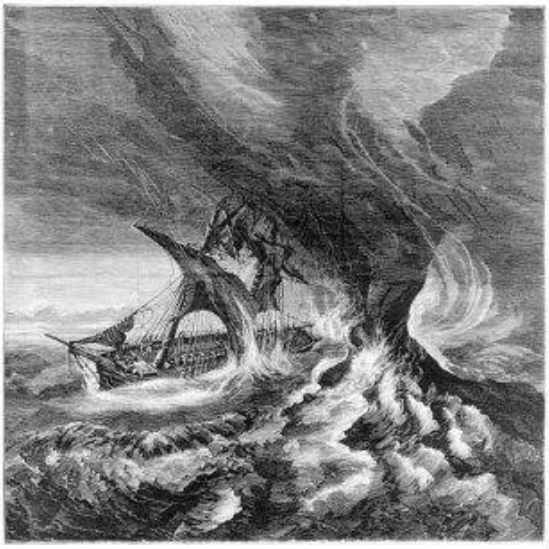
The MacVicar's

Archibald and Christina *McKellar* MacVicar

Christina McKellar was born 22 September 1824 in Govan, Scotland. Archibald MacVicar was born in Gorbals, Scotland, on 21 March 1825. They married 2 November 1847 in Barony. After the birth of their second child in 1851, Archibald sailed to Melbourne, Australia. On 9 April 1855, he was a passenger aboard the *Drover*, traveling from Melbourne to Auckland. Christina and their daughter Margaret joined him in Auckland 22 months later, on 12 February 1857, sailing directly from Gravesend, England, aboard the *Euphemus*.

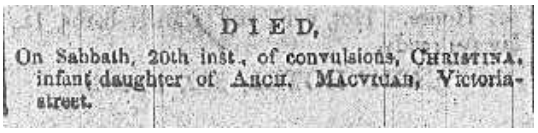


"Brig Drover caught in a waterspout off Newcastle" Samuel Calvert 1875

In Auckland, Archibald established himself as a trader and grocer at the corner of Victoria and Albert Streets. Their daughter Christina was born in Auckland but died on 20 March 1859, at just 14 months old.

An obituary for his daughter Margaret, published in 1931, said that Archibald arrived in New Zealand on the *Duchess of Argyle* and that he was fluent in Te Reo Māori, having served as a translator during the Waikato War. However, he died on 8 March 1862—about a year and eight months before the Waikato War officially began on 20 November 1863— so these details do not appear to be entirely accurate.

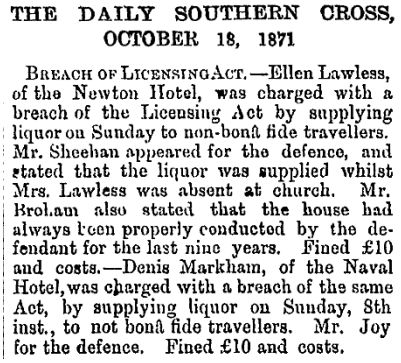
When Archibald died in 1862—less than seven years after arriving in New Zealand—Christina was left to manage alone. Without supporting relatives, her life was undoubtedly difficult.



DIED,
On Sabbath, 20th inst., of convulsions, CHRISTINA, infant daughter of ANCH. MACVICAR, Victoria-street.

In July 1862, Christina and her neighbour, Thomas Reilly, were charged with allowing a chimney in Victoria Street to catch fire. There were two flues in the chimney, and since it was impossible to determine which side had caused the fire, both neighbours were fined 10 shillings plus costs—roughly $150 to $200 NZD in 2025.

On 7 December 1871, Christina beat her daughter, who then ran across the street to her neighbour, Mary Ann Porteous, seeking refuge. The next afternoon, Mrs. Porteous found Christina dead in her bed at West Street, Newton, with a strong smell of rum on her breath and a half-full bottle beside her on the floor. She was also surrounded by 27 pawn tickets for articles of clothing—the property pledged belonged to her customers, whose washing she used to take in. Christina was "kept by a man named Underwood, now at the Waikato, who occasionally sent her remit-



THE DAILY SOUTHERN CROSS, OCTOBER 18, 1871

BREACH OF LICENSING ACT.—Ellen Lawless, of the Newton Hotel, was charged with a breach of the Licensing Act by supplying liquor on Sunday to non-bonâ fide travellers. Mr. Sheehan appeared for the defence, and stated that the liquor was supplied whilst Mrs. Lawless was absent at church. Mr. Brolam also stated that the house had always been properly conducted by the defendant for the last nine years. Fined £10 and costs.—Denis Markham, of the Naval Hotel, was charged with a breach of the same Act, by supplying liquor on Sunday, 8th inst., to not bonâ fide travellers. Mr. Joy for the defence. Fined £10 and costs.

tances." The man was believed to be the father of her child, Sarah, who was then about six years old.

