

OKATO HOTEL

The Okato Hotel was built on the corner of the Main Road and Kaihihi Road about 1875 by Robert Gray, who came to Okato in 1865. Robert died in 1906 and his son William James Gray took over the ownership until he sold it to Charles Edward Brookes in 1926 who then became Chairman of the Taranaki Brewery and Cordials.

Many alterations were made to the Hotel over the years, which you can read about in the following minutes from 1952 - 1970.

MINUTES FROM THE TARANAKI BREWERY & CORDIALS

23 June 1952

Resolved that in the event of the County requiring the encroachment rectified, the vendor to enter into a covenant accepting responsibility for any liability there may occur during the term of 15 years.

26 June 1952

Mr Webster submitted a proposal in lieu of the original proposal stating that the Government had fixed the interest rate at 4¼ % ruling out the firm proposal whereby the vendor would receive 5 %. The new proposal was in effect the same as the original, the difference being that Mr Brooke would become the lessor instead of the vendor.

Mr Brooke stated that he would consider the matter. Mr Rowe suggested that the matter of purchasing the Okato Hotel should be finalised as soon as possible. Resolved that the sub-committee have power to act providing the purchase price is not greater than the original proposed agreement.

7 July 1952

That the offer made by Mr Brooke for the freehold of the Okato Hotel property be accepted on the following terms:

Price £20,000.

£3,500 cash to be paid on the expiration of the present lease in December next.

Balance £16,500 to remain on mortgage for 15 years at 4¼ %.

Annual reductions £600. Carried.

That the company accept all responsibility in connection with the encroachment of the Hotel building on the road. Carried.

In answer to a question by the chairman, Mr Brookes who attended the meeting to receive the Directors decision regarding the purchase of the Hotel - stated that he had no notification

from the Licensing Commission on any other responsible person as to the buildings of the Hotel notwithstanding the improvements recently carried out by him.

24 July 1952

That the agreement between CE Brooke and Taranaki Brewery and Cordials heed the approval and be sealed with the seal of the company.

30 October 1952

The Directors interviewed Mr and Mrs McNeil in connection with the management of the Okato Hotel. After the position was set out by the Chairman Mr and Mrs McNeil left the meeting.

Resolved that the Secretary write to Mr and Mrs Cummings, Mr and Mrs Pownall and Mr and Mrs Miller asking them to meet the Directors.

5 November 1952

The Director interviewed Mr and Mrs Pownall, Mr and Mrs Cummings and Mr and Mrs Miller. After outlining the conditions of employment the Chairman pointed out to the applicants the fact that even if they were successful in being placed at the Okato Hotel, other opportunities would be available, when their application would be taken into consideration.

Appointment: That Mr and Mrs McNeil be appointed Manager and Manageress of the Okato Hotel on the conditions as set out by the Chairman.

£10 per week - Manager

£5 per week - Manageress

£3 per week - hospitality Carried.

21 April 1953

Resolved that Mr N McNeil, Manager of the Okato Hotel be given the grazing rights on the Hotel property.

26 February 1954

The appointment of Mr and Mrs L Guilford as Manager and Manageress of the Okato Hotel was confirmed.

The following letter was forwarded to Mr N McNeil, Okato Hotel: "It is with regret that I have to inform you that my Directors have decided to accept your resignation as from Saturday March 6th, 1954. I conveyed to my Directors your wish that you carry on for a further term of three months. After giving this request consideration they have decided as already stated to accept your resignation as from the above mentioned date."

15 March 1954

The Secretary reported that Mr and Mrs L Guilford had taken over the management of the Okato Hotel from Mr and Mrs N McNeil.

Resolved that the Secretary and Mr K Johnston to check inventory of Okato Hotel.

12 October 1954

Mr Webster stated that he had given the matter a lot of thought and the house loss should not continue, we cannot go on with the House costing the Company seven or eight hundred pounds a year. Mr Guilford is a good man and we should give him a chance to improve the figures. Directors should not delay on the matter any longer. After a full discussion it was resolved that the Secretary inform Mr Guilford that the services of the cook should be dispensed with immediately.

16 November 1954

Resolved that the matter of staff bonus and Okato Hotel management be left over until the next meeting which was set down for Thursday 18th November at 10.30am.

23 November 1954

Resolved that the matter of management be left over until after the Xmas and New Year Holidays.

