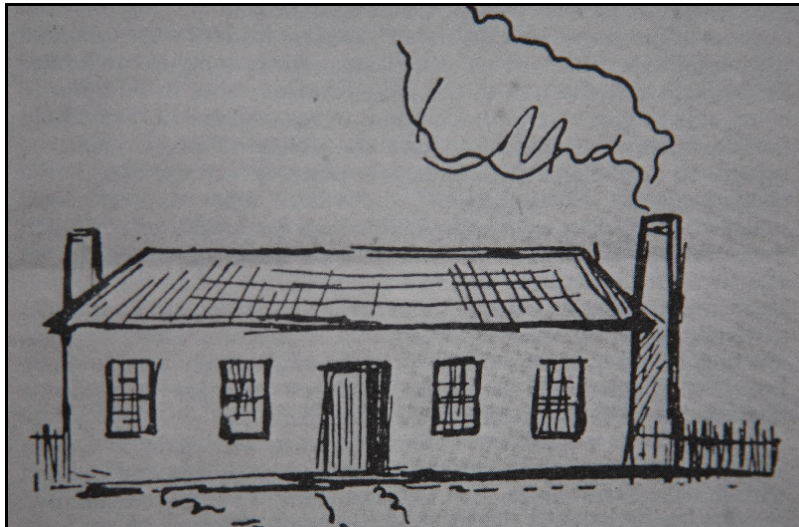


William Jenkins & Family at Ngakuta Bay, Port Underwood, Marlborough 1843-1848

The opening of the new stone Wesleyan Chapel in Courtney Street, New Plymouth on 10 September 1843 coincided with the annual district meeting.¹ Rev. Samuel Ironside gave a full report on the 'Wairau troubles' and the meeting decided to retain him in Wellington and to send a supervised salaried teacher to the Ngakuta mission house at Cloudy Bay. "*Ironside left Ngamotu happy with the decisions reached and promptly took steps to install William Jenkins as resident teacher at Ngakuta and to remove all his own belongings to Wellington.*" Further discussions at the Waipa section of the annual district meeting, held on 22 September, resolved that Ironside should return to Ngakuta. By the time Ironside had learnt of this William, Jane and their 15 month old son, John Bumby Jenkins, had already left Wellington. "*The expense of reversing what had already been done and the personal inconvenience to himself and Mr Jenkins*" led Ironside to "*protest to his chairman, and to lay his case before the missionary committee in London.*"²

The Jenkins family moved into the six-roomed mission house. "*It had a chimney at each end and Sarah [Ironside] had made the house her own by painting each room a different colour as she fancied, blue, pink, orange.*"³



Mission house, Ngakuta Bay. This sketch was made by Dr Weekes when the New Zealand Company vessel *William Bryan*, bound for Taranaki, put into Port Underwood in March 1841. The drawing was originally sent to Major Albert Rugby Pratt in 1940 and was published in the *Methodist Times*.⁴

Ebenezer Church, built in 1842, was also nearby. It measured "66 feet by 36, and about 12 feet up to the wall plate. The frame of the building was of long huge slabs of pine, two to three inches in thickness. They were set up for the walls, about a foot apart from each other, the interstices being filled with wattle from the kareao and plastered over with mortar. The whole interior was lined with tall reeds and the women exercised their ingenuity and patience in staining each reed with various pigments, and the combination of colours was just beautiful." There were eight windows, four each side, and a board, with "Ebenezer" painted

¹ New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator 20 September 1843

² Samuel Ironside in New Zealand 1839-1858 by W. A. Chambers (1982) page 151

³ Samuel Ironside in New Zealand 1839-1858 by W. A. Chambers (1982) page 108

⁴ Samuel Ironside in New Zealand 1839-1858 by W. A. Chambers (1982) page 105

in capitals, "affixed to the front gable."⁵ Samuel Ironside considered it "capable of accommodating 800 persons with ease." In a journal entry dated 22 April 1843, John Wallis Barnicoat, on his way to survey the Wairau, described the chapel as being "about 70' by 40' neatly built in the native fashion. It is thatched with raupo and its sides are formed in the exterior with manuka bark and in the interior with the reed of the toi-toi. One of the gables projected a few feet according to the usual native mode and becomes a portico. The interior is yet incomplete and merely contains the pulpit and a space railed in as an altar."⁶

Before Ironside left Ngakuta he placed "the few natives left in the vicinity under the charge of Paramena, one of his [native] teachers."⁷ Ironside, in a diary entry dated 7 November 1842, described Paramena as a slave who had "evidently studied his testament" and had just delivered "one of the very best sermons from a native" that he had heard.⁸