The Newton Hotel was built about 1866 and is still standing at 382 K'Road. Due to changes in the licensing laws, it ceased to be a pub in 1909.

A newspaper article questioned, "Who should be inquired of—supplied this woman, a well-known habitual drunkard, with a bottle of rum? Did she procure it herself from a public house? Was she drunk when she applied for it? And was she known to the landlord or landlady, or whoever might have served her? If this matter were inquired into, it might be that there would, at the next licensing term, be one public-house license less in Auckland than there is today." An inquest held at the nearby Newton Hotel on K'Road concluded that she had died from "excessive drinking."

It is not known where Sarah Underwood was raised after her mother died. She married William James Little in 1892—a meat preserver and caretaker—and they had at least one child, Lillian Edith Little. William James Little's father, Robert, arrived in the Colony in 1864 aboard the *Ganges*. He was an accomplished musician and was associated with several brass bands in Auckland. His obituary in 1923 said that he was the superintendent of the Sailors' Home and that "about 30 years ago he formed the first Salvation Army band in this city."

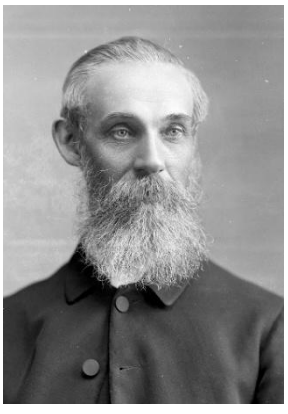
THE AUCKLAND STAR,
THURSDAY, JULY 22, 1937.

FALL FROM TRAMCAR.

Falling from a tramcar in Symonds Street at about 6.30 last evening, Mrs. Sarah Little, aged 72, of 80, Grey's Avenue, City, suffered head injuries and was admitted to the Auckland Hospital. Her condition is reported to be not serious.

Christina's *other* Surviving Children; Archibald, and Margaret MacVicar

Archibald MacVicar, son of Archibald MacVicar and Christina *McKellar* MacVicar, was born on 14 November 1860 in Auckland. He was only 11 when his mother died and was likely cared for by his older sister Margaret, who was 22. Margaret married the Irishman, Gerard Nixon on 7 May 1870 in the dwelling (Manse) of Rev. R F MacNicol (Presbyterian) in Union Street. Their first child of ten was born *seven* months later, on 6 December 1870, and was named Christina after Margaret's mother.



Rev. R F MacNicol. Auckland Libraries

When he was 21 years old, on 17 May 1881, Archibald married Harriet Woodward. He was a slaughterman and butcher at Daniel Neilson's in Onehunga. On 12 March 1886, a group of local youths—Charles Lane, J. Muir, A. Bray, and W. Simkins—were brought to court for harassing the MacVicar household on Selwyn Street, Onehunga; On the evening of 2 March, between 10 and 11 o'clock, they knocked on the door and ran away, then threw stones at the house. The boys were fined 10 shillings plus 5 shillings in costs each.

In February 1918, Archibald suffered a painful accident while driving his butcher's wagon loaded with meat. On Mt Smart Road, his three horses were startled by a passing dray carrying tiles, causing the wagon to strike a bank. Archibald was thrown to the ground but managed to hold on to the reins until the back wheel of the wagon ran over his foot, forcing him to release his grip.

The premises of D Neilson, butcher in Queen Street, Onehunga, and Rishworth dentist (centre left). Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 957-445

Later that year, following his wife's death, Archibald moved from Neilson Street to Angle Street, Te Papapa, where he became a farmer. He later moved to 31 Captain Springs Road, where he sold Spanish onion seeds.

When Daniel Neilson died on 21 August 1922, he bequeathed Archibald £500 (approximately NZ$60,000 to NZ$70,000 in 2025). Three other employees received £100. The larger inheritance for Archibald was likely to acknowledge his long—40-year—service with Neilson's butchery in Onehunga.

THE AUCKLAND STAR.
MONDAY, JULY 11, 1910.

