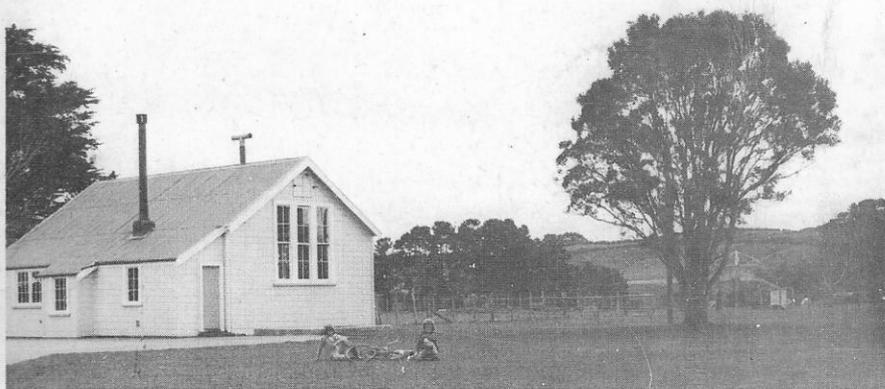


KOHI

SCHOOL  
CENTENNIAL



1876

1976

# KOHI SCHOOL

This booklet is an endeavour to record the history of the Kohi School and district over the past century.

I am sure those responsible for its contents have found it a very interesting experience.

The School has always been regarded as the centre of our community, and has played a major part in maintaining the good relations and loyalty that prevails. I hope it will continue to play this important role for many years to come.

The grand support the executive has had in planning the Centennial celebrations, should ensure a very enjoyable weekend for those fortunate enough to attend.

L. T. HONE  
Chairman.



Replica of Kohi Rock carving



Back Row: Leslie Mackie, George Mackie, Ted Miller, Laurie Fleetwood, George Miller, Willie Walker, Robert Johnstone.

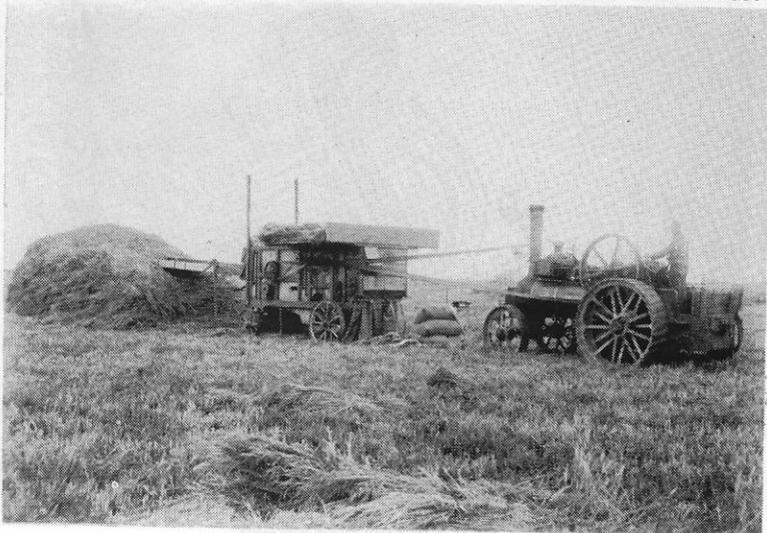
4th Row: Mable Howie, Beatrice Bennett, Edith Wilkins, Edith Dickie, Ada Walkinton, Adalaide Bremer, Bella Walker, May Johnstone.

3rd Row boys: James Riddell, Walter Watkins, David Walker, Norman (Lachie) Walker, Willie Johnstone.

2nd Row girls: Mary Howie, Agnes Watkins, Maud Bennett, Millie Howie, Louie Wilkins, Annie Johnstone, Olive Walker, Maggie Riddell, Jeanie McLean, Lizzie Walker, Pene Hone, Violet Hone.

Front Row boys: Willie Bremer, Jack Bennett, Gordon Walker.

TEACHER Mr Fred Mason.



Harvesting in Kōhi, 1908.

1866

1976

## KOHI DISTRICT

As the celebration of the first one hundred years of the Kōhi School approaches, the Centennial Committee feel that a brief record of the districts history would be a fitting introduction to the story of the School itself.

