

JOHN and MARY GEBBIE
and their descendants



1985

JOHN GEBBIE
b. - -1814
d.16- 3-1851

and

MARY GEBBIE
b. - -1816
d.25- 1-1894

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John Gebbie was the son of a farmer from Ayrshire, Scotland, whose family had farmed the same land for over 300 years, probably as tenants for the Earl of Loudon. Mary was the daughter of Hugh and Isabella Campbell (nee Brown) and she and John were married in the Loudon Kirk, on 14 June, 1837. They lived at Loudon Hill, Darvel, Straeven, Kilmarnock, Co. Ayr.

With times hard and the prospect of advancement bleak, and John not in good health, they decided to emigrate, perhaps to Canada. While looking into the procedure of emigration they met up with William Deans, who was coming to New Zealand. He was looking for a good man with stock to take with him, and he persuaded John to try a new life in New Zealand. William engaged John for a period of five years as 'grieve' or working manager, at a salary of £25 per year.

On 18th September 1839, Mary and John, and toddler son David embarked on the 'Aurora' at Gravesend, and arrived off the New Zealand coast 110 days later. The Aurora was considered a lucky ship, and was built in 1817, of teak and English oak. The ship was kept out of Wellington by a gale, and so did not land until the 22nd January 1840, little David's second birthday. Mary was the first woman to land from the ship's boat, but two young girls decided to be first on land, and swam ashore.

William Deans obtained an acre of land, and got some Maoris to built him a 'New Zealand house' which was built of wood and large pieces of fern, and was 34 feet by 17 feet, with three rooms, one for baggage, one for himself, and one for the Gebbies. He paid the Maoris 6 blankets for this work. He got work for John Gebbie cutting surveyor's lines through the bush. This was very heavy work, 12 hours a day, and John was paid £1 per week. William cultivated his land and planted vegetables, which he later sold, and did a little trading, and so the first winter was passed by the new settlers. William went off on survey trips, and eventually decided on land in Canterbury. While John and Mary were in Wellington they added two more children, John and Mary, to their family.

On 10th February 1843 William Deans, the Gebbies, and also the Manson family who had arrived on the 'Thomas Harrison' in 1842 and were also under contract to the Deans brothers, set sail for the South Island on board the ship 'Richmond', and landed at Port Levy 10 days later. Only a few whalers and some Maoris lived at Port Levy, but the women and children were settled here, with John Gebbie as protector, while William Deans and Samuel Manson went on to Riccarton, where William Deans had decided to settle, to get a building erected. First the timber was felled and pit sawn in the bush, and because the nails had been left behind in Wellington, wooden pegs had to be made in the tents at night. The first building was a long barn-shaped structure with a loft for stores. It was partitioned into three rooms with blankets and sheets; one for Manson and his family, the middle one for the Deans brothers, and the other end for the Gebbie family. It was later called the 'Old Barn'. (Another house was built the same year, with three bedrooms, sitting room and store-room, and this one was moved by the Rotary Club to near Riccarton House in 1950.) When the building was finished Sam Manson returned to Port Levy for the families. The families came by boat up the Avon as far as possible (about where the botanical gardens are) then walked to Riccarton, carrying the little children as well as some of their possessions. The way was rough, with tall fern and scrub that had to be pushed through, with resulting damage to their clothing. William Deans was watching and waiting for them at the house, the only one on the plains. When the ladies mentioned the damage to their clothing, he said to comfort them, that one day there would be roads and railways in all directions,

Soon after, John Deans, Williams brother, arrived from Australia with 100 head of stock, and these were landed and driven across the plains to Riccarton, where John Gebbie took charge of them. Both the women looked after the dairy, making butter and cheese, which were sold, and soap and candles, besides their household duties. Mary produced another daughter, Marion, who was the second white child born on the Canterbury plains.

By May 1845 John Gebbies contract had expired, and both Gebbies and Mansons felt ready to start out on their own. They had lived frugally and saved hard, and the Deans brothers sent to Sydney for Cheese making apparatus for both of them. John Gebbie had obtained a lease on some Maori land at the Head of the Bay, Port Cooper and on a fine morning all set out by boat. However, by the time they reached Sumner a strong wind had got up and the bar was very rough. The women and children were landed, and spent a cold and hungry night in a cave. The boat capsised while crossing the bar, and William Deans only saved his life by clinging to a tea chest. The next day they all arrived safely at Port Cooper.

The families settled near each other at the Head of the Bay, now called Teddington, and having each leased a 'bowl' (14) of cows from the Deans brothers, they commenced farming. The terms were 50/- per cow, and all calves to belong to the Deans's. The first house was a wattle and daub cottage of five rooms. Later, this was replaced with an eight roomed two storied house, the floors of which were of pit-sawn timber. Two more sons were born at the Head of the Bay; Andrew in 1846 and William Deans in 1849. Andrew died in boyhood and was buried in the orchard, there being neither church nor cemetery in the area.

Both families continued to do well, and their butter and cheese became very well known and by 1847 the Gebbies had expanded their farming operations to include sheep. Butter was selling for 1/1½d per lb, and cheese for 1/- per lb. William Deans had taken a quantity with him to Wellington for sale. However, they suffered a severe setback when the Schooner 'Jessie Miller' sank with all hands on the way to Wellington. The Gebbies had 36 cheeses - 900 lbs - on board, and the Mansons also had a quantity.

When John Gebbie died in 1851 of consumption, Mary was left to bring up her family, the eldest then 13 years old. Her family in Scotland wanted her to return, but she decided the prospects were better for her children in New Zealand. By the terms of John's Will she was to receive 1/3 of the clear profits of the dairy as remuneration. After his death, following advice from Robert Heaton Rhodes and William Deans she purchased 4 sections totalling 143½ acres, and then in 1852 and again in 1862 she was allocated a pastoral lease of 5000 acres each time. By 1864 she had 7700 acres - it had been reduced by freeholding - and besides the dairy cattle was carrying 6000 sheep.

When Mary Gebbie, a woman of courage, resourcefulness and industry, died in 1894 age 80 she held a freehold acreage of over 3000 acres of land, and had raised a family of 6 children on her own in a strange country, after starting with nothing.

A true pioneer.

