



John Collie was born in Fairfax, Southland, to farming parents Donald and Elizabeth Collie, where he grew up and received his education.

After being dux of Southland Boys High School, John graduated MA with double honours from the University of Otago in 1895, and then trained at the Theological College.

He was minister successively at Crookston, North Invercargill, and Queenstown. Deeply interested in people, and taking pride in his rural origins, he gave himself unsparingly to pastoral visitation.

In 1931 he was elected Moderator of the general Assembly, and appointed Professor of New Testament Studies at Knox Theological Hall – the first New Zealand-born minister to hold this post.

From 1931 he lived at 'Aparima' in the East Taieri parish where he had for a time been assistant to the ageing Rev. William Will.

After his retirement from Knox in 1937 Collie served the congregation in a variety of capacities and was called 'the unofficial curate'.

John Collie was a lover of books and his library filled a considerable portion of the upper storey of 'Aparima'. He was a well-known writer about people and about the Presbyterian tradition which he believed had given a permanent and distinctive quality to Otago.

As well as writing many pieces for the *Outlook*, he wrote some parish histories including an historical souvenir to mark the 80th anniversary of East Taieri Church in 1934.

His best-known works were his memoir of Rutherford Waddell in 1932, and *The Story of the Otago Free Church Settlement 1848-1948* – a book which was completed by others after his death at East Taieri on 30 July 1947. He was survived by his wife Annie Marie (nee Pretsch), and was buried in the East Taieri Cemetery adjacent to the church where a beautiful stained glass window was erected in his memory.

Prepared by the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand (www.cemeteries.org.nz) from information in *Southern People – a Dictionary of Otago Southland Biography*.