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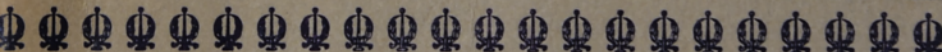
McCaw, John.
History of Tuapeka West
Mission

Course

1/6

History
of
Tuapeka West
Presbyterian
Mission

[McCaw, John]



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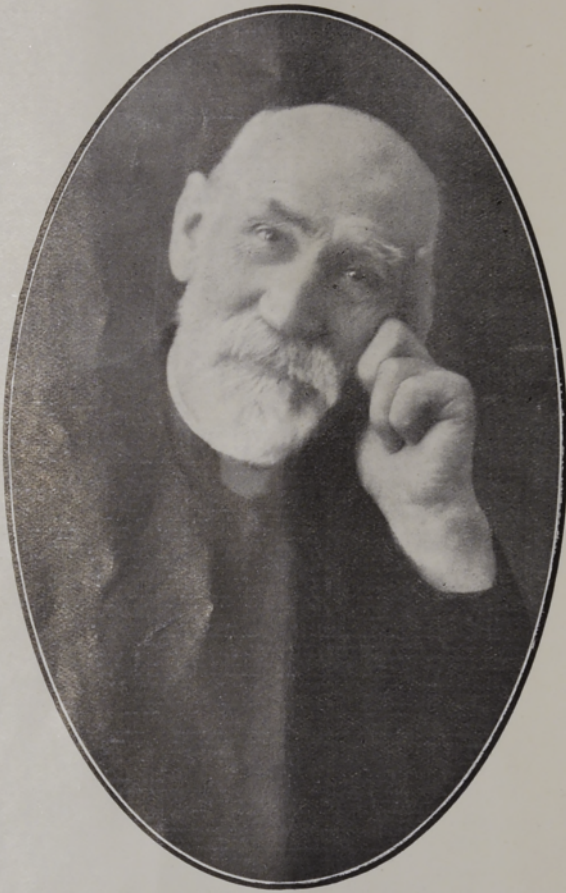
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REV. JOHN McCAW.

History
of
Tuapeka West
Mission



By Rev. John McCaw

N.Z. BOOK DEPOT
WILLIS STREET - WELLINGTON

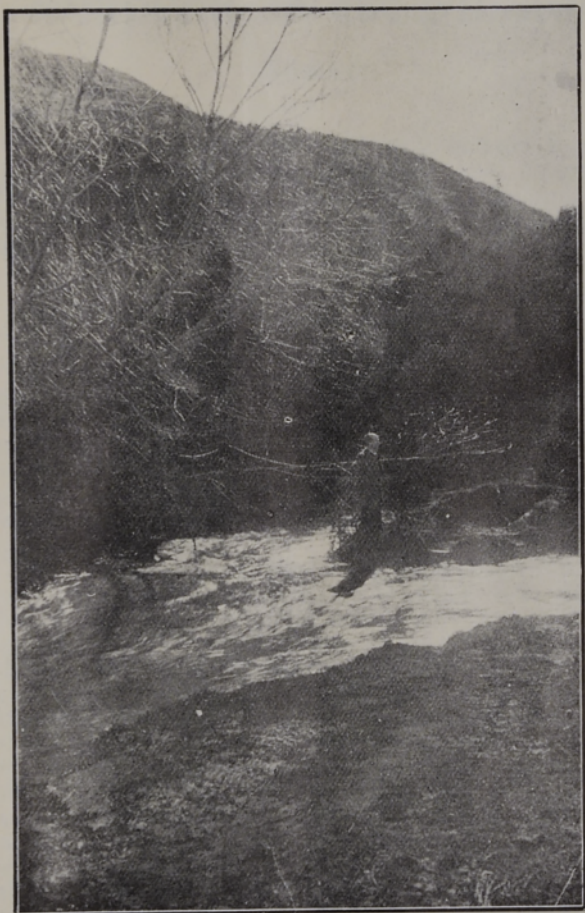
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Foreword

