

WAKARARA

SCHOOL

1897

—

1972



Doing it the hard way. Felling a tree on Hirst's property. At the top of the tree G. Douglas & G. Burkin, with Mr Hirst at bottom. Other person unknown.

75TH JUBILEE

Introduction

It is customary in the celebration of a Jubilee such as this to produce a booklet commemorating the event. While it is the main purpose of this booklet to trace the school's history and to commemorate its founding, it is not possible to exclude from this booklet and our celebrations the general history of our district. Most small rural schools have served their district both as a means to education and also as a social centre and focal point of district activities. Wakarara school has been no exception to this and the history of the district and of the school have followed parallel courses.

I have made every effort to make sure that dates and information published here are as accurate as possible. The brevity of this booklet makes it impossible to publish in great detail the history of our district. There are gaps which have been difficult to fill because of a lack of records. This is regretted and if any person finds on reading this booklet that they have additional names or material then the Jubilee Committee would be pleased to obtain this information for their records.

To name all the people who have contributed towards the compiling of this booklet would be a difficult task. I would like to give the heartfelt thanks of the Jubilee Committee to all persons whom I have interviewed and who have contacted me with photographs or information. I have not personalised this list because I hope that those who have helped will take their thanks as being the enjoyment they will gain through reading this booklet and attending the celebrations.

R. J. Jeffarès

The Wakarara School 75th Jubilee Committee

On behalf of the Committee I wish you as much enjoyment as possible during the celebrations. If memories of your days in Wakarara are stirred by this booklet and by the people you will meet at the celebrations and if, above all, you enjoy yourself while remembering then this Committee is amply repaid for for the work they have put in.

Mrs Myra Beattie,

Secretary Wakarara School 75th Jubilee Committee

Chairman: R. J. Jeffares.

Secretary: Mrs M. Beattie.

Treasurer: D. McDonald.

Committee Members:

J. Tatam, B. Richardson, W. Macdonald, W. Cullen,
Mesdames N. Macdonald, A. Bradley, M. Worsnop,
G. Borrie.

PROGRAMME

Wakarara School:

Afternoon Tea 3p.m.

Enrolment 12-1p.m.

Official Opening 1p.m.

Evening

Cutting of the Cake

Waipawa Municipal Theatre

Photographs 2-3p.m.

Open 6.30p.m. Dinner 7p.m.

We would like to pay a short tribute to the late Mrs Lillian Baker

Mrs Baker was a strong supporter to our jubilee project from its conception and supplied a tremendous amount of the matter used in the compiling of this booklet.

General History and Settlement of Wakarara

Wakarara is situated in a valley between the Ruahine Ranges and the Whakarara Range. The Wakarara District as defined by the Waipawa County Council and the Hawke's Bay Education Board at the beginning of this century, is that land which is boundaried by the Waipawa and the Makaroro Rivers. The third boundary of this triangular shaped region is the Ruahine Bushline.

The first reference to the Wakarara district, then not known as such, comes from the journals of William Colenso. On the 5th February, 1845, William Colenso entered the Waipawa River in the vicinity of Tikokino and journeyed up the river in an attempt to cross the Ruahine Range to visit part of his parish in Inland Patea. His party journeyed up the Waipawa River until they reached the forks of the Waipawa and the Makaroro Rivers, he followed the Makaroro River. Early maps refer to this river simply as the Northern branch of the Waipawa River. Travelling up this river he camped for the night on the stream bed, probably in the vicinity of Mr L. Worsnop's or Mr B. Richardson's property. The next day his party tried several times to leave the riverbed in the vicinity of Wakarara but found the bush to be impenetrable. Travelling up the Makarora, Colenso came to another set of forks, here he left the river and followed a ridge situated between the forks, in an effort to reach the top at a peak called Te Atu Mahuri. On this trip Colenso never crossed to Inland Patea although two members of his party did.

The view Colenso must have had, looking down from Te Atu Mahuri on the tangled bush land of Wakarara, varies considerably from the same view today. Having recently viewed Wakarara from this same peak, having followed Colenso's track one is presented with a picture of rolling to steep prosperous farmland.

Samuel Fletcher and his wife Harriet deserve a chapter in the history of Wakarara as they were our first settlers and the descendants of this family still maintain strong ties with the district today. Just some seventeen years after Colenso passed through the Wakarara District Samuel Fletcher was granted his first block of land in the Wakarara area, on April 23rd, 1862.

Sam Fletcher's wife, Harriet Lomas, whom he married in 1866 in Wellington, came from Pendle Hill in Lancashire. It took the newly married couple a fortnight to travel from Napier to their new home. The last stage of the journey being made from Waipawa by bullock dray, through riverbeds and scrub. The Fletcher's first home was a slab and bark whare built on Holdens property at Heavitree.

These were the troublesome times of the Maori uprisings and after Harriet had been frightened by a group of tattooed Maoris it was decided that Harriet would be safer living on the Pendle Hill property eight miles away. The first house on Pendle Hill was a clay hut with walls two feet thick, a clay chimney and a wooden shingled roof. Later the existing homestead was built and later still additional rooms were added to each end. In the isolation of early Wakarara, Mrs. Harriet Fletcher reared 13 children, the only surviving member of this family being Mrs. J. Dassler from Onga Onga. Pendle Hill is now owned by Mrs. Lilian H. Baker of Onga Onga.

The rest of the district took some time to settle and develop as access made progress difficult. The country was heavily bushed, with swift flowing streams and rivers. This made the development of roading a slow tedious business necessitating the building of many bridges.

In the late 1870s and the early 1880, land on and around the present Mangataura Station was settled.

In the original settlement of land from the Makaretu Crown Grant District names are to be found which would feature in the history of Wakarara for years to come. The Peers brothers John and James, step-brothers to Sam Fletcher of Pendle Hill, took up blocks within this district in 1879. John Peers and his wife Maragaret worked on Gwavas Station for a while before taking up their land at Wakarara. They were financed into their venture by the original Mr. James Mathews, and the two brothers had just over 500 acres in this grant.

James Barlow was the founder of a large family which were to play an important part in the development of Wakarara. He originally took up his land in 1881 and shortly afterwards he bought up other blocks adjacent to him. James Barlow and his wife both came from England. Mrs Barlow had been a nurse in a London hospital before marrying. The original homestead was built out on the river flats of the Makaroro. The next dwelling was erected close to the present road near junction of Wakarara Road and Mathews Road. Shortly after James Barlow and his wife moved up to Wakarara they had a son Arthur James Havelock Barlow who was so christened because he had been born in Havelock and came to Wakarara when he was six months old. In researching land deeds it becomes apparent that the Barlow family farmed extensively throughout the district. Unfortunately the family has severed their landlink with the district and the homestead property is now farmed by Mr. I. Wincombe.

