
MATHESON

1875-1975

An Otago Family History

By E. H. Matheson

AUTHORS BIOGRAPHY



E.H. Matheson
Author of this booklet

Elliot Hugh Matheson eldest surviving son of Dougald and Mary Matheson was born at "Attadale" in 1906. Was educated at Strath Taieri and Waitaki Boys' High School. Has farmed at "Attadale" all his life and has taken an active part in many organisations related to the land. He is a past president and life member of the Strath Taieri A. & P. Society and is the current president of the Otago A. & P. Society. For six years he represented the Counties of Taieri and Peninsula on the Otago Catchment Board and for a time held the position of deputy chairman. For 20 years was involved in rabbit board affairs, was chairman of the Macraes Board for 13 years, and was the first chairman of the large East Otago Pest Destruction Board which embraces eight former boards.

In 1940 he married Helen Forrest Walker of Outram whose father was a well known blacksmith and horseman. Her Grandfather William Snow was a well known Taieri personality in earlier days. Of their family of one daughter and four sons, Hugh and Alister are at "Attadale". Hugh married Leone McMaster of Middlemarch and has 2 sons and 1 daughter. Robert who married Maureen Strett of Dunedin is a draughtsman in an Oamaru building firm, and David who married Elizabeth Haggitt is Dalgety's representative in Roxburgh. Helen lives in her mothers old home in Outram and her interests are overseas travel, horses, horticulture, music and early Taieri history.

INTRODUCTION

I have tried to present this family history in the form of a story rather than a chapter of statistics. In covering a period of 100 years it is impossible to avoid some small discrepancies in dates and sequence of events, but basically it is a true record of the family's exploits. I have not dealt in detail with the fourth and fifth generations as I feel this age group being still in its prime, could be better dealt with by some future family historian. I wish to thank all those who have supplied information and material for this story. It has given me great pleasure and interest to compile this booklet and I hope it may be of assistance to some future family historian.

THE HIGHLAND SCENE

The closing years of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century were marked by many changes in the way of life and outlook of the Scottish Highlands. The clan system which had endured for centuries was weakening. The hereditary chiefs were no longer filling the role of guardians and leaders of their people, but were becoming landlords of more fixed abode and property. Many of them were tempted to change the pattern of land use from crofting to sheep grazing and deer forests. This led to the terrible brutalities of the clearances which continued into the early nineteenth century. Many dispossessed families were looking for a new and freer life abroad. At this period discord and disruption in the Scottish Church also led to discontent and uncertainty. This combined with the harshness of the climate and the small hope of an agricultural future led to large scale emigration to America, Canada, Australia and later to New Zealand.

Flora McPherson in her excellent book "Watchman against the World" which traces the migration of Norman McLeod and his people to Nova Scotia and later to found the Waipu Highland settlement in New Zealand, gives a glimpse of the Highland landscape.

"When in the last years of the eighteenth century, a man of the northern Highlands looked beyond himself for security, he had two resources — his God and his tribe."

In the world around him there was little comfort. Bare mountains towered over his rugged land. At their bases and in the country by the Atlantic shore the gloomy heath was studded with piles of grey rocks. Worn into weird shapes, they stood eerie in the twilight or the half light of an approaching storm. Not even a light ribbon of road cut the brooding blackness of the land."

"The sounds, too, were harsh and austere. Breakers crashed on the western shore. Inland the sounds were of water dashing down the hillsides, of rain lashed by endless days of western wind, and of the birds wild cries."

It is from this period and environment that the two central figures in our story emerge — Murdo and Christina Matheson.

Murdo Matheson was born at Hartfield, Applecross Rosshire in 1823, a son of Dougald and Rebecca Matheson (nee McLennan). Little is recorded of Murdo's father but there is evidence to suggest that he was a retired army officer. He must have been a man of some substance and responsibility as he was able to send Murdo to a boarding school where he proved a receptive pupil with an aptitude for mathematics. The fact that Murdo and his wife were better educated than many of their contemporaries had a strong influence on their lives, and this appreciation of the worth of knowledge was passed on to their family who made the most use of any facilities for education that were offering. After leaving school Murdo worked on an estate in Invernesshire as a shepherd. He married Christina Elliot who was a dairy maid on the same estate. Originally a Border family the Elliots had moved to Inverness. Murdo later set up in business as a butcher in Dingwall but this venture seems to have failed. In 1854 he obtained a position on the island of Eigg as a shepherd, where he remained with his wife and son Dougald for eighteen months. His employer a Mr McKenzie later found him employment as head shepherd on the island of Rum where he was in charge of six hundred sheep. The island was owned by the Marquis of Salisbury, but leased by a Captain McLeod. Little was seen of these people except in the shooting season, as the island was also a deer forest.

The terrain and climate were similar to that described earlier in this chapter. It was in these austere and remote surroundings that their family of twelve children were reared. Murdo's wages were very small and one can imagine with such a large family frugality must have been the price of survival. Their humble dwelling although boasting of a chimney must have been by today's standards very crowded. Their staple diet of fish, oatmeal and potatoes with a meagre allowance of mutton, and with the added luxury of an occasional liver or kidneys from a deer during the shooting season was equally spartan.

The education of the children was the parents responsibility supplemented by the loan of second hand books supplied by

the Ulster Church. Murdo's nephew David Beatson a divinity student was a regular visitor to the island in the summer months and acted as tutor to the family. The tiny fishing village of Kilmory was their only social centre. Many of the inhabitants of the island only spoke the Gaelic tongue and folklore and superstition played a large part in their lives. Although Dougald was able to communicate in this tongue the parents did not encourage their family to learn it, but to concentrate on more useful aspects of their education.

So the family grew and enjoyed the humble pleasures of childhood such as playing with the seals and the illicit catching of an occasional salmon in the streams. Later the older brothers found part time employment on the fishing vessels owned by a bachelor uncle John Matheson who also owned a store in Skye supplying fishermen's gear. The rigours and perils of this life were perhaps a good training for the hardships they were to later experience in far off New Zealand. Dougald was also a skilled handler of smaller craft and was noted for his daring exploits with small boats. A powerful swimmer he saved lives on several occasions in the treacherous waters that surrounded the island.

