

## OBITUARY PIONEER PASSES LATE MR T. RODGERS

Last of the original band of pioneers of the Hutt Valley, and for over half a century a well known settler on Rangitikei Line, where his farm was closely adjacent to Palmerston North, Mr Thomas Rodgers passed away peacefully on Saturday afternoon at the great age of 93, following an illness of seven weeks. Throughout his long life he had enjoyed splendid health, and he retained all his faculties right up to the hour of his death, besides maintaining the keenest interest in all current events. His death will be greatly regretted by a very large circle of friends and acquaintances.

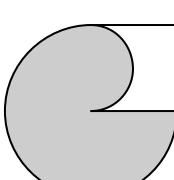
Mr and Mrs Charles Rodgers, the parents of Mr Thomas Rodgers, came from Waltham Abbey, Essex, and arrived at Petone on the steamship Oriental on January 25th, 1840. Mr Rodgers was born on February 29th, 1840, leap year day, in a small manuka shack on Petone beach, and later became known as the "Father of Petone". His father, who was a surveyor, was at one time attacked by hostile Maoris, but escaped, only to be drowned a few months after the birth of his son, who later received a crown grant of 50 acres for being the first white child born in Wellington.

The late Mr Rodgers, who as a boy saw much of the trouble with the Maoris, and gained a wide knowledge of the natives through his associations with them, spent his early years as an assistant on various farms in the Hutt Valley district until on June 3rd, 1866, he was married and commenced farming on his own account in that district. He later purchased a block of land at Palmerston North and came to this district to reside in 1877.

The journey from the Hutt Valley to the Manawatu, which was made by bullock dray, occupied three days, the route being over to Paekakariki, and up the coast to the mouth of the Manawatu River. A punt was used to transport the dray and bullocks over the river, and a ticklish job it often proved to be. Before shifting to his bush clad section, Mr Rodgers made several trips to the district to clear away some of the bush and erect a whare. After this was accomplished he finally shifted, going up the coast with a bullock dray. Mrs Rodgers and her family of six children and their belongings came up to Foxton by the steamer Tui, a coastal trade, and from there to the section by coach over the roughly formed bullock track.

Ever since coming to the Manawatu the late Mr Rodgers had occupied the same holding on the Rangitikei Line, being one of the first to farm in the district. He had seen it develop from its original bush clad state to its present fertility. When he arrived at his section 56 years ago, his first job, as stated, was the building of a whare, and until this was completed he lived under a dray. Before he had been here twelve months he had the bush down and his boundary fences well under way.

Mrs Rodgers predeceased her husband 15 years ago. He is survived by two sons, Messrs T.J. and A.C.A. Rodgers, both of Church Street, Palmerston North, and three daughters, Mesdames T.C. Cornford (Pahiatua), E. Adams (Lower Hutt) and Miss S. Rodgers, Rangitikei Line, together with over 30 grandchildren and a number of great grandchildren. The deepest sympathy will be extended to the bereaved family.



The funeral of the late Mr Rodgers took place this afternoon, the pallbearers being six of his grandchildren.