BUILDING FOR DEMOCRACY.

Align your life with Youth to help them meet
Their problems in their hours of leisure time,
And know that they need guidance, kind, concrete,
And space in which to revel, free from grime.
Then build large halls for Youth, well filled with lore;
Around them carve the lawns with streams, plant vines-
Place these in every city at its core,
Invite each boy to smell clean air, young pines;
Guide boys in play, train hands for useful works,
Grant hearts the chance to tingle with delights,
Prove that in idleness dishonour lurks—
Thus give to sleepless millions restful nights.
Democracy lies in the hearts of men
Who build of Youth to make a citizen.

—Verdie McMillen.
AUTHOR'S NOTE.

This booklet cannot, and does not, claim to be a complete account of the establishment and development of church and Sunday school work in the circuit of New Plymouth. It is a retrospect and prospect of youth work "among the people called Methodists," and is issued in the hope and belief that it will at least be some inspiration to the appeal now being made for the provision of the most up-to-date building and facilities for the carrying on of this important section of church work in the circuit in the future. From the information that I have been able to collect, and the records to which I have had access, I have been enabled to place on record, in some chronological form, how the work was originally commenced and the steps by which it has been developed down to the present time. There are gaps in the records which it has burn impossible to bridge, but from what has been ascertained it is plain that the church has always set great store by its work among the youth of the community, and while the names of many former workers appear, there must be many others who loyally and with great devotion carried on this work, but because of the loss of records they must go "unsung" if not unhonoured for their part in this great activity. What the work is today stands as a living memorial of the work of these members of the church. With the heritage they have handed down must be accepted the responsibility for seeing that the coming generations of young Methodists are as well nurtured in the principles of religion and citizenship and the doctrines of the church as were those of past eras.

The booklet goes forth with the confidence that its story of past achievements will inspire that devotion and enthusiasm in others for the work among the youth of our church and community that was so much a characteristic of those who wrought so faithfully in the days of difficulty and hardship which marked the experiences of the pioneers of the church in New Plymouth.
FOREWORD.

This brief but excellent survey of local Sunday school and youth work appears at a most opportune time. Not only does it commemorate the launching of the new building scheme and pay tribute to past leaders, it is also an expression of the church's concern for and confidence in youth. Living as they are in the most critical period of human history, compelled as they are to shoulder heavy responsibilities, not of their own making, young people today urgently need all the help and practical encouragement which experience can give. Whiteley Youth Centre is an investment for youth and in youth. The facilities it will provide for spiritual, mental and physical development will be a rich contribution paying handsome returns in young men and women inspired and trained to take their place in a world crying out for leadership. There is vision behind the scheme — vision and out-moving faith. May the living message of this booklet cause many to catch both vision and faith, and to identify themselves with this adventurous project.

E. T. OLDS, Superintendent Minister.
"Another circumstance to which I wish to refer is the anniversary of the Sunday school on Easter Sunday."

So wrote the Rev. Charles Creed, in a letter to the Wesleyan Missionary Society of London, on April 8, 1842.

It must follow, therefore, that at that time the Sunday school had been in existence for a year, and so 1841 dates the commencement of youth work for Methodists, or, as they were then known, Wesleyans, in the New Plymouth district.

That letter of Charles Creed, the first Methodist Minister to be stationed in New Plymouth, contains a striking account of the anniversary occasion. He said:

"The Sunday services were conducted in the orthodox style. Two sermons were preached and collections made. On the Monday evening a tea meeting and public examination of the children were held in the open air. This was followed by a public meeting in the church (the raupo building in Brougham Street) when addresses were delivered by Mr. Creed and the Rev. Skevington and Hoani Ri (John Leigh) a Native missionary. The latter delivered a most powerful oration in favour of Sunday schools which had an indescribable effect on the congregation. At first those seated at the back rose in their places to gaze on the orator. Others followed. Presently everyone was standing and they remained so until the speaker broke the tension by resuming his seat."