Several neighbouring schools in the South Taranaki — Wanganui area, have recently held Centennial celebrations and published histories of their respective districts. All have enjoyed the advantage of being able to draw on well documented records of the exciting events of the decade 1860 — 1870, when troubles between European and Maori dominated the scene.

Kōhi can make no claim to such a colourful past, as the district was entirely uninhabited by either race at that time. The district served by the Kōhi Schools is situated partly in Taranaki and partly in Wellington Province. It is bounded by the Kōhi stream from it's source to its junction with the Whenuakura river, then follows the river back to Nukuhau and across to the Kōhi.

A century ago it was almost completely isolated by the formidable barriers of the Kōhi and Karahaki gorges, this probably being the reason no white man had attempted to settle there. The Maoris did know the area, as there was some evidence of temporary occupation, such as cooking sites and cultivation plots, also, a number of stone adzes and other artifacts have been found. However, nothing permanent, such as Pa sites or earthworks as are found so frequently in adjoining areas. There is also evidence that Kōhi may have been known in pre-Maori times, as a large rock carving was found on the Northern face of the Kōhi gorge, on the property now owned by Mr T. Simson. This carving was found by Mr John Ion, one of the original owners of the property, in 1895. Mr Ion did not disclose his find till twelve or fifteen years later, when he mentioned it to a neighbour Mr W. Hone, who reported it to the Curator of the Wanganui Museum.

Enquiries were made among leading Maoris at Waitotara, Ngutuwera and Whenuakura, but none knew of its existence or were able to explain its meaning. Intensive investigations have since been made, but no satisfactory explanations of its origin has been established. It is generally believed to be of considerable antiquity, and is now protected by the Historic Places Trust.

When discovered, the carving was in excellent condition, but with the passing of time, it has suffered from increasing exposure to weather, and the unwelcome attention of vandals. Several conflicting stories have been published about the finding of this work. The correct version being that told in the "Wanganui Story", by Mr J. C. Smart and A. P. Bates.

In 1912, a small cave was found nearby by Messrs L. S. Mackie, A. S. Hone and E. C. Hone. This contained human remains, a complete skeleton, minus the skull. The absence of a skull raises speculation about the custom of Wanganui Maoris, of drying and preserving the heads of tribal chiefs, or of chiefs killed in battle.



Penfolds 1844

## Penfolds Medallion Sparkling Wines, the traditional way to celebrate.

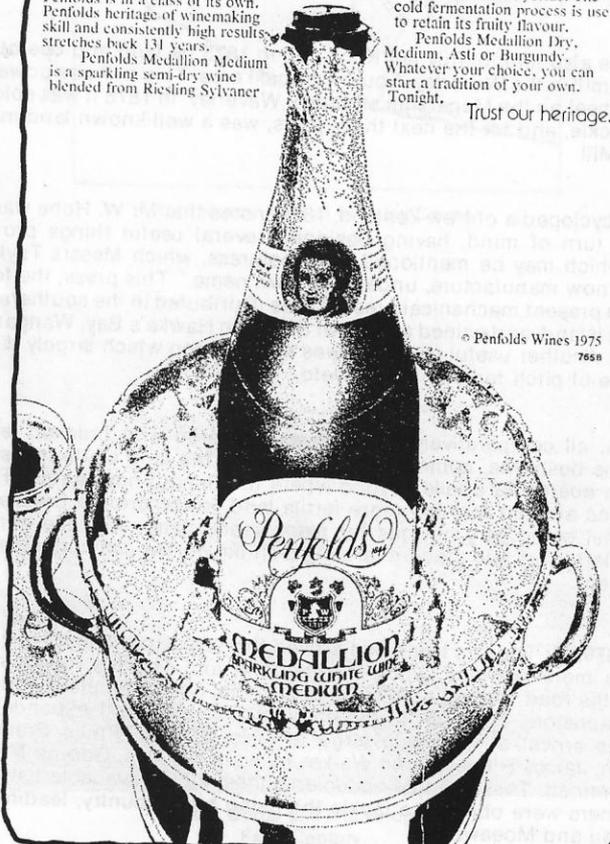
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The main handicap to early progress, was the lack of a road across the Kohi gorge, this adding to the difficulty of obtaining material and equipment to clear, fence the land, and erect buildings. A road was eventually constructed by the combined efforts of the settlers themselves, using picks, shovels and wheelbarrows. This was followed by the formation of the Kohi Road Board, which maintained and improved the roads to the best of their ability with some limited resources, until 1917, when the Patea County Council took over and gradually proceeded to provide the excellent roads of today.