27 January 1955

That the tender of Winstone Ltd, to seal down on felt Battleship quality Linoleum (after removing existing covering and preparing floor) laid to an approved design for the outside area of the bar and "A" quality Lino behind the bar, for the sum of £117.3.0 be accepted.

30 May 1955

The Chairman stated that the Police and Health reports on the Okato Hotel were far from satisfactory. Both reports drew attention to the state of the building pointing out that the whole of the rear portion was in an advanced state of dry rot, approximately 90% being affected. The Company solicitor advised getting an independent report from the Architect and the builder Mr Snowden. Mr Syme stated that the rear wall referred to as subject to 90% dry rot appeared reasonably sound from the outside. A few weatherboards required to be renewed, and it was possible that some studs may be affected through improper flashings and maintenance. The substructure of the building was supported generally on stones and some wood piles. The floors are reasonably firm. Matters concerning the Lounge, exterior door, chimney and pipe flashings, roof etc were reported on by Mr Symes. Dr Brown stated that the Architects report should be placed before the Licensing Committee, and the companys solicitor should be instructed to take a very firm stand on the Health and Police reports.

2 June 1955

The Chairman advised Directors that at a sitting of the Licensing Committee held in Stratford, the License was withheld until the September sitting when, the committee would expect all the requirements of the report fulfilled as follows:

- a) Foundation and piling to be renewed as and where required.

- b) General attention to be given to floors and must be renewed where wrong and put right.
- c) Kitchen and services rooms around kitchen and the diningroom to receive the necessary attention to bring them to good order and tenantable condition and to be made hygienic.
- d) All sanitary equipment including W.C.'s to be put into working order and to be in a clean and sanitary condition.

Other matters that require attention are the matters requisitioned for in the police and health reports, copies of which we already hold.

Dr Brown stated that the most pressing item was the piling. It should be gone into immediately and another meeting held in say a months time when the other work could be finalised. Mr Webster stated that Directors should go into the matter further. The hotel was purchased in good faith and the company in his opinion should not be called upon to bear any structural work. We as Directors accepted the Vendors word as satisfactory and I am sure the Vendor should give this matter consideration.

Dr Brown asked "Was the Licensing Commission satisfied that the work had been carried out". Mr Brooke stated in reply that the work was carried out in a satisfactory manner as far as the commission was concerned.

Dr Brown stated that if the work was carried out - why is it that after three years, work of a major nature has to be done now.

Mr Webster asked would the vendor meet the company in the piling of the kitchen floor. Mr Brooke stated that he had sold the hotel to the company in good faith and as far as he was concerned all Licensing requisitions were met.

After further discussion it was resolved that the matter be left in the hands of the Hotel sub-committee.

23 June 1955

The Chairman stated that he had seen the contractor Mr Snowden and work would proceed at Okato as soon as possible.

28 July 1955

The kitchen floor has been renewed at Okato. A quotation from Messrs Winston Ltd for covering the kitchen pantry, toilet, passageway and dining room at the price of £123.17.6 nett was accepted. Aldrich Electric Coy. quoted £33 for the supply and fitting of four fluorescent fittings and wiring of three lights. The quote was accepted. The Chairman read a quote for painting for Colin Lovegrove in which the work would be done at a cost of £144.19.0. The Chairman stated the he thought the charge was high and suggested that Mr Snowden contact Lovegrove's brother for a new quotation. Mr Webster - Dr Brown "That the renovating, electrical and painting work be proceeded with at the price quoted". Carried. Mr H Brown - Dr Brown "that the painting quote be left in the hands of the committee with power to act".

25 August 1955

The Chairman reported that the work at Okato was progressing and should be completed at an early date. The kitchen floor was far from satisfactory and the contractor Mr Snowden had been asked to relay the floor. The Chairman informed Directors that on inspection the new floor was found to be badly sprung and wide gaps in the boards were found all over the floor.

26 January 1956

The Chairman explained to Directors the inability of getting a sufficient water supply, stating that the present pump was not big enough to cope with the demand of water. Dr Brown said that it could be the pipes were old and corroded. The Chairman stated that he would instruct the Engineer to test the pipes and give a report. If a bigger pump was required the quote from the Farmers Co-operative at £65 should be accepted.