Not long after this occasion certain leading gentlemen of the town sought the use of the church building for the holding of an agricultural show, but Mr. Creed refused to allow the church to be used for such a purpose. It seems like a spiteful action that soon after this the church authorities were advised that as the building encroached on the street line it must be removed. But, of course, no building could be allowed to remain an encroachment upon a public thoroughfare.

But this is anticipating the story by a little. Prior to this time Mr. and Mrs. Creed, who landed on the beach at Ngamotu on January 14, 1841, and were therefore here to welcome, on behalf of the church, the first pioneer settlers of the district, were living in a small raupo whare on the beach. This primitive dwelling had no floor or fireplace and doubtless possessed many other "modern inconveniences." It is recorded, however, that in a small rush-covered chapel adjoining this dwelling there was held, on March 21, 1841, the first service in Taranaki attended by Europeans. These were the chief surveyor for the Plymouth Company, Mr. F. A. Carrington, and his staff. The establishment of Methodist services for Europeans should therefore date from that event.
The Original Settlers.

With the arrival of the original settlers by the William Bryan and the Amelia Thompson, at the end of March of that year, there came many devoted Christian men and women who at once associated themselves together with Mr. Creed in the carrying on of regular church services. Laymen must have played a significant part in tins early development of the church, as Mr. Creed was often away on visits to the Natives in other parts of his very wide parish. Records, however, do not mention the names of any lay persons having charge of Sunday school work, and it may perhaps be assumed that the charge of the work was in the hands of Mr. or Mrs. Creed, or maybe, both.

First Raupo Church.

With the building of the first raupo church in Brougham Street the activities were transferred from the dwelling-cum-chapel on the beach to the new headquarters of the church. This was situated on the western side of Brougham Street, a few yards north of Powderham Street, somewhere close to where the Salvation Army citadel now stands. This took place early in 1842, and among church officials and Sunday school workers were those who had belonged in the Homeland to the Bible Christian Church. Though there is no record of who had charge of the school there are names handed down of many who taught in the school. Prominent among them are those of Messrs. Edgecumbe, Nathaniel and Harry Hooker, William Priske and Simeon Howell.
A "Big Gun" Superintendent.

The first mention of a Sunday school superintendent that I have been able to discover is in 1857 in the person of a Sergeant Marjouram, gunnery instructor with the Royal Artillery. He is described as a man of great devotion when he took charge of the school. He was a very great man of his time. He did more than merely supervise the Sunday school work. Because few of the soldiers and settlers were able to read he held classes for adults as well as children to teach them to read the Bible. He stayed several years, but eventually had to give up his work and return to England on account of poor health.

A Clergyman's Tribute.

When he was about to leave New Plymouth Archdeacon Henry Govett, then vicar of St. Mary's parish, wrote him the following letter

Dear Sergeant, Marjouram,

I am sorry that you are unfit for service and obliged to leave us. I have seen with much pleasure the way in which you have exerted yourself to give religious instruction to the children of the soldiers stationed here. In fact, the establishment of a school for men was brought about, I believe, entirely through your exertions, and I know full well that your example and precept have exerted a good effect upon the minds of many of your comrades, who have thus had proof that it is possible for a soldier to live as a Christian. You have gained the goodwill and respect of the whole community, and we should all be glad to hear that you were spared to labour for many years longer in your Master's service. Believe me to remain, with every feeling of respect and esteem.

Yours faithfully,
HENRY GOVETT.

At this stage the records are unfortunately silent as to who succeeded this devoted servant in the administration of the school, and also as to those who carried on the work. Its importance to the church, however, is evidenced by the appointment by the circuit quarterly meeting in January, 1862, of the following as a Sunday school committee for the ensuing year:


A Magisterial "Super"

Here it is recorded that the superintendent of the school was Mr. Josiah Flight, the district Magistrate. It is also assumed that those who were delegated as the teachers' representatives on the committee were also themselves teachers in the school. In 1864 the same names appear of teachers' representatives on the committee, with the addition of that of Edward Okey. And as Mr. Okey was still teaching in the "little Sunday school," as it was for many years called, as late as 1898, his active connection with the school must have been a very long one.