Mr. Ralph Douglas;

Mr. Douglas was born in Invernesshire, Scotland in 1849 and was brought up to a farming way of life. He came to N.Z. in the ship "Old England" and landed in Wellington. He worked in Waipukurau as a shepherd for 10 years. Mr. Douglas went to Gwavas where he remained for 23 years. During this time he took up 634 acres of land in Wakarara. This he farmed in conjunction with his 100 acre station in Tikokino. Mr. Douglas married in Wellington in 1873, a Miss Catherine Garson, who came from England with him as a ship-mate on the same vessel. Mr. Douglas did not reside in the Wakarara district but worked his property from Tikokino. The present homestead on his Wakarara property was built by his son John, who farmed the property for many years and served the district and school as a school committee member and chairman for many years. The only surviving member of Mr. Ralph Douglas's family is Mrs. A. Parkinson of Tikokino.

William Hirst and Herbert Shaw;

Very little is known about these two gentlemen except that they were remittance men from England. That is, they lived off an allowance sent to them from their family in England. Herbert Shaw took up a small sub-section of one of the blocks taken by William Hirst and was only there for a short time before he sold out to William Hirst and no more is known of him.

Mr. Alf Berkahn and Mr. Chris. Berkahn;

This is a family name which features amongst the earlier settlers in Wakarara. In the early years of the school's history the predominant name on the school register is Berkahn. It was largely through the efforts of Mr. Alf Berkahn that Wakarara obtained its school. The school was well served in all capacities by both of these gentlemen in the early years of Wakarara. A comment from Mrs. Annie Oates, a daughter of Mr. Alf Berkahn, typifies the family and for that matter so many of our early pioneers. She says of her parents "They worked very hard and it was said of my mother that she could make a home out of a packing case."

Mrs. Oates remembers a bush fire when the furniture was put in a sort of cave dug out of the ground, and the family spending some time under the "Papa Creek" bridge. Trout and eels were lying dead along the stream choked with ash and smoke. Mr. Chris Berkahn left the district in 1908 for Te Kuiti and in 1911 Mr. Alf Berkahn sold his farm and shifted from the district.

George Burkin;

The Burkin family were another of the original families to take up land within our district. The two blocks taken up by George Burkin and his son, also George Burkin, are still owned by the same family today although they are leased out to Mr. L. McKay of Onga Onga. This family officially took up title to their land in 1905. The blocks being 155 and 156 acres respectively. A daughter of George Burkin and a sister to George Burkin the younger, Mrs. Eliza Fair, is the only surviving member of the original family and was also an original pupil of the school.

Edwin Turfrey;

Block 8 of the Wakarara Survey District, comprising some 419 acres, was taken up by Edwin Turfrey for an annual rental of £16-15-2. The original Turfrey homestead was a slab whare in the group of trees down from where Mr. P. Rayner now lives.

Mr. Turfrey also ran the mail for some years. Starting off with horses and brake in the early 1900's and progressing to a truck about 1916. The property is still farmed by descendants of Edwin Turfrey.

Jack Carson;

Born at Oxford, Canterbury, 16th. August 1863. Jack Carson came to Hawke's Bay about 1883. It is uncertain when he first came to Wakarara, but his first job was forming the road past Turfrey's. After this he worked on various properties in the district, mainly Mathew's fencing, bush felling, road work and as teamster.

He married Mrs. Margaret Peers about 1898. She had five children, Lena, Johnny, Jimmy, Alec and Ada, they also adopted a boy, Jock. About this time Forest Home was purchased from a Mr. Symons and later Silverstream. Mrs. Carson also owned Mossburn, after her death this was sold.

Jack also commenced milling operations on his own account in 1908, this was in use for about three years. The first sheep dip in the district was on Forest Home, some of the yarding still remains. A great man with horses, he held the record for a two horse team, 2 hours 20 minutes from Wakarara to Waipawa.

Jack Carson died 30th March 1960. Forest Home and Silverstream are now worked jointly by Ada's only son John Tatam.

Edward Worsnop;

Block 6 of the Wakarara Survey district was taken up by Edward Worsnop in 1896 and is farmed today by his grandson

Mr. Laurie Worsnop. Edward Worsnop, a carpenter, came from Bradford, England. His wife followed him a few years later and stayed in Wakarara with Mr. and Mrs. Alf Berkahn until they were married in the Blackburn Church. Their first dwelling was a whare which was burnt down while they were working in the bush. Edward heard a shot and realised something was wrong. He had left a loaded shotgun hanging on the wall and the heat had caused this to discharge. The second dwelling where Edgar, Horace, Harold and Wilfred were born was built on the same site. Edward Worsnop supplemented his income in the early years by shearing, fencing and building. The Worsnop family have maintained a strong link with the district over the years.

Andrew Taylor;

Very little information is available on this settler. In 1891 Andrew Taylor took up Section 10 of the Wakarara Survey district, some 532 acres. This was leased in perpetuity for the sum of £21-6-4 annually. In 1923 this land was sold to Henry Barlow but reverted to Andrew Taylor 10 years later in 1933 and was sold finally to Mr. D. Preston in 1937. It is farmed today by Mr. E. Joyce.

William Foulds;

In 1890 William Foulds took up Block 13 of the Wakarara Survey District. He was drowned in 1898 and the property was farmed by his wife and later by a neighbour Mr. Henry Dorreen who married Mrs. Foulds in 1901. The properties were transferred to William Foulds's son William in 1912 and were sold to the late Douglas Cullen in 1951 and are today farmed by his son Bill Cullen.

History of the School

The settlers of Wakarara approached the Hawke's Bay Education Board in an effort to have a school erected in the district of Wakarara. Mr. A. C. A. Berkahn went to Napier to meet with the Hawke's Bay Education Board in conjunction with Mr. Harding of Mount Vernon Station who was a member of the Board. Mr. Harding visited Wakarara and as a result of his support wheels were set in motion and tenders were called late in 1896. An original pupil of the school Mrs. A. Oates (nee Berkahn) remembers Mr. Harding as a nice gentleman who brought the children of their family coloured picture books and who drove four black ponies and a buggy.

Where the timber came from to build the school is not known but it is unlikely that it was obtained locally in Wakarara as there were no mills operating at this time. Two brothers, Tom and Henry Cross, were employed to erect the school which was opened on the 1st of March 1897.