Judgment was given by Mr. E. C. Cutten, S.M., this morning in the case heard at Onehunga on Monday last, in which the Inspector of Awards (Mr. R. T. Bailey) proceeded against D. Neilson, butcher, Onehunga (Mr. Schnauer), for causing, through his manager, his employees, A. McVickers and three others, to commence work, between April 7 and May 7, on Saturday mornings earlier than 6 a.m., contrary to the provision of the award. The evidence for the defence was that the men started work half-an-hour early on May 7 for their own convenience, as they wanted to get away earlier than usual. His Worship held that this defence might have availed if one or two of the men had started a little early, but when practically all the men, including the foreman, started half-an-hour early, the defendant must have been a party to the arrangement, and the utmost that could be taken was that the breach was committed for the convenience of the employees. A fine of £5, with costs 5/-, was inflicted.

Harriet *Woodward* MacVicar's Family Background

Harriet was born in Onehunga on 2 November 1863, the seventh of twelve children of Edmund Woodward and Harriet *Beswick* Woodward. In 1877, Harriet is recorded as attending the Onehunga District Girls' School. Her father, a private in H. M. 58th Foot Regiment, had served as a convict guard in Sydney and notoriously harsh Norfolk Island, before being sent to New Zealand on 23 December 1845 to join his regiment at Waiomio, where they were preparing for the battle at Ruapekapeka pā (the Bat's Nest) during the Flagstaff War.

Harriet's mother was the daughter of Charles Jefferson Beswick and Catherine *McNeil* Beswick. Charles was a soldier in H. M. 55th Regiment of Foot, taking part in the expedition to Kaffraria in South Africa in 1828, and later the expedition against the Rajah of Coorg in March and April 1834 at Mercara, India. He contracted syphilitic ophthalmia and gonorrhea of unknown cause while in Bellary, India, leading to suspicion that his health was rooted in a syphilitic taint in his constitution. On 20 June 1836, as Orderly-Sergeant of his company, he was caught drunk on duty, which resulted in his reduction back to Private.

Their sons James and William Jefferson died young—James in 1833 at 11 months old, and William in 1838 at just 1 month. Catherine died around 1839 in India, aged about 27. Harriet was about 5 years old at the time, suddenly without a mother and the only surviving child.

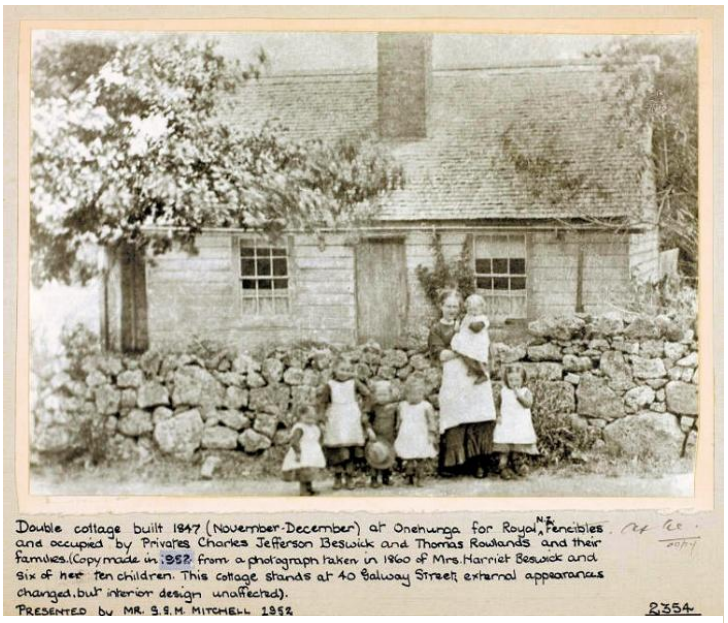
On 4 July 1840, Charles was discharged with a pension due to acute and chronic rheumatism, particularly in his left ankle, and he returned home to Stockport, England. On 1 August 1842, he married Harriet Rowland. Shortly afterwards, Charles enlisted in the Royal New Zealand Fencible Corps.

Together, with Charles's daughter Harriet and two children born in Manchester—William Charles (1844–1878) and Elizabeth Ann (1845–1848)—they sailed aboard the *Ramillies*, arriving in New Zealand on 5 August 1847, a journey of 111 days. The group included 80 Fencibles, 56 women, and 120 children. This detachment went on to establish a settlement in Onehunga.