In October, 1866, Mr. Thomas Veale appears in the records as an active worker in the young men's Bible class, as he was appointed its representative on the quarter board.

In the following year several new names appear as members of the Sunday school committee. This system was evidently continued as a means of official contact between the church and the Sunday school work. To-day the link is through the circuit youth councils, a modern counterpart of the Sunday school committee.

The new names referred to were those of Messrs. McNaughton, Penwarden, Charlton, Dr. T. E. Rawson and Harris Ford.

A little earlier than this, in 1861, the Rev. W. Cannell, then a probationer minister was assisting with the youth work, as assistant to the Rev. John Whiteley.

Coming down to the year 1870 we meet with some names that are a little more familiar to the present and the immediate past generations than some that have already been mentioned. Mr. Thomas Humphries, Crown Lands Commissioner and chief
surveyor for the district, was in the Sunday school work as superintendent. He was a man of outstanding ability and education and he made a very deep mark on the life of the church and the community. He remained in the position of superintendent of the school, as well as being church organist, to about 1886, when he was transferred to another district.

Another familiar name, that of Mr. William Collis, senior, appears in the late 'seventies, and in 1880 he is listed as the official Sunday school visitor, apparently at that time a newly-created office. Other names coming into prominence about this time are those of Mr. John Grayson and Mr. J. C. George, the latter at this time taking over the leadership of the girls' Bible class from Mr. Henry Taylor.

A Splendid Team.

In 1881, and for many years onward, it is recorded that the school had a splendid team of officers. The chief of them at that time were: Mr. T. Humphries, superintendent; Messrs. W. A. Collis and T. K. Skinner, secretaries; Colonel Nelson Okey; librarian. It must have been a flourishing school, too, for the roll of scholars numbered some 400.

Others prominently associated with the work at this period were Messrs. Elisha Veale, a superintendent, F. W. Okey (who also retained his connection with the school as treasurer until well into the 1920's), John Guy, S. B. White, C. Carter (for 31 years a Sunday school worker, for 16 of which he was superintendent), and W. H. Pillar; Miss Alice Perry (afterwards Mrs. T. G. Sole), Miss Annie Perry (later Mrs. F. W. Okey).

The first officer to have charge of the infant or primary department was Mr. E. Okey, and he was followed by Mrs. Alan Douglas, and then Miss A. Sadler, Miss I. Sutherland, Mrs. M. Kitchingham (nee Berry) and Mrs. Holland (nee Bennett).

Accommodation and Equipment.

And now to the aspect of the work winch touches the conditions under which it had to be maintained and developed. One must conclude, from the data available, that up to the time accommodation was separately provided in the first Liardet Street church, the school sessions were held in the church buildings.

The first little raupo building in Brougham Street was occupied for little more than a year, when a small church in Courtenay Street was acquired. This was a little sandstone building 30 feet by 20 feet that was being built for a Congregationalist communion which at that time was under the ministry of the Rev. Horatio Groubes. It was situated next to what was later Dr. Leatham's residence. This, in its unfinished state, was purchased for the sum of £80, and was opened for Wesleyan services on September 10, 1843. The preachers for the occasion were the Revs. John Whiteley and John Aldred.
From 1843 to 1856 this church was the centre of the activities of the Wesleyan community, and here the foundations of the church were firmly established, under the ministry of the Rev. H. H. Turton. The congregations of the two communions worshipped together for some time, but the relations between them were not always thoroughly cordial.

**First Liardet Street Church.**

In April, 1856, a church site was secured by the Wesleyans in Liardet Street, at the corner of Courtenay Street. An area of half an acre was acquired on which was a small residence which was adapted for a parsonage.