William Jenkins, who was described as "a local preacher who had a fair knowledge of Maori" was asked to "watch events and take care of the station." Three months after his arrival at Ngakuta, Ironside reported that "I have very good news from Mr Jenkins. The natives have received him with open arms, and are quite delighted with the appointment. It should be observed that the Cloudy Bay natives have removed to this side of the straits, sixteen miles from Wellington, but about twenty stragglers remain. The large body of Natives belonging to the Circuit are in Queen Charlotte's Sound, and to them Mr Jenkins devoted his chief attention, but resides at Ngakuta, as the uncertainty of the movements of the rambling New Zealanders, and also the great expense of building, will not justify beginning another station at present. There must be a removal of that station soon, for it is of little use for the Missionary to live a half day's journey from his charge, and the Cloudy Bay people appear determined not to return."⁷



Family Register entry for James Dixon Jenkins born at Cloudy Bay 15 Feb 1844

During early July 1844 Reverend John Aldred left Nelson for the Bay of Islands and William Jenkins was asked to oversee local church affairs.⁹ Aldred returned on 1 Oct 1844 and the following entry was made in his diary on 7 October at Nelson. "Employed in getting things in order - received a letter from Chairman on the subject of Finance have to pay for both the Nelson and Motueka chapels as well as the disallowance of several things. The present state of the Mission Fund demands it. B^{ro} Jenkins who had been supplying during my absence left on the 3rd."¹⁰

Reverend Samuel Ironside departed from Wellington for Cloudy Bay on the cutter 'Ann and Sarah' on 14 April 1845 along with fellow passenger William Eilerslie Wallace.¹¹ This was one of his bi-annual visits "to supervise the work going on under William Jenkins."¹²

⁵ Te Tau Ihu O Te Waka: A History of Maori of Nelson and Marlborough Volume II Te Ara Hou – The New Society by Hilary and John Mitchell (2007) page 81

⁶ Te Tau Ihu O Te Waka: A History of Maori of Nelson and Marlborough Volume II Te Ara Hou – The New Society by Hilary and John Mitchell (2007) page 114

⁷ The History of Methodism in New Zealand page 152

⁸ Samuel Ironside's diaries – Mission in the South Island

<http://www.marlboroughonline.co.nz/index.mvc?ArticleID=3&intPage=19>

⁹ Aldred left for Wellington on 09 July on the Government brig 'Victoria', was ordained at the Auckland Wesleyan Chapel on 18 August, continued on the 'Victoria' to Russell on 12 September and returned to Nelson on the 'Victoria' on 29 September 1844 [Papers Past – Nelson Examiner and Daily Southern Cross]

¹⁰ Alexander Turnbull Library Reference MS-0007-0008 Journal of Reverend John Aldred covering the period between 1828-1832 and 1864

¹¹ New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian 19 April 1845

The 1846 Wesleyan Native Return reported that Cloudy Bay (under William Jenkins) had 206 members, nine chapels, one catechist, ten Sunday School teachers, twenty local preachers and eleven class leaders.¹³

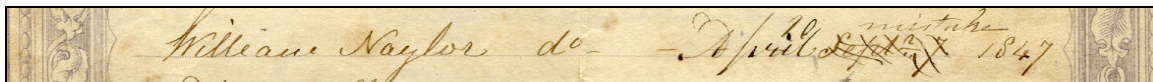


Family Register entry for Agnes Crocker Jenkins born at Cloudy Bay 4 Nov 1846

On 19 February 1847 the Government Brig 'Victoria' departed from Wellington for Port Underwood.¹⁴ On board were Charles Wybrow Ligar, the Surveyor General; William Fox, the New Zealand Company agent for Nelson; Mr Budge, Mrs Fox and Mrs McDonald. The brig "was ordered off so suddenly from Wellington" that she carried no mail. "The object of this journey is to enable the Surveyor-General to report on the extent of the plain, and to ascertain whether the natives occupy any portion of it, or have cultivations there."¹⁵

Ligar later reported, in early March, that "Mr Jenkins, a gentleman connected with the Wesleyan Mission" assisted him when interviewing the Natives. William also informed him that "it was his own and the general impression in the neighbourhood" that the recent establishment of cultivations by the Natives at the Wairau were made in order to strengthen their claim to the land. Ligar also stated that William "resides near the pa, and would be likely to know the sentiments of the Natives." At the time the Native population of Port Underwood consisted of "twenty men and about the same number of women belonging to the Ngatitōa Tribe, and nine men and one woman of the Rangitane Tribe. The latter are the slaves, but one of their number, Kaikora, has acquired much influence, and may now be considered the head man of the little settlement."¹⁶

In the Wairau Valley, Fox and Ligar "travelled the whole length of the plain, and without seeing a Maori or finding the least trace of native residence or cultivation. From information previously obtained in Cloudy Bay, it appears that from three to five acres of cultivation is all the Maories have in the Wairau."¹⁷



Family Register entry for William Naylor Jenkins born at Cloudy Bay 20 Apr 1847

William was present at the Annual Meeting of the Wellington Auxiliary Wesleyan Missionary Society held in the Wesleyan Church on 20 September 1847.¹⁸