The first wheeled vehicle brought across the gorge was a block dray, owned by the Hone brothers. It was lowered with ropes down the steep hill, known as "Old Buffalo" (now the course used by the Waverley Dog Trials Club) then manhandled up the opposite side some distance below the present road.

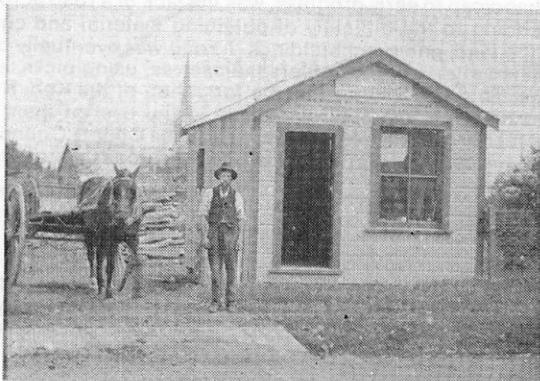
The early years produced little return for hard work, however the farms were gradually cleared, fenced and grassed, and the first livestock was brought in about 1872. All fencing was of the ditch and bank variety, on which gorse was planted. This type of fencing was used in many areas, and proved highly effective, but unfortunately, the plant found soil and climate so much to its liking, that it quickly got out of control to become New Zealand's most troublesome noxious weed.

Early farming consisted mostly of growing potatoes, and other vegetables for the settlers own use, or to barter for supplies from the storekeepers in Waverley.

In 1876, the first school was opened. The building was little better than a rough shack, and was the subject of continuous complaints, throughout its existence of nineteen years, when a new school was built in 1895. The school logbook for that period makes interesting reading. Children were frequently kept at home for planting, or digging potatoes. By 1883, a considerable number of sheep had been introduced, and the logbook states that most children were kept home to assist with shearing.

As this was before the advent of refrigeration, there was no outlet for the disposal of fat sheep, so the Ion brothers set up a boilingdown works, the tallow being exported in large casks. Prime mutton was given away or sold for just a few pence.

With the start of flourmilling in Waverley, grain growing became popular, and was the mainstay of the district for some twenty years.



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**The firm has pleasure in extending its congratulations to the Kohi School on attaining their 100th year of education to the Kohi District. We also extend our best wishes for the Kohi School Centennial Celebrations.**

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PHONE 5 — MAIN STREET

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In 1887 the school attendance was again depleted by children being kept away for harvesting. Mr George Mackie operated the first threshing plant consisting of a portable steam engine, combined threshing mill and elevator and chaffcutter. These machines were drawn by bullock teams, six or eight bullocks to a team. In later years, traction engines provided power for both hauling and operating.

The 1903 season saw a distressing accident while chaffcutting on the Ion brother's farm. Mr Tom Sinclair was feeding the machine, when his left arm was drawn into the cutter, the remainder of the arm having to be amputated just below the shoulder.

By 1908 grain growing had come to an end, being replaced by fat lamb, mutton, beef and dairy farming. One of the last threshing machines to visit Kohi, met with near disaster, when returning across the gorge. Halfway down the hill on a sharp bend, the combine slipped over the edge. Fortunately the traction engine remained on the road, the coupling held, and the mill was left dangling over the cliff throughout the night. Next day, a Sunday, a large gang of men gathered from miles around. They rigged a series of blocks and tackles and by late afternoon had man-hauled the heavy machine safely back on the road.

Dairy farming can be said to have commenced in 1894. Up to that time most farmers had milked a few cows for their own use, surplus butter being sold in Waverley. That year, the newly formed Waverley Dairy Company, opened a butter factory in Waverley, at the same time opening a creamery at Kohi. The first manager was Mr George Mackie, who, some years earlier had the first threshing machine.