The new church building was opened for public worship on October 2, 1856, by the Rev. S. Ironside. In 1864 it was enlarged to twice the size, during the ministry of the Rev. Alexander Reid, and a schoolroom provided under the new northern wing of the building. This is the first step towards providing independent accommodation for a Sunday school. The extensions, estimated to cost £400, actually involved an expenditure of £700, and the whole project of the Liardet Street church cost £2,000.

Here the work of the church developed and was carried on for more than 30 years. It expanded to the formation of the Waitara circuit in early 'eighties, and a few years later a site was secured on the South Road for £65 where, on a fifth of an acre, a small church-school hall was built costing £140. Here a school was established with about 120 children. With additions to the building the work at St. Aubyn has since been continuously maintained.
The period during which the congregation worshipped in the first Liardet Street church covered the troublous times of the Maori Wars, and the work of the church suffered therefrom. It is of interest to note that during the hostilities that took place in the country surrounding New Plymouth, the church was at times utilised for military hospital purposes.
This photograph, taken during preparations for the building of Whiteley Memorial Church, shows the northern wing of the old building cut away and removed to the northern side of the property, and the main portion of the original church ready for removal to the site it now occupies as Whiteley Hall.

**Whiteley Memorial.**

In the early 'nineties the congregation was concerned with the inadequacy of the church to meet the needs of the growing town, and thoughts were turned towards the provision of a more commodious and up-to-date building for the purpose. With the advent of the Rev. C. H. Garland as superintendent of the circuit in 1896, the project took definite shape and a decision was reached to proceed with the erection of a new church on the site of the church of that time, this building to be transferred to the side of the property and adapted as a church hall and Sunday school. Thus came about the provision of the first independent building for use as a centre for the work of the youth of the church.

Impetus was given to the project by a decision to make the new church a memorial to the Rev. John Whiteley for his work among both the Maoris and Europeans of the district. There had been a small hall on the site adjoining the church right on the Liardet Street frontage. This was moved to the rear of the section and the church building was removed to the site which it now occupies. Portions of the church, which had a substantial wing on the northern side, were transformed into class rooms, and the original small hall linked up to make a primary department. In this way the site was cleared for the erection of the new church, and, what must have been in those days, commodious accommodation provided for the Sunday school and Bible class.
work. Indeed, few churches at that time had the amount of space and the number of rooms that were then available for the central church in New Plymouth.

The new Whiteley Memorial Church was opened for worship by the Rev. Wm. Morley, D.D., on December 15, 1898. It cost £2,300. A sum of £450 was in hand before the work was commenced, many efforts were made in the course of raising the money required, and the sale of two sections in Gover Street materially assisted the financial campaign. The foundation stone was laid by the Governor, the Earl of Ranfurly, on December 9, 1897.

In the old building, transferred and transformed, the work of the young people of the place then developed and has been carried on for the past half century. The building has, however, "had its day," though it has not quite yet "ceased to be." The recognised necessity of more modern and up-to-date premises for the development of new methods of youth work has now taken shape in the determination of the church to equip itself for the great task of providing everything it can conceive to be the due of those concerned in such activities and the privilege of the coming generations, who will be the substance of the church of the future.

And What of Equipment?

Records have just nothing to say on this aspect of youth work. It must therefore be assumed that in this respect Whiteley differed little from other schools of those days. Fifty years ago there were probably few schools that could boast a blackboard or sand tray, with model figures as aids to teaching. The teachers had their Bibles and hymn books, and the lesson notes, and beyond these they had only their love of the children.
and concern for their religious training and their devotion to a self-appointed task. Teacher training classes or group gatherings for a common study of the lessons and methods of presentation were scarcely known, and these devoted workers had to rely mainly on their own resources.