23 February 1956

The Chairman reported on the pump and plumbing at the Okato Hotel, stating that a report from the Engineer had suggested that new water pipes should be installed where required. After further discussion it was moved Mr Innes, seconded Mr Rowe "that Snowden's Plumber be instructed to go ahead with the job". Resolved that the quote of £65 as tendered by the Farmers Co-operative for a new pump at Okato be accepted.

21 June 1956

Okato Licensee It was resolved that the action of the Hotel Committee in appointing Mr Duggan Manager of the Okato Hotel be approved.

Okato Land Lots 4 & 5 It was resolved that these two lots be offered for two years to Mr Kalin without charge on the following conditions - that he:

- a) Immediately cuts the gorse and follows this up with a spray of the new growth.
- b) That he keeps the fences in order.
- c) That the sections not be ploughed in any way.
- d) That at the end of the two years the sections be left free of gorse.

26 July 1956

A counter offer seeking a right of renewal after two years. It was resolved that we adhere to our original terms and at the end of the two years if Mr Kalin has complied with our conditions there will be a review of the future dealings with the land.

23 August 1956

Resolved that the hotel committee meet Mr Kalin at a favourable opportunity and that it be given power to act in making an arrangement.

27 September 1956

Mr St Leger Reeves re Okato Land purchase on behalf of Roebuck's. It was decided that

before making any decision the members of the Board view the property next Wednesday.

30 October 1956

It was resolved that the land in respect of which negotiations have recently been made with Mr CW Kalin be offered to Mr Kalin at a rental for three years of £45 per annum with a right of renewal for a further two years.

It was resolved that the land described in Mr St Leger H Reeves letter dated 30 August which is required for his client (S. Roebuck) be offered for use by M/S Roebuck (Okato) Ltd for a five year term at £50 per annum.

Resolved that the Board investigate the installation of a new stove in the Okato Hotel and that Mr Rowe obtain a price for consideration by the Board.

16 January 1957

Resolved that the wages of the Licensee and his wife be increased by £1 each per week.

21 February 1957

It was suggested that a few reputable firms be asked to quote on specifications as drawn up by Mr Rowe.

21 March 1957

Mr Rowe requested that the directors make an inspection of the hotel with a view to giving him more definite instructions to assist him in drawing up specifications. It was decided that the directors should carry out an inspection on Tuesday 26th of this month leaving the Brewery at 8am.

1 May 1957

Okato Hotel Painting Mr Saunders reported that quotes were received as follows:

Lovegrove Bros £311.14.0
Parrish £504

Mr Lovegrove had pointed out that it would be dangerous to burn off the old paint but he would scrape the building down. Mr Rowe supported this procedure and it was resolved that Lovegrove's quote be accepted and that it be left to Mr Rowe and Mr Lovegrove to agree on the type of paint to be used.

Temporary Bar Mr Saunders reported that the bar must have the approval of the Licensing Commission. Sergeant Quinn would shortly put in his recommendations.

23 May 1957

It was resolved that a suitable space heater be purchased for the public bar.

25 September 1957

Mr Saunders told the meeting that the shed at the back of this hotel gets very hot and it is difficult to keep the beer at a cool temperature in the hot months. This hotel was a good income producer for the Brewery and it was only fair the meeting decide to improve its output. It was resolved that the Company should proceed with the installation of two tank units and the corking of the holding room at an approximate cost of £875.

25 November 1957

In regard to a letter from the above re the Okato land it was resolved that Mr HL Thomson get a price for spraying the gorse and the Secretary replied to this effect to Mr Kalin, also informing him that the land has been valued as a revenue earner and it is considered that the price charged is reasonable and he will be held to the agreement.

12 December 1957

The agreement drawn up by Mr St Leger Reeves between the Company and Okato Quarries Limited was approved by the meeting and the Commission Seal was affixed. The Secretary was directed to point out to Mr Reeves that that part of the agreement requiring the lessee to clear and keep clear the land of noxious weeds had not been complied with and asking him to bring this clause to the notice of his Company client.

9 January 1958

Mr Saunders advised the meeting that Mr Frank Jones had resigned as Manager of the Okato Hotel, and his resignation was to take effect from the 26th January 1958. The reason for the resignation was that Mr Jones had accepted a position with New Zealand Breweries as manager of the Benedale Hotel.