Taking the emigrant vessels, not in the order of sailing from England, but in the order of their arrival at Port Nicholson, we have first the Aurora, 550 tons, Captain Theophilus Heale, which brought out 148 souls, 58 being males and 90 females. Among the cabin passengers were Major Richard Baker (the magistrate appointed by the New Zealand Company) and Mr Edward Stafford afterwards Sir Edward Stafford. Of the voyage out there is nothing of exceptional interest to record. It was very much like hundreds of other passages made in subsequent years by other emigrant ships, but there is always attaching to the well-named Aurora the special interest that she was actually the first of a long train of vessels to arrive in New Zealand with people who had come over 12,000 miles of ocean to found the Britain of the South.

Wellington people have had the good taste to give the names of their first fleet ships to various streets, and the result is that wherever one goes in the town there is a name that recalls the stirring days when the city was born. Aurora, Oriental, Tory, Cuba, Adelaide, Bolton and so on - you will find them all figuring on the street name-plates and you cannot help thinking it is fitting and proper that the 'old barkies' should have their memories perpetuated in this way. One could only wish that the younger generations knew a little more about the real meaning of these names.

Like all the ships of the New Zealand Company, the Aurora was well victualled, including supplies of "wine, spirits and porter" which were described as ample.

The passengers, being all picked settlers, had no difficulty in amusing themselves on the long voyage, and we read of the dancing and other forms of entertainment which are very much the sort of thing with which the immigrants of today amuse themselves on their brief run in steamers that keep to a time-table.

On the whole the weather was good, but off the Cape of Good Hope and in the Southern Ocean some heavy gales were encountered, and the ship lost a topmast or two, as well as a yard-arm. She was a good sea boat, however, and came gallantly through it all. Christmas Day was remembered on account of an immense iceberg that was passed.

It was not until January 17th that New Zealand was sighted and on that day the ship entered Port Hardy. There a whaler named McLaren gave Colonel Wakefield's message, which was to go on to Port Nicholson. The Aurora was off the Heads on the 20th, but a nor'wester kept her out for a couple of days, during which time she was visited by Wakefield, who had by this time returned from his travels.

Piloted by Captain "Georgie" Young, the well-known whaler, the Aurora entered port on the 22nd January 1840, after a passage of 126 days. She dropped anchor about half-way between Somes Island and Petone Beach and her welcome was a salute from the Cuba's guns.

Extract No 2.

The Aurora.

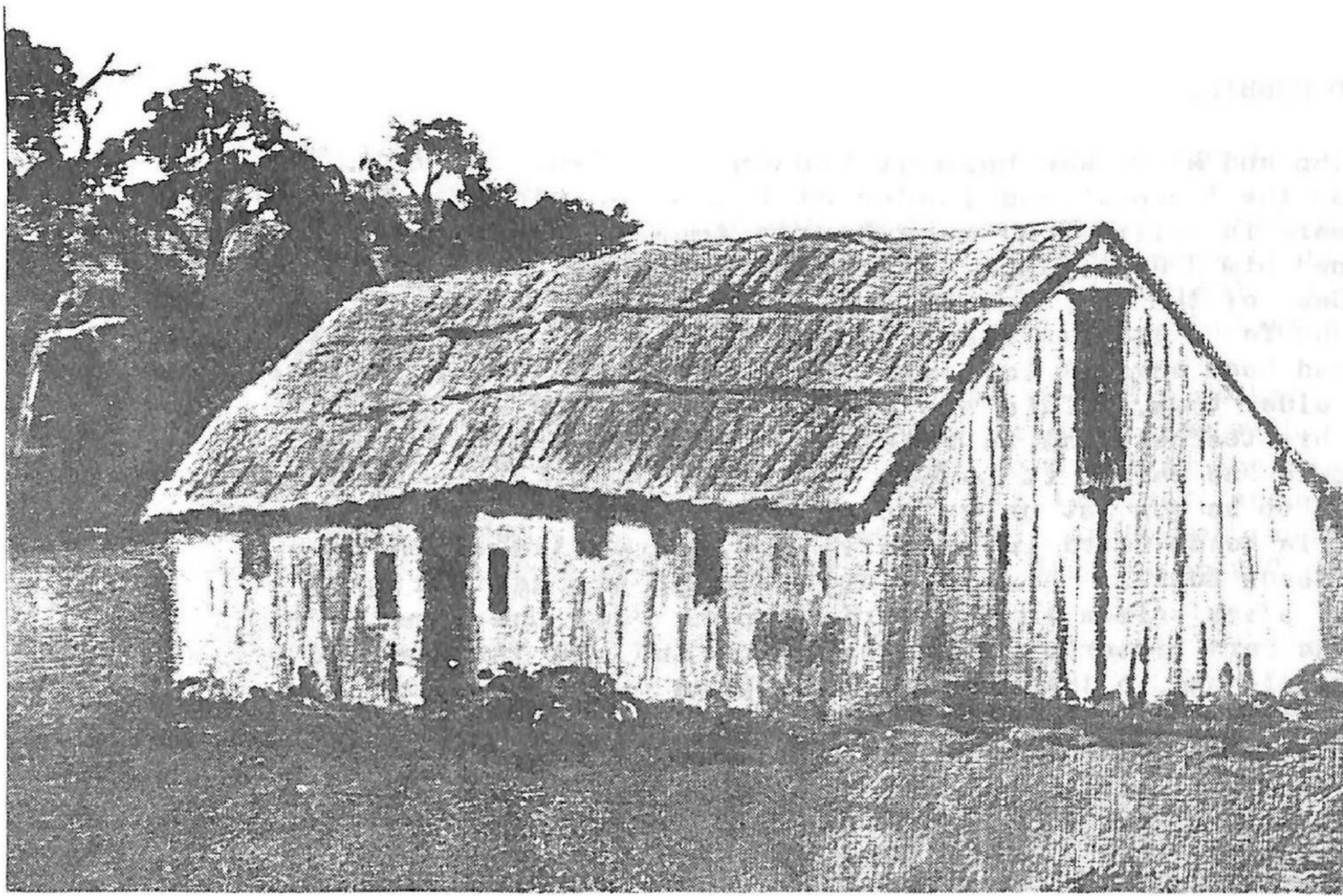
Source - 'Early Wellington'

The Aurora, a barque of 550 tons, commanded by Captain Theophilus Heale, left Gravesend on the 18th September 1839. She had 148 emigrants, and 21 cabin passengers on board, some of the former coming out under engagement to Messrs E Catchpool, W Deans, G Duppa, Eaton, Hughes and H Moreing.