On 9 November a meeting of land purchasers was held in Nelson "to appoint a deputation to select the most eligible spot for a town and port for the Wairau district." Five gentlemen were elected and Stephen Carkeek was requested to accompany them to the Wairau. William

¹² Samuel Ironside in *New Zealand 1839-1858* by W. A. Chambers (1982) pages 159 and 161

¹³ *Te Tau Ihu O Te Waka: A History of Maori of Nelson and Marlborough Volume II Te Ara Hou – The New Society* by Hilary and John Mitchell (2007) page 100

¹⁴ *New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian* 20 February 1847 Shipping Intelligence

¹⁵ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle* 27 February 1847 'Victoria' arrived at Nelson 22 Feb

¹⁶ Report from Mr C. W. Ligar, Surveyor General, to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor written at Nelson 8 March 1847 regarding the capabilities of the Wairau District. Contained within Alexander Mackay's *Compendium of Official Documents relative to Native Affairs in the South Island, Volume 1 – Papers and documents relative to the purchase of the Wairau District, March 1849*. Also in *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives (AJHR) 1858 Section C3 page 2 - Reports relative to land purchases and the condition of the natives in the Middle Island*

¹⁷ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle* 13 March 1847

¹⁸ *New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian* 25 September 1847

Oldfield Cautley, Alfred Domett, Alfred Fell, John Danforth Greenwood, and Edward Stafford were to leave about the 25th of November.¹⁹ Cautley and Fell represented “*a large proportion of the absentees.*” Also accompanying the party were the Honourable Mr Dillon, the surveyor, William Budge, and F. Moore.²⁰ The party left in early December.²¹

*“In conjunction with the Company’s Agent”, William Fox, they made their way to “a survey station at the lower part of the Wairau plain” then split into two parties. One crossed the Wairau Bar and sailed to Port Underwood while the other walked along the coast. After reuniting in Port Underwood the group divided into two again. One party went by sea to Tory channel and the other “sailed up the eastern arm of Port Underwood, and gained the channel by crossing the hills at its head.”*²²

One party consisting of Fox, Domett, Stafford, Dillon and Captain Frederick Moore “*all spent the night in Jacky Guard’s house, sleeping on the earthen floor under blankets and sails. It was probably the only time in New Zealand history when three future prime ministers – Fox, Domett, and Stafford, were accomodated so cheaply. Don Grady in his ‘Guards of the Sea’ takes up the story: Next day was spent examining Port Underwood as a possible future port, an inspection for which Captain Moore was particularly responsible as the one mariner in the party. Moore thought that Port Underwood was an excellent harbour for shipping purposes, but considered the expense of putting a road through was not warranted.*”²³

The committee’s report, dated 18 January and signed by Alfred Domett stated that “*As a sample of the violence with which the south-east wind blows up this harbour, it may not be out of place to state, that the missionary who lives at the very head of the eastern arm of the harbour – the part of it described, perhaps correctly, by Dr Dieffenbach, as ‘by far the most sheltered’ – pointed out to us a peach tree in his garden, which a late gale had completely stripped of its leaves.*” William Jenkins, in reference to Queen Charlotte Sound, also declared “*that he had never seen a sea that he could not cross in his dingy.*”²⁴ The party arrived back in Nelson on Christmas Eve.²⁴

On 9 August 1848 His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Edward John Eyre, accompanied by his Private Secretary William Gisborne, Walter Baldock Durrant Mantell and Alfred Wills, surveyor, sailed from Wellington on HMS ‘Fly’ to visit Nelson and Akaroa. Mantell, appointed as a Commissioner, was “*to complete the necessary arrangements connected with the recent purchase of lands in the Middle Island and to mark out the lands to be set apart as Reserves for the use of the natives.*”²⁵ On the same evening they left Nelson for Motueka then returned on 11 August. The following day His Excellency had “*taken his departure for the Wairau and will go on board the ‘Fly’ either in the Sound, or at Port Underwood, then proceed to Akaroa.*” His Excellency had indicated to concerned Nelson gentlemen “*that the Wairau shall be thoroughly explored, so that the proper line for a road may be finally determined.*”²⁶ Mantell, however, “*sailed*” from Nelson on 12 August and arrived at Port Underwood on the 13th. Four days later he went from Port Underwood to Mt Pisgah. A pencil sketch, made the same day, shows the location of Mr Jenkins’ property at

¹⁹ Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle 13 Nov 1847 Meeting of Landpurchasers

²⁰ Archives New Zealand Wellington Reference NZC 3/18 No. 1/48 Enclosure 6/48 Report by William Fox to William Wakefield dated 19 April 1848

²¹ Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle 25 Dec 1847

²² Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle 12 Feb 1848 Report of the Committee appointed to choose the site of a shipping town for the Wairau District to the Resident Land purchasers of Nelson

²³ Scrutiny on the County by Ken Berry (1986) Chapter V Whatamongo /Port Underwood Roadman p59