With their education and sense of responsibility to a large family the parents must have been deeply conscious of the limitations of their life and surroundings, and the futility of the future. Two of Christina's brothers, James and Matthew and a married sister Elizabeth Beattie had emigrated to New Zealand in the early sixties and were to found families that were to be contemporaries of the Mathesons until the present day. Robert and Henry Beattie eventually settled in the Strath Taieri district and their descendants still occupy property there. Mrs Helen Thompson a daughter of Henry Beattie is the author of the Otago Centennial publication "East of the Rock and Pillar". Correspondence from New Zealand no doubt whetted the interest of the Mathesons in the thought of emigration. In March 1871 the family suffered its first bereavement in the loss of their infant son Archibald Duncan aged 7 months. A worse family tragedy was to follow in September 1873 when five members of the family died within three days of a diphtheria epidemic that swept the islands.

Even in a period when a high child mortality rate was accepted with fatalistic calm, this was surely a crushing blow by any standard. What sustained this family in this dark hour? The headstone in the lonely cemetery at Kilmory bears the sombre legend.

"Erected by Murdo Matheson in memory of his beloved children

Rebecca who died Sept. 8th 1873 aged 17 years

John who died Sept. 9th 1873 aged 12 years

Christina Ann who died Sept. 8th 1873 aged 8 years

Murdo who died Sept. 10th 1873 aged 6 years

William John who died Sept. 9th 1873 aged 4 years

Archibald Duncan who died April 9th 1871 aged 7 months

*"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not,
for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."*

This monument is still in good repair and has been a source of interest and speculation to many visitors to the island. The cemetery has been visited by several third and fourth generation members of the family and some photographs are available.

In the year that followed this tragedy it became apparent to the remaining members of the family that a change of scene for the parents would be necessary if life was to go on. The Minister of the Parish of the small isles the Rev. John Sinclair was no doubt a help to the family in this trying period. After much discussion it was decided that the family should emigrate to Otago, New Zealand, where Christina's two brothers and sister were established. This it was hoped would be at least a partial escape from the grief and despair that was clouding their lives.

A NEW LIFE BEGINS

In July 1875 the family sailed from Glasgow in the Shaw Saville sailing clipper ship *Auckland* reaching Port Chalmers after an eighty eight day voyage. The *Auckland* was a good vessel of her kind, new, fast and with competent officers and crew. Dougald

who had a youthful urge to become a merchant navy captain, having learned logarithms from his father and having read a useful amount of navigation theory, charted the ships entire course and was only three miles out on arrival.

The family was to suffer yet another loss in the death of their only remaining daughter Jessie Margaret, aged 3 years, who died shortly after their arrival, from the effects of the long sea voyage.

The family remained in barracks in Dunedin for some time till arrangements for employment were made. Dougald recalled the continuous rain that fell in Dunedin after their arrival and the family was no doubt relieved when they were able to move inland. Murdo and Christina and the youngest son Alexander spent some months with John and Elizabeth Beattie at Maungatua on the Taieri until they moved to Strath Taieri to take up a position on the large "Cottesbrook" Station. Prior to this Christina's brother James Elliot had been head shepherd on Cottesbrook and it was no doubt through these connections that the position was obtained.

At this period inland Otago was dominated by the large sheep stations and it was understandable that these Highland immigrants would graduate to their traditional calling of shepherds. Cottesbrook was typical of the times, carrying 80,000 sheep and embracing all that area east of the Taieri River to almost the outskirts of Dunedin. The various outposts of the station were manned by married shepherds, the Mathesons being situated at "Bald Hill" in a two roomed cottage with an attic, approximately eight miles from what was later to become the township of Middlemarch. Further information on early Cottesbrook is contained in an article the writer contributed to the Taieri Herald some years ago. A revised version of this is printed as a supplement to this booklet.

Although the Otago settlement had been established for over a quarter of a century the interior was still an empty land, and the newcomers must have had mixed feelings about their new environment as they gradually adapted to the new life. Days of Central Otago sunshine, the burning heat of summer, and the fierce dry winds that swept these uplands were surely in sharp contrast to

the misty and rain drenched Highland climate they had left. The isolation of these station outposts was almost complete, and although only eight miles from the station headquarters there seems to have been little communication at this stage among the women of the area.

Conditions of employment on these early stations were less than benevolent. Stores arrived at six monthly intervals. Tea, sugar and flour were the only items supplied by the station, although the shepherds were allowed to kill station sheep as required. It is known that the Mathesons kept a cow, home made butter, vegetables, and perhaps the honey from a precious hive of bees went towards the variation of their spartan diet. Items such as rice, cornflour and sago were rarely available and were considered luxury in this humble household.

The youngest son Alexander often recalled his late childhood on the station when helping his father with sheep work, of hard days spent in the shearing shed where 80,000 sheep were shorn annually, of hunting wild pigs and cattle in the matagouri scrub and the shooting of pheasants.

Perhaps we should pause here and speculate on what philosophy of life sustained these people throughout lives that by today's standards must seem lonely and unrewarding. Although obviously possessed of a deep piety and faith they seemed to have risen above the harsh pattern of religious observance practiced and insisted upon by so many of the Presbyterians of that period. Before their arrival in New Zealand the ritual of family worship was regularly observed, but was discontinued in this country no doubt owing to the scattered state of the family. A fatalistic serenity seems to have tempered their lives against the blows of fate.

As far as can be ascertained Christina was a kind and gentle woman, was a friend to her children and in later years at Hartfield made many friends among the closely-knit community that was evolving in that district. Very much a woman of her time, she thought it immodest for Dougald's wife to accompany him to a wool sale "among all they men", and a touch of Celtic superstition as she was upset at the same daughter-in-law weighing a baby. Of a more reserved disposition Murdo was more of an

authoritarian parent as befitted the times. Arriving in the country after middle life he never really adapted to colonial methods of stock husbandry. The cumulative effects of his life's hardships and successive bereavements combined to make him more withdrawn as time passed. The pain of rheumatism was also another burden to him in his final years. Although Christina continued to correspond with friends and relatives in Scotland and with a brother Robert in Canada, the break with the old life seems to have been complete, and in no part of their New Zealand story do we read of the ache of exile.

