

## 6.7 ROBERT GILMER NELSON

Robert had been working at Reefton since Gilmer Brothers purchased Dawson's Hotel in June 1877. This means that he left Charleston at least nine months before the hotel there was transferred to Owen McArdle. In September 1877, in the Court case at Reefton in which Harry Smith had been charged with stealing 100 Pounds from the hotel, the evidence showed Robert had just left for Greymouth and Sam was now managing the hotel. Robert was therefore available to work at any of the hotels at Greymouth, Cobden and Ahaura before he went to Wellington in about March 1878 when the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel had been purchased.

### Masonic Hotel Nelson

In May 1878 Gilmer Brothers took over the lease of the Masonic Hotel on the corner of Trafalgar and Hardy Streets, Nelson. The Lease agreement was in the name of Hamilton Gilmer, hotelkeeper of Greymouth, Samuel Gilmer, hotelkeeper of Reefton and Robert Gilmer hotelkeeper of Wellington.<sup>1</sup> The hotel was a Gilmer Brothers business venture and was recorded as such at the Christchurch Land Information Office. The annual lease was 250 Pounds.

The Masonic was an old Nelson hotel. It was originally a timber building in common with most in the 1850's. On 7 November 1867 a fire broke out in one of the bedrooms on the upper floor and burnt the hotel down. It also spread to a ten other buildings which were burnt out. The losses were large and estimated at about 30,000 Pounds<sup>2</sup>. The owner Thomas Field, a brewer, had insured the building for 900 Pounds and the licensee Joseph Trimble the furniture and stock for 750 Pounds. Trimble had been at the hotel since 1865.

An inquest into the fire found that the fire was willfully lit "*and that very grave suspicions attach to Mary Wilson, in charge of the house at the time, as the incendiary.*"<sup>3</sup> Later Mary Wilson and Henry William Maguire were brought before the Magistrates Court where a series of witnesses were heard. The Magistrate concluded there was insufficient evidence to bring them to trial and they were discharged.<sup>4</sup>

The licensee, Joseph Trimble, brought a Supreme Court action against the insurer, New Zealand Insurance Company, who had refused to pay on the insurance policy. He sued for 649 Pounds. The outcome was an order for New Zealand Insurance to pay him 435 Pounds. The main reasons for the reduced amount were evidence about the age and condition of furniture and also the valuation of stock.<sup>5</sup>

The hotel was rebuilt using stone quarried from Dun Mountain near Nelson. The hotel opened in November 1868 and about a week later it was announced that E. Everett was the new licensee. He had previously been the licensee of the Bank Hotel which was also burnt in the 1867 fire. The newspapers carried a detailed description of the hotel which would also have described the hotel taken over by Gilmer Brothers in 1878.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Hotel That Sam Built John Hewstone, Ian Cameron. Peter Sydor

<sup>2</sup> Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle 9 November 1867

<sup>3</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 15 November 1867

<sup>4</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 26 November 1867

<sup>5</sup> Nelson Examiner & New Zealand Chronicle 6 August 1868

<sup>6</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 20 November 1868

One of the most prominent, if it be not the most ornamental, the new buildings in Trafalgar-street which have arisen, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the various houses destroyed by the last great fire, is the new hotel just completed for Mr T. Field at the corner of Trafalgar and Hardy-streets, on the site of the Masonic Hotel, where the fire originated. This building is of solid brick, and presents a frontage to Hardy-street of about 74 feet, and of 49 feet to Trafalgar-street, with an elevation from the causeway of 32 feet. Although the want of proper elevation in the building imparts to it a heavy appearance, which is extremely detrimental to the general effect, and which is rendered all the more obvious from the superior elevation of the buildings in immediate contiguity with it, the hotel merits commendation as having been very substantially built, and for the convenient and appropriate nature of its interior arrangements. The ground floor contains eight apartments, including two dining rooms,

one 25 by 14, and the other 23 by 13-6in. and two bars, one of which, facing Trafalgar-street, measures 23 by 16, with kitchen and offices at the back. The upper story has 24 bed chambers, averaging 10 to 8 each, some being larger, and a billiard room, 25 by 19ft 3in, to which access is obtained by two staircases. The height of the ceilings is, on the ground floor 11ft 6in, and on the upper floor, 10ft, with a cellarage corresponding with the entire area of the building, of sufficient height. The plans were, we understand, drawn and designed by Mr J. Scott, but the works have been carried out under the inspection of Mr Scotland, architect, of Hardy-street. Mr Clinch had the contract for the carpenters' work, and Messrs Blick and Tudehope, for the masonry, and in both instances the work has been performed conscientiously and effectively. The painting and plumbing devolved on Mr Cooke, and is also entitled to equally favorable notice, the plastering and painting being done by Mr Percival, and the slating by Mr Dement.