²⁴ Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle 25 Dec 1847

²⁵ New Zealand Spectator and Cook’s Strait Guardian 9 Aug 1848

²⁶ Nelson Examiner and Evening Chronicle 12 Aug 1848

the head of Port Underwood. Mantell "sailed" the next day.²⁷ On 19 August "*His Excellency reached the bottom of the plain in safety*" and "*immediately went on board the Fly.*"²⁸

Later, on 16 July 1863, William recorded in his diary that he had met, on a small island near Portsmouth, "*an Officer who had been at my home in Cloudy Bay 18 years ago; he was Sailing Master on board the 'Fly' man-of-war.*"²⁹

An account of the The Cloudy Bay Mission, as part of the "*Maori department*", was given at the 1848 district meeting for the southern section of New Zealand held at Wellington. "*In Cloudy Bay there were nine chapels, one catechist [William Jenkins], ten Sunday school teachers, twenty lay preachers, eleven class leaders and 150 members. There were 200 Sunday school scholars in nine schools and 250 people attending public worship.*"³⁰

It is likely that the district meeting coincided with the anniversary of the Wellington Wesleyan Missionary Society celebrated on the 10th and 11th of September 1848. The speakers at the public meeting were the Reverends Creed and Aldred and Messrs Inglis, Green, Woodward, Ironside, Hunt, Lovell and Watkin.³¹

On Monday, 16 October 1848, an earthquake with an estimated magnitude of 7.4-7.7 was caused by the surface rupture of the Awatere Fault. The fissure created extended approximately 110 kilometers from the coast at White Cliffs to near Barefell Pass. Significant aftershocks followed on 17, 19 and 24 October.³²

The first shock occurred at "*twenty minutes to two o'clock*" in the morning and "*lasted for the space of nearly a minute... this was followed at an interval of half an hour by another shock not so intense as the first, and during the subsequent nineteen minutes a succession of severe shocks occurred with lesser ones at intervals.*" A southeasterly storm was also raging at the time "*so that the fury of the wind added its force to the destructive agencies at work.*" Further shocks followed during the day at 5.45am, 12 o'clock and 2.30pm.³³

"*At Cloudy Bay the shocks appear to have been more violent, the chimnies of the houses having been all thrown down, and the cutter 'Fly' which was at anchor having felt the shocks very severely.*" The native crews of two whaleboats and a canoe that had departed from Queen Charlotte's Sound on 20 October arrived at Wellington the following day. They reported "*that the earthquake has been felt very severely in that part of the Middle Island.*"³⁴

"*By a boat from Queen Charlotte's Sound and Cloudy Bay, we learn that the earthquake had committed havoc in both those places; the clay houses and the brick chimneys being all more or less destroyed.*"³⁵

²⁷ Alexander Turnbull Library reference qMS-1312 Walter Baldock Durrant Mantell Sketchbook No.3 Item No.153 "*Mr Jenkins, Aug 17*". Item Nos 94 and 95 contained calendar notes. 12 Aug 1848 "sailed", 13 Aug 1848 "*arrived Port Underwood*", 17 Aug 1848 "*Port Underwood to Mt Pisgah*", 18 Aug 1848 "sailed."