THE HUNGER FOR LAND

The last two decades of the nineteenth century were not prosperous ones for Otago. The prosperity of the earlier gold rushes was passing and many unattached men were looking for a more secure way of life than the goldfields or the transient nature of employment on the large sheep stations. Many of Scottish and Irish background, some still conscious of the memory of the clearances and Irish famines were looking for the security of their own "rood of land".

One John McKenzie whose family had witnessed the injustices of the clearances, was a rising force in Otago local government and was later to become Minister of Lands in the central Government. Land laws and tenure are too involved to study in this story, but enough to say that McKenzie was the force that eventually brought in a land settlement policy which saw the subdivision of many of the large sheep stations. Such was to be the fate of Cottesbrook which was sub-divided in 1885. This release of land for settlement continued into the twentieth century and led to better land use and consolidation of the rural scene.

There must have been some recognition of the services rendered by the Cottesbrook shepherds as all these families were allot-

ted small grazing runs in the area and many of the family names remain in the area to this day.

After eight years at Bald Hill, Murdo took up the lease of a grazing run situated on the North Eastern boundary of Cottesbrook, on the Taieri ridge which faces onto the Taieri river, this run being part of the former Deepdell Station.

HARTFIELD

The move to Hartfield (named after Murdo's birthplace) was the beginning of the third and final chapter in the lives of Murdo and Christina Matheson. This was to prove perhaps the most contented and rewarding period of their lives. However, they were still to know frugal living, disappointment and minor disaster, the loss of their woolshed by fire being among their set backs. A series of dry seasons, poor prices for wool and sheep, and the approach and final invasion by the rabbit pest were some of the trials of their early years. It is hard to appreciate today the disaster the rabbit pest was to these early settlers and later generations.

The family lived under canvas until a house was built. At this point James and Matthew returned from their inland employment to assist their parents in their new venture. The economic rigours of the times are reflected in some of the prices ruling at that time. Hartfield wool was sold for one shilling per pound and as low as five pence. History also records that the Hartfield wool clip was one of the first to be carried by rail from Middlemarch to Dunedin.

Although the new home was relatively remote the nearby mining township of Hyde and later the settlement of Moonlight gave a sense of permanence and security to the area, and a social community was gradually evolving. Many of the contemporary Hyde and Moonlight names still persist; Ramsay, Kinney, Prendergast, Williamson, Dowling, Roy and Heffernan being some that come to mind.

INLAND TO THE LAKES

We must leave the Hartfield scene for a time to trace the movements of the remainder of the family following their arrival in Dunedin. Three of the remaining brothers Dougald aged 23, James aged 20 and Robert aged 16 journeyed inland in a waggon party passing through Palmerston, Dunback and the present pig root road that even at that time was one of the gateways to Central Otago. Their eventual destination was the Wakatipu district, where employment had been arranged on Cecil Peak Station owned by Hallenstein and Wither. Dougald often recalled the poor state of the roads and even when doubling their teams how the hardy waggoners had difficulty in negotiating the many quagmires along the way.

Let us try to recapture the scene Central Otago must have presented at that period. It was still a harsh and lonely land dominated by the large sheep stations and although the gold boom was waning there were still some mining townships still in their roaring days. The vastness of the timeless landscape and contrasts in colour and climate must have made a lasting impact on the newcomers. Little did they know that within the next hundred years this was to become one of the play grounds of the southern hemisphere. This must have seemed high adventure to young men recently released from the confines of a long sea voyage, who were physically strong and had nothing to lose.

Information about the movements of Matthew at this point is not recorded but it is known that he also graduated to the inland station life. This station life with its many hardships was to be the lot of the brothers for many years to come, punctuated by brief visits to Bald Hill when transport and finance allowed.

The diaries of their employer Mr Wither record the wages paid to the brothers. Under the date November 15th 1875 is the following entry: "Brought Dougald, James and Robert Matheson over in the boat. Dougald and James employed by me at 55 pounds a year each and Robert at 10/- (ten shillings) a week". The same diary records Mr Withers trip in April 1876 to Central Otago to purchase sheep. The following entries are of interest: "Saturday

April 8th 1876. Took delivery of 977 sheep from Blackstone Hill Station. Dougald and Robert started on their way from Queenstown to meet me". "Thursday 20th April 1876. Drove sheep to Queenstown. Kept the sheep in the park. Took five loads of sheep across the lake in the "Jane Williams" later "Ben Lomond". "Friday April 21st 1876. Rowed over to Queenstown on our boat, took Robert as far as the island. Dougald, James and Robert drove sheep we crossed the day before round to woolshed (Cecil Peak)". "Saturday April 22nd. Crossed all the sheep from the park. Dougald and James watching the sheep by the little island."

High country shepherding with its dangers and hardships was a challenge to these "new chums" as new arrivals were called in those days. Mr Wither was a kind and just employer and was a friend to these young men. This friendship based on mutual regard was to last throughout their lives. In later years when the Withers had left Cecil Peak Dougald and his wife were regular visitors to their Dunedin home.

The mountain gradeur of the Wakatipu area, early Queenstown life and personalities, the many types of men met among the transient labour force that peopled the stations and goldfields, were a life long source of reminiscence by the brothers.

Dougald recalled the severity of the winters and the ever recurring task of snowraking, the fear of avalanches, and the terrible fatigue of work that was only for the physically strong. He spoke of the man who gave Eichardts Hotel its name, an ex Prussian officer of commanding presence, of a German military deserter who even in remote Queenstown lived in constant fear of recapture.

Intrigued by his environment and its many uncharted areas Dougald made several exploring trips to the West Coast. These trips although of lasting interest were accompanied by severe physical hardship and on one occasion he and his companion were fortunate to survive the ordeal.

