

# HUGH ANDREW KELSO

## Origins

Hugh Andrew KELSO was born in County Tyrone, Ireland. The son of a farmer.

## Arrival in NZ

The name H.A. Kelso appears on the list of people who have purchased tickets on the steamer Orotova, (*mis-spelled in the newspaper*) due to leave Tilbury docks in London on 4th November 1892. This vessel (with H.A. Kelso age 22 on the passenger list) came in to Australia and Hugh would have taken a smaller ship for the last leg to New Zealand.

His obituary records he arrived in 1893 and went to Wanganui to work for a chemist. This is corroborated by the presence of his name on the 1896 electoral roll in Wanganui, occupation Chemist.

## Eketahuna

In 1896 Hugh Andrew Kelso, a chemist, is also on the electoral roll for Eketahuna and in September 1895, a fire in Eketahuna spread to his shop. So it is likely he had not been in Eketahuna very long when this calamity took place.

## PASSENGERS FOR NEW ZEALAND.

Per Orient steamer Orotora, to leave Tilbury on November 4 :—For New Zealand : Miss Gugg, Mrs. Greenwood, Mrs and Miss Gibson, Mr. M. Edwards, Mr. Kernan, Mr. J. W. Warren, Mrs. Rudd and child, Mrs. and Miss McLean, Mr. and Mrs. J. V. Ross, Mr. H. A. Kelso, Mr. W. A. J. Hensler, Mrs. Menzies, Mr. Wynne Edwards, Mr. and Mrs. Dickie.

New Zealand Herald 3 Dec 1892

## A Disastrous Fire at Eketahuna

### A NUMBER OF BUILDINGS DESTROYED.

(Per Press Association.)

MASTERTON, This Day.

The most extensive fire which ever occurred in the Forty Mile bush broke out last night at Eketahuna, in Hunter's billiard room about 2 o'clock. It had a strong hold when discovered. The fire spread rapidly to Dixon's branch cordial factory, Steers' boot shop, and Low's Railway Hotel on the north side, and to Kelso's chemist shop, McInds bakery, and Brennihals boarding-house on the south. A gale was blowing and all the buildings were blazing together. Nothing was saved, except a little bedding from the hotel. All are heavy losers. There was no water supply of any kind. All the buildings mentioned were completely destroyed within an hour.

Fielding Star, 7 September 1895

The shop was replaced the following year by a new brick building.

There was a court case regarding commission over the sale/purchase of the business. I have been unable to identify Mr J. Benjamin, so cannot comment on whether he is an agent, or the previous chemist. In 1899 Hugh Kelso was first registered on the pharmaceutical register. In the early days of professional registration there were a number of pathways to registration. His later advertisements stress that he is a pharmacist "By Examination".

Newspapers suggest he was prominent in the rifle club, and also a keen cyclist.

Eketahuna Museum holds the original of this great photograph of him with his bicycle.

## EKETAHUNA NOTES

(From Our Own Correspondent).

Monday

Messrs A. H. Herbert, S. Marenzie, and H. A. Kelso, of Eketahuna, left on Saturday on a cycling tour to the Hot Lakes district, Mr Kelso, our local chemist, taking with him an ample supply of sticking plaster and other articles which might be of use on an expedition of such a risky nature.

Wairarapa Daily Times  
15 January 1900

Two large brick shops are being erected at Eketahuna for Mr T. C. Williams. One is to be occupied by Mr Herbert as a general store and the other by Mr Kelso as a chemist's shop.

Woodville Examiner,  
16 March 1896

costs. In the defended case of J. Benjamin v. H. A. Kelso, claim £13, commission on the sale of a chemist's business carried on by the defendant at Eketahuna, judgment was given for the plaintiff for £11 10s with £3 19s costs.

Evening Post 7 April 1897

### REGISTER OF PHARMACEUTICAL CHEMISTS—continued.

| No. of Certificate. | Date of Registration. | Name.                 | Address.          |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 631                 | 15 Sept., 1899        | Kelso, Hugh Andrew .. | Matamata, Waikato |

NZ Gazette



H.A. Kelso 1895  
original photograph held by Eketahuna  
Museum

## Marriage

His marriage to Hellen (Nellie) Julia HARDING was recorded in the New Zealand Times of 11 April 1902. They had three children. Ethel, James & Evelyn.