This creamery supplied the Waverley factory until 1908, when Mr E. P. Blake bought it and supplied the Stainley Park factory until it closed in 1911. In 1905, another creamery was opened in upper Kohi by Mr O. W. Oldham who owned a butter factory at Patea. This second creamery was on the farm now owned by Mr O. Poad, and served a large herd milked by Mr Raynor, on that property. Three years later it was removed to the hospital lease near the Kohi gorge, where it was supplied by a 100 cow herd owned by Mr George Bishop.

About this time dairy farming was becoming more attractive, and early in 1912, a canvass of the district, initiated by Mr W. H. Watkins, secured a promise of supply from over twelve hundred cows.

The Kohi Cooperative Dairy Company was now formed, a cheese factory replaced the creamery and cheese production began in the Spring of that year. The first manager was Mr F. Brooking, then Mr C. Crews, followed by Mr J. McCall, who in 1924 was awarded the Taranaki championship for Cheddar cheese at the Hawera Winter Show.



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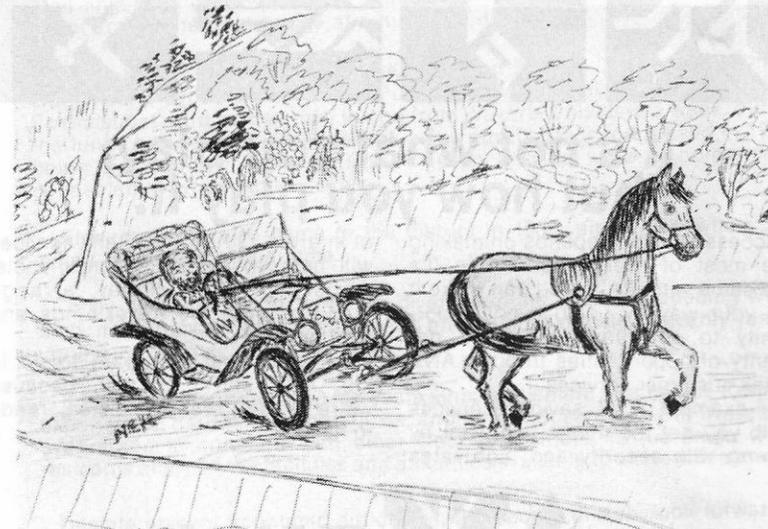
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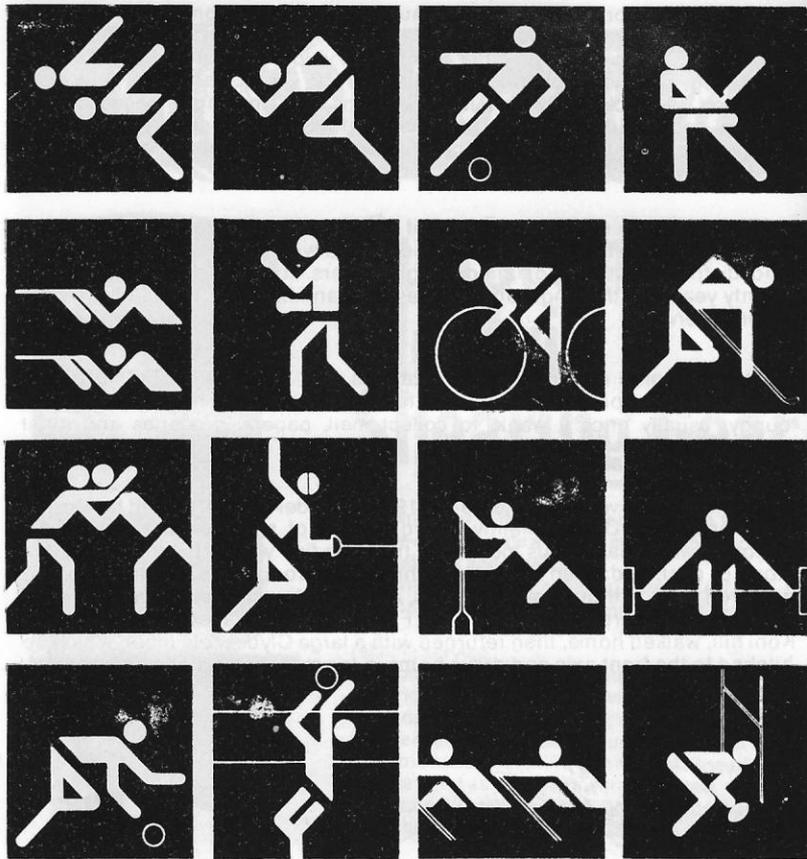
Peak production, of about three hundred and sixty tons of cheese was reached during the years of World War II, then supply gradually diminished until 1954, when the Company went into voluntary liquidation, the few remaining suppliers joining the Whenuakura Dairy Company. Milk was collected by truck for two or three seasons, this making it necessary for farmers to provide two sets of cans. In 1958, the Company introduced milktankers, being only the second Company in Taranaki to adopt this modern method of milk collection.