## Part 1

## Part 2

## Nelson Evening Mail 20 November 1868

Robert Gilmer applied for and was granted the transfer of the license from Thomas Cother at the June 1878 Meeting of the Licensing Committee.<sup>7</sup> The Chairman of the committee stated that *"there were no hotelkeepers in New Zealand who had a higher reputation than Gilmer Brothers."*

The Greymouth newspaper further commented that *"this was a remark at which some of the Nelson 1878 hotelkeepers chose to take umbrage as reflecting on their own qualifications. There is no doubt, however, that the travelling public will not be slow to appreciate the introduction of the West Coast system of hotelkeeping at Nelson, where if travellers' tales are true hotel accommodation suffers by comparison."*<sup>8</sup>

When John Hamilton's daughter Dorothea arrived in New Zealand in October 1878, Robert and her father sent her money to come to them. In her letters to Ireland she said the hotel in Nelson was her father's. She was not aware of the Gilmer Brothers partnership which was in place. However, the other important detail is that John was living at the hotel with Robert and this was almost 12 months after the hotel had been acquired. It seems that the senior members of the partnership (John, Sam & Hamilton) had reservations about Robert even though he had been trusted with the running of the Melbourne Hotel at Charleston for quite a number of years.

<sup>7</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 4 June 1878

<sup>8</sup> Grey River Argus 19 June 1878

The Masonic Hotel was a meeting place for a number of different sporting clubs. In June 1878 there were meetings of the Nelson Football Club and also the Tradesman's Athletic Club. In July a football team from Wellington stayed there. In September there was a meeting at the Masonic to form a cricket club for the town.

The Nelson Football Club had all its regular meetings there and others clubs included the Nelson Rowing Club, the Cricket Club, The New Zealand Rifle Association, the Jockey Club and the Racing Committee. The Hotel was also the address for sending entries nominations acceptances and other correspondence for the forthcoming races. While sporting clubs were predominant the Nelson Horticultural Society also used the Masonic as a meeting venue. It was also used for company shareholder meetings.

Robert fitted in well at Nelson and he received some recognition for his willingness to help his neighbours. An advertisement was placed by a J. Larking thanking people for helping to save his property from fire "*and especially the proprietor of the Masonic Hotel for his kindness to my wife and family.*"<sup>9</sup>

Robert did not advertise the hotel as was the case at other places especially Greymouth. However, there were continuing advertisements mentioning the hotel as a booking office for coach lines. This included Newman's on the route to Lyell and Westport. In addition, throughout 1880 there were daily advertisements for the sale of sweep tickets on the February 1881 Wellington Cup.

The Gilmer Brothers business partnership was dissolved in February 1882. The newspaper carried a report which appears to be related: "*Mr. R Gilmer performed a feat the other day worth mentioning. Leaving Nelson in the morning on horseback and he arrived the next night at Westport thus travelling a distance of 160 miles in two days.*"<sup>10</sup> This looks to have been an urgent trip to get to Greymouth to sign the paper for the dissolution of the partnership. This was dated 4th February 1882 with the first newspaper advertisement appearing in Greymouth on 13 February 1882.

**N**OTICE is hereby given that the PARTNERSHIP hitherto existing between HAMILTON GILMER, SAMUEL GILMER, JOHN HAMILTON, JOHN GILMER, and ROBERT GILMER, carrying on the business of Hotel-keepers at Greymouth, Wellington, Cobden, Westport, Nelson, and elsewhere, under the style of "GILMER BROTHERS" has this day been DISSOLVED by mutual consent.

As witness our hands this Fourth day of February, 1882.

