

Ponatahi

Ponatahi: 1896-1977 Ponatahi was the Northern School in our rural group of schools for the South Wairarapa While at South Featherston we had a lot to do with Murray and Christine Facer, Murray took Ponatahi with South Featherston to Resolution Bay in the Marlborough Sounds for a school camp . 12 kilometres from Carterton on the Ponatahi Road. The Ponatahi Christian School took over the facility once the state school closed



29th April 1896 The Board's Carpenter was instructed to do certain repairs at Carterton, and also some necessary work a Ponatahi PP
29th June 1896 Miss Rutherford, teacher at Pirinoa, is to take charge of the new school at Ponatahi, near Greytown 29 PP
29th March 1898. School Committee Elections called
6th January 1899 Ponatahi School average attendance 18. Salary £80 salary and rooms attached to the school. There were six applicants
26th January 1899 Miss Rutherford resigned

26th January 1899 Head teacher, Ponatahi School (£80 and rooms)— Miss Ada Bairstow, Clareville PP

1st March 1900 A Bairstow 10 pounds overpaid PP

27 Feb 1901. H Brunton 80 pounds 10 pounds over paid

23rd January 1902 It is understood that the Land Purchase Commissioner (Mr Barron) having made an inspection of a large number of properties in South Wairarapa, is about to recommend to the Government the purchase of Ponatahi (McLaren's Trustees), Longbush and Table Lands.

27th February 1902 Ponatahi MR C W Dallaston 92 Pounds to replace Miss Brunton going to Kaitara PP

11th August 1904 THE BISHOP'S RESERVE.

A memorial signed by Mr J. A. Renall, Mayor, and over 150 of the leading residents of Masterton, has been presented to the Premier, asking that a block of land near the Masterton Railway Station, comprising 190 acres, and known as The Bishop's Reserve," may be withdrawn from the Trustees who are administering it, and subdivided into workmen's homes or for the purpose of closer settlement. The memorial sets forth that although many years have elapsed since the land was placed in the hands of the Trust, no effort has been made to comply with the conditions prescribed by the original Native owners, and that owing to the way in which it was administered, instead of being useful or beneficial to Natives or Europeans, it is a formidable drawback to the progress and expansion of the town. We understand the revenue from this and other reserves, such as that at Porirua, have been used in establishing a school for Natives at Ponatahi near Carterton, in accordance with the scheme recently approved by the Supreme Court. There is

dissatisfaction amongst the Natives, especially at Otaki, at the administration of the Trustees PP (*Presumably Hikurangi College*)

4th September 1905 Two pupils of the Ponatahi Public School Annie Jensen and Myrtle Renall, have been congratulated by the Minister of Education (Mr R. J. Seddon) for their essays, entitled " Empire Day." WTPP

Miss Luxton, school mistress of Ponatahi has been presented by the parents and scholars with a handsome lady's companion as a birthday gift. WTPP

19th September 1905 Resigned Miss Luxton 29 September 1905

26th January 1906 Miss M Luxton appointed WTPP

13th February 1906 At the Makara Church, Wellington, on Wednesday last, Mr Harold Renall, second son of Mr R. Renall, of Kokotau. was married to Miss Myra Luxton, eldest daughter of Mr W. Luxton, of Makara, and formerly school teacher at the Ponatahi State school. WTPP

2nd April 1906 Mr George Lee ST from Akitio Resigned from Teaching 28th September 1906

10th October 1906 Mrs H. Renall is at present acting teacher at the Ponatahi State School, in place of Mr Lee, resigned

29th October 1906 Mr J. A. Gilruth, Government Veterinarian, lectured to an assemblage of farmers at Parkvale on Friday night last. The bachelors of Ponatahi held a very enjoyable ball at Ponatahi in the schoolhouse on Friday night, when about thirty five couples occupied the floor. The dancing was interspersed with songs. Mr H. Burch was M.C., and the supper was prepared by Mrs D. McPhee. WTPP

7th November 1906 Miss C Manning ST PP

29th November 1906 Miss Manning, head teacher of Te Whiti School, has been appointed to the position of sole teacher at the Ponatahi School . Mr Gibb, of Wellington, is in charge at Te Whiti. WTPP

13th December 1907 Ponatahi new tank 5 pound PP

6th April 1907 Miss I. Merlet, now at Kohinui, to be sole teacher at Ponatahi School

10th Nov 1909 ST 90 pound to 120 and house

13th December 1909 Ponatahi sole teacher, Miss M. Martin WTPP

14th December ST Miss Martin resigned 19 May 1912

26 April 1911 Repairs to house and residence

29 Nov 1911 Ponatahi , painting, etc., school and residence, E» G. Beard, £19 10s;

28th August 1912 Ponatahi New Latrines Grant made

11th March 1913 Ponatahi (Carterton District) — Sole Teacher. £120 to £150, and small house.