The first teacher was Miss Annabelle Wyllie. Miss Wyllie taught here for approximately one year before she moved on to Maraekakaho School and then married Kenneth Mackenzie of Seaforth, Weber She remembers Wakarara in the early days of the school mainly for the kindness of the settlers. Inspectors' reports made during Miss Wyllie's period as Mistress in charge point out the difficulties she and the school faced in the first few years of the school's existence. The following are extracts taken from reports issued by the Inspector of Schools, Mr. Henry Hill;

Wakarara, April 13th, 1897

The school was opened March 1st and is in charge of Miss Wyllie. The roll numbers 21 of whom 20 were present at the time of my visit. The buildings were well arranged and suitable for the need of the district for some time to come. The children are mostly young and have not attended school before.

The next report was made in February 1898;

Wakarara;

"This small school has had many difficulties to encounter in its initial stages. The removal of settlers from their holdings causes great fluctuations in the school population and at present the attendance is merely nominal and barely sufficient for the school to continue under the regulations. Thirteen names are entered on the schedule but only seven were present at the time of examination. The Mistress has a difficult task in front of

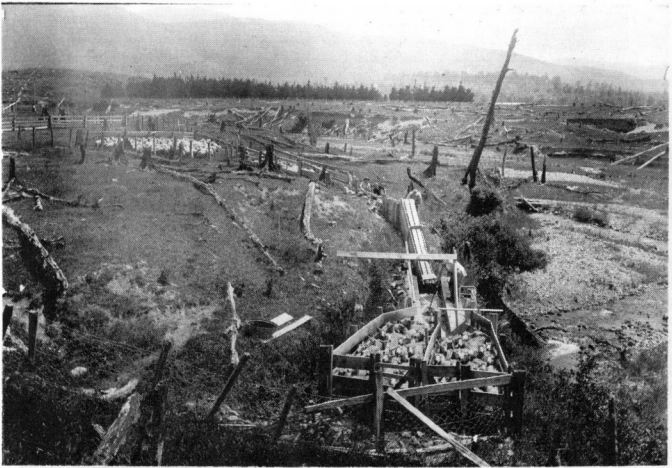


Blade shearing at Mangataura Station around the turn of the century.

Back Row from left: —, Sid Moody, Harry Craddock, Mr Jensen, Rest unknown.
 Front Row: —, Harry Dorreen, George Fletcher, —, —, —, James Mathews, —, —, —, George Douglas.



Hamish Armstrong's plane which crashed above Shut Eye Shack. Members of the search party: Mr Albert Hutt, Mr Horace Baker, Mr A. Peers and Duffy. — 1935



One of the first swim dips in Wakarusa, owned by Jack Carson and used by a lot of the local farmers. Photo by courtesy of J. Tatam.



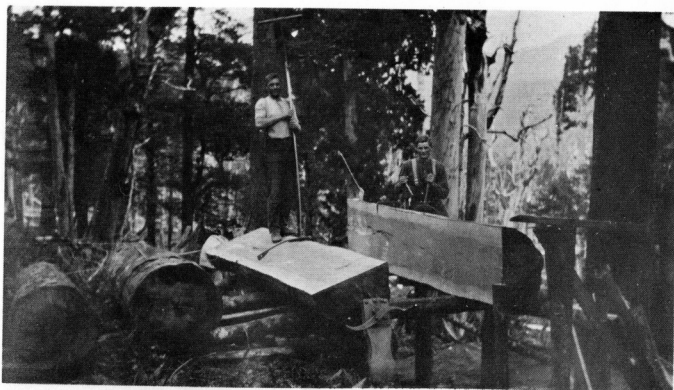
Horse and bullock teams hauling timber at Jack Carson's Mill. Two men standing at back are George Moorcock and Axel Hansen. In front, Jack Verran and Jack Carson. 1908.



Bullock team dragging log to tramlines for transport to Carson's Mill.



Traction engine at McCullough's Mill. Used for hauling logs & timber. Photo by courtesy of Mrs W. Macdonald.



Pit sawing of timber in Wakarara. Photo by courtesy of Mr A. Hutt.



Miss Peggy Donald Wakarara's longest serving teacher with car parked at the top pines across the Waipawa River, at the back of Cullens property.

her and needs every help and encouragement. The grounds are unfenced, but in other aspects the arrangements are good, and the accommodation is sufficient for forty pupils."

In the minute book of the Hawke's Bay Education Board correspondence is recorded which warns that the school would have to close unless the roll was to become more stable.

However in June 1899 when Inspector Henry Hill again visited the school it was still in operation and he had the following comments to make: "This small outlying school is beset with many difficulties. The pupils have, in most cases, to walk miles to school and with bad roads and bad weather, the teaching has to be carried out under conditions not met with in places where the population is more centred.

Attention is drawn to the great need of drainage about the school and to the danger of allowing the dead stumps of trees being so close to the school buildings. A roadway is also wanted to the school and a space of at least 10 feet should be cleared about the school buildings and covered with metal; the place at present being a miry mess. Eight or nine pounds judiciously expended would carry out the work suggested."

At the time this report was written the school had its second teacher Mr Spurrell.

The original school was built with a sloping or stepped floor. It is not known when this floor was levelled but we do know that it was somewhere between 1926 and 1930. This original sloping floor made dancing and social functions held at the school very hazardous.

The following are extracts taken from the school log books;

This school has been fortunate in that a good deal of its history has been recorded by teachers in the school Log Books. The earliest log entries available today come from Oct. 1907 and were recorded by Miss Foote. These log entries contain general observations made by the teacher as well as reports issued by inspectors in their periodic visits to the school of the district, children, weather and happenings. These log books make fascinating reading and are valuable historic documents in themselves.

For the purposes of this booklet I have browsed through these log books and have selected those entries which appear to have the greatest general appeal and have published these. However because of the brevity of this publication much interesting material has had to be omitted.

Names in some cases have been omitted and left as blanks

so as not to embarrass ex-pupils, settlers or relatives of the person involved.

July 22nd 1908: Children planted trees, and commenced to log up the playground. I consider parents are not too kind where they will allow small children to do such work. I watched to see that too much is not attempted.

July 27th 1908: The children have cleared enough ground to have a game of rounders on.

Sept. 18th 1910: Bush fires burnt the Boys Outhouse to the ground. The wind is fearful and the school attendance still continues to be very poor.

Dec. 11th 1911: A very windy day, a sheet of iron blew off the school roof. The chairman nailed boards across the opening to keep more iron from blowing off until they can get another sheet from Onga. For the last six weeks the weather has been dreadful. Teaching has been carried on under difficulties.