Photograph c.1860s looking south along Hill Street, Onehunga towards Mangere Mountain, showing a military encampment (background, left). Source: Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 957-36

Onehunga's first permanent industry was John Bycroft's flour mill and biscuit factory, built in 1854 near the springs in Princes Street. Before that, locally grown wheat had to be transported to Eden Mill in Mt Eden. To avoid this long journey, Charles Beswick carved out a bowl in a large stone near his back door and used a pestle made of tough mānuka to grind wheat into flour.

In June 1869, Charles and Harriet *Rowland* Beswick appeared before the Onehunga Resident Magistrates Court. Charles accused his wife of desertion after she left him on 4 March, taking only her washing tubs. She left some children with him, but after a few days, he sent the children back, saying he could not support them. Charles was a pensioner receiving 1 shilling a day, along with a cottage and an acre. Mutual recriminations took place, revealing long-standing grievances on both sides. The Court ordered the matter to be adjourned for a week: "If the wife would return to her home with the children, who were not young, she could live in



This early photo of Charles Beswick's Fencible Cottage at 40 Galway Street, Onehunga (formerly Albert Street)—now at Howick Historical Village—is not accurately described, as the children could not all have been Harriet Beswick's. See: **https://www.rter.co.nz/onehunga.html**

comfort through their united efforts."

The Long Depression

The 1880s and 1890s are known as the long depression in New Zealand history. On 11 May 1894, Edmund Woodward applied for relief to the Auckland Hospital and Charitable Aid Board. At that time, the old soldier was 70 years of age and Harriet was 63. They had been in the Colony for 30 years. Relatives who could have contributed included the Smiths (Newton), the Barrs (Huia), the Storeys (Huia), the McVickers (Onehunga), the Kilgours (Huia), and two of his sons—Edmond, a bushman in Manganui, and Henry, a gumdigger in North Cape.

According to William Percival Storey in his 1948 letter to the Secretary of the Pioneer Woman's Memorial, his grandparents — Edmund Woodward and John Storey, both previously of the 58th Foot Regiment—were employed for many years by John Logan Campbell. They built many of the fences, planted oaks, olives, and other trees—"including the famous one on the hill that gives it the name 'One Tree Hill.'"

J. Logan Campbell in The Avenue, Cornwall Park, Auckland. Original photographic prints and postcards from file print collection, Box 10. Ref: PAColl-6208-60. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22307576

Charles Beswick died on 21 January 1870 in Onehunga from a disease of the stomach. Edmund Woodward died on 20 May 1904 at his daughter Elizabeth Ann Smith's residence in Newton Road—roughly where the North-Western Motorway now runs.

The Great War

Most of the men in the family who were physically fit and of eligible age (generally between 20 and 45 years) volunteered to serve in World War I. The total population of New Zealand at the time was around 1.1 million, with approximately 100,000 men enlisting.

Balfour Nixon, 1st XV Rugby, 1906. Auckland Grammar School Archives.

Archibald MacVicar's nephew, 2nd Lieutenant Balfour Nixon, landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. He later served in Egypt, Armentières, and at the Somme. He returned home on 14 July 1917 suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis and severe trench foot, which had caused a double hallux valgus deformity in both feet. He never fully recovered from his injuries and died on 9 June 1920. His older brother, Albert, a clerk in civilian life, was discharged after just over a year of service due to his "nervous temperament." His instructor wrote in the medical report that he was a "*danger to comrades when he had a rifle in his hands.*"

World War II

Archibald MacVicar's grandson, Herbert (Bert) Edward Godfery (Jnr.), son of Herbert Edward Godfery and Evelina Maria MacVicar, was born in Dargaville on 6 November 1918 — just 17 days before his father died in the 1918 Influenza Epidemic. Bert initially enlisted in the 1st Auckland Regiment, then transferred to the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) on 22 December 1940. After training in Canada, he was promoted to Sergeant, received his air gunner's badge, and was posted to No. 158 Squadron at East Moor, Yorkshire, as the front gunner of a Halifax bomber.

Sergeant H. E. Godfrey

Bert Godfery (Jnr.) received his education at Waiuku District School.

On the night of 19/20 July 1942, Bert's aircraft failed to return from a mission. All crew members were initially listed as missing. Later, the International Red Cross advised — via an official German source — that his body had washed ashore on the south coast of Borkum Island, Germany. He was officially presumed killed in action on 20 July 1942 and was buried with service honours in the Lutheran Cemetery, Borkum. At the time, his brothers Don and Ernie were serving in Italy.

