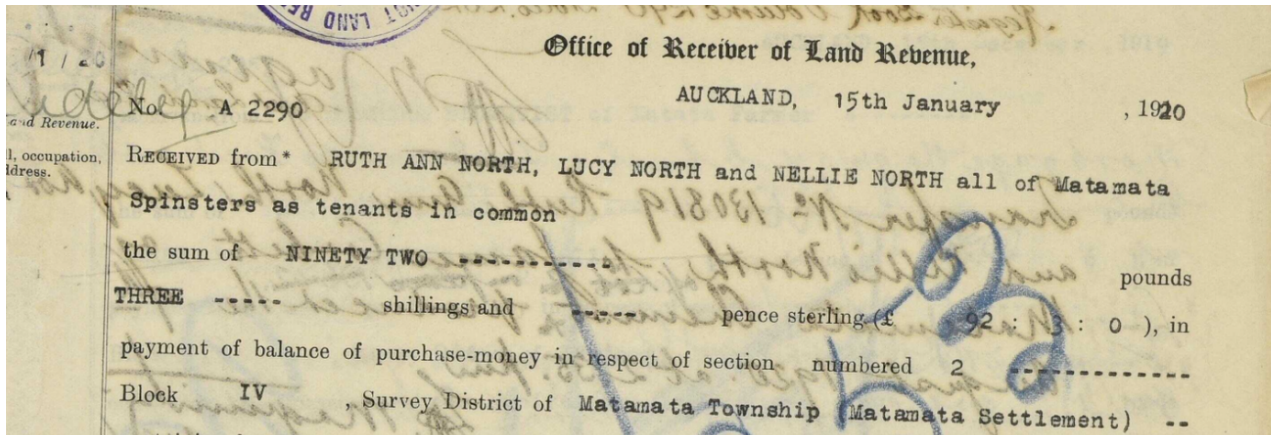


THE MISSES NORTH



On January 15th 1920, Ruth Ann, Lucy and Nellie NORTH paid the balance of £ 92 3s for Section 2 Block IV in Matamata town. This is one section down from the South Eastern Corner of Arawa Street & Broadway. Their deposit had been £5 10s 6d - making the total cost of the section £97 13s & 6d.

Later that year the local pharmacist, James Corbett, bought the section, and a mortgage was extended to him by the Misses North.

Who were the Misses North?

They were born in Halifax, in Yorkshire's West Riding. To William Henry NORTH and his wife Hannah nee BUTTERWORTH who had married in 1873. I do not know what William's occupation was then, but by 1881 he was an Assurance Agent. An occupation he continued until he died. In 1911 we further know he was working for the Prudential Assurance Company.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Halifax was a significant centre for textile manufacturing and this is reflected in the occupations of the older North children in 1891. Martha Ellen, age 17, was a 'twister in worsted & cotton and her brother Herbert, age 15, a curler in worsted.

Sadly, the one son, Herbert died age 20 in 1896 from Pulmonary Tuberculosis. At that time his occupation was a carpet creeler, someone who maintains and operates the machinery that supplies yarn for carpet manufacturing.



At the time of Herbert's death, and through until 1915, the Norths lived in Diamond Terrace in a "through house". AI tells me this is

a type of terraced house, one room deep, with a door front and back, allowing for a 'through' way. These houses were typically smaller and narrower than typical terraced houses, often only about 13 feet wide. They were common in industrial areas of Yorkshire.

In 1894 a through house in Diamond terrace is to let for 5s 1d.

By 1901 Martha and Ruth were working as woollen weavers, Lucy was a brace maker (fancy). Nellie is 11. In 1911 Lucy is a machinist (underclothing), Nellie is a baker's assistant. Martha Ellen married in 1907 to Harry SCAMPTON and he is a book-keeper for a printer & bookbinder, while Ruth Ann is working away from home as a domestic servant.

This was not a wealthy family.

The Halifax Evening Courier of October 5th, carried this small item in its "Feminine Fancies" column. Did it attract the attention of one or more of the North girls?

