

The Olivers

Early New Plymouth Settlers

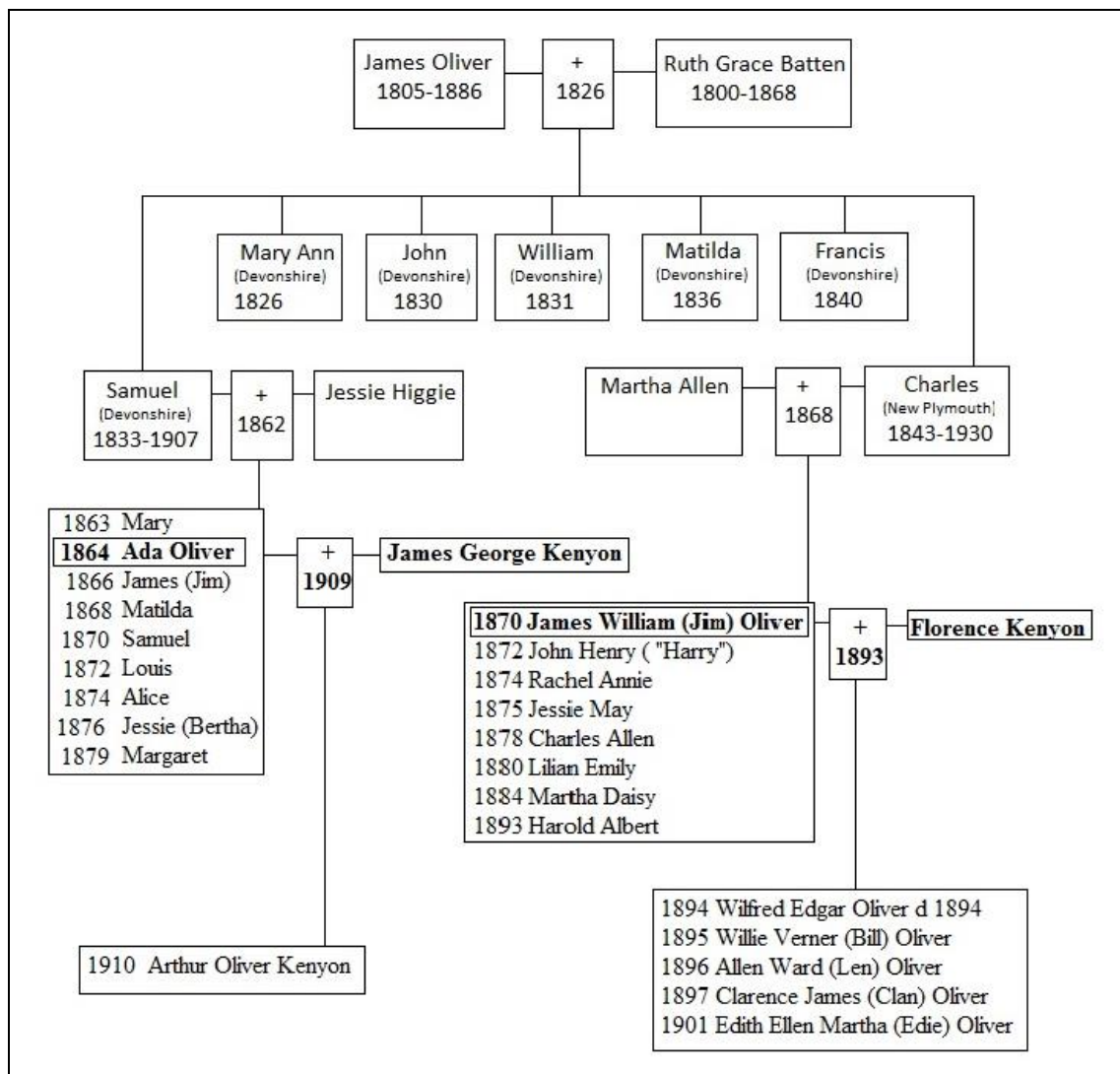


Cover photograph from the collection of Brian Oliver
NZOlivers website

Settlers James and Ruth Oliver of Holsworthy, Devonshire.

The small boy is said to be son Charles who was born in New Plymouth.
Charles Oliver was the father of James William Oliver, who married
Florence Kenyon.

Another son, Samuel, was the father of Ada Oliver, 2nd wife of
James George Kenyon.



Introduction

The Kenyons and the Olivers.

I grew up vaguely familiar with the Oliver name, having heard it mentioned occasionally during conversations between my father and his Kenyon family – but had no real understanding of the connection. Not being descended from an Oliver, I was content to leave the Olivers out of this research, although I had become aware of the fact that my great grandfather James George Kenyon had remarried to an Oliver after the death of his first wife, my great grandmother Frances.

I had heard my parents and grandparents speak of “Artie”
(the only son of **James George Kenyon and his second wife Ada Oliver.**)
Also, I had heard my father and my aunt speak of “Len” and “Clan” and “Uncle Bill”, all sons of **Jim Oliver and “Florrie” (my great aunt Florence, nee Kenyon).**
They were all well-known as part of our family, though by the time of my parents’ generation it had been forgotten that Ada Oliver and Jim Oliver were cousins.
(Both are descendants of the original New Plymouth pioneering family of Olivers.)

As far as I can recall, I never met any of them.
By the time of my generation, contact between Kenyons and Olivers was about to be lost for good.

My interest in the family was sparked by hearing a recorded interview with my grandfather Jack Kenyon, by his niece Shirley Niederer. They had finished the interview and were chatting about Jack’s half brother Artie, and a casual comment was made about Artie’s mother Ada: *“She was a cousin of Jim Oliver. Her father was Sam Oliver, and.....Uncle Jim’s father was Charlie Oliver.....”*
A little more research revealed that this interesting family was actually part of the first group of British pioneers who settled in New Plymouth.
By now I felt compelled to learn more, and began to hope that it might be possible to re-establish some connections with the Olivers.

With my father, in 2013, I was fortunate to visit Trevor Oliver at his residence near Tauranga. Trevor (b 1926) was a grandson of Jim and Florence (Kenyon) Oliver. He gave me some type-written notes regarding his father Allen Ward Oliver who had pioneered Tauranga’s first bus service.
(Allen Ward Oliver had been known to our family as “Len” Oliver.)
Trevor was recovering from an operation, and passed away just a few weeks after our visit.

In early 2014 my father and I visited Alice Oliver at her home in Omokoroa, also near Tauranga. Alice was the wife of Graham Oliver who had unfortunately passed away just a few months prior to our visit. Graham Oliver (b 1925). He was also a grandson of Jim and Florence. His father was Clarence, known to our family as “Clan” Oliver.

Alice Oliver lent me a book called “The Allen Family” written by Cynthia Glover. This book has been a good source of information because it has a full chapter on Martha Oliver (nee Allen) who was the grandmother of all the descendants of Jim and Florence Oliver, most of whom had relocated from New Plymouth and settled in the Tauranga district by the turn of the 19th century.



Trevor and Pat Oliver at their home in
Clake Road Te Puna, Tauranga.

In the centre is Cynthia Glover

Cynthia Glover is the author of
"The Allen Family" which has
extensive information on the
descendants of Charles Oliver
and his wife Martha (nee Allen).

The other Oliver/Kenyon connection was a little more difficult to trace, but worth it. James George Kenyon and Ada (Oliver) had only one child, Arthur – a half brother of my grandfather Jack Kenyon. "Artie" as my family called him, was well known in my family during my grandfather's day.

My mother and father knew him (in fact he was at their wedding in 1946.)

However I had never known him and had never known any of his descendants.

I had found out that Artie's son, Peter Kenyon, was born the same year as I was, and I had very much hoped to meet him. Sadly, I was just a few months too late.

However, shortly after Christmas of 2013 my mother, father and I were able to visit another of Artie's children: Ngaire Holden, at her home in Rotorua.

As there was a family gathering at the time, we were also able to meet Margaret, Artie's grandchildren Mary-Ellen Kenyon and Peter Kenyon, and other descendants of Arthur Oliver Kenyon.

In fact the family gathering at the home of Ngaire Holden at that Christmas time was partly to remember Artie's son Peter. He had been loved by the family and his recent departure had been sudden and unexpected.



Arthur Oliver Kenyon and his wife Helen
with children Peter and Ruth.
Centre are Arthur's parents:
Ada (nee Oliver) and James George Kenyon,



Children of Artie and Helen:
Peter, Margaret
Ngaire, Ann, Ruth
(Ann is Helen's daughter, now one of the family.)

Graeme Kenyon

Auckland October 2016

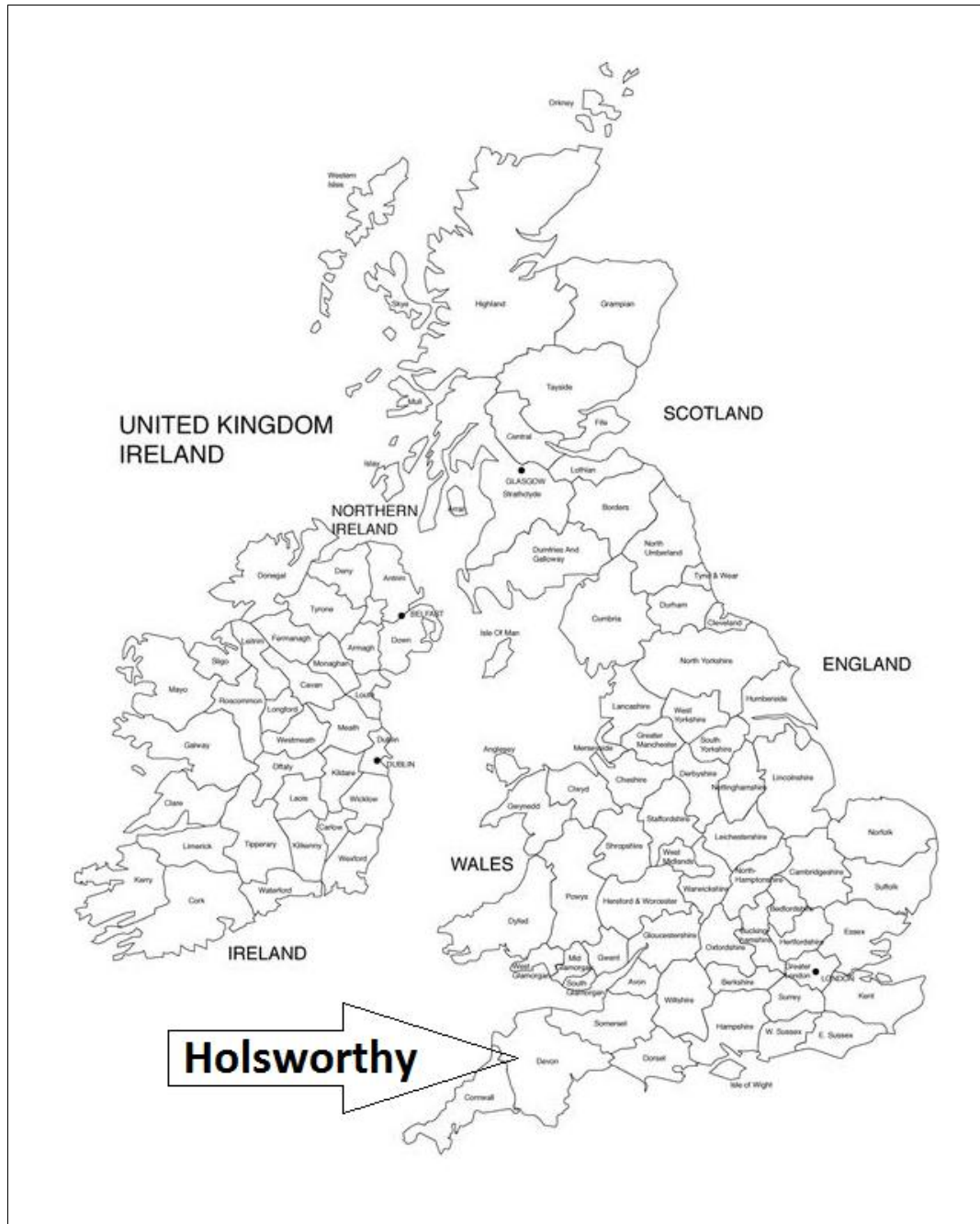
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Many references here are made to the NZOlivers website, maintained by Brian Oliver. For further information and genealogical details, refer to the NZOlivers website www.nzolivers.com

References are also made to a book about the Allen family, researched and written by Cynthia Glover. This book has provided information and photographs relating to Charles Oliver (who married Martha Allen) and his son Jim Oliver (who married Florence Kenyon.)



Origins

The Olivers came from the ancient market town of Holsworthy, in the north west of Devonshire. They were millers by trade.



Boyton Mill

This is the old family home the Olivers left behind in Devonshire.

This photograph comes from a collection stored on NZOlivers website.

From the Neville Richards collection.

The present mill house dates from 1808, producing flour from corn. James and his brother Samuel had lived here since 1827.

James Oliver, and a large number of other Holsworthy folk, had been impressed by an emigration proposal circulated by the newly-established “Plymouth Company”.

Under the leadership of one of their number, Captain Henry King RN, they made the commitment to leave their home and voyage to a little-known land on the other side of the world. They were among the earliest arrivals at what was to be a tiny, isolated settlement they called “New Plymouth.”

The Oliver family comprised James Oliver and his wife Ruth, with their children Mary Ann (14), John (11), William (9), Samuel (7), James (6), Matilda (4) and Francis (1).

They were accompanied by James Oliver’s brother, Samuel, aged 21.

We will refer to him as Samuel the Miller – so as not to confuse him with James’s young son Samuel (7) above.

The Olivers of particular interest in this narrative are two of the children:

- (1) **Samuel (age 7) who grew up to be the father of Ada Oliver, (second wife of James George Kenyon)**
- (2) the youngest child Charles, who had not yet been born.
Charles Oliver was born in New Plymouth in 1843, and he grew up to be the father of James William Oliver (husband of Florence Kenyon).

The Oliver family sailed from Plymouth in March 1841, on the emigrant ship Amelia Thompson.

At that time the actual location of the proposed colony had not yet been decided.

The Voyage of the *Amelia Thompson*

This impression of the **Amelia Thompson** is taken from “*The Establishment of the New Plymouth Settlement in New Zealand*” by Rutherford and Skinner.



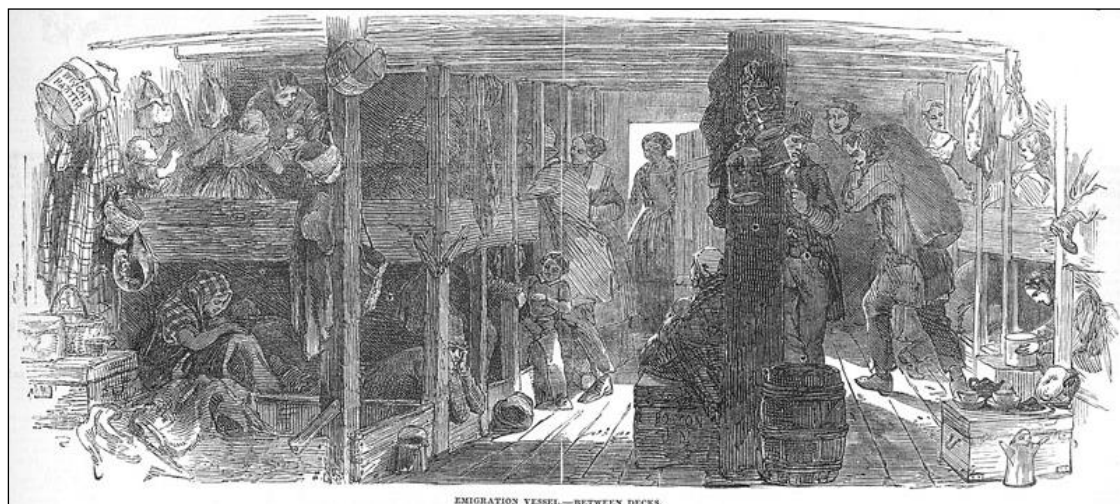
The *Amelia Thompson*, 477 tons and just 6.5 feet (2 metres) between decks, carried 187 men, women and children, together with the ship's crew, making a total of about 200 souls.

She left Plymouth in late March 1841 and arrived in New Plymouth almost six months later, in early September.

Although the tender for the hire of the ship stated that she was “rated first class at Lloyds”, it was said by her Captain that some time after the New Plymouth voyage she was beached for antifouling and it was discovered that her back was broken. When this was brought to the attention of Lloyds, the Secretary was said to have replied “Oh, yes, we knew that her back was broken in launching.”

(Anecdote reported by Seffern in “*Chronicles of Taranaki*”)

On the voyage of the *Amelia Thompson* the physical welfare of the passengers was secured by means of a “payment by results” contract with the ship's surgeon – an arrangement which would be described today by the euphemism “financial incentive”. For every live adult landed in New Zealand he was to receive a fee of 10s, for those between 7 and 14 years 5s, for those under 7 years old 3s 4d. A deduction from those fees of 20s to be made for every death, and an addition of 20s for every live birth. W. H. Skinner wrote: “As the births on the ship slightly outnumbered the deaths, the doctor scored somewhat on the latter part of the agreement.”