How long the brothers remained at "Cecil Peak" is not recorded, but Dougald spoke of employment in the Glenorchy area and surrounding districts. As it is difficult to maintain a sequence of dates in a story like this it is sufficient to say the brothers followed a free lance existence as shepherds and drovers, punctuated

with excursions back to Hartfield to visit their parents. It is known that Robert graduated to Blackstone Hill Station where he was associated with his uncle James Elliot. Prior to this he had visited the North Island where the habits of the Maoris greatly intrigued him. The fact that Matthew Elliot was situated at Coal Creek, Roxburgh lends authority to the belief that his nephew Matthew spent considerable time in this district. The writer recalls his mention of experiences on the large Teviot Station.

Following a period of employment in the Palmerston-Waihemo area Dougald took over a property at Lake Ohau in the McKenzie Country. This venture although embarked upon with enthusiasm ended in failure owing to successive snow losses and the economic rigours of the times. Although an economic failure the years spent here were not unrewarding. His love of exploring unknown country had plenty of scope. He is credited with discovering and giving the name to the beautiful Lake Matheson in Westland. During his stay at Ohau he was able to meet and accommodate in his humble dwelling many interesting people, many of them scientists, explorers, and overseas tourists. It was in this chapter of his life that he took up photography as a hobby which he practiced for the remainder of his life.

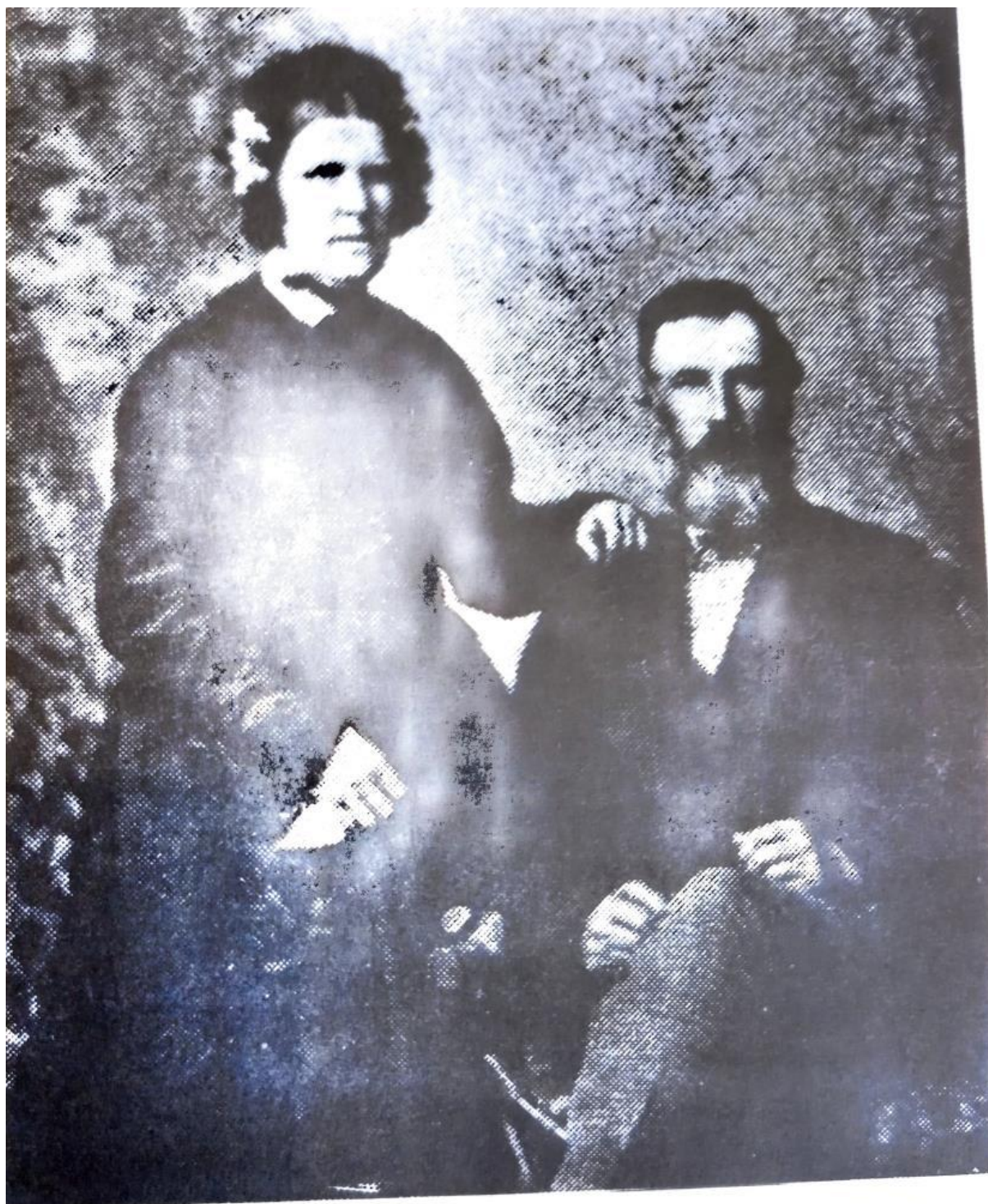
THE FAMILY IS UNITED AGAIN

In July 1897 Dougald married Mary Hyndman, a University graduate and a daughter of Scottish parents. Her father had come to New Zealand with little else than the skills of his carpentry trade. During his life he built a sound building business in Christchurch and owned considerable house property in the city.

After their marriage Dougald and his wife came to Bald Hill to take over the 640 acres of freehold and 4,000 acres leasehold now known as "Attadale", named after the seat of the Matheson clan in Scotland.