WHEN I went south in the beginning of April, 1924, to assist in the Semi-Jubilee Services at Beaumont, it was on my mind to write a brief historical sketch of Church life there during a period extending over half a century. In my search after reliable information I discovered that the spring whence issued the water of life was at Lawrence, the name of which was The Junction at the first. From Lawrence the spring was parted and became four heads, going north to Teviot, east to Waitahuna, south to Tuapeka Mouth, and west to Tuapeka West. I found the story of the north stream so interwoven with those of the other three that any attempt to disentangle the threads was but to spoil the whole, and a larger effort was determined on. This involved much reading of Church history, congregational records, and much correspondence, the pioneers having almost wholly passed away, and the young generation not being very well versed in the story of the various settlements. The statements made in the narrative may be relied on as substantially correct; where dates are uncertain nothing bearing the impress of finality has been written. That the young may be informed, and thereby inspired to keep the flag the pioneers hoisted flying in the breeze, their memories green, and the Glory of God promoted, is the earnest desire of the writer.

JOHN McCRAW.

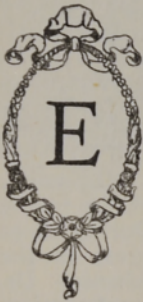
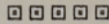
23 Paterson Street, Wellington,
August, 1926.



THE MEETING OF THE WATERS

From Gabriel's and Weatherstone's, familiarly known as "The Junction."
Mr. A. McKinlay indicating point of intersection.

.. History of .. Tuapeka West Mission



EARLY in the year 1861, Gabriel Read, a miner with Californian and Australian experience, came to New Zealand, and shortly after his arrival, visited Tuapeka. He reached Tuapeka stream, somewhere in the vicinity of where Evans Flat bridge now stands, on the 20th of May, and followed its course to the head of Munro's Gully.

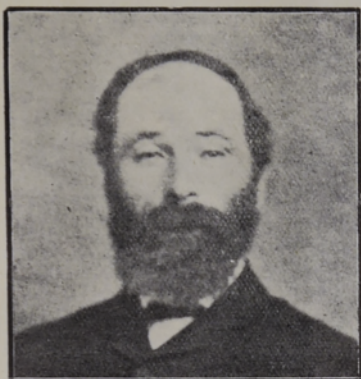
From thence he crossed the spur into the next gully which was thereafter to bear his name, and followed the creek down until he reached a flat. At a place where a kind of road crossed on a shallow bar he shovelled away about two and a half feet of gravel, and there, on a beautiful soft slate, to quote his own words, "he saw gold shining like the stars in Orion on a dark frosty night."

On the 4th of June, Read reported to Major Richardson, the superintendent of the province, that for ten hours' work with pan and a butcher's knife he had been enabled to collect seven ounces of gold. Almost immediately after Read's discovery there was an outbreak of gold fever, and the cry, "Off to the diggings," became universal. Before the end of the year it is stated that there were approximately 17,000 people on the field, but the number mentioned seems to lack historical verification. Not one Sabbath was allowed to pass without opportunity being given to all-comers to meet for public worship. On the first Sabbath of July, when about 50 people had arrived, service was conducted at the Junction by Mr. J. L. Gillies, a member of Tokomairiro Kirk Session, in the morning, and Mr. H. L. Gilbert in the afternoon. The same gentlemen officiated on the next Sabbath, and Rev. A. B. Todd, the nearest minister and the first to visit Tuapeka, on the third. Supply for some months thereafter was arranged by Otago Presbytery; but in June, 1862, Mr. Bonard, a

missionary, was stationed at Lawrence. Mr. Bonard was succeeded by Mr. T. S. Forsaith, who would have been the first minister of Lawrence but for the fact that he had a limited knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, in those days an insuperable barrier to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church.