“Six foot six inches between decks...” Image from *Illustrated London News* May 10 1851

The voyage, arduous and long, has been recorded in some detail by Rutherford and Skinner, with extensive quotations from the ships log, letters home, and a journal kept by John Newland - who we shall meet again later as the town's jailer.

(The same diary records some years later that Newland once had occasion to lock up the young larrikin Joseph Hawke.)

There is no need here for another detailed version of the ship's passage.

An extract from one letter home to Devonshire will suffice:

"Dear Mother, - This, I hope, will find you in good health.... My family are now all well; we have buried our dear little baby; nine weeks old when he died. We had a long voyage; our family was not on land, after we went on board at Plymouth, until landed here at New Plymouth, six months and three days on board. It is a trial for a family that has been well reared to be closed up, as it were, in the voyage; but thanks be to Him that cared for us over the wide and boundless ocean...."

Since early August the arrival of the *Amelia Thompson* had been anxiously awaited by the first group, those who had already made their voyage and arrived a few months before, on the *William Bryan*.

They had struggled through the winter, housed in tents and raupo whares, and were beginning to run dangerously low on supplies.

The late arrival of the *Amelia Thompson* was, in part, due to a misunderstanding.

Earlier, in January, the Plymouth Company's survey party in the *Brougham*, looking for a suitable site for the settlement, had visited the Sugar Loaf (Ngamotu) area on the Taranaki coast, but had decided against it. They then proceeded to the area of Cloudy Bay in the South Island, near to where Nelson is today. After being shown around rather quickly by a whaler there called Dicky Barrett, the chief surveyor, Carrington, probably influenced by Barrett, decided to return to the Taranaki coast for another look. They anchored at Ngamotu again in February. Persuaded that the nearby Waitara river was unsuitable as a harbour, Carrington finally chose Ngamotu as the site for the new settlement, despite the absence of any harbour, because of the proximity of suitable land for farming, and access to timber for building.



Ngamotu, the open beach, at first rejected then later chosen as the site for the Plymouth Company's settlement, to be called "New Plymouth."

(The photograph belongs to the Alexander Turnbull Library and was taken from "The Interpreter", a biography of Dickie Barrett, written by Angela Caughey)

By this time the first immigrant ship *William Bryan* had already set sail for New Zealand. When *Amelia Thompson* sailed, her captain, too, did not know that the final destination was to be Ngamotu. Captain Dawson had been commissioned to take the *Amelia Thompson* to Cloudy Bay to await further instructions.

Passengers on the *Amelia Thompson* first sighted New Zealand at daybreak on 28th July as they lay becalmed before entering Cook Strait, heading for Cloudy Bay. (They had a good view of Cape Egmont and Cape Farewell.)

After much delay at Port Underwood (Cloudy Bay) and then at Port Nicholson (the fledgling town of Wellington) the vessel finally shaped its course for New Plymouth. The winds were contrary and the ship was under-ballasted. The Captain was somewhat reluctant to go the extra distance, and all too aware that he was approaching an exposed coast which afforded no harbour, and no pilot.

By mid August the first arrivals at Ngamotu (New Plymouth), still with no news of the *Amelia Thompson*, were in a serious situation. Food supplies were now almost exhausted. *Amelia Thompson* had been forced to return to Port Underwood. There she was caught in a gale, and due to an anchor foul-up, almost wrecked.

By the end of August she was properly ballasted and on her way again.

A few miles short of New Plymouth she lay stopped, becalmed off the Timaru River. Patience finally broke and a ship's boat was launched, which arrived with some of the immigrants, at New Plymouth late that evening. They approached shore in the dark, almost capsizing in the surf. The official date of arrival of the *Amelia Thompson* is thus given by Rutherford and Skinner as 3rd September 1841.

Some more passengers landed a few days later, but bad weather forced the ship to stand away. This pattern was repeated a number of times, and it was some weeks before the cargo and the long awaited supplies were landed, and the last of the passengers had braved the surf, to finally stand on the open beach of their new home.

.....

Sadly, after all the discomfort, frustration, privations and delay - for the Olivers, the joy of finally arriving was overshadowed by grief.

The journal of John Newland, for the month of July records:

"20th. (Olivers) child was committed to the deep aged 6 years (Boy.)"

The Olivers' little boy James, 6 years old, had died at sea, on the 20th July 1841. It was just a week before the first sighting of New Zealand.

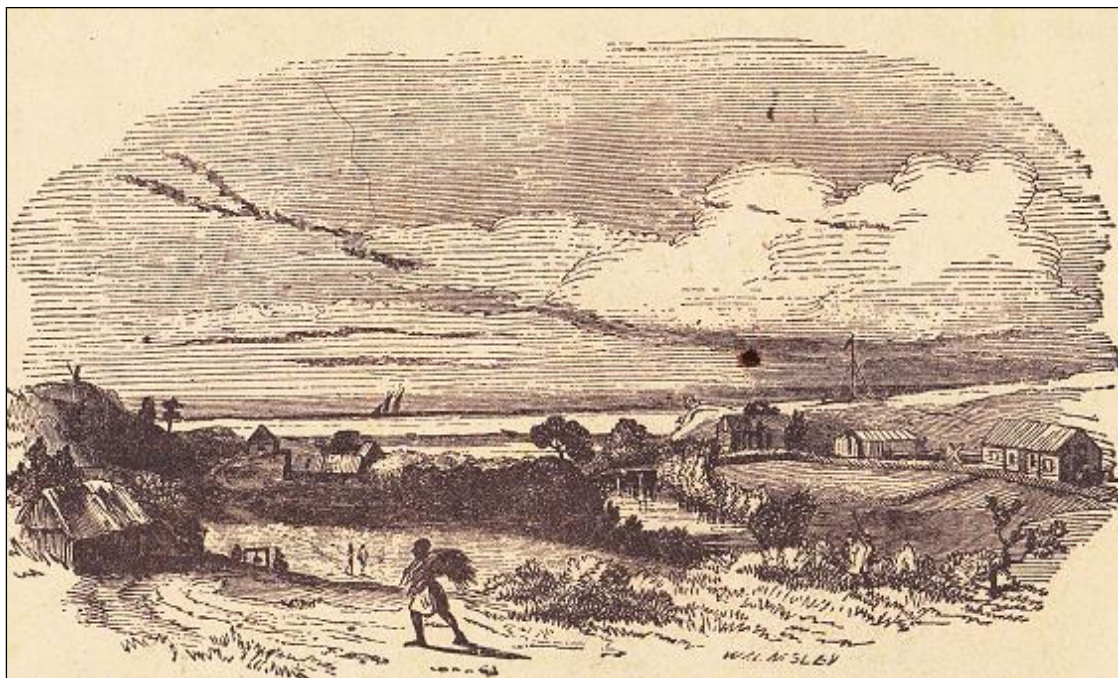
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The Very Early Days in New Plymouth

On their arrival during the month of September 1841, passengers from the *Amelia Thompson* found a small community based on the remnants of the survey party sent out in the *Brougham* in February, and the first immigrants off the *William Bryan* who had arrived in March, totalling perhaps 150. Some had been living in raupo huts which the local whaler Dicky Barret had arranged to be constructed for them, others in tents. With the arrival of the *Amelia Thompson*, this immigrant population was now more than doubled.

Amelia Thompson sailed away in mid October and shortly after that the *Regina* arrived bringing further luggage and supplies, the unloading of which was delayed due to dangerous sea conditions. By early November a further 190 immigrants had arrived on the *Oriental*. After unloading, the *Oriental* cleared out following a narrow escape from shipwreck. The *Regina* was less fortunate and ended up wrecked after the discharge of just 40 tons of luggage and cargo onto the exposed, ocean beach.

The first settlers had built a bridge over the Huatoki stream, completed a storehouse, and explored the country as far as the Waitara River. Some had obtained their own “houses” (raupo whares built by the Maoris costing about eighteen pounds each).

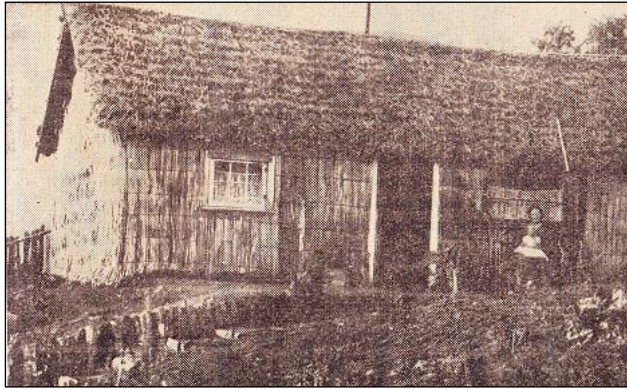


New Plymouth in November 1841. (Taranaki Herald Centennial issue, 1852 – 1952)

This is the earliest known sketch of New Plymouth.

Made from the corner of today's Brougham and Powderham Streets, the sketch shows:

On the right, the Plymouth Company's warehouse; on the left, Holsworthy Hill, later Mt. Eliot; centre, the first Huatoki bridge, between the present Devon Street and Hill Street bridges. Raupo *whare* (house built of thatch) on the left.



Raupo whare.

Raupo is a leafy plant found in the swamps and wetlands which were numerous in the early days. It was suitable for making thatch.

Such farm house whares were still in use in Taranaki as late as the turn of the century.

(Photograph from Taranaki Herald Centennial Issue 1852 – 1952.)

In 1841 the situation could hardly be described as idyllic.

The lack of a harbour had earned the settlement a bad reputation and ship owners were reluctant to go there. As a result, one of its early problems was isolation.

This led to early shortages of food and supplies.

(The problem slowly resolved itself later, as sail power became replaced by steam.)

In addition to infestations of fleas and other pests, including a remarkable plague of rats, the first settlers had already experienced a rather unsettling earthquake.

And during those early days when progress had stalled due to the late arrival of the *Amelia Thompson*, boredom had set in, resulting in instances of drunkenness.

Some of the leading settlers became pessimistic, predicting collapse of the colony, criticising the choice of site, and coveting the nearby Waitara with the easy and fertile land along its banks, and its river mouth and small harbour (though in fact it could be negotiated only by small coastal vessels.)

Dr. Weekes, earlier, had been reporting shortages of food, the “*rather severe shock of an earthquake*”, and increasing drunkenness “*this is the effect of the labourers having no amusements*” – and on the rat plague: “*..one man caught in a pit outside his door twenty-five in one night!*”. However he remained pleased with the progress of his vegetable garden. During November he was writing: “*Moschitos very troublesome these two nights past...*” “*Waikatos threaten to come down shortly and take the Waitara....*” (These were Maori war parties who, two decades before, had raided and de-populated the area.) “*No tea, coffee or sugar in the Colony! Flour getting short...*”

Despite all this, for many settlers, optimism remained high that this place held more potential for them than the old home country. The first allotment of town sections had taken place (drawn by ballot.)

By December things were looking a little better.

And there are many records of letters written home during that time which can be described in today’s terms as “upbeat.”

One of the first to disembark from the *Amelia Thompson* wrote:

“...We had the best treat that evening for supper that I ever had in my life; there was plenty of roast pork, potatoes and greens, and soft bread....With regard to the country, I think no-one can dislike it, and wages are very good....After a little time I expect to be more comfortable when we move into our own home etc....” (W.H. Skinner)

Further examples recorded by W. H. Skinner:

“... I little thought that ever I should leave my native land; but I hope and trust it is all for the best; for now I have got a house of my own, given to us for two years (by the Company), and garden, which stands on 20 yards (18.5m) of ground. My house is 16 feet broad and 24 feet long (36 sq m).....I am working for the company at my trade (blacksmith); the hours are from half-past seven in the morning until half-past four, and I am getting 7s 6d to 8s per day.....”

“... This is a beautiful country, I should say one of the finest in the world... Our harbour (?) is very bad; that is all against this place, for the land is what the Natives call the Garden of New Zealand.... I am happy that I left home....the labouring class is as well off here as the Nobs are at home....a man will do well here if he will keep himself sober, but if he drinks, all is over with him... Tell Mr. Brown I am not come to a country of cannibals....”

“I wish you were all here. It is the prettiest place in the world, I should think.... I think if you knew how we get on you would not abide in England long.” (W.H. Skinner)

The tone of most of these letters is the same. Optimism regarding their future, satisfaction at having decided to leave England, wages, fertility of soil, the prospect of home ownership, and so on. By necessity it seems, a focus on material matters, and apart from general comments about the beauty of the country, surprisingly no mention of what one might have expected to be a dominating first impression: the sight of Mt. Egmont. Evidently they found more satisfaction in looking down at the soil and what diligence might bring them, than looking upwards at the skyline for their inspiration.

Most of the original Maori inhabitants (said to include a fighting force of 10,000 men between the Waitara and New Plymouth) had been displaced 20 years before, by musket raids from the Waikato in the north. Those not killed or escaped as refugees to the Wellington area, had been taken away as captive slaves. Only a few had remained behind, in semi-hiding, and these welcomed the first influx of settlers, assuming their presence would provide protection. As the missionaries began their “good work” converting the Waikato Maoris to Christianity, some of those who had been enslaved were released. Carrington in his journal wrote “On my first arrival here the inhabitants were very few, perhaps 60 or 80. They are now more numerous, perhaps 300. Many are constantly returning from captivity.” Relations with the local “Natives” was generally good, and a number of letters home at this time express relief that they were not “cannibalistic” as some had obviously feared.

Early the following year the *Timandra* arrived.

(A number of key people in our family history arrived on the *Timandra*, and it will be more convenient to tell their story, and resume the story of the settlement of New Plymouth, in another scrap book.)

Samuel Oliver, New Plymouth's First Miller

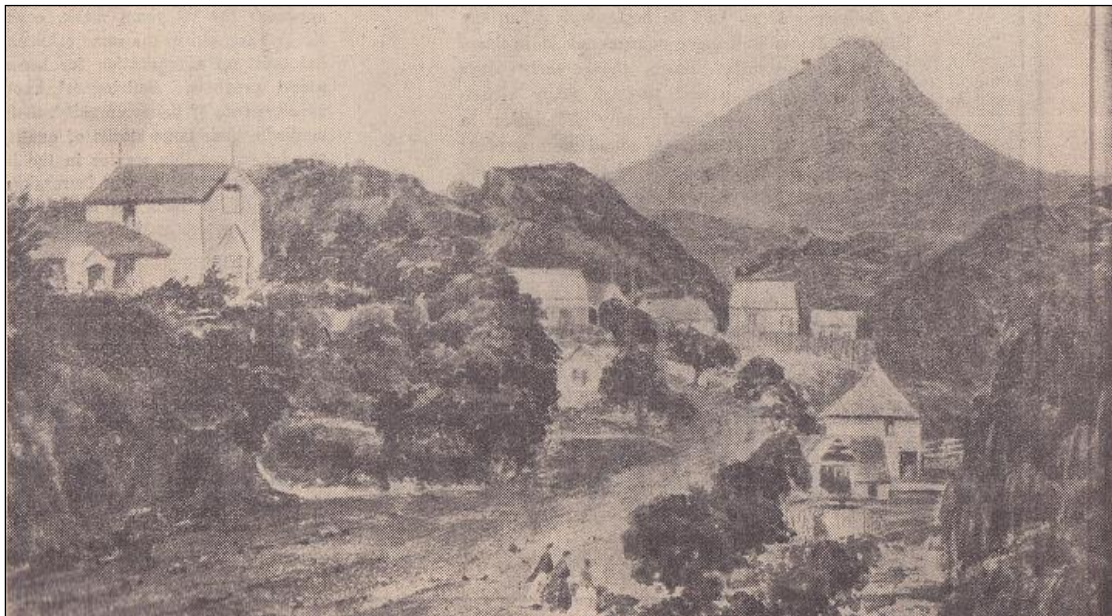
Not to be confused with James Oliver's son Samuel, this is James's adult brother Samuel the Miller, who emigrated to New Plymouth together with our Oliver family.

After his arrival in New Plymouth, Samuel Oliver went into partnership with a fellow

when the house was built. In 1843, Mr Rundle designed and built the "Alpha flour mills." The remains, of the first flour mill erected in Taranaki, are still to be seen immediately below Mr Bauchope's residence, on the Carrington Road. On completion of the mill, Mr Rundle entered into partnership with the late Mr Samuel Oliver, as miller, the latter conducting the milling business, and Mr Rundle carrying on his trade as builder, &c. We now hear of him

immigrant from the *Amelia Thompson* named Richard Rundle, and within a couple of years they set up the first flour mill in New Plymouth.

Taranaki Herald
12th February 1894
(Obituary of Richard Rundle)



Early water-colour.

(Taranaki Herald Centennial Edition 1952)

On the right the Alpha flour mill, situated on the Huatoki river bank.

They called the enterprise "Alpha Mill". According to W. H. Skinner ("Taranaki 80 Years Ago") the land had been purchased and the mill was under construction by 1843. The location was "on the east bank of the Huatoki Stream, Carrington Road, about one hundred yards above the Vivian Street Bridge."

W. H. Skinner wrote in 1923:

"The first grinding stones were made from beach boulders (they can still be seen on the river bank).... This mill ground all the flour required by the settlers, and considerable quantities were also exported. The flour for exportation was carted to the beach by Mr. Joll, whose team consisted of four goats and a dog, and with this strange team many hundreds of tons of flour was taken from the mill...." W.H. Skinner

Mr. S. Oliver has just had prepared, by a stonemason named Williams, a second pair of stones for his mill. The first pair, which have been at work some months, grind equal to any French burrs. Mr. Williams offers to cut a pair for the Nelson mill if required.

Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle

13 September 1845

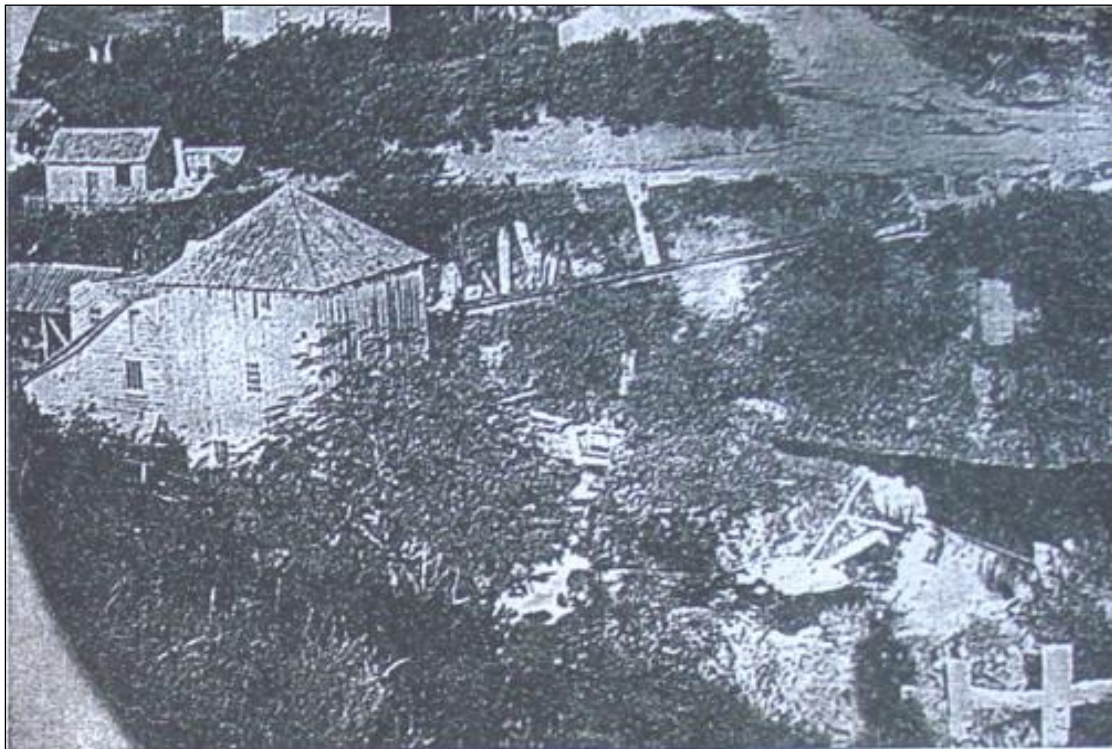
The mill erected by Oliver, all of materials found on the spot, is at work *night and day*, and, with its two pair of stones, grinds upwards of 400 bushels of wheat weekly. The flour is conveyed to the mill in

Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle

October 1846

10 tons of 1st quality Taranaki Flour, from Oliver's mill

New Zealand Spectator and Cooks Strait Guardian,
31 October 1846



Another image of the Alpha Mill (from a rare photograph owned by the late Mr. Harry Mace. Image was found in newspaper article on NZOlivers website.)

With the exception of the machinery, it belongs to Mr. S. Oliver an ingenious and industrious settler who was a working Miller in England: the whole of the machinery was made in the settlement under his

The New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian, 12th April 1845

"It belongs to Mr. S. Oliver an ingenious and industrious settler who was a working

Miller in England: the whole of the machinery was made in the settlement under his direction, and in part by himself. In making the bolting machine, not being able to procure any wire, he has substituted thin slips of wood for the coarser parts, and muslin for the finer parts. The stones, which are three feet ten inches in diameter (about 1m), are made of a bluish kind of granite, which is met with in great abundance on the shore of the district, and which is found to answer the purpose of grinding remarkably well..... The price of grinding at these mills is 10d. per bushel, the miller retaining the bran, or 15d. without the bran, or 1s. 6d. for grinding, dressing and delivering the flour and bran.... Flour produced at this mill was declared by competent judges to be of first rate quality. We are informed that Mr. Oliver has offered to deliver flour of this quality in Wellington for 12 pounds per Ton *cash*."



The stone foundations of the mill may be seen across the Huatoki Stream from the Walkway adjacent to the millstones. The dam to provide water for the wheel was made using the large rocks nearby. Several notches for the dam's braces may be seen in them.

Other mills soon followed, one being the Victoria whose mechanical parts were all imported from England.

In 1850 Samuel Oliver bought out a competitor – the Union Mill, which he took over from W. J. Halse. In this he was assisted by his two sons Samuel Jnr. and Frank. When Samuel Oliver died in 1873 the Union Mill was sold to Honeyfield and Reid.



Union Mill on Queen Street in the early 1870s. (From *Tales of Old Taranaki* by Murray Moorhead)

A singular discovery of bullets in wheat purchased by Mr S. Oliver from the Sea Gull, ex Wanganui, occurred the other day. Mr Oliver was passing the wheat through the smut machine, when suddenly it was stopped by some foreign substance, and on examination it was found to be choked by a bag of 400 bullets, weighing 15 lbs. The bag of wheat which had contained the bullets was bought at Wanganui from the natives.

Taranaki Herald 20th October 1860

An interesting discovery during the first Taranaki war.

On Tuesday the schooner Sea Gull, belonging to Mr S. Oliver of this place, was struck by lightning during a thunder storm that passed over the settlement between 9 and 10 a.m. The electric fluid struck the head of the mainmast, smashing it, and dividing chains and bars of iron, passed down into the hold, filling it with smoke, and causing a leak of such magnitude that to save the lives and property on board she was beached near the Henui river, where she now lies a total wreck. The Sea Gull was at anchor discharging cargo, and was not insured. ✕

Taranaki Herald 15th August 1873

Samuel Oliver's schooner Seagull was struck by lightning uninsured.

One of Murray Moorhead's Taranaki War anecdotes tells of a party of audacious Maoris who crept into town one night, past the sentries, and stole some bags of flour from Oliver's mill. They left a promise for Samuel, scrawled on the wall in charcoal, that they would pay next time they were in town.

During the war period, when the town was overcrowded and unsanitary, many families remaining in the town became victims of outbreaks of contagious diseases. On 11th April 1861 Samuel Oliver lost his eldest son John, aged 13- and then two days later his eldest daughter Annabella, aged 14. Both died from diphtheria. (Taranaki Herald 13th April 4th May 1861)

In the 1860s and 70s Samuel Oliver's advertisements as a miller featured numerous. In later years he must have had a number of customers who forgot to pay their bills. In the 1870s Samuel is frequently reported as resorting to the courts to recover debts.

In March 1873 Messrs Honeyfield and Reid bought the Union Mills from Samuel Oliver.

Samuel Oliver died in May 1873.

Deaths.

Taranaki Herald 24th May 1873

OLIVER.—On the 20th May, at his residence, Moturoa,
SAMUEL OLIVER, aged 53 years.



Samuel Oliver

The first miller in New Plymouth.

Established Alpha Flour Mill in 1843 with partner Richard Rundle.
In 1850 he purchased the Union Mill, which he sold shortly before he died in 1873.

(Image taken from Tales of Old North Taranaki by Murray Moorhead.)

(Note: When Samuel the miller emigrated to New Plymouth on the *Amelia Thomson* there was a fellow passenger called Miss Baker. This was Charlotte Baker.

(See passenger lists in Rutherford and Skinner.)

This is not the Miss Baker who Samuel married.

Samuel's wife was Miss Elizabeth Baker who arrived in New Plymouth in 1842, with her parents Robert and Emma Baker, on the ship *Blenheim*.)

James and Ruth Oliver in New Plymouth

James Oliver, of Holsworthy, Devon, was born on 25th Nov 1805.

Ruth Grace Batten was born on 12th Aug 1800.

They married on 28th August 1826 and fifteen years later joined Capt. Henry King's party and embarked on the *Amelia Thompson*, one of the first immigrant ships of the Plymouth Company.

ON SALE,
BY THE UNDERSIGNED,
TWO STEERS in excellent condition.
One 2 year old—the other 12 months.
Apply to
JAMES OLIVER, Woodleigh Farm.

Little is known of their first few years in New Plymouth, but by 1852 the family appears to be living at Woodleigh Farm.¹

Taranaki Herald 29th September 1852

The obituary of Matilda Oliver records that before the war (which commenced February 1860) the family lived on Carrington Rd just beyond the junction of Tarahua Rd, and that during the war the family was forced to move into Town, and their homestead was burned down.

The following notice, in the 6th April 1861 Taranaki Herald, seems to verify this, as the description: "Carrington Rd, one and one half miles from Town" seems to match Matilda Oliver's description:

"just beyond the junction of Tarahua Rd".

ALPHABETICAL LIST of European Settlers resident at Taranaki New Zealand, whose Homesteads, &c., have been burned by the rebel Maories, between the periods of the 17th March, 1860, and the 31st March, 1861; showing the Approximate Distance of each Homestead from the nearest Military Post or Garrison.

Names of Settlers.	Name of District.	Approximate Distance from the nearest Military Post by Road, and sundry other Remarks.
Northerft W. ...	Bell Block	1½ miles from Bell Block Stockade.
Nield J. C.	Henui	1½ do. Town.
Oliver J.	Carrington Road	One mile and a-half from Town.
Oliver G.	Mangorei	6 miles from any Military Post.
Oliver T.	T. ...	" do "

(The G Oliver on Mangorei Rd is, at this stage, a mystery.

Evidently there was another Oliver family, including a "George Oliver" living in New Plymouth in the 1860's.)

¹ Woodleigh Farm, where the Olivers may have lived in 1852, now makes up Frankleigh Park, a suburb in New Plymouth between Westown and Vogeltown. The estate was owned by William Cutfield King, son of Captain Henry King RN.

Later, during the wars, William Cutfield King, a Captain in the Taranaki Rifle Volunteers, was elected to Parliament, but was killed before the first session.

He would occasionally move out from the safety of the town to inspect his farm and check his cattle.

In 1861 he was caught by a group of Maori fighters and shot before he could get away on his horse.

The incident was witnessed from Marsland Hill.

The NZOlivers website shows an image of the title deeds to a farm on Mangorei Rd. said to have been purchased by James Oliver in 1858. *Perhaps* J Oliver had a farm on Mangorei Rd in addition to the farm “one mile and a half miles from Town” where the Carrington Rd farm house was listed as having been burned down in 1860.



The westernmost road is Frankley Rd which runs down to intersect Carrington Rd.

In the 1855, 1856, 1857/58 and 1860 lists of men qualified and liable to serve as jurors in New Plymouth, James Oliver’s address is always given as Carrington Rd.

It is possible that the Olivers lived first at Woodleigh farm, the estate of Capt. King – and then in 1858 shifted to their own farm on Mangorei Rd.

At both farms the address could be given, roughly, as Carrington Rd.



(From the photograph albums of NZOlivers website)

Said to be Mangorei Rd, the photograph shows the early stages of breaking in a farm from the bush. Mt. Taranaki (Egmont) in the background.

Regarding the period before the 1860 war, inconsistencies remain as to exactly where the family lived and what land they owned. By now James had five adult sons, including Charles in his late teens, so possibly he had more than one property.

Young Samuel had probably moved or was about to move to Wanganui around 1860.

During the 1860 war the Olivers' house was plundered, possibly by Waikato Maoris who came south to Taranaki to join the fighting.

Taranaki Herald 14th Aug 1860

At the same time New Plymouth seems to be in a critical position—hemmed in by hordes of blood-thirsty savages. To those who know the settlement we need only mention: that the following homesteads have been found plundered; Messrs. Oliver's, Broadmore's, Captain King's, Messrs. W. C. King's, Groube's, Mc-Kechney's, Richardson's, Des Voeux's, and Joll's; and that when the armed party proceeded to Broadmore's they heard guns firing at Ratanui. In Oliver's house the words "Nga Waikato" were found written upon the wall. The state of siege in which New Plymouth at present is must be intelligible to all acquainted with its position.

This is interesting because history tells us the first record of Waikato participation in the Taranaki War was the (for them) disastrous battle of Mahoetahi in November 1860.

This reference, above, suggests a war party from the Waikato may have been in Taranaki as early as August.

After the war there is no doubt, that, apart from son Samuel who had shifted to Wanganui, James Oliver and his family were settled on various farm blocks on Mangorei Rd.

James' wife Ruth (nee Ruth Grace Batten) died on the 4th of September 1868.

In 1880 James Oliver was lucky not to be drowned.

Taranaki Herald 25th February:

Mr. James Oliver had a narrow escape from being drowned yesterday. It appears he was coming along the side of the railway line between the beach and Devon-street, and when near the bridge must have missed his footing and fell into the river, being unable to get out again. A young lady seeing him in that position told the police, when Constable Roach immediately went to his assistance,

jumping into the river and holding the old man's head out of the water till help arrived. Mr. Oliver, who is between 70 and 80 years of age, was then lifted on to the bank and taken care of by his friends. Had not the old man been seen at the time he was and Mr. Roach so quickly gone to his assistance, he would certainly have been drowned; as it was it was some time before he recovered consciousness.

In 1885 the youngest son Charles went to court with the intent to have a "Prohibition Order" placed on old James Oliver.

It seems that in his senior years, James had become rather fond of strong drink – so much so in fact that Charles began to worry that the family fortune was disappearing.

Taranaki Herald 21st August 1885

POLICE COURT.

THIS DAY.

FRIDAY, August 21.—Before C. E. Rawson, Esq., R.M.

PROHIBITION ORDER.

Mr. Hughes applied in the behalf of Charles Oliver for a prohibition order against James Oliver.

Sergeant Duffin gave evidence that defendant was of intemperate habits.

Defendant said he was 80 years of age, and had worked hard during his lifetime, and had saved money. He impoverished nobody by his indulgence, having money out at interest, and the house in which his son-in-law and family lived belonged to him. He thought nobody had a right to interfere.

Mr. Cholwill gave evidence as to money defendant had received.

Mr. Hughes urged that the fact of the defendant wasting his substance was sufficient grounds to issue the order.

His Worship said the ground on which the order was asked for was that the defendant was wasting his estate by excessive drinking. His Worship said that waste was a comparative term, and that while spending 1s. would be waste with one man, spending 10s. would not be waste with another. It appeared to him

that he could not make the order, because it was not shown what income Mr. Oliver had and what proportion he spent in drink. Defendant had not a wife and family to support, and the law does not cast upon anyone the duty of leaving money to his children. All that the administrators of law had to do was to see that the defendant was not thrown as a burden upon the country. Unless it was shown that somebody was in danger of being left on the parish, the law had no right to interfere.

Mr. Hughes asked how His Worship would view a case in which a man with £1,000 spent £900 of it in drink and lived on the remainder.

His Worship said he was not called upon to decide that question. It was an extreme case, but he was inclined to think a man would have a perfect right to do so, providing he did not commit a breach of the peace or waste his money so that he would ultimately come upon the parish. His Worship jocularly remarked that if his own grown up family sought to limit his expenditure in such a way he would entirely forget to include their names in his last will and testament.

The Court adjourned.

The Order was not granted. (In fact Charles was mildly admonished by the Judge.)

A week later James was charged with being drunk in Brougham Street, and fined 5s.

On informing the judge that he was not drunk and would not pay, he was sentenced to 24 hours imprisonment. He was also warned that if it happened again, he might indeed be facing a prohibition order.

POLICE COURT.

THIS DAY.

MONDAY, August 31.—Before C. E. Rawson, Esq., R.M., and R. Parris, Esq., J.P.

DRUNK. — James Oliver was charged with being drunk in Brougham-street last Monday. — Constable Roche proved the offence, and stated that accused was very drunk, and he took him home to his friends.

—His Worship said that as it was a first offence accused would only be fined 5s. If he appeared in Court again a prohibition order might be issued against him.—Prisoner maintained he was not drunk, and would not pay the fine ; and a sentence of 24 hours imprisonment was given.

FUNERAL NOTICE.

THE Funeral of the late JAMES OLIVER will leave his late residence at 1 30 p.m sharp TO-MORROW (Saturday).

Friends will kindly accept this intimation.

JAMES LOVERIDGE,

553 ap2

Undertaker.

Sadly, the intractable old man passed away less than a year later, on 1st April 1886

Taranaki Herald
2nd April 1886



James Oliver

1805 – 1886

(Photograph from NZOlivers website www.nzolivers.com)

Samuel Oliver (Son of James Oliver and father of Ada Oliver)

Samuel Oliver was born on 7th October 1833 in Devonshire
He was just 8 years old when the family arrived in New Plymouth on the *Amelia Thompson* in September 1841.

Samuel does not appear on any Jury list, or electoral roll in New Plymouth.

It is said that he grew up to become a carpenter.

It is not established exactly when he left Taranaki, but he settled and married in Wanganui probably no later than early 1860.

(The first Taranaki War commenced in February 1860, at which time Samuel was 27 years of age, however unlike his brother Francis he is not listed in Stowers (2012) as having applied for a NZ medal. This suggests he might have moved from Taranaki in or before early 1860.)