The Demand for Servants.

There is still a keen demand for domestic servants throughout New Zealand. In Christchurch girls are not to be obtained, no matter what wages are offered. In Wellington last month 158 employers sought the Government Labour Bureau's assistance, 65 generals being applied for, 43 charwomen, and 16 housemaids.

Or perhaps they had seen the piece entitled LAND WITHOUT A MILLIONAIRE in the Halifax Daily Guardian of 15th July 1911. It continued "*on the other hand, there were very few paupers, and the general standard of living was as high as any other country in the world.*"

Or the one in the same newspaper on 27th July saying New Zealand had a great need for workers. That "*domestic servants were as difficult to procure as nuggets of gold*"

What ever prompted them, in 1912, Ruth Ann & Nellie sailed to New Zealand on the 'Remuera' arriving in Wellington on September 12th. Both giving their occupations as "Domestic". Interestingly they have very different ticket numbers. Did they both have the same idea independently? Did one copy the other? Who knows.

The arrival of Lucy has proven a little more elusive, she is not on the same ship but is in New Zealand in time to be included in the 1914 electoral roll. (*below*)

North, Lucy, Waitoa, spinster
North, Nellie, Koromiko-street, Te Aroha, spinster
North, Ruth Ann, Bonny Glen, Te Aroha, spinster

On September 8th 1915 their father William Henry NORTH died, age 63. Still living at 22 Diamond Terrace. and still working as an insurance agent. Did he have a good life insurance policy? There appears to be no will for him. Incredibly Ruth Ann (now age 35) obtained a berth on the S.S Rotorua, perhaps on receiving word he was failing, and arrived in England on October 21st. She travelled 3rd class. An advertisement for one shipping company has return 3rd class fares advertised at £36 & £43. (That is a bit more than one third of the price of the section they bought 5 years later).

Was it always planned, or did Ruth Ann arrive and boss her mother around? On 17th January 1916 Ruth Ann, her mother Hannah (now 63) and Allan SCAMPTON age 7, the oldest son of Martha Ellen the eldest North daughter, set sail for New Zealand on board the R.M.S. Rimutaka. Hannah describing herself as a Housekeeper and Ruth Ann, Domestic.



S.S. Rotorua

These journeys during WWI were not without risk. The SS Rotorua was torpedoed in the English Channel in 1917.

They all settled back into life in the Waikato, newspaper articles indicate they were very involved with the Methodist Church in Morrinsville, and in 1917 they decided to move to Matamata, where in 1919 Hannah & Ruth Ann are in the electoral roll at Tower Road, Matamata.

A Welcome and a Farewell.

A pleasant little function took place in the Baptist Church on Wednesday, about 40 or 50 of the congregation and friends from other churches being present. The gathering was held for the dual purpose of giving a welcome to Mrs Maiden, the minister's wife, and farewelling Mrs North and the Misses North (3), who are removing to Matamata. Mr Clifford, the senior deacon, welcomed Mrs Maiden, on behalf of the church, and assured her that all would do their best to make her at home. Later in the evening Rev. W. B. Maiden presented the Misses North with a handsome silver service of three pieces, and a book to Mrs North, Messrs Edmeades, church secretary, and Cuthforth, referring in highly eulogistic terms to the magnificent services rendered by the family in every branch of church work during the last five years. Mrs North suitably replied on behalf of herself and family. The evening was spent pleasantly with songs and games, the proceedings terminating with supper provided by the ladies of the congregation.

Waikato Times, 1st October 1917

In January the Matamata Town board considered the problem of providing water for cattle & horses passing through the town. As the Misses North were to be asked to provide water for a trough, their section must have been fairly central to town.

WATER-TROUGH.

On the motion of Mr Gordon it was decided that the chairman interview the Misses North regarding supplying water to the trough outside their property.

The chairman said if satisfactory arrangements were made it may be worth considering the erection of a concrete water-trough.