²⁸ Nelson Examiner and Evening Chronicle 26 Aug 1848

²⁹ William Jenkins Diary - entry for Thursday 16 July 1863

³⁰ Samuel Ironside in New Zealand 1839-1858 by W. A. Chambers (1982) page 181

³¹ New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian 13 September 1848

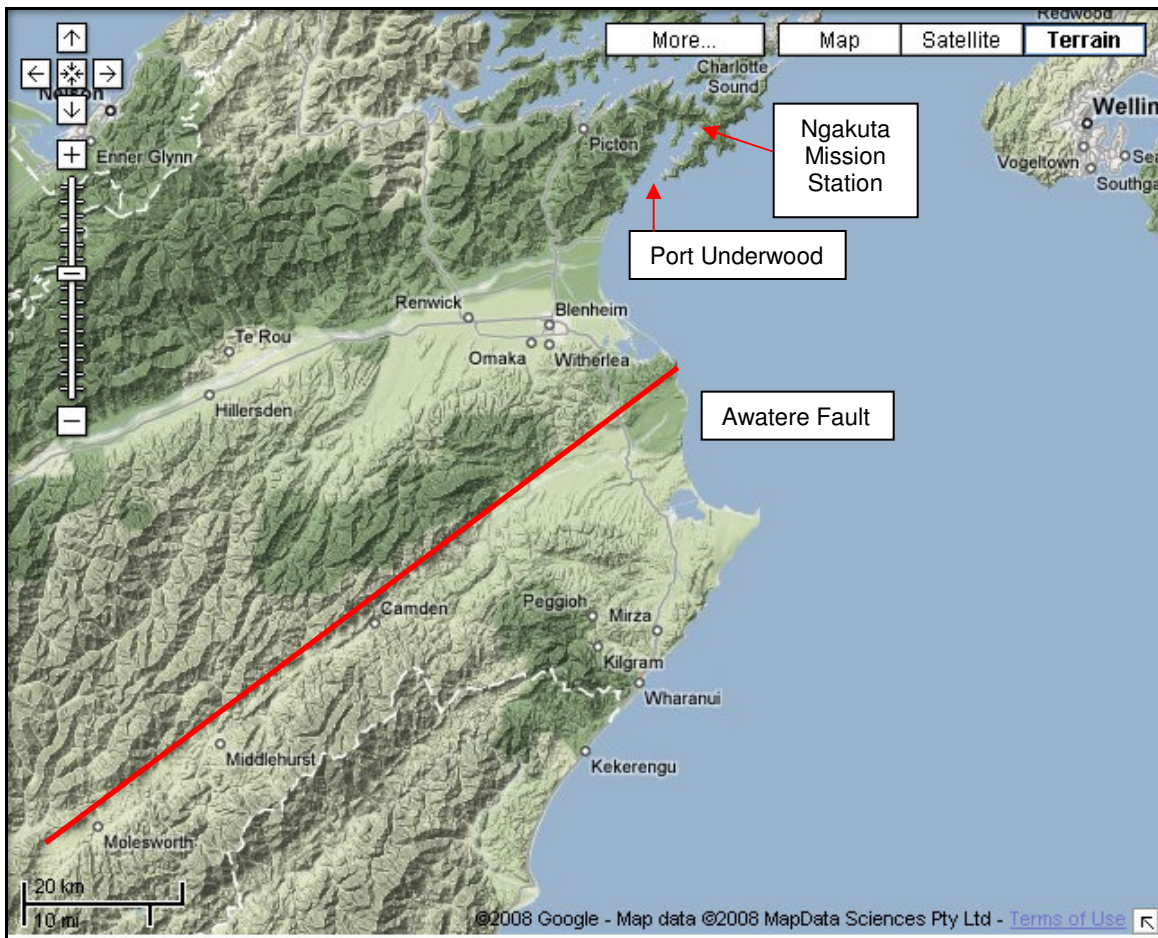
³² Refined slip distribution and moment magnitude of the 1848 Marlborough earthquake, Awatere Fault, New Zealand by Dougal P. M. Mason and Timothy A. Little. *New Zealand Journal of Geology and Geophysics* 2006 Volume 49: pp375-382

³³ New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian 18 October 1848

³⁴ New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian 25 October 1848

³⁵ Wellington Independent 25 October 1848

“At Cloudy Bay, Queen Charlotte’s Sound, and Cape Campbell, the shocks appear to have been felt as severely as at Wellington.” Aurora Australis were also observed during the evenings of 16 and 17 October.³⁶



Mr Toms, a passenger from Queen Charlotte’s Sound, arrived at Wellington on the ‘Triumph’ on 31 October and he stated that “*the natives report an eruption to have taken place on the night of the 17th ult at the Bluff, halfway between the mouth of the Wairau river and Cape Campbell, and that a large fissure had been made in the Wairau near the native cultivations about ten miles from the mouth of the river. The natives, among whom was Te Rauparaha, had left in alarm and proceeded to Otaki.*”³⁷

Natives at Porirua related to a Wellington Independent correspondent that “*the native chief Kanae has just arrived in a boat from Wairau. He states that they experienced a heavy shock of an earthquake on Sunday, the 29th instant, Rauparaha was thrown out of bed and had his hip sprained; and he reports that the earth had opened, and that the hills have been thrown down, and that the water is bubbling up through the cracks. He seems to think that Wairau is done for.*”³⁸

³⁶ New Zealand Spectator and Cook’s Strait Guardian 28 October 1848

³⁷ New Zealand Spectator and Cook’s Strait Guardian 1 November 1848

³⁸ The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser 2 Dec 1848 – including an article from the Wellington Independent dated 1 November 1848

*"On the Middle Island, the shocks were very violent; and some of the natives were so alarmed, that they fled to their homes at Waikanae. Rauparaha was in the neighbourhood, and during the consternation, had his leg severely bruised."*³⁹

*"From Queen Charlotte's sound, an open boat came over in very stormy weather for the purpose of bringing away a party of European Women who were living there, and were alarmed at the convulsion going on."*⁴⁰