These beautiful chairs are said to have been made by Samuel Oliver.

Before he went farming in Wanganui he was a craftsman carpenter.

(Photograph from the collection of Rachel Oliver NZOlivers website.)

Samuel Oliver married Janet (Jessie) Higgie, of Blink Bonnie estate, in Wanganui, in 1862, and in 1870 he appears on the Wanganui electoral roll as owning freehold land, section 73 on No. 3 Line, Wanganui.

From then until his death in 1907, this mixed farm holding at No. 3 Line, of approximately 90 acres, adjoining Gordon Park, was Samuel Oliver's address in Wanganui.

In 2013 Brian Oliver (NZOlivers website) wrote:

"One thing that puzzles me is why he (Samuel) left the family in New Plymouth and moved to Wanganui. I have a theory, with no evidence, is that he was a carpenter and he may have worked on the New Plymouth Colonial hospital - the contractor I believe being Thomas Higgie. So, I wonder if Tom Higgie enticed him to work for him in Wanganui - where he was based - and met/fell in love with his daughter and duly married? My theory, nothing to back it up. Brian Oliver"

Blink Bonnie (The Higgie estate)

Jessie's father Thomas Higgie came from Blinkbonnie, in Edinburgh.

Hence the name given to the estate in Wanganui.

(Blinkbonnie was a small hamlet of SW Edinburgh Council Area. It overlooked the Water of Leith opposite Currie, 5½ miles (9 km) southwest of Edinburgh city centre. Originally a farm, which still exists.)



Samuel Oliver

Married Jessie Higgie in 1862

Samuel and Jessie had nine children:

Mary	1863 - 1947
Ada	1864 - 1959
James	1866 - 1948
Matilda	1868 - 1869
Samuel	1870 - 1943
Louis	1872 - 1938
Alice	1874 - 1945
Jessie (Bertha)	1876 - 1952
Margaret	1879 - 1879

(Photograph from the collection of Joy Nixon NZOlivers website.)

of several chains from the edge. We then cross a corner of Mr Samuel Oliver's section, still rather swampy, there being no outlet for the surface water. Proceeding onwards, the line will cut through the land occupied by Mr Alex. Higgie, which is drier than any we have met with since leaving the bush, being higher, more open, and out of the swamp. An angle of Mr Wilson's land is here cut off from the remainder, after which another portion of Mr Higgie's land is traversed by the line for a space of some twenty-five

Olivers' and Higgies' land in relation to

The Railway line

Wanganui Herald 15 Dec 1873

Samuel Oliver v. W. Strachan. Claim —£56 18s.
Mr Hutchinson for the plaintiff.
Verdict for amount and costs, with one month imprisonment in default of payment.

Resident Magistrate's Court

15th June 1875 Wanganui Herald

Required for Jury Service, names include:
Samuel Oliver, John Higgle, Thos. Higgle..

Wanganui Herald 13th Oct 1880

For the position of sub-inspector to the Harbour Board the following 25 applications were received :—David Rose, W. S. Fleetwood, Chas. Davy, P. L. Sim, Villiers Beere, S. Grant, James Sultman, Alfred Ryan, William Jackson, William Gibson, S. Plumley, S. Burgess, Robt. Daniels, Samuel Oliver, G. A. Garrie, John Newman, S. Clansey, R. S. Patchett, P. Jarvis, W. G. Abram, John Richmond, E. H. Cannoburn, J. Batten, W. Gifford, and G. Winslaid. The Board resolved itself into Committee to consider the applications.

Harbour Board

Wanganui Herald
15th September 1882

Refusal to comply with Council Order

Wanganui Chronicle 13th May 1885

The action brought by the Wanganui Road Board against Samuel Oliver, for refusing to comply with an order of the board re the removal of some willow trees, excited some interest yesterday at the Resident Magistrate's Court. Mr Hutchison appeared for the board, and Mr Barnicoat for the defendant. Mr Lilliton, secretary to the board, gave evidence as to the locality of defendant's land, and the damage through moisture which the board alleged the willows did to the road. Messrs Porteous and John McGregor, wardens of the board, gave corroborative evidence. Mr Barnicoat, for the defence, said the defendant undoubtedly had a right to plant trees on his property. The question to be decided was the damage the overhanging

branches really did to the road. The defendant, Mr Samuel Oliver, said the willows had been there for 17 or 18 years. The trees did not overhang the road, nor did he think their removal would make any difference to the road. Mr Sommerville, the chairman of the Wanganui County Council, said the metalled road was not overhung by the trees, and it was a pleasant drive through the trees in summer time. His Worship said the board had a right to make an order respecting the trees. He considered some injury had been done, but not such as needed a heavy penalty. Fined one shilling a day for the nine days on which the order remained in force, with costs £7s.

Samuel's wife Jessie died on 3rd Dec 1891.

OLIVER—On the 3rd instant, at her residence, No. 3 Line, Jessie, the beloved wife of Samuel Oliver, aged 49 years.

Wanganui Chronicle
4th December 1891

Mrs Jessie Oliver, wife of Mr Samuel Oliver, of No. 3 Line, died of bronchitis yesterday, at the age of 49. Mrs Oliver was the daughter of the late Mr Thomas Higgle, of Okoia, and a native of Wanganui. The deceased was well known and respected in the neighbourhood, and her death will be deeply regretted, not only within the family circle, but by numerous friends and acquaintances scattered all over the district. She leaves a husband and a family of seven children—three boys and four girls—all of whom are grown up. The funeral will leave the residence about 2 p.m. to-morrow, and is due on the Town Bridge at three o'clock.



Samuel Oliver.
1833 – 1907

Thought to have been
taken in 1903 on his 70th
birthday.

(Though it might also have
been on the occasion of his
daughter's wedding
see below)

From the collection of
Rachel Oliver
NZOlivers website

BRADLEY—OLIVER.— On September
3, 1903, at the residence of the
bride's father, by the Rev. J. W.
Hayward: Thomas Henry, eldest
son of the late Mr Edwin Bradley,
to Jessie Bertha, youngest daughter
of Mr Samuel Oliver, No. 3 Line,
Wanganui.

Marriage of Samuel
Oliver's
daughter Jessie

Wanganui Chronicle, 11
September 1903

Samuel Oliver, died on April 4th 1907.

The old Samuel Oliver property at Line 3 just out of Wanganui was then subdivided, extensively advertised, and sold by auction in 1908.

NOTICE.

ALL accounts owing by the late Samuel Oliver, of No. 3 Line, to be sent to the undersigned on or before the 13th April, 1907.
Any claims sent after that date will not be acknowledged.
J. A. OLIVER.
Care Mrs T. Bradley, Gonville,
Wanganui.

The late Samuel Oliver

Wanganui Herald 26th March 1907

WINDLEBURN'S STABLES.

FRIDAY, 24th MAY.

At 9.30 a.m.

FREEMAN R. JACKSON AND CO., instructed by the Executors of the late S. Oliver, will sell as above—
The Mare Westguard, 11 years, by Vanguard—Sou'-wester mare.
Sou'-wester Mare, aged, dam by Ravensworth.
Br Gelding, 9 years, by Ruatanga—Sou'-wester mare.
Br Filly, 2 years, by Chain Link—Sou'-wester mare.
Br Colt, yearling, by Motor—Sou'-wester mare.
Bay mare, 8 years, broken harness.

Sale of the late Samuel Oliver's race horses

Wanganui Chronicle 24th May 1907

SATURDAY, 25th JANUARY, 1908,
At 2 p.m.
**AUCTION SALE OF CHOICE FREE-
HOLDS.**

NEAR TOWN.

MESSRS C. L. DUIGAN AND CO. are instructed by the Executors of the late Samuel Oliver to sell by public auction in their Land Sale Rooms, 75, Ridgway Street as above—
That desirable freehold property situated on the No. 3 Line, about 4 miles from Wanganui, being part of section 13, Block XI., Ikitara, subdivided into 8 desirable sections of from **THREE ACRES to NINETEEN ACRES** each.
The property is offered for absolute sale, to wind up the estate.
Litho plans and full particulars on application to the auctioneers.
C. L. DUIGAN AND CO.,
75, Ridgway Street.

Sale of the late Samuel Oliver's property

Wanganui Herald 8th January 1908

**AUCTION SALE OF CHOICE FREE-
HOLD SECTIONS.**

ON No. 3 LINE.

The executors of the estate of the late Samuel Oliver have instructed Messrs C. L. Duigan and Co. to sell by public auction on Saturday, the 25th inst., at 2 p.m., the valuable freehold property situated on the No. 3 Line, near Gordon Park and about four miles from Wanganui. The property has been subdivided into eight convenient sections varying in area from three to 19 acres. As these sections are very handy to town and are offered for absolute sale to wind up the estate, they should command the attention of investors. Plans and full particulars may be obtained from the auctioneers, Messrs C. L. Duigan and Co.

The subdivision and sale of Samuel Oliver's property.

8th Jan 1908 Wanganui Herald

Evidently the property did not sell and was advertised again extensively in February and March.

SATURDAY, 21st MARCH, 1908,
At 2 p.m.

**AUCTION SALE OF CHOICE FREE-
HOLDS NEAR TOWN.**

MESSRS C. L. DUIGAN AND CO. are instructed by the Executors of the late Samuel Oliver to sell by public auction in their Land Sale Rooms, 75, Ridgway Street as above:—

That desirable freehold property situated on the No. 3 Line, about 4 miles from Wanganui, being part of section 13, Block XI., Ikitara, subdivided into 8 desirable sections of from THREE ACRES to NINETEEN ACRES each.

The property is offered for absolute sale, to wind up the estate.

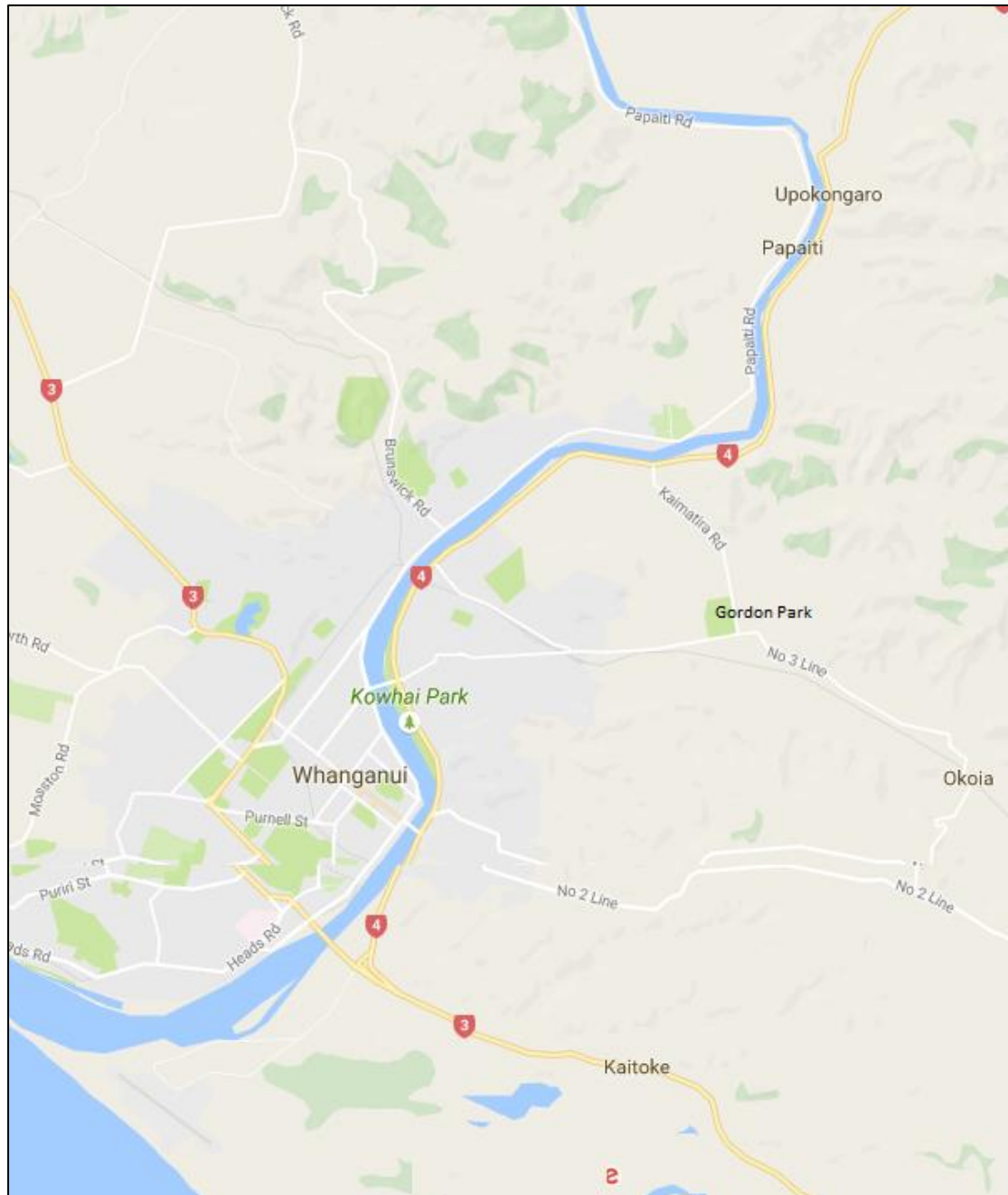
Litho plans and full particulars on application to Messrs Barnicoat and Treadwell, Solicitors, or the auctioneers:—

C. L. DUIGAN AND CO.,
75, Ridgway Street.

Wanganui Herald 28th February 1908

Those in want of a few acres near town will have a splendid opportunity to obtain their requirements to-morrow (Saturday) the 21st inst., at 2 p.m., when the Oliver estate of about 90 acres on the No. 3 Line, and adjoining Gordon Park, will be submitted to public competition to wind up the estate of the late Samuel Oliver. The property has been sub-divided into eight convenient sections of from three acres to 20 acres, and is offered for absolute sale. As the land is first-class, and convenient to town, it will doubtless elicit keen competition. Full particulars, plans, etc., may be obtained from the auctioneers, Messrs C. L. Duigan and Co.

Wanganui Herald 20th March 1908



The Oliver property of 90 acres on Number 3 Line adjoined Gordon Park

Our person of interest in Samuel's family is his daughter Ada Oliver.

Ada Oliver and James George Kenyon

James George Kenyon, widower with five children, was farming in South Taranaki. In 1909 James George Kenyon and Ada Oliver were married. The wedding took place at the home of Ada's sister Jessie, in Wanganui.



KENYON—OLIVER—On August 25, at the residence of Mr. Bradley, Gonville Avenue, by the Rev. J. Luxford, James George, eldest son of Mr. J. Kenyon, New Plymouth, to Ada, second daughter of the late Samuel Oliver, No. 3 Line, Wanganui. Wanganui Herald, 9 September 1909

This photograph was taken from the NZOlivers website, from the collection of Rachel Oliver



(From the collection of Shirley Niederer)

James George Kenyon and Ada pose with members of the Oliver family in Wanganui. (Brian Oliver has identified his grandparents front right: Maud and Louis Oliver)

Shortly prior to the wedding, James George Kenyon had sold up in South Taranaki.



Then, with his new wife Ada, and his existing family, they moved to Sandon Block, near Hunterville, a steep property of approximately 1000 acres.

Photo taken in 2013

On 26th July 1910, Arthur Oliver Kenyon was born.

Arthur was born in New Plymouth and the birth appears to have been registered by C. J. Rundle. It is not known how or why Ada travelled all the way to New Plymouth for the birth. The presence of “agent” C J Rundle at the birth registration seems to suggest that James George may have stayed behind, on the farm at Sandon Block.

Chronology

23 rd April 1903	died	Francis (Wilson) Kenyon, Manaia
1903 – 1906		Taikatu Rd., Otakeho, South Taranaki
1906 – 1909		Normanby Rd., Manaia, Sth Taranaki
1909		Sold up all, prepared to leave Taranaki
28th October 1909	married	Ada Oliver
1909 – 1912		sheep farm, Sandon Block
1912 – 1917		Newstead, Waikato
1918		Bush farm at Waimai
1919		Dairy farm at Motumaoho, Morrinsville
1920 – approx 1935		On various Boards. Morrinsville.
approx 1935 – 1952		Farm at Okoroire at some time here.
4 th December 1952	died	retired, Hamilton
23 rd January 1959	died	James George Kenyon, Hamilton
		Ada (Oliver) Kenyon, Hamilton



photographs from the collection of Shirley Niederer

Further details may be found in the James George Kenyon scrapbook.



Ada (Oliver) Kenyon died in Hamilton on 23rd January 1959 at the age of 94.



James George Kenyon and Ada 1945



Arthur Oliver Kenyon (right)

From the left are the other children of James George Kenyon: Wilfred, Harold (obscured) Mildred, Jack and Janie.

Ada Oliver (foreground)

Charles Oliver

(Son of James Oliver and father-in-law of Florence Kenyon)

Charles, the youngest of the children of James and Ruth Oliver, was born in New Plymouth in 1843



Charles Oliver 1843 – 1930

Charles was born in New Plymouth about two years after the family arrived.

He joined the Taranaki Rifle Volunteers at the age of 17 and served until the close of the wars, reaching the rank of colour sergeant.

Charles Oliver married Martha Allen and they took up land in Tikorangi, later shifting to Mangorei Rd. where they farmed until 1909.