Mr Saunders stated that the word had already been well circulated and that without any kind of advertisement on its part the Company now had seven applicants for the position. Interviews had been arranged for Mr and Mrs Wilson of Okato and Mr and Mrs Burrows of New Plymouth for this evening.

Following these interviews, where Mr Saunders had stated the salary would be £15 per week plus £3 per week hospitality subject to review at the end of three months, and after full discussion on the other applications, it was resolved that Mr and Mrs Burrows be duly appointed and that the Secretary inform the company's Solicitors to attend to the legal formalities.

23 January 1958

The Chairman submitted sketch plans for improvements to this bar at the same time providing for tank installation. It was resolved that the architect get out more informative plans and submit an estimate of the cost.

26 March 1958

Mr Borrell read out the following tenders after opening same in the presence of the Directors.

- a) B Rooke £730.15.0
- b) KR Cooke £824.4.0
- c) L Sole £871.2.0

The tendering was for the upstairs room, and it was resolved that the tender of Rooke be accepted subject to Mr Borrell being satisfied as to his workmanship.

Mr LG Smith had approached Mr Saunders with an offer for the Okato Hotel. It was resolved that no action be taken.

22 May 1958

Okato bedroom floor coverings: Resolved that the Chairman and deputy chairman be given power to act with regard to floor coverings.

19 June 1958

A price of £285.8.8 for carpeting four rooms and the passage was submitted to the directors, but it was resolved that other quotes be obtained.

24 July 1958

Another quote was obtained. This one from Floor Styles Limited for £279.14.6 for carpeting Licensees bedroom with A1 and Haircord in four other rooms and passageway. It was resolved that this quote be accepted.

A proposition to purchase a portion of the Okato land at an approximate price of £800 was not entertained by the Directors.

28 August 1958

Okato painting has been completed and it was now in excellent order.

25 September 1958

Okato bar alterations: Resolved that this work be postponed for discussion until next March.

19 November 1958

Quotes were received for covering the kitchen with hardboard and painting same in accordance with Health Regulations. It was resolved that subject to the tenders of DT Hine and Thomson and Williams being on a comparable basis that the lower be accepted.

23 April 1959

Resolved that we write to Mr Kalin telling him that we have cut, sprayed and disced (where possible) in accordance with our share of the contract and it was now over to him to keep the land in good order.

2 July 1959

Figures were submitted to the meeting and the chairman pointed out that due to celebrations at Okato that the hotel had done £800 per week for two weeks in a row.

22 October 1959

It was pointed out that in accordance with the terms of the contract between Kalin and the company the period of the lease had expired but Kalin had a contingent right of renewal for a further two years. It was decided that the matter be left in the hands of the Chairman and Mr HL Thomson and that they report back to the Board.

26 January 1960

Mr Burrows, Manager of the Okato Hotel, was offered the position of manager of the Tasman Hotel. The Board decided that if Mr Burrow's accepted the position he and his wife between them would receive a salary of £18 per week with a hospitality allowance of £10 per week.

The fixing of the position of manager of the Okato Hotel was discussed next but after getting it down to two applicants, vis. Messrs Gillard and Gardiner it was decided that the final decision be made by the hotel committee after having interviewed both gentlemen.

13 June 1960

It was resolved that a sub-committee consisting of the chairman and Mr Rowe prepare plans and specifications for cool rooms for the Okato Hotel

28 July 1960

Plans as drawn up by Mr HN Rowe were produced at the meeting and it was resolved that a sub-committee consisting of the Chairman, Mr Brown and Mr Rowe be appointed to finalise the plans and specifications and to call tenders.

30 August 1960

Tenders were opened and read out as follows:

Lindsey E Sole £2,987.0
Snowden Construction Co. £2,523.16.0
Stan Priest £3,359.0
Bowers & Schweiters £2,900.0

It was resolved that Snowdens tender be accepted, the penalty/bonus period to run from the 1st September.

5 October 1960

Resolved that it be left to Mr Saunders and Mr HL Thomson to meet both Kalin and Roebucks re our leases at Okato.

30 November 1960

Okato Renovation The second progress payment of £1000 was passed for payment subject to the work being okayed by the Chairman and Mr Brown.