Matheson headstone in the Kilmory Cemetery, Island of Rum



Murdo and Christina Matheson



Alexander McKenzie Matheson
1863 - 1956



**Alex Matheson with "Bonnie", a New Zealand
champion at head, pull and yard.**

Although this run had been leased by several absentees since the sub-division of Cottesbrook Dougalds arrival saw the first formation of a permanent homestead. A new four roomed house was built adjoining the original cottage occupied by Murdo and Christina. This cottage remained until 1936 when renovations necessitated its demolition. The original timber was still sound and is still in use today as part of outhouses. A woolshed was later built and a set of stone sheepyards, a relic of station days remained in use for many years.

In 1909 the lease of 7,800 acres known as "Stoneburn" was taken over. Although not actually adjoining "Attadale" this area was used only for dry sheep and proved to be a valuable supplement to the lower "Attadale" country. In 1925 a small grazing run and some freehold was purchased from Williamson brothers of Nenthorn. The freehold of this property was released for rehabilitation after the Second World War and was taken over by Trevor Tisdall (a member of an early Strath Taieri family) and his wife Audrey who was a daughter of M.A. Matheson.

Dougald remained at "Attadale" for the remainder of his life and knew the limitations and frustrations of life on the land during his generation. It is difficult for the present generation to understand the isolation and domestic discomfort that accompanied life in the country at that period. Perhaps this second generation of women, many of whom had come from more sophisticated surroundings suffered more from the rigours of the times than the original pioneers whose former life in Scotland seems to have been noted for its austerity. However, conditions were gradually improving, roading, communication and transport were developing. The first telephone in the district was erected from "Attadale" to A. Horn's store in Middlemarch in 1911. The railway had reached Middlemarch in 1894 and reached Hyde in 1897. From 1914 onward the motor car was no longer a curiosity on the roads.

Of their family of three sons and one daughter the oldest son Ian Dougald died in July 1921 aged 17 years. The remaining sons Elliot Hugh and Peter Alister managed the property after their father's death in 1931 until 1934 when Peter left to take up a career in aviation.

Born in 1909 Peter was educated at Strath Taieri and Otago Boys' High School. He learned to fly in 1934 and joined Union Airways in 1936, and on the outbreak of war joined the N.Z.A.F. After serving as an instructor in New Zealand he was stationed at Green Island and Jacquinot Bay in the Solomons. At the conclusion of the war he was present at the surrender of the Japanese on board the aircraft carrier "Glory". Later he accepted the surrender of the Japanese air force at Jacquinot Bay. He was commended for valuable service in the air and was awarded the O.B.E. On returning to New Zealand he rejoined Union Airways and later N.A.C. in 1947, and became chief pilot in 1950 and before his retirement in 1966 held the position of operations manager.

Formerly a footballer and golfer his chief sport over the last twenty years has been clay target shooting. In this sport he has won many trophy matches and about 50 championships at island, provincial and national level. In the administrative side he has served for fifteen years on the N.Z. Executive Council of the Gun Club Assn. and was for a term president.

In 1939 he married Gwen Dallas a daughter of William Dallas who farmed at "Mt Stoker" Middlemarch and prior to this at Te Houka Balclutha. Their son Ian married Elizabeth Andrew of Christchurch in 1964 and they have a family of one son and one daughter. Mary Christina remained at "Attadale" until her mother's death in 1953 when she moved to Dunedin. Her interests have been overseas travel, St John Ambulance and family history.

Dougald throughout his life took a keen interest in the affairs of men and supported many local organisations in the district. He was most active with patriotic work during World War One and served for several years on the Taieri County Council. He was a keen observer of politics both at home and abroad. During his life he studied many subjects outside his calling, including, surveying, navigation, mathematics and astronomy. His early life gave him a love of the sea which remained with him through the years. Under different circumstances he could have been a master mariner or an explorer. A strong man physically the hardships of his life never daunted him. He died in March 1931 aged 78 years.

Robert Elliot was still at Blackstone hill when he married

Margaret A. Johnstone in June 1897. Margaret was the daughter of Scottish-Irish parents, her father being involved in the gold rushes and later farmed in the Blackstone Hill district.

This part of Central Otago was noted for the severity of its winters and Robert often recalled the terrible hardship suffered by man and beast in the 1895 and 1903 snowstorms. Like many others this station was no doubt under the shadow of sub-division, and Robert, when an opportunity offered in 1904 to return to Strath Taieri, saw the possibility of an easier way of life in a more congenial climate.

He took over one of the runs formerly owned by Hunter-Weston just north of the Cottesbrook homestead and named it "Dry Ridge". No name was more appropriate for this whole Taieri Ridge area, as dry seasons, dust storms and rabbit infestation were to hamper progress for many decades to come.

Robert and his family of three sons and one daughter remained at "Dry Ridge" until 1915 when "Greenvale" station in the Garston-Fairlight area was purchased. The limitations of "Dry Ridge" no doubt moved Robert to look for wider fields. Their stay at "Dry Ridge" had been saddened by the death of their young son Murdo at the age of 8 years. "Dry Ridge" was taken over by Robert Elliot a son of James Elliot who renamed the property "Strathavon". For the last 25 years "Strathavon" has been occupied by Mr and Mrs L.N. James and their family. This highly developed and well appointed property is the home of one of the South Islands leading Hereford cattle studs.

The conditions at "Greenvale" must have caused some misgivings to a man now in his late fifties returning to the rigours of high country. However, the added scope and potential of the venture maintained his enthusiasm. By this time the brothers Matthew and Alexander had sold "Hartfield" and retired to Middelmarsh. Alex still active and at a loose end was a tower of strength to his brother in the early years at "Greenvale". When the 1918 influenza epidemic swept over New Zealand the "Greenvale" household was not spared. Robert was stricken to such an extent that he never fully regained his former health and strength. He died in July 1919 aged 60 years. This left another gap in a generation of

the family that had known so much bereavement. After his death his widow Margaret retired to Dunedin where she died in June 1944.

Uncle "Bob" as he was known to his nephews and nieces will always be remembered as a genial and fun loving man, and one can imagine that in his young station days he could have been quite a practical joker and "hard case". An excellent stockman and horseman he loved stock work for its own sake, and he was able to fulfill his love for cattle on the wider horizons of "Greenvale".