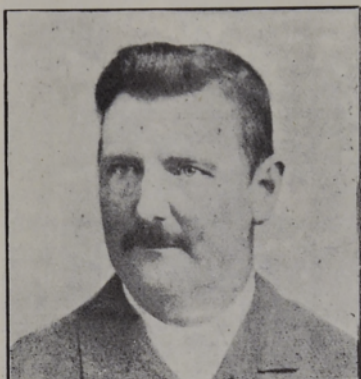
In 1864 the people requisitioned the Presbytery for the settlement of a minister among them. In the following year—May, 1865, Rev. James Copland, M.A., M.D., Ph.D., was ordained and inducted into the pastoral charge of the district. The day following the induction was observed as a public holiday in honour of the event, and closed with a soiree in the evening, which was presided over by Major Croker, the Resident Magistrate. Tickets, sold at 5s. each, were eagerly bought by people interested in the coming of a minister. During those years, 1861-64, settlements were in progress in the Teviot district, and shortly after his induction Dr. Copland visited them, and thereafter occasional services were conducted by him and Rev. James Urie, Tapanui; a Sabbath school was opened and a few earnest Christian people met frequently for Bible-reading and prayer. Two years later, these, under the guidance of Dr. Copland, made application to the Presbytery for stated ministerial supply; Teviot was declared a preaching station and Rev. Robert Telford, who had been selected by the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland for work on Otago goldfields, arrived and was placed in charge. After labouring for some months he was ordained on the 4th of May, 1868, and inducted into the pastorate to the great joy of the people.

Mr. Telford's district extended some 40 miles, and came as far south as Beaumont, where services were held monthly, and a Sabbath school opened under the care of Mr. Adam Stevenson. The necessity for a place of meeting soon manifested itself, and on the 7th March, 1870, a meeting of settlers was held to discuss the situation. A minute book was procured in which to record the proceedings of this and subsequent meetings, several sheets of which remain unto this day. The following is a copy of page 1:—"Record of proceedings of the congregation and Committee of Management of the Presbyterian Church at Beaumont, Otago, New Zealand, from the date of the first meeting held there on the 7th March, 1870, the proceedings of which form the first minute in the records."



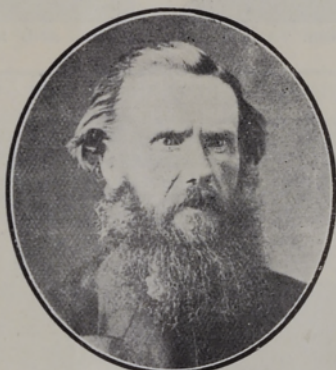
MR. JAMES CLAGUE

Native of Isle of Man. Born 1836, died 1897.
Many years S.S. Superintendent.

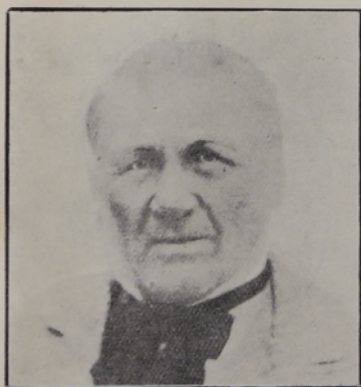


MR. JAMES HOPKINS

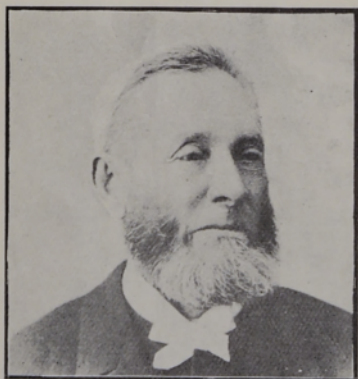
Who kept an ever open door for
Minister's horse.



REV. DR. COPLAND.



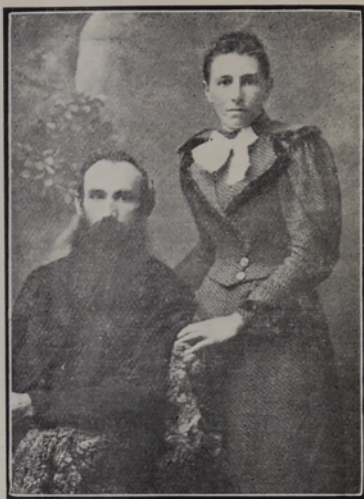
MR. WM. SMITH
Many years Treasurer.



REV. ROBERT TELFORD.



REV. JAMES AND MRS. TAYLOR



MR. AND MRS. JOHN McCAW



THE MANSE, TUAPEKA WEST

Mr. and Mrs. McCaw on Verandah.