For a week at a time sometimes. I have to go right up to a child when speaking to make it hear me. The children have attended well considering the dreadful weather. For the past three months they have had to contend with wind, rain, hail and snow, at times some of them have come when it wasn't fit for anyone to be out.

June 17th 1912: Yesterday (Sunday) a terrific gale raged. One of the ventilators blew off the school. The rain beat through the West windows and ran halfway over the school floor (I had to give the boys cloths and a bucket and set them to sop the water up this morning). The East wall swayed in and out so that I was afraid it would collapse. In the house the rain beat in at the windows ran in under the back door and simply poured through the ceiling in the two bedrooms.

June 4th 1914: A mild day. I had to put the fire out this afternoon, the chimney smoked so badly and the fire was blown out in the room every few minutes. I was afraid the place would be burned down.

Oct. 7th 1914: Big bush fires all over Wakarara last night the teacher had to sit up all night to help watch the school. Only 13 children present today. Some of the settlers are heavy losers, numbers of their sheep having been burnt in the fire. The fire came so suddenly, in the night, and although the men went out with their dogs to try and muster their sheep they could do little or nothing—what with the fire and the terrific gale raging. Many of the houses were in great danger and both men and women had to fight hard to save them.

July 23rd 1915: A social and dance were held in the school-room this evening to say farewell to four of the Wakarara boys who are leaving for the front.

Mr Hickey on behalf of the Wakarara settlers presented each of the boys with a wristlet watch.

Sept. 12th 1915: Lance Corp. George Peers, an old Wakarara pupil, has just returned wounded from the Dardanelles.

Aug. 14th 1916: A cold, wet, miserable day. I was unavoidably absent from school in the forenoon. I went out on Saturday. The Waipawa River rose on Saturday night and all day Sunday until 10 o'clock on Monday it was impossible to cross. On Monday at 10 o'clock I borrowed a horse and rode over, the water was then up to the saddle flaps. Four pupils were present in the afternoon.

July 21st 1919: School closed for the Peace Celebrations. Most of the Wakarara residents took their children to Onga or Waipawa. The Chairman of the Onga Onga school committee extended an invitation to the school children of this district to join in with the Onga Onga school children in the procession and sports held there.

Nov 3rd 1919: Log fires raging all last night, fanned by a tremendous gale, did not go to bed for fear the wind should change and bring the fire towards the school. Consequently no school was held today as I was very tired and only six children were present. These children dug a hole in which to put the school records and our personal belongings in case of necessity in the future.

Feb. 23rd 1926: Fires are spreading fast and the school has been full of smoke today. As reports came down that the fires were now in Mr McNeill's property and there is a possibility of them crossing to the school should the wind increase. I thought it best to ring the Education Office and notify them of the danger. We packed all books and the school papers in boxes to bury them if necessary. The wind changed in the night blowing it into Mr Johnston's property then a heavy shower fell about 2am.

Dec. 2nd 1926: Mr Turfrey called to draw my attention to some stray horses that had found their way into the playground, causing destruction to some young trees.

The horses, being of superior intelligence, still manage to find their way in, in spite of two patent fasteners of my own invention which are not always put into use by folks.

May 7th 1935: A cheque for 10/- for celebration of Silver Jubilee was received from the Education Board. Mr Fleming,

architect of the Education Board visited the school, examined the buildings and took photographs for the Board's records.

April 26th, 1938: Took search party to look for _____ and two others up to mill. Owing to magneto trouble did not return till 10. Children had, however, carried on with assigned work. Edrick Spotswood, Margaret Logan and John Tatam unable to get to school because of large slip in road.

The school roll dropped to 6 in 1946 and the school was closed on the 28th of June, 1946. It was reopened again on the 2nd of July, 1951, with Mrs A. Leitch as the relieving teacher.

On the 12th of September 1969 the school moved into its new classroom.

On the 15th of July, 1971, the teacher moved into a new residence.

After 74 years the buildings of the Wakarara school had been completely replaced. Up to this stage Wakarara School had been unique in Hawke's Bay and unusual in New Zealand in that its classroom and residence were all in one building. This building has served the community for 75 years. At times in its history it served the multiple purposes of house, classroom, community hall, post office and telephone exchange. The building still continues to serve a valuable function as a communal centre for church services, dances, sports activities, library and gymnasium.

School Roll

Rolls prior to 1915 have been compiled from lists found on Inspectors reports. These will only include such pupils who were at the school on the day the Inspector made his visit. I regret that some pupils may not have been included.

1897-1902

Billy Foulds
Ada Peers
Edith Burkin
Edward Burkin
Alec Peers
Mary Berkahn
Annie Berkahn
Eliza Burkin
Muriel Symons
Lizzie Burkin
Frank Middleton
Jack Foulds
Arthur Foulds
Annie Foulds
Albina Bowden
Josephine Peers
James Peers
Richard Peers
James Bowden
Sarah Peers
Henry Peers
George Peers
Alfred Berkahn
Edward Burkin
George Foulds
Maud Ingpen
Norman Berkahn
Francis Berkahn
Edgar Worsnop
Horace Worsnop
Nina Berkahn
Doris Berkahn
William Taylor
Mary Christensen
Arthur Christensen
Hilda Christensen
Frank Christensen

1903-1913

Adeline Hogg
Sophia Hogg
Henry Berkahn
Amy Foulds
Mary Campbell
Herbert Thompson
Sammuel Thompson
Lorna Campbell
Louis Turfrey
Ernest Turfrey
Alice Berkahn
Willie Martin
Harold Worsnop
Jack Carson
Gordon Dorreen
Willie Rumbal
George Martin
Ronald Parkinson
Charlie Dorreen
Dan Rumbal
Frank Turfrey
Emmily Turfrey
May Barlow
Jessie Avison
Lillian Douglas
Henry Barlow
Dorothy Hansen
Wilfred Worsnop
Sidney Barlow
Zoe Fletcher
Marion Fletcher
Reginald Hansen
Ellen Hansen
Sidney Hansen
Selwyn Waldrom
Gordon Morrison
Doris Turfrey
Elsie Turfrey
Grace Taylor