The year 1898 saw the building of a district Public Hall, on the School reserve. This hall has been the focal point for a wide variety of entertainments and district functions for almost eighty years. It was also used for some twenty years, by the Anglican and Presbyterian Ministers, to hold fortnightly Church services.

For over half a century, communications with Waverley and other places were extremely primitive, residents having to travel by horseback, gig or buggy, usually once a week, to collect mail, papers, groceries and other supplies.

The first motor vehicle appeared in 1911, a Model T Ford, owned by Messrs H. G. and C. D. Dickie. Mainly owing to lack of metal on the Kohi road, motoring was a hazardous method of travel. In fine weather, cars moved in a cloud of dust, and when wet, forced their way through a sea of mud. No one ventured forth without a set of chains, and assortment of earthmoving tools, in case of an emergency hold up. One Ford driver, who failed to negotiate the Kohi hill, walked home, then returned with a large Clydesdale mare, which he hitched to the front axle and drove home in triumph, behind one horsepower.





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Ready to listen — Ready to help.



Motoring in those days was reasonably free, if not always easy. One could call on a car dealer, buy a car, get in and drive away as best he could. No driving instruction, no driver's licence, no warrant of fitness, no annual registration, no traffic officers, and strangely enough, no road toll. Another humorous incident on the Kohi Hill, concerned another Ford driver, who decided his brakes were not holding too well. He attached a rope to the rear axle directed his wife and four children to hold on, while he carefully steered to the bottom. The car soon proved too heavy for the human brake, the rope slipped through their fingers, and a few seconds later, the family were relieved to see the car shoot across the Kohi bridge at a high rate of speed.

A telephone and mail service to Kohi began in 1910. A small Post Office stood near the road, in front of the Public Hall. Miss Ethel Armstrong was first Postmistress, and carried mail to and from Waverley, six days a week, during the lunch hour, either on horseback or by glg. This service ceased in 1932, being replaced by the present Rural Delivery Service, while all homes were connected by phone to Waverley.

Electric power also came to the district in 1930, almost the whole area being reticulated at that time.

Today, farming in Kohi is widely diversified, the district producing wool, lamb, mutton, beef, dairy produce and after a lapse of nearly seventy year, a significant quantity of grain.

It is now one hundred and ten years since settlement first began. Kohi has experienced hard times, good times, and times not so good. But overall has progressed in common with other Country districts, to the stage where residents enjoy all the facilities and amenities available to all New Zealanders.

Despite present economic difficulties, the people of Kohi look forward to the future with hope and confidence.

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1868 Gibson's Stores Ltd. 1976

1876 Kohi School 1976

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As a Centenarian Gibson's Stores Ltd. congratulate the district. We too have been proud to have given service to Kohi School on giving one hundred years of service to the the people of Patea and surrounding districts for over 100 years. Let us celebrate together this historic occasion.

