had a characteristic of many successful men. He took knock after knock and would survive them and come back again so that eventually things came right again. They took over MacDonalds Lane, the Limeworks out at Ngapara, he did well at that.

Can you remember going off the gold standard?

I joined the bank in August 1930, it all seemed far away in little old Oamaru. So in 1937. I was transferred, that was as good as a promotion. I went to Dunedin the bank opposite Waiu's Hotel, the beautiful one with the columns. Incidentally, I could claim to be a pioneer in trying to whip up interest in the red building of Oamaru. I lived in Oamaru until I was twenty-three and never gave a second look, nor did I give a second look at the bank building in Dunedin, which is a Lawson, the architect. I was typical of many people it took the passage of years to realise what a legacy we did have.

Sept 39. I was in Dunedin in December 1939. I transferred to Auckland, but in June 1940 I joined, but I asked to go in to Burnham because I had spent all my time here, and so I was supposed to report to Burnham 1st April 1940. April Fools day.

I reported a day late, to go down a group instead of an my own. I found afterwards that I was supposed to go to N.C.O. school. They used to issue you with denims, which were very basic army working clothes, more like person garb ?? Well the chap in the quartermasters store who issued me with denims couldn't have been very efficient because they would have been too big for Colin Meads (big rugby player). So I had to roll the sleeves up about five times, I felt such a fool and I looked such a scarecrow, and by this time they finally caught up with me and I was transferred to NCO school.

Well Colonel Satterwaite came down to inspect us. We lined up in our denims and he stopped opposite me and said "Where did you get those denims, soldier?" Well what a stupid question. I didn't have a tailor, that was obvious. He said I don't think you're meant to be here and he picked on three or four more fortunates or unfortunates. With our tails between our legs, now what transpired was, that, had I persevered with NCO school I would have been a Lance Corporal at least in the 26th Battalion and might have got killed or badly wounded,because they left in the third eschelon.

Because I was marched back to camp I went away with the 2nd eschelon and as bonus we got six months in England before we went to the Middle East. I got through without being wounded and obviously not killed. The only thing that happened to me was that I was a P.O.W for five or six weeks, so if it hadn't been for denims what might have happened. How your fate depends on a council mess-up!

Patriotism?

Oh yes, patriotism did play a part in it, because my father and grandfather had been extremely patriotic people, but there was also boredom with the job and the work I had at that particular time was very repetitive, and then a certain amount of peer pressure.

But it was a quite extra-ordinary thing in New Zealand. Like the intense patriotism following WWI with our horrible casualties. We arrived in the Clyde, June 1941. They called us colonial tourists when we got there but it was during the Battle of Britain, which was largely fought in the skies over where we were camped. We used to hide out in the fields and watch these air battles going on. We even had cartridge cases falling down on us. We were generally billeted out in

the country. When we first arrived there was a camp there at Mitcham, not far from London, and then another camp, but then we went down to Kent. We went round the South of England in civilian buses. While we were down there we were camped in an old Coast house. Then finally we went into winter quarters we were billeted in a house belonging to a Major Churchill. It was on the London Pentonville Road. We were pretty comfortable.

And then we finally sailed for the Middle East from Newport in Wales in early January 1942. I remember the ivies hanging from the houses we went round the Cape to Egypt.

Did have plenty of equipment?

Getting ammunition and rifles was more difficult in Britain where everything had been lost at Dunkirk. We arrived just about a week after Dunkirk. No problem in Egypt. We arrived 2 or 3 weeks before the Greek campaign in March 1941.

So the Germans were still advancing down the Greek Peninsula?

They were just coming through the Balkans.

We were taken in cattle trucks, quite a long trip to Cairo. I had dysentery, very, very bad.

Question. How was dysentery stopped?

Don't know but a friend and I didn't get dysentery and we drank wine. But we'd come to an Arab village and the whole village would watch these guys, no wonder there's no respect for us. The South Africans finally took Badir accompanied by some of our own divines?? cavalry in Bren carriers including a chap Bessel who was in the DW Cavalry.

The Germans were more genial than the Afrikaners. We could talk quite easily to a group of the English speaking Germans. I went across to a lunch of these Afrikaners, all I got was Ya, ya ya, and they started talking Afrikaans. Well we were taken by trucks to the railhead. This was the main supply dump for the 8th army. We went there and there were acres and acres of every material thing a man could want, went almost as far as the eye could see. I couldn't help thinking to myself, couldn't find the money to feed the Welsh coal miner, but in the middle of desert there was everything, anything a man could want. It made you a bit antisocial for a while.

I've got a photo here, chaps were happy not to shave for five weeks. Group in Crete, group in Milidii?? in Egypt. That's the camp we were at, great leave, houseboat on the Nile, spent the rest of June there. Health, no good, so stayed at base until sent back on furlough.

If our army pay lower than bank pay then the bank made it up. I went to Hamilton, worked two months. I took odd jobs until my health picked up then. In those days you were transferred, but in this case I did ask to go back to Christchurch. In our case it worked out very well for the education of the children.

When did you marry?

In 1952, what happened was I was sent down to Dunedin to replace the accountant who was ill,

and I met my wife whose first husband had died. We stayed in Christchurch. I was transferred to Invercargill till 1957. Never had to use the hose once in Invercargill I really liked it. Then I was manager at Balclutha and then I came here (Oamaru) and finished off here. It was a good ending wasn't it, after not liking it as a Junior. Yes, not many people who lead the normal nomadic life of a banker and finished up in the branch the started in.

What charges have you seen?

Well, the computers have taken over, a lot of the work was extremely repetitive and boring and its an ill wind that blows nobody good. It's taken away all that monotony, better educated, as far as we were concerned, we got the better girls from the commercial stream, even the boys were great, miles better than we were. I welcomed the introduction of decimal currency which gave them a challenge. In Australia who had decimal currency before us, they had all sorts of problems. Their tellers ended up being thousands of dollars out, in their dealings from sheer exhaustion. Our kids coped. Similarly, when it came to going on to computers. I was glad, again it was a challenge to them but it was a fantastic change.

I couldn't add when I went into the bank, but you soon learnt, no option. To do a thing you'll do it. The old manager insisted on all juniors learning shorthand and typing. Things were slower in those days, the manager had to sign various things before we could go. The sun would come into his room and he'd go to sleep. So we'd come and drop a heavy ledger from a great height. There'd be a scuffling then he come out and sign whatever we wanted.

I retired in 1972. I retired about 16 months before my 60th birthday because it won't make any difference to my pension. I would still get the same penssion as if I stayed on.

Have you any funny incidents? You can recall?

As you entered the bank there were many wooden partitions. I was in the first partition, then there was the tellers box and behind that the manager room and the managers residence. Its much easier to transfer if you can supply them with a house so the general rule in those days was to have a residence attached to the office. Oamaru was one of the last where the manager lived in the bank premises. They kept us in it because we quite liked it. We bought a house but we stayed there.