HAMILTON GILMER,  
SAMUEL GILMER,  
JOHN GILMER,  
ROBERT GILMER,  
JOHN HAMILTON.

Witness to the signatures of all parties,  
WILLIAM PERKINS,  
Solicitor, Greymouth.

612—26

**T**HE Business of the MASONIC HOTEL in Nelson, will, for the future, be conducted by, and in the name of the undersigned.

634 ROBERT GILMER.

Nelson Evening Mail 22 February 1882

<sup>9</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 3 September 1878

<sup>10</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 16 February 1882

The dissolution notice was published in the Nelson newspapers until the end of March. Robert's statement that he would continue at the Masonic did not mean that he now owned the hotel. In fact, all the indications are that Sam Gilmer continued to own the lease with Robert operating the hotel on his behalf. It would be of interest to know the terms of such an arrangement. This was confirmed by newspaper item in Wellington years later.<sup>11</sup>

Robert did not seek or achieve the public exposure through the newspapers that his brothers achieved. We believe Hamilton and Sam Gilmer actively provided the newspapers with stories and details of their activities which when published added to their public profile. However, this was not the case with either of their brothers, Robert or John.

Nevertheless, over the years at the Masonic Hotel events occurred which highlight interesting features of the hotel industry of those times and others were reported by the newspapers indicating activities undertaken by Robert. Some of these were:

- Robert was appointed as a member of The Reception Committee to organize the forthcoming visit by the Governor.<sup>12</sup>
- At a meeting of creditors of Abraham Palmer, Robert was recorded as being owed 50 Pounds and he was the largest unsecured creditor. Palmer was a Nelson Storekeeper who admitted to losing 5,000 to 6000 Pounds on mining speculations.<sup>13</sup>
- Robert was listed as a secured creditor of Moutray<sup>14</sup> and Crosbie. The debt was 25 Pounds and the value of the security was 64 Pounds.
- A couple of "*rather queer robberies*" occurred at the hotel's sample rooms. It was a Sunday night and in the first robbery the thief made such a noise breaking open the door that he was heard by a resident on the other side of the street who took no notice believing it was Mr. Gilmer leaving and shutting the door for the night. The items stolen would have been easily recognizable.

In the second robbery the thief "*was injudicious in the selection of goods which consisted of Masonic books and jewels which had recently arrived in a case from England.*" These would have been of limited value and again easily recognizable.<sup>15</sup>

- Robert was fined for allowing water to run to waste. He was fined 5 shillings and 1 Pound 8 shillings costs. Robert's solicitor objected making the case he was unaware of the waste that was going on and hence could not be guilty. This objection was overruled.<sup>16</sup> It seems that in those days the availability of water was limited and was more highly valued by the community than it is today.
- Robert was fined 10 shillings and costs in the Magistrate's Court for allowing a chimney to catch fire.<sup>17</sup> This charge reflects the desire to ensure that fires are avoided at a time when many structures were timber.

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<sup>11</sup> Evening Post 5 November 1900

<sup>12</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 10 October 1883

<sup>13</sup> Colonist 1 June 1886

<sup>14</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 21 March 1887

<sup>15</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 14 February 1884

<sup>16</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 1 April 1887

<sup>17</sup> Colonist 20 October 1893

In June 1886 additions were made to the hotel:

*“Extensive additions are being made to the Masonic Hotel are now near to completion. They consist of a billiard room, 20 ft x 26 ft, kitchen, pantry, offices on the ground floor and ten bedrooms and a bathroom in the upper storey. This will go far towards providing the additional accommodation which Mr. Gilmer so frequently finds that he requires, and will enable him now to provide sleeping accommodation for about forty lodgers. The late billiard room is converted into a dining room, for which purpose it is admirably suited. The new building which is of brick has been erected in a most substantial manner by Mr. Dear.”<sup>18</sup>*

This was followed shortly by the announcement that a billiard tournament was to take place at the Masonic Hotel.