1914-1923

Gladys Hansen
Edith Waldrom
Myra Morrison
Agnes Johnstone
Jack Barlow
Stephen Burkin
John Taylor
Norma Callaghan
Leslie Beale
Helen Waldrom
Maurice MacRae
Nora Rasmussen
Evelyn Rasmussen
Edward Rasmussen
Esther MacRae
Gladys Turfrey
Herbert Turfrey
Ivy Miller
Marjory Johnson
Sydney Hansen
Kathleen Peers
Josephine Peers
Desmond Fahey
Kathleen Fahey
Hugh Johnstone
Russell Taylor
Lorna Fahey
Rita Tatam
Mavis Tatam
Lorna Tatam
Claude Wyatt
Clarence Turfrey
Jack Barlow
Kenneth Barlow
Martha Waldrom
Leola Hansen
Richard Jones
Harold Cornwall
Jean Cornwall
Clara Turfrey
Liela Jones
Joan Webley
Monica Webley
Donald Preston
John Preston
Valentine Green
Robert Turfrey
Ian Beattie

1934-1943

Eric Syder
John Tatam
Maisie Douglas
Mavis Cook
Phyllis Gutschlag
Roy Gutschlag
Noel Gutschlag
Elaine Cook
John Middleton
Derek Douglas
Peter Kendall
Rex Bainbridge
Allen Foulds
Stanley Cook
Allan Mason
Keith Neilson
Joyce Neilson
Peggy Neilson
Robyn Douglas
Thelma Spotswood
Myra Avison
Eric Spotswood
Margaret Logan
Jean Browning
Heather Douglas
Frederick Worsnop
Sally Porter
Robert Worsnop
Allan Loane
William McPhail
Raymond Douglas
Jack Harwood
Mary Ferguson
Margaret Barlow
Ngaire Douglas
Mervyn Timms

1944-1953

John Innes
Ngaire Rumbal
Donald Barlow
Shirley Fletcher
Sonia Smith
William Smith
Graeme Smith
Robert Smith
Veronica Middleton
Daphne Middleton
James Middleton
Maurice Middleton
Donald Middleton
Jean Middleton
Jenny Barlow
James Barlow
William Cullen
Veronica Smith
Marjory Barlow
Patricia Harris
Michael Harris
Margaret Cullen
Doreen Barlow
Richard Bradley
Elaine Ross
Paul Mason
Robert Kelly
Janice Kelly
Colin Barlow
Judith Moore
John Moore

1954-1963. cont

Phillip Heke
Aline Worsnop
Jennifer Yeoman
Vivienne Borrie
Noel Kinney
Alastair Kinney
Gregory Kinney
Anne Kinney
Denise Magnussen
Lynette Magnussen
Judy Magnussen
Peter Magnussen
Peter Borrie
Rachel Worsnop
Mary Bradley
Susan Kinney
Jeffrey Worsnop
Lynda Worsnop
Leon Magnussen
Christine Yeoman
Pamela Magnussen
Anne Worsnop
Stuart Borrie
Arinda Smith
Cheryl Smith
Timmy Smith
Perry Smith
Barbara Hall
Graeme Joyce

1964-1972

Naomi Worsnop
Wendy Macdonald
Dale Tatam
Robert Yeoman
Deborah Rayner
Benjamin Marshall
Angela Yeoman
Shona Macdonald
Alison Hall
Amy Biddle
Lovey Biddle
Awhi Biddle
Rangi Biddle
Mavis Biddle
Amelia Biddle
Bella Biddle
Timothy Rayner
Lorena Yeoman
Shaun Tatam
Jennifer Stuart
Susan Stuart
Michael Hall
Thompson Biddle
Robyn Jeffares
Rosemary Jeffares
Emma Biddle
Sonia Biddle
Martin Richardson

1954-1963

Jennifer Macdonald
Ann Macdonald
Leslie Macdonald
Donald Macdonald
Kevin Burns
Erina Burns
Graeme Moore
Keith Barlow
Christopher Morgan
Allan Foster
Ronald Burns
Bertrand Worsnop
William Bradley
Nancye Barlow
Jane Worsnop
Susan Cullen
Lynda McKenna
Jennifer Borrie
Pamela Baxter
Peter Baxter

Teachers

Most of the people attending these Jubilee celebrations will have vivid memories of teachers who have taught them during their school years. Some of these memories will be pleasant others will be memories you would prefer to forget. In general Wakarara seems to have been well served by its teachers over the years in which the school has been in existence. In the early years the teachers faced isolation, adverse weather conditions, poor transport facilities alongside the pioneers in the district. Because of adverse conditions in the pioneering years attendances at school were not good and this presented an additional burden for the teacher. The length of service to the district varied from 1 day to 6½ years. In the very early years of the school a prospective teacher was brought into the district by a local farmer in his buggy. Upon viewing the local inhabitants assembled around the post office this young girl was so upset that she spent all that night in tears and the following morning was escorted back to Waipawa by the same farmer. However, this was more the exception than the rule and another young single girl Miss M. Donald who arrived at the school adapted herself to the district and to some extent adapted the district to herself and stayed for 6½ years.

Staff:

1897 Miss Wyllie (first teacher)	1928 Miss N. L. MacDonald
1898 Mr Spurrell	1929 Mr H. Lunn
1902 Mr Ingpen	1930 Miss M. Donald
1907 Miss Foote	1937 Mr Southgate
1908 Mr F. Barnby	1942 Miss J. Smith
1911 Mrs L. R. Fletcher	1944 Miss M. Milligan
1917 Miss G. Pimley	CLOSED
1919 Miss E. Ward	1951 Mrs Leitch
1920 Miss Trolore	1951 Mr H. L. Shephard
1922 Mr C. O. Christoffer- son	1955 Mr J. Way
1923 Mrs H. W. Preston	1958 Mr P. Ascham
1926 Miss Budden	1963 Mr K. Lamason
1926 Miss V. Line	1964 Mr P. Donovan
	1968 Mr R. J. Jeffares

In researching the school's history it was obvious that each and every teacher had something unique to offer. I have included notes in this booklet on the two longest serving teachers in the school's history.

Mrs Lilian Fletcher.

Mrs Fletcher was born in England at Stanton-by-Dale in Derbyshire and she was five years old when her parents sailed to New Zealand. Her first school was Makeretu as a Pupil Teacher in 1896 and her last school was Parkvale in Hastings from which she retired in 1934. When her husband died Mrs Fletcher went back to her profession of school teaching. She commenced duties as the temporary teacher at Wakarara on the 11th September, 1911, this appointment was later made permanent. Mrs Fletcher left Wakarara nearly 6 years later to take up a war appointment at Kiritaki. Many of you who were taught by Mrs Fletcher will pay your own tribute to her. I quote from reports made on the school by visiting Inspectors, these will serve as Wakarara's tribute to this teacher. "This small outlying school situated between the Wakarara mountains is now in capital working order"—"Really good work is being done by the mistress who is the pink of neatness in all her surroundings. In manners and tone and in earnestness this school is most satisfactory."—Henry Hill, Chief Inspector of Schools.

