

Two excerpts from

'A TOWNSHIP LIKE OURS'

by Dell Adsett, recalling early days in Colyton.

'Miss Alice Shepherd was, many years later, Superintendent of St Andrews Sunday School and she was remembered with great affection and respect by hundreds of scholars.

For attendance a silver star was pasted inside the purple cover of a hymn book. These small things were truly remembered. They were a part of childhood.

It was also a part of childhood to giggle helplessly through the singing of a hymn because the organist had played a wrong note. Or some mundane sound had filled a sacred silence - such as a cow bellowing in a nearby paddock. It was enough to make the whole pew rock with laughter. Maybe a small coin purse would drop with a clatter on to the bare boards; or somebody sneezing.

In the church one day a young boy let a frog loose during Sunday School lessons and it was shrieks instead of giggles which filled the church'.

And another story:

'For a long time, the Hotel attracted an assortment of characters.

The remittance men from 'home' who were sent out to the Colonies by embarrassed but wealthy relatives.

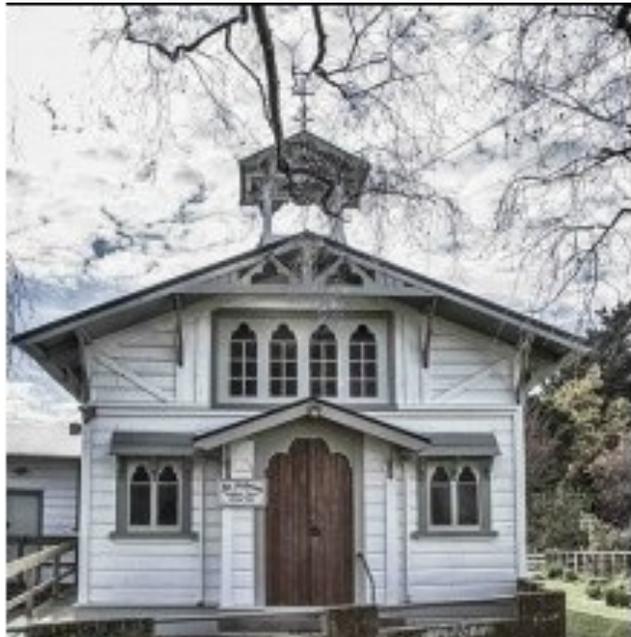
In Colyton these men were tolerated with good humour and could be said to have added colour to the scene, because they were always well educated. These cast-aways whose only sin was the bottle. They had seen much of the world and were good raconteurs. Most of them, in the jargon of that time, were considered 'toffs' who had slid fast and long from the top of a social scale, until finally hitting the gutter.

In their sober moments these men showed little remorse. They had found a kind of freedom and they were always likeable. Even the rogue dressed up 'to kill' complete with top hat as he stood outside the Hotel on sale day, wearing dark glasses and carrying a white stick.

This way he could obtain enough money to sustain his mind in a state of buoyancy for several days. They said he spoke like a 'real toff'. No New Zealand twang or dropping off letters for this man, even when he became 'shickered'.

These small excerpts made me smile. The Sunday School story could have been about my local Sunday School at Brunswick, often ending with stern words from my Mother. R H.

Colyton Church



Coach House Chronicle

Volume 6
Issue 19

July
2019

in association with

Feilding & Districts Community Archive

A collection of interesting items for friends and supporters of 'The Coach House'

Museum Mural Dedicated

Sunday 23rd June 2019 saw a crowd gather at the Coach House Museum for the dedication of the mural.

It depicts our local pioneering history from Maori settlement; arrival of pioneers, to present time.

Designed and painted by local artist, Joe McMenamain, the mural is 90 metres long. Many of the items portrayed in the mural are on display inside the museum or are scenes from round the town.

Museum Trust Chairman, Bryan Guy thanked the sponsors and others who were involved with the mural.

Mr Dick Earle, of Earle Creativity and Development Trust spoke about the Trust and their pleasure in helping local interests, and admired the finished work. This Trust was part sponsor of the mural.

Artist, Joe McMenamain described how the mural evolved and his pleasure at completing the work, and his wife Reverend Sarah McMenamain blessed the mural.

Mayor, Helen Worboys congratulated the museum on its significant presence in the community and declared the mural open.

Below, Joe McMenamain, artist.



Walter George Pearce

story continued:

The first Sunday Church Services were held in Mr G Farmers kitchen and were conducted by the Reverend T G Hammond, the well-known Maori missionary, and the first Sunday School was opened by Mr H Sanson in his home in that same year.