MR. AND MRS. SMITH



MISS FRANCES BULFIN
One of the Pioneer Organists. Died as the
result of a gig accident; aged 27.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

“It may be recorded that Rev. Robert Telford, Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Mount Benger Parish (of which Beaumont forms a part), had several services at Beaumont on Sabbath days and week days from the date of his settlement as minister in May, 1868, and also several interviews with some of the residents on various matters connected with the cause of religion in the district, and specially in reference to a place of worship. For this purpose a subscription list had been sent throughout the district for some time previous to the date of the first formal meeting here recorded, and the subscriptions promised by that date encouraged those who had moved in the matter to proceed as they did at that meeting. The following, therefore, are the records of meetings of Committee of Management and congregation of Beaumont Presbyterian Church.”

At that meeting a Committee consisting of Messrs. Adam Stevenson, Donald McKinnon, John Gamble, John Main, Hugh Stewart, John Davidson, John Bryant, W. Riddell and H. W. Henderson, was elected and empowered to purchase a site and proceed with the erection of a church. Section I., Block I., Dunkeld, was purchased; plans and estimates of building were obtained; and at a meeting, held on May 10, a Subcommittee was appointed to accept a tender and proceed. Mr. McDonald built the church for £40, Mr. D. Hunter supplied the pulpit, and others the seats. It was opened by Dr. Copland, 60 people being present at the service. The Church was but a shell; but presently a school was required, and the residents contributed sufficient funds to cover the interior with match lining. As settlement increased the Church became too small to accommodate the children, and the Otago Education Board erected a school on the east side of the river in 1872. Ten years later the congregation, having quite exceeded the size of the Church, it was sold for £16, and from thence until May, 1889, public worship was conducted in the school.

“The districts lying between the parishes of Lawrence and Teviot, while enjoying the blessings of post office and common school, as for Christian ordinances would be wholly overlooked but for the self-denying zeal of Mr. Telford, Minister of Roxburgh.”—*Church Extension Report, 1881.*

EVANS FLAT.

Services were commenced at Evans Flat under the auspices of the Methodist Church in 1862. In the same year a church was opened in Munro's Gully. A Bible, now in possession of Mrs. Hopkins, Lawrence, daughter-in-law of the donor, bears the inscription: "Presented to the Wesleyan Congregation by James Hopkins, Evans Flat, 24th January, 1868." The school was opened in 1872, and the order of Sabbath school teachers, as nearly as can be ascertained is:—Mrs. Cullen (*nee* Miss Munro), Mrs. Evans, Mr. Clague and assistants, Mr. John Brook and associates, Mrs. G. W. Brook and her daughters.

TUAPEKA MOUTH.

The early religious life of the Mouth centred in the home of Mr. John Brown. It contained a "prophet's chamber" for visiting ministers—Revs. Copland, Menzies, Cameron, Skinner, Cowie and others, who, for well nigh twenty years kept the residents in touch with things Divine until the arrival of Mr. James Taylor in 1882. A silver teapot, presented to Mrs. Brown, has these words engraved on it: "Presented by the inhabitants of Dalhousie and neighbourhood to Mrs. J. Brown, in acknowledgment of hospitality freely bestowed for several years on ministers of the Gospel. March, 1873."

TUAPEKA WEST.

The Commissioner of Crown Lands, Dunedin, writes: "The earliest reference that can be found to lands in Tuapeka West District is contained in a proclamation published in the Otago Gazette of 27th January, 1875. The date of the proclamation is November 2nd, 1874, and the date on which the lands, being specified sections in Blocks II. and III., were opened for selection is November 3rd, 1874." These lands were familiarly known as "scrubby run," and were a firewood supply depot for Lawrence and surroundings until the advent of the railway in 1877. Tuapeka West Settlement was effected mainly by miners who had been more or less successful on the goldfields, the names most familiar being: Hall, Dalziel, Smith, Moore, Osborne, Williams, McKay, Mullins, Bulfin and others. At the very beginning of the settlement Sabbath school work was undertaken by Mrs. Moore, then by Mrs. Smith and Miss Osborne, Mrs. Moore having to go to Melbourne