12th May 1913 .Miss P M H.urren ST

4th May 1915 Relief Fund, Ponatahi School (Id per child per week) 17shillings S pennies. WTPP

16th February 1917 The great interest taken by both boys and girls in Red Cross work has been shown by the excellent parcels which are often sent to the committee of the St. John Ambulance and Red Cross Society at the Star Club, Jervois-Quay. These parcels contain hospital equipment of the best quality, the work of knitting and sewing being accomplished by boys as well as girls in some of the schools. The names of the schools contributing are as follow :— Paraparaumu, Newtown, Petone West, Pirinoa, Rongomai, Puketoi,

Koputaroa, Levin, Ponatahi, Mangaone, Whakataki, Normandale, Mangapakeha, Taueru, To Ore Ore, Kaipororo, Parkvale v Kaituna Makuri, Waikanae,. (Pirinoa.). , PP

8th February 1928 Miss EM Scott ST PP

29th January 1941 Mr. C. W. Dallaston, head teacher of the Porirua School , who is retiring after 43 years in the Wellington Education Board's service, was tendered a farewell by the board today. Mr. Dallaston began his teaching career as a pupil teacher at the Clyde Quay School in October, 1897. In subsequent' years he was a pupil teacher at the Mount Cook Boys' School a master at Ponatahi and Te Rangitumau. sole teacher at Ohariu, head teacher at Plimmerton for 10 years, and he has been head teacher at Porirua since February, 1930. PP

1919

Ponatahi school built 1897

Roll 1916 19, 1917, 17, 1918 21

Parkvale, 5 Miles Roll 57

Waihakeke 5 miles Roll 63

Longbush 6 ½ miles Roll 23

Part Section 8 Ahiaruhe District Area 2 acres

The plan of the new residence provides for a building of 3 rooms consisting of a living room 15 ½ x 12 Bedroom 12 x10 and a Kitchen 11 ½ X 10 ½ bathroom 6 ½ x 6 ½

The Cost being £398

The present accommodation consist of two leanto rooms and a scullery attached to the school building

It is not large enough for a family nor in the present state to enable a teacher to keep a companion with her

For the comfort of the teacher who is an excellent manager the Board has already provided a wash house

1920

9th March Note from Secretary of Wellington Education Board to Department There is some impatience growing locally for a reply to the Board's Letter of 9th October re house

1922

28th January paper road through school land offered by Council to Wellington Education Board for 17/6

1st August Letter to Department In October 1919 the Board made application for a grant for a residence and in March 1920 reminded you that no reply had been received The Committee were much in earnest that he offered 75 pounds of the £150 cost

2nd August reply from W E Spence (Director of Education)

- a) No correspondence passed between this school since March 1920

- b) The Department has no money until the financial situation improves
- c) If you want to renew the application please fill in Form G-1
- d) State whether the offer of 75 pounds stands

1927

Letter from Director to Board . The teacher of Ponatahi called in regard necessity of additions to residence. Her Mother and a cousin (Boy) were also living with her

I mentioned the matter to Mr. Stewart by phone and he said he would look into the matter

9th June New plan including electric lights

17th June Miss Wallace is a sole teacher and it therefore appears to the Department that the present accommodation is not inadequate

20th June Miss Wallace's sister and mother live with her. Her mother has no other accommodation

29th June

Letter from T B Strong to Wellington Education Board

- a) Recognises that the residence is inadequate. Transfer Miss Wallace to another school that meets her needs

- b) It has been the experience of the department on more than one occasion of doing up a residence and the teacher immediately moves on

- c) So the money has practically been thrown away

1st July Board replies As this is an enforced move will the Department pay removal expenses

15th July The Department will consider the removal as long as costs are reasonable

26th October The teacher has raised the question if she rented a neighbouring house which has been offered her, will a housing allowance be paid?