The equator was crossed on the 5th of November, when Neptune paid the vessel his customary visit. The voyage was uneventful. The South Island of New Zealand was sighted at 6 p.m. on the 16th of January, and on the following day the anchor was dropped at Port Hardy. There was great excitement among the passengers as they were doubtful what kind of reception they would meet with at the hands of the natives, and every preparation was made to guard against surprise. The Maoris came off in canoes to the vessel and delivered a letter from Colonel Wakefield addressed to the captain of the 'Aurora'. Some alarm was felt among the immigrants in consequence of not meeting with the "Tory", which vessel had arrived some time previously from London. The anchor was weighed and the vessel, with a fine breeze, passed through Cook Straits, arriving off Port Nicholson Heads on the evening of the 21st. On the following day the vessel beat up the heads against a north-west wind, accompanied by a trading barque called the "Helena" from Sydney, commanded by Captain W.B. Rhodes. Both vessels came to an anchor under Somes Island on the 22nd.

Mr J Howard Wallace, in his extracts from his diary, January 22nd, 1840, states: "We prepared for landing. Richard Deighton and myself were the first to land, opposite the native village or pa at Petone. We strolled a short distance to the edge of the bush, observing, perched on one of the trees several wood pigeons. Each of us the same instant shot one of the fine birds. The first great object of attraction was the venerable old chief Te Puni, his interesting and beautiful wife 'Victoria' and his handsome daughter Aena, the princess, together with sons and endless relatives and a pa full of natives who were delighted to greet us with 'Kapai-te-Pakeha', Tena-koe, and other expressions of greeting. Our tents were soon pitched, huts were built by the natives, and what we termed the city of 'Britannia' was formed".

During the next week, the work of disembarking was carried on. A small jetty had been run out by the surveyors, locations were allotted near the beach for the pitching of tents and temporary huts, in the erection of which the natives assisted, and some wooden houses in frame sent out by the Company for the reception of the labouring emigrants were also set up. The following Sunday - the 26th - the Rev J. Buller, a Wesleyan missionary, visited the place and performed divine service on board the "Aurora". Captain Heale gave a farewell dinner on board the "Aurora" to the principal settlers on the 26th February, 1840.



The first house on the Plains at Riccarton, built in 1843, from a sketch by J. Hollobon.



Mary Gebbie
C.M.L.

Dearest mother, thou hast left us,
We thy loss most deeply feel;
But 'tis God who hath bereft us,
He can all our sorrows heal.
O, silent grave, to thee we trust
This precious part of earthly dust;
Guard it safely, sacred tomb,
Till we, her children, ask for room.

IN LOVING MEMORY

— OF —

MARY : GEBBIE

WHO DIED AT TEDDINGTON, 25th JANUARY, 1894

IN HER 81ST YEAR

DAVID GEBBIE.

David Gebbie, the eldest child of John and Mary, was born at Loudon, Scotland in 1838. He came to New Zealand with his parents on the 'Aurora' and landed at Petone on his second birthday, January 22nd, 1840. While the family were in Wellington, some Maoris took a fancy to the little white boy, and stole him away, but returned him 3 days later after inquiries had been made. The family moved to Riccarton, then to the Head of the Bay, and here David grew up.

David was 13 when his father died, and for a little education he attended a night school, which was run by William Blatchford who had been engaged to teach the Gebbie and Manson children, and who had started the night school for older boys. This was taught gratis, and 10 children attended it. David borrowed books from his teacher, and so received a very sketchy education.

David took up part of the Gebbie estate and called it Loudon after the Scottish home, and commenced to breed stock. In September 1866 he won 1st prize at the Port Victoria Ploughing Match. He was elected to the Port Victoria Roads Board in January 1867 and continued to be a member, and was also on the Little River Roads Board. He was a director of the Agricultural Produce Export Co in 1868, and won several stock prizes in the Christchurch Show the same year. In 1869 he entered three horse teams in the Port Victoria Ploughing Match and won 1st and 2nd prizes. He was a constant exhibitor of cattle and in 1872 won the Champion Cup at the Lincoln Show.

In 1875 he married Agnes Smith at St Peters, Teddington. The date was 21 January. Agnes was the daughter of Matthew and Marion Smith (nee Griffiths) who farmed land on the lower slopes of Mt Herbert between Loudon and the Blatchford farm. (Matthew Smith and Jean Smith, who married Samuel Manson, were brother and sister). Matthew had arrived on the 'Duke of Portland' on 21 October 1852. Loudon homestead was built this year (1875). Agnes had received almost no education, and could hardly read or write.

David gave the land for the new Teddington School - about 1877 - and acted as Church Warden at St Peters. On Jan 7th, 1885 when St Peters was consecrated by Bishop Harper, he and William Blatchford met the Bishop at the Church door. David and Agnes had a family of 7 children, 2 of whom died young.

Although William, David's brother, leased part of Loudon for a time, David and Agnes continued to live there until about 1898 when they were ruined by an act of folly. Loudon was sold to Charles and Lawrence Wilson, David's second cousins, and with their family life in ruins David and Agnes parted and never met again. The family was split up and the children went out to work.

Agnes lived with various relatives around the country and died at Hororata in 1913.

David, then in his 60s lived with his nephew Orton Gebbie for some years, helping around the property and doing the garden, then his health failing, with Helen, the widow of William Deans Gebbie in Christchurch. About 1920 David moved to his son David's house at Hororata and died, aged 87, in 1925.

John and David, their sons, both enlisted together for the Boer War with the 19th Company 6th Contingent, and swore allegiance to Queen Victoria. John was an Armourer, and later a Trouper, while David was a Rifleman. Both men were tall - 5' 10" and had blue eyes, and were big men. John was overseas for nearly two years, David just over 1 year, and both were in the Orange Free State and Transvaal. On their return to New Zealand John worked for Marmaduke Dixon at Eyreton, and David joined Trueman Jones on the Traction engines, and did heavy haulage around Lake Coleridge. One of

his job was hauling the huge penstock pipes up to the Lake Coleridge Power Station, which was then being built.