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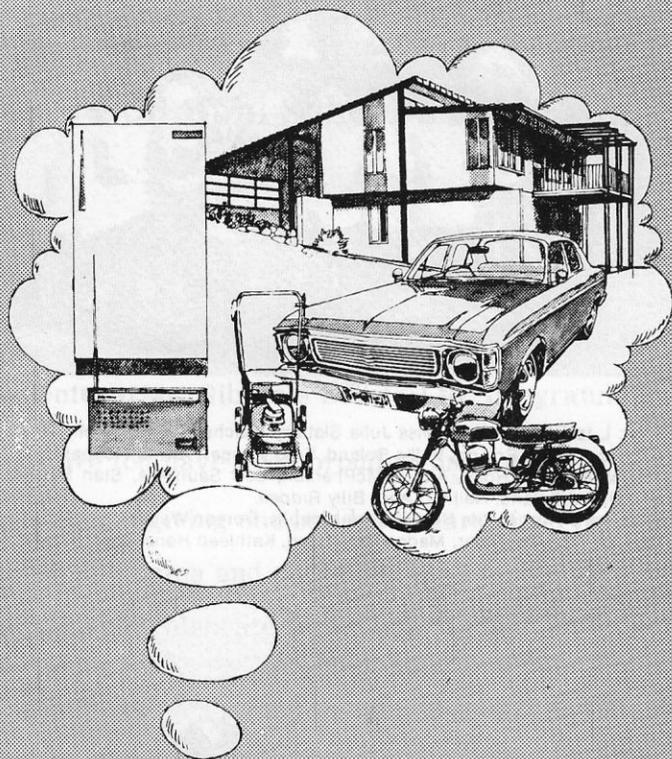


1906

Back Row: L to R: Ida Howie, Miss Julia Slattery Teacher, Tom Riddell, Cliff Hone, Watty Robertson, Eddie Soland, Willie Soland, Fred Hooper, Arthur Hooper.  
Middle Row: Sheldon Hone, Angus McPherson, Bert Saunders, Stan Soland, Jim Robertson, Wilfred Soland, Neil McLean, Billy Riddell.  
Front Row: Irene Howie, Rita Howie, Elsie Nicholls, Doreen Watkins, —, Kate Howie, Thelma Cooper, Florrie Cooper, Madge Robertson, Kathleen Hone, Lizzie Howie.



Back Row: — Mr William Watkins (Chairman School Committee); Jessie Armstrong; E. Soland; Gertie Coleman; Stuart Partridge; N. Murray (Teacher).  
Middle Row: — Carnie Watkins; Colin Campbell; Doreen Watkins; Ronald Bates; Ivy Roscoe; Phyllis Armstrong.  
Front Row: — Robbie Watkins; Albert Armstrong; E. Watkins; Gordon Watkins; Guy Campbell.



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1926

At Back: Walter Mitchell, Gordon Paul.  
4th Row: L to R: Willie Mitchell, Sadie Paul, Lilian Powell, Rita McCall, Francis Powell, Maisie Waterland, Nellie Young, Vivian Hammond, Adalaide Powell, Betty Hopkinson, Bill Powell, Roy Newland, George Newland, Bob Young.  
3rd Row: Bert Young, Charlie Hawkes, Joan Hughes, Clare Newland, — Hawkes, Grace McCall, Joan Neilson, —, —.  
2nd Row: Lucy Hone, Dorothy Mountfort, Beryl Hill, Jean McCall, Dorothy Young, Douglas Paul, — Oliver, — Paul, Harry Powell, Arnold Oliver, Jack Hopkinson, Charlie Oliver, Matt Hammond.  
Front Row: — McCall, Joyce Hill, Bob Oliver, Noel Oliver, —, —.



1931

Back Row L to R: Miss Vera Gilmour Teacher, Betty Hopkinson, May McCall, Dorothy Mountfort, Lucy Hone, Joan Hughes, Violet Young, Joyce Hill, Dorothy Young, Beryl Hill, Viola Morrison, Mr C. E. Mountfort Head Teacher.  
2nd Row: Beth McCall, Valerie Gulliver, Violet Soland, Diana Hughes, Joyce Nicholson, Myra Morrison, Eileen Oliver, Phyllis Oliver, Jim McCall.  
3rd Row: Claude Waterland, Arnold Oliver, Matt Hammond, Harry Powell, Lyall Oliver, Charlie Oliver, Jack Hopkinson, Ray Oliver, Noel Oliver.  
Front Row: Brian Hone, Lloyd Gulliver, Paul Mountfort, Roland Mountfort, Bob Oliver, David Morrison, Laurie Gulliver, Les Gulliver, Les Hone.