Matamata Record 17th January 1918

Town sections are still changing hands at advanced figures in Matamata. This week Messrs Finnerty and Darby have disposed of Mr W. Bartlett's two-acre sections to Misses North. The same firm has sold Mr Quillam's quarter-acre section near the railway station to Mrs G. Fussey.

Matamata Record, 14th February 1918

WANTED — Girl to assist with housework; sleep out preferred. Apply Misses North, confectioners, Tower Road.

Matamata Record 29th August 1918

How are they supporting themselves?

From the advertisement above we know they were running a shop, and are in the pleasant position of wanting to employ someone to help them do the housework.

They certainly seem to have thrown themselves into the affairs of the town. The Matamata Record of 5th September 1918 has a long piece on a Mock Court in support of the Red Queen. Everyone was fined for various spurious offences.

For harbouring Northern Spies, the Misses North paid up like men

They also ran a tea-rooms. Selling it to Mrs Collins in 1919. But they still have the shop! And are enlarging it.



Auckland Libraries Heritage Images
[Collection](#)

The Misses North's tea rooms are the building on the left. Next door is H(arry James) Buckley a boot-maker and then the premises of Mrs E.M.Gray. She sold stationery, fancy goods & drapery and on August 8th 1918 announced she had sold the business "*carried on by me for three years*" to the Misses Montague.

As we know the Misses North didn't come to Matamata until October 1917, thus this photograph can be dated to about 1918.

NOTICE.

The Misses North wish to inform the Public of Matamata that they still have their Fruit and Confectionery Shop, which they are enlarging.

Christmas stocks now arriving.

Good Chocolates a specialty.

Matamata Record - 27 November 1919

NOTICE.

I WISH to notify the public of Matamata and surrounding districts that I have disposed of the fancy goods and drapery business, carried on by me for three years, to the Misses Montague. I hope that the same liberal patronage extended to me will be given my successors. Thanking you for past support.

Yours faithfully,
(MRS) E. M. GRAY.

WE, having purchased Mrs Gray's business, trust that by buying right, keeping good stocks and giving good service to retain all her old customers, and to secure many new ones.

MISSSES M. & H. MONTAGUE.

NOTICE.**Matamata Tea Rooms.**

We wish to notify the general public that we have disposed of our Matamata luncheon and tea room business to Mrs Collins. We wish to thank the public for its past support, and ask that it be extended to our successor.
(Signed) MISSES NORTH.

I wish to inform the residents of Matamata and district that I have taken over the above business, and hope that by strict attention to the wants of the public I shall hold its support.
(Signed) Mrs S. COLLINS.

N.Z. L. & M. AGENCY CO.

Matamata Record - 20 November
1919

Then what? Did Mrs Collins default on the deal? Or is this another business?

For Sale.

URGENT, for Sale—Good Dining Room Business. — Apply Misses North, Matamata.

Matamata Record - 8 January 1920

At the end of 1920, the family were reunited with the arrival of Martha Ellen, her husband and the rest of their children. Eventually they settled in Auckland but in 1921 all four Scampton children attended Matamata Primary School. (Allan had been there since the 5th November 1917).

4572 - North, Hannah, Tower Road, Matamata, married
4573 - North, Lucy, Tower Road, Matamata, spinster
4574 - North, Nellie, Matamata, spinster.
4575 - North, Ruth Ann, Tower Road, Matamata, spinster.
4717 - Paltridge, Emily, Tower Road, Matamata, spinster.

1922 Electoral Roll

In 1922 all the Misses North and their mother are living in Tower Road, as also somewhere in the road, is Emily PALTRIDGE.

She and Ruth Ann went on to develop an apiary & produce business they ran until about 1939. Frequently winning awards at agricultural shows for the product. They were also very active in the Methodist Church, running stalls at bazaars and fundraising for missionaries.

Lucy married in 1923, and Hannah and Nellie moved to Auckland where they appear on the 1925 electoral roll

NEW season's Honey now ready; bring your jars and have them filled. Paltridge and North, Bee Farm, 'Phone 178s.