Mary, the eldest daughter, married Charles Lennox, a Contractor, who had been working around Governor's Bay. They went to Foxton to live where Charles worked in the Flax Mill, then later to Opihi where he worked on Akers Estate, and finally retired to Palmerston North.

Andrew, the second son, remained single, and obtained a position as a gentleman's gentleman, (Valet) and lived at Redcliffs.

Francis, the youngest child, lived with his mother for a time. He later moved down to Dunedin and took up market gardening. A small man with simple tastes, he led rather a lonely life. When in the mood he was a fine singer, and played the accordion, but became rather eccentric. Late in life he married a widow from Little River, and after her death he lived around Ashburton. He ended his days in an Old Folks Home in Ashburton, and being the last of his generation, and having cut himself off from friends and family, only 7 people attended his funeral.

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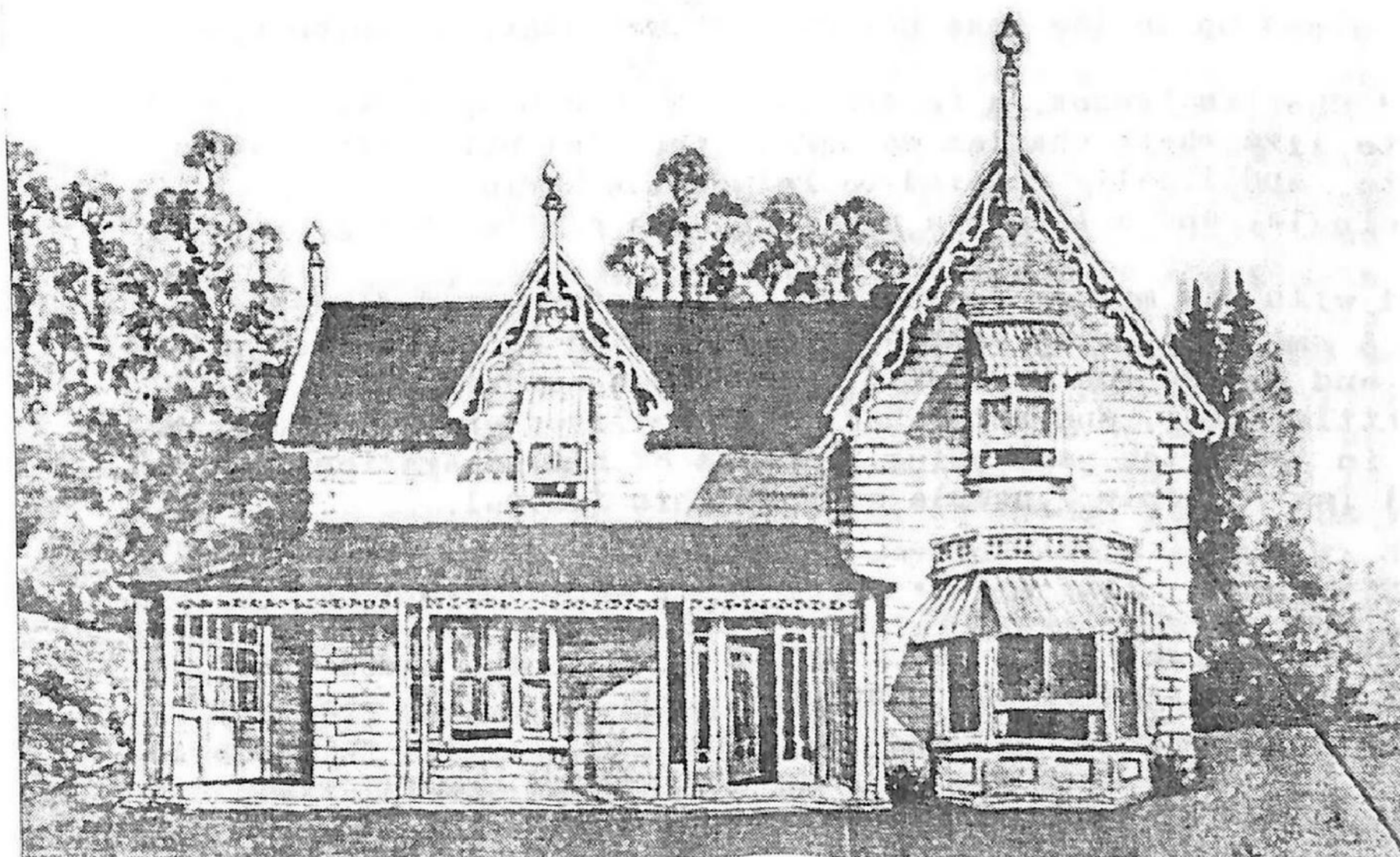
The following extract is from the Christchurch Press, Nov. 1925. Some of the names were mixed up, and these have been corrected, as has some of the content.

Pioneer Passes. Mr David Gebbie.

Mr David Gebbie, who died last week aged 87 years, was born at Loudon, Ayrshire, Scotland. Among the passengers of the ship Aurora commanded by Captain Theale, which arrived in Wellington Harbour on January 22nd 1840 were several families whose names are associated with the early history of Canterbury. There were no houses, but the Maoris built huts for them to live in. The baby, David, was stolen by the Maoris, but returned 3 days later. Mr John Gebbie remained with his wife and children in Wellington until 1843 when they came to Canterbury. After working for some time for William Deans, John Gebbie took up land in what is now known as Gebbies Valley, and which extended from Teddington down to Motukarara. Mr Manson settled on the peninsula at the same time. Mr John Gebbie died when his eldest son David was 13 years old. There were no schools, and David educated himself from books lent by the late Mr Blatchford, who used to help the boys at a kind of night school at his house. David helped build St Peters, and was afterwards Churchwarden for some years.

As the settlers began to arrive the Gebbie family freeholded most of their land. David Gebbie was a constant exhibitor of purebred Shorthorns, winning the Champion Cup at the A & P Show at Lincoln, where the shows were then held, in 1877. The station was subdivided between David, John and William, David having the block with the homestead called Loudon. David played for New Zealand against the first English cricket team that visited New Zealand.