Methods, too, were primitive compared with those in operation to-day. Children in the primary section had their tickets with texts on them that they were supposed to memorise week by week. In the upper classes there were tablets issued weekly, containing a "golden text" which scholars were expected to commit to memory, and a few questions, mainly on the lesson subjects, to which written answers were required. We did them or not, as we felt inclined, and not ever the prospect of a prize at the end of the school year induced some to take an intelligent interest in these things. These methods, of course, were not to be, and are not, despised. They followed the accepted concept of religious instruction for the young. But they were in many instances strangely unrelated to the child conception of religious matters—if, indeed, children can be said to have much conception of such things. Then, too, many of the hymns used were of a kind that conveyed little to the child mind of the reality of Christian things. I can recall the singing of some hymns, and with a more than appreciated frequency, that just meant nothing to us as children. What a contrast there is between some of those hymns and those used to-day, in which the presence of God in the everyday things of nature about us is emphasised. And yet the hymn books of today still leave something to be desired in the matter of the teaching of some of the hymns. For instance, why do we ask children to believe that the "Friend for little children," is "above the bright blue sky." Even our aviators at their highest altitudes, still find the bright blue sky very far away. It's all too remote and unreal, and doesn't square with the oft-quoted truth that God is "closer than breathing—nearer than hands and feet."

These observations perhaps do not add much to the present appeal being made for the new youth premises, but they are made to point the changes that have taken place, and that will continue to take place, in the attitude to youth work as the years pass and conditions change.

**And Now What?**

This little booklet issues not merely as some record of past achievements of the Methodist Church in the field of youth work, but to help reinforce the appeal for more adequate provision for the expansion and development of that work under the most modern conditions known to-day.

The present premises will no doubt contain many treasured associations for those who have been connected with the work that has been carried on within their walls. But the old must give place to the new. They have served their day and generation well, but they are now completely out of date and unworthy of a church which sets such store by its work for its young people and which hopes to win others who have not yet come.
within the sphere of its influence. And they are inadequate and past the stage when it would be economic to spend large sums of money on their modernisation.

The trustees have, therefore, after many years of consideration, at last taken the step and committed the congregation to the project of providing completely new premises for the carrying on of this department of the church's work. It is expected that in the near future the congregation and the community will have seen the plans of the new building and will have a more accurate conception of what is envisaged; but whether that is so or not, the need cannot be more urgently emphasised than it has been. The cause is worthy of the best and the most that we can all do, and having put our hands to the plough there can be no turning back.

This booklet has been prepared at the request of the trustees. It goes forth with their wish, as well as that of the author, that it will make its contribution to the project and inspire others to share the responsibility that belongs to us all.

We cannot foretell the future, but we do know there will always be the need for the care and nurture of the children of the church. That responsibility must be accepted by every Methodist in New Plymouth. It is for the better discharge of that responsibility that the present project is launched. It is the King's business, and on it no one must fail. In the rebuilding of our youth centre every member must labour with both hands in the work, to provide for the future generations such a church home for our young people that they, and those who are now, and who will become leaders, will give thanks for the vision that gave birth to the project of 1950.

That visions of a new church hall and Sunday school had been seen many years ago is evidenced by the bequest in the will of Mr. J. Grayson of a sum of £500 for such a
project. The Sunday school teachers' minute book contains a record of notification of this (after the death of Mr. Grayson) at a meeting on May 22, 1939.

**The Church's Support.**

Coming to the financial support of the work, I have discovered a cash book with records dating back to the year 1858. This shows that the church in New Plymouth has always been generous to the work among its young people. I have not found a year in which the school did not have a credit balance in its accounts—sometimes quite a substantial amount. There is one significant entry which suggests that the school, once at least, came to the help of the church, for there is recorded an item: "Loan to the circuit: £2/12/9." They were punctilious, too, in those days in the care of the accounts. They invariably had them audited and the certificates as to the accuracy thereof bear the signatures of such men as Dr. T. E. Rawson, Messrs. Stephen B. White, Harris Ford, W. K. Hulke, Henry Taylor and J. Nodder.

