

Narrative of Mrs Olive Boyce, 85 years of Stoke.
Mrs Boyce (nee Ashley Cooper, formerly of Christchurch)
remembers some of the recollections her late husband,
Mr Charles Boyce, related to her of his days whilst
headmaster of the Richmond Primary School between
1911 and 1919.

Interviewed by Les Slater for the Richmond Borough
Council on 21st June 1984, and transcribed from his
shorthand and longhand notes. Typed by Louise Charters.

"Once, before the First World War it would have
to be, Charlie was in the train taking children from
the Richmond school to the Tech classes - carpentry
and cooking - in Nelson.

*train
school*

When at Annesbrook, at the tunnel, there was a
collosion; a car with four businessmen ran into the
train. One or two men were killed, I think. And
Charlie had to keep the children from looking at
the wreckage in their curiosity.

accident

Another event was after one of the school black-
berry picnics, when the school boys fought in the
carriage with blackberries. It was covered in black-
berries. Charlie said that he simply had to laugh,
and he gave the guard £1 to clean the carriage.

picnics

Charlie was born in the Waimea; along the Motueka river there is the place his family lived, near the bluffs.

His first teaching position was at Denniston. It was £90 a year, and out of it he had to pay hotel costs. He couldn't travel on that train up the incline to Denniston. Only the mine managers and the doctor could do that.

West coast

The Westport Coal Company directors offered him a job with the company at twice his teacher's salary, but Charlie was committed to teaching; he loved teaching and nothing else would have satisfied him.

salary

After Denniston he taught at Charleston, and that area at that time, along the coast, had 70 pubs.

Charlie left Richmond in 19~~33~~¹⁹ because he could find no further challenge there, at that level. His next appointment was in St. Albans in Christchurch. Then he was headmaster of Rangiora Primary, then headmaster of Christchurch East School, during which

time his first wife died.

Charlie's first wife was Eva McGlashen, sister of Morrie McGlashen and aunt of Muir. She had suffered illness as a child and this weakened her heart and hastened her early death.

McGlashen

When I met Charlie, through cousins, he was baching. We married in 1933. Charlie was 45 and I was 33. If he was alive today he would be 105. We were very good chums. Our years counted not at all against us. I miss him very much.

The Boyce family were in New Zealand first at Port Underwood, at the whaling station, when at the time after the Wairau massacre they came away by whaleboat, rowed to Nelson - down Tory Channel, Queen Charlotte Sound, and around to Nelson, where they stayed at the fort where the Cathedral now is.

Wairau

Shortly after our marriage Charlie wanted to make an insurance policy out in my favour, so the medical examination necessary for him to have a policy

was carried out by a young and very clever doctor, who discovered a lump in his liver and thought it might be a hydatid cyst, which indeed it was. This was removed by surgery, quite successfully in 1936. But the treatment eventually put a strain on the lung and that strain affected his heart in the long run.

So in 1940 he retired. Throughout his career he was beloved by his pupils, parents and staff.

Charlie had been president of the Christchurch branch of the Nelson College Old Boys' Association. He wanted to return to Nelson for the centennial of the school. In 1953 or '54 he asked me if I'd like to go and live in Richmond. I said 'I know you'd like to live in Richmond, and I'll go wherever you would like to live. We lived in a house in Taunton Place in Stoke.

Charlie enjoyed golf and had golf taught to me, and in a year I was on a 3 handicap and won a tournament. I took part in several tournaments.

At Avonside and Cashmere Charlie was closely involved with the Masonic Lodge.

My mother's maiden name was Mayne and my father was an Ashley Cooper, of the family of Lord Shaftsbury. My brother S. Ashley Cooper was the science master at Rotorua Boys' High School for many years. I was a music teacher for many years. In the 1920's I did quite a lot of climbing in the Southern Alps. But now, recently, I've hurt my back and my right leg, and I'm a lot shorter than I was. I was once 5'7"; the cartilage is compressing, as it does with advancing years."