

Victoria University of Wellington Library



▼ ABOUT THIS PAGE

Title: The Cyclopedia of New Zealand [Otago & Southland Provincial Districts]

Author: Cyclopedia Company Limited

Publication details: The Cyclopedia Company, Limited, 1905, Christchurch



Part of: The Cyclopedia of New Zealand



License: Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 New Zealand Licence

Share:

OTHER FORMATS



CONNECT



THE CYCLOPEDIA OF NEW ZEALAND [OTAGO & SOUTHLAND PROVINCIAL DISTRICTS]

BERWICK

[Previous Section](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Up](#) | [Next Section](#)

BERWICK.

BERWICK is a small township in the Taieri district four miles from Henley railway station, and twenty-one miles south-west from Dunedin. It is devoted largely to dairy-farming, but sheep, also, are

extensively depastured on the higher lands. The town has a school, store, butcher's shop, and a boarding house, but no hotel. At first the district was known as Waipori Lake, from a local lake or lagoon of that name; but during the late fifties, or early sixties, Mr. Watson Shennan, now of Dunedin, had some land there surveyed and cut up for a township, which was named Berwick, and since then the district has borne this name. Formerly the neighbouring land was very subject to floods, but improvements and embankments made under the supervision of a River Board have considerably reduced risks in that connection. The settlers have a still more effective scheme in view, and if it is successfully carried out, it is expected that the district will then enjoy practical immunity from damage by floods. The land around is very fertile, and so well known for its fattening qualities, that stock raised there is held in special estimation by the Dunedin butchers. There are good roads in the district, and cycling to Henley, four miles distant, or to Outram; about twelve, is much in vogue; and in passing along the base of the Maungatua Range the traveller sees some of the finest farms in the Taieri.

MCPHERSON, DAVID , Farmer, Berwick. Mr. McPherson was born in Inverness-shire, Scotland, in 1831, and was brought up to sheepfarming. After emigrating to South Australia, where he remained for some years, he came to Otago in 1862, during the early days of the goldfields. He was for a short time on the Dunstan diggings. After that he and his brother bought the estate then belonging to Messrs John Shennan and Robert Charters at Lake Waipori—between Berwick and Henley—and carried on most successfully under the style of McPherson Brothers, sheepfarmers. During their partnership, the brothers were well known as breeders of pedigree Leicester sheep, and were successful in winning sixty silver medals for first and second champions, besides numerous silver-cups. The partnership has been dissolved for a considerable time, and Mr. McPherson now devotes his farm to dairying operations, and the fattening of sheep and cattle. Mr. McPherson has never taken any part in public affairs, but has 'given all his time to the management of his farm. He married Miss Campbell, daughter of Mr. Donald Campbell, of Berwick, who arrived in New Zealand in 1861, and there is a family of two sons and four daughters.

ROBINSON, ROBERT , Greenbank Farm, Berwick. Mr. Robinson was born in Westmorland, England, in 1833, and landed at Port Chalmers by the ship "Tasmania," in 1852, accompanied by his mother and two sisters. He first lived for some years at Caversham, Dunedin, and settled at Berwick in 1857, Mr. J. H. Wilson and he being the first

settlers in the district. The land which is now, through cultivation and drainage, classed



MR. R. ROBINSON'S RESIDENCE.

MR. R. ROBINSON'S RESIDENCE.



MR. AND MRS R. ROBINSON.

MR. AND MRS R. ROBINSON.

with the most fertile in New Zealand, was then, like other portions of the Taieri Plains in the pioneer days, a swamp covered with flax and Maori-heads, where wild pigs had run undisturbed until the advent of the settlers. Originally the district was known as Waipori Lake, but when the township was founded the Government gave it the name of Berwick, in remembrance of the town of that name in Scotland. Mr. Robinson has all along resided on his first selection, but has largely extended his original area, and runs several thousands of sheep, principally cross breeds, on his adjoining station. His homestead is a handsome residence, beautifully situated, and surrounded by tasteful grounds; and there, after many years of toil and hard work, he now enjoys well earned ease. Mr. Robinson has devoted a large portion of

his time to local affairs; and has been a member of the Taieri River, Henley and Waipori Road Boards, and of the school committee. He was the first settler to start banking the Waipori river, and to use steam power in getting rid of the drainage water between Henley and Berwick, owing to the want of fall. His mother, Mrs Robinson, died in 1888, aged eighty-four. Mr. Robinson married Miss Mackenzie, who arrived by the "Slains Castle," in 1852, and, of a family of three daughters and six sons, two daughters and six sons are alive.