In 1875 he married and had a family of 4 sons and 3 daughters. Continuing to live at Teddington he did a lot of tree planting and worked the property successfully till about 1898, when he was ruined through the failure of a friend whose account he had guaranteed for a large amount. On the loss of the property the family was broken up, the children going out to work, while David lived quietly with relatives, the last five years at Hororata with his son David.



'Loudon', early Teddington homestead.

Set on a wooded knoll the house is glimpsed from the Diamond Harbour road, a trim white gabled house with red roofs.

At close quarters it is even more attractive, with bold gables and dormer windows finished with delicate tracery to the barge boards which end in rather elongated square finials with turned knobs. The sketch is of the front showing the strong two-story projecting gable terminating the verandah and return wing of the house. A great deal of detail has been lavished on it, from the bay window with a simply panelled base and pierced parapet aiding the low roof; the first floor window crowned by a moulded hood; to the planted timber mock stone quoining which emphasises the corners of the gabled projection.

Originally the verandah was shallow, but it has been extended to give a very pleasant sheltered outdoor living space. Original posts and decoration were reused where possible. At the same time the entrance was altered, but the triple sash windows with the circular headed panes flanking it is original.



David Gebbie.

JOHN CAMPBELL GEBBIE.

John was the second child of John and Mary Gebbie and was born at Petone, only a few months after the family arrived in New Zealand. He probably received a little education from William Blatchford when he was about 11 years old. After his father died in 1851 he helped his mother on the farm and at the Port Victoria Ploughing Match on 16 August 1861 he won 1st prize driving his mother's team, his brother David taking 2nd place.

In 1864 he took over his own land, and called the property "Newton", and in the same year won 1st prize with his Shorthorn bull "Crown Prince" in the Christchurch Show.

On 21.8.1865 he married Ellen Cryer, the daughter of Moses Cryer of "Waterford" at St James Church, Ellesmere, and this was the first marriage to take place there. They were married by Bishop Harper, and the Church had only been consecrated the previous day.

John served on the Little River Roads Board in 1867, and again in 1870. He was deeply involved in raising funds for a school, and the Chapel School in Gebbies Valley was opened on 29 September 1872, with a concert. 120 people sat down to the tea, which was followed by a variety concert. However about 6.30 p.m. rain set in, and the incessant downpour continued all night. In vain did the concert organisers keep the guests entertained very late in the hope of a clearing, but a temporary lull was the only result. This enabled the guests to get to shelter for the night, about 30 of them in John Gebbies home.

He was elected to the Committee of the Canterbury A & P Assn in January 1869, and the same year was gored by a bull, but was not seriously injured. In August he was a judge at the Champion Ploughing Match held at Joseph Hill's farm, Avonhead.

In July 1871 he advertised for sale his complete herd of dairy cows, young stock and bullocks - 150 head in all. September saw him again judging at a Ploughing Match, this time at Middleton, and in November he was a cattle judge at the Christchurch Show. He was Chairman of the School Committee and a Director of the Saleyards Co. In 1876 and 1878 he served on the Akaroa County Council for the Little River Riding. About 1880 he bought an adjoining property in McQueens Valley, and this gave him 1300 - 1400 acres of land. He was made a Life Member of the Canterbury A & P Association and usually exhibited cattle each year.

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Ellen had been born in Gloucestershire, England. In later life she was remembered as a friendly, uncritical person, smiling and happy. After John's death she lived at 49 Opawa Road, a big victorian wooden house with a verandah round three sides.

She was an excellent needlewoman, and did fine, exquisite Irish crochet, and made large cloths for the table. She had several acres of land which was in lawns and gardens, and she was an ardent gardener who loved her flowers. Inside the house were many ferns, some hanging down in great clusters like waterfalls, others climbing up bamboo stakes, all in a great variety of pots. Florence and Dora, her two unmarried daughters, lived

with their mother. Both these girls were rather plain, and had frequent arguments with each other.

John and David, the eldest sons, were twins. Both became farmers, John on his father's land, but David moved up to Taranaki and tried dairy farming. However, he and his wife Margaret were involved in a nasty accident when their gig overturned. David received a fractured skull, but Margaret died from her injuries. Feeling unable to cope with his young family, David returned to Christchurch and his children lived with Ellen, by then a widow, and his unmarried sisters. Later he remarried.

Mary, the eldest daughter, met the Rev Phillip John Cocks when he was Curate of the Governor's Bay parish, and once a month took services at Gebbies Valley. He rode over and stayed at John Gebbies house the night, and it was not long before he became engaged to Mary. Life for Mary was a serious business. She had had a rather inadequate education, and had very little sense of humour. She played the harmonium, and after her marriage became very involved in her Church duties, with often not much time over for her growing family. She enjoyed music, and never missed a good concert, and always attended the Academy Painting Exhibitions in Christchurch. The Rev Cocks spent a number of years in the Sydenham parish, with a stipend of £300. He loved the outdoors and taught his children about the birds and insects, about the weather, and was a mine of information on the outdoors. He loved fishing. Another hobby was his workshop, where he invented many little gadgets. After some years in St Johns, Latimer Square, and Waimate, they visited England, where he had a parish in Devonshire. He died on the return journey to New Zealand.

Donald was the youngest child of John and Ellen, and also entered the farming community. The depression in 1921 caused him to leave his farm at Hoon Hay and he then lived at Sumner for many years.

Lyttleton Times - Friday 21 Sept 1888.

Mr John Gebbie.

It is our sad duty to chronicle yesterday the sudden death from heart disease of an old and valued colonist; one who though colonial born was of the stuff of which men are made and of whom the colony may well be proud. The subject of our notice is Mr John Gebbie of Gebbies Valley who died on Wednesday at his homestead. The deceased gentleman appeared to be in his usual state of health on Sunday last, but began to ail on the following day. Still no serious results were apprehended but on Tuesday he was palpably worse and medical aid was sought. Even then no fears for his ultimate recovery were entertained but on Wednesday the end came and Mr Gebbie passed to his last account.

