



## sir john's first-hand account of life in acacia cottage

Back when Sir John and William Brown first arrived in Auckland, they had no choice but to conduct all business ventures from within Sir Johns canvas tent. This was until Acacia Cottage was built in 1841. It seems life in Acacia Cottage was not much better than living in a tent! Sir John had this to say on his experience;

*“You know it as “Acacia Cottage”, and there it stands to this day [1875]. A month later (21 July 1841), I moved into it as well, my tent having blown down on the top of me one night when it was raining as it only can rain at the tail end of one of Auckland’s easterly gales. But oh! the cottage then was comfortless and dreary — four bare walls unlined, some rough green planking stood on end eight feet high, waiting to be used to partition off the rooms. No ceiling; you saw all the rafters and shingles, the cold wintery wet south-west winds whistling all around you; and no chimney, that was a luxury we did not achieve until the following winter. But in the house as it was, we had to keep ourselves warm as best we could by gathering the hot embers from our outside fire, and putting them into a large round three-legged gypsy iron pot, around which we used to sit! I was less to be pitied than my two friends. For I soon established a workshop in the spare back room where I could work away preparing the divisioning planking to be used to separate the various rooms. You can still see my work of 1841, for it stands to this very day. And may I say that for many a long day that now modest plain little cottage was considered quite a grand house in Auckland.”*

- Taken from *Reminiscences of a long life*,  
by John Logan Campbell