The question arises as to who paid for the upgrading of the hotel. **It would not have been the building owner so it most likely that it would have been Sam Gilmer because Sam was in fact the actual holder of the lease and Robert was employed to run the hotel for him.**



**Masonic Hotel, Nelson (circa 1895)**

**Nelson Provincial Museum  
Tyree Studio: ½ 115266/3**

### **Robert's Bankruptcy**

Robert had the practice of issuing promissory note (IOU's) for payment to his suppliers. This gave them the opportunity of endorsing them to the payment of third parties (e.g. a bank) and obtaining immediate payment rather than waiting for payment on the date on the note. He did this for a number of years.

<sup>18</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 15 June 1886

However, in late 1889 a number of his notes were not honoured when the due date for payment arrived and the bank sued Robert for payment. The matter was settled by the issue of a number of other notes which were also subsequently dishonoured. He continued to issue notes during 1890 and these were also not paid on the due date. Robert was ultimately forced into bankruptcy and on 21 March 1891 Robert "*made a deed of composition with his creditors and paid about 3/6 in the Pound.*"<sup>19</sup>

His property was vested in his trustees Shield, Cook and Bethwaite and this included Gilmer's Farm and all of the land was advertised for sale "*By order of the mortgagees and under the conduct of the Registrar of the Supreme Court.*"

**By order of the Mortgagees, and  
under the conduct of the Registrar of  
the Supreme Court.**

**SHARP & SONS will Sell by  
Auction,**

**AT THEIR ROOMS, HARDY-ST.,  
On SATURDAY, the 9th May, 1891  
at Noon,**

**That Valuable BLOCK of LAND**  
having a large frontage to Vanguard  
Street and lately known as GILMER'S  
FARM, and being Sections 852, part  
of Sections 853, 854, 855, 856, and  
857, and parts of Sections marked 5  
and 8 Block E, containing altogether  
9 acres and 7 perches.

The Property will be offered in one lot,  
If a sale should not be effected in that way  
it will be put up in three lots. The part  
above the Railway is planted in fruit-trees  
and has a small house on it; the lower part  
is agricultural land, and the whole is suit-  
able for fruit growers and market gardeners  
who can now obtain a valuable property  
upon reasonable terms.

For further particulars apply to MESSRS  
FELL & ATKINSON, Solicitors, or to

**SHARP & SONS,  
Auctioneers.**

Nelson Evening Mail 7 May 1891

Robert had married Eleanor Esther Carter in September 1888 and their son Hugh Carter Gilmer was born later that year. Unfortunately, the marriage lasted only a little over four years and Eleanor died in child birth on 12 January 1892. Eleanor died "*at her residence in Hardy St.*"

**DEATHS.**  
GILMER.—January 12, at her residence,  
Hardy street, Eleanor, the beloved wife of  
Robert Gilmer,  
Died at Kumeu on the 5th instant

<sup>19</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 9 June 1891

### Nelson Evening Mail 13 January 1892

Eleanor's death occurred at a time when Robert was again under financial pressure. Only five weeks after her death, Robert was again under the control of Trustees in Bankruptcy and on 30 March a first dividend of 2 Shillings in the Pound was advertised.

**ESTATE OF ROBERT GILMER.**  
**C**REDITORS who have NOT PROVED are required to lodge SWORN CLAIMS with the undersigned by 28th February inst., to enable the First Dividend to be declared.  
**FELL & ATKINSON,**  
 Solicitors to Trustees.  
 519

Colonist 19 February 1892

**ESTATE OF ROBERT GILMER.**  
**C**REDITORS are hereby notified that a **FIRST DIVIDEND of TWO SHILLINGS** in the £ is NOW PAYABLE at our Offices, Hardy street.  
**FELL & ATKINSON,**  
 Solicitors to Trustees.  
 776

Colonist 30 March 1892

Later in the year we observed that H. Gilmer was a visitor at the hotel on 1 September 1892.<sup>20</sup> We believe this was Hamilton Gilmer. It does not seem at all a coincidence that soon afterwards a Final Dividend was being advertised.