23 March 1961

A quote of £186.5.0 by Lovegrove's for a single coat of high gloss paint on the outside of the hotel and a coat of roof paint was not accepted at this stage. It was decided that quotes be obtained from another firm and again from Lovegrove's for two coats on the woodwork but that decision as to whether the job should be done immediately or delayed for a period be made after the quotes are received.

12 April 1962

Lease - Okato Land The Chairman's reported that Kalin's lease had expired and that he (Mr Saunders) had been approached by a Mr RA Warner who was willing to pay £85 per year for the land. It was resolved that he be granted a three year lease with a right of renewal for a further two years at a rental of £85 per annum.

25 May 1962

Okato Quarries Resolved that Okato Quarries be offered a renewal of their lease for a further five years but that the rental per annum be increased by £15 to £65.

10 July 1962

Okato Quarries Resolved that the new agreement fixing the rental at £65 per annum be completed on behalf of the Company by Mr Saunders, Mr Barnes and the Secretary.

23 August 1962

Okato Property - Nominal Occupier Resolved that Mr HL Thomson be the company's representative to vote in the County election.

27 June 1963

It was resolved that the Chairman be given authority to proceed with reroofing the hotel.

20 November 1963

It was decided that D Davenport be approached to see if he was interested in managing this hotel.

5 December 1963

Mr & Mrs J Mowatt were present for the purpose of meeting the Directors and after some discussion retired. It was then resolved that J Mowatt be appointed Manager of the Okato Hotel in place of Mr J Gillard who had resigned.

4 June 1964

The Chairman tabled quotations from D Moore for £196 for painting as required by Health Department requisitions and B Rooke for £167 for a new roof over the outside urinal. It was resolved that these quotations be adopted.

9 July 1964

Policy to be presented to the Commission sitting at Stratford The Chairman recommended to the Board that the Company apply to the Commission to have the Okato Hotel converted to a tavern licence and that if such licence be granted then in most cases a new premises up to the standard required by the Commission be erected. The question of finance was discussed and the Chairman stated that his estimates for erecting suitable premises were as follows: Okato £18,000 - new hotel on new site.

25 March 1965

It was resolved that Mr HL Thomson arrange if possible for the disposal of the surplus land on the other side of the road from the Hotel at a price of £1,700.

6 May 1965

Tenders Okato Tavern The Chairman read a letter from the Architect advising names and prices of tenders. These were discussed and it was resolved that the second lowest tender of Jones and Sandford Ltd be accepted and that the Chairman be empowered to negotiate a price for an additional bay.

9 December 1965

Manager Royal, Tasman & Okato Hotels The Chairman advised that the temporary manager at the Royal was not satisfactory and that he felt action should be taken immediately. It was resolved to transfer Mr Mowat from Okato to the Tasman, Mr Skilton from the Tasman to the Royal and advertise the vacancy at Okato.

19 October 1967

The Chairman was authorised to buy a piano for the Okato Hotel.

The Secretary was instructed to write to RA Warner regarding gorse growing on the Okato property.

5 March 1968

Okato Tavern Mr M Antill, at present on the Okato Tavern Staff, would be a suitable person to manage the Tavern and was willing to accept the position. It was resolved that Mr Antill be appointed manager of the Okato Tavern.

9 December 1968

The Chairman advised that it had become necessary to install outside doors for the toilet block at Okato. The estimated cost was £320. The chairman was given authority to proceed

with this item.

MANAGERS & MANGERESSES OF THE OKATO HOTEL/TAVERN

The following is a list of Managers with approximate dates. These dates have been taken from the Taranaki Brewery & Cordials Minute Book from 1952 - 1970 and information given from Okato residents. If you have any further information regarding dates and names of owners, managers, cooks, housemaids etc, please do not hesitate to contact Lloyd or Rosalie Gray, as it has been a big job to find any early accurate information about the Hotel.

The Okato Hotel was built around about 1875 by Robert Gray, and was once known as "The Stoney River Hotel". Approximately 1912, Will Emeny was reputed to be in the Okato Hotel, he was nicknamed "Slippery Bill".

One Edgar Meredith was in occupancy in 1923, he was the donor of the Meredith Cup that is being played for regularly between the Okato Rugby Club and the Rahotu Club.

Charlie Brookes bought the hotel in 1926 off WJ Gray, stayed for 18 months, and leased it out for 5 years to go to Auckland. When this lease was up, Mr Brookes could not find a buyer or leasee, so he went back for several years.

