

relatives. Mary ann, her eldest sister had married Grrahame Tanehe of old Ohaeawai, and another sister became Mrs Weaver. The Weaver children attended Ohaeawai Maori School, and a daughter, Sarah, became an assistant teacher to Mr Woods after Eliza retired in 1895.

On 18th June 1892 Louis Te Haara, son of the chief of the district married another Mary Ann Leaf who was the daughter of Eliza's brother George. Mr Woods records; 'Wife, self and family all attended wedding: I gave 10/- towards it, all I could afford.'

Times were hard in the early 1900's. Whole families would leave Ohaeawai for weeks at a time to go gum-digging and as time passed they had to go farther away as new gum-fields were opened up. There are frequent references in the logbooks to the fact that the families and children were in difficulties.

26 Nov 1906 Several children away gum-

digging, in fact whole settlement are more or less starving, none of them have any potatoes to eat, they are living on bread and tea.

12 Nov 1907 Had meeting re bad attendance. The fact is the children are starving, the Maoris living on doughboys and watercress, children sneak away from Tawhera (Note - the edible flower of the Kiekie)

In those hard times the Headteacher and his assistant must have suffered too. And the hardship was not always related to food.

When the family arrived at Ohaeawai in 1885, they took possession of a school/residence combined. The previous teacher had been Mrs Wyatt-Watling who lived most of the time alone.

Her husband was the Waimate Mission doctor and had his home at Waimate. Mrs Wyatt-Watling who had no children of her own would have found the residence more than adequate for her needs. However the Woods family was much more numerous and active. In 1890 the seventh son Benny was born. The walls of the tiny residence did not stretch accordingly and we can imagine the crowding.

The building had been erected in 1874. We have a floor plan of it only; the structure itself has long gone, travelling first to Ohaeawai where it became the residence for the Board School Headteacher, and then it was broken up and the timber used for repairs elsewhere.

There were three bedrooms, two being very tiny; there was a separate pantry off the kitchen, and one living room. There is no bathroom indicated so perhaps the washing and bathing arrangements were in a separate building.

We can imagine Mr Woods escaping to do most of his writing in the adjoining schoolroom.

For Eliza there was little opportunity for escape from bodies and noise. The teaching she did, mainly sewing for the girls, might have been some relaxation, but most of her time must have been spent in cooking, washing and cleaning, all of which meant hard physical work at that time.

One of Mr Woods first requests to the Department was for a pump to assist the water supply. It was not easy to get things done. Authorisation had to be sought before any money could be spent; letters back and forth took time.

Then there was the problem of transportation. Roads were few and very badly constructed. They were impassable in wet weather, and according to Mr Woods there seemed to be many wet days. Floods, deluges and continuous rain are frequently mentioned in his logbooks. Some families who had to walk or ride several miles to school were often absent, or in the case of rain occurring during the school day, were sent home early so they could safely cross the rising streams.

'Leaking roof' plagued the Woods family for months. In fact nothing was done by the Department to improve it because they had plans to build a new residence. To Eliza mopping up after a deluge those plans would have been of no interest at all.

There was a store at old Ohaeawai which Eliza probably patronised in the early days. Later her son George became a storekeeper in Ohaeawai, the Corner, a settlement which stood at the junction of the roads from Kawakawa to Okaihau and North, and from Kawakawa to Kai-kohe and the Hokianga. Her shopping would have been easier then with George's transport available for delivery.

Although Eliza's life was a busy one there were times for socialising. Visitors



George Edmond Woods.