31st October An internal memo from Department The teacher moved here at the request of the Department and cannot seek transfer in the ordinary course until the end of next year

1929

19th February Letter from Mrs Renall (Nee M Luxton) Te Awa Kokatau

Dear Mr. Bird, having the privilege of knowing you a few years ago I am writing with regard to Ponatahi School. Letter includes

- a) The sanitary conditions are disgraceful and are at present not being attended to
- b) We have a married lady teacher with two children living in two rooms attached to the school

- c) I have found it necessary to board my child 12 years old out in Carterton for her schooling
- d) At present the school room should accommodate 24 children while we have thirty four attending with six more school age
- e) Mr. Jury our chairman asked me to write to you as he has written to Mr. Stewart (SECRETARY of Wellington Education Board) without any response

8th April Letter from Mr. Stewart to Director of Education included

- a) Mrs Burch now raises the question of accommodation Mrs Burch succeeded Miss Wallace
- b) In the summer we spent most of the time outdoors but in winter a fourteen year old girl and a boy of 11 had to stay inside
- c) Through the winter is becoming a problem
- d) I may say my furniture is still at Ohau because there is nowhere to put it here
- e) The chief inspector has today looked over the premises and will be able to corroborate what I have said
- f) There is a house of rooms available which might be rented'

25th June The Department approves of another room The work will proceed as soon as possible

7th October The lowest tender was too high The Board must find 25 pound and the Department will pay 63 pound

1935

29th August An application of a grant of 26-10 pounds to install a hot water service in the school residence The present teacher Mr. Sandlant has just married and the board considers that the convenience is essential

The Dept would only pay a third of the costs

1940

16th October J Plummer applies for holiday for Carterton A and P Show

1942

2nd March Mrs J Plummer has been selected for another position

8th May Letter from Mrs J Plummer This is to certify that as I have now finished duty here I have delivered to the Chairman of the School Committee (Mr. W M Jury) all the public records of the school, the tools (gardening and woodwork) and have left

12th May Appointing Miss M Fisher as Relieving Teacher

20th May War appointment Mrs S C Cowin Grading No 180 C 10 years service unemployed

Mr. J F Savage Grading 163 7 1/2 years Military Service

Mr. AS T Lonie Grading 163 17 years teaching Military Service.

Board forwarded both names

1945

26th February Letter from C Paton Chairman of School Committee We understand Mr. Savage has been appointed to this school and we would be pleased to know you have any idea as to where he is or when he will be available

We are not satisfied with the teacher we have at the moment and would be pleased with a new appointment as soon as possible

Reply: We don't know where Mr. Savage is or when he will return nor of his prospects of release from the armed forces

Mrs Cowin was appointed to the position as a war vacancy and gained the position in open competition

5th November Letter from Mr. C Paton We are pleased with Mr. Savage's safe return from the Middle East and will do our best to make his work here a pleasure

1946

31st January Re Mr. Savage Mr. Savage has been appointed to a permanent position in the Taranaki A relieving teacher will be sent for the 4th February

12th August Recently the Honourable Minister of Agriculture was attending the Jubilee of the Ponatahi School At present there is

only one building which is subdivided to form the residence for teacher on one side and the school on another

The School Committee suggests removing the empty school from Tablelands (*Went to Maungaraki*) and to convert the present school room into a residence

Or To build a new teacher residence and turn all the building into a school

The Committee also pointed out that the water tanks at the present building are inadequate and that at present there is no water there.

1947

12th February Letter from Mr. J H Savage The school will be closed for the Masterton show most of the children will be competing in the jumping and riding events

1948

28th April Letter to Minister from Wellington Education Board

- a) The present accommodation consists of three small rooms attached to the school
- b) The classroom is separated from the living room and one of the bedrooms by a thin partition and thus family are afforded little privacy during the day

- c) There is at present one baby in the home and a further addition is expected
- d) On many occasions the teacher has to cancel lessons planned e.g. singing, rhythmic work because to the possibility of the baby sleeping in the adjacent bedroom
- e) As the school is the only suitable building in the district it is frequently used for social gatherings card parties etc,
- f) The only way is to build a new residence
- g) A suitable site opposite the school could be acquired
- h) In 1944 the Department gave approval for the Tiraumea residence and this was subsequently erected by the housing construction dept

Notes School erected 1896 1 classroom contains 352 square feet

Roll September 1947, 14

Residence attached to school 1897 Additions 1929

Teacher Mr. J F H Savage Married

Appointed 1st February 1946

A letter from Mr. Savage pointing out that his wife can't even have a telephone conversation during school time without being heard by the children. Same when his wife's parents visit 14th July The Board has a bore down to the depth of 133 feet, the previous summer farmers brought milk cans of water back from the dairy factory