Other proof of the generous support given by the congregations of these times to the junior work is seen in the consistently large collections recorded on the occasion of the school anniversaries. These, with the proceeds of the scholars' tea meeting and some special donations ran from £20 to £20 and sometimes up to as high as £60 for the occasion.

**What Will Be Provided.**

Below is an impressionist picture of what the exterior of the new Youth Centre will look like. While an attractive external appearance is most desirable, the internal appointments and facilities provided for meeting the needs of every form of youth activity is of greater importance.

A fine sweep of steps from the Countenay Street entrance to the property gives on to the main vestibule of spacious dimensions. On the right side of this there will be a separate entrance to a well-appointed room for the primary department of the Sunday School. This will be a self-contained unit to which the children may come and go without the necessity of entering the main hall. It will, however, have convenient access to the main auditorium for use when desired. Sound proof walls will avoid any clash of activities in the two halls.

On the left of the vestibule will be a small office for superintendent and secretary for administration purposes. There will also be provided a small ticket seller's box for use when the hall is engaged for entertainment purposes. Further to the right will be a kitchen-servery from which refreshments can be dispensed by means of a slide opening into the hall.

The main hall is designed to seat about 450 persons and will be useful for all general purposes. It will have a stage of approximately 18 feet in depth by 36 feet in width,
with ample accommodation in rear rooms for all stage productions. Access for "stage properties" will be by a double door at the rear of the building opening directly at stage level and there will be under-stage space for property storage.

Surrounding the hall there will be a series of classrooms of appropriate size, with the probable adjustment of some partitions to enable two rooms to be thrown into one for larger groups or hobby purposes. One important feature will be the provision of a church parlour for meeting of moderate-sized groups and for Bible class gatherings. This will have an independent entrance on the eastern side of the building and will have special heating facilities. Modern kitchen equipment and other necessary facilities will make the Whiteley Youth Centre one of the most modern buildings of its kind—quite the best in New Plymouth, and capable of meeting the requirements of the development of youth work in the city for many years to come.
APPENDIX I.

SUPERINTENDENT MINISTERS.

List of Ministers who have been superintendents of the New Plymouth Circuit of the Methodist Church:

1856-57—S. Ironside (Eng.),  1903-05—J. N. Buttle
J. Whiteley (Native),  (pres. conference 1905).
1858-60—J. Fletcher (Eng.),  1906-08—T. G. Brooke.
1864—A. Reid (English),  1914-16—A. Chappell, M.A.
J. Whiteley (Native).  1917-18—W. A. Sinclair.
1876-78—F. W. Isitt.  1933-38—F. Copeland.
1884-86—William Lee.
APPENDIX II.

SUPERINTENDENTS.

Men who are known to have been Superintendents of Whiteley Sunday school (the list cannot claim to be complete because the records for the whole period are not complete): Sergeant Marjouram, Messrs. Josiah Flight, S.M., Thos. Humphries, W. Ambury, Elisha Veale, C. Carter, A. Pikett, N. Hooker, J. T. Griffin, R. L. Cooper, A. Ramshaw, A. C. Carey, G. W. Kirk and T. P. Hughson.

SECRETARIES.

The names of those who have filled the important office of secretary of the school are not so easy to come by. They have been too modest to enter their names in minute records of the school doings and are merely mentioned as "the secretary." There are the names of Messrs. W. A. Collis and T. K. Skinner in the early 'eighties. During the past 60 years, however, names are more easily traced, and these include the following: Messrs. W. Collis, L. 0. Hooker, J. Hooker, Miss A. Sadler, Messrs. C. W. Hooker, W. P. Okey, S. Foote. W. Wilkie, S. E. White, A MacDiarmid, D. Blundell, C. W. Head, H. R. Cooper, D. Vesty, R. C. Prentice, Misses Z. Kivell and M. Nicholson.