

KORU MONASTERY SITE

PLAQUE UNVEILING

Saturday 18 October 1997
10.00am



FATHER JEAN BAPTISTE ROLLAND

FOUNDER
(1834 - 1903)

OKATO AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

KORU MONASTERY SITE

A POTTED HISTORY

JEAN-BAPTISTE ROLLAND:

Jean-Baptiste Rolland was born in France 8 December 1834. He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1861 and joined the Society of Mary (the Marists). He came to New Zealand in 1864 and in 1865 was made rector of the New Plymouth mission, visiting families scattered throughout Taranaki and becoming the (unofficial) chaplain to the British soldiers who were attempting to maintain the uneasy peace in the area. In 1869, he bought a farm at Koru (although there is some question as to whether any money changed hands), where he established the first Catholic school for boys in Taranaki, and a monastery-type home. He was transferred to Westland in 1874 and died 13 July 1903 in Reefton, where he had been parish priest for 19 years.

KORU MONASTERY

Koru Monastery is thought to have been New Zealand's first Roman Catholic monastery. It was built about 1869 of unpainted, horizontal weather-boards and was about 18m long and 9m wide with a verandah extending around three sides.

Its main aim was to house bachelor and widower Irish ex-militia men in the hope of converting them to Marist lay brothers. The only ordained brother was Brother Elias Regis Marin, who is buried in the small cemetery nearby.

Closed in about 1874, it was destroyed by fire in 1915 while being used as a farmhouse by the Mace family.

MACE FAMILY

Thomas Mace married Isabella Broughton. Their son, Thomas William Mace married Helen Jecks Webber (nee Curtis). Thomas and Helen had seven children:

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|----|---------------------------|---------|---|
| 1: | Lilly Isabell Mace | married | Sidney Howard Tuck. |
| 2: | Cicely Isabella Mace | married | Henry Scarlett Watson. |
| 3: | Herbert Darcy Mace. | | |
| 4: | Ida Gertrude Mace | married | Frederick Walker McGregor. |
| 5: | Aldernon Wilfred Mace | married | Annie Elizabeth McKee. |
| 6: | George Thomas (Dick) Mace | married | Margaret Isabella Logan. |
| 7: | Louis Frank Mace | married | Rosella Adelaide Stockley
Hazel Linda Julian (widow, nee Magon). |

PROGRAMME

MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

Mrs Nola Corbett
Co-Ordinator
Okato and District Historical Society Inc.

SPEAKER:

Dr Alistair Buist
Chairperson
Taranaki Branch
Historic Places Trust

UNVEILING OF PLAQUE:

Father Tom Lawn
Priest
St Joseph's Parish

SPEAKER:

Mrs Barbara Williams
President
Rotary Club of New Plymouth West

CLOSE 11.00AM