

BATCHELOR James Alfred

these biographical notes were curated by John McAlpine,
and they await confirmation/correction, and further detail/expansion from family descendants ...

James Alfred BATCHELOR, son of **Andrew and Sarah (Sparkes) BATCHELOR**, was born sometime in 1867. (It seems that his birth was not registered; there is no BDM record of the birth).

Tragically, **James Alfred** drowned in a creek at Awhitu on the 14 February 1869. An inquest ensued:

NZ Herald: 17 Feb 1869

*An inquest was held on Tuesday, at the Royal Hotel, Onehunga, before Dr. Philson and a respectable jury, of which Mr. Spaulding was chosen foreman, on the body of **James Alfred Batchelor**.*

The following evidence was taken:

Sarah Batchelor, being duly sworn, deposed: *I am the wife of Andrew Batchelor, and the mother of the deceased, who was one year and eight months old. I reside at Awitu. On Sunday last, about half-past one o'clock, p.m., I was in my bedroom, when Mrs Oldbury, who lives in the same house, went out to look after her own child, who is three years old. Mrs Oldbury's child was playing with mine. Immediately after she went out, I heard her calling my husband and saying that she could not see my child. I then ran out of the house to the creek, where the children had been playing. The creek is about forty yards from the house. I saw Mrs Oldbury's child on the edge of the bank of the creek. I looked into the creek and saw my child lying at the bottom, in the water, which was about one foot in depth. Tho child's clothes were not covered with water, but his head was under it. The water was deep enough to drown him. I called to my husband, and he came and took the child out of the water and brought it into the house and undressed it. He then put it into a warm bath and swapped it in hot flannels. Mr Coulthard then came and tried to blow air into the child's lungs. Deceased opened his eyes once, but there was no sign of breathing when taken out of the water; we tried for about three hours to restore animation, but without any effect. After the child was taken out of the water, I observed froth on his lips and nose. I saw the child five minutes before he was missed. I have been a fortnight living at the same place. The child was in the habit of going to play at the creek, and I was afraid he would fall into the water. I took what precautions I could to prevent him, but he was such a short time absent that I did not think he could have come to any harm.*

Andrew Batchelor, being duly sworn, deposed: *I am a bushman, residing at Awitu, about 22 miles from Onehunga. I am father of deceased. On Sunday afternoon, about two o'clock p.m., I was in my home, when I heard Mrs Oldbury call out 'Andrew'. I went out and she told me that she could not find James. She was about six yards from the house. She was holding her own little boy by the hand. I then went to look for my child. I was looking about when my wife called out to me that the child was in the creek. I ran into the water and took him out. The water was about one foot in depth. The body was warm, but there was no sign of breathing. I did not feel his pulse. I observed one of his eyes to open. I carried him into the house and took off his clothes, and put him into a warm bath, and then rolled him up in flannel. Mrs Coulthard tried to breath into his mouth, but without effect. The child was not more than five minutes out of sight before we missed him. I brought the body to Onehunga on Sunday night. Myself and my wife took every precaution we could to keep the child from the creek.*

*This being all the evidence, the jury returned a verdict, that deceased, **James Alfred Batchelor** was found drowned at Awitu, on the 14th day of February 1869, but that there was no evidence to show by what means he fell into the water.*

James Alfred BATCHELOR was buried in Saint Peter's Cemetery (Plot 260) on 17 February 1869.

Sarah was pregnant with their second child when **James Alfred** died.

She gave birth to **George Andrew** on 1 September 1869, at Awhitu. (George lived until he was 53 years old; he died 29 March 1923, in Auckland).

A list of the then known Plots in the cemetery was drawn up in 1898. It notes that **two Batchelor infants** were buried in Plot 260. It is possible that **Andrew** and **Sarah** buried two infants.

The death of Andrew BATCHELOR and the marriage of Sarah BATCHELOR to Edward PARSONS

On 2 December 1874, **Andrew BATCHELOR** (aged 26) also died by drowning, but a few years after his son **James Alfred's** death by drowning.

Daily Southern Cross: 4 December 1874.

*Napier — Mr **Andrew BACHELOR**, a ferryman at the Spit, has drowned. The body has not been recovered. He was aged 25 yrs, married, and leaves a widow and young family at Onehunga. The deceased was a steady sober man.*

The following month, Andrew's widowed wife **Sarah** married bushman **Edward PARSONS** (at the Registry Office, 19 January 1875).