

**Some Yesteryears of Motueka Methodism by the Rev. C. B. Jordan, M.A., B.D. (1952)  
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Removal to Wellington: After the Wairau tragedy of June 17, 1843, Mr Ironside removed to Wellington and appointed a catechist, Mr William Jenkins, to overlook the Maori work. Later on Mr Jenkins was appointed, under Mr Aldred, resident catechist at Motueka. Mr Ironside records that the natives, prior to 1843, had built a church at Motueka.

Chapel Windows: Among Mr Aldred's papers, Dr Morley tells us, was an account marked "Windows for Moutawaka Chapel, 5 pounds 2s." I understand from my friend, Mr Stevens, that the correct spelling is "Motuweka," but the point is that it furnishes fresh evidence that steps were taken at an early date to build chapel in Motueka. This was in due course finished, but gales seem to have damaged the structure, and when the Maoris removed from the pah, they took away the chapel and paid in potatoes the amount still owing on it. The pah covered approximately the area where there lived up a comparatively short time ago the Gray family, at the corner of two roads known to-day as Pah and Gray Streets. The Pah was called Te Taone (The Town).

Port Underwood: During the year 1910, when the author himself was stationed in Motueka, he was given an item of information about another old chapel, the successor of the first one to which reference was made above. This was erected in 1849. At all events, that is the date entered (once only) in an old Circuit Schedule Book. In 1910 I was verbally informed by my own mother that this same 1849 church was brought over from Port Underwood to Motueka.

My informant had been in intimate touch with Motueka Methodists for 40 years before 1910. Recently I asked my old schoolmate, Warena Tiwini, what he thought about that tradition. He replied that he could not say for sure, but what he knew was quite consistent with the above supposition. Many early Motueka Maoris, he told me, came thither from Port Underwood, including his own father, Rupini Tiwini, whom we children knew as "Mr Reuben." The suggestion must be that when those natives came from Port Underwood to Motueka, they brought the old Port Underwood chapel with them. There must surely be some truth about the Port Underwood tradition; yet the chapel at Port Underwood was 66 feet by 36 feet, much larger than the old chapel the author remembers as still standing in his early boyhood days. However, there had been very close to the old Motueka chapel a schoolroom wherein tea meetings were often held, and in early times it was almost certainly used not only as a Sunday school, but as a Wesleyan day school. No living person can now tell us the exact size of it, but by all accounts it was a fairly large building. My friend, Mr Hollis Hill, an historic research student with respect to churches, agrees with the author's theory that the old chapel at Port Underwood must have been brought over to Motueka and re-erected there as a schoolroom. There is no space here for details of the evidence available to support this conclusion, but it is the only possible conclusion that fits the historic facts as I have been able to gather them.

May we venture a further suggestion concerning the schoolroom? When Mr Ironside moved from his Cloudy Bay station to Wellington after the Wairau tragedy in 1843, he would not immediately think of getting the Port Underwood chapel removed; but since from that date his mission work in that district was practically at an end, sooner or later he and the Methodist authorities of those days would need to consider what should be done in Motueka. What thought, then, would be more natural to Mr Ironside, who early in the same year had come to Nelson as its circuit minister, than that of getting the same chapel removed to Motueka? It could well have been removed by 1849, and indeed 1849 would be the most likely year for such an event.

According to Dr Morley, the natives residing in Motueka in the late forties were numerous, and they remained faithful to Methodism. Mr W. Jenkins was appointed resident catechist among them, and remained there for two years. "About the same time (1848) the present grants of land for church, mission house, and cemetery purposes were made, and the old weather-board church and a small mission house were erected in the following year. From a variety of causes the number of natives has since greatly declined."

Despite the large number of natives there in 1848-9, the question how the three buildings - church, mission house and schoolroom - all came to be erected in the one year still remains, to say the least, a problem; but if we suppose that the schoolroom came originally from Port Underwood, our problem is partly solved.

The Old Schoolroom, 1849: The schoolroom in the same locality had entirely disappeared before the author was born; but by all accounts it was a building on considerable dimensions and was well able to accommodate the considerable gatherings of people that assembled there on occasions of tea-meetings and such-like functions. The view to which the author has been driven is that this schoolroom was the former chapel at Port Underwood removed and re-erected.