Photo from the collection of David Lloyd. NZOlivers website.

Charles apparently had a lengthy military career during the wars of the 1860s, though according to Stowers, his medal application cites only the battle of Mahoetahi as his instance of being actually under fire. It is likely there were many other occasions.

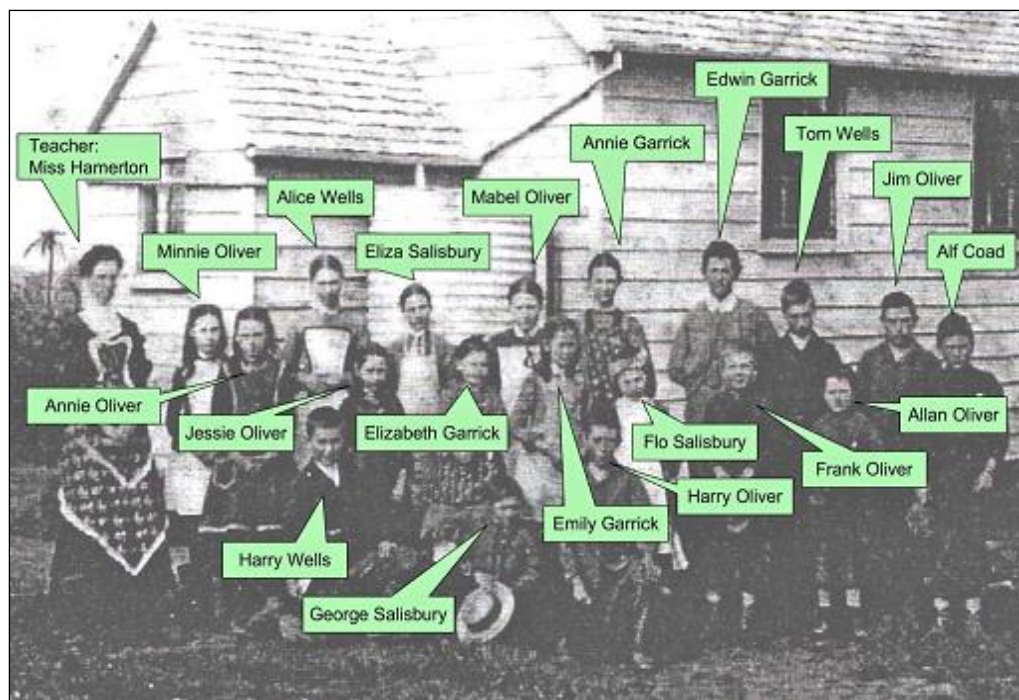
After the war, Charles received a land grant at Tikorangi, but some time after that he shifted to Mangorei Rd where he settled, farmed and raised his family.

Charles married Martha, daughter of William and Prudence Allen of New Plymouth, on Dec 31 1868. They had 8 children.

Their eldest, **James William Oliver**, was born on 3rd May 1870.

James William Oliver was followed by:

John Henry (Harry) Oliver 1872,
Rachel Annie 1874,
Jessie May 1875,
Charles Allen (Charles) 1878,
Lilian Emily 1880,
Martha Daisy 1884,
Harold Albert 1893.



Upper Mangorei School around 1884

This photograph is part of the collection on NZOlivers website.

The website states that it was scanned from a photograph held by Marlene Balsom (a descendant of the Wells family).

The photograph shows Jim Oliver (James William Oliver) at about age 14, second from the right.

Other members of the family of Charles Oliver are:

Annie Oliver (Rachel Annie, about 10 years of age)

Jessie Oliver (Jessie May about 9 years of age)

Allan Oliver (Charles Allen, about 6 years of age)

Harry Oliver (John Henry, about 12 years of age)

The other Oliver children are said to be the children of Frank Oliver.

Minnie Oliver (Edith Minnie, about 11 years of age)

Mabel Oliver (Mabel Matilda, about 15 years of age)

Frank Oliver (maybe Francis Thomas Oliver, about 9 years of age)

The old grandfather James Oliver died in 1886.

In 1892, Charles and his eldest son James William, now 22, were involved in the aftermath of an armed hold-up at a neighbouring property (the Carricks) on Mangorei Rd:

DARING OUTRAGE

AT MANGOREI.

SETTLER'S HOUSE STUCK UP.

ROBBERS FIRED AT

ONE MAN SUPPOSED TO BE
WOUNDED.

A DARING outrage was reported to the police at 5 o'clock this (Thursday) morning. It appears that Mr George Carrick, a settler on the Mangorei Road, had an encounter with armed robbers at his house. A representative of this paper rode out to Mr Carrick's place this (Thursday) morning, when he got the following particulars:

MR GEORGE CARRICK'S STATEMENT.

Mr Carrick says:—About 2 o'clock I was awakened by hearing my two dogs barking furiously. Shortly afterwards I heard the back door of my house tried, and then the front door handle was turned. I said to my wife, "There is somebody trying the doors. Don't be frightened; I am going to get up to see who it is." I then got up and put on a pair of socks. I took down my double-barrelled breech-loading fowling piece, and put two shot cartridges (No. 3) in the barrels. I had only my shirt on, besides the socks. I went out the front door and then I cocked both barrels—a thing I have never done before. I went round to the left of the house, but as I was afraid of striking my feet against the stonework of the chimney I made a detour behind a small garden path hedge, and looked round towards the back of the house. As I looked I saw a man standing about three feet from the corner at the back of the house. The man saw me before I saw him, for he immediately presented a revolver at me, and in a distinct and commanding voice called out, "Stand or I'll fire." On being thus addressed I brought my piece up to my shoulder without a moment's hesitation, and fired at his body. The man staggered, and fell on his side; letting out a sort of groan as he did so. He got up immediately, and again presented the revolver at me, but did not speak. I then let go the second barrel at his legs. Just before I fired the second barrel at him, a second man came from the direction of the outhouse, and crossed behind the one at whom I fired. When I fired the second shot the second man ran away, and the

one with the revolver followed him. They were both good runners. I am positive that I wounded the man with the revolver, because when I fired the first shot he staggered to the ground, and said "Oh! Oh!" I fired at his legs the second time, as I did not want to kill him. Part of the second charge went into a hay shed fifty yards off, which was in a direct line with the man. After they ran away I went inside, loaded the piece again, and spoke of following the men to capture one, but my wife would not hear of it. I then went over to Mr Oliver's place, which is opposite my house, and Mr Oliver and his son James came over with me. I went down the road to my father's, James Oliver staying in my house, and told my father, who wrote an account and sent my brother William into town with it.

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE.

Mr Carrick, who is 32 years of age, lives with his wife and family of three children on a farm about four miles up the Mangorei Road. The house, which stands about 300 yards from the road, is reached by means of a track, across which is a substantial gate half-way to the house. The cottage is a small four-roomed one, and just behind it is a small outhouse. Anyone entering the premises would have to either come by this way, or come up the Carrington Road and cross the Houi River at the back of Mr Carrick's house. It might be here pointed out that the two men made off in the direction of this crossing, although this (Thursday) morning Mr Carrick could discover no traces of horses' hoofs at the place.

MR M. CARRICK'S STATEMENT.

Mr M. Carrick, father of Mr George Carrick, who lives half a mile lower down the road, that is nearer to the Junction Road, states that the dogs at his house barked furiously on Wednesday night, and about half past 2 o'clock, as near as he could judge, the dogs ran out into the road as if rushing after some persons. The road between the two houses is not metalled, so that horses' hoof beats would be muffled as it were. This would, however, point out that the men, whoever they were, rode back along the Mangorei Road after the occurrence at Mr George Carrick's place.

CARRICK HAD MONEY IN HIS HOUSE.

In course of a further conversation, Mr George Carrick said that he had money in the house, and in proof of his statement he produced from his bedroom 5 five pound notes, and a one pound note. He also stated that at the Bell Block races on Tuesday he took a good deal of money out of the totalisator, principally, however for other persons, and Mr Carrick thinks that some one must have seen him receiving money from the machine, and thus come to the conclusion that he had a great deal in his house. He also states that he was lucky himself at the recent Taranaki Anniversary Races, and thought that some persons might have concluded that he had a fairly large sum of money which he kept on the premises.

In answer to further questions Mr Carrick stated that had he come along the path near the chimney he would have run almost against the man with the revolver, as he would have to squeeze himself through a small opening between the end of the house at the back and a rail fence, that runs along almost in a direct line from the back of the building. In getting through this aperture he would have had to keep his gun behind him, and thus he would have been at the mercy of the desperado, who was waiting at the back. Instead of going along this path he made a short detour, and came to a view of the back about six feet from the corner. He was standing here looking (the night being clear and the stars bright, with a sharp frost), when he heard the peremptory words—

"STAND, OR I'LL FIRE!"

The words were delivered in a firm and distinct voice, in fact they were heard by Mrs Carrick, who was in the house. Mr Carrick was about eleven paces from the man, who had him covered with the revolver. For a moment, Mr Carrick says, he was thoroughly stupefied, but recovering himself quickly he brought his piece to his shoulder, took quick aim, and fired at the man's body. The man staggered about four yards and fell, but got up and presented the revolver again, when Mr Carrick let go the other barrel at his legs. This was the shot that took effect on the chest, about 50 yards distant, and on going over to this building our representative saw several marks, and in fact picked some of the shot out of the wood.

THE SECOND MAN

was apparently trying to pacify one of the dogs, which was tied up to the outhouse, for Mr Carrick never saw him till just before he fired the second time. This man took to his heels before the second shot, and the one with the revolver followed immediately after the second shot.

DESCRIPTION OF MEN.

On the question of description Mr Carrick is not very clear, as the whole affair happened so quickly. The man with the revolver he describes as being of medium height, stiff built, with a full face. He could not say if the man had whiskers or not. The man had on an overcoat that covered him almost to his boots, the coat being buttoned up round the neck. A slouch hat completed the costume. The second man was taller than the other, being, as far as Mr Carrick could judge, about 5 feet 9 inches. This man had no overcoat, but was dressed in a dark looking suit, and also wore a slouch hat. It could hardly be expected that Mr Carrick could give a fuller description, as everything occurred so quickly, and as it was not light.

WAS THE MAN SHOT?

On this point Mr Carrick expresses the opinion that his first shot took effect, and he bases his opinion on the fact that he took full aim at the man's body, and that the man immediately after the discharge staggered and fell on his side, emitting sounds like "Oh! oh!" at the time. No traces of blood were found, but this could hardly be expected, as the blood, if the man was wounded, would hardly have time to soak through his clothing from the first shot to the time of running away.

MAN'S VOICE.

"It was a determined voice, and very distinct," Mr Carrick remarked, "and if I heard it again I think I would recognise it. It was like the voice of a man who had some education, and who could give a military order, as the 'Stand or I'll fire' command gave me that impression."

POLICE SEEKING A CLUE.

When word was brought in at 5 o'clock, Inspector Pardy immediately took steps to trace the perpetrators of the outrage. Constable Scully rode out to Mr Carrick's place early, and made all necessary enquiries. Constable Lister also rode out, and Mr G. Carrick came to town in company with

proceeded to the police station to give such information as was deemed necessary.

THEY KNEW THE PREMISES.

It is Mr Carrick's opinion that the persons knew the premises, as they tried to force the back door by gentle pressure. This door has a very shaky lock. He next heard them at the front door, the handle of which was turned round. Both doors were, however, locked. From the time of hearing the back door being tampered with till he decided to get out of bed, Mr Carrick thinks that about a couple of minutes had elapsed. He considers that it was providential that he full-cocked both triggers in going out the front

door, and also that he made the detour instead of going along the pathway to the back of the house. Had he gone along the path he must have been placed at the mercy of the person, who carried the revolver.

WAS HE FRIGHTENED?

Replying to our representative on this point, Mr Carrick said he was considerably startled when he heard the man speak, and on looking saw that he was covered by a revolver. His prompt action in having first shot was due, he considered, to practice in rifle shooting. He considers that had he not taken first shot the man would have sent a bullet into him.



In 1899 Charles Oliver travelled to Tauranga, and liked the look of the land he saw there.

Direct travel between New Plymouth and Tauranga at that time would have been impractical.

Charles would have taken a passage by sea from New Plymouth, to Onehunga, Auckland's West Coast port.

From there he would have crossed a few kilometres to the Port of Auckland and embarked on a vessel which would take him down the East Coast to Tauranga.

The move to Bethlehem (near Tauranga)

In her book “The Allen Family” Cynthia Glover has recorded the story of the Oliver extended family’s move to Bethlehem.

(Her notes were based on a visit to Harold and Len Oliver in 1975)

“Gordon CUMMINGS owned the Bethlehem, Tauranga, property at the time Charlie first saw it (1899) and was offered the opportunity to buy. He was staying with friends at 433 Otumoetai Road, on holiday; Mr. Ralph HOWELL, owner of the scow “Pearl.” Charlie Oliver and his family had previously been farming in Mangorei, New Plymouth, but he believed a change to a better climate would be advantageous and the Bethlehem property of 820 acres (about 330 hectares) would be large enough to portion out among the various members of his family. The property was bought in 1899 and in 1900 two of his sons, James and Harry, came to Tauranga to start on clearing the land. Although pieces of the property had been loaned to the Maori for growing crops, an enormous amount of work confronted the new owners.”

The Allen Family Cynthia Glover

(Note: “Harry” referred to here as one of the sons who, together with James, first went to break in the land in 1900 – is actually John Henry Oliver.

He often appears to be referred to as “Harry”.

Not to be confused with the youngest son Harold Albert Oliver who was only about 7 years old in 1900. Harold accompanied his parents Charlie and Martha when they first moved to Bethlehem in 1909.)

“Charlie Oliver himself, with his wife and his son, Harold, settled down in their new home in 1909. This was a house already on the property, on Moffats Road, about half a mile from the Waihi Road; for some time it continued to be occupied by the Cummings family who were experiencing considerable difficulty in getting their new home completed. Finally they were able to move out and the Oliver family moved in, Harold being about 16 years of age.

The boundaries of the property extended from the Tauranga end of the Waihi Road (the bottom of Parkers Hill) up Cambridge Road to the vicinity of the present city dump, across to Moffats Road, down to Waihi Road, branching off almost to the river on one side, as far as, but not including the Maori pa. The Bethlehem School today stands on part of the property.”

“The Oliver family’s journey to Tauranga was undertaken on the ship “Aupouri” which under Captain Haultain was making its first trip to Tauranga. Amongst the family belongings carried on the boat were their horses; draught horses were used for the heavy farm work and even drew the family buggy.”

The Allen Family Cynthia Glover

This could not have been exactly “The Oliver Family’s journey to Tauranga” because the first trip of the *Aupouri* to Tauranga was actually in December 1905.

In 1905, Jim and Harry had been in Tauranga already for a number of years, breaking in the Bethlehem land prior to the arrival of Charles, Martha and Harold, who made their journey in 1909 on the *Waitohi*. (see next page.)

There is some evidence that Jim’s wife Florence and one of their children may have arrived in Tauranga on the *Aupouri* in December 1905. (see next page.)

Charles, Martha and Harold Albert arrive in 1901 on the *Waiotahi*.

July 27.—Waiotahi, s.s., 278 tons. Hopkins, from Auckland. Passengers: Misses Kent (2); Messrs Darragh, Bullman, Oliver (3), Turnbull, Pill-	Messrs C. and H. A. Oliver arrived here from the Taranaki district yes- terday and intend settling at Wai- roa.
BOP Times 28th July 1909. Charles, Martha and young Harold Albert arrive from Taranaki	

The *Aupouri* was brought out from Glasgow in 1905.

In December 1905 Captain T Haultain (who had brought steamers to Tauranga regularly in the past) was transferred to the new *Aupouri*.

The first recorded trip of the *Aupouri* to Tauranga was her departure from Auckland on 30th December 1905 with Haultain in command.

Her arrival is recorded in the 3rd January 1906 Bay of Plenty Times:

Arrivals—December— 30. Aupouri, s.s., 220 tons, Haultain, from Auckland. Passengers: — Mesdames Oliver and child, and Shaw; Misses Clarke, Smith,
--

The passengers recorded here include: “Mesdames Oliver and child.”

This does suggest that at least two of the Oliver women, possibly including Florence, and one of the children, “made their journey to Tauranga” in 1905.

This may well have been the voyage on which family belongings, draught horses etc were brought to Tauranga.

(There were other (unrelated) Olivers living in Tauranga at this time, commuting regularly between Auckland and New Plymouth.

However in this case it is likely that the Olivers listed above, as passengers on the *Aupouri*, are members of our Oliver family, because of the family recollection of it being the *Aupouri*’s first trip to Tauranga.)

Cynthia Glover’s recorded notes continue:

“On the property, near to the present school site, the Maori had made a kind of racetrack, overlooked by rising ground which made a natural grandstand for the spectators. When the Olivers took possession the races were discontinued but when maize was grown in this area the ring of the old racetrack showed up again in a circle of poorer quality maize, conspicuous in the fresh green of the rest of the field. The condition of the roads was deplorable, especially the Waihi Road which at times had potholes big enough to overturn a horse and buggy.” <i>The Allen Family</i> Cynthia Glover
--

Harold himself, many years later, provided his own description of the Oliver family’s move to Bethlehem. He confirms that two of his elder brothers came first, in 1900, and he came later with his parents Charlie and Martha, in 1909.