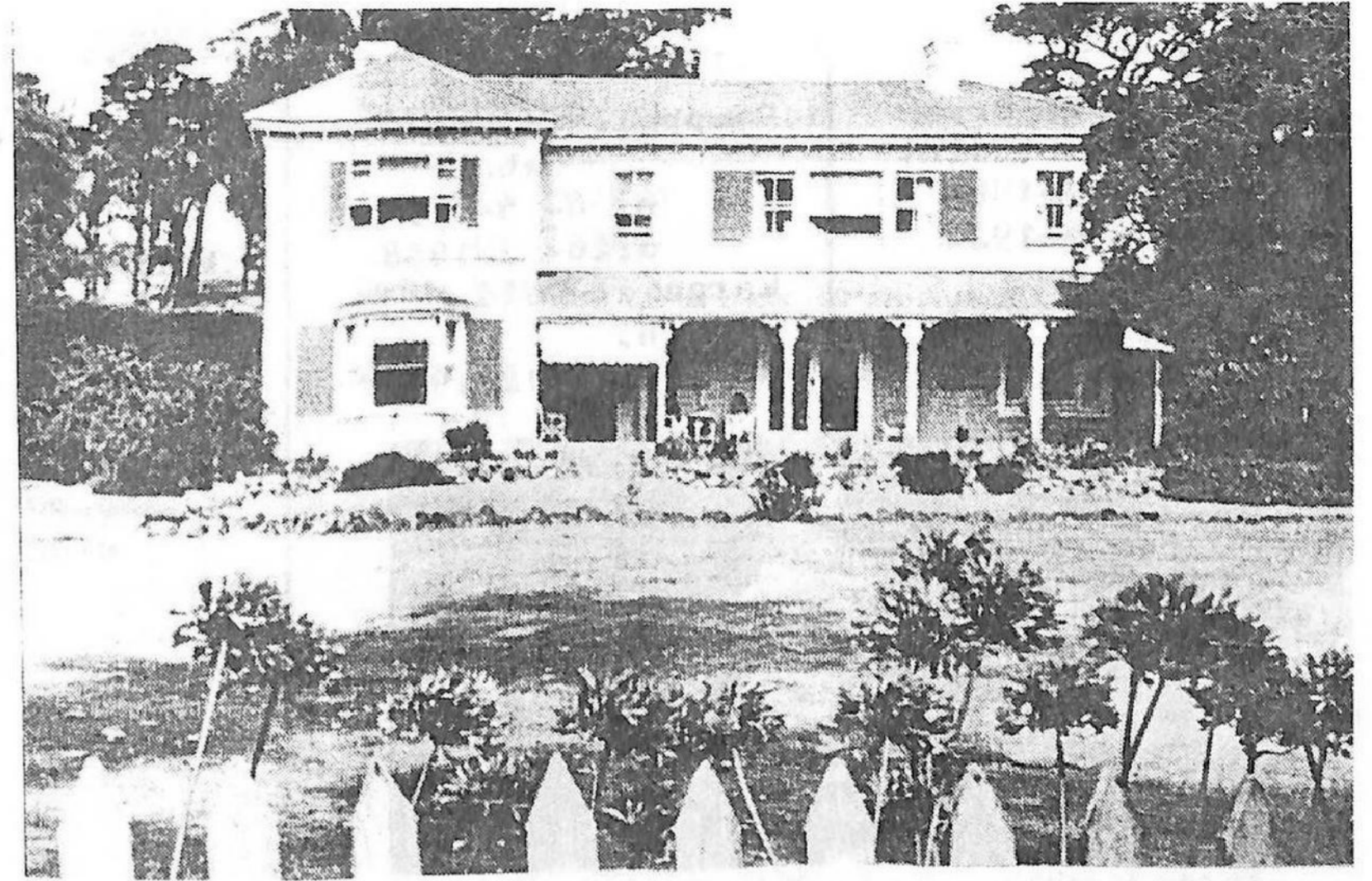
The deceased gentleman was born in Wellington only a few months after the arrival in the colony of his parents. This was in 1840 very early in the history of New Zealand colonisation. A few years afterwards the old people removed to Canterbury and the father took an engagement with Mr John Deans at Riccarton on whose estate he acted as what Scotch people call "grieve" or working manager. In that capacity old Mr Gebbie was guide, philosopher and friend to Mr Deans for many years. Meanwhile, the young Gebbie, the subject of this notice and his brothers were growing up to manhood. At the age of 24 John struck out to do for himself in the world and took up land in the valley that now bears his name. He at once set to work upon it and soon under his industrious hand the wilderness began to blossom as the rose, the dour land became friendly and where all had been before a waste, perseverance, skill and industrious hard work soon transformed the scene into one of smiling plenty. The young farmer, while attending to his own interests did not forget his public duties and soon he was found taking positions of usefulness to his neighbours and fellow colonists. He was elected to the Little River Road Board of which he became Chairman. He lent his aid to his district as Chairman of the School Committee. He represented the district at the Akaroa County Council and was always available on the Licensing Committee or any body claiming his services in the interests of the people among whom he lived. He was an extensive and successful exhibitor at the A & P Assn Show and was a Life Member of the society. Shortly after he took up his farm he married the daughter of Mr Moses Cryer the butcher and stock dealer of Lyttleton and during his happy married life he was known as a quiet unassuming man, a good neighbour and a fast friend of the district, and an excellent and intelligent farmer ever ready to lend a helping hand to those about him, most generous and sociable and a valuable adviser. His loss at a comparatively early age is deeply deplored.

Oct 3rd, 1888.

The funeral took place on September 21st. The procession left his late residence shortly after 11 o'clock in the morning and about 2 o'clock in the afternoon reached Governor's Bay Church where the burial took place. The service was read by the Rev W Knowles. The respect in which the deceased gentleman was held was shown by the very large number of mourners, in vehicles and on horseback who had gathered from the whole countryside to be present at his obsequies.



John Gebbie (Junior)
C.M.L.



Oxen were used to haul pit-sawn timber from Little River to Gebbie's Valley, nearly one hundred years ago, to build this fine colonial type homestead for Campbell Gebbie. A variety of gum trees shelters the house and in a corner of the grounds a tiny schoolhouse still stands. Five generations of the Gebbie family lived here prior to the present owners, Mr and Mrs T.J.Holderness

MARY CAMPBELL GEBBIE.

Mary was the third child and eldest daughter of John and Mary, and was born at Petone on 5th July, 1842. She came to Riccarton then to the Head of the Bay with the family.

