

# MATAKANUI MEMORIES

by JACK HAMILTON.

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On the 5th. or 6th. August 1886 our family arrived at Matakanui. At that time there were eight big mining companies working at Matakanui. Our home was on the North-West corner of what was to be the first football ground. The Moran family were on the North-East corner. In 1892, we went into the Moran's home when they went to Muddy Creek.

Coming to the Winter of 1887, the miners after work grubbed the speargrass and scrub on the football ground. We kids and the Morans, who were older with the Templetons and Slattery's gathered the speargrass and scrub which was set on fire.

Bill Wall was the first captain of the 1887 team. To go on to about 1893-94, Otago played Matakanui and beat them, I think, 57-nil. The Matakanui Team of 1896 was Tom Reid at full-back, Leonard Greenbank, Bob Sutherland and Harry Norman three-quarters and other backs were Bob Hemingway, Felix Donnelly and Jim Shepherd. Forwards were Dan Moran, George Moran Tom Moran, Ned Moran, Jim Cummock, Jim McGowan, Bill Daniels and Jim Burnstein.

In a game with St. Bathans about this time, I remember Moscy Hanrahan getting over the Matakanui line but before he could ground the ball, Dan Moran took hold of it. They wrestled for possession for some time and Dan Moran finally got it and forced it, saving the try.

In the Spring of 1895, the Matakanui Schoolboys played Blacks and beat them by 74 points to nil. My brother and I are the only living players of that team. A very fine player of that team was the late Edmund Grace who was also one of the mainstays in 1905. He was badly injured at the landing at Gallipoli, where he also lost his brother. When he died about a year ago, he was an accountant in Dunedin.

The late Bob Sutherland, a Boer War Veteran, whom I have already mentioned as a player in 1896 was a very fine man and player as was his brother George of our 1895 to 1905 teams. Both these men have passed away.

Now as to the names of the 1905 team. These names are taken from an actual photo but does not include all names :- Bob Rutherford, Frank Templeton, Lester Huddleston, Alex. Hamilton, Douglas Nicolson, Tom Moran, George Sutherland, George Moran, Jack Thomson, Arthur Byrnes, Alf. Peak, Tom. Shepherd, Edmund Grace, Tom Truesdale, Alex Harley and missing players are Jack Hamilton, Harry Simes, George Clare and Bob. Shepherd.

Before 1906, Harry Simes went out and Bob Shepherd was killed. In 1906 was added Steve Shanahan and George Whyte. These new players went with us to Lowburn on a Friday and we played Cromwell on the Saturday. We knocked off at the mines at 5p.m., caught George Moran's rabbit waggon at 6.30, went on to Clyde, where the Clyde boys gave us an evening or smoke concert. We went on and played Lowburn the next day when there was no score. On the Saturday we held Cromwell till about twenty minutes before time when they beat us.

About the next year 1907, we had new young players George Naylor, 17, Tom Huddleston, 17, Mick Ryan, 17, and Gerald Gallagher and Bill Webb from St. Bathans came to work in the mines, and played for us.

From 1908 to 1911 we had Dave Weir from Gimmerburn and Barney Rushton late of Nightcaps, deceased, of Dundee Sandy trotting fame. Local players of 1908 On are Ernie Huddleston, Tom Peak, Bill Wilson. I think these players are better explained in a photo taken in 1911 at St. Bathans. This photo is in the possession of George Naylor of Alexandra and is headed

WINNERS MANITOTO COUNTY BANNER 1911.

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Shortly after the 1911 Season, I left for Wellington and later went to Christchurch, then the West Coast and in 1920 to Port Chalmers.

ALTHOUGH I PLAYED FOR SIX MORE SEASONS AFTER LEAVING IN 1911, ALL MY SYMPATHIES ARE WITH OLD MATAKANUI AND I WISH THEM ALL THE VERY BEST.

Getting away from football but to go back to the great sporting qualities of the MORAN FAMILY.

The Vincent Jockey Club saw fit to have a race, THE MORAN MEMORIAL! Dan, George and Tom all trained and rode trotters. In about 1893, Father Shein, a fine old man, had a buggy horse called Blackthorne ~~which was by Bucifilas a thoroughbred~~. Dan Moran got this horse and trained it for the Vincent Races. It was starting without any money on the tote and ~~it is said that Father Shein gave Dan £4 to put on~~. It won and paid £107. I was there and saw Dan Moran win on Blackthorne.

Many times when I pass Arthur Barnetts shop in Dunedin which has a sign of a trotting horse, I can see Dan Moran coming up the straight on Blackthorne.

THE MORANS WERE THE FOUNDATION OF MATAKANUI AND OTHER SPORT. Dan played until he was 45, George 39 and Tom 37. That was in 1911 when I left Matakanui. No doubt they had not finished then. Without the Morans there would have been no early football in Matakanui.

I hope this is not too boring and some of it may be of interest to old Matakanui sports.

JACK HAMILTON  
93 Centennial Avenue,  
Alexandra.