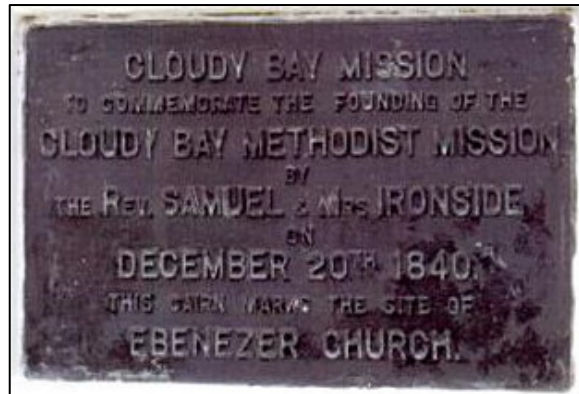
*"Immediately across Cook's Straits at Cloudy Bay the catastrophe was so severely felt on Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th of October, that some whalers brought their families over to Wellington in an open boat, at considerable risk, during a strong south-east gale."*⁴¹

Whether William was home with his family when the earthquakes began is unknown. The two chimneys of the Jenkins' home probably collapsed and the Ebenezer Church damaged. At the time William's wife, Jane, was 7½ months pregnant and she had the care of four children under seven years of age. The whole mission station was later abandoned with the Jenkins family and some local Maori moving to Motueka. The Ebenezer Church may have been moved at the same time.

Later history of the Ngakuta Bay Mission site

About 1950 Henry George William Bothwell, who owned a farm at Ngakuta Bay, donated about half an acre to the church.⁴² Frank William Smith, a local historian, says that Bothwell permitted the erection of a cairn and *"donated to the church the quarter acre on which it stands. It was surveyed off and is now church property."* Smith also visited the site in the 1960s and *"the mouldered remains of the mission house chimneys were to be seen, but ploughing operations removed them."*⁴³

The land (a quarter-acre) includes the sites of the Mission Station and the Ebenezer Church. As a contribution towards the Marlborough Centenary celebrations the Methodist Blenheim Circuit decided to commemorate the work of the Reverend Samuel and Mrs Ironside by erecting a memorial in Ngakuta Bay. With no road access Mr L. F. Daken made his launch and punt freely available for transporting materials to the site.⁴⁴



Plaque on Cairn at Ngakuta Bay⁴⁵

³⁹ New Zealander 15 November 1848 Reported by Captain Petre of the schooner Carbon which was obliged to put into Queen Charlotte's sound in consequence of adverse winds when leaving Wellington on 30 October.

⁴⁰ New Zealander 15 November 1848: Letter written from Government House, Wellington dated 21 October 1848 from E. Eyre to His Excellency the Governor in Chief

⁴¹ Chambers's Edinburgh Journal by William Chambers, Robert Chambers published by William Orr 1849 n.s.v 11-12 p188-189 Article titled "The Earthquake in New Zealand".

⁴² Webpage for Henry George William Bothwell (1902-1984) compiled by Graeme Adams last updated 28 February 2010 <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=kiwig&id=I3847>

⁴³ Nelson Historical Society Journal Volume 3 Issue 1 October 1974 Tua Marina and Port Underwood – an account of a field trip to these places by members of the Nelson Historical Society in October 1973

⁴⁴ Methodism in Marlborough 1840-1965 published in connection with the Centennial of Wesley Church Blenheim April 1965 page 126 – also a photo of unveiling the cairn.

⁴⁵ Image credit: Te Tau Ihu O Te Waka: A History of Maori of Nelson and Marlborough Volume II Te Ara Hou – The New Society by Hilary and John Mitchell (2007) page 84

Nearly 300 people attended the unveiling of the Memorial Cairn by the President of the Methodist Church, Reverend A. Everill Orr, M.B.E. on 5 March 1960. Over 100 of those who attended had arrived by walking over the saddle from Missionary Bay in Tory Channel to Ngakuta Bay. The service was held on "*the mound of remains*" of the crumbled chimney of the Flood family home that was built on the old foundations of the Ebenezer Church. Reverend M. A. McDowell, D.D., chairman of the Methodist District of Nelson, conducted the service and the lesson was read by Reverend H. E. Harkness, superintendent of the Blenheim Circuit.⁴⁶

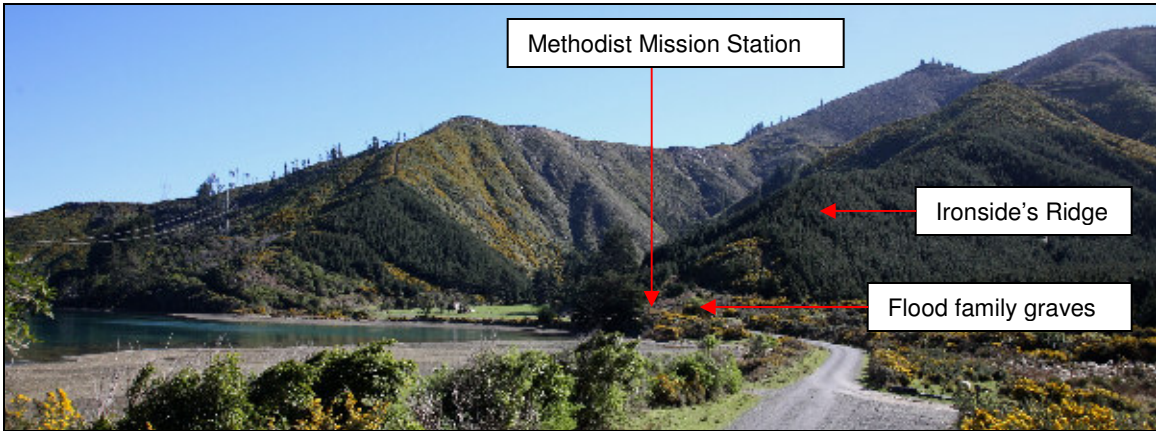
In 1975 an archaeological survey of Port Underwood was undertaken by Michael Trotter. For Ngakuta Bay he reported that "*Shell middens were seen on the surface of a small ridge running up from a European grave (J. Flood) and on the south bank of the nearby stream mouth. The latter partly overlaid burnt stones and charcoal, and there were also numerous burnt stones washed out onto the beach on the eastern side of the bay.*" The nearby Ironside's Ridge was described as "*overlooking a Methodist Church cairn marking the site of the missionary's church on the flat.*"⁴⁷