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1935

Back Row L to R: Lloyd Gulliver, Brian Hone, Roland Mountfort, Claude Waterland, Bob Oliver, Eileen Oliver, Myra Morrison, Dorothy Perkins, Valerie Gulliver, Ray Oliver, Paul Mountfort, David Morrison, Les Hone.

Middle Row: Alan Oliver, Laurie Gulliver, Puck Hughes, Clara Robertson, Beth McCall, Phylis Oliver, Diana Hughes, Nancy Brown, Godfrey Perkins, Les Gulliver, Lionel Oliver.

Front Row: Keith Soland, Ian McCall, Allan Gulliver, Mary Robertson, Thelma Oliver, Margaret Robertson, Mary Hone, Margaret Mountfort, Joan Campbell, Gavin Brown, Douglas Morrison, Bill Hone.



Feeding calves on R. Campbell's property 1912

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### COMMITTEE

BACK STANDING: Les Gulliver, decorating. Puck Hughes, entertainment. Grant Hughes. Geoff Harden. Douglas Morrison.

MIDDLE: David Morrison accommodation. Roger Neilson. Shirley Simpson. Mary Ross.

SITTING: Gwen Hone, history. Nora Hooper, catering. Nell Hone, enrolments. Les Hone, chairman. Bill Hone, secretary. Lucy Belton. Eileen Hickey, treasurer.





**TEACHERS**

STANDING: Ed Palmer, 1958 — 61. J. Pearcey, 1975 — Ian Falconer, 1970 — 75. Keith Manktelow, 1965 — 67. Pam Hone, 1958. Buck Birkitt, 1952 — 55.

SITTING: Gordon Carswell, 1947 — 52. Harry Littlewood, 1938 — 43. Charles Mountfort, 1926 — 36. Mrs Peg McConnon, 1935 — 37. Mrs Peg Manning, 1933 — 35. Mrs Melba Morrison, 1964 — 67.



Mrs W. Draper and Mrs E. C. Hone, cutting Centennial Cake.



Mr A. E. Hooper and Mr E. C. Hone.



Mr Don and Children  
Planting Rata Tree  
on Coronation Day 1937.



Mr Ven Young M.P., Planting Commemorative Tree.

## CENTENNIAL WEEKEND

In writing the account of the Kohi School Centennial Celebrations, from the point of view of the Secretary, my impressions seem to have been always those of an onlooker. My position seemed to require me to mostly sit, or hover, in the background somewhere, generally providing some sort of service, and, or, collecting money. However this, although a disadvantage in some respects, has meant that I could view proceedings in a fairly objective manner.

Now that it is all over, it hardly seems to have happened. And yet beforehand, during almost three years of planning, it all seemed far in the future and it was hard to believe, that suddenly one day, it was right upon us.

I think I can say it went well. This was without doubt mainly due to the great efforts of the various sub-committees, who went enthusiastically about their work, making regular reports to the General Committee, for suggestions and for approval of their plans. We were perhaps fortunate, in that several other schools in our vicinity had recently celebrated Centennials, and were all more than willing to help from their experience.

The plans therefore, were made. The sub-committees worked, the day approached, and all hoped for good weather. Until the last day, this looked unpromising, but in the event, the elements could scarcely have been more co-operative.

The celebrations commenced on Friday January 21st with an informal get together in the Kohi Hall. This had been enlarged for the weekend by the addition of a small marquee. Informality was the keynote here, where about 185 people seemed intent on seeing who could meet the most and talk the longest. Having some secretarial duties to perform, I was unable to wander around as much as I could have wished, but it was obvious that everyone there, had a wonderful time. All took great interest in our display of early photos and certificates, generously loaned by interested parties from all over the country. One of the more notable decorations was a road map of the district, showing all the houses, past and present with the names of all known occupants.

Here also, we commenced the sale of souvenir spoons and openers, which met with great response. These indeed make an eye catching and very permanent memento, of a great occasion for the District.