Mary soon learnt to help around the farm and dairy, as the Gebbie butter and cheese became very well known, and was often sold to the ships at Lyttleton. As she grew older, Mary and several of the younger children, had to take this produce to the port, a very long walk. While passing the Rapaki Pa the children used to hurry, as they were rather afraid of the tattooed Maoris, who looked fierce, but the Maoris were friendly and helpful to the new settlers. Mary probably received a little education from William Blatchford, who after 1851 taught both Gebbie and Manson children. (He later married the eldest Manson daughter, Agnes, and settled in the area.)

In 1861 Mary married John G Murray who with his parents and family came to New Zealand on the ship 'Labuan' on 14.8.1851 from Surry, England. They were married at the Head of the Bay, Port Victoria, by the Rev Charles Fraser. John came from a farming family, but one of his first jobs was helping to carry sacks of flour and oatmeal on his back over the Port Hills to Opawa. John obtained land that was the old Lincoln College farm, and later had land at Greenpark which he called Riverlawn, and this came to him through his wife Mary - perhaps her marriage settlement. He also had a lease on land near Lake Ellesmere. 1867 was a dry summer, and the fire that swept through his property was estimated at £1000 - a harvester had carelessly thrown down a match.

A keen cricketer, John was Captain of the Lincoln Cricket Club for many years. He took part in forming the Christchurch Farmers Club, which later became the Canterbury A & P Assn, and won prizes at the Shows with his English Leicester sheep. John did his part for the district being on the Selwyn County Council for some years and also was on several Roads Boards. When John Gebbie resigned his seat on the Little River Board, John Murray took his place. He also represented the Selwyn County Council on the Christchurch Hospital Board.

In 1902 he bought a very rough block of land north of the Clarence River for £4.00 an acre, and settled his sons Charles and Jack, and son-in-law Rittson Thomas on it. Hard work have tamed the rough lands over the years. He and Mary lived for a while with his son Jack, then retired to Christchurch.

In 1911 he and Mary celebrated their Golden Wedding with a big family party at their home 'Hartley' in Dyers Pass Road, Christchurch. The family gave them as a present the new H.M.V. Gramophone and records - the very latest invention.

They had 7 children, most of whom were involved in large scale farming operations.

John died at 'Hartley' in 1915 and in 1923 Mary, then 84, travelled by ship to England with her daughter Emily. She died in England in 1928 and her ashes were returned to New Zealand and buried at Halswell.

The eldest son, George, struck out on his own early with over 2,000 acres in Taranaki, but after 2 years sold out and went to South Africa, where he worked as foreman in a Johannesburg Gold mine. Still restless, he returned to New Zealand, but two years later was off again, this time to South America where he worked as sub-manager on a large estate. On his return to New Zealand in 1902 he purchased Sawdon station in the McKenzie country. 4 years later he sold it and bought 'Glentanne' which he kept till 1911, then took over 'Braemar' station and remained there. In 1896 he married Mary Nalder of Lyttleton.

Charles the second son, farmed several properties, then settled on land which was part of Flaxbourne Station, now called Wharanui, in Marlborough, and got to work breaking in the rough, unimproved country.

John the youngest son leased properties round Greenpark and Tai Tapu from his father, then got settled on a back country block at Clarence Bridge, Marlborough. Later further large land blocks were purchased and are now worked by family members. John died at 'Woodbank' in 1949 and his ashes were spread from the air over the property for which he had worked for 50 years.

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Mrs George Murray. An appreciation. May, 1954.

The death, at 85 of Mary Murray wife of the late George Murray, of Braemar in the Mackenzie Country will be keenly felt by a very large circle of friends. She retained her health and vigor to the end, flying to Hamilton to stay with her daughter only a week before she died.

Mrs Murray was born Mary Nalder in 1869 at Lyttleton. She trained at the Christchurch Hospital under Nurse Maude at a time when nursing was anything but a popular profession for girls. To her years under that outstanding woman she always attributed the regularity and thoroughness in all she did that were the wonder of her children and grandchildren to the end of her life.

She married the late George Murray in 1896 and made her first home at Sawdon Station, up the road from Burkes Pass, and one of the coldest places in New Zealand. Later, while she lived at Glentanner, near the Hermitage, Mrs Murray was the first woman to drive a car into the Mackenzie Country; she continued to drive there until the age of 80. On one occasion the Glentanner cook faded out in the middle of shearing. Mrs Murray, then in Timaru, was asked to get a cook for 30 men - must be able to bake bread. She tried all day without success. That night Mr Shewan, the well-known Timaru baker, gave her an intensive course in bread making and early in the morning she set out for Glentanner. Her daughter remembers nursing a precious jar of yeast - taken up in case the cook had drunk the station supply as well as everything else.

From 1910 to 1938 Mrs Murray lived at Braemar Station where there was always a welcome and warm hospitality for all comers. Some strays and lame ducks stayed on for years. When her son, Bruce Murray, took over Braemar, Mrs Murray moved to Lake Tekapo where her cottage by the lake became a centre of refuge for all who came and went in the Mackenzie Country. On Sundays or Tekapo sale days she would feed friends and relations by the dozen. In 1950 she came to live with her daughter at Hoon Hay, visiting another daughter in Hamilton every winter. All her life her routine never varied. Until she left Braemar she rose always at 5.45 a.m. and took a cold bath. As a concession to her retirement she rose thereafter at 6.15 a.m., but always the cold bath. Bed time was 9 p.m. Her family noted with pride that she died at precisely that hour.

Mrs Murray was a tower of strength to her family, her neighbours in the back country and to her church. The charity of her mind and of her purse was unbounded. She always had time to do her own work and leisure to work for others, all with a self-effacing ability that earned the abiding love of her many friends. Mrs Murray's life stretched from the pioneering days to the age of air travel. To every aspect of it she brought a love and graciousness that can only leave a happy memory with her family and all who were privileged to know her.



Mary (nee Gebbie) Murray
C.M.L.



John George Murray
C.M.L.

MARION GEBBIE.

Marion Gebbie, 4th child of John and Mary, was born at Riccarton in July, 1844, the second white child to be born on the Canterbury plains. She was one year old when the family moved to the Head of the Bay. Marion learnt at an early age to help on the farm and in the dairy, and probably received a little education from William Blatchford, who was tutor to both Gebbie and Manson families.