Jerome Nugent Flood "*built his home on the site of the old Ebenezer Church in the middle of the bay and recently a cairn has been erected to mark the location of the church and mission station.*"⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Nelson Evening Mail 07 Mar 1960 Rev.Samuel Ironside Cairn Unveiled

⁴⁷ Port Underwood Archaeological Survey by Michael Trotter 1975

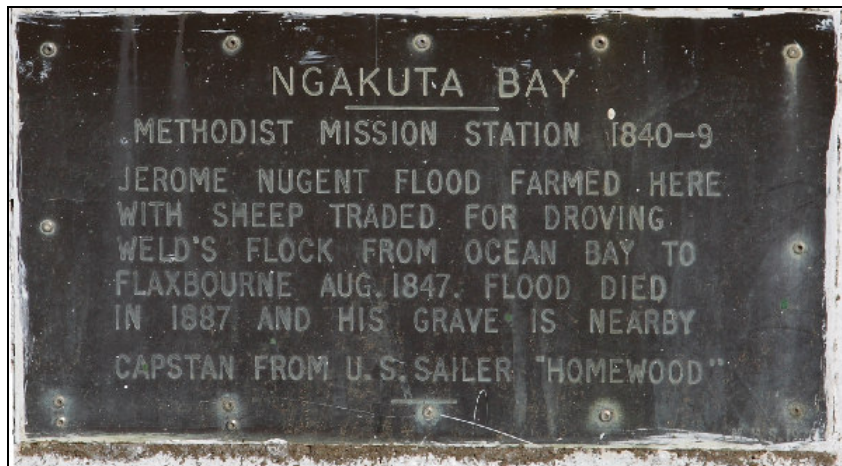
⁴⁸ Place names of Port Underwood by James Reyles O.B.E. (2002) page 39



Ngakuta Bay 20 August 2009



Memorial at Ngakuta Bay 20 August 2009



Further references

Kinder Library Reference: MET 64
Primitive Methodist Church of New Zealand. New Zealand District Records 1836-1910

Letters written by Mary Frederica Swainson (1826-1854) to her grandparents – number 54 dated 14 Nov 1848. Says that the Maoris at Cloudy Bay considered the quake was a 'judgment on them for the Wairau Massacre and all hastened away.' Typescript copies held at the Alexander Turnbull Library qMS-1337-1339.

When speculation becomes tradition: Was the Port Underwood Church moved to Motueka? by Wesley A. Chambers. *In Journal Wesley Historical Society v56 (1990) pages 78-81*

Book: Guards of the Sea by Don Grady – refers to the 1847 party that visited Ngakuta Bay

Nelson Evening Mail 7 Mar 1960 *Rev. Samuel Ironside Cairn Unveiled*
Blenheim. This Day. Nearly 300 people, probably the greatest number of civilians ever to have gathered at Port Underwood since the great whaling days of over a century ago, paid tribute on Saturday to the Rev. Samuel Ironside, the noted early Methodist missionary and one of the most sterling characters to have lived and worked in Marlborough. The occasion was the unveiling of a memorial cairn to Mr Ironside by the president of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, the Rev. A. Everill Orr, M.B.E. Over 100 of those who attended re-trod the missionary's footsteps by walking over the 900-foot saddle from Missionary Bay (off Tory Channel) to Ngakuta Bay at the head of Port Underwood. This was the track used by Mr Ironside. It is at Ngakuta Bay that the simple white cairn has been built. Among the crowd were people from as far afield as Auckland and Christchurch, with several having come from Mr Ironside's one-time parish of Nelson. They included descendants of some of New Zealand's earliest settlers who had been married or christened by him in the infant days of the Dominion. Today nothing remains of the great Ebenezer Church (it measured 66 feet long by 36 feet wide) which Mr Ironside built at the bay. What happened to it is a mystery, but it is known that Joseph and James Flood built a house on its old foundations and it was here, on the mound of remains from the home's crumbled chimney, that speakers addressed Saturday's gathering. The service was conducted by the Rev. M. A. McDowell, D.D., chairman of the Methodist District of Nelson, and the lesson was read by the Rev. H. E. Harkness, superintendent of the Blenheim Circuit. **Photograph:** of the Cairn surrounded by... Mrs E. F. Wastney, of Wakapuaka, and formerly of Ngakuta Bay, Port Underwood, went on last Saturday's pilgrimage to the bay to unveil a cairn in honour of the Rev. Samuel Ironside, who founded there in 1840 the first mission station of the northern part of the South Island. At 72, with her son and his family, Mrs Wastney walked over the rough steep track to Ngakuta from Missionary Bay in Queen Charlotte Sound. From left to right: Mr G. Wastney, Mrs E. F. Wastney, Jeffrey (10), Meryl (6), Peter (13), Mrs G. Wastney, Raewyn (9) - 282

