

KILGOUR Ellen (nee Colledge)

the information in this biography is primarily taken from:
'The Kilgour Family of Te Huia, West Auckland': Kathryn Mooney (Revised Second Edition, 2007)

William and **Mary (nee Duess) Kilgour** left Greenock, Scotland on the 18 June 1842, on board the *Jane Gifford*, sailing for Auckland where they arrived as some of Auckland's first assisted immigrants.

They had six children with them. Their seventh child was born a few months later at Huia, a coastal settlement on the Manukau harbour. William and Mary were among the first European settlers in Huia.

William and Mary's children were **Ann**, b. c1824; **John**, b.c1826; **Martha**, b.1829; **Mary**, b. 1832; **William (jnr)**, b. 1835; **Thomas**, b. 1838; and **Lavinia**, born at Huia, 1843.

William (snr) was a bushman and a farmer in Huia.

Mary (snr) died 24 July 1876, aged 74; **William** (snr) died 29 Dec 1881, aged 80; both died at Huia and are buried '*on the knoll in Te Huia.*'

John Kilgour, the second child of **William (snr) and Mary Kilgour** (see inset above), was born in Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland in 1826. He was 16 years old when he arrived in New Zealand with his parents and siblings in 1842. He worked with his father in the creation of a tent-camp in Huia, before they began to clear the bush, plant a garden and construct a house. Later he assisted his father to set up a farm, and to construct out-buildings.

Throughout his whole life, John was well-known as a hard worker, and an extremely considerate and principled person.

Aged 30, John married **Ellen Colledge** on 18 March 1857 at **Saint Peter's Church**, Onehunga. Ellen was 16 years old. Both were literate - both signed their names in the church's marriage register.

Ellen was born, 19 September 1841, in Wessington, Derbyshire, England. She was 8 years old when she arrived, 16 June 1849, on the ship *Berhampore*, together with her parents **John Simpson Colledge**, his wife **Mary Ann Holliday** (see inset below) and her brother **William**, b.1844. Another brother, **Jack**, was born in Onehunga in 1851 and baptised at **Saint Peter's Church**, Onehunga.

John Colledge was a member of the **Royal New Zealand Fencible Corps**. He was involved with the structural setting up Onehunga as a town; he later worked as a Town Warden. He died 6 Oct 1887, aged 83 and was buried in **Saint Peter's Cemetery**.

Mary Ann Colledge, aged 88, registered her occupation as 'dress-maker' on the electoral roll; she probably had strong political views; no doubt she voted in 1893 when New Zealand women gained the right to vote in parliamentary elections. She died 12 August 1895, in her 90th year, and was buried in the same plot as her husband in **Saint Peter's Cemetery**.

Shortly after being married, John and Ellen moved to Kawhia where John had a timber contract. There they forged strong friendships with the local Māori, relationships which they fostered and treasured. About 1860, due to the British Government pushing for a land war, the young couple moved back to Onehunga for a short period before shifting to Huia, where they occupied Matthew Roe's beautiful home overlooking the Manukau harbour. Within a few years they purchased the house. It was in this home that John and Ellen reared their large family. The house had amazing

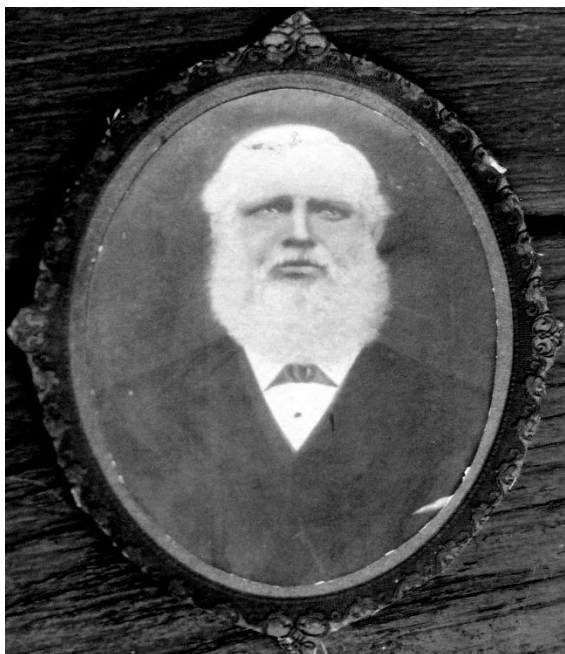
views of the Manukau Heads. John was well known for keeping a lamp burning all night from his window, to guide ships through the Manukau Harbour.

John and Ellen had 14 children: their first child, b.c.1858, unnamed, possibly died at birth; **John William**, b.1860; **Thomas Edward**, b.1862; **Mary Jane**, b.1864; **Ellen**, b.1867; **Lavinia**, b.1868; **Emma Jane**, b.1870; **William**, b.1872; **Ann**, b.1874; **Elizabeth Frances**, b.1876; **George Amos**, b.1879; **Janet**, b.1881; **Annie** (Fanny), b.1883; and **Martha**, b.1886.

John and Ellen ran a trading store. They made a strong partnership. Like all store owners they got to know everyone in the community and were greatly respected by all. Anyone in need was guaranteed support and a substantial meal.

In 1863 when the *HMS Orpheus* floundered at the Manukau Heads, it was John who organised the community into going out and rescuing the survivors; and it was Ellen who nursed them back to health. It was John who buried the dead sailors.

In 1889 their home burned down, and they lost everything. Ellen and John moved down to Big Muddy Creek to live with their eldest son, **John William**. The stables at that Cornwallis farm were turned into a cottage and it was there that John and Ellen lived their later years.



John Kilgour

John, aged 72, died on 14 May 1896 (his headstone has the incorrect date of 1897) from cancer of the stomach and is buried at the site of the historic **Cornwallis Graves**, beside the drowned sailors.

A great many people attended his funeral; such was the esteem in which John and Ellen were held.



Ellen Kilgour (nee Colledge)

Ellen was to live many more years (nearly 40 years). Both before and after John's death, not only was she store-keeper, but also local nurse and mid-wife. She often slept alongside mothers-in-labour and assisted the local doctor with autopsies. She milked cows and kept a garden, all the while being mother to a large family (14 children, 13 who lived into adulthood).

She enjoyed remarkable good health. Never one to be idle she made exquisite trinket boxes and handcrafts, selling them to a shop in Karangahape Road, Central Auckland.

In her later years, Ellen lived with her daughter **Lavinia Lockwood**, Coronation Road, Mangere. As an older person she was *'that white-haired lady with plenty of go'*; she was often heard saying *'no catching me, no having me!'* She maintained good health up until a short time before she died. She is reported to have, just before her death, **'ordered'** her breakfast and **'then'** died!

Her death came on 29 August 1935; she was buried two days later in **Saint Peter's Cemetery**, in the same plot as her sister-in-law, **Agnes Murdoch**, and her great-nephew **Athol Kilgour**.