Settler Recalls Bethlehem Wilderness

The son of the man who used to own Bethlehem, Mr Harold Oliver, remembers well the days when the now prosperous settlement was just acres of scrubland.

"My father came up from New Plymouth in 1899 to spend a few weeks with a friend at Otumotai," said Mr Oliver. "While here he was asked if he would be interested in buying some land. And as it was a large block, big enough to support the whole family, he bought it."

The land in question was 820 acres at Bethlehem, owned by a Mr Gordon Cummings — "The nephew of the celebrated lion hunter" — who had let pieces to the local Maoris for crop growing. But the remainder was overgrown with ti-tree and fern.

"It was in a terrible state when two of my brothers came up from Taranaki in 1900 to break it in."

SCHOOL

The boundaries extended from the Tauranga end of the Waihi road, up to Cambridge road, Moffats road, down Bethlehem road to the sea on one side and to the Maori Pa on the other.

The Bethlehem School today stands on some of the original property.

Mr Oliver himself arrived at the Bethlehem block with his parents in 1909. Each member of the family was given their own piece to develop, an elder brother milking 30 cows on the land where Mr Athelston Mayfield now lives.

The original Mayfield homestead was built by Mr Oliver's brother, Colonel Mayfield adding a wing

when he bought the land in 1910, Mr Oliver said.

"My brother had also grown fruit trees on the property, as well as running a dairy herd," he added.

The brother, after selling the house to Colonel Mayfield, built another house on Bethlehem road on what was known as the old Maori racecourse — where the school now stands.

ALLOTTED

Harold Oliver himself lived in one of the two cottages already on the block up where Farrelly's place is now.

"That piece of ground was allotted to me," he recalls, "and I ran a dairy

herd. It was a hard life, but a happy one. There were no shops at Bethlehem then, so once a week we hitched up the horse and buggy for the trek into Tauranga.

"We did our entire week's shopping every Saturday, buying all the meat required for a large family for a week. How we kept it, I really don't know, we didn't have fridges or deep freezers then."

Farming in those days was all done without mechanical help. Horses and Shank's pony were the order of the day and Mr Oliver remembers long hours trudging up and down behind the horse and plow.

SUB-DIVIDED

Over the years the Oliver



property was gradually sub-divided — the first shop opened in Bethlehem in the late 1930s — and now Mr Oliver's son is the only branch of the family remaining in Bethlehem.

But the ties remain — for he is orcharding on part of the original block.

Mr Oliver's wife, Myrtle, was also one of the original

settlers in Bethlehem. Then Myrtle Rowe, she came to the area with her family in 1911. They developed 100 acres up Moffats Road, now the property of another family of Rowes, who are however, no relations.

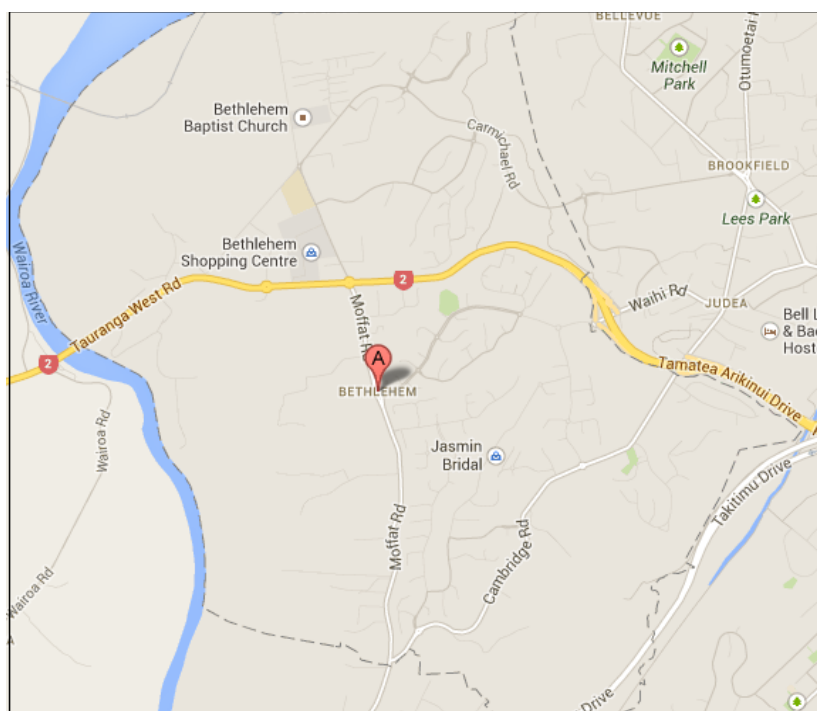
The Olivers married in Bethlehem 53 years ago and now live in retirement in Otumotai.

This article is from the Bay of Plenty Times
9th October 1973

Describes how Charles Oliver bought the 820 acre Bethlehem block and settled his family on it at the beginning of the 20th century.

The article was based on the recollections of the youngest son
Harold Oliver

The persons standing in the doorway of the cottage were probably
Charles and Martha Oliver, and youngest son Harold.



The district of Bethlehem as it is today.

State Highway 2 approximates to what used to be called Waihi Road.

Bethlehem School site and site of the old race track is approximately between the Bethlehem Church and the Bethlehem shopping centre.

Maps from Google Earth



MR. & MRS. CHARLES OLIVER, formerly of Mangorei, but now residing at Bethlehem, near Tauranga, Bay of Plenty.

Mr. Charles Oliver, who is now resident at Bethlehem, Bay of Plenty, was born at New Plymouth in 1843, his parents having come out by the *Amelia Thompson*, arriving here on September 3, 1841. His father took up land on the Carrington Road, about 2½ miles from New Plymouth, where the family lived until the outbreak of war with the Maoris compelled them to take refuge in town. Mr. Oliver, though then only 17 years of age, applied for permission to join the Volunteer Force, and was accepted. Being a good rifle shot, he was sent to the Omata Blockhouse, where he spent about a year. He then joined the Mounted Corps under Captain Mace, and was engaged as a dispatch rider through enemy country. Later he was stationed at the Tataraimaka Redoubt, where he was made a corporal. He took part in numerous

engagements, and acted as orderly to several officers. He served right through the war and was made a colour-sergeant. At the close of the war he received a grant of land at Tikorangi, and later he was farming in the Mangorei district, leaving there about 1909 to settle at Bethlehem, near Tauranga where he had bought a property of 820 acres, part of which he still holds.

Mrs. Oliver was a daughter of Mr William Allen, another Taranaki pioneer. She, too, was born in New Plymouth, and married Mr. Oliver on December 31, 1868. Both Mr. and Mrs. Oliver are very highly esteemed by everyone who knows them, and there are many among our readers who will be pleased to learn that they are both in good health and continue to take a keen interest in Taranaki and their old friends here.

Short biography of Charles Oliver, above, (date of publication unknown, possibly at the time of their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1919 or Diamond Wedding 1929)



50th Wedding Anniversary

Charles and Martha Oliver with the Oliver and Rowe families and Mr. and Mrs. Baker. (Cynthia Glover's book "The Allen Family")

GOLDEN WEDDING

At Bethlehem, on the last day of the old year, a large number of relatives and friends met at the residence of Mr J. W. Oliver to celebrate the golden wedding of Mr and Mrs Charles Oliver. Fifty years ago they were married in New Plymouth in the year 1868 by the Rev. C. Waters. Their parents came out together to New Zealand in the ship "Amelia Thompson" in the year 1844. The two families settled in the Taranaki district and there Mr and Mrs Oliver were born and lived until about nine years ago, when they moved to the Bay of Plenty, their present home. They have a family of four sons and three daughters living, twenty-five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Mr Oliver is the youngest son of the late Mr James Oliver and was born in the year 1843. Mrs Oliver is the only daughter of the late Mr W. Allen; all of Taranaki. Their youngest son, Harold, is now in France, serving his King and country, and some of their

grandsons have done their share in winning the war. Mr Oliver is one of the few remaining veterans of the Maori War, and he is the holder of the Maori War medal and also possesses the Veteran's Medal. Corporal Charles Oliver enlisted at the early age of 17 and served in the war for nearly 7 years, passing through many exciting experiences during that time. At the close of the war he took up bush land in the Mangorai district, near New Plymouth, and here they carved out a home. Mr and Mrs Oliver belong to the sturdy pioneer settlers of the early days of New Zealand, who helped to build this Dominion of the Southern Seas. The happy gathering was concluded by many congratulations and good wishes by those present, and telegrams from others, the singing of a Christmas hymn and the National Anthem.

Bay of Plenty Times 6th January 1919

(The statement that parents came to NZ in 1844 was corrected to 1841 in the next edition.)



Charles and Martha Oliver

Charles Oliver 1843 – 1930

Married 1868

Martha Allen 1849 – 1929

Children:

James William (Jim) Oliver	1870-1942
John Henry (Harry) Oliver	1872-1927
Rachel Annie (Annie) Oliver	1874-1954
Jessie May (May) Oliver	1875-1938
Charles Allen (Allen) Oliver	1878-1955
Lillian Emily Oliver	1880-1974
Martha Daisy Oliver	1884-1884
Harold Albert Oliver	1893-1981

In 1927 John Henry Oliver (Harry) died.

It was stated in John Henry Oliver's obituary that he had converted his share of the family block at Bethlehem into

"...one of the show farms of the Bay of Plenty. He went in for the fattening of cattle and the splendid quality of the beef raised on his farm was well known to cattle men of this district. The farm of 125 acres is now carrying 100 head of cattle, many of them fat bullocks – which is a wonderful testimony to the industry of the late owner who won the property from a fern stage to its present high-producing quality. Mr. Oliver was a very enthusiastic fisherman and kept two boats for fishing, off Bethlehem, and at times had large catches."

Death of Martha Oliver 1929

Charlie and Martha celebrated their Diamond (60th) Wedding Anniversary early in 1929, but a month later Martha died at her home at Bethlehem. (4th Feb 1929.)

Her Obituary in the Bay of Plenty Times reads:

"We regret to record the death at her home at Bethlehem of Mrs. C. OLIVER, at the advanced age of 79. Until a month or two ago the deceased lady was hale and hearty but latterly failing health compelled her to keep to her home and she finally passed away about 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon.

Her family settled at New Plymouth and there she was born. After marrying, she settled down with her husband on a farm at Mangorei near New Plymouth and remained there until about twenty years ago when Mr. and Mrs OLIVER came to Tauranga and settled at Bethlehem, where her two sons, James and Harry (John Henry) had preceded them.

Since residing at Bethlehem Mrs. OLIVER took a keen interest in matters affecting her own little circle there and was a staunch supporter of the Methodist Church.

Only a month ago the aged couple celebrated their Diamond wedding.

The deceased lady is survived by her husband, Mr. C. OLIVER who is now 86 years of age, three sons and three daughters – Mr. J. W. OLIVER of Vogeltown, New Plymouth; and Messrs. C. A. and H. A. OLIVER, of Bethlehem, Mrs. R. W.

BOCOCK of Matapu; Mrs. G. HERBERT of Urenui; and Mrs. W. HERBERT, of Wairoa (Tauranga.) Her second son predeceased her two years ago.

Mr. W. ALLEN of Vogeltown, New Plymouth, is a brother.

Mrs. OLIVER was one of the fast-disappearing type of early pioneers and it can certainly be said that she contributed her full quota of work and hardship to the settlement of this district in particular. When Mr. and Mrs. OLIVER settled there, only two houses stood on some 800 acres. Today there are twenty comfortable and prosperous homesteads on the area."



Martha Allen

Jim Oliver's son Len wrote of his grandmother: "Martha Oliver was a very popular lady with both her descendants and people of the district. She joined in all local activities especially visiting the sick and helping people in need.

She was particularly fond of picnics, with the Oliver families and other settlers held on the beach at Bethlehem on Christmas day.

She also enjoyed boat trips up the Wairoa River, picking wild peaches and blackberries which were made into jams and preserves.

Martha Oliver was a staunch Methodist and attended services held at the school house when the minister could attend.

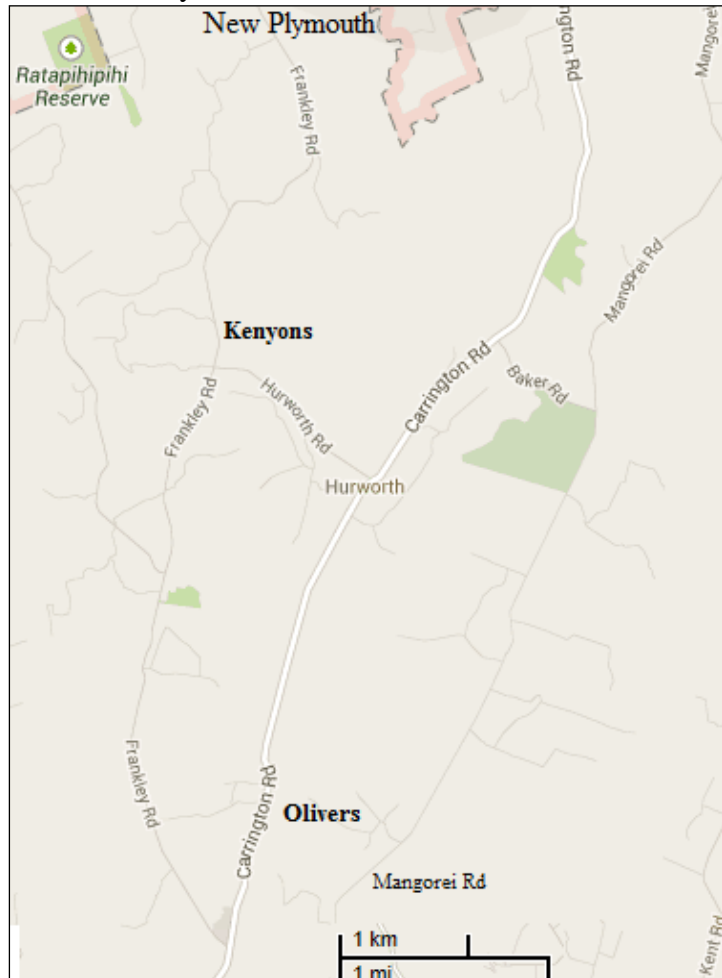
She possessed a very sweet singing voice.

Charles Oliver died in 1930.

Our person of interest in the family of Charles Oliver is James (Jim) Oliver who married Florence Kenyon in 1893.

James William Oliver (Jim)

Florence Kenyon



Florence was the sixth child of John and Ellen Kenyon, early New Plymouth pioneers.

Her brothers and sisters were:

Joe Willah Kenyon
(who died as a child)
James George Kenyon
John Kenyon
Ellen Kenyon
Ernest Henry Kenyon
and a younger sister
Jane Kenyon.

Florence was born in 1870 and grew up on the Kenyon farm at Frankley Road, not too many miles away from the Olivers at Mangorei Road.

On 31st January 1893, James William Oliver married Florence Kenyon



The homestead of
James and Florence

Mangorei Road,
New Plymouth.

(Photo from "The
Allen Family" by
Cynthia Glover.)

Florence and Jim Oliver had four children during their first few years at Mangorei:

Wilfred Edgar Oliver (4 Jan 1894 – died a few months later.)

Willie Verner Oliver (16 Jan 1895), known to our family as “Bill”.

Allen Ward Oliver (22 Oct 1896), known to our family as “Len.”

Clarence James Oliver (5 Nov 1897), known to our family as “Clan”.



James Oliver and Florence (nee Kenyon) with their children born in New Plymouth
Left to right: Willie (Bill), Clarence (Clan) and Allen (Len).

The Move from New Plymouth to Bethlehem

In 1899 Jim’s father Charlie had bought 830 acres of land at Bethlehem, near Tauranga. In 1900 Jim and his brother Harry (John Henry) had moved from Mangorei to Bethlehem to commence breaking in the land, prior to being joined by Charlie, Martha and the youngest, Harold.



Soon after Jim had gone to Tauranga with his brother Harry, Florence had another child.

Edith Ellen Matha Oliver (Edie) born in 1901 in New Plymouth.

It is not recorded when Florence and the four children came to join Jim and the family settled on their block at Bethlehem.

Bay of Plenty Times 22 October 1902 records a meeting to discuss the building of a Dairy Factory for Tauranga. One of the Oliveres from Mangorei was there, (perhaps Jim or Harry), and voiced his opinion based on the Taranaki experience.

A meeting of settlers from the neighbourhood of Tauranga was held at the Native Court House at 2 p.m. on Saturday. Present:— Messrs Davidson, (in the Chair), Badger, Lochhead, Pratt, Ley, Dickey, Schreiber, McNaughton, Oliver, Howell, Loder, A. Matheson, H. P. Clark, Armstrong, Anderson, Seccombe, Corbett, Tollemache, the Hon W. Kelly and others.

The minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed.

The canvassers lists of cows promised were read and showed the following results:—

Otumoetai	..	163
Cambridge Road..		74
Greerton	..	122
Te Puna	..	205

Total .. 564

The Chairman said the number was rather small but everyone had just put down the number with which he could start now, but when once the factory started they would increase the number and perhaps supply double.

Mr Oliver said it was not worth while to start a creamery without 300 cows. He read the annual report and balance sheet of the Mangarei factory and said he had made £249 in a year with 31 cows.

