

## JEFFERY Richard Gardiner and BACKHURST Ellen

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In October 1833, **Richard Gardiner Jeffery** was born to **James Gardiner Jeffery** and **Ann Godsmark**, in Yalding, County Kent, England. **Richard** was baptised on 13 November 1833 at the church of Saints Peter and Paul in Yalding, the church which had been the source of religious comfort to his family for generations. His father, James, was a 'gentleman farmer', the owner of the 'Fox Pitts' farm on Yalding Hill, a few kilometres north of Yalding. This made James a wealthy and influential member of the community.

**Richard** was the second son and seventh child of his parents. After him two more brothers were born. On the death of his father in 1845, Richard, aged 12 years, inherited 40 acres (16 hectares) of land bordering the parishes of Yalding, West Farleigh and Hunton.

**Richard** (aged 22) married **Mary Larkin Waghorn** (aged 15) on 26 September 1855 at the same church in London as his parents. A son, Richard James Jeffery, was born late in 1857; however, the marriage seems to have ended.

We next find **Richard** in the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa in the company of **Ellen Backhurst**. The birth of their first child, **Alice Eliza**, is noted on 1 March 1860 so it seems likely that they left England in 1859. Other children followed and Richard mainly involved himself with the production of orchards and market gardens, enterprises he was familiar with at 'home' in Kent.

**Ellen Backhurst** was born in October 1840 in the Kent village of Boughton-Monchelsea, a village about 10 kms east of Yalding. She was the seventh of twelve children of **William Backhurst** and **Eliza Wilkins**. William was an 'agricultural labourer' who would have worked on one or more of the various farms in the area. Family lore suggested Ellen may have worked at Richard's property.

(See biographies for **George Backhurst**, Ellen's brother, and **Mercy Williams**, Ellen's sister, on this website.)

During the latter part of 1864, due to a recruitment effort held in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth by agents of the New Zealand Immigration organization, immigrants were sought under the Waikato Immigration Scheme of the Auckland Provincial Council. South Africa was not proving to be as prosperous as they had hoped, so **Richard and Ellen** signed up to the scheme and left for New Zealand on the ship 'Maori' on 8 November 1864.

They were accompanied by Ellen's sister, **Mercy** and her husband, **Tom Williams** and family. They arrived in Auckland 24 December 1864, and all settled in Onehunga.

**Richard and Ellen** brought a number of properties in Onehunga where Richard again involved himself with the production of orchards and market gardens. More children followed but some died, mostly due to diseases that are easily treatable today but were deadly then: **Henry Richard** d. 17 Feb 1865, aged 13 months; **Ellen** died 20 Jan 1866, aged 20 days; and **Emily Georgiana** died 12 Feb 1876, aged 8 months. All three dead infant children were buried at **Saint Peter's Cemetery**.

Otherwise life was quite good but money was always tight with a growing family.



Ellen and Richard Jeffery c.1870

On 29 January 1878 **Richard** passed away after an illness and was buried in the **Saint Peter's Cemetery** near the left-hand rear of the church as it is now.

He was only 43 and left Ellen alone to bring up their four sons and three daughters, aged from 2 to 18 years.

**Ellen** had some income from their properties, though mortgages probably needed paying. Records show that the children attended the Onehunga School, at least to the age of 13. Ellen continued with domestic life. As time went on she involved herself in Saint Peter's Church events and was a supporter of the Onehunga Horticultural Show which was held a couple of times a year. She picked up several prizes for her flowers as well as a first prize for her cabbages. James and younger sister, Annie, also featured. Concerts were often held afterwards, which the whole family would have enjoyed.

On 1 September 1881 Ellen's eldest daughter, **Alice Eliza** married **Walter Kelsall**, a baker in Onehunga, at Saint Peter's Church.

Over the years Ellen's sons took up trades: **James William** became a florist and gardener; **Henry Gardiner** moved at some stage to Wellington and became a warehouseman; **George Edward** became a baker (possibly in the employ of his brother-in-law, Walter Kelsall) but later became a painter; and **John Richard** became a carpenter (he may have been apprenticed to his uncle Thomas Williams) and married **Maria Shaldrick**, daughter of William Shaldrick and Margaret Nealis.

Ellen's daughter **Ellen Elizabeth** remained with her mother until her marriage to John Hooper Morland in 1903, whilst youngest daughter, **Annie Cordelia** did not marry until late in life (see her biography on this website.)

**Ellen** died on 10 September 1909 and was buried with Richard and their infant children in **Saint Peter's Cemetery**. No headstone seemed to have been erected until their daughter **Annie Cordelia** died. She left provision for a headstone in her will and her name is also transcribed on it.

Three of Richard and Ellen's children lie in *Waikaraka Cemetery*:

**Alice Eliza Kelsall**, her husband Walter, and sons Cyril and Walter and daughter, Annie.

**James William Jeffery**, his wife Kate and daughter, May.

**John Richard Jeffery** and his wife Maria.

Three other children lie elsewhere:

**Ellen Elizabeth Morland** and her husband John, are in *Paeroa Cemetery*.

**George Edward Jeffery** was cremated at *Waikumete Cemetery* and his ashes scattered.

**Henry (Harry) Gardiner Jeffery** is buried in the *Old Napier Cemetery*.

Mention was made earlier of **William Shaldrick**, an early settler, arriving in 1852. He served as an Onehunga councillor for several years and nominated **Elizabeth Yates** for Mayor of Onehunga. One of William's homes is now an historical building at 50 Onehunga Mall. His wife, **Margaret** was the daughter of Fencible **John Nealis**, and his wife **Mary Casey**.