

History of School.

Fifty years ago the now fertile valley of Waioweka was a land of manuka and fern. Settlers were few and far between, roads were mainly narrow ribbons wide enough only to take a cart and the majority of streams were not bridged and at times became roaring torrents. The Waioweka Pa at this time contained about 1000 people of the Maori race.

Although New Zealand and particularly the Waioweka district was in its infancy, the leaders of the Maori people were far-seeing enough to see the advantages of having their own school. With this aim in view, in 1883 the following, on behalf of the people of the pa, vested in the Government the site consisting of 4½ acres upon which the school now stands:—

Hira Te Popo (chief), Apera Makao, Wharenui Tuhakia, Mihaka Mataika, Katupuku, Mauka Rangiiha.

On February 25th 1884, the school was opened, the first head-teacher being Mr. P. Herlihy. From June, 1892, when Mr. P. Herlihy resigned, changes of head-teachers were frequent until Miss M. Levert took over in February 1898. Except for a period of eight months, when Miss A. Burgoyne and Miss E. Green were relieving head-teachers owing to the illness of Miss Levert, the last-named served as head-teacher for no fewer than 18 years. On her retirement in April 1916 Mr. A. A. Watkins assumed control of the school, and on his appointment to the Papakura Public School, the present head-teacher, Mr. E. A. Boon, took charge.

To the early teachers of this school, this can truly be said: "They taught in school; the older generation of Maoris they influenced by their lives and conduct generally, and by their ever-ready counsel and practical aid freely rendered in times of sickness and in their various difficulties in adjusting themselves to the new order of things." Before their eyes has rolled the moving picture of first the axe and fire in the clearing of a one-time waste of manuka-covered plain to the present-day rich dairying lands below. In that time also has a pa changed from groups of nikau huts to that of European homes. And last but not least has been the winning of the Shield in 1933 for the cleanest pa in the district. This in itself shows the progress made in half a century, of the school's existence, and bodes well for the future of the School, the Pa, and the District.

Circa 1934