Of the remaining members of Robert and Margarets family the oldest son Robert remained for a time at "Greenvale", but later left to take up a career in aviation. He was a renowned flyer with the R.A.F. in Iraq in the early 1920's. Later he returned to New Zealand a competent glider pilot and flew the first mails across Cook Strait from Wellington to Christchurch. After a long illness he died in December 1937.

The second son James Elliott was educated at Strath Taieri primary and Waitaki Boy's High School. At high school he had a fine record in sport, representing his school in rugby, cricket, boxing and swimming. He attended law school at Otago University. He practiced law in Dunedin and Invercargill until 1939. An early volunteer in the Second World War, he was sent to the Officers Cadet Training Unit, gaining the rank of lieutenant. After serving in Egypt until 1942 he returned to New Zealand with the rank of Captain. For the remainder of the war he was an instructor in mortars and bombs. He married Mary MacCormack in July 1942. They had a family two daughters and one son. Anna, Gillian and John.

After the war the family moved to Pahiatua where he again practiced law. He became a well known citizen in the town and continued his interest in golf a game at which he excelled having won an Otago Championship in 1939. He died on the 11th March 1970 aged 67 years.

The only daughter Anna was educated at Ngapuna school, High St. school and Columba College. She trained as a hairdresser and journeyed to England in 1935. Married Eric Tyrrell in 1936 and returned to New Zealand in 1939. Their son Robert John Matheson Tyrrell was twice married and there are four grandchildren, Mark, Nicolas, David and Stephen. Mrs Tyrrell is living

in Pitt St., Dunedin.

James who had journeyed to Wakitipu with his brothers eventually returned to "Hartfield" and later acquired a small grazing run adjoining the southern boundary of "Hartfield", thus consolidating the family footing in this Taieri Ridge locality. He lived at "Hartfield" until 1902 when he married Agnes Elliott, daughter of a well known local family. At this time he acquired the property known as Taieri Lake on the West-side of the Taieri river, where he remained until his retirement to Middlemarch in 1918. Taieri Lake was purchased by James Dunnery a former owner of the large Rocklands station. A few years later the property was taken over by the Allan brothers Robert, James and John who were nephews of James Dunnery. Today Taieri Lake is ably carried on by Ross Allan and his young family.

James will always be remembered by the family and community as a quiet and steadfast man who was content to devote his life to his family and property. Although of a retiring nature he had a strong sense of responsibility toward the community. He served for a term on the Waihemo County Council when living at "Hartfield". Some sacrifice must have been required in this office as attendance at meetings involved travel to and from Palmerston by horseback this often meaning three days away from home. After his retirement to Middlemarch he served on several local committees and was president of the Strath Taieri A. & P. Society in 1921. Their home "Inglenuik" was noted for its hospitality and was a meeting place for the family. He died at his home in July 1922 aged 67 years.

Of their family of two sons and two daughters the elder son Murdo Alexander remained at Taieri Lake after his father's retirement. In 1927 he took over part of the southern area of Taieri Lake and named it "Wandle" after a stream of that name in Scotland. He married Gladys Fisher, daughter of a local family, who on her mother's side traced back to the McPhee family who were early Cottesbrook shepherds.

Early in his life "Alick" as he was known showed an interest in shepherding and the handling of dogs. One of his first dogs "Joe" a heading dog purchased from the late Martin Heffernan

was to prove the foundation of a long line that produced trial winners for many decades to come. Under the kindly guidance of his Uncle Alick he was soon taking part in local dog trials. This was the starting point of a long and successful career in the sport. So impressive in his record as competitor, administrator and judge that it deserves recording in some detail.

Some of the top titles won by his dogs include:— “Vale” New Zealand Champion and three times South Island huntaway and slew; “Sid” New Zealand Champion huntaway; “Bonnie” New Zealand Champion head, pull and yard, and South Island short head and yard; “Snow” South Island long head champion twice and North Island short head and yard once. “Gale” South Island Champion huntaway; “Snowflake” South Island long head champion. Seconds and third placings in all three championships have been won with “Glen”, “Scott”, “Berwick Don” and “Fog”.

In the administrative field some of the offices he held include, Past President Strath Taieri Collie Club, a foundation member of the Otago Provincial Association and was secretary for 8 years and President for 4 years. He represented Otago on the South Island Association and was for many years one of the four vice-presidents. He helped to form the New Zealand sheepdog trial association.

Although best remembered for his prominence in the dog trial sport he found time for involvement in community affairs, having served for two terms on the Otago Catchment Board and was a past president of the Strath Taieri A. & P. Society. He was also a Justice of the Peace. His wife, Gladys, will always be remembered for her kindness and hospitality at the “Wandle” homestead and along with their family of two daughters and two sons were hosts to a wide circle of friends and relations and young and old can all recall many happy occasions spent in this family circle. Alick and Gladys later retired to Middlemarch where Alick died in January 1966. His wife died in September 1970.

Of their family the sons Douglas and Bruce have carried on the “Wandle” property. Some years ago the property was subdivided, Bruce remaining at the “Wandle” homestead and Douglas building a new homestead on the southern portion, this he named “Kilmory”. Douglas married Heather Martin and they have a

family of three sons and one daughter. Bruce married Nancy Miller and they have a family of four daughters and one son. The elder daughter Audrey married Trevor Tisdall a member of an early Strath Taieri family and they have a family of three sons and one daughter. The second daughter Christina married Malcolm Murrar whose mother was formerly a Thompson of "Foulden Hill". They have a family of three daughters.

The elder daughter Christina Elliott was born at Taieri Lake in 1905. Along with her elder brother Murdo Alexander her early education was with a governess at their home. A detached sundried brick building was the "school" to which they were called by an old cow bell. This was the only means of education in those days for many families until transport conditions improved. Chris later attended Ngapuna school and finished her education at St. Hilda's College Dunedin. In 1935 she married Ian Nicolson and after farming for a year at "Bonspiel" Moa Creek, moved to "Wilden Homestead" Moa Flat. Her husband died in 1946. Their family of two daughters Jennifer and Annette are both married. Jennifer married Lisle Morgan in 1961 and Annette married Bryan Hurring in 1962. After her husband's death Chris returned to Middlemarch to care for her mother and on her mother's death came to Dunedin where she married Alexander Gibson in 1961. She was widowed in 1968 and still lives in Dunedin.

