



WEEDONS SCHOOL TE KURA O KARAMU

In the early days, Weeden (as Weedons was originally known) was a very important link in the transport chain as it was halfway between Christchurch and the Selwyn Hotel and the coach horses were changed there. The accommodation house and stables on the south side of the main road were licensed in July 1859 and owned by James Main who called his inn Half Way House. He sold the inn to William Weeden in March 1861.

William Weeden was an enterprising man, who after having a well dug and finding an abundant water supply at fifty-seven feet decided to establish a township on the same side of the main road as the inn.

A registered plan dated December 1862 shows seven streets and some three hundred quarter acre sections. These were advertised for sale at ten pounds for those adjoining the Great South Road and seven pounds ten shillings for the others. Only four sections sold and in June 1863 the inn was again advertised for sale because of Mr Weeden's financial problems so the township never eventuated.

William White became the licensee and he in turn sold Half Way House to Thomas Ranger who in May 1870 let the licence lapse and he took over the Rolleston Hotel.

The coming of the railway in 1866, the railway-line being on the other side of the main road to the inn meant there was no longer the same need for a hotel and stables.

It was Weeden's discovery of water that led to farms being established in the district. Mr J.J. McClelland bought 364 acres from the Crown and later increased his holding to 448 acres.

From 1867 Anglican and Methodist clergy held divine service in a sod hut at Weedons. It is also said that at this time a school was conducted in a private house but that the children then went to Templeton by train and walked the four miles home if they didn't manage to get a ride.

The establishment of a local church and school resulted from donations of land from Mr J.J. McClelland who gave an acre for the school at the north-west corner of his farm Clenda on the Weedons-Ross Road. Mr J.J. Peacock of Christchurch gave an acre from the 50 acre section adjoining for a Wesleyan Church and half an acre for the school. Mr McClelland gave a 25 pound donation as well as the land and the school was opened in 1871.

In it's last year in 1876 the Provincial Government set aside 58 and a half acres as a recreational reserve and two years later 10 acres of this land was taken for a cemetery. The Courtenay Road Board appointed Trustees Robert Pitken, James McDowell, Robert



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Thompson and Robert Munro as the Weedons Cemetery and Recreation Board. In 1889 the recreation area was constituted a domain and the trustees now Robert Thompson - Chairman, Robert Curragh, James and Richard McDowell and Patrick Manion became a Domain Board.

The cemetery was tidied but during the seventy-two years it never saw a burial. The graveyard at the Methodist Church being used, so, in May 1950 the area was restored to the Domain. (Although there are rumours that one person was exhumed and moved to the graveyard at the Methodist Church, this has never been verified.)

As a matter of interest Weedons has the oldest cricket club in New Zealand. For two years from 1942 the Domain was used by the New Zealand Military Forces for a Battery Unit training camp.

When the Air Force supply depot, between Templeton and Weedons on Jones Road was opened in 1942 during World War 2, the need for a railway station and siding close to the base resulted in the Weedons Air Force Base railway station coming into being. The original Weedons station a few miles south retained its identity and so Weedons had the distinction of being the only place in New Zealand to have two recognised railway stations. Both have long since been demolished.

The railway line from Christchurch reached Weedons early in the 1860's and travel and the transport of goods became considerably easier for the settlers.

The original name for the district was Weeden after William Weeden the innkeeper but when a railway employee painted the station's name on a sign he changed forever the name to Weedons. It has been pointed out that the sign-writer was probably not a pupil of the school!!!!

The official recognition of the name Weedons seems to have taken place about 1880.