A discussion took place as to persons desirous of joining the Company after its formation, and as to such persons being required to sign the bank guarantee.

Mr Pratt moved that Provisional Directors be appointed to take the preliminary steps towards forming a Company and getting the factory in operation.

Seconded by the Hon. W. Kelly, who said he was convinced that the district was one eminently suited to the dairy business, provided they set about it heartily and in a proper manner. He himself was not particularly anxious to milk but had put his name down for 30 and hoped next year to increase it to 50. He went in for it believing that the establishment of the Factory would enhance the value of property throughout the district and attract further population.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The Chairman then asked for provisional directors the following being then proposed:— Messrs Lochhead, Dickey, C. McNaughton, Pratt, Davidson, Ley and A. Matheson.

Mr Pratt said the reason he had moved for a Provisional Directorate was that the question of establishment of the main factory and creameries could be discussed fully. Of course as to the main factory he considered they should be greatly guided by the advice of the Government expert.

The Chairman said there would be difficulty in establishment of sufficient creameries at first for the convenience of all and he thought it would be better if the more distant suppliers made up their minds to do some extra carting this year and as there was sure to be a large increase in the number of cows next year they would be better able to fix the site for the creameries then.

This concluded the business.

From J. W. Oliver, asking permission to take cuttings from willows at Wairoa.—Permission granted.

County Council inward correspondence

Bay of Plenty Times
7th July 1905

The following new members were duly proposed, seconded and elected :—Rev. W. Barnett, Messrs Barnett, junr., J. W. Oliver, S. Goss, A. F. Tunks, W. Heard, John Wallace, J. H. McCaw, J. E. Dalton, F. Wood, F. H. Hammond and U. E. Nicholas.

Tauranga Agricultural and Pastoral Association

Bay of Plenty Times
13th September 1905

FOR SALE.—By tender, until September 30, 4-roomed house, iron roof, double brick chimney.—Apply J. W. Oliver, Tauranga.

J.W. Oliver advertises his house

Bay of Plenty Times
31st August 1906

As evidence of increased settlement in the neighbourhood of Tauranga we may mention that Mr J. W. Oliver has just completed the erection of a substantial seven roomed house on his property, situated on the Tauranga—Waihi main road, about four miles from town.

On the same day, the newspaper recorded that he had just completed the building of a substantial 7-roomed house.

Bay of Plenty Times
31st August 1906



This was the new home of James and Florence Oliver at Bethlehem (from "The Allen family" by Cynthia Glover.)

Cynthia Glover recorded the following:

“James William Oliver had been developing his portion of the property (at Bethlehem, Tauranga) slowly clearing the land and grazing about thirty cows. He also built a fine house for his family; all the kauri timber came from Mercury Bay (Whitianga) brought down by the scow, “Pearl”, to the Wairoa Bridge from where it was transported by horse and dray. This splendid timber cost about ten to fifteen shillings per hundred feet (about 3c to 5c per metre) – cartage included! The house stood on blocks which have no doubt been replaced by concrete ones now; apart from this the house is as sound today as it was then. Iron for the roof and spouting was probably obtained from Mr. Chappell who had a hardware and joinery business in Cameron Road, near 8th Avenue. James cropped wheat and maize and oats as well as running a small dairy herd. The family made their own butter and to get the cream they used settling pans, the cream would settle on top of the milk then be skimmed off with a skimmer; the butter would be churned and the pound portions formed on a special utensil and wrapped in special butter paper. This butter would be sold at sixpence (5c) a pound. Chappells were amongst their customers.”

The Allen Family Cynthia Glover

Class 2. Two lbs butter, with salt.—Mrs J. W. Oliver, 2.
Class 3. Two lbs butter with salt, made by farmer's daughter.

Horticultural show

Bay of Plenty Times
15th December 1905

“With the proceeds from the butter the other food supplies were bought. In time, when the dairy factory (at first a small wooden building standing on the corner of Devonport Road and 11th Avenue, started up, the cream was taken there.”

FARM CROPS.
Prize, 2/6.
Sheaf of Wheat.—Mrs J. W. Oliver, 1.

Tauranga A. and P. Association
Horticultural show

Bay of Plenty Times
16th February 1906

Mrs J. W. Oliver left on a holiday visit to Taranaki yesterday.

Bay of Plenty Times
24th April 1907

Marnied Ladies' Race.—Mrs J. W. Oliver 1.

Good Templars Picnic Day
13th November 1907

In 1908 William Harray, of Te Puke, subdivided a block of land he had bought at Mt. Maunganui, and it is recorded that he sold 6 acres of this land to “Florence Oliver, a Tauranga Farmer's wife” for £31-17-0.
(Family History; “Te Puke, Jane and William Harray 1890-1918”)

Cynthia Glover's notes continue:

"In 1910 Mr. J. W. Oliver sold a portion of his land, including the homestead, to Colonel Mayfield who added to the house. Mayfield employed a man called Mr. BETTELHEIM who was closely associated with him in developing an orchard. James's son, Allen (Len) remembers well how, as a young boy, he helped Mr. Bettelheim to plant the little blue gums which have now grown into such magnificent trees, shielding the property (Mayfields) from the road." *The Allen Family* Cynthia Glover



These gum trees and the brick fence on the main road to Tauranga, "just before the roundabout" at Bethlehem, mark the place where Jim and Florrie's house was. The gum trees were planted later, by Mr. Bettelheim, for Major Mayfield. (Photographs from Cynthia Glover's "The Allen Family".)

The family memory of the Oliver homestead being sold to Mayfield in 1910 is slightly at odds with local newspaper reports of property sales. It was reported in Aug 1906 that Jim had commenced advertising his four-roomed house for sale by tender and that he had just complete the building of a substantial seven-room house on the Waihi Road.

Messrs Kerr and Matthews report the sale of 140 acres of land and homestead at Wairoa, on behalf of Mr J. W. Oliver, to Mr S. Serjeant. We are pleased to learn that Mr Serjeant has decided to continue his residence in the Tauranga district.

It was reported in 1907 that James Oliver had sold the homestead and 140 acres to Mr. S. Sergeant.

Bay of Plenty Times
18th December 1907

Messrs Norris & Bell, land and estate agents, report the sale of Mr J. W. Oliver's homestead property, Te Wairoa, comprising 140 acres, to Major E. Mayfield, a recent arrival from England. Major Mayfield intends planting 15 acres in fruit trees this season and a large consignment of young trees arrived on Saturday. The planting operations are being carried out under the supervision of Mr J. J. Bettelheim.

Then in July 1909 it was reported that he had sold the property to Major E. Mayfield.

Bay of Plenty Times
July 26th 1909

Also Mayfield is recorded in newspaper articles at the time, variously as 'Major Mayfield' and "Colonel Mayfield."

After selling this block, in 1909 (or 1910), to Major (or Colonel) Mayfield, James and Florence Oliver built another house, on Bethlehem Road, on what was known as the old Maori race course part of which is now the site of the Bethlehem School.

By now, Jim was 30 years old, he and Florence had a family of four children.

Mayfield House

The homestead built by Jim Oliver and sold to Major (or Colonel) Mayfield was added to over the years and became known as Mayfield House.

After it was sold by Mayfield, it was re-sited at Tauranga Boys' College on the corner of Cameron Road and 18th Avenue where it became a well-known landmark.



(Mayfield House as sited at Tauranga Boys' College. Photo from Cynthia Glover)

FOR SALE—300 Dougherty and Northern Spy apple trees, from Morrison's nursery last year. Nice branched, healthy trees. 1/- each or £4 10s per hundred. J W Oliver, Tauranga.

Bay of Plenty Times

7th August 1916

Some time after 1920, Bay of Plenty times ceased reporting on J W Oliver.

James and Florence had moved back to Taranaki.

(Cynthia Glover records that "after the war" James's son Bill (Willie Verner) bought the farm with his soldiers' grant on his return home from WW2.

(This needs to be verified. It was more likely his return home from World War 1.)

James and Florence now lived at Vogeltown, just out of New Plymouth.
J. W. Oliver had retired from farming.
On the electoral roll for that time he was recorded as being a carpenter.

Florence's old father John Kenyon was still alive, living at Vogeltown.
It is presumed he was being looked after by Florence's spinster sister Ellen.
Maybe Florence was needed to help, or wanted to be near the old man in his last years.

Old John Kenyon died at Vogeltown in 1924, at the age of 91.



Jim and Florrie
1930



James Oliver

James William Oliver died 14th Dec 1942 aged 72 years.



Florence Oliver (nee Kenyon)

1870 – 1962

Florence Oliver died in 1962 aged 92 years.

Appendix 1

The other children of James and Ruth Oliver

Mary Ann Oliver

Born 17th Dec 1826 Married Patrick McCoy around 1850 . Died on 3rd Sept 1908
She was 14 years old when the family arrived in New Plymouth on *Amelia Thompson*.

In 1863 The McKoy's house at Gill Street burned down. There was a lengthy inquest in which Mary Ann, her father James Oliver and her husband Patrick McKoy gave evidence. It is possible the fire was caused accidentally by a match dropping through a crack in the floor. But this was not certain. There were also suggestions that the fire might have been caused by a rat striking a match. An interesting aspect as that when a neighbour tried to draw water from the bucket, to try to extinguish the fire – the rope was unexplainably too short to allow the bucket to reach the water in the well.

Lengthy description given in 29th June 1867 Taranaki Herald.

The verdict was given as “cause unknown.”

Some rumours must have circulated, particularly regarding the circumstance that the bucket rope seemed to have been too short. Patrick McKoy sent a polite letter to the editor on 3rd August requesting that it be made known that the rope for the bucket was measured afterwards and it was found to be long enough.

Mary Ann (Oliver) McKoy died in 1908.

Here is her obituary:

7th Sept 1908 Taranaki Herald

The late Mrs. McKoy, who was buried in St. Mary's churchyard yesterday, came to New Plymouth with her father, Mr. James Oliver, and family by the *Amelia Thompson*, arriving here on September 3rd, 1841. She was born in Devonshire in 1826, and was therefore 82 years of age. For seven years she was in the service of the late Captain King, and it was while a member of his household that she made the first cheese manufactured in Taranaki and also the first barrel of salt butter exported from the province. Afterwards she was lady's maid to Mrs. Page, wife of Captain Page, of the Imperial Army, and while in that capacity she assisted in dressing three ladies for what was probably the first fancy dress ball ever held in Auckland. Returning to Taranaki, she married, about 1850, Mr. P. McKoy, of the 58th Regiment, who was a comrade in arms of Colonel Stapp. During the first Maori war, Mrs. McKoy went with many other refugees to Nelson. In 1867 she went

with her husband to Tikorangi, where he had been awarded a grant of land as a military settler, and there they resided until Mr. McKoy died on August 30th, 1895. Mrs. McKoy then lived in Waitara for about a year, afterwards coming to New Plymouth, where she has resided ever since with her eldest daughter, Mrs. McGonagle. For the last five years she has been an invalid. It will thus be seen that Mrs. McKoy has borne in full measure the heat and burden of the pioneering days, and she leaves behind her to mourn their loss a family of four sons and seven daughters, besides 57 grandchildren and 21 greatchildren. The sons are Mr. James McKoy, of Tongaporutu, Mr. William McKoy, of New Plymouth, Mr. Charles McKoy, of Waitara, and Mr. Hugh McKoy, of Normanby, while the daughters are Mrs. McGonagle and Mrs. W. Jury, of New Plymouth, Mrs. T. G. Billing, of Rāhōtu, Mrs. C. Crocker, of Auckland, Miss Ada McKoy and Mrs. Feltham,

Matilda Oliver

Born 22nd Dec 1836 Married William Wood.

Died on 20th June 1921

She was 4 years old when the family arrived in New Plymouth on *Amelia Thompson*.

23rd June 1921 Hawera and Normanby Star

The funeral took place yesterday of Mrs W. H. Wood, one of the old settlers of New Plymouth, whose death occurred on Monday after a long illness. The late Mrs Wood, who was 84 years of age, came to New Plymouth with her parents, Mr and Mrs James Oliver, by the *Amelia Thompson*, which left Plymouth on March 25, 1841, and arrived in New Plymouth on September 3, 1841. A few years later the family moved to town to the Carrington road, just beyond the present junction with the Tarahua road. When the Maori war broke out the family were compelled

to return to town and later on their homestead was burned by the Maoris. Miss Oliver was one of the women who declined to go to Nelson when most of the women were sent there for safety. In 1869 she married Mr William Hanson Wood, and had resided in New Plymouth ever since. She had a family of two sons (one surviving) and two daughters, and she adopted another daughter. She leaves also sixteen grandchildren and one great grandchild, and is survived by two brothers, Messrs Frank and Charles Oliver, both of whom went through the Maori wars.—News.

Francis Oliver

Born 23rd January 1840 Married Elizabeth Langman

Died on 6th February 1926

He was one year old when the family arrived in New Plymouth on *Amelia Thompson*.

He joined the Taranaki Rifle Volunteers and was in action at the Battle of Waireka (March 1860) and also Mahoetahi (Nov 1860.) (Stowers 2012.)

Francis Oliver lost a baby son in September 1870.

OLIVER.—On the 26th September, of erysipelas, FRANCIS JAMES, son of Mr. F. Oliver, aged 7 weeks.

Taranaki Herald 1st October 1870:

A curious freak of nature has just happened at Mangorei. A cow, the property of Mr. Francis Oliver, has just calved. The calf is minus its tail, the backbone only slightly projecting.

From a few clippings of the Taranaki Herald we can infer that Francis was farming at Mangorei after the war.

Taranaki Herald 13th August 1877

MANGOREI.

Elected: Mesdames N. Stephenson and J. Brown; Messrs Francis Oliver, Philip Wells, Newton Stephenson, John Brown, and Captain Balsom. Mr Brown was elected chairman.

School Committee
Mangorei School

Taranaki Herald 26th April 1906

The NZOlivers site shows a copy of the title deeds of the farm which James purchased in 1858. There is reference to “Oliver” and “Oliver F” handwritten here, and the website has inferred that “James farmed the property from 1859 to 1875, and son Francis from 1875 to 1917.” It seems likely James retired (at age 70) in 1875 and sold or passed the farm on to Francis at that time.

The NZOlivers site refers to a number of other farms on Mangorei Rd which were owned or leased by members of the Oliver family in the last half of the 19th century. (Members include James, son Francis, son Charles – and also a Walter Oliver and George Oliver – the relationship of these last two with our Oliver family, if any, has not been explained.)

William Oliver

Born 23rd October 1831 Married Emily Jury Died on 4th February 1877
He was 9 years old when the family arrived in New Plymouth on *Amelia Thompson*.

William Oliver appears not to have seen action during the Taranaki wars, or did not apply for the New Zealand Medal (Not listed in Stowers 2012.)

There appear to have been two William Olivers in New Plymouth at this time.

There was a William Oliver officially reported as Wounded at the Battle of Waireka. This is probably a man called William Willoughby Oliver, Taranaki Rifle Volunteers, listed by Stowers (2012) as having received a NZ Medal. His action is cited as Waireka and his date of death is recorded as 1911. BDM records show William Willoughby Oliver died 1911 - aged 66 - and a computation shows that his age at death is correct, he must have been very young to have been in battle!

BDM information shows another William Oliver - who died 1877 aged 45 and this matches the information in NZOliver website. This is the William belonging to our Oliver family. The list of men qualified and liable to serve as jurors, for New Plymouth, in 1857/58 has William Oliver, cordwainer living at Carrington Rd (same address as James Oliver.) A consideration of ages shows this is almost certainly the same man, the son of James Oliver.

A curious fact emerges here: this is also the man who appeared as a witness at the marriage of William Wilson and Jane Hawke in 1857.

Note that Jane Hawke's father was also a cordwainer by trade. Perhaps William Oliver knew the Hawke family, and hence also the Wilsons, through his connection with the shoe-making trade.

In September 1875 Patrick McKoy (husband of Mary Ann Oliver) had a disagreement with a female school teacher at the Tikorangi School, relating to his two children who were attending that school. Being a member of the School Committee, he took his complaint to a committee meeting, and also made the statement that a male teacher would be preferred to a female one. Following that, there were some letters to the newspaper, and Mr. McKoy, feeling that he had not been given a fair hearing by the Committee, convened a meeting of parents to be held at the School. The Committee, however, refused the use of the school room. McKoy then resigned from the Committee. Later the Committee agreed that it had been wrong to disallow use of the schoolroom. One of the school committee members opposed to Patrick McKoy was his brother-in-law William Oliver. (See Taranaki Herald during September 1875.)

John Oliver

Born 3rd March 1830 Married Mary Julian

Died on 8th Aug 1899

He was 11 years old when the family arrived in New Plymouth on *Amelia Thompson*.

It is known that there was another early settler in New Plymouth called John Oliver, who died in April 1886 aged 81 years. However the following information is consistent with the known facts relating to John Oliver of our Oliver family.

John Oliver who applied for a New Zealand medal based on service in the Taranaki Militia and being under fire at the battle of Waireka.

His application was rejected (Stowers 2012.) The reason was not given by Stowers, possibly he was not actually under fire on the day of that skirmish.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 15.—Before H. Eyre Kenny, Esq., R.M.

