

Victor Wilhelm Lindauer (1888 – 1964)

Victor Lindauer was born in 1888 in Marton, New Zealand, the second son of well-known portrait painter Gottfried Lindauer, who had emigrated from Bohemia in 1874, and his second wife Rebecca Petty from England. In 1892 the family moved to a ten-acre bush block at Woodville, where the boys grew up, stimulated by distinguished visitors, including botanist William Colenso, and two family trips to Europe.

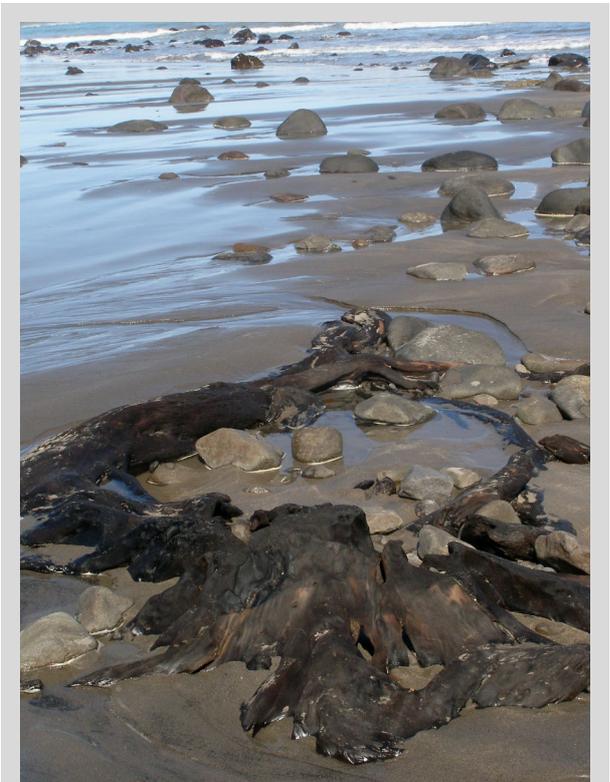
At the age of 15 Victor taught children only a little younger than himself at Woodville School, and then at Napier. He volunteered for war service in 1916 and spent two years in the army medical corps. Back in New Zealand he resumed teaching, and in 1927 married Elsie May Lovell, one of his former students. His many hobbies included painting, jewellery making and collecting various objects, and on a trip to Panama with his mother he made a collection of seashells, now in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Rebecca Lindauer returned wheelchair-bound, her hip broken in a fall, and after the deaths of her husband in 1926, and her oldest son, an accomplished violinist, in 1928, she lived with Victor and Elsie. Her first grandchild, Rebe, was born in Woodville in 1929.

In January 1931 the family moved to Russell in the Bay of Islands, where another daughter and two sons were born, and Victor's passion for collecting extended to mosses, lichens and chitons on the rocky shore. In 1935 nine overseas phycologists visited the town. Lindauer, then headmaster, offered them the use of the school facilities; he was invited to join the team, and his long interest in seaweeds began. He was soon collecting, pressing and identifying New Zealand specimens himself, assisted by his family, senior pupils and enthusiasts such as Eileen Willa of Stewart Island, who sent him southern forms. His family also scoured the beaches for the red alga *Pterocladia lucida*, a wartime alternative source of agar, a gelatine-like substance used in food processing and laboratory cultures, which could no longer be imported from Japan.

After a move north to Awanui in 1940 and a year in the National Reserve, Lindauer was transferred to Mangapehi in the inland King Country and then Pihama School on the exposed Taranaki coast, where there were new seaweeds to study and more *Pterocladia* to collect. Four years later the Lindauers returned to their orchard at Uriti Bay, near Russell. In 1949 Victor was invited to join the botany department of the Auckland University College as a senior research fellow, to investigate the taxonomy of the New Zealand seaweed flora. A severe stroke

in 1953 curtailed his activities, and he died in 1964 at the age of 76.

His caring nature, contagious enthusiasm and high expectations were inspiring. For more than 25 years his family and other helpers, including school children, collected, prepared and identified over 20,000 specimens for museums and universities. He corresponded with New Zealand and overseas experts, and published scientific papers, mainly in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of New Zealand*. One, in 1938, described the small iridescent red alga *Champia laingii*. His renowned algal herbarium is spread far and wide in New Zealand and overseas herbaria, and two seaweed species that he found at Pihama were named in his honour.



Pihama coast, Taranaki, 2009

Helminthora lindaueri

Helminthora lindaueri was described in 1955 by the eminent Indian phycologist Desikachary, who worked on red algae with Professor Paperfuss of the University of California. Victor Lindauer collected the type specimen on 30 January 1945, at Pihama, Taranaki. A "summer only" alga on intertidal rocks, *Helminthora lindaueri* is dark red, with a soft and mucilaginous texture, and grows to about 10 cm long. The cylindrical, dichotomously branched plants sometimes have a few short laterals near the base; the attaching holdfast is a small disc. A few collections have been made from localities on exposed coasts of the southern North Island and the South Island of New Zealand, but the species is better known, and attains a larger size, in southern Australia.