On 12th April, 1863 she married John Williams at the home of Mrs Williams, Market Place, Christchurch, and the Rev Fraser conducted the service.

John had arrived in New Zealand on the Randolph, in December 1850, with his parents and family. He was the eldest son of John and Isabella Williams of Dumferline, Fifeshire. His father, a baker, had dropped dead while climbing the Bridle path the day after the family had arrived at Lyttleton, leaving the family without funds in a strange country. Mrs Williams had received some assistance from her fellow passengers and later managed to set up a drapery business in Victoria Square, Christchurch.

John joined the staff of the Lands and Survey Dept about 1852, and remained with them for the rest of his life. He held the position of draughtsman in 1860 and became chief draughtsman about 1869. He was elected to the Committee of the Mechanics Institute. He had bought about 9 acres of land in Boundary Road, later Rossall St, and built a house there for his family.

From Chief Draughtsman he was promoted to Receiver of Land Revenue, and was very well liked and respected by his fellow workers. After his death in 1893 they erected a tombstone in his memory on his grave in the Barbadoes St Cemetery.

Marion and John had a family of 11 children, but consumption struck the family, and 6 of the children died young.

An interesting extract. "Lyttleton Times" (first issue) Sat. January 11, 1851.

The Widow and her Children.

As it is generally believed that many persons have been debarred by circumstances from hearing or fully understanding the distressing facts connected with the death of the late John Williams and the hopes which are entertained of the prospects of his deserving family it is hereby intimated that the Subscription which was set on foot at the time of the calamitous event has not yet closed and that the following gentlemen are ready to receive donations and to give information on the subject.

The Accountant of the Canterbury Assn
The Rev Edward Puckle
Theodore Williams Esq.

WILLIAM DEANS GEBBIE.

William Deans Gebbie, named after the Deans brothers for whom the Gebbie family worked on their arrival in New Zealand, was born 22.7.1849 at the Head of the Bay, and was the 6th and youngest child of John and Mary. He received his education from William Blatchford of Teddington.

One of his early jobs was to carry the mails from Lyttleton to Little River by horseback.

In 1873 he took up about 300 acres of land opposite his father's old farm and commenced farming on his own account. On 4th June, 1874, he married Emma Caroline Agnes Bradley at St Peters Church Teddington. Caroline was the 3rd daughter of William Orton Bradley, and a niece of the Rev R. Bradley, who with the Rev H.E. East, performed the marriage service. William and the Rev Bradley dealt in stock sales on a considerable scale. William loved his farm, and seldom left it, and in July 1882 he obtained a lease on his brother Davids property, Loudon, and they held a ball in the woolshed to celebrate the event. William and Caroline had 3 sons and 2 daughters, but Caroline died in April, 1886 at the age of 32, with their eldest child aged 11 and the youngest barely 2. William remarried soon afterwards Helen McLraith, of Waitaki, and they had 2 more daughters.

William was Vice President of the Akaroa County Racing Club, and raced horses in a small way at the local meetings. He served on the Akaroa County Council for a time and was a member of the Port Victoria Roads Board, the Teddington School Committee and was a Church Warden at St Peters. Like his brothers he exhibited stock successfully, and in the Christchurch Show in 1894 he won a 1st prize for his 2 year old working steers. This was the last time that class was included in the Show exhibits and his descendants still have the cup he won. After his mother died in 1894 he bought a lot of her land which gave him over 3000 acres and he farmed this successfully until his death, aged 53, in 1902. He was the first person buried in the newly consecrated Teddington Cemetery.

Both William Gebbie and William Blatchford had served for many years as Vicars Warden and Church Warden at St Peters, and in April 1906 a magnificent memorial window was erected in their little church. The inscription reads 'In memory of W.F. Blatchford died 1897 and W.D. Gebbie, died 1902 for many years prominent supporters of this Church'.

Helen, his wife, moved to Leinster Rd, Christchurch and remained there until her death on 27.2.1922 aged 59.

Extract from 'Lyttleton Times' 17.7.1882.

Entertainment at the Head of the Bay.

On Thursday last a very pleasant gathering took place at the Head of the Bay, Lyttleton, at Mr D. Gebbie's station on the occasion of Messrs W. Gebbie and D. Edmunds leasing Mr D. Gebbie's property. The festivities took the form of a ball which was attended by about 100 couples. The woolshed being used for dancing, supper was served at Mr D. Gebbie's residence at which a number of toasts were given and duly honoured. A most enjoyable evening was spent, the company separating at an early hour next morning.



Burnt Hollow above is on the Gebbies Pass road at Teddington. It is the home of Charles Gebbie and his sister Margaret. The property dates back to early days of Banks Peninsula settlement.

Burnt Hollow, not far from the Wheatsheaf Hotel, is a 135ha town milk supply farm with about 100 head of cattle.

It is a ten-room gable style house with three upstairs bedrooms. Additions have considerably increased its size from the original.



William Deans Gebbie
C.M.L.

13 Ivory St
Rangiora

7th Oct 1985

Dear Everyone,

Please find your Gebbie Family History enclosed, and thank you for your order.

I am sure you will find this interesting, as some branches know very little about the other branches, or about the early history of the family.

I have tried to treat each branch slightly differently in the matter of newspaper reports, and hopefully have put in details which give an insight into that era. It was at times difficult to decide what to put in or leave out, bearing in mind that the more pages the more cost. Sometimes I was given two conflicting dates, sent to me by different people; while I tried to check these back, if you find an error I apologise. I had to accept what was sent as correct. Some of the family are overseas, and I appreciate the effort of their families to supply me with the relevant information.

I have been asked many times how I became involved and it was like this. My Gt Grandfather was William Blatchford, who was tutor to the Gebbie and Manson families. He married Agnes Manson (one of his pupils) and settled at Teddington. My husband's Gt Grandfather was David Gebbie, and Loudon farm was the adjacent property to the Blatchford farm. With our children direct descendants of these pioneers I readily accepted the challenge when asked to update the family history in January 1985.

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone who sent me information, family papers and booklets, and who all gave me moral support - it was very much appreciated. Also thanks to Jeanette Walker who helped me with the gathering up of information, and with whom I was able to discuss ideas and details before making final decisions.

Rachel Frost.