SHENNAN, JOHN, Farmer. "Valleyfield," Berwick. Mr. Shennan was born in Gulloway, Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland, and came to New Zealand in 1858 by the ship "Gloucester," accompanied by his wife and two children. He went up to the Dunstan to join his brother Mr. Watson Shennan, who owned a large station there, but left after a year to take up a farm at Woodside. Two years later he disposed of his property, and removed to Berwick, where he and his brother-in-law, Mr. Robert Charters, bought the Lake estate, on the banks of Lake Waipori, from his brother, Mr. Watson Shennan. Messrs Shennan and Charters carried on the estate in partnership for several years, until

PAGE 654



MR. J. SHENNAN.

MR. J. SHENNAN.

the property was divided and each partner took his half. Mr. Shennan finally disposed of his portion of the estate, and bought the Valleyfield Farm at Berwick. This property then contained 183 acres, with a handsome villa residence surrounded by gardens and orchards and substantial outbuildings. Mr. Shennan has largely added to the original holding, as he bought 216 acres of the Henley estate, and 480 acres at Otokaia, then in a state of nature, but since improved into a most fertile farm. Mr. Shennan has been well known as a stock

breeder, particularly of Shorthorn cattle, and took first prize at Dunedin for three successive years for the best Shorthorn bull. He was for many years a member of the local school committee, of the old Clarendon Road Board, and of the Maungatua Licensing Committee. Although requested on several occasions to accept the Commission of the Peace, he has refused the honour. In Scotland, Mr Shennan married Miss MacGeorge, who died in 1901, aged sixty-seven, and left a family of three sons and one daughter.

TWELFTREE, ROBERT B. , Farmer, Berwick. Mr. Twelftree was born in London in 1828, and engaged in clerical work in the office of Messrs Cook, Sons and Co., St. Paul's Churchyard, for several years. In 1850 he came to Otago on the second trip of the ship "Mariner," and shortly after his arrival started to build a schooner at Anderson's Bay, and named it the "Endeavour." It was his intention to trade around Dunedin, but finding it difficult to obtain spars he sold the hull to a merchant in the city. Attracted by the accounts of the Australian goldfields, Mr. Twelftree went to that country in a fifty-five ton schooner belonging to the late Mr. John Jones. He went to the Bathurst diggings, and he was for six months very lucky in getting gold, but owing to a sunstroke he was compelled to give up his prospects and return to New Zealand. After being some time in Dunedin Mr. Twelftree moved, in 1859, to Berwick, then known as Waipori Lake, and bought his present farm. During his long residence in the district he has filled many public office. He was clerk to the Berwick Road Board for seven years, and also for several years enumerator of the census and agricultural statistics of the district, and was complimented by the Warden at Milton for the satisfactory manner in which he performed his duties. Mr. Twelftree was also returning officer for the Licensing Committee of the Maungata district, and for the Maungatua riding of the county of Taieri, and was also for some time collector for the County Council. He was clerk of the school committee for many years, and chairman for thirty consecutive years, and in connection with his duties as such was presented on three different occasions with a watch, a



MR. R. B. TWELFTREE.

MR. R. B. TWELFTREE.

clock, and a purse of sovereigns, Mr. Twelftree married Miss Dempster, who died in 1897, leaving a surviving family of ten, with thirty grandchildren.

WILSON, J. HARKER , Farmer, "Rosebank," Berwick. Mr. Wilson was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1832, and served his articles as a solicitor; but finding the legal profession an uncongenial one, he entered, the service of the British Linen Company's Bank, at Haddington, where he remained two years. Being desirous of seeing more of the world than was bounded by the narrow horizon of a country bank, he came to Dunedin, in 1852, by the ship "Agra." In the same year he settled at Berwick, where at first he carried on sheepfarming on the adjoining hills; but he afterwards sold his sheep, and kept cattle instead. He, however, remained in the district, but being unable to buy land owing to the failure of the New Zealand Company,



MR. J. H. WILSON.

MR. J. H. WILSON.

he left for Dunedin, to enter the office of Messrs Macandrew and Co., as chief clerk. On the country lands being declared open for purchase, Mr. Wilson made the first selection in Otago, No. 1; it contained about 150 acres, and his home still stands on it. Mr. Wilson is, therefore, not only the pioneer of the Berwick district, but, in a sense, of rural settlement in Otago. He has never taken much part in public affairs, though he was for some years on the Maungatua and Berwick Road Boards; and was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1894. Mr. Wilson married a young lady who had been a fellow passenger by the ship he came out in, and has had a family of seven sons and two daughters. Two of his sons and both of his daughters are married.

[Previous Section](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Up](#) | [Next Section](#)

[Home](#) | [Advanced Search](#) | [About](#) | [Help](#)

© 2016 Victoria University of Wellington | [Contact us](#) | [Conditions of use](#)