The second son James Thomas Elliott was born at "Taieri Lake" in 1914 and educated at Strath Taieri and Otago Boys' High School. On leaving school he worked for his brother at "Wandle" and later in South Canterbury. He joined the air force in 1940 and served on Hudson bombers in the Islands and Guadal Canal with the rank of Flight-Lieutenant. On his return to New Zealand he acted as instructor till 1946. On leaving the air force he farmed at Pukerau until 1964 when he retired to Queenstown. In 1940 he married Gwen Elliott and they have a family of two daughters, Judy and Lynley. In 1964 Judy married Bruce Cochrane.

The second daughter Marion Agnes married William Cunningham in 1942 and lived in Australia for several years. They returned to New Zealand where Bill was instructor for Radio Communications in Christchurch and Waioura. Later they returned to Australia.

lia where Bill died. Of their family of one son and one daughter Dea Robyn and Jeffrey Francis, Dea is married and has a family of two daughters and one son.

Let us pause here and give a summary of the location of the various member of the family in the first decade of the century. It must have been a great comfort to the parents at "Hartfield" to have their family united again in the home district. Matthew and Alexander were still with them at "Hartfield", Dougald at "Attadale", Robert at "Dry Ridge" and James at "Taieri Lake". Christina's brother James Elliott was settled at "Mt Ross" with his wife and grown up family.

On 19th June 1906 Murdo died at "Hartfield" aged 84 years. Christina was spared until 2nd September 1912. When she passed away at the age of 82 years. So ended the earthly journey of these two humble people who had asked so little of life and yet had suffered so much sorrow and hardship. It is comforting to learn from sources outside the family of the brother's constant concern for their ageing parents. In their final years they were given all the loving care and attention that a united family could provide. They will be remembered as the founders of a family that along with so many others have written their chapter into the Otago story.

*"From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
Makes her loved at home revered abroad,
Princes and Lords are but the breath of Kings,
An honest man is the noblest work of God".* Burns

THE UNCLES

Of the five brothers two remained unmarried — Matthew Elliott and Alexander McKenzie. After the death of their parents they remained at "Hartfield" and farmed this property and its two supporting runs "Mareburn" and "Fillyburn" until their retirement in 1915.

Historic "Hartfield" was taken over by Alex McRae whose family to the third generation remain in possession today. The writer can vividly recall the journeys to "Hartfield" to visit the Uncles and their two devoted housekeepers Nellie Morton and Annie Currie. The journey by horse and buggy, with a stop-over at "Dry Ridge" to visit Uncle Bob and Aunt Maggie and the final stages up the Taieri Ridge where the rabbit warrens on the river flats and the number of gates to open are still clear in the memory. The interest and patience shown by the Uncles in their nephews and nieces was to remain and develop as the years passed.

On leaving "Hartfield" the Uncles retired to Middelmarsh, where in that closely-knit community and by virtue of their personality and way of life became a legend in their time. Their ever open house was a meeting place for their many friends and relations and was some times referred to as the "gentlemen's club". The close bond between these two brothers throughout their lives was a constant source of wonder and inspiration to the younger generations of the family.

In their retirement the brothers were able to exploit their hobbies of fishing and shooting and they were inseparable companions on many excursions throughout the country. Keen followers and critics of piping and Highland dancing they were regular attenders at many competitions in Otago and Southland. Both dedicated pipe smokers, this habit often caused some concern to at least one sister-in-law whose sons were more than willing to try the pleasures of tobacco or its substitutes after a visit from the Uncles.

The fact of his arrival in the country at such an early age allowed Alexander to become as much a colonial as the colonials and he was perhaps able to adapt to New Zealand conditions faster than some of the older members of the family. His early experience on "Cottesbrook" was the stepping stone to wider fields of employment as shepherd on Hawkdun and Blackstone Hill stations, this no doubt facilitated by his Uncle James Elliot who was manager of Blackstone Hill. He often recalled his exploits on these large stations and it was here that his ability as a trainer of sheep dogs became apparent. This interest in dogs and dog trials

was to remain with him for life. Many younger men have cause to be grateful to him for the guidance and interest shown by him in their careers in this sport. A successful competitor throughout his life, the highlight was no doubt his winning of the South Island and New Zealand Champion huntaway and slew event with his dog "Daniel" in 1948 at Taieri. This was a fitting climax to his career in the sport, all the more meritorious as at the time he was 86 years of age.

He was not only a good stock handler but as time passed he became a good judge of most classes of live stock and was undoubtedly the most capable of the brothers in this field. His experience with his uncle James Elliot on some of the lower country and Taieri Plain helped to broaden his knowledge of farming. When he later settled at "Hartfield" he maintained a select Romney stud and later in conjunction with his nephew at "Wandle" started another stud that proved a great interest to him in his later years.

After leaving "Hartfield" although officially retired his interests increased if anything. Much of his time was spent with his brother at "Greenvale" and after Roberts' death he maintained an interest here until the property was finally sold.

In the late 1920's when his nephew was established at "Wandle" he took a keen interest in events there and later acquired a neighbouring property which was run in conjunction with "Wandle". He was again able to assemble a team of dogs and his trial activities started again and along with his nephew Alick (who was now quite a force in the dog trial sport) was a regular competitor at many Otago trials.

This was the start of what could be called an "Indian Summer" of his life. In spite of his advancing years his interest in farming and people was as vital as ever. The establishment of the pipe band also gave him great pleasure and interest and the active role played by so many of the family was an added reward to him. He held the office of Patron of the band.