Matamata Record - 13 December 1923

SITTINGS of Purebred White Leghorns and Black Orpingtons; good laying strains; fifteen eggs 7/6. Paltridge and North, Matamata.

Matamata Record - 4 September 1924

Miscellaneous.

BEFORE selecting your Christmas presents inspect our Hand-made Indian Goods; see display in shop lately occupied by Mr. Follett; proceeds devoted to missionary work. Paltridge and North.

Matamata Record - 18 December 1924

In 1923 tenders were called for the Matamata Sewerage Scheme. They closed on the 28th November 1923. Tenders were accepted in January 1924, and the work was expected to be completed within seven to eight months.

However, in 1925 it was still being laid, and not without problems. They probably weren't expecting bees to be an issue.

The busy bee obviously does not believe in other people getting a hustle on. Part of the Matamata sewerage line runs through the apiary of Messrs. North and Paltridge, and several of the men were so badly stung that the work in that section had to be done at night. Though there was plenty of honey about, the men had not exactly a "sweet thing on," and some are of the opinion that if heaven is a land of milk and honey it will be, by comparison, too hot for them.

Matamata Record - 26 November 1925

NEW Season's Honey now ready. Try our honey—vinegar, unequalled for salads and sauces. Paltridge and North.

Matamata Record - 11 April 1926

Mr. Taylor congratulated Misses Paltridge and North for their winnings at the Winter Show. They had scooped the pool against much bigger competitors.

Chamber of Commerce Annual Christmas Dinner.
Matamata Record 24 June 1926

Misses Paltridge and North, who motored through to Auckland recently, returned to Matamata on Tuesday evening.

Matamata Record 5th March 1928. Did they own their own car?

extremely fine toys. The flowers and produce corner, run by Miss Paltridge and Miss North, was perhaps the most attractive of all, the flowers and fruit being of exceptionally good quality. Mrs. Whitehead sold

Matamata Record - 29 November 1928

Things must have been going well. In May 1930 Emily & Ruth Ann went on a two month holiday to Hawaii. Describing themselves as Bee Farmers. Not long after their return they were advertising some land to lease.

To Let.

**PADDOCK, 2 acres ; good Cow Bails.
Apply Paltridge and North.**

MATAMATA.

A Collision in Street.

A collision took place at Bell's Corner, Broadway, on Sunday between a motor truck driven by Miss North and a motor cycle ridden by George Cockshoot, employed by Mr J. Downie, of Peria. Cockshoot received severe bruises and the front wheel of the cycle was badly bent.

Waikato Times, 13 January 1932

In March 1933, their entry in the class for “Most Attractive Display” at the Matamata A & P show was worthy of special mention and *would be an asset on the benches of any show in the Dominion*. At the end of that year, they advertised for a strong boy to help. By this time both Ruth Ann North and Emily Paltridge were in their early 50s.



Following an article in the ‘Scene’ newspaper in 2025, Graeme Hancock remembered he had this photograph in his family album. Which is the house he and his parents moved into at 23 Tower Road, Matamata. The photograph is from before 1939, and is Miss North and Miss Paltridge. A check of the title for this property confirmed the Misses North did own this property until 1945. Graeme was born there in 1941, so we assume the Hancocks rented for a few years.

He recalled there was a lot of land with a “honey house”; a long windowless timber structure, with mezzanine inside”. There was extensive land around the house, so much so that the North sisters had a large orchard (with one of almost every type of fruit tree) and Graeme’s family had space for a milch-cow while he was growing up.

We have also established that the North sisters owned Section 5 in block V. (that block in Broadway between modern day Miro & Vosper Streets), and we still have not accounted for the 2 acre sections of Mr Bartlett that they are reported to have bought in 1918. -

4 Dec 2025

In 1937 a Lantern Lecture was given in the Methodist Church by Miss Joan McGregor of Kedgaon. She had lived for 36 years in India and was on furlough from the Ramabai Mukti Mission.

