

South Canterbury Group NZSG – Temuka cemetery

Daniel Fergusson

Daniel Fergusson was born at Crieff, Perthshire, Scotland on 11th September 1806, the eldest of nine children born to Alexander Fergusson and Isabel, née Campbell. Daniel was well educated, studying at St. Andrew's University, and held the position of schoolmaster at various towns in Scotland. As well as his career in education he held the position of Inspector of the Poor and Sessions Clerk in the Parish of Dowally, Scotland. Daniel had a passion for poetry and languages. He had composed several poems in English, Scots and Gaelic and won the Queen's prize of £9 three years in succession. Other Highlanders would not compete against him and the Gaelic Society banned him from further competition though they did pay him £11 to translate his final prize poem from Gaelic into English.



Daniel married Catherine Anderson, (born at Lanarch, Edinburgh, the daughter of John Anderson and Elspet Ross) at Logierait, Perthshire on 9 March 1834 and they had eleven children. Leaving behind their eldest daughter Anne, Daniel and Catherine took the rest of the children including their grandson to New Zealand on the "Cresswell" arriving at Lyttelton on the 12 September 1859. The passage cost £80 15 shillings and the government paid £76.

On arrival Daniel lived first in Kaiapoi where he worked as one of the first schoolmasters. He, his wife and twelve children then moved on to a new settlement called George Town near Temuka. Here in 1862 he opened the first public school in the Arowhenua district with about 16 pupils, most of who were boarded, and he also became the local postmaster. The new Temuka District High School opened in 1866 which meant the end of the Arowhenua School on Fergusson's property and the end of his career in education. In 1864 Daniel was appointed as Clerk to the first Geraldine District Roads Board, later known as the Temuka Road Board and he held this office for 14 years until ill health forced his retirement in 1877.

Daniel's wife Catherine died 6th March 1880 and Daniel himself died suddenly on 20th April 1887 in Geraldine and was buried in Temuka with his wife and beside his daughter Mary and her husband William Hopkinson.