*[Ethel & James attended Matamata Primary school and Ethel was a pupil at Matamata College.]*

## Move to Matamata

The first evidence of the Kelsos in Matamata is the 1905/06 electoral roll, in this as well as the 1907 roll, Hugh gives his occupation as farmer.

The obituary appended records this was on a farm at Turanga-o-moana.

A mention in the Waikato Argus of 16 Sept 1907 says he is going to build in Arawa Street and start business there shortly.

It took a few months, but building had commenced by the 6th November, of a house as well as a shop, and by 16th March 1908 both he and E. Jones the saddler were in business, and his shop had a verandah.

In 1912 Dr Carolan came to Matamata and his first advertisements require people to leave messages with Mr Kelso, the chemist.

The section he built on is probably Section 10 Block VII. Certainly Helen Kelso owned it in 1914.

## EKETAHUNA.

(By Telegraph.—Own Correspondent.)  
Thursday.

The wedding of Mr H. A. Kelso, chemist, with Miss Nellie Harding, daughter of Mr J. Harding, an old settler of Opaki and now of Pleckville, took place yesterday at the residence of the bride's father. The Rev Mr Marshall, of the Hutt, officiated. Mr Bert Boyes was best man.

Mr E. Jones, saddler, is about to open business in Arawa Street, Matamata. Mr C. Watts of Morrinsville, has obtained the contract for the building. Mr Kelso, chemist, is also going to build in Arawa street, and start business there shortly. The Te Aroha Co-operative Dairy Company is about to erect a new creamery at Mangawhero.

Waikato Argus, 16 Sept 1907

Building is proceeding briskly in the district. Messrs Good and Gordon have completed the Turanga-a-Moana school and are now erecting a residence for Mr McMiken. Messrs Souter Bros. have commenced the shop and residence for Mr Kelso, and Mr Thompson, of Peria, is erecting a residence on his section.

Waikato, Argus, 6 Nov 1907

From Hugh Kelso asking permission to erect a verandah at Matamata.—Permission granted on usual conditions.

Waikato Argus 21 January 1908

Mr Jones, saddler, and Mr Kelso, chemist, have now commenced business in Arawa street.

Waikato Argus 16th March 1908

Mrs Kelso was active in the Red Cross with some time as the president of the Matamata group.

In 1911 Hugh Kelso was on the A & P Show committee, as well as being part of a group that formed a "Progressive League". [see footnote]

In 1918 he was elected to the Matamata Town Board, and at the beginning of 1919 he and Joseph Price were (according to a record at NZ National Archives) appointed Justices of the Peace.

In 1916 Hugh Kelso appears on a list of 78 people in the South Auckland district who own a Buick Motor Car.

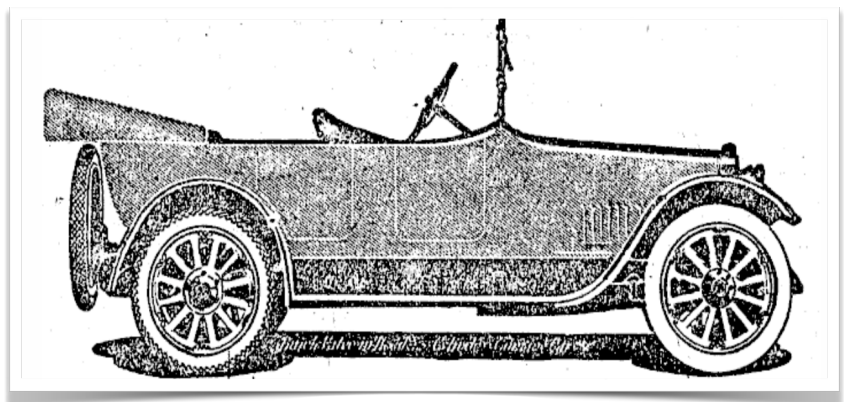
A Mr Carr-Rollitt of Matamata Downs is the only other local owner. There were six in Te Aroha.

An advertisement for a Buick that year is eye opening. Nearly four times the price of Section 2 Block IV in 1920.

Between October and December 1918 the town was affected by the post war Influenza epidemic. Although Hugh Kelso survived that, his obituary, on the next page, hints he was very worn down as a result and died age only 52 in May 1919.

A meeting was convened by Mr. R. B. Morgan on Thursday night for the purpose of considering the formation of a Progressive League. Mr. W. A. Gordon was in the chair. It was resolved that a league be formed. Mr. W. A. Gordon was elected chairman and Mr. H. A. Kelso, vice-chairman. Messrs. J. Steen, J. Long, N. Blackburn, R. S. James, W. A. Gordon, and H. A. Kelso were elected an executive committee. Mr. R. B. Morgan was elected secretary. It was decided that a meeting be held monthly.