Nelson Evening Mail 8 Mar 1960 Mystery of Church Which Disappeared

One hundred and seventeen years ago, amid great rejoicing, the first church in the northern part of the South Island was opened at Ngakuta Bay, Port Underwood. It was the Ebenezer Wesleyan Chapel, which took between 100 and 150 men several months to build. A memorial to its minister, the Rev. Samuel Ironside, was unveiled on its site last Saturday. But what happened to the church? Not many years after its opening its site was bare, and a cottage was built there. Where did the church go? Mr F.W. Smith, of the Marlborough Historical Society, has been trying to solve the problem for many years. On Saturday he announced at the unveiling a new suggestion: that a whaler who had had a blacksmith's shop in Port Underwood had burnt down the church and put the bell on his scrap-heap. Mr Smith and a party of fellow-historians had found the site of the smithy and dug into the scrap-heap, but so far without success. The alternative explanation was, he said, that, when Ironside's successor, William Jenkins, closed the mission station at Ngakuta in 1849 and moved to Motueka, he took with him the beams and other parts of the church, which he used in putting up a new building. Mr Smith did not think this likely, as Ironside, who had charge of the Nelson Wesleyan Church at the time, did not mention it in any of his known papers. Evidence from Motueka might shed light on the mystery. The 'pilgrims' to Saturday's unveiling went in two parties: one by launch from Picton round through part of Tory Channel to Missionary Bay, where Ironside had kept his whaleboat, and thence over a track to Ngakuta; the other by the new road to Oyster Bay on Port Underwood, and from there to Ngakuta Bay by launch. This Ngakuta Bay, incidentally, should not be confused with the other bay of the same name on the Grove Track on Queen Charlotte Sound. A "Mail" representative went with the Missionary Bay party, which numbered about 100. Among the pilgrims was 72-year old Mrs E. F. Wastney, of Wakapuaka, whose late husband was a former owner of the bay. They lived there for seven years about 40 years ago. Although the track was rough, steep, and overgrown, she made the journey in as good time as any others of the party. At the other end of the scale, there were several young children, including Mrs Wastney's six-year old grand-daughter Meryl, also of Wakapuaka. Altogether, seven Wastneys went over the hill – Mrs Wastney, senr., and her son, Mr G.Wastney, with his wife and four children. The saddle between Missionary and Ngakuta Bays is 900ft high, and the rise is in little more than a mile; the view of the Sounds on one side, and of Port Underwood on the other, however, is well worth the exertion. The ridge up which the track winds from Missionary Bay is Missionary Ridge and that down the Ngakuta side is Ironside Ridge, both after the pioneer missionary. He is reputed, by the way, to have made the trip between the two bays regularly in about 45 minutes, but Saturday's pilgrims found themselves hard pressed to get over in 1 hour 45 minutes. Among those who came by way of Oyster Bay were the Rev. J. D. McArthur, of Blenheim, who in 1940 led a similar pilgrimage to mark the centenary of the arrival of Samuel Ironside in Ngakuta Bay; the Misses E.L. and G. D. Holdaway, of Nelson, whose grandparents, Mr and Mrs John Holdaway, were married in Nelson in August 1842 almost certainly by Mr Ironside; Mrs Spurdle, of Wanganui, whose grandparents, Mr and Mrs Cave were married by him; and Mr L. Daken, of Port Underwood, whose great-grandparents were among the couples married by the missionary only a few days after his arrival. **Photograph:** About 300 people went on a "pilgrimage" on Saturday to be present at the unveiling of a memorial to the Rev. Samuel Ironside at the site of his mission at Ngakuta Bay, Port Underwood. The president of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, the Rev. A. Everil Orr, M.B.E., dedicates the memorial. The others pictured are the chairman of the Nelson Methodist district, the Rev. Dr M. A. McDowell, and the vice-president of the Methodist Church, Mr M. Hughson. -280