Figure 6.   Pen and ink sketch of Mesopotamia Station, Canterbury. Drawn by Samuel Butler in the early 1860s.
Courtesy of Canterbury Museum (Samuel Butler Drawing; reference number CMNZ 16882).

Figure 7.   Cottages built at Mesopotamia Station, Canterbury, in the early 1860s. These are probably the cottages in Samuel Butler's sketch (Fig. 6). *Courtesy of Canterbury Museum (E.P. Sealy Photograph, Charles Beken Collection; reference number CMNZ 1900).*
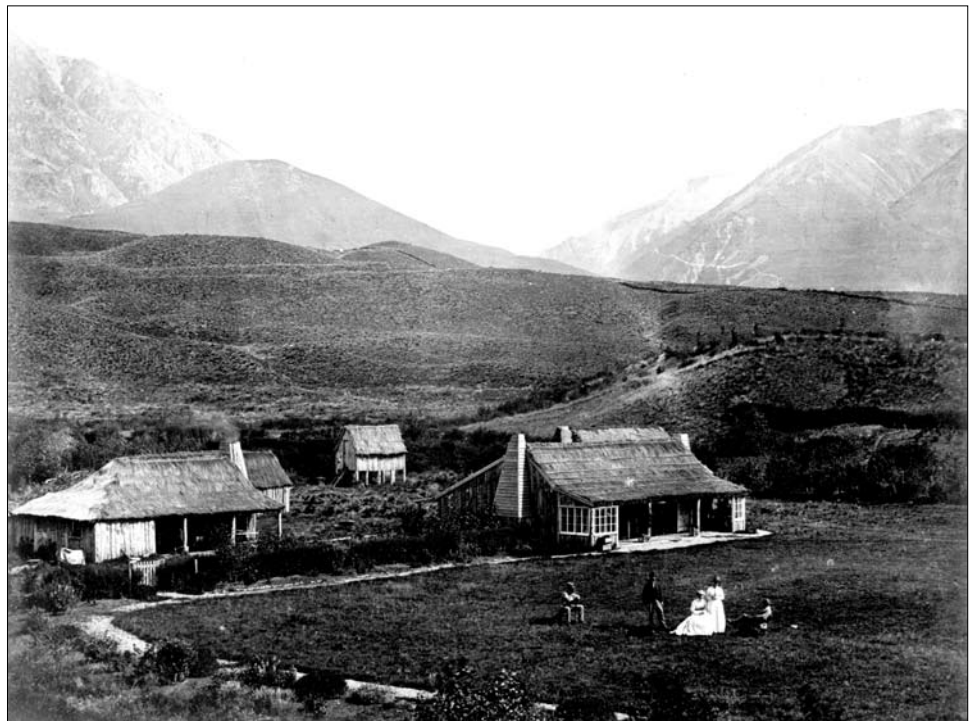
licence for Run 14, extending from the northern bank of the Shag River to the Horse Range, and 8 miles (c. 12.9 km) inland from the coast. A second son, William, took up Run 80 by the end of 1854 to secure the hinterland up the Shag River, and a third son, Frederick, acquired Run 255 on the northerly bank by the end of 1858. In the 1860s, the Shag Valley runs, which were collectively known as 'Coal Creek', were purchased by the politician and administrator Francis Dillon Bell. He soon replaced the original damp cottage with a larger home (Pinney 1981).

On most stations, early tents or sod huts with thatched roofs evolved into a cluster of buildings, centred on the station homestead, which resembled a small village (Dominy 2001). The buildings eventually included a substantial home for the runholder or manager, a store house, woolshed, shearers' quarters, stock yards and a sheep dip (Dominy 2001). Barns, stables, smithies, cookshops, dairies, privies and killing sheds appeared on some homesteads as well.

At first, some shearing sheds had sod or treefern walls with canvas roofs, while others were built of slab with shingle roofs. Later, these buildings were larger and more commodious (Beattie 1947). The woolshed became arguably the most striking symbol of the New Zealand pastoral landscape, and the earliest designs were derived from Australia (Dominy 2001). Samuel Butler, who explored Canterbury in the 1860s, wrote that:

> 'A wool-shed is a roomy place, built somewhat on the same plan as a cathedral, with aisles on either side full of pens for the sheep, a great nave, at the upper end of which the shearers work, and a further space for wool sorters and packers. It always refreshed me with a semblance of antiquity (precious in a new country), though I very well knew that the oldest wool-shed in the settlement was not more than seven years old, while this was only two.'
>
> (Butler 1987: 24)

The woolshed at St Leonards, Amuri, was built in 1856 of posts from Pahau bush and thatched with toi toi (toetoe) (Gardner 1956). It is likely that the walls were made of laced and battened bundles of toi toi. Within a year, the woolshed was on a lean and had to be propped up. Soon the roof blew apart and had to be battened down. Eventually, the walls were lined with manuka brushwood from Hurunui scrub, the roof was re-thatched with raupo, a grating floor was put in, and post-and-rail fencing replaced the primitive yards of 1855 (Gardner 1956).

Some paddocks around the homestead were often used for growing crops such as English grasses (for hay), oats and root vegetables for feeding stock (Hargreaves 1966). Isolated huts were scattered on the station's outer rim for shepherds and musterers. Before wire fencing became widespread in the 1870s, the edges of runs were marked only on maps, and shepherds had to walk or ride along the boundaries to stop sheep from leaving the run or to stop foreign, possibly scabby, sheep from entering (Hargreaves 1966). Natural boundaries, such as rivers, were used whenever possible, to save labour and solve the problem of straying animals (Hargreaves 1966). Figure 8 shows the ruins of the Lake Guyon homestead and yards in the Amuri high country.