She was a guest of Miss Paltridge and Miss North who *"have for years been deeply interested in the Ramabai Mukti Mission"*

Two more women from the Ramabai Mukti Mission visited in 1940 and were hosted by Misses Paltridge & North

In 1940, after over 20 years in Matamata, Ruth Ann and Emily, both now about 60, sold up and moved.

The Misses R. North and E. Paltridge have sold their home and are leaving Matamata on Wednesday. They will be very much missed by a wide circle of friends. Miss North is going to Christchurch and possibly further south for an indefinite period. Miss Paltridge will reside in Remuera, Auckland.

Matamata Record 21 October 1940

Extended holidays were had by both in 1939. Ruth North can be seen in Halifax on the 1939 war register compiled in the United Kingdom in September that year in preparation for war. She is staying at a Temperance Hotel with her sister Nellie, who travelled with her, Ruth still describes herself as a Bee Farmer, and Nellie is a shop assistant.

I don't know what happened to the plan to move to Christchurch, but in 1943 Ruth Ann is living with her sister Nellie in New North Road, Auckland. (their mother Hannah had died in 1937). Ruth Ann and Nellie travelled together to England at least twice more. Once in 1949 and again (age 79 & 69) in 1960.

PERSONAL

Miss R. North, Matamata, left to-day by the Wanganella on the first stages of a visit to England.

Miss E. Paltridge, Matamata, has left on an extended visit to relatives and friends at Great Barrier and Auckland.

Matamata Record 30 March 1939

The "Misses North" lived long lives.

Ruth Ann was 87 when she died, Lucy 89, and Nellie 93.

Another property found

FIRE AT MATAMATA

BRIGADE'S GOOD SAVE

Portion of Dwelling Destroyed

Fire partially destroyed the kitchen, sittingroom and one bedroom in an unoccupied house on the corner of Peria and Gladstone roads, Matamata, at about 9:15 o'clock on Wednesday night.

The house is owned by Miss North, of Matamata, and was vacated by a tenant on the previous day. It is thought that a rubbish fire, which was lit about 26 feet away, set the house alight. The damage is estimated at about £150. The insurances are not available.

A good save was made by the Matamata Fire Brigade, which was holding a card tournament at the time, and but for the brigade's prompt action the house would have been totally destroyed.

MM record 6 May 1935

The Wills

Ruth Ann died in 1968. She left

£300 to the British & Foreign Bible Society - for it's work in NZ

£200 to the China Inland Mission Overseas Missionary Fellowship - for it's work in NZ

£200 to the Mission to Lepers (NZ) for the general purpose of it's home base in NZ

£200 to the Auckland Baptist Association - for development work in NZ

£200 to the NZ Bible Training Institute

Nellie to be her executor and estate divided among her surviving sister Lucy and her nephews and niece.

If Nellie predeceased her, a further £200 to the Auckland Baptist Association for its work at the Aranui Old People's Home (where Ruth Ann was living when she died)

Nellie - who had made her will at the same time as Ruth Ann (1964) and made Ruth Ann her executor, left exactly the same charitable bequests as her sister. And likewise the remainder to be divided among her nephews and niece.

The charitable bequests of both I think would amount to about \$50,000 today (2025) . Although Nellie did not die until 1982, so her bequests would not have meant much to the charities, if they still existed.

Lucy - died in 1974. She had made her will much earlier, in 1948 and left each sister £50. The rest to her son.

Emily Paltridge

Also died in 1968. She left her entire estate, in a will made in 1949, to her friend, Elizabeth Ann FORSYTH, a Salvation Army Officer.

Sources

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Photograph of Halifax Mills c 1900 - http://www.an-englishmanshome.co.uk/halifax_mill_1900s.html

Images of death entry for Herbert North and William Henry North www.gro.gov.uk

Wills - NZ Archives

Shipping lists - Ancestry.com, familysearch.com

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SS Rotorua photograph - Item is held by John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=14382008>

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Recollections & album of Mr Graeme Hancock.