Life dealt Evelina Maria *MacVicar* Godfery more than her share of hardship — the deaths of her twins, James and Eileen, her husband, and the loss of her eldest surviving son, Walter, killed when his motorcycle collided with a car at Waitoa at 1 a.m. on 16 January 1936 while returning from a dance at Springdale. Bert's death in the war brought yet another devastating blow.

The 1918 Influenza Epidemic

The highlight for Evelina Godfery in November 1918 was undoubtedly the birth of her son, Bert. But her happiness was quickly crushed by the death of her mother, Harriet *Woodward* MacVicar, eight days later on 14 November 1918, of influenza at Neilson Street, Onehunga, during the devastating 1918 influenza epidemic, known as the "Spanish Flu" and "Black November." A short time later, on 23 November 1918, her husband Herbert also died of influenza, aged just 27.

BEREAVEMENT NOTICES.

MR. A. MacVICAR and Family, of Anzio Street, Te Papapa, wish to convey their sincere thanks to all kind friends for expressions of sympathy in their recent sad bereavement also for letters, cards, telegrams, and floral emblems received, especially to Mr. and Mrs. C. Bray, Mr. and Mrs. W. Austin, Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, and Miss E. Taylor.

New Zealand Herald 25 November 1918

BEREAVEMENT THANKS.

MacVICAR.—The Family of the late Archibald MacVicar wish to thank all relatives and friends for floral emblems, cards and telegrams, also the nurses of the infirmary, Mrs Sherriff, and to sincerely thank Mr. and Mrs Robert Buchanan for their kindness to their dear father.

Auckland Star 20 July 1940

Bottom notice: The philanthropist Robert Buchanan married Euphemia Neilson, daughter of Daniel Neilson, Archibald's long-time employer. She instituted the Buchanan Award for the most promising pupils of Onehunga and Te Papapa schools.

The epidemic struck the wider family as well. Harriet's older sister, Elizabeth Ann *Woodward* Smith, died on 9 November at Clifton House on Newton Road. Elizabeth's son, William Francis Smith, succumbed to influenza on 12 November. Another nephew, Thomas Henry Storey, son of their sister Mary Jane, died on 31 October at the Military Hospital in Cannock Chase, Staffordshire, England, from influenza and pneumonia while on active service overseas.

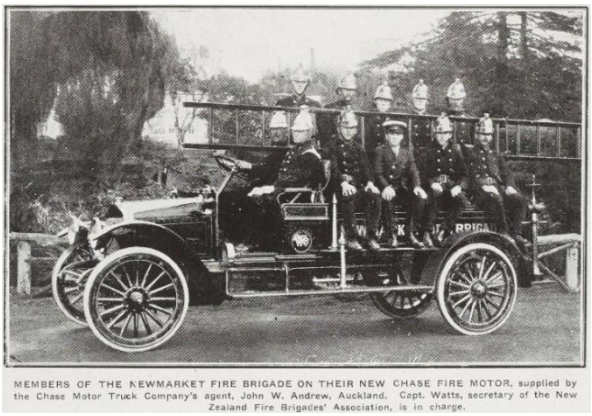
The epidemic had a high mortality rate among young adults and healthy individuals. With limited understanding of the virus, vaccines or antiviral treatments were unavailable. In New Zealand, it claimed at least 6,000 European lives, with more than 300 soldiers dying overseas. An estimated 2,160 Māori died, though Māori death registration was not compulsory at the time.

Archibald and Harriet's Children

Archibald and Harriet Woodward MacVicar had twelve children, including Evelina, all born in Onehunga. Tragically, their first four children did not survive past two months.

Their first child, also named Archibald, died on 13 February 1882, aged just 17 days. An inquest found that he had died from an overdose of Chlorodyne, a popular "patent medicine" containing morphine, chloroform, and cannabis extract. The overdose was found to have been "ignorantly administered" by his mother. Chlorodyne's high morphine content made it an effective painkiller but also highly addictive. Deaths like Archibald's — from accidental overdoses and suicides — led to increased public awareness of the drug's dangers and calls for stricter regulation.

Robert and Eva *MacVicar* Carter



MEMBERS OF THE NEWMARKET FIRE BRIGADE ON THEIR NEW CHASE FIRE MOTOR, supplied by the Chase Motor Truck Company's agent, John W. Andrew, Auckland. Capt. Watts, secretary of the New Zealand Fire Brigades' Association, is in charge.

