

Harriet Bowyer

Harriet Bowyer was born at Hohi on 12th August 1824, and baptised on 15th April 1827. Her father's occupation was again given as a carpenter.

Harriet met Samuel Bowyer after he came to the Bay of Islands about 1830 and settled on the Purerua Peninsula. Harriet and Samuel were married at Whangaroa on 18th March 1847, with Joseph Matthews officiating. The two witnesses were James and Harriet Shepherd who had once lived beside the Kings at the CMS mission site at Hohi and then at Te Puna.

The Bowyers made their home in Kaeo, where Harriet and Samuel lived all their married life, and where all of their 13 children were born between 1848 and 1872. One son died in infancy, and a bachelor son, Philip, died aged 27. However, the remaining seven daughters and four sons all married and had children. Harriet and Samuel also brought up a 14th child named Annie; not to be confused with their own daughter, Annie Bowyer.

Samuel prospered in Kaeo, and before he died in 1891, his estate was bequeathed to Harriet and his surviving children. All the daughters received £50, with larger sums and property to the sons. Harriet was to have use of the family homestead during her lifetime, after which ownership would pass to their youngest son Henry Bowyer.

Samuel died at Kaeo on 7th November 1891 aged 72. He was buried with his son Phillip and grandson Joseph on private land in Kaeo. Harriet survived her husband for 20 years and died on 11th September 1911 aged 87. She was buried at the old Kaeo cemetery, a small burial ground beside the Masonic hall in Waikare Road.

When located in 1988, the cemetery was in a disgraceful state. Harriet's plot was tidied up and the headstone was cleaned. Family members visiting in 1989 left floral tributes as part of the 175th celebrations. Since then, this old cemetery, the last resting place for many early pioneers of the district, has also been tidied up and now looks more presentable.

Researched by Kath Hansen. Written by Eric Hansen

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