**ESTATE OF ROBERT GILMER.**  
**A** FINAL DIVIDEND being about to be Distributed, the Trustees require that any CLAIMS not yet made shall be PROVED before 30th September instant, otherwise they will not be recognised.  
**FELL & ATKINSON,**  
 Solicitors to the Trustees.  
 2192

Colonist 21 September 1892

**Estate of Robert Gilmer.**  
**N**OTICE is hereby given that a **SECOND AND FINAL DIVIDEND** is NOW PAYABLE at our Offices.  
**FELL & ATKINSON,**  
 Solicitors to Trustees.  
 2279

Colonist 6 October 1892

What happened? What caused Robert's bankruptcy? Why was this profitable hotel unable to keep Robert solvent? It had been profitable for over 10 years sustaining his livelihood and his lifestyle. However, the hotel was the source of funds for all his activities and over this period he had made a number of investments. We cannot be conclusive about the full extent of these but we are aware of a number of them.

#### Robert's Investments

**9 July 1883** Robert sold an acre of land in Hardy Street between Mrs. Betts and Mr. Dements to one of our local manufacturers. The price was not disclosed but it was believed to be 1400 Pounds<sup>21</sup> although this appears to be far too high.

Land Information NZ records show that Robert obtained two properties in 1884. In September he obtained Allotment 23, Gibbstown, Collingwood and in October Allotments 9,

<sup>20</sup> Colonist 2 September 1892

<sup>21</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 9 July 1883

10, 11 & 12 also at Collingwood.<sup>22</sup> These lots were in very remote areas where the only activity was prospecting for minerals.

On 12 September 1884 Robert was involved at the District Court Reefton, Lankeys Creek Company and also the Ballarat Company, Lyell (in Liquidation). Robert had been a Director of the latter company. From the details in both cases Robert had forfeited his shares because of non-payment of calls. This might have been because he no longer saw value in their future prospects rather than because of a shortage of funds.

20 January 1887 Robert applied to the Land Board for a prospecting license in the Aorere District and his application was granted.

### **The Ngakawau Coal Leases**

In July 1888 John Gilmer and his brother Robert in Nelson were involved in some coal leases. There were four people in the Westport syndicate that involved John and it also contained a person named Bailie who had been a director with John on the Koranui Coal Company board. There were two other syndicates. One syndicate from Denniston contained one person and the other was of three people from Nelson. They all sold their leases for 10,000 Pounds half in cash and half in shares. The promoter took 1000 pounds.<sup>23</sup>

The leases received a favourable report from a mining expert and a company was formed and floated in November 1889. The company offered 75,500 one Pound shares to the public. Unfortunately, we do not know of the size of Robert's shareholding but if each syndicate shared the 9,000 Pounds equally Robert would have received a quarter of 3000 Pounds, 750 Pounds, and 750 shares. The size of the public offering considerably diluted his holding and what might have looked a good prospect at the start would have produced only a modest return.

At this time the Nelson Land Board expressed dissatisfaction at the extent to which leases were applied for and acquired in locations close to new mineral finds. It appeared the purpose of acquiring leases was for speculation and not for exploration. Rather the leases were put up for sale to promoters of new companies to be listed on stock exchanges after the raising of money from public investors. These investors were more interested in speculating that the share price would rise. The Board considered that lease holders should be compelled to prospect on their holdings. It appears that Robert had been caught up in the speculation both in the purchase of leases and also speculative shares.

### **Gilmer's Farm**

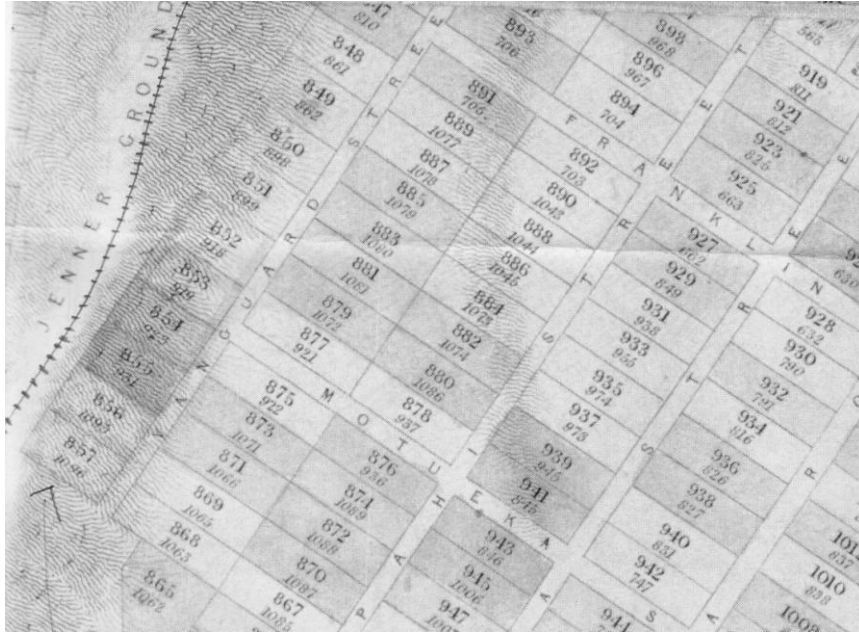
Robert owned nine and a half acres of land in Vanguard Street, Toi Toi Valley now known as Toi Toi Street. He bought the first parcel on 12 November 1883 comprising Sections 852 and 853. The second parcel was purchased on 6 September 1885 and comprised Sections 854, 855, 856 and part Section 857, E5 and E8.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> LINZ Christchurch

