

Tiny chapel has seen 100 years of history

Tomorrow afternoon, the great-great-grandsons of pioneer New Plymouth settler Zacchaeus Wells will be christened during a memorial service in the Rangiatea Chapel, South Rd, built by their forefather a century ago.

About 100 Wells family descendants from as far north as Auckland and as far south as Nelson will attend the service. Father H. F. Doogan, of St Joseph's Church, New Plymouth, will christen three-months-old Adrian McKibbin, of Wellington, and the Rev. A. C. Hight, West End Methodist Church, will christen Craig Miscall, 27 of Mill Rd, New Plymouth.

The small chapel, now administered by the Methodist Maori Mission, was built by the settler of pit-sawn timber in 1869 on his Mangorei Rd farm to provide a place of worship for his ten sons. The opening service was conducted by an Anglican minister, the Rev. H. H. Brown.

The Taranaki Herald, in its issue of Saturday, October 16, 1869, said of Mr Wells:

"We feel certain his neighbours and the settlers round about there must feel grateful to him for his liberal act in providing them with a place wherein they can assemble once a week to offer up their prayers to the Almighty."

"It is built of red pine, and will hold about fifty persons. The seats and reading desk are of polished wood and the doors are covered with green baize. The chapel will be opened for Protestant worship every Sunday; and when there are a sufficient number of children in the district to attend, a school will be held in the building during the week."

In the same issue, there is a letter to the editor from Mr Wells on sugar, or sweet, corn. He writes of his growth on his farm after being introduced into Taranaki from New York

by DIANA QUAY

in 1867 by his brother-in-law.

Mr Wells was associated, too, with financing the introduction of the first Jersey cows to Taranaki and with the importation of the province's first slag fertiliser.

Born in Wiltshire in 1830, Zacchaeus Wells arrived in the small New Plymouth settlement on January 6, 1852. He worked first for Mr W. Bayly on a farm at Omata. Ten years later he settled on his own property at Mangorei. His older brother, Benjamin, was an early editor of the Taranaki Daily News and author of "The History of Taranaki."

Inheritance

When an uncle died, the two brothers inherited money which helped Zacchaeus purchase the Egmont Flour and Bone Mill, Courtenay St, from Mr W. K. Hulke who had completed it in September, 1886, with operations beginning in March, 1887.

He married Miss Selina Handy, whose family had arrived in New Plymouth from England in 1839. Her brother owned a general store on the corner of Eliot and Courtenay St in the 1860s.

All denominations in the district used the chapel until 1940, when it was shifted next to the old Mission House, South Rd, following its presentation to the Methodist Maori Mission by the Wells family.

A plaque in the chapel is inscribed: "To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Philip Wells, who was

instrumental in giving this historic family church from Lower Mangorei to the Methodist Home Mission Department for the use of the Maori People. Borne 28 June, 1868. Died 27 June, 1941. He walked with God."

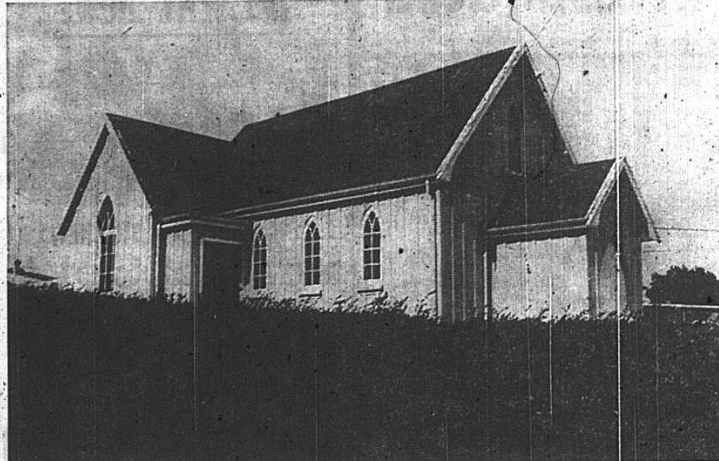
To mark the centenary, the family has presented an organ for use in the chapel and a granddaughter of Mr Wells, Mrs

E. M. Boitten, of New Plymouth, has made a cake, a replica of the chapel, for the family reunion.

At 10.30 a.m. tomorrow the Maori Mission minister, the Rev. Moke Couch, is to conduct a service. A luncheon in the church grounds, will follow and the memorial service conducted by Mr Hight, will begin at 2 p.m.



THE CHAPEL on its original site at Upper Mangorei. It was built from timber from the Wells farm. One of the younger sons of Zacchaeus Wells drilled a hole in the floor of the chapel with an auger during its construction, thinking he was being helpful. The hole still remains.



THE CHAPEL on its present site on South Rd. It was moved here in 1940 after the Wells family presented it to the Methodist Maori Mission. It can seat about 50 people and a recent acquisition is an organ which the family have presented to the mission to mark the chapel's centenary.



THE CHAPEL builder, Mr Zacchaeus Wells and his wife Selina (nee Handy). The couple met and married in New Plymouth after emigrating from England in the early days of the settlement. They raised a family of ten sons.

Grieg played by Semprini

Listening to Semprini playing Grieg is a rewarding experience, a restocking of the inward ear with memorable melody (writes W. J.).

A World Record Club disc presents "The Marvellous Music of Grieg," played by Semprini accompanied by an orchestra conducted by Vilem Tausky. I found it delightful.

Great tides of harmony surge up the fjords in "The Last Spring," Op. 34; there

is the haunting melody of "Solveig's Song" and the brisk and lively "March of the Dwarfs," taken at a pace that would make light infantry blench.

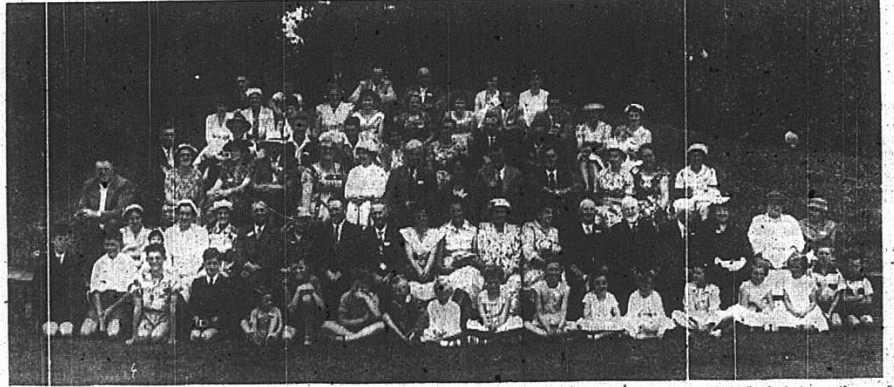
You may not recognise these names, but you'll know the tunes. They've been used as mood music in countless radio and TV shows and

FOUR NEW ZEALAND COMPOSERS

Tessa Birnie, the New Zealand

Record of the year?

Daniel Barenboim's presentation of Mozart's "Haffner" and "Prague" symphonies is bound to rank as one of the finest classical records of 1969. Not since the days of Bee-



MORE than 70 descendants of Zacchaeus Wells are pictured here in a family reunion held in January, 1959. Included are three of the four sons still living at that time. They are seated to the right in the second row from the front and are, from left: Sydney, Arnold and Heber. The fourth surviving son, Decimus, was too ill to attend the reunion. All the sons are now dead.