Mr Bullock was there in the 1920's, he would be best remembered for his loss of hair. Len Dunne came in the 1930's. He will best be remembered as "Dad Dunne", he would encourage the young men, not to drink alcoholic beverages, but to drink soft drinks instead.

Other publicans to come were Harry Burke, one evening as some rugby players were walking down the passage of the hotel, Harry asked them to walk quietly as his wife was pregnant and resting. One player remarked "That's not our fault, we came to get some drink"!

Later on, maybe not in order, were Tom Moran, Mr Darrah, Mr Palmer, Mr Thompson, Barney McCulloch, Mr McNeil and Jack Gillard who went to Australia with his wife Colleen. Jack was the instigator of the regular bowling trips between Okato and his local club in Australia "Lithgow". Mr Hutchinson came and he was prominent in the Okato Rugby Club.

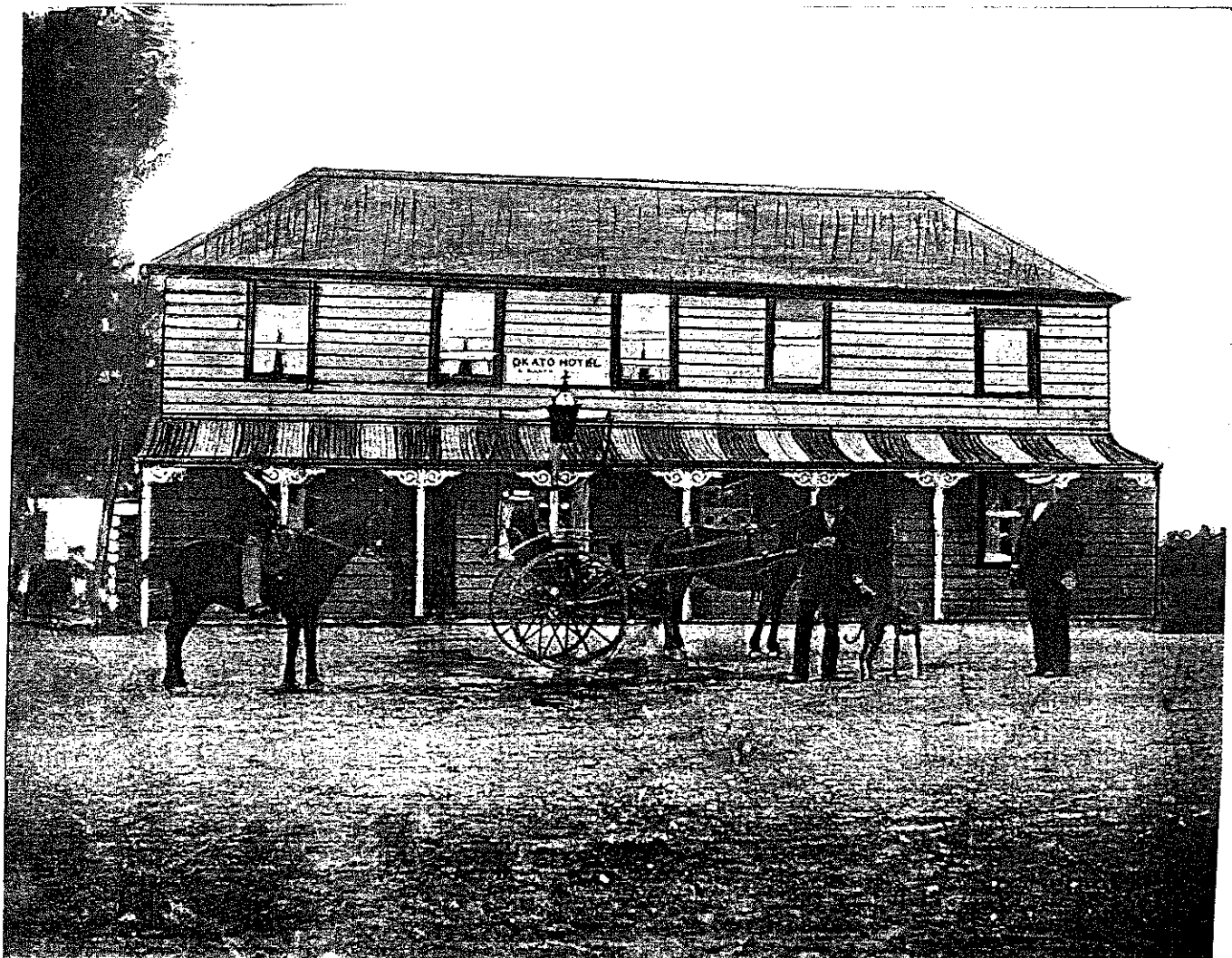
1875 built by Robert Coulter Gray and owned until it was passed on to his son William James Gray who sold it to Mr Charlies Brooke in 1926.