Miss M. Donald (Mrs Boyce)

Miss Donald was Wakarara's longest serving teacher. She taught here from the 21st June, 1930 until the end of 1936. Miss Donald came from a rural background in Masterton. Miss Donald did not at first reside in the schoolhouse but boarded with a local resident and later moved into the school residence where some of the school pupils who had a considerable distance to travel to school lived with her during the week. For the first three years of her stay in Wakarara she did not have a car but travelled home on some weekends and in the holiday breaks with the timber lorry which was taking timber to town.

Miss Donald tells of bringing her bicycle to Wakarara. She set out from Onga Onga and rode and walked most of the way here. However the bicycle was never used again to transport her back to Onga Onga. One trip had obviously been enough.

Miss Donald recounts having spent an evening huddled in the schoolhouse terrified of what she took to be a prowler in the adjacent schoolroom. The prowler turned out to be an opossum. The children went swimming in Douglas's cutting. Miss Donald recalls swimming there herself and walking home in her togs throwing modesty aside and collecting firewood in her towelling cloak. During the 1931 earthquake she remembers standing back from the school and watching it vibrate.

The farewell to Miss Donald was quite a tumultuous affair and took several days to complete. The following is an extract taken from a 1936 edition of the Waipawa Mail "The 'break-up' ceremony of the Wakarara school held on Tuesday evening



School Group with teacher Mr Ingpen and his wife — 1902 - 1907.



Teacher; Miss Kathleen Foote, Back row, Harold Worsnop, Amy Foulds, George Foulds, Mary Martin, George Peers, Louie Turfrey, Norman Berkahn, Eva Jensen, Edgar Worsnop, Emily Turfrey.

Front Row: Ernie Turfrey, Willie Rumbal, May Barlow, Dan Rumbal, Queenie Berkahn, Myrtle Rumbal, Len Rumbal, Vera Berkahn, Jock Carson, Frank Turfrey.

Sitting: Gordon & Charlie Dorreen, Leslie Rumbal, Maud Berkahn, not sure of next two boys, (could be Worsnops), Henry Barlow. — 1908.

Wakarara.



The front view of the school taken around 1914. Photo by courtesy of Mrs Newmann.



The back view of the school with pupils taken between 1918-'20. Photo by courtesy of Mrs A.D. Pope.



Back Row: Joyce Neilson, John Tatam, Keith Neilson, Alan Mason, Mavis Cook.
 Front Row: Betty Neilson, Peggy Neilson, Eileen Cook, Robyn Douglas, Maisie Douglas,
 Derek Douglas, Stan Cook. Teacher: Mr Southgate - 1937.



School Hockey Teams in their new uniforms taken in 1969.

Back row left to right: Teacher, R.J. Jeffares, R. Yeoman, G. Joyce, L. Biddle, A. Biddle, M. Biddle, S. Borrie, B. Hall. Two girls standing Middle row: Amelia Biddle, L. Yeoman. Kneeling middle row left to right: D. Tatam, A. Hall, Awhi Biddle, W. Macdonald, R. Biddle, D. Rayner.
 Front Row: S. Macdonald, Robyn Jeffares, T. Rayner, B. Biddle, A. Yeoman.
 Very Front: Rosemary Jeffares.



Popular sports at the turn of the century amongst the local population were chopping and sawing. The three gentlemen in the middle are Jim Peers, Alf Berkahn, and Johnny Peers.



The Wakarara Creamery in operation around 1904 - 1905

was one of happiness, but mingled with a touch of sadness at the departure of Miss Donald who has been teaching here for the past $6\frac{1}{2}$ years.

"Mr G. W. Bainbridge, on behalf of the pupils and committee spoke with regret of the departure of Miss Donald whose work for the school had been tremendously worthwhile."

The following poem written for our Jubilee celebrations by an ex-teacher Mrs H. M. Preston who did much for the school during her stay here tells us something of how Wakarara looked to a teacher.

Memories of Wakarara

The years have rolled by with frightening speed.

So much to do, no time to heed.

Now for a brief space, let us pause to recall.

The days of youth spent in this hall.

The old school stood boldly on top of a hill.

Overlooking the road that led to the mill.

Behind the school, the small house clung.

As if for safety where fierce winds flung.

There blasts that made the rafters quiver.

Strain, rock, and groan as if in terror.

On Tuesdays and Fridays the post office woke

To serve the mail to the waiting folk.

And the bread and goods from the Onga Store

Were carried to us fifteen miles or more.

The unlined kitchen was draughty and bare

But much cheerful laughter has echoed there.

Many social evenings I can recall

With bright fires, music, and fun for all.

We bought a school library with money made

And felt our efforts were very well paid.

So many memories crowd my mind

Friendships and happy times, some not so kind.

Changes and children and their future hopes

Happy and wistful — like kaleidoscopes.

May you all relive for an hour or two

Those years gone by when life was new.

When hopes were high with visions far

A pot of gold, a shining star.

Are dreams fulfilled? I hope they are.

For the star may lead to a life well spent

To a golden deed, or a kindness meant . . .

H. M. Preston.

School Committee

Wakarara school is fortunate in that over the 75 years of its history it has been well served by the members of its school committees. These people served as the work horses of the school. The functions they served were many and varied. They ranged from fund-raising to carrying out repairs on buildings. It is unfortunate that our records are very brief and prior to 1940 all the information we have comes from the school logs which in some cases do not mention names and in a lot of cases where names are actually mentioned no Christian name is attached.

It is obvious therefore that we will, in listing the names of school committee members, have missed many. To these people and to their families I apologise and can only say that the district and school owes a debt of gratitude to all persons who have served on the school committee.

Mr A. Berkahn
Mr C. Berkahn
Mr A. Hansen
Mr H. McNeil
Mr J. Hansen
Mr Waldrom
Mr Taylor
Mr S. Barlow
Mr Peers
Mr Beattie
Mr Perry
Mr Turrey
Mr Nicoll
Mr Foulds
Mr J. Tatam
Mrs N. MacDonald

Mr Bainbridge
Mr Laugesen
Mr Goodwillie
Mr Cook
Mr A. Barlow
Mr E. Worsnop
Mr J. Porter
Mr J. Douglas
Miss M. Milligan
Mrs G. Gregory
Mr S. Douglas
Mr R. Bradley
Mrs A. Bradley
Mr D. Cullen
Mr B. Richardson
Mr B. Worsnop

Mr D. Rumball
Mr F. Worsnop
Mr J. Innes
Mr J. Innes
Mrs J. Porter
Mrs P. Ascham
Mr C. Foster
Mr W. Macdonald
Mr L. Worsnop
Mr J. Borrie
Mr R. Yeoman
Mr E. Joyce
Mr W. Hall
Mr P. Rayner
Mrs C. Tatam

The present committee is: P. Rayner, Chairman; Mrs C. Tatam, Secretary; Members: B. Richardson, W. Hall, Mrs N. MacDonald.