FURIOUS DRIVING.—John Oliver was charged by James Quigley, with driving furiously on the 10th August, a cart drawn by four horses, to the great danger of the occupants of a carriage driven by James Quigley, and also with using threatening and abusive language. The defendant partly admitted the offence, and partly denied it, stating that he had taken a glass or two of grog. The evidence having been taken, the Court found the defendant guilty, and fined him in the sum of £5, and 9s. costs, or in default of payment one month's imprisonment with hard labour.

It is possible that this is our John Oliver.

This man was a carter, living at Omata in the 1860's and 70's.

In 1871 he was charged with "furious driving" and found guilty.

Taranaki Herald 16th August 1871

MR JOHN OLIVER.

Another of the rapidly diminishing band of pioneer settlers, John Oliver also passed away on Tuesday at Omata. Mr Oliver arrived at New Plymouth with his parents in the *Amelia Thompson* on September 3rd, 1841, and shared in the hardships of pioneer life. During the war he served with the Taranaki Militia, and since the cessation of hostilities has continued to reside at Omata, in which district he had numerous friends.

In 1893 John Oliver had a house in Omata.

In 1897 he was short-listed for the position of carter for the local Council.

His death is reported here

Taranaki Herald 9th August 1899

Appendix 2 The Children of Jim and Florence Oliver

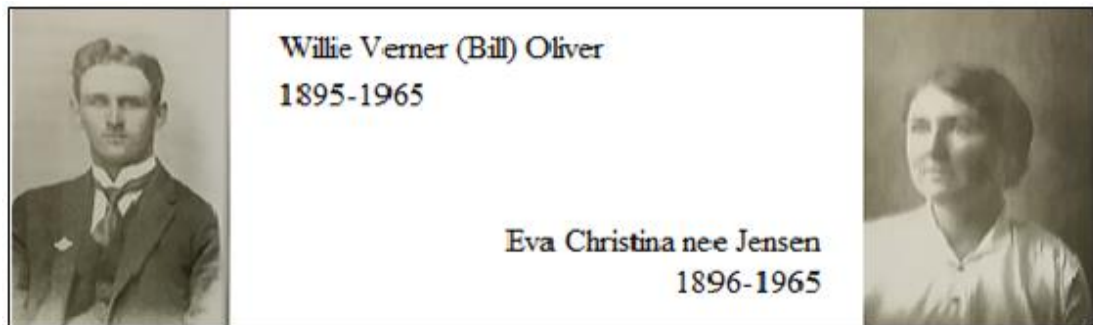
Len, Clan and Bill were a generation older than my father.

Back in my grandfather's day, and when my father was young, the Kenyons knew this branch of the Oliver family quite well. Our families all lived within the Tauranga district, and visits were frequent enough.

Times changed, families shifted their locations, and during my early childhood, "Len", "Clan" and "Uncle Bill" were just names to me.

I do not recall ever meeting any of them, or their children.

Willie Verner ("Bill") Oliver was born on 16th January 1895, in New Plymouth.



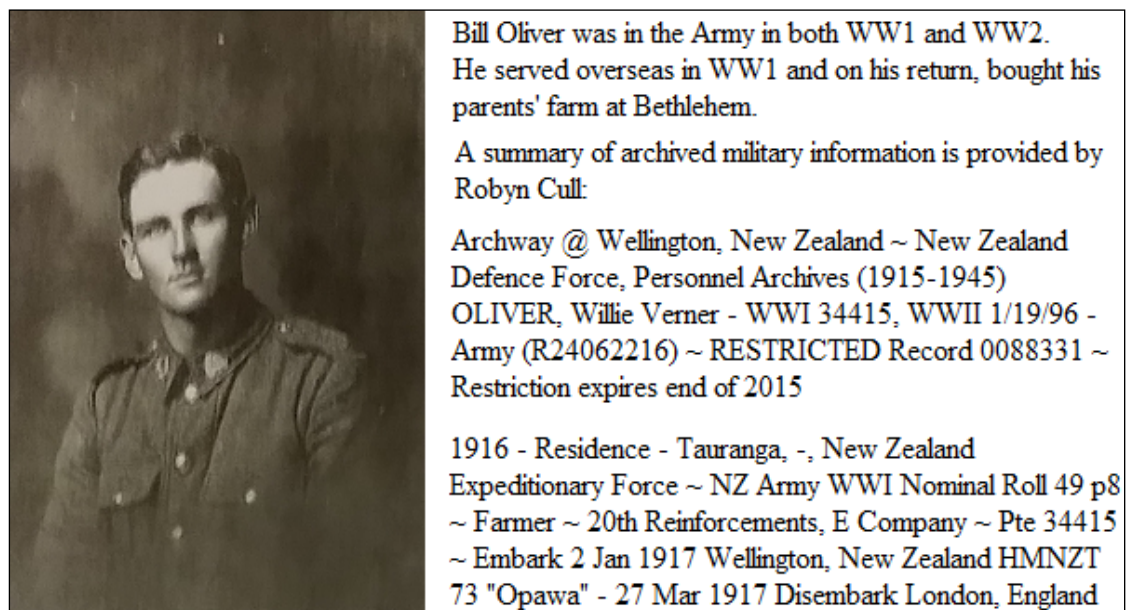
Bill and Eva were married in 1921.

They had three children:

Margeret Olwyn (Peggy) Oliver 1923

James (Peter) Oliver 1925 who died when he was four years of age.

Jack Hamilton Oliver born 1930 in Opunake, who was adopted.



Not much else has so far been recorded on "Uncle Bill".

Allen Ward (“Len”) Oliver was born on 22nd October 1896 in New Plymouth.



Allen Ward Oliver 1896-1984

Catherine Gladys Allison London 1899-1972

Len and Gladys were married in 1919 and they had three children:

Ronald Allen Oliver 1920

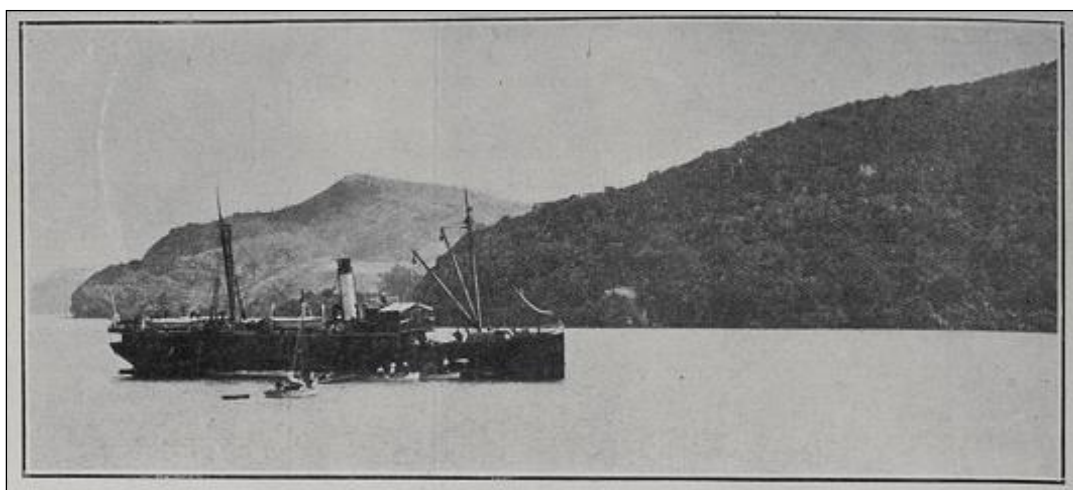
Leonard Ross Oliver 1924

Trevor Russell Oliver 1926

Len Oliver married again, in 1972, to Ethel (Ettie) Lorrigan.

Tauranga Library Archives holds files containing interviews with Len Oliver, and others, so we have some record of Len’s life in the early days.
Some of these interviews may be read in Cynthia Glover’s book.

Len Oliver was the first registered apprentice to F. N. Christian & Co.
Some of his early work included repair and maintenance to bicycles, re-roofing buildings, and maintaining the local mullet boat fleet as well as marine engineering on some of the larger vessels, for example replacing tail shafts and bearings.
He describes how they would sometimes put vessels on the sand spit opposite the Strand, and work on them there across the low tide.
On one occasion he worked waist deep in water replacing a blade on the propeller of the Northern Steamship vessel *Aupouri*.



Aupouri loading 20 tons of honey from Great Barrier Island, for Auckland.
Auckland Weekly News 10th May 1906.

Maintenance and engine installation on newly-built scows was also carried out at Brain’s Slipway, among the last of the marine engineering work done by this firm.
The local Maori on Motiti Island also had a fleet of small boats, which Len sometimes worked on, and he found the Motiti Islanders to be ‘sensible, good, honest people, easy to get along with’ who took good care of their boats.



Len Oliver
2nd row, 3rd from right



Len Oliver served overseas in WW1, spent some time in hospital in Rouen and Bournemouth before repatriation in 1918.



“The following is an account of the exploits of A.W. Oliver, my father, during World War 1.

Allen, or Len as he was known, enlisted around 1915 or thereabouts and joined the first Field Ambulance Corp. His unit was posted to France. After arriving in the Ambulance Corp. he transferred to front line duties as a despatch rider, their trusty steed was a Douglas belt-driven motor bike. Usually when despatches were to be conveyed to various command posts, two riders would be sent by different routes so as to be sure the orders etc. got through. Many of these riders were killed en route. On one occasion Dad and his buddy tossed a coin to see who took which route. Dad lost the toss and had to take the route considered most dangerous. Fate would have it. Dad got through and his buddy was killed.”

(Len Oliver as recorded by Cynthia Glover)

“On another occasion Len fell off his bike and his legs were run over by a gun carriage breaking both ankles. He spent some considerable time in hospital and when eventually discharged he returned to duty. His commanding officer gave him a special pair of boots to help make things easier on his legs. These boots have a special place in our history.

There was an outbreak of what everyone called the ‘Flanders Flu’ which swept through the ranks like wildfire. Special large tents were arranged to accommodate the victims of this epidemic. Those that were likely to recover in the first tent, and the next tent was for the dead and dying. Dad happened to be among them. His C.O. regularly visited the tents and on one occasion he noticed one of the boots move, and instantly recognised them as those he had given to Len. ‘Get this soldier back inside the recovery tent’, he ordered, and we have the boots and the C.O. to thank for Dad’s survival, and of course, our presence in the family tree.

Len spent the rest of the war in England working in army workshops as he was unable to resume normal duties.”

(Trevor Oliver, son, 2004.)

Allen (Len) Oliver and the first passenger service in Tauranga.

The following is an extract from

‘THE FIRST SERVICE CAR DRIVERS OF THE TAURANGA DISTRICT
NOTES TAKEN DURING VISITS TO MR. AND MRS. A. E. BAIKIE
on 24.6.1975 and 9.7.1975 (held by Tauranga Public Library.)

Interviewed on these visits were Mr. J. Leslie Hume, Mr. Victor L. Davies and Mr. Allen (Len) Oliver.

Mr. A. W. (Len) Oliver

Mr. Oliver was responsible for introducing the first passenger service round Tauranga itself. The bus he used had been built by Mr. W. W. Herbert, and consisted of a 1912 Overland car converted to a Smith Form A truck, to make a long wheel base and to get a reduced gearing in order to carry the load the bus was able to accommodate. The Form A truck had a chain drive, sprockets being fitted to the ends of the car axles to sprockets on the wheels which were of solid tyre type. This made it a much lower geared and more powerful car. It had match-lining bodywork.

The service carried passengers from town out as far as Greerton; the fare was one shilling, and the route was divided into different sections. Mr. Oliver continued through 1923 and 1924 with this service, until it ceased to be a paying proposition; he then went into the carrying business and became acquainted with Mr. Baikie. Messrs. McLaren and West bought the bus from him, and later Mr. Gresham purchased it and began the Tauranga Bus Service Company.

In time Mr. Oliver went to work for Mr. Walker; he was principally engaged as a mechanic in the workshop, keeping the cars in order. Occasionally he had to go out ^{on} the roads, particularly on the Kaimais, to peg them out - in bad weather the surfaces were full of holes and morasses, and ti-tree poles were driven in to mark the worst places, so that drivers could be made aware of them and avoid them in time. The amount of mud the drivers had to contend with was unbelievable; many a time a car got buried in it up to its headlamps.

Later on, Mr. Oliver went to work for Messrs. Griffiths and Kidd, who were running service cars in opposition to Mr. Walker; he drove for them for twelve to eighteen months, on both the Matamata and the Waihi runs. Eventually he returned to his trade and joined the firm of Mr. F. N. Christian as motor mechanic, in due course becoming foreman. He has offered the Library a most interesting photograph of the Garage and the staff while the business was still in premises in Devonport Road. Mr. Davies also has given a photograph of the F. N. Christian staff members, belonging to a later date.

These notes were provided by Trevor Oliver (Len Oliver's son) on the occasion of a visit by my father and me in late 2013.

A few weeks after this visit, Trevor passed away at the age of 87.

Clarence James (“Clan”) Oliver was born in New Plymouth on 5th November 1897.



Edith Ellen Martha (“Edie”) Oliver was born in New Plymouth on 3rd Aug 1901.

Edith Ellen Martha Oliver 1901- 1943

Frederick James Bettelheim 1901-1961

Edie and Fred married in 1925.

They had one child:

Edith (Olga) Bettelheim 1929

Appendix 3 Arthur Oliver Kenyon

Ada Oliver married quite late in life, to become the second wife of James George Kenyon (usually referred to by the family as “George.”)
They married on 25th August 1909 in Wanganui.



James George and Ada had one child. Although the family had recently moved to the remote Sandon Block, near Hunterville, the child was born in New Plymouth, on 26th July 1910.

Arthur Oliver Kenyon.

Artie, as he became known, grew up in somewhat more prosperous circumstances than his half-siblings (Mildred, Jack, Harold, Wilf and Janey).

And he was much younger.

In 1910, the year Artie was born, Mildred had already married (Owen Parry), and his eldest brother Jack (my grandfather) had already left home.

The family fairly soon moved from Sandon Block (Hunterville) to a farm at Newstead, in the Waikato. The bare details of the life of the Kenyons during the Waikato days is given in the section on James George Kenyon.

So far, not very much has been recorded of Artie’s growing up years.

By 1919 Artie and his family had shifted from Newstead to Motumaoho.

Artie was 9 years old then, so presumably he attended the Motumaoho school, which had opened with a one-classroom building in 1912.

Arthur Oliver Kenyon married Helen Brennan and they had the following children: Ruth (1945), Peter (1947) followed by Ann (who died at the age of two weeks) then Margaret (1952) and Ngaire (1956).

Helen had a daughter of her own called Ann, who later also became part of the family.

In his later years, my grandfather Jack Kenyon maintained a cordial relationship with his half-brother Artie. He described him as “a proper young scamp” when he was young – but later, after he had married Helen: “a good fellow, in many ways”

It is remembered that Artie was mechanically-minded, and that when he was younger he had a motorbike.

The casual and good-humoured comments in the following interview seem to confirm these views of his childhood and his adulthood.

Shirley Niederer interview with Jack Kenyon.

(Shirley is a daughter of Wilf Kenyon.

Wilf, Jack and Harold Kenyon were half-brothers of Arthur Oliver Kenyon.)

Some years ago, before he died, Shirley interviewed Jack Kenyon and at the end of the interview there was some informal chat between Jack, Shirley, Shirley's sister Gwen, and Jack's wife Edie. They were discussing Artie.

The following is a transcript:

Jack: "Yes, well, you know when he married Helen, he...it was really the makings of him. He was a proper young scamp, Gosh..."

Shirley: "Was he? (laughter.)

Jack: "I could have kicked him – so could all the other fellows – your father could have belted him too (laughter) .. it's a wonder he didn't...Harold actually did get him down one day, don't know how he got on, but..."

Shirley: (laughter) "Have a fight did they?"

Jack: "Oh (laughter).. Oh, shook him up a bit I think..... but anyhow, he's a different man since, he's paid for it since he married Helen – I think she, you know, got him out of the bog... he used to smoke, and, oh, stink like anything of tobacco, and...he was a wild young scamp.. ah but any how,... those days are gone...I rang him up, oh, about a week ago... had a talk with him....he rings me up occasionally..."

Shirley: "Is he still in Te Aroha Street?"

Jack: "Yeah, still there.. Oh he'll never leave there....

Edie: "Well I think he'd be delighted to answer a few questions.."

Gwen: Well I spoke with him when Colin's mother was in the hospital in Waikato, you know, just before she died... 'cause, he was waiting for Helen, she had to go up about.. something...and he was really thrilled to talk, and he said, you know, come around for a cup of tea, but we didn't have time...."

Jack: "No, well, he is a good chap in lots of ways...but he's pig-headed! He won't alter his clock, ...you know - when it comes to altering his clock, he won't alter HIS clock, no fear --- (laughter)..."

Shirley: "You just have to know its an hour out! (laughter)"

Jack: "Yeah.."

Edie: "True Kenyon..."

Shirley: "True Kenyon, yeah, stubborn..."

Jack: "No, its Oliver there... a Kenyon will alter HIS clock.."

Shirley: "Its funny that it should be Oliver

Gwen: "Stubborn?"

Shirley: ".... that grandfather married an Oliver..."

Jack: "Yeah. They're related too...."

Shirley: "Are they related?"

Jack: "She was a cousin of Jim Oliver.

Her father was Sam Oliver, and, er, Uncle Jim's father was Charlie Oliver.."

Arthur Oliver Kenyon died in Hamilton on 25th August 1988 at the age of 78.