

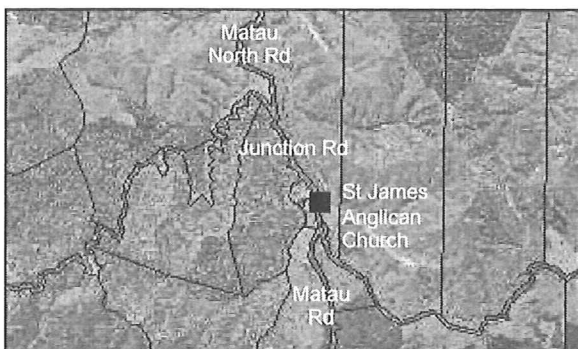
St James Anglican Church, Matau

Junction Rd

1957

Use: Church
Materials: Timber, iron roof
NZHPT Registered: Not registered
Legal Description: -

Historic Value: 1 out of 5
Architectural Value: 1 out of 4
Technical Value: - out of 2
Symbolic Value: 1 out of 3
Rarity Value: - out of 2
Townscape Value: - out of 2
Group Value: - out of 2
Overall Heritage Value: 3 out of 20



The Matau, Junction, Mangaoapa and Mangamaire Roads were originally located in the Clifton County, with the surveying being finished in 1893. The land was steep, and progress was held back by limited funds and difficult communication. Some settlers battled on, however, and Matau became one of two villages (along with Purangi) which met these settlers' basic needs. A school was opened in 1896 with a roll of 10 pupils; a post office and a small store were added, and farmers made butter in their own dairies, as the road was in too poor condition to be able to establish a dairy factory.

Priests and ministers travelled to Matau and Purangi whenever time (and road conditions) allowed. This was often only once every few months, with the district making the most of the visits. One minister commented that *"the spiritual welfare of the people seems to be looked after in a way not known before in the history of this neighbourhood"*, when Church services were held on four consecutive Sundays. The services were held in the school, which was the focal point for the community, as weddings, funerals and all social functions were also held here.

Two of the earliest missionaries to Matau were Mr. Jeynes and Mr. Ensign Buick. Jeynes was a bush missionary who played cornet wherever he went, and Buick was from the Salvation Army. These two, especially Buick, had an immense impact on the religious life of the Matau community. Indeed, Buick is remembered for walking hundreds of miles in the back country of Taranaki to deliver the gospel everywhere possible.

The Church of England serviced Matau from Whangamomona until 1951 when the Whangamomona Parish was added onto the Stratford Parish. Matau has had many respected Bishops visit, including Bishop Panapa, the Maori Bishop of Aotearoa.

In 1957, it was decided that an actual Church building should be built at Matau. Mr. and Mrs. W.L. Carver donated land for the Church, Mr. Nigel Rawlinson donated the timber, and numerous people donated other necessities. Mr. Tom Mackie from Stratford was employed to build the Church, with the Matau community supplying voluntary labour. The Church was complete within six weeks, and on the 28th of August 1957 it was dedicated by the Rt. Rev. J.T. Holland, the second Bishop of Waikato.

Sunday School has been taken at the Church at odd times. This became less frequent as ministers went to the school as part of the Bible in School's programme.

The Church is still in use today, and has been used not only for Church services, but also for christenings, weddings and burials. It is an important part of the small community left at Matau, and holds many memories of the people of the district.

Bibliography

Matau: 1889-1971, N.S. Smillie, p70-71