



In Dunedin's Southern Cemetery lies the grave of

Joseph Cable was born in 1813, at a little yarn mill in Tannadice, near Forfar, the second son of James Cable. He grew up at his father's mill and the experience gained there enabled him, before 1841, to become manager of part of a much larger yarn mill owned by Turnbull and Company at Trottick, just north of Dundee. This was one of many mills established, in the early days of hydraulic power, along the Dighty river.

Joseph had no address but Trottick in the census returns of 1841 and 1851, so he and his family – he had married Catherine James of Dundee in 1842 and his fourth child was born in 1853 – probably resided at the mill, which was all that the little village of Trottick then was.

Joseph may have realised that his was a dwindling trade as in 1853 he took over a lease on a 121 acre farm, called Westerton, near Strathendry, in Fifeshire. Joseph's main crop was oats, but he also raised wheat, barley, potatoes, hay and turnips as well as keeping a couple of dozen head of cattle and a few pigs.

With the harsh farming conditions and no marketing boards or guaranteed prices for his crops Joseph struggled to meet his financial obligations and by late 1863 he was in financial difficulty. It was at this time when realising his precarious position financially that he decided to send his eldest son James to New Zealand to investigate the prospects of emigration to that country. James sailed to New Zealand on the Resolute, arriving at Port Chalmers on 16/3/1864.

Joseph's financial situation did not improve and the decision was made to emigrate to New Zealand and join James in Dunedin. Joseph and Catherine along with 3 of their

sons and 2 daughters arrived at Dunedin on the ship "Pariah" on 19/1/1866. William their youngest son had stayed behind to complete his engineering apprenticeship and travelled to Dunedin on the ship "Otago" in 1869.

In 1866, when he arrived in New Zealand Joseph was determined to try again. He began as overseer of a farm some ten miles from Dunedin. After a short time Joseph moved back to Dunedin and, summoning his son James to help him, established a grain and produce store in George Street, on a site now occupied by Farry's Menswear store.

At first this new venture succeeded well enough for Joseph, with the assistance of a local building society, to become, in 1869, the owner of a house at 829 Cumberland Street, Dunedin at a cost of £260. This house remained in the family until the death of the Reverend John Cable in 1974. The DCC then purchased the property and have rebuilt the old house with a replica facade and it is protected as an Historic Home.

Its survival in the family was the result of unusual foresight on Joseph's part, for the freehold had been made the subject of a deed of trust and the house thus escaped Joseph's second bankruptcy when the grain and produce store venture got into financial difficulties. Family tradition ascribes this to the failure of a local bank and Joseph may well have been unlucky in the moment chosen for his first venture into commerce. The failure of the great house of Overend-Gurney in London had brought down the Commercial Banking Company in New Zealand and the Bank of Auckland. Gold production was declining and many of those it had attracted were leaving Dunedin and even Otago. The fever of speculation, which had spread far beyond the diggings themselves, subsided and so did the fortunes of many more modest and less adventurous New Zealanders. By 1870 depression and widespread unemployment gripped Dunedin.

Economic revival was soon to come, but too late for the unfortunate Joseph, who died a ruined and a disappointed man in 1871, when he was only 58 years of age. Two successive disasters in two different countries may well have proved more than he could bear.

Joseph died too early to witness how successful his sons, James, William, John and Alexander, were in business themselves especially in the engineering industry in New Zealand. James was successful in rebuilding the grain and produce store in Dunedin and retired from the business in 1895. William developed a large engineering company, William Cable and Co. William died in 1922 and his sons continued developing the business which later became Cable Price and Co, then Cable Price Downer.

John was the first Engineering apprentice to qualify in Otago and went on to own a major shareholding in the engineering company Morgan and Cable at Port Chalmers, before emigrating with his family to Perth in 1903 and continuing in the engineering industry there until his death in 1912. Alexander became a patternmaker in Engineering and designed gold mining dredges and equipment whilst working in the engineering industry at Port Chalmers for many years.

Joseph's daughter Mary married Gavin Dickson and they purchased a farm at Otama, near Gore, in 1877 and it is still in the family today.

Others buried with Mr Cable at the Southern Cemetery are his wife, Catherine, his daughter, Catherine, his son, David and his grand daughter Isabella Dickson.

Prepared for the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand ([www.cemeteries.org.nz](http://www.cemeteries.org.nz)) by Allan Steel, Cable family historian.