Many of these people listed above have given long service to the school as committee members. Our early records, although they are incomplete, indicate Mr Jack Douglas as being one of the longest serving committee members. In more recent times John Borrie, Laurie Worsnop and Bob Yeoman stand out with long service records on the committee.

Odds and ends of Whakarara History

Wakarara Post Office.

Wakarara was served for 37 years by its own Post Office. This post office had a very chequered career. The building in front of the school where it was housed for part of its life has

been partially demolished. It was also housed at the school for some of its life and operated by the school teacher. Mr Harold Worsnop recalls the post office in the days that it was operated by the school masters and mistresses. He tells of numerous interruptions to the school programme by the ringing of the telephone in the early days. All the mills conducted their business over this telephone. There used to be an opening in the kitchen door for the teacher to reach through for the telephone from the schoolroom. This opening was also used in the distribution of the mail to the district.

The following is a brief account of the recorded history of the Post Office:

Wakarara Post Office established 1st March, 1893, with postal facilities only. On the 1st of June, 1896, it was given postal note facilities. On the 9th of April, 1893, it became a telephone office as well. The postmasters were as follows: G. Douglas 1893, R. J. Douglas 1898, E. H. Ingpen 1901, R. Campbell 1903, Miss K. E. Foot 1907, H. J. W. S. Whyte 1908, Claud M. Burley 1909, Albert Niven 1911, John Hanson 1912, Miss Amy L. Hanson 1st January, 1916.

The Post Office officially closed on the 1st of August, 1929, and the telephone office closed on the 7th of June, 1930.

Creamery.

Prior to my investigations there seems some contention as to whether or not this building ever operated. However, in browsing through the diaries of Mrs Carson it became evident that this building did actually serve its intended purpose for a short period of time.

It was later used as a store and for many other purposes before it was demolished. The creamery in operation is shown in a photograph published in this booklet. By 1905 the cream was being sent to Onga Onga which would indicate that the creamery had closed.

Huia Bird.

The huia is one of New Zealand's rarest birds believed to be extinct. This bird was part of Wakarara's history. Mr Alec Peers tells of seeing this bird around the turn of the century in the Wakarara bush. He tells of his brother Johnny Peers selling huia tail feathers to a Maori. To the Maoris these feathers were a mark of rank and very much prized. Perhaps the huia still exists in some of the bush land behind Wakarara and will someday be rediscovered.

Tale of the Painted Horse.

From the diaries of Mrs Carson comes an account of the out-back sense of humour: "Brooky, an elderly travelling salesman, stayed the night at Carson's. He owned a bay horse with white

face and legs. In the morning on going to catch the horse the only one he could see was a white horse with bay legs and face. He walked by his animal several times before he realised it was his." According to Mrs Carson he was far from amused about the redecorating job and never came back.

Store on Mangataura Station.

This store was run by the Peers family and account books and lists of merchandise make most interesting reading. A wide range of goods were available. This range extended from sugar, flour, salt and other basic needs to blasting requirements. It included such items as Pain Killer which seemed to sell well, possibly because of its high alcoholic content. The store carried a wide range of clothing, both men's and women's. The following are some of the items with their prices entered in the ledgers in 1892-'93: 1 bucket 2/8d, 1 pair of drawers, 10lb of staples 2/11d, 1 pkt cigarettes 6d, 1 pair saddle straps 1/6d, 1 bag sugar 12/6d.

Wakarara Gun Club.

The gun club was formed prior to the First World War and an item from an old copy of the Waipawa Mail written by Wakarara's own correspondent marks its opening. "There was splendid weather and a good attendance at the first shoot of the newly formed gun club which took place on Saturday last. Before the matches commenced Miss Ada Peers performed the opening ceremony by firing the first shot. During the afternoon some fine shooting was shown. Results: Trophy presented by H. Whyte, J. Douglas 1st, A. Freemantle 2nd."

Extracts from Waipawa Mail, August 13th, 1907

At last the weather seems to have cleared up. For the last two weeks we have had little else but rain. The road along Gaffnee's cutting is in a very bad state, also the Papa road, making it hard for the children coming to school.

We are about to lose some of our popular residents, Mr and Mrs C. A. Berkahn and family, who I hear, intend taking up their residence in the Auckland district.

Wakarara at last seems to be making a move. Mr Burgess intends starting his sawmill in a few weeks. He has been laid up with a bad attack of "gippe," but is making a good recovery.

Our popular mailman, Mr Alf Berkham, is having additions made to his already fine residence.

Mr J. J. Peers is on a visit to Auckland.

Mr A. J. Foulds is in the Waipawa hospital about to undergo an operation. His many friends wish him a speedy recovery and return home.

Most of the settlers are busy planting and making general improvements on their places.

School Days

The following is an extract from a letter I received from Mrs Annie Oates (nee Berkahn) of Gisborne. She tells something of her schooldays "Mr Ingpen was an elderly man with a wife and one daughter (Maud). The post office was at the school-house and the only telephone in the district was there. Maud had a chestnut horse called "Consumption" and if there were any telegrams she would ride in haste to deliver them. The Ingpens were very well liked in the district. I enjoyed my schooldays. My only complaint was we lived too near the school and had to walk instead of ride as quite a few of the others rode, but my friend Annie Foulds used to let me have a ride on her horse at luncheon and that helped quite a lot.

In the winter walking to school we used to take icicles off the bank and suck them; any wonder we had chilblains. I think I was the youngest pupil when the school opened, not quite five but I made an extra one on the roll. Some were in their teens. How Miss Wyllie coped with those big boys I don't know."

Californian Thistle.

Californian Thistle hit Wakarara shortly after the bush burns and the whole bushline of the Ruahine stretched purple. Noxious weed inspectors fined all the land owners 30/- and costs because of complaints laid against them by outsiders worried about the weed.

Shearing.

