



MT VICTORIA

Historical Society News

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★A Christmas Miscellany★



Postcard. Christmas greetings from New Zealand [1914-1918].
Alexander Turnbull Library Eph-B-POSTCARD-Vol-17-010-1

Sunday November 29 at 2.30 pm

New Crossways, 6 Roxburgh St

Raffle at the Christmas event

At our gathering on November 29 we will be raffling a copy of the beautiful book, *A New Zealand Christmas: Three centuries of Kiwi Christmas celebrations from the Alexander Turnbull Library*, by Sarah Ell. You have to be there to be in to win!

New committee member

At the AGM we were delighted to have a new member elected to our committee – David Lee, who is probably already well-known to many in Mt Victoria for his passion for our suburb, its heritage and green belt. Apart from that, the same lot are still around!

Evening Post Advertisements from November 29, 1909

WANTED, a superior Girl to assist in household duties; good home for suitable girl. Apply 16, Roxburgh-street.

WANTED, a Girl, just left school, for light housework, take child out in afternoons; comfortable home, sleep in. Apply this evening, 96, Ellice-street.

WANTED for country, House-Parlour maid; two others kept. Apply 44, Roxburgh-street.

MR. G. COLLETT REYNOLDS,
Private Tutor and Coach
(Late Headmaster of Penwerris Grammar School, Cornwall, Eng.),
Coaches for Matric., all Civil Service, Varsity Exams., Etc.

Also receives adults desirous of improving their knowledge. Terms on application. Tuition by correspondence if desired. Address – 123, Brougham-st, Wellington

WANTED – When Niobe began to weep, the reason was that she anticipated having Murdoch's Fruitettes, but was disappointed. Don't you weep. Buy Fruitettes from E. Bolton, Kent-terrace. 3 packets 1s.

A. WARBURTON & CO.,
ESTATE AGENTS AND SHARE-BROKERS 164, Featherston-st.
BROUGHAM-STREET–Best part, 2min tram, large level Section, specially well-built 8rd. House, plastered throughout; almost new; an absolute bargain at £1600; terms.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Rahiri

In a suburb which seemed, at the end of the nineteenth century, to be full of well-to-do businessmen and Congregational, Methodist or Presbyterian church folk, it is a surprise to find a name like Poutawera.

Thomas George Poutawera, or Tamati, was, indeed, a property owner in Mt Victoria in the 1890's. He bought two sections on the Victoria Block in 1896 and built a house there which he called *Rahiri*. The house still stands, at No. 15 Porritt Avenue.

The Victoria Block was the last major subdivision on Mt Victoria. It consisted of the seven town acres of the Gray Estate, bordered by Brougham, Austin and Ellice Streets. The Grays sold the land in 1893 and development of the Block started with the creation of three new streets in 1894: Brougham Avenue (now Armour Avenue), Tutchen Street (now Porritt Avenue) and Victoria Avenue (now Albany Avenue). Water, drainage and gas were soon laid on. The house built for Thomas Poutawera was designed and submitted to Council in 1894, but presumably not built till 1896.



The former Gray Estate can be seen, still uninhabited, on the left just above the middle of this photograph dated c. 1895. Poutawera's house would be just out of the frame to the left of the 'green' patch. (Note Waring Taylor's large house far right.) [Photograph from the collection of Alan Marshall]

Thomas was Nga Puhī, born in the Bay of Islands and a cousin of Hone Heke. He went on to be educated at Te Aute College. In about 1884 he came to Wellington to work for the government. He was considered to be of exceptional ability by his peers and colleagues. For many years he was an interpreter in the Native Department, often involved in land negotiations. Not only that, he was a member of the Polynesian Society, elected to its Council in 1897 and his translations of Maori legends were published in their highly-respected journal.

He was also a prominent member of the Wellington Cricket and Football clubs and his name constantly appears in reports on the clubs games through the 1880's and 1890's. He was described as a "young man of excellent principle", being also a zealous Sunday school teacher at St Mark's Parish.

Tragically, however, this talented and genial young man died just as he seemed to be fulfilling his promise. In 1897, the year he was elected to the Council of the Polynesian Society and gave a paper on "The employment of Maoris after leaving school" at the first conference of the Te Aute Students' Association, he died of cancer. Only 36 years old, it had been discovered some months earlier that he had cancer of the shoulder. He was operated on twice, but the operations were ultimately unsuccessful and he was sent home and died on November 26, 1897. Such was the regard in which he was held that the Evening Post on July 7 had reported after one of the operations "We are glad to learn that the health of Mr T Poutawera, of the Native Office, who recently underwent an operation in the Hospital, is improving."

Thomas left a wife, Jeannette, and two children. It is not known how long his widow continued to live in Tutchen Street, but presumably she was not left destitute; the family employed a general servant at the time Thomas died.