

## Richard David Power (Dick)

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Richard (Dick) was born at Aohanga on 20 May 1929 to Henry Richard David Power and Ema Power, nee Namana. Ema was a staunch member of the Catholic Church after changing over from Mormon to Catholic so that she and Henry could get married, see opposite in figure 1. *She was a very religious woman, she made sure we got a good dose of it, says Dick.*

At a young age Dick went to live with his Granny Pane and Manaena Waaka at Homewood. Dick remembers hearing his Granny Pane and Manaena singing to each other in Maori. Over the years that he lived with them, they only spoke Maori to him; he only spoke Maori to them. Granny Pane shown below in figure 2 used to cook all their food on an open fire. Dick recollects that *Granny Pane made beautiful scones in the camp oven. She would scrape the embers out of the fire, put them on the hearth, and then put them over the camp oven. They were lovely!*



Figure 2: Granny Pane



Figure 1: Henry & Ema Power

Dick began school at Homewood. When World War II broke out Dick was taken back to Aohanga by his father. Dick remembers that when he moved back to Aohanga he travelled on the mail bus every Tuesday and Friday to Pongaroa School with his brother Johnny. They would have breakfast at the old boarding house and then go to school. The other three days of the week they were given home-work to do. For a short while they also spent some time on correspondence before attending Aohanga School in 1941.

Dick recalls that the Aohanga School building came from Saunders Road, just out of Alfredton. The school was pulled down in parts, and transported in sections to Aohanga. The Aohanga school was built by Tom Brinson and was completed in 1942, but the school had already started in the old shearer's quarters at Aohanga Station. When the shearer's arrived at Aohanga for the shearing season the school was moved to the old meeting house. Occasionally the students were allowed to go and watch the sheep

being shorn when the shearer's came. Dick attended the opening of Aohanga school and talks about the students performing Maori action songs. *I used to lead all the Haka when we were at school, said Dick.* Figure 3 shows the children performing action songs on the verandah of Aohanga school at the opening.



*Figure 3: School Performance at Aohanga Native School Opening 1942*

There were only two rooms in the school building. The children used to put their bags in the corridor (where the electric stove is now), and the desks were in the big room. The school only went to the outside verandah. Cocoa was boiled on the pot belly in the winter. Dick and his other brother and sisters would ride horses to Aohanga school and at one time they travelled on a horse and gig. However their main form of transport when he was growing up as child was as Dick puts it *Shanks' Pony* - walking.

Dick remembers that *the Wairarapa Member of Parliament was at the opening, Mr Roberts, and a gentleman from the Department of Education by the name of Mr Mason also attended the opening.* It was quite a big opening! Figure 4 shows speeches being made at the opening. At that time Mrs McGregor was the teacher at Aohanga School.



*Figure 4: Speeches at the Opening of Aohanga School*

There were a lot of families living at Aohanga in the 1940s. *Several families lived in the paddock where the hay shed is now situated. Tom Brinson also built the house where Clarence lived. Uncle Bill lived in a house down by the river across from the cemetery. Auntie Lizzy lived near the gate at the cemetery. There were also houses at the station itself a rabbitier by the name of Hikurangi lived by the corner of the river. All of the old places have now been pulled down apart from Clarence's home.*

While growing up, Dick and his whānau would go hunting in the bush where there were always rabbits, pigs or deer. Eels and white bait were collected, as well as crayfish, paua, and kina. *And mum would always have a garden. Whenever they went to the beach to gather kaimoana it was a whānau affair. They would make their way over the rough hill track on horse back or horse and gig to the beach.*

Dick finished his formal education at the age of 13 or 14 and went straight out to work on Branscombe Station; working there on and off over the years. Dick recalls his Mum saying, *that only one of her boys was allowed to go to war at any one time. So when Henry (Dubby) the oldest brother was wounded, Tom enlisted. His older bother Tom gave Dick his working dogs, before he went away to war. The dogs came in handy as Dick's jobs were mainly shepherding, fencing and droving; however shearing was what he did for most of his working life and he was still shearing in his seventies. Dick supposes that he shore over a million sheep in his lifetime. He worked with or knew by reputation, whether good or bad, many shearing contractors, shearers, rousies (wool handlers) and pressers. He*

*shore in many shearing sheds, on many farms and often talks about the different landmarks around the country that were significant places for him when he worked for Bill Meech and other contractors.*

The only sport that Dick played was rugby. He has great memories about local rugby matches and he speaks fondly and proudly of Māori All Blacks like Kingi Matthews. *Kingi married my cousin Polly Holes. Dick is still a staunch supporter of local rugby and can often be seen on the sideline when local matches are being played.*

Dick married Lorna Chase of Ngāti Tuwharetoa. Lorna was of the Ratana Religion, however she changed her religion so as they could be married. Dick laughs as he says, *we had to get married twice, first at the old Post Office in Pongaroa and then in the Catholic Church.*

Dick and Lorna settled in Tinui where their children and some of their grandchildren grew up and spent their early years. He still lives in Tinui and enjoys his independence, shown below in figure 5. Dick celebrated his 80th birthday last year in May with all of his whānau at Papuauma Marae.

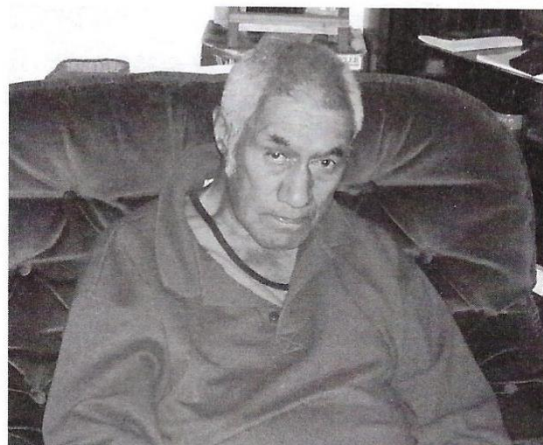


Figure 5: Dick Power