What he lacked in formal education was made up for in worldly wisdom and throughout his later life he filled the role of patriarch, counsellor and friend to the family and a wide circle of

friends. A feature of his life was the great interest he always took in young people and their doings. He remained young in heart till the end. Although small in physical stature he was mighty in his enthusiasm for life and people, and although bedridden for his final years his mental faculties remained unimpaired. Here we must pay a tribute to his nephew Alick, his wife Gladys and their family for the loving care and attention bestowed on him during the years he lived with them at "Wandle". He passed away on 26th May 1956 at the wonderful age of 93 years.

Although the brothers were inseparable companions their personalities were in many ways contrasting. While Alex was outgoing and company loving Matthew was cast in a sterner mould. Reserved almost to the point of abruptness he could be never the less a stimulating conversationalist on the many subjects in which he was interested. Of the brothers he was perhaps the least dedicated to his calling of sheep farming. Other interests seemed to arouse his enthusiasm to a higher degree. In his early life along with his brother Dougald he had known the perils and hardships of life at sea. Early in his New Zealand life he studied engineering and gained his certificate to operate steam. This love of machinery helped him in the early days of motoring when he was the owner of a motor buggy, one of the first motors in the district.

When at the turn of the century wood carving was a popular hobby he practiced this craft with enthusiasm and produced many fine articles. Piping and Highland dancing was one of his life-long interests and the sound of the local pipe band always brought a gleam to his eyes in his later years in Middlemarch. Uncle Matt will best be remembered by the family for his orderly habits and love of routine. This characteristic became more apparent in his later years when living in Middlemarch, where without fail for several decades he met the morning train to collect his newspaper. His attendances at the local hotel for meals were equally punctual.

Although never seeking public life he was a well informed citizen and a generous contributor to any worthy cause. In his prime Matthew with his piercing blue eyes and upright bearing must have been a striking figure in any company. A man of high integrity of thought and deed, he commanded the respect of all

who knew him. Under other circumstances he could well have been a master craftsman, an engineer, or with his orderly mind and love of routine a military staff officer.

He died at Middlemarch on December 8th 1942 aged 85 years. He passed away as quietly and unobtrusively as he had lived, surely one of nature's gentlemen.

THE PIPE BAND

The Middlemarch district was served in the early decades of the century by a brass band that enlivened many a public gathering. When this band went out of existence the opportunity offered to start a pipe band. From small beginnings the Strath Taieri Highland Pipe Band has grown and consolidated its position over a period of 35 years. The pipe band is of special interest to our story by reason of the contribution made by the family during its life. It has supplied pipers, drummers, pipe majors and drum majors and today the band is led by Drum Major Bruce Matheson. Several members of the family have contributed to the administrative side in the offices of President and Secretary and the position of Patron has been held by the late A. McK. Matheson and his nephew M.A. Matheson.

When finance became available and uniforms were purchased the Matheson clan tartan was chosen as their colours. The band has graced many a local occasion and has been successful in competitions at Provincial and National level.

CONCLUSION

So ends a century in which we have seen the transformation from the pioneer scene to the welfare state, but the human problems remain. Let us welcome the second century confident that its inevitable challenges will be met with the same fortitude and resilience as was shown by those who have gone before.

SUPPLEMENT THE EARLY COTTESBROOK SHEPHERDS

The centenary of Otago in 1948 marked the publication of many excellent district histories. In this pastoral province it was to be expected that the early sheep stations would figure prominently in these records. The large Cottesbrook station in the Strath Taieri district was no exception.

The history of this station that extended east of the Taieri River from Strath Taieri to almost the outskirts of Dunedin city is ably dealt with in the Centennial publication "East of the Rock and Pillar". After the passing of nearly another quarter century the interest and importance of these records is brought into sharper outline. As with most history the human element is the most enduring and it is with this aspect that I would briefly deal.

The original Cottesbrook shepherds and their familys, who, needless to say were all Scottish, manned the remote outposts of the station. The spartan conditions under which they lived and worked were typical of the times. In spite of this these pioneer familys lived out useful and contented lives in this young country. Little did they realise that they were the founders of familys that endure to this day often as far as the fifth generation.

These familys included the Mathesons, Thompsons, Patersons, Camerons, McRaes and McPhees. To this day descendants of many of these familys occupy propertys in the old Cottesbrook area.

Murdo Matheson was stationed at "Bald Hill" now better known as "Attadale" and his descendants have occupied the homestead to the fifth generation in Mathew Matheson son of Hugh and Leone Matheson. An adjoining property "Gladsmuir" until quite recently occupied by the Paterson family whose descendants including the Macaulay brothers still farm on "Cottesbrook" land. Others tracing to the Patersons include the children of Mr and Mrs James of "Craiglynn", a property formerly occupied by a McRae and within the old Cottesbrook area.

Thomas Thompson and his family settled at "Foulden Hill". This property has also been occupied continuously by the family

to the present day. In later years the Thompsons acquired the original Cottesbrook homestead block which is now occupied by Mr and Mrs W.J. Thompson, their two sons also being fifth generation descendants to occupy Cottesbrook soil. Other fifth generation children include those of Duncan and Muriel Thompson these also claiming descent from the McRaes.

The descendants of Mr and Mrs Ewen Cameron still occupy Cottesbrook property in the Simpson family up to the fourth generation as well as descendants in other parts of the districts.

Some of these original families in later generations were united in marriage. In one instance the McRaes and Thompsons and in a later generation a Matheson married a descendant of the McPhees, thus some of the fourth and fifth generation have a double infusion of the Cottesbrook tradition. Fifth generation descendants of the McPhees include the children of Mr and Mrs F. Atkinson, the junior Mathesons of Rock and Pillar, who with the junior Tisdalls of Nenthorn can claim descent from both Mathesons and McPhees.

Although not in the Cottesbrook area, others claiming direct descent include the McDougalls of Sutton (through the Thompsons) and the sons of Mr and Mrs F.M. Howell (through the Camerons).

Agricultural and pastoral development, roading, electric power and modern transport have transformed the original Cottesbrook scene, but the names remain. A sealed road and a new bridge over the Taieri River now mark the gateway to "Cottesbrook Country". This fine structure will no doubt prove as enduring as the community founded by the early Cottesbrook shepherds.