1875 - 1926	The Gray Family
1903 - 1905	Mr Alexander Baker
1912	Mr Will Emeny
1920	Mr Bullock
1923	Mr Edgar Meredith
1926 - 1932	Mr CE Brookes
1920's	Mr Bullock
	Mr Harry Burke
	Mr Palmer
1930's	Mr Len Dunn
	Mr Tom Moron

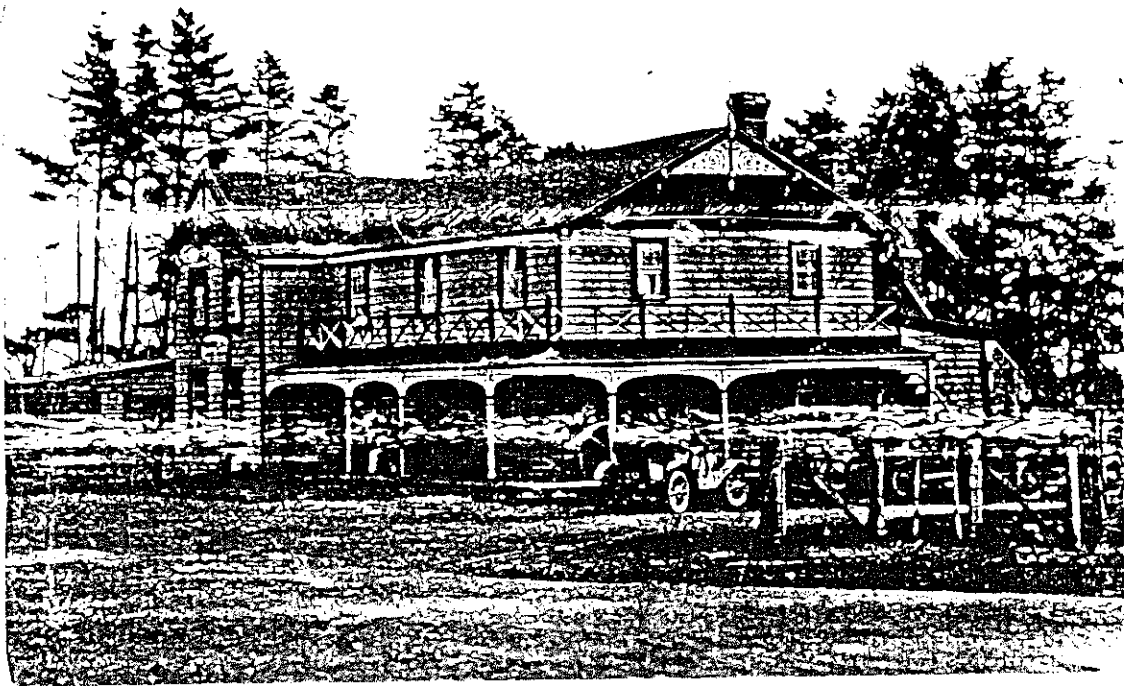
5 November 1952 - 26 February 1954
 26 February 1954 -
 21 June 1956 -
 6 January 1958 (date of resignation)
 26 January 1958 - 26 January 1960
 26 January 1960 - 5 December 1963
 5 December 1963 - 9 December 1965
 5 March 1968 -