<sup>23</sup> Grey River Argus 19 July 1888

<sup>24</sup> Nominal Index LINZ Christchurch



**Smith & Elder Town Plan 1842 Sections 852 to 857 LHS  
Nelson Provincial Museum**

We are not aware of how Robert used the land and part of it was probably leased. One parcel had a dwelling and it is possible that Robert lived there. As mentioned above in 1891, when Robert was under financial pressure all of the land was advertised for sale *“By order of the mortgagees and under the conduct of the Registrar of the Supreme Court.”*

This advertisement was useful because it has confirmed Robert’s ownership of the land and how it was being used.

The land did not sell which indicates that Robert had to an extent been able to forestall his creditors. However, on 4 August 1891, the land was again advertised this time with a different agent.

**HOUSE AND LAND**  
**FOR SALE OR TO LET CHEAP.**

**T**HE TOWN ACRE on the Waimea Road nearly opposite the Rising Sun, occupied by Mr Humphreys as a wheelright’s yard.

Also,

The BRICK HOUSE and about Two Acres of Land in Toi Toi Valley, opposite the Town School, and known as Patching’s brick yard.

Also,

The LAND known as Gilmer’s Farm, comprising 9½ acres, in Toi Toi Valley.

Apply to  
H. D. JACKSON.

2068.—to

**Nelson Evening Mail 4 August 1891**

The land does not appear to have been sold. We cannot be certain of this but Robert had survived his bankruptcy and the immediate need for funds. It was again put on the market as Gilmer’s Farm in 1898. A listing of new advertisements referred to the following:

**Toi Toi Valley—Gilmer's farm property, consisting of dwelling, farm buildings, and about 10 acres of excellent land.**

**Two acres of land in St Vincent street near Victory Square. Will be sold in allotments if desired.**

Colonist 5 September 1898

We could locate only one specific advertisement. It was brief and referred to *"eight acres of hill land in Toi Toi St very suitable for fruit growing. Price 130 Pounds.* This seems to be a very low price.

### **Purchase and sale of the Masonic Hotel Freehold**

On 2 November 1900 the Colonist reported that Sam Gilmer of Wellington *"has purchased the freehold of the Masonic Hotel of which he has been lessee for a number of years."* The transaction was finalized on 1 December 1900.

**Mr. S. Gilmer, of the Royal Oak Hotel, Wellington, who has been lessee of the Masonic Hotel Nelson, for the past 25 years, has purchased the freehold of the Nelson property.**

Evening Post 10 November 1900

Sam immediately advertised the hotel for lease for a period of ten years. Sam was obviously dissatisfied with Robert who by this time was about 57 years old and Sam did not see him as being capable of running the hotel into the future.

MASONIC HOTEL, NELSON.