to consult an eye specialist, where she had an eye removed. The school was opened in 1879 by Mr. Ferguson, who also became head of the Sabbath school work. Mr. Ferguson was succeeded by Messrs. Closs, Botting and McDuff. Writing of the pioneer Sabbath school teachers, Miss E. G. McKay says:—"They are deserving of special mention, all being of outstanding Christian character, viz., Mesdames Moore and Smith, Miss Osborne and Mr. Ferguson. Their thoughts for others were of the highest and best; they laboured not for themselves only, but for the good of all. By their teaching and example they sought to leave impressions on the minds of the young that could never be effaced. At their feet we lay this grateful tribute to their memory." The period immediately following the going of Mr. McDuff is shrouded in some obscurity; but about this time Mr. and Mrs. Williams took charge of the school, and for twelve years, with great devotion and without a break, they gave it of their best. When the school was closed, simply because the pioneer children had all grown up, Mr. Williams was presented with an address in recognition of his services.

Sabbath services for all-comers were conducted by Mr. Johnson (Horse Shoe Bend), the Congregational and Methodist ministers of Lawrence, and Rev. J. Skinner, Waitahuna. Rev. W. Baumber was the first Methodist minister to conduct Sabbath services, and was, probably, the first minister of any denomination who officiated in the school. Writing under date September 2nd, 1924, Mr. Baumber says:—"My memory now is defective, and I possess no diary to which I can refer. I remember my first visit to Tuaepeka West, and believe that I went there more than once for a Sunday afternoon service. I cannot, however, remember whether the services were held in a house or in the school. I left Lawrence in April, 1879, and one of my visits must have been in the early part of the year. If, therefore, the school was opened before April, the services would doubtless be held therein. Sorry I cannot be more definite."

FORMATION OF TUAPEKA WEST MISSION.

The first meeting of which there is any record in connection with the inauguration of a Presbyterian Mission was held on November 11th, 1881, and was attended by Rev. J. Skinner, Messrs. Smith, Bulfin, McKay and Dalziel. Mr. Skinner reported that Mr.

James Taylor, a native of Rothiemay, Banffshire, Scotland, who had been engaged in Home Mission work, was due to arrive shortly to begin similar work at Tuapeka West. Mr. Skinner was thanked for his zeal, and arrangements were made for the erection of a cottage manse. It was reported to the Synod of 1884 that a Mission Station, comprising Beaumont, Tuapeka West, Evans Flat and Tuapeka Mouth, had been formed, and Mr. Taylor placed in charge as from January 1st, 1882.

TUAPEKA FLAT.

Tuapeka Flat came into the Mission early in 1885, and was represented on the Committee by Mr. Geo. Murray, their first quarterly contribution to the central fund being £4. Mr. Murray acted as treasurer for fourteen years, and on resigning on account of illness, was presented with a writing desk in recognition of his services. Mr. Robert Ross succeeded him and acted as treasurer until shortly before his death. He resigned in October, 1910, having acted as treasurer for eight years.

ORDINATION OF MR. TAYLOR.

In 1887, at the request of the people, supported by Mr. Skinner and Lawrence Session, the Synod instructed the Clutha Presbytery to ordain and induct Mr. Taylor to the charge on condition that he be not open to a call from another congregation without special leave of Synod, and be no burden on the funds of the Church.

RONGAHERE.

In 1889 the upper part of the Australian and New Zealand Land Company's Clydevale Estate was opened for settlement. A school for the children of the settlers was required, built, and opened. Mr. Taylor crossed the river and conducted worship with them with great acceptance on the fourth Sabbath of each month until he was laid aside by illness. Very few of the pioneers now reside in the district, and many have "crossed the Bar," but names such as Arnott, McColl, Bunn, Gilland, etc., are remembered as among those who attended the services and took a deep interest in the good work.

DEATH OF MR. TAYLOR.

Rev. James Taylor died on September 29th, 1892. The story of his work is told in the simple inscription on his tombstone in Lawrence Cemetery: "A man greatly beloved."