Mrs Ada Tatam (nee Peers) tells of shearing on the Mangataura Station in the early years before the turn of the century. She remembers as a little girl, a gang of Maoris who rode all the way from the Waikato somewhere, possibly Hamilton, to shear at the Station. There were 33 people each riding a horse. They carried ducks and hens in boxes strapped on to the horses as well as everything else they needed. The dogs tagged along as well. Their arrival was quite an event each year and everyone turned out to watch.

Down the road they would come always in single file. One of the Maori women had a baby while at the Station and instead of bathing it as we would have done the mother took it, held it by the arms and dunked it in the river several times.

The Capture of Ellis.

Perhaps the most dramatic and controversial event in the history of Wakarara was the capture of James Ellis who was later tried and convicted of the murder of Leonard Collinson. Ellis expiated his crime upon the scaffold. Ellis was captured in a hut now known as Murderer's Hut or Ellis's Whare. This hut lies just north of the Makaroro River.

On February 26th, 1904, Collison was found shot while scrub cutting on the Te Awaiti Station near Martinborough. A police search was made for Ellis but he had disappeared into the Ranges. The shell of the bullet that killed Collinson was found 300 yards away from where he was found. Clues were reported of Ellis as he moved North through the ranges but no sightings were made. Ellis was an expert bushman and an excellent shot with a rifle. This made the task of finding him and capturing him very difficult.

Ellis made his presence felt in Wakarara by breaking into and ransacking the homestead of William Hirst which at that time was occupied by the manager of the property Mr George Douglas. A police party arrived on the scene but there was no sign of Ellis. A day or so later a shepherd saw smoke rising from the hut. The police party, together with Mr George Douglas who knew the country and acted as a guide, set off on foot along the rugged gorge at the foot of the Ruahines in an effort to capture a very dangerous man.

Detective Broburg had jumped Ellis, they handcuffed him and took him back to Hirst's. Constable Wilcock described Ellis as a walking arsenal.

He was taken from Hirst's handcuffed and driven to Waipawa in Constable Wilcock's gig and from there on a train to Wellington.

The conviction of Ellis and his subsequent hanging closes a sensational event in the history of Wakarara.

Timber Yesterday.

Timber in the early years of Wakarara's history was very much a part of Wakarara's economy. The closing of the Gardner and Yeoman Mill saw the end of an era in Wakarara history. To-day only the odd logs of native timber are trucked out of the district by farmers to be milled. In the early 1900s the bushman with his axe and saw was an important part of the Wakarara scene. Bullock and horse teams, traction engines, steam haulers and steam engines all played their part in the development of our district.

The following is a short extract from a letter from Mr A. A. Nicoll concerning pit-sawing of timber "Before Gardner and Yeoman started to mill Duff's Flat my brother bought Axel Hansen's farm. He wanted timber for a home and woolshed. My Uncle R. Dassler and I offered to pit-saw the timber which was agreed to. We were paid 18/- per 100 super feet delivered at the home site. We got 21/- per 100 super feet for the woolshed, which worked out at 2/3d per hour, good money in those days.

Burgess Mill.

On the 3rd of June the mill engine arrived for Fred Burgess' Mill and on the 11th of July, 1907, the first board was cut at the mill. This mill was situated on Mrs Carson's property which is now owned by Wilson Brothers. Little more is known about this mill. However, later on Fred Burgess bought Stacey's which is situated on the back block of what is now Mr W. Macdonald's property. This area was known as Knight's Bush probably after George Knight who owned the property at the time. Matai and Rimu were the main timbers milled from here. This mill was burnt out in 1922 and was rebuilt by Les Parkinson and Albert Collins. The timber was hauled out in a solid tyred lorry in half loads and stacked on skids at the top of Jack Douglass's cutting.

From here it was carted to Winloves, Waipukurau and to Coles, Onga Onga and then railed The trucks were backloaded with boulders which were laid on roads. This mill cut out in 1925.

Carson's Mill.—W akarara Timber Coy.

This mill was situated on Taylor's property and started operation in 1908 and cut for about four years. The mill was driven by a Brown and Maye portable steam engine. The mill was threatened by fire in 1912 and the machinery was removed. There is very little information on this mill but some excellent photographs taken while it was operating have been published in this booklet.

McCullough's Mill.

James Alexander McCullough came from a family with a milling background. He originally came from Le Buns Bay in the South Island. He had a farm at Springhill and in 1930 he opened a mill on the Silverstream property now farmed by Mr John Tatam. Some of the remains of this mill are to be found still here today. Timber was hauled to the mill across the Wai-pawa river by a steam winch. This mill operated from this site for about three years and was then shifted to the bed of the Wai-

pawa river and from here milled much of the area now farmed by Mr W. Cullen. Bullocks were employed in dragging the logs out of the bush aided by the steam winch and trucks. About 15 men were employed at this mill most of them being single men. The timber was carted out by Mr Jack Ruddick to Winloves at Wai-pukurau and some of it going to Hastings. The mill was powered by a stationary Steam engine. A steam driven traction engine was also employed around the mill. The mill finally closed in 1942.

Gardener and Yeoman's Mill

On a river flat between the stark, bleak Whakarara's and the towering snow-capped Ruahines stands the remains of a small saw-milling settlement. Now derelict this ghost town was a thriving busy community of some eighteen families in the peak years of the mill. These decaying remains stand as mute testimony to over fifty million feet of timber which had been won from the bush.

A good road leads to the mill from the Onga Onga main highway. Along this road came Charlie Gardner and Tom Yeoman in 1926, after they had successfully tendered to the State Forest Department for the felling of this bush. In their wake came a convoy of trucks laden with equipment, men and materials and the mill settlement was set up on the banks of Makaroro river. The village grew and two years later a school was built. Eighteen men worked for the mill in its peak point and at one time there were 40 children in the camp.

Most of the timber was rimu, matai, miro and white pine although there was a smattering of totara taken. The mill boasted a large steam engine of 20 horsepower with a flywheel of some 12 feet in diameter. This steam engine originally came from the Martin Sash and Door Company before it was installed in Makaroro.

A bridge was built in conjunction with the mill to haul the timber across the river and in the early years the timber was hauled out on tramlines by horses and a steam hauler. In the later years motor lorries carted out the heavy logs. Timber was also cut from the adjacent farmland. Later in 1950 electricity was laid on at the mill. The mill closed in 1956 because it simply ran out of timber to cut. Both the original members of the company are dead but Mr R. D. Yeoman still resides in the district. Mr R. D. Yeoman was one of the originals who helped build the mill.



Bush tramlines used for carting timber and logs at Jack Carson's Mill. Photo by courtesy of J. Tatam.