**T**ENDERS are invited, to be sent to S. Gilmer, Wellington, on or before the 13th day of December, 1900, at noon, for the Purchase of a Lease of the above Hotel, together with the goodwill of the same, and the furniture and effects therein, stock, license, and insurance extra. The lease will be a new lease for the term of ten years from the 13th day of December, 1900, at the rent of £ per week, payable monthly. This Hotel occupies an excellent site in the city of Nelson, situate at the corner of Hardy-street and Trafalgar-street. The Hotel has a large connection, and the business is capable of being largely extended. The highest or any tender not necessarily accepted. Conditions of the lease may be seen at the Royal Oak Hotel, where all further particulars can be obtained.  
S. GILMER, Royal Oak Hotel, Wellington

Evening Post 30 November 1900

Shortly after Robert renewed his license for the Masonic in June 1901, the newspaper carried a brief comment that *"it is understood that negotiations are pending with a well known hotelkeeper in the Wellington district for the sale of Gilmer's Masonic Hotel."*<sup>25</sup> This was supported by numerous shipping movements of *"Gilmer"* to and from Wellington.

<sup>25</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 13 July 1901

Sam sold the hotel in January 1902<sup>26</sup> to Henry Baigent and he held a mortgage over it until 14 July 1910.<sup>27</sup> Baigent stayed at hotel until September 1910 when the license was transferred to T Madge.<sup>28</sup>

**SALE OF MASONIC HOTEL.—** We learn that the well-known Masonic Hotel, at the corner of Hardy and Trafalgar streets has changed hands, Mr S. Gilmer having disposed of the property, £9,500 being mentioned as the purchase money. Mr Henry Baigent, of Collingwood-street, is the purchaser, and took possession yesterday afternoon.

Colonist 23 January 1902



**Masonic Hotel 1902 (Note rendering of external walls and trim of windows since 1895 photo)**

On 27 January Robert commenced advertising that he would apply to transfer the license to Henry Baigent at the March Licensing Committee Meeting and this was agreed to by the committee. However, Robert was to shortly take over the Globe Hotel in St Vincent Street and this perhaps explains the advertisement he placed for the sale of one and a half acres of land in January. He appears to have been getting some cash together for the purchase.

<sup>26</sup> Colonist 23 January 1902

<sup>27</sup> John Hewstone, Nelson

<sup>28</sup> Colonist 6 September 1910

SATURDAY, 25th January, at Noon.  
**SALE BY AUCTION**  
 OF  
**PROPERTY IN VANGUARD  
 STREET,**  
 Known as "CURTIS'S."

**M**ESSRS W. ROUT & SONS have been favoured with instructions from MR R. GILMER to sell by Public Auction, at their Land Sale Rooms, Hardy-street, on Saturday, 26th inst., at noon,

THAT VALUABLE PROPERTY situate in Vanguard-street containing 1½ Acres, and the commodious Dwelling House thereon.

Full particulars from

W. ROUT & SONS,  
 Auctioneers.

Nelson Evening Mail 15 Jan 1902

A little later on 26 April Robert advertised that he would apply to take over the license of the Globe from Timothy Devine at the June meeting of the Licensing Committee and he also advertised for people to do hotel work indicating that he had taken possession. At the June meeting the license passed to Robert with the comment "*that when the improvements being made by Mr. Gilmer were complete the hotel will be fairly up to date.*"<sup>29</sup>

Robert also started to advertise his presence at the Globe something that he had not done when he was at the Masonic. This advertisement was placed in both the Colonist and Nelson Evening Mail on a daily basis.

**THE**  
**GLOBE HOTEL,**  
**HAVEN ROAD.**

**R**OBERT GILMER has taken over the GLOBE HOTEL, Haven Road, and the premises have been completely renovated, improved, and extended.  
**First-class Accommodation for Visitors, and the most central and convenient situation in the city.**

Nelson Evening Mail 29 June 1902

Robert bought the freehold of the Globe Hotel as well as taking over the license. He proceeded to make significant renovations. Advertisements referred to it being "*rebuilt and newly furnished*" and "*renovated, improved and extended.*"

<sup>29</sup> Nelson Evening Mail 2 June 1902



Globe Hotel c1891

Tasman Bays Heritage, Trust Nelson Provincial Museum, Maguire Collection, Ref: 47912/4



Globe Hotel c1900

Tasman Bays Heritage Trust, Nelson Provincial Museum, Daroux Collection

Ref: 76953/5 T1/2 2511

Robert did not keep the license very long and on 11 September 1902, it was reported that Mr. J.W. Jacob had taken over the hotel. At the December meeting of the Licensing Court the license was transferred. Jacob was previously at the Terminus Hotel at Picton. The scale

of the renovations indicated that Robert also owned the freehold of property and this was later confirmed with the sale of the property to J.A. Harley reported in April 1903.<sup>30</sup> Harley was an old friend and the brewer who supplied beer to the Masonic Hotel. He was the person who endorsed Robert's promissory notes in the period around his bankruptcy. J.W. Jacob continued as the licensee and had his license renewed in June 1903.