15th October Land for new residence bought from Mr. G Snell

1949

1st June Tenders called for new residence

12th September No tenders received

21st December Contract let to Mr. E F Diamond on 30th November

1950

22nd November appointment of Mr. E Tombs on transfer Grading 42 6 1/2 years teaching Present Job ST Wharanui

18th December As Wharanui School has an increased roll Mr. Tombs will not now be shifted

1951

21st February Appointment of Mrs F E Brown 11 years teaching relieving Hawkes Bay

1953

2nd October Letter from Beverley Herrick Standard 6. The Ponatahi School was closed yesterday because Mrs Brown has the measles. She will let you know when she returns to work

1955

10th June F Brown School was closed in remembrances of the late Allan Edwards a former pupil of the school and local resident who gave untiringly of his time and also gave considerable financial assistance to the school

Reply from Board There is no legal provision for the school to be closed and you should have referred the matter to the Board

18th August letter from S R M Lauchlin Secretary Treasurer of Ponatahi School Committee

Included

- a) The school is seven miles from Carterton by sealed road
- b) The residence is only 5 years old 5 roomed (Not 4)
- c) The school building is also reticulated for electricity
- d) There are at present 21 children on the roll
- e) Etc

20th September Mr. C Davies Grade no 66 4 years service Karori

26th September Letter from School Committee we selected Mr. J M Eccles from the list you provided us

Mr. Eccles has more recent infant experience and our school is bottom heavy

Mr. Eccles is a married man with two children attending school

There was also some leakage as Mr. Davies told us he would be given the job.

In reply the Board stated that as Mr. Brown has won another position in the Wanganui Board he was supposed to be advised

that he would most likely get the job at Ponatahi. Mr. Brown is married

D Brown I have left the school residence at Ponatahi and live at Rose Street Waipawa

1956

21st March Mr. C Davies has resigned and may possibly be travelling overseas at the end of April

17th April Two applicants equal The School Committee to select

J Nilsen Grade C certificate 10 1/4 years Otaki 6 3/4 years

J Eccles Grade B 10 1/4 years Hawkes bay

1969

22nd January School residence fire damaged for \$180.98

1974

Murray Facer came to Ponatahi from Hinakura School. I worked with Murray a lot from South Featherston School. We went to resolution Bay as a combined party

1975

School closed at end of 1975 sold to Ponatahi Christian School

Jubilee Book

1895 The district approach Wellington Education Board to build a school if the land was given by Settlers

The site was purchased from Mr Blatchford for £10 this sum having been donated by the settlers of the district. The school was built by Mr Trotman of Greytown. The building was an unlined shell which allowed the wind to whistle through. It is recorded that the discomfort experienced by the teacher and pupils more than compensated by the opportunities given to the pupils to surreptitiously participate in the interests the first teacher (Miss Elizabeth J Rutherford) and her fiancé for whenever the gallant gentleman called at the school there was great competition among the students to secure the largest cracks in the wall. The school was later lined by Mr C J Jury at his own expense

The school was Opened on 27th July 1896 when the following pupils were enrolled.

Blatchford; Douglas

Jury; Marshall, Milsome, Maud, Ruby

Herrick; Mary, Horace, Tenat, Richard

Snell; James

Renall; Nelson, Minnie, Ivy, Harold, Herbert

Miss Rutherford boarded with the Blatchford Family

During the first decade many started dairy farming

Miss Rutherford was followed by Miss Powell, Miss Bairstow and Miss Brunton all of whom boarded with the Jury family which involved riding horseback some eight miles per day over an unmetalled road which in winter was knee deep in mud.

Miss Brunton converted some totara posts which were stacked in Blatchford's paddocks into firewood

Mr C W Dallaston 1902 to 1903 followed Miss Brunton also boarded with the Jury family. He died in 1946

August 1904 Miss E M Luxton was appointed She arrived by afternoon train and expected to be met by some bewhiskered member of the School Committee She failed to recognise a shy young schoolboy who had been dispatched to fetch her. The envoy returned home minus Miss Luxton.

Miss Luxton hired a horse and trap from Cole's stables and driven by another school boy headed out for Ponatahi She called in at Renall homestead to find the family engaged in cooking outside following the demolition of the chimneys in an earthquake of 1904 She finally arrived at the Tilson Homestead where she arrived after an arduous journey the latter two hours of which had been spent in darkness save the light of candles in gig lamps.