Present - 1994

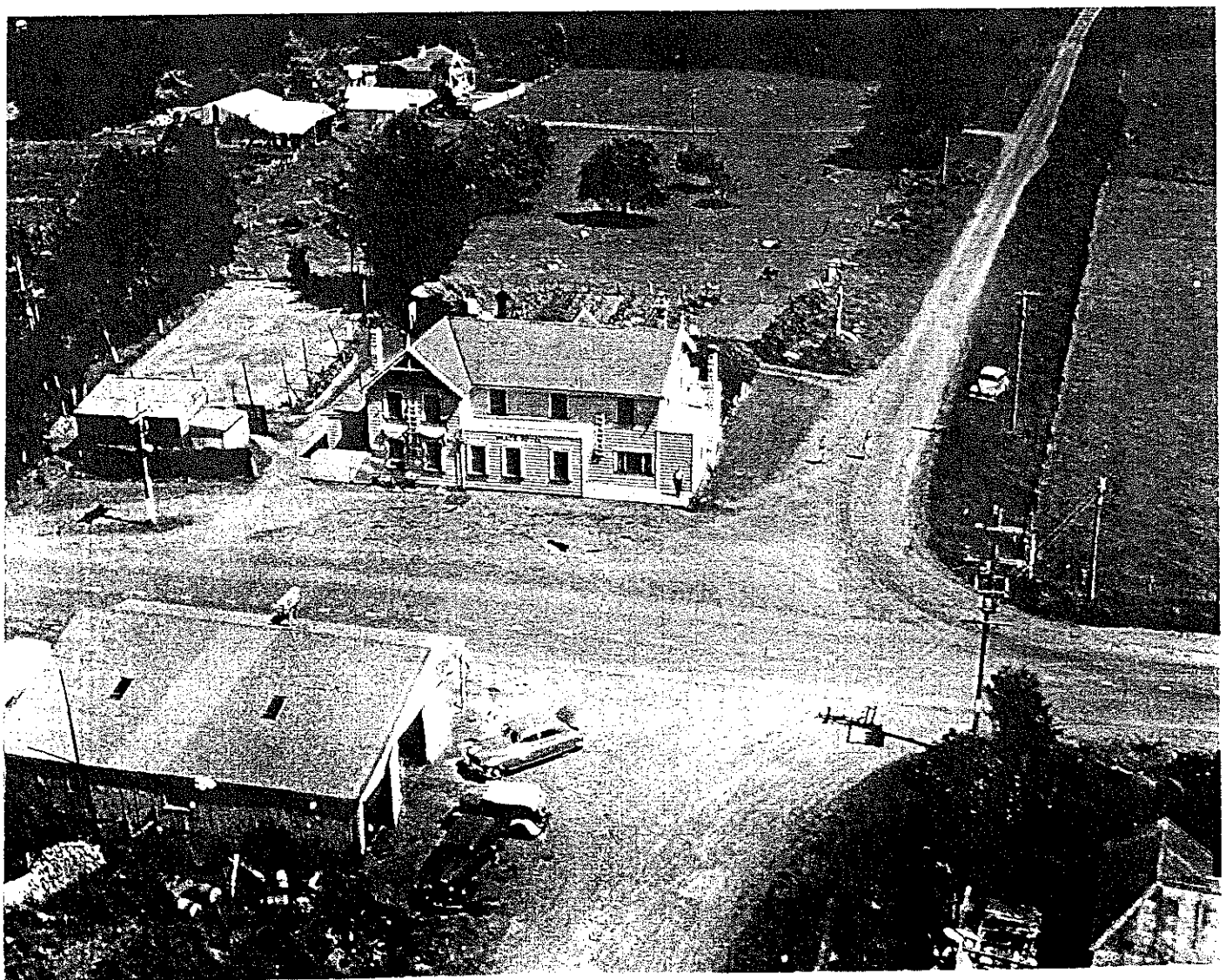
Mr Darrah
 Mr Thompson
 Mr Barney McCulloch
 Mr Hutchison
 Mr & Mrs N McNeil
 Mr & Mrs L Guilford
 Mr Duggan
 Mr Frank Jones
 Mr & Mrs Burrows
 Mr Jack Gillard
 Mr John Mowatt
 Mr Merv Anthill
 Mr Don Manson
 Mr Peter Johns
 Mr Jimmy Hagget
 Mr Colin Lovegrove
 Mr Lionel Simpson
 Mr Denzil Hodson



CAPTAIN KNIGHT ON THE HORSE. ON THE RIGHT ALEXANDER BAKER PROPRIETOR OF THE OKATO HOTEL 1902 TO 31 MARCH 1905
 ERNEST BAKER IN THE GIG. FRANK BAKER WITH THE DOG



Okato Hotel 1910



Okato Hotel 1938