DUGALD McCOLL

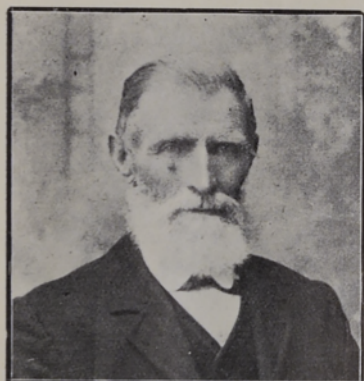


ANNIE ARNOT

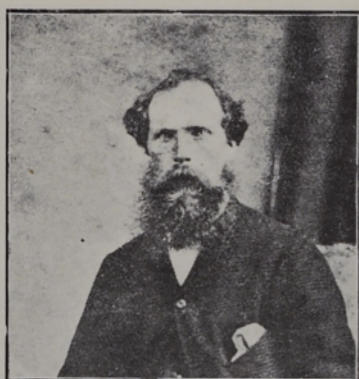


GEORGE BUNN

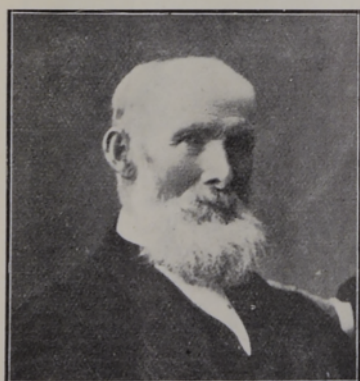
FIRST SESSION



MR. JAMES GRIEVE



MR. JOHN BROWN



MR. ADAM STEVENSON

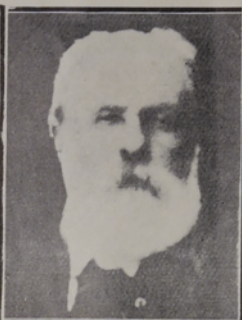


MR. HUGH M. HENDERSON

BEAUMONT CHURCH BUILDING COMMITTEE, 1899



MR. E. W. BATES
Secretary.



MR. WM. CUMMING
Chairman.



MR. JAMES McCORKINDALE



MR. JOHN JOHNSTONE



MR. ROBERT COSKERY



CHURCH AND MANSE, BEAUMONT

MR. JOHN McCAW.

On the first Sabbath of March, 1893, Mr. McCaw took up the work that Mr. Taylor in dying laid down. Eleven years later (1904) Mr. Telford resigned the pastorate of Teviot, which included Rae's Junction—the apple of his eye. On March 20th he ordained two elders—Alexander Milne and James Edwards, and finished his ministry on April 3rd by dispensing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Beaumont managers, believing that the way was thus opened for the formation of a new station and weekly services, met the brethren at Rae's in conference thereanent. The Conference ended happily, a motion affirming the wisdom of the movement being carried unanimously. This was agreed to by the southern part of the district, Roxburgh congregation, and the Presbyteries of Dunstan and Clutha; and to the Assembly of 1904 it was reported by the Home Mission Committee that a new station, comprising Rae's, Beaumont and Evans Flat had come into existence. Mr. McCaw was in charge of the whole district between Rae's Junction and the Crook Burn (Tuapeka Mouth), Waitahuna West and the summit of the Blue Mountains. With the assistance of Revs. Reid and Miller, and Messrs. Andrews, McLay, R. Blair and R. McCaw, services were kept going in the seven centres until the arrival of Mr. John Adams, Home Missionary, who took charge as from November 1st, 1904. The new station thus formed commenced under the guidance of Rev. R. S. Allan (Moderator), Adam Stevenson, Alexander Milne and James Edwards, elders. There were 41 names on the communion roll.

At a social meeting held on January 25th, 1905, Mr. McCaw was sent off laden with tokens of the people's goodwill, and Mr. Adams heartily welcomed.

Those who carried on the work as Home Missionaries in succession to Mr. Adams were Messrs. Walters, McLennan, Crockett, Dunlop and McLean, the present minister, who is loved and trusted as a faithful preacher and true friend. The Moderators since the death of Mr. Taylor have been: Revs. I. Jolly, J. A. Will, R. S. Allan, P. C. Dunward, J. S. Ponder, E. Bandy, H. Hogg, and A. Dow. The elders: Messrs. Alfred Stevenson, ordained March 4th, 1917, and David Martin, December 15th, 1907, who has also been S.S. Superintendent for 19 years.

