



Finnerty Road School

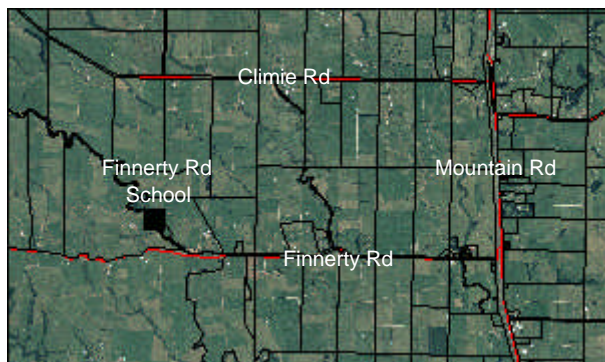
Finnerty Rd, Ngaere

1917

Use:	Residential	Historic Value:	1 out of 5
Materials:	Timber	Architectural Value:	1 out of 4
NZHPT Registered:	Not registered	Technical Value:	- out of 2
Legal Description:	Lot 1 DP 11209 Blk V Ngaere SD	Symbolic Value:	- out of 3

Rarity Value:	- out of 2
Townscape Value:	1 out of 2
Group Value:	- out of 2

Overall Heritage Value: 3 out of 20



Finnerty Road is named after surveyor Charles Finnerty, and was metalled in 1910. A community started on the road, based around a crushing plant that obtained its boulders from Waingongoro River. The land on Finnerty Road was originally owned by Sam Death, and was part of a 600 acre block. This was subdivided into four farms, each approximately 150 acres large. Life was hard for the early settlers; they were constantly faced with the task of removing tree stumps and ploughing the tough ground.

Early on, the local children had to walk to Ngaere or Mangatoki to attend school. From 1913, the residents pushed for a school to try and save their children this long walk – which was especially arduous in winter. The Education Board purchased a site at Lowgarth, which was then discovered to be unsuitable as it was too far away for the residents on Stuart Road. Edward Gray then donated one acre of his farm on Finnerty Road for a school to be built on, and residents purchased an extra acre for use as the school paddock. The school was duly built by the settlers, with a total cost of £500.

On September 10 1917, the timber one-roomed Finnerty Road School was opened, with a total roll of 18. Miss Ethel Rowntree was the first teacher, and she remained at the school for 21 years. The opening of the school was celebrated with a school concert, which was held in the packing room of the Lowgarth Factory, as there was no school hall. The concert was a success, but bad storms caused many families to have to spend the night in the packing room, before returning home in their horse and wagons. The motto of the school was adopted at this time: *“Always turn your face to the sunshine and the shadows will fall behind.”*

The school roll rapidly increased, with 46 pupils attending by the 12th of March 1918. The large number of pupils meant a second teacher could be employed, with Miss Brown beginning in October that year. The teachers were sharing one room, but thankfully the overcrowding was relieved in June the following year, when a second room was added, costing £359. By this stage, the roll was sitting at 51 pupils, so the joy of another room must have been very obvious!

The World Wars affected even this rural school. In 1917, when the school was first opened, the girls did knitting to try and help the war effort, in replacement of sewing instruction classes. In 1921, a flag pole was erected, and, in honour of the ANZAC's, R. Masters (MP) and S.B. White (the Chairman of the Education Board) visited the school on the 25th of April and unfurled the flag.

In 1963, large improvements to the school were undertaken. A new classroom was built, a new toilet block, store-room and staffroom were erected opposite to the original building, and the original building was converted into one large room to be used by the primers and standard one children. These improvements had a total cost of £5,951.

The roll numbers at the school steadily decreased – possibly an effect of the easy travel available to the bigger schools in Stratford. In 1992, Finnerty Road School was finally closed for the last time, after 75 years of educating local children.

Bibliography

Finnerty Road School 50th Jubilee

Church, Ian; *The Stratford Inheritance*, The Heritage Press (1990) p48