I think it probably took a good hour longer than anticipated, to make an end to the Friday evening proceedings.

The free Saturday morning enabled the Committee to make final preparations, and tie the occasional loose knot, prior to the official programme.

Saturday afternoon's activities in the School Grounds, were held in weather that was ideal for the occasion. The proceedings were opened by our Chairman Mr L. T. Hone, who was accompanied by Mrs Hone, and who introduced the official party. Mr Ven Young M.P. for Egmont; Mrs S. Geary, Ward member, representing the Wanganui Education Board and Mr Geary; Mr H. C. Newland, Chairman of the Patea County Council and Mrs Newland; Mr S. E. A. Breach, Senior Inspector for the Board and Mrs Breach; Mr W. T. Hone, Secretary and Mrs Hone who was Enrolment Secretary and last, but by no means least, Mr E. C. Hone, Guest Speaker, accompanied by his daughter-in-law, Mrs G. Hone, who was in charge of History.

The gathering was addressed briefly by Mr Young, Mrs Geary, and Mr Breach, and at more length, and in an Historical vein and witty manner, by Mr E. C. Hone.

The idea of a local identity making the official speech is perhaps rather unusual, but I am convinced, the choice was a wise one. Without wishing to

seem critical of visiting speakers, it is obvious that they, who may have to speak often at functions of this nature, are likely to become somewhat repetitive. The use of a local speaker, with a lifetime of local knowledge and anecdote without doubt, made for a speech refreshingly different in its character.

A Centennial cake, made by Mrs B. Belton, was then cut by Mrs W. Draper and Mr E. C. Hone, being the senior Lady and Man ex pupils present. It should be mentioned, I feel, that the oldest Lady ex pupil present, should have been Mrs Jessie Oliver (nee Armstrong) who had previously agreed to cut the cake. However, the passing of her sister Mrs Cole, another old pupil, precluded her attendance, and also that of another sister, Mrs P. Beere.

To close the afternoon ceremony, Mr Young planted an ornamental tree.

Decade photos and others followed, and one of these was of the attending teachers, who undoubtedly made a goodly showing with their numbers. Among those of interest to yours truly, were Mrs M. Manning (nee Hill) and Mr H. C. Littlewood, being respectively my first and last teacher at Kohi.

The evening was taken up by a Cocktail Hour and Dinner, and immediately following a Cabaret, in the Waverley Town Hall, attended by about 240 people. Here as at Kohi, the decorating committee had made a wonderful job. When the evening closed with Auld Lang Syne, at around 1.30 a.m., I feel that all had indeed had a wonderful time. Even if nobody's aim was good enough to shoot a balloon with a Champagne cork!

The Sunday morning produced very pleasant conditions, for a commemorative Church Service to be held outdoors, in the School Grounds.

This was well and appropriately conducted by Rev. David Clark, Minister to the Anglican-Presbyterian co-operating Parish, and Father Rex Begley, St. Francis Parish Priest, with Mrs Clark accompanying on the electric organ. Father Begley's theme of Faith, Unity and Love was most inspiring in the way it was woven into the whole spirit of the occasion.

The excellent luncheon attended by about 160 in the Kohi Hall made a fitting end to the celebrations, and was much like Friday's get together, as old friends extracted the most from their meetings, and seemed most reluctant to leave.

Comments such as "The best weekend I have spent", from a young visitor, to "Even after several trips overseas, the most enjoyable occasion" from an older one, "A most treasured memory", from an ex-teacher, and many letters of congratulations, lead one to summarize quite simply, that the weekend was an unqualified success in every way, and must be remembered as perhaps the greatest ever occasion, for this District.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On completing this Centennial booklet, I gratefully acknowledge the help so willingly given by members of my committee, including my father-in-law, Mr E. C. Hone, for his encouragement, sometimes blunt criticism, and mostly for his excellent history of the Kohi district. Bill and Nell Hone for the account of the celebration, cartoon and sketches, Geoff and Judy Harden for typing and general arrangement.

Thanks also to all ex pupils and others who lent photos and supplied useful information.

Gwen Hone