Miss Luxton resigned 18 months later to become Mrs Harold Renall. Their four children all attended Ponatahi School

From 1905 to 1912 there was no School Committee Mr Isaac Snell was commissioner

In 1919 while topping trees in the school grounds, Mr Snell suffered a severe chill from which he later died.

Mrs M P Hurren taught from April 1913 and during the war years raised a lot of money

In May 1920 his Royal Highness the Duke of York stopped at Carterton for a brief while and the children went to see him.

Mr W M Jury and Mrs H R Renall took the senior children to visit the H M S Hood and H M S Repulse where they spent an exciting 3 hours. After dinner the children caught a double decker tram and went to Wellington zoo

They got back at 8 pm

Miss Hurren resigned in July 1921 after teaching at Ponatahi

Mr R H Abraham followed

In 1923 the production Hiawatha was coached by Miss S Cairns.

The School Committee built a manuka wig wam in a corner of the school grounds and with the aid of lanterns strung on a wire, sack dresses and trousers and coloured feathers for hair adornment the play was presented in a realistic setting

On several Occasions the children went to Wellington to see the Winter Shows

On one occasion two pupils missed the train back However they did manage to catch another train later which went only to Featherston Much to their parents relief and surprise the two missing links arrived in Carterton on a train that was run from Featherston to Carterton for their special benefit

The Annual School Concert on 19th December 1924 during the show there was a phenomenal thunderstorms followed by a cloud burst which caused all the creeks to become to become flooded. Consequently many people were marooned and some were obliged to remain in school all night or until the water subsided

In November 2nd 1928. The end span of the old Kokotau bridge subsided and the children from Kokotau had to be pulled across in a cage until the bridge was repaired.

Up till 1929 the teachers residence was confined to one living room and a scullery attached to the school room.

In November 1929 6 carpenters were busy working while Mrs M L Burch was conducting her term exams. The living room was extended and a bedroom and verandah was added. In 1935 a new bath was installed in the wash house and a new range set in place in the living room.

Electricity was installed in 1944

By 1929 there was overcrowding and the Ahiaruhe school was opened. *See Ahiaruhe for the real story*

The Ahiaruhe children went to the Ponatahi Picnic

In 1930 the original post and rail fence was pulled down and a new post and wire netting fence erected.

Mr M W Sandlant who established many of the ornamental shrubs

In 1942 Mr M W Jury and Mr H L Herrick retired from the School Committee thus ending a period of thirty years s chairman for Mr Jury and 17 years as committee man for Mr Herrick

In 1942 a working bee formed a tennis court. The court opened on 21st October 1943

13th July 1944 A radio was installed in the school With children taking part in radio lessons

1896	15	Ponatahi	Rutherford	Elizabeth J		Female	£70
1897	15	Ponatahi	Rutherford	Elizabeth J		Female	£70
1898	19	Ponatahi	Rutherford	Elizabeth J		Female	£90
1899	20	Ponatahi	Bairstow	Ada L		Female	£90
1900	17	Ponatahi	Brunton	Helen O		Female	£80
1901	18	Ponatahi	Brunton	Helen O		Female	£85
1902	16	Ponatahi	Dallaston	Charles W		Female	£92
1903	14	Ponatahi	Dallaston	Charles W		Headmaster	£84
1904	13	Ponatahi	Luxton	Eliz M		Female	£76
1905	13	Ponatahi	Luxton	Elizabeth	Licensed	Female	£75
1906	16	Ponatahi	Manning	C A	Licensed	Female	£90
1907	17	Ponatahi	Merlet	Isabella A	E2	Female	£110
1908	14	Ponatahi	Merlet	Isabella A	E2	Female	£110
1909	12	Ponatahi	Merlet	Isabella A	E2	Female	£115
1910	12	Ponatahi	Martin	Margaret L	D4	Female	£125
1911	18	Ponatahi	Marten	Margaret L	D4	Female	£125
1912	23	Ponatahi	Marten	Margaret L	D4	Female	£130

1913	24	Ponatahi	Hurren	Mary P	D2	Female	£120
1914	22	Ponatahi	Hurren	Mary P	D2	Female	£130
1915	26	Ponatahi	Hurren	Mary P	D2	Female	£140
1917	17	Ponatahi	Hurren	Mary P	D-70	Sole	£160
1919	24	Ponatahi	Hurren	Mary P	D-68	Sole	£250
1921	25	Ponatahi	Abraham	R H	D	Sole	£270
1923	21	Ponatahi	Cairns	Elizabeth S O	C-208	Sole	£195