Mr. McCaw carried on the work at Tuapeka West until the end of March, 1906. The convener of the Home

Mission Committee—Rev. David Borrie—visited the district and informed Mr. McCaw that we have a law, and by that law he ought not to be at Tuapeka West. The stay of any Home Missionary in one district was limited to three years, and he had exceeded the limit by ten years. The people were well satisfied with the ministry they had; but it was hopeless to expect a satisfied people to advance to a higher position, and the goal the Church ever had in view was a settled ministry. Mr. McCaw fully concurred, and was transferred to Levin, on the west coast of the North Island. Before leaving, Mr. and Mrs. McCaw were entertained at a social meeting and sent off with forty sovereigns enclosed in a pretty net purse. "The gold of that land is good."

The work was then taken up by Mr. S. Gaston, student, and there followed him Messrs. Fleming, Pate, Anderson, Cawley and S. J. Webb, Home Missionaries. The elders associated with them have been—Messrs. Robert Hunter, John Porter, George Steel, Christopher Dalziel, Samuel Young, David Blair, R. H. Fairbairn, L. M. Valpy, E. W. Hayman and A. T. Guthrie. The Moderators, as at Beaumont, have been the ministers of Lawrence and Waitahuna.

THE PIONEER ELDERS.

The elders associated with Rev. James Taylor after his ordination were Messrs. John Brown and James Grieve (Tuapeka Mouth), Adam Stevenson and Hugh McKay Henderson (Beaumont). Mr. Brown was a native of Sutherlandshire, Scotland, and came to New Zealand on the ship Silistria in November, 1860. Leaving his wife and infant son in the Immigration Barracks, he went up country in search of work as a shearer. This he found in the sheds between the woolshed (Glenore) and Waitahuna. At the close of the season he brought his wife and child from Dunedin and settled near Waitahuna. When Gabriel Read was on his way from Tokomairiro to search for gold he foregathered with Black Peter, and together they spent a night with the Browns and enjoyed their hospitality. Early in the morning the gold-seekers pursued their way. Before going, however, they told Mr. Brown that they had "bottomed" a hole, indicating the position, but did not consider the "dirt" rich enough to warrant their staying to wash it. He could have it if he wished. Mr. Brown went to look at it one morning after a heavy rain, and saw the specks of gold shining in the clay like stars in the sky. Mr.



CHURCH, TUAPEKA MOUTH



MR. ARCHIBALD MOFFAT
Donated £100, building Rae's
Junction Church.



MR. ALEX. MILNE



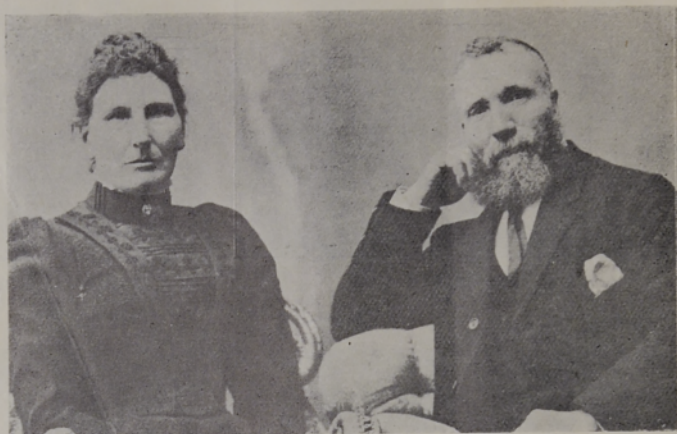
MR. AND MRS. ROBERT WOOD
Donors of Beaumont Manse Site and Glebe



CHURCH, RAE'S JUNCTION
From Plans by W. A. McCaw, Invercargill.



MRS. RICHARDSON
Rae's Junction



MR. AND MRS. JOHNSTONE
Beaumont.



MR. AND MRS. GRIEVE
Tuapeka Mouth.

Whose homes were latterly the main centres of hospitality
for visiting ministers.