**SALE OF HOTEL PROPERTY. — We learn on good authority that Mr J. A. Harley has purchased the Globe Hotel, from Mr Robert Gilmer.**

Colonist 7 April 1903



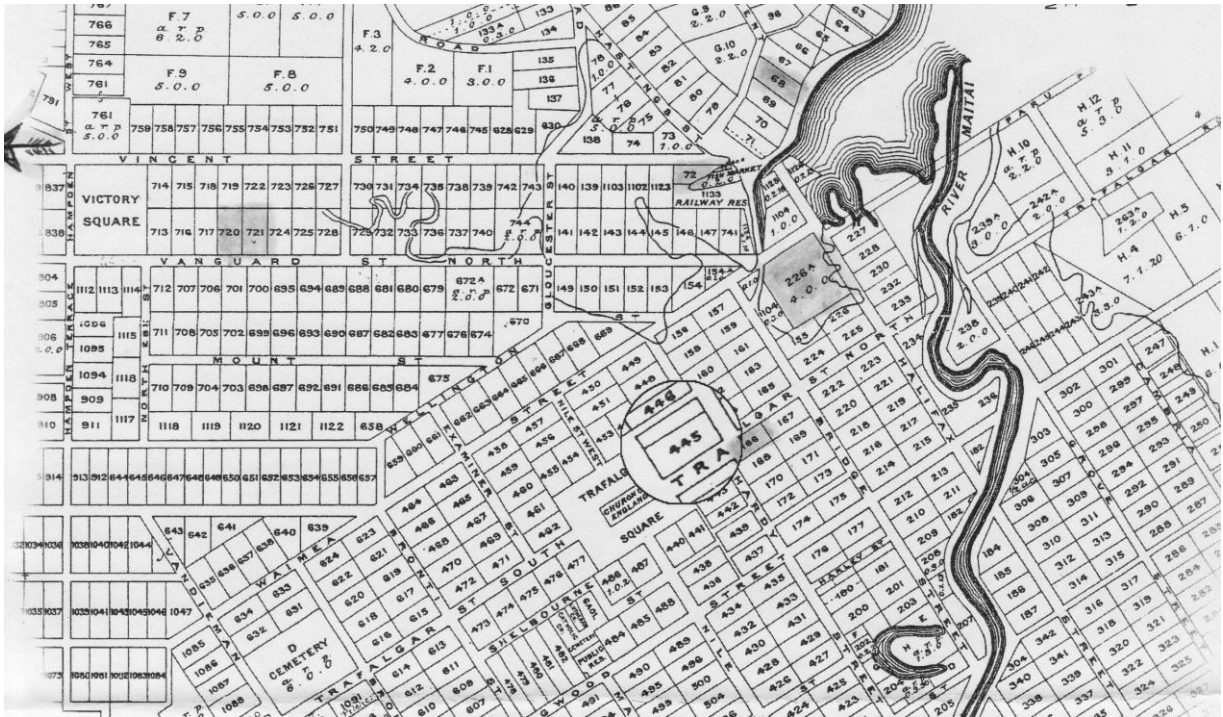
**Globe Hotel 2009**

In 1903 Robert turned 60 years of age and the sale of the Globe Hotel after only a brief period of ownership has the appearance of Robert retiring. As a minimum it was retirement from the hotel industry which had occupied his working life for over 35 years.

There is no doubt that Robert did not have the same level of business skills as his brothers Hamilton and Sam or share their ambitions and drive for success. However, he was successful in running the Masonic Hotel over a long period of time. He had a good reputation in business and was well known and liked by the Nelson community.

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<sup>30</sup> Colonist 7 April 1903



**Town Plan Nelson showing Robert Gilmer's Interests  
Sections 720, 721, 72 Globe Hotel, 68 Haven Road Home, 226, 166 Masonic Hotel.**