Eva May MacVicar, Evelina's older sister, daughter of Archibald and Harriet *Woodward* MacVicar, was born on 12 July 1889 in Onehunga. In 1899, she was in the same class as her first cousin, Carrie Woodward, at Onehunga Public School. Their teacher was Miss M. G. Kirkbride.

Robert Carter was born on 23 May 1885 in Maryborough, Queensland, Australia. In April 1891, his family's home was destroyed when the wooden chimney, partly protected by iron on the inside, caught fire. Around 1909, the Carter family moved to Auckland. Robert worked as a plumber (when kerosene lamps and outhouses were the norm) and volunteered with the Newmarket Fire Brigade. When Mt Roskill Volunteer Fire Brigade began operations in April 1927, Robert Carter was among the founding members.

Robert and Eva married on 13 July 1910 at St Peter's Anglican Church in Onehunga, and they had eight children, one of whom was adopted. Their son Robert died on 20 June 1923 at 11 months old, and their daughter Marion died on 13 December 1925, aged 8, after falling from a timber pile at the Taupo Timber Company's mill in Newmarket.

Onehunga Salvation Army Band 1919. The Salvation Army Heritage Centre & Archives

The family, like many of the wider MacVicar relatives, became closely involved with the Salvation Army. Although Christina MacVicar's death in 1871 occurred long before Eva was born, the story of what happened to her — widely reported at the time — may have shaped later attitudes toward alcohol and hardship. The Salvation Army's focus on temperance and practical support would have aligned closely with the values of

a family that had not forgotten Christina's fate.

The Salvation Army was established in New Zealand in 1883. Services in Onehunga began on 28 March 1886 with the opening of the new Salvation Army Hall. Eva MacVicar appears three times in *The War Cry* during 1905–06, attending the Corps Cadets, a Bible-study and training programme for young people. She was about 15 or 16 at the time, already taking part in the movement that would become a steady thread through her adult life.

On 24 December 1928, Robert became Band Secretary—a role he held until his death. It was Robert, one would think, who encouraged his son James William Carter to learn the euphonium. Eva held several positions, including Treasurer of the women's group, *The Home League*. They met weekly and followed principles of worship, education, fellowship, and service. In the 1930s, Eva and her daughter Esther were Sunday School teachers (Company Guards), and she remained active in this role into the 1950s. Esther was also a designated seller of *The War Cry*, often at local pubs and outdoor events. Another daughter, Gwen, served as a patrol leader for the Salvation Army's Life Saving Guards, the equivalent of Guides.

Onehunga Salvation Army Hall 1920's. The Salvation Army Heritage Centre & Archives

The Depression Years

After the war, New Zealand's economy declined significantly. By 1929, it had fallen into a full depression. During this period, jobs became scarce, and many families faced increasing uncertainty as unemployment rose. Robert Carter was among those affected; in 1927, he applied for relief due to "lack of work." His sister-in-law, Hilda *MacVicar* Cooke, from Papakura, also applied for relief, in 1926. Her husband was in gaol, and they were living apart. With seven children to support, they had "insufficient means."

Cooke. Charles Powell.

Robert endured these difficult years until his heart gave out on 8 September 1948 at 50 Princes Street, Onehunga. Eva May Carter died on 15 November 1977. Over her 88 years, she moved seventeen times—mainly in Onehunga.

1896 Selwyn Street, Onehunga

1905 Neilson Street, Onehunga

1911 Second Avenue, Kingsland

1914 Church Street, Onehunga

1919 Angle Street, Onehunga

1919 King Street, Newmarket

1923 137 Carlton Gore Road, Grafton

1925 10 King Street, Newmarket

1926 55 Mays Road, Onehunga

1927 31 Hill Street, Onehunga

1928 97 Arthur Street, Onehunga

1928 99 Mays Road, Onehunga

1935 38 Princes Street, Onehunga

1946 50 Princes Street, Onehunga

1963 45 Fyvie Avenue, Mr Roskill

1969 69 Buckland Road, Epsom

1977 28 Orakau Avenue, Epsom

Robert and Eva May *MacVicar* Carter

The family is interred at Waikaraka Cemetery, Onehunga, Area 1 Block I Lot No 113, 114 A&B.

Russell Carter - **Carter Family Website:** https://www.rter.co.nz
07/08/2025