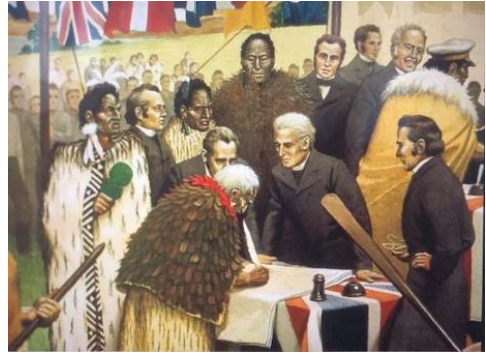


CELEBRATING THE NEW ZEALAND FOUNDATION

New Zealand historical facts from around the time Brigidines arrived in New Zealand:

- 1840 The first European settlement in New Zealand. The *Aurora* arrived in Wellington on 22 January. The signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, 6th February
- 1865 Wellington became New Zealand's capital city.
- 1867 The Māori Representative Act created four Māori Parliamentary seats.
- 1871 2,712 labourers, known as the navvies, were brought to New Zealand from Britain to work on the railroads.
- 1877 The Education Act made education in New Zealand free, secular and compulsory. The secular clause was the catalyst for the establishment of Catholic Schools.
- 1879 The first General Election - Maori, and Europeans who owned land, voted.
- 1893 New Zealand became the first country in the world to give women the right to vote
- 1898 Old Age Pensions were introduced.
The first New Zealand-made movie was screened on Christmas Eve.
Six brave pioneer Brigidines came to New Zealand to begin their work here, arriving only 58 years after the first settlers.



These excerpts are taken from **One Love Many Faces, by Helena Fouhy csb**

When, in 1897, Father McKenna (Masterton) asked the Cooma community to supply six Sisters for his parish, only four could be spared. **Sister Gertrude Banahan, Brigid Desmond, Joseph Flahaven and Patrick Phelan** were chosen as the pioneer group. Coonamble loaned two Sisters, **Teresa Flynn and Claver Cooke**, to enable the foundation to be made.

The Provincial, Mother John Synan, and her sister, Sister Michael, accompanied Sisters Teresa and Claver from Coonamble. In Sydney they met the group from Cooma and finalized arrangements. Sisters John and Gertrude, companions on the Australian foundation, were well aware of the difficulties inherent in this new undertaking.



At last the day of departure dawned; the time for farewells had come. The ship's log indicates it was 10 December 1898 that the "Monowai" sailed for Wellington from the Port of Sydney via Newcastle. The Sisters arrived in New Zealand on Wednesday 14th December.

While they waited to disembark the Sisters took in the sights about them. They were quite bewildered; where had they entered the harbour through hills that encircled them? The travellers were taken to the Convent in Hill Street where they "rested some days with the Sisters of Mercy who treated them with the most cordial affection". The Foundation Sisters often recalled with gratitude that warmth and hospitality which often was extended to Brigidine Sisters in later years.

Early on the morning of Friday 16th December the pioneers boarded the train for the last stage of their journey to Masterton, accompanied by Fr John McKenna. The scenery that greeted the newcomers was in marked contrast to the vast expanses of the Australian landscape. Ranges, hills, valleys, forest, rivers, streams, and myriad greens unfolded around them.

That first crossing of the Rimutakas was an unforgettable experience. An easy grade led to the Summit but the precipitous northern side with its rugged, broken terrain had presented grave problems in the search for a rail route. The Sisters marvelled at the ingenuity and skill of the engineers who had conquered the mountains.



Punctually at 11.30am the train pulled into Masterton Station. It had taken four hours to travel 106 kilometres. Now, at journey's end the Sisters alighted with faith, courage and high hopes for the future. The welcome extended by the parish was warm and sincere; it left no doubt that the Sisters had come amongst friends...

Sisters Patrick, Claver, Teresa, Gertrude, Brigid and Joseph.