NZ Herald. 17 January 1911



Price, 5-Seater, £385 plus £15. 2-3-Seater, £365 plus £15.

**Buick Light Weight Economical Six-cylinder Model.**

## FIRST COST

The 1916 BUICK Six-Cylinder Car is offered to the public with every confidence, because in not a single item is Efficiency sacrificed to Cost.

The 1916 BUICK Six-Cylinder Model is manufactured exclusively by the BUICK COY., at their immense factory, Flint, where this gigantic organisation has reduced the cost of production to a minimum.

The 1916 BUICK Six-Cylinder Car has a LOWER PETROL CONSUMPTION than many Four-Cylinder Cars.

Guaranteed Petrol Consumption over Rough and Hilly Otago Roads,  
**22 MILES PER GALLON.**

Remember BUICK build only ONE Car.

Otago Daily Times - 14 March 1916

**OBITUARY.****Death of Mr Kelso.**

A highly respected, publicly spirited citizen of Matamata, Mr Hugh Andrew Kelso, passed away at his residence on Friday evening last after nearly a fortnight's illness. The deceased had attended a Town board meeting on Monday, May 12th, and on arriving home complained of being intensely cold. However, he was up betimes next morning and was proceeding with his work when he was compelled to give in and take to bed. It was found that he was suffering with pneumonia and pleurisy, and was seriously ill. He lingered as stated until Friday night, although little hope was held out on Thursday. The patient was conscious until a few hours before death. The sympathy of the residents of the whole district is extended to the bereaved family.

Hugh Andrew Kelso was born at Co. Tyrone, Ireland and arrived in New Zealand in 1893, under engagement to Mr Williamson, chemist, Wanganui. He later commenced business on his own account at Eketahuna, which place he left to come to Matamata about 14 years ago, having purchased a farm at Turanga-o-moana. After farming for a while, he opened the business with which he was connected when he died. While at Eketahuna the late Mr Kelso married Miss Helen Harding. He leaves his widow and a family of two girls and a boy to mourn their loss. While at Matamata

Matamata Record, 29 May 1919

"Hughie" Kelso endeared himself to all on account of his honesty of opinion, his straight dealing and his joviality. An illustration of the public opinion of the deceased was given at the last town board election, when he was placed next to the chairman of the board (second) on the poll. Probably his best work in life was during the recent epidemic, when he worked day and night for a long period, dispensing medicine for a very large district. The demand made on him during that period was very heavy, but he gave the best that was in him. He could not do more.

The funeral was held at Matamata on Sunday, when the cortege was a very long one. Despite heavy rain over thirty motor-cars and as many vehicles, besides horsemen followed the remains to the cemetery, where an impressive burial service was conducted by Rev. R. W. Jackson. The grief is widespread throughout the district, the people knowing that they have lost a friend, and a man hard to replace.

## Sources

Justices of the peace [NZ Archives](#).

[Paperspast](#) as captioned.

Electoral Rolls - [ancestry.com](#) pay site

Image from Eketahuna museum [DigitalNZ](#)

Administration documentation for H.A.Kelso [NZ Archives](#)

Passenger list - [ancestry.com](#) pay site

## Endnotes

Progressive League - from [Te Ara](#) - “ Progress leagues, expansion leagues and advancement committees were established throughout the country, and many were active from the 1910s and 1920s. Their purpose was to promote their towns, cities and regions, and to encourage economic and social development. They were typically run by businesspeople and other prominent community members – usually men. The scope of these groups was wide. The Hastings Progress League, for example, busied itself with establishing and encouraging industries, beautifying the town and publishing favourable statistics and information about Hastings. They also advocated an underground railway and a cycle track to nearby Havelock North. A number of these groups lasted into the 1990s. Some were superseded by publicly funded promotional organisations.”

Pharmacist Training - from [Otago University](#)

The training to become a pharmacist in New Zealand was originally based on an apprenticeship system and from 1881 pharmacists had to be registered.

Trainees were indentured to a practising pharmacist and learned from them while working in their pharmacy. Some courses were available. Apprentices

sat two examinations, Pharmacy B and Pharmacy C, which were run by the Pharmacy Board and taken in various places around the country