As Father had been a bushman and there was neither timber or water on our section he decided to sell out and take up land in a new block which was just thrown open for free selection by the Government on the 10 years deferred payment scheme and he surrendered the Sanson Block. He took up one section and took another on the south side of the Taipo Road, a small part clear, the balance bush. Price one pound per annum. For some of the block the price was increased along Penny's Line to 30 shillings and on the Mt Steward Road to 2 pounds per annum. This block was thrown open about 1873.

Settlers came from all parts; Messers Speedy, Port, Ellerm from the Lower Hutt; Bishops, Gibbs, Gifford, Kew and Very from Nelson; Mathews and Eglington, from Wairarapa; Penny and Davis from Otago; Phillips from Gollamas Valley; Drummond from Turakina; McKenzie and Wheeler from Porawanui, and later the Henson's from Wanganui.

Mr H Hammond secured the homestead at Waitohi which he had leased as a sheep run from the Government prior to the land being offered for selection. By virtue of his lease he had the first offer to purchase the homestead of 640 acres. All the settlers on this and the Sandon Blocks were the right sort to prosper. All the land is now is highly improved and very valuable, reaching as high as 90 pounds per acre recently. (1920)

To give an idea of the rise in prices between then and now; a farmer had several hundred bags of oats for sale. The best price offering was one shilling four

and a half pence per bushel f.o.p. In English papers those oats were worth 2 shillings and 6 pence to 3 shillings in London. He approached a firm with a view of shipping the grain to London. He was told that it would cost 10 pence per bushel, freight and charges, so he decided to ship. The oats were sold at average 2 shillings and 9 pence in London. On receipt of account sales he found he received exactly 1 shilling and 4 and a half pence, the difference being absorbed in charges equal to 1 shilling 4 and a half pence, instead of 10 pence. The settler had a grave suspicion that the firm doing the business was interested in keeping down the price of oats and upped the expenses so as to nip in the bud, the export of oats.

Extension of Walter Pearce's story written for the 'Colyton Centennial, 1984'.

Upon hearing about the prime land at Mangaone, Walter Pearce, now a young man, decided to ride out and see the district for himself. And it was while riding past that area of land where the Caldwell homestead now is, that he stopped to pass the time of day with one of the Ashworth brothers, Harry, who was enjoying a quiet smoke while seated on a tree stump. The two men naturally began talking and it transpired that the property next door to Ashworth's had come on the market again after a previous deal had fallen through. Walter Pearce liked what he saw and wasted little time in riding back to Feilding to sign up for the purchase, of 198 acres, much to the ultimate benefit of Mangaone and generations to follow.

For several years he lived a bachelor existence before returning to Sanson to marry Sophia Harris. The homestead he built was completed in 1892 in a sheltered valley along the road north of the township.

During this time there was much bush felling in progress and 2000 acres was still in standing bush, a marked contrast to the fertile fields of today.

The following list is by no means conclusive but helps us gain some measure of Walter Pearce's involvement in the district. In 1889 he was voted in as Warden on the Manchester Road Board and during lengthy service extending into the changed name of Oroua County Council. He was made Chairman and Acting Chairman over a period of years. In 1893 he called a meeting for erection of a Creamery or Dairy Factory in Colyton. In 1894 he was elected President of Colyton Cricket Club. 1900 called a meeting re Mild Cure Bacon Company. Represented the Road Board on the Palmerston North Hospital Board. Re-elected director of Woodville Bacon Company. Re-elected President of N Z Farmer's Union in 1906. He also found time to liberate trout into the Mangaone Stream, a particular spot much favoured by Colyton School and church groups and known as Pearce's Bush. A more permanent landmark is Pearce's Hill which is just the kind of memorial

Walter G Pearce would wish to have in commemoration of his name. He died in 1943 and leaving one son, the late Newell and three daughters, Alice Mrs Tutty), Nina (Mrs Chowen), and Miss Lilla Pearce, Feilding.

Newell married Miss Jessie Viles, and they farmed the properties on the Colyton Road and another block on Spur Road East. Two sons, Keven and Winston now farm this land, while two other sons went north; Noel to establish a kiwi fruit packing business, while Alvin has an engineering enterprise in Te Puke.

Some facts about Walter George Pearce.

Born: 5 April 1857, Hutt Valley, New Zealand

Married Sophia Ann Helen Harris

Died: October 1934, aged 77 years in Feilding

The handwritten notes, completed by Walter Pearce were given to me by Winston Pearce, his grandson. R H



Mr Walter Pearce, second from left, in front of their home that still stands today on the left, travelling towards Valley Road, at the bottom of Pearce's Hill.