Brown's shepherd instincts, however, impelled him to seek wealth in the golden fleece rather than in the golden sand. He obtained employment as a boundary rider (shepherd) with Messrs. Musgrove and Murray, and went out to Slamanan—the same is Brown's creek—and resided there until 1867, when he removed to Dalhousie—Tuapeka Mouth—and built a cottage in which he lived and died, and from which his mortal remains were carried to the cemetery. On May 16th, 1903, Mr. Brown was presented with a Family Bible on which is inscribed these words: "Presented to Mr. John Brown, Tuapeka Mouth, 36 years a settler in the district; 14 years an elder in the Presbyterian Church, by the members, adherents, and friends of the Church because they love him." He died on August 6th, 1903, and his sons, Alexander and Robertson, buried him.

Mr. James Grieve was a native of Forfarshire, and came to New Zealand in the early sixties. He "tried his luck" at the diggings, then went down to Greenfield Station and worked as a farm hand there. The agricultural industry having developed somewhat, he saw the need for a threshing mill, and, in company with Mr. Wm. Robins, procured one and worked it. Later he bought a farm near the Mouth, which he worked most skilfully and successfully for full 40 years, removing to the Mouth after selling out. He was a warm supporter of the Church, an elder and S.S. teacher for nearly 50 years. For many years he acted as precentor, and when superseded by the organ, was made the recipient of an illuminated address. The home of the Grieves was noted for its abounding hospitality. A more upright man never lived. He died on February 17th, 1922, and sleeps in Tuapeka Mouth Cemetery.

Mr. Adam Stevenson was born in County Tyrone, Ireland, and when quite a young man emigrated to Victoria; but was induced by Mr. James Adam to leave that colony and come to New Zealand. He came over in 1861 and settled at Beaumont in 1869. To the day of his death 36 years later he was a member of the Church, and for 31 years acted as precentor. When he retired, owing to the introduction of the organ, he was presented with a Bible and an address. The inscription on the Bible states that he had been 31 years precentor, 17 years a Sabbath school teacher, and 11 years an elder. He died in Dunedin Hospital on May 22, 1905, and two days later his body was laid to rest in Lawrence Cemetery.

Mr. Hugh McKay Henderson was a quiet man who attended to his business (general store), but did not forget the other part of the precept enjoining fervency of spirit in the service of the Lord. For many years he conducted a Sabbath school for all who cared to attend. He always prepared the "Lord's Table" at Communion seasons, in which he took much delight. When he left the district, having sold his business, at his own request no mention of his going was made further than a few suitable words from the minister during the last service he attended. He died in Dunedin on April 18th, 1907.

BUILDINGS.

The Manse, Tuapeka West, was built by Mr. Walker and cost £310.—1882.

A Congregational meeting, held at Beaumont, decided to erect a new church on, as nearly as possible, the exact spot on which the first church stood. This church was built by Robertson and Grant and cost £247 9s. 3d., which sum covered all furniture, bell and fencing. It was opened by Rev. James Somerville (Waihola) on May 14th, 1899. Mr. Stevenson led the singing, the first song of praise being Psalm 100. Messrs. Henderson and Bates were the office-bearers on duty. The opening was followed by a social meeting on the Monday night, when addresses were delivered by Revs. J. A. Will, J. Somerville and W. A. Kydd. The church at Rae's was opened by Rev. P. C. Durward on July 28th, 1915. The Manse at Beaumont was built by Messrs. Shephard and Strong, their tender for the contract being £363. At a meeting of Committee, held at Tuapeka Mouth on January 23rd, 1904, it was resolved to write the Otago Land Board, pointing out the suitability of Section 17, Block I., Waitahuna West District, held by the Board as a mining reserve, as a church site, and enquiring as to the possibility of the reserve being removed, and the upset price. Negotiations were successful, and the land was transferred to the Church Property Trustees. On January 2nd, 1908, a canvass for money to erect a church was authorised. Application was made for the usual Synod grant, and on August 6th plans were approved and sent to the Presbytery. On October 20th the tender of Messrs. Bulfin and Rattray (£276 11s.) was accepted. The church was opened on March 7th, 1909, by Rev. John Kilpatrick, minister of Green Island.



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