



The Hon. James Fulton was the third son of Major Robert Bell Fulton, of the Honourable East India Company's Bengal Artillery, and was born in 1830. He was educated at Blackheath Proprietary School, and in 1849 he came to New Zealand by the ship "Ajax," in company with Mr. W. H. Valpy, a retired Indian judge, one of whose daughters he married in 1852.

On 22 September 1852 Catherine Valpy married James Fulton, at a joint wedding with her sister Juliet Valpy and William Mackworth. The ceremony took place at her parents' home, The Forbury, Dunedin. James Fulton held land in West Taieri, called initially Ravensbourne, and later Ravenscliffe, to distinguish it from the West Harbour suburb of Dunedin.

Mr. Fulton engaged in sheepfarming at West Taieri, but was soon afterwards appointed Resident Magistrate at Outram and Dunedin. At the general election in 1879 he was invited to become a candidate for the representation of Taieri in Parliament, and was returned as member. In 1882 he was returned unopposed, and he was again returned for the Taieri—but not without opposition—in 1884 and 1887, in each instance defeating Mr Carncross. He was chairman of the Taieri County Council, a member of the University Council, Otago Education Board, and the High Schools Board of Governors.

In the Dunedin suburb of Caversham is Lisburn House, 15 Lisburn Avenue, which is believed to have been built about 1865 by James Fulton as a town house. The 'house' to some resembles a church, to others a gingerbread house, and it is a 12 roomed polychrome - patterned brick home with high church-like gables and narrow windows once standing in a block of some 10 acres but now flanked by homes of a much later vintage.

It was named after the Fulton's family home town Lisburn, County Antrim, Northern Ireland. The identity of its architect is unknown but there are similarities with All Saints Church, Cumberland Street, Dunedin and possibly it was designed by the same person.

Catherine Fulton's political sympathies were echoed by her husband, who, as a prominent politician, supported women's suffrage and the temperance cause. Their unmarried daughter, Caroline Fulton, was also a tireless worker for temperance, women's franchise and evangelical church organisations.

Mr. Fulton was called to the Legislative Council in January, 1891, but he died on the 20th of November, of the same year, leaving a widow, and a grownup family of three sons and three daughters. Speaking of him, the "Otago Daily Times" said: "He has probably not left an enemy behind him in the world. Upright in the highest degree, conscientious in everything he did, invariably courteous, he was widely esteemed as a private citizen, and respected as a public man by those on the opposite, as well as on his own side in politics." Mr. Fulton is further referred to in the section devoted to old colonists.

After James Fulton died, Catherine Fulton managed the stud farm at Ravenscliffe, and continued to pursue her many interests until her own death on 6 May 1919.

James and Catherine are buried in the West Taieri Cemetery, along with their daughter Caroline Arabella.

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In the suburb of Caversham is Lisburn House, 15 Lisburn Avenue, Dunedin, which is believed to have been built as a town house about 1865 by James Fulton who, amongst other things, was a successful farming pioneer and had a property known as "Ravenscliffe" in West Taieri. The 'house' to some resembles a church, to others a gingerbread house, and it is a 12 roomed polychrome - patterned brick home with high church-like gables and narrow windows once standing in a block of some 10 acres but now flanked by homes of a much later vintage. It was named after the Fulton's family home town Lisburn, County Antrim, Northern Ireland.

But what and who were the Fultons, the builders? This family, probably of Saxon origin, was settled in early times in Ayrshire, and held lands at Beith. Alan de Foulton, Nicol de Foulton and Thomas de Foulton, of Ayrshire, signed in 1296, among the Scottish Barons and landed proprietors, a Parliamentary roll acknowledging Edward I as King Paramount of Scotland, and whilst some are still to be found in their old locality, the family has spread from Ayrshire over most of Lowland Scotland.

On 8th September, 1614, when Sir William Wade was Lieutenant of the Tower, a minute was made by order of the Privy Council directing the Rev. Dr. Fulton to visit the Lady Arabella Stuart, then a prisoner in the Tower for having married William Seymour, afterwards first Marquess of Hertford. Rev. Dr. Fulton was probably father of William Fulton who came to Ireland and died in 1638 at Kilkenny, leaving a son or grandson, Robert Fulton.

This Robert Fulton, born about 1637, sailed in 1689 as Chaplain of HMS SUCCESS and settled at Quanabo in Jamaica, where he became vicar of St. John's and a landowner. By his first wife he had a son, Richard.

Richard Fulton, born about 1678, became a cavalry officer in the army of William III. On his retirement he settled at Belsize, Lisburn, and married about 1718, Margaret, sister of John Camac of Kilfullert, near Maralin, Co. Down. Richard and Margaret's second son, John, born 1723, was appointed registrar of the Supreme Court of Calcutta, and proceeded to India about 1787, but was shipwrecked, and as a result the journey took two years, and, finally, on arrival in India was advised that the post had been filled on his non-arrival. He then turned his attention to the world of commerce but found time to marry in 1751 Anne Wade, daughter of Joseph Wade, of Clonebraney, Crossakiel, Co. Meath.

Their second son, James, born in 1755, was brought up, like his eldest brother Joseph, to carry on with his father his business transactions of various kinds. He was also a solicitor and land agent, and served as Sub-Sheriff of Antrim in 1773, 1791, 1795, 1796 and 1802; also of Armagh in 1803, 1809, 1814, and 1815. In the intervening years he is believed to have been Sub-Sheriff of Down, he certainly held that office for Down in 1817 - the year of his death. He was appointed Lieutenant, Lisburn Yeomanry Cavalry, 27th June, 1799.

James Fulton married on 10th November, 1783, Anne Bell and the Belfast Mercury or Freeman's Chronicle of the 11th November:-

*Married last night, at Lambeg, Mr. James Fulton to Miss Bell, daughter of Henry Bell, Esq. of Lisburn, a young lady who (exclusive of a large fortune) is possessed of every accomplishment to render the marriage state truly happy.*

James and Ann settled in a house on Chapel Hill, nearly opposite St. Patrick's and lived there until their deaths, James on the 26th July, 1817 aged 62 years, and his widow Ann on 5th January, 1834 aged 75. They lie together in Lisburn Cathedral Churchyard. They had a family of three sons and five daughters and again it is the second son that we are interested in, Robert Bell Fulton who was born on 28th September, 1788. After training at the military colleges of Chatham and Woolwich he joined the Bengal Artillery in 1806 and rose to the rank of Major. On a visit home in 1817 he married Elizabeth Jane Stephenson of Hillsborough at Gretna Green on 30th October, 1817 and a second ceremony was performed on their return to Hillsborough on 9th December following. Elizabeth Jane was the daughter of George Stephenson, agent of the Marquess of Downshire for forty nine years.

Major Fulton died at Futtighur, Hindoostan, India on 5th May, 1836; his memorial on the north side of the nave in Lisburn Cathedral reads:

*Sacred to the memory of Major Robert Bell Fulton, of the Bengall Artillery, who died at Futtighur, in Hindoostan, on the 11 May 1836, aged 47 years. As a soldier keenly alive to the honour of his profession, he filled several high and responsible staff appointments with acknowledged zeal, talent, and integrity. As a friend he was generous, affectionate, and constant; as a Christian, humble, devout, and sincere. To record, in his native town, the high character he established in that distant land, this cenotaph is inscribed by his Brother Officers and Friends, who have also erected a suitable monument over his grave in the Fort of Futtighur.*

Major Fulton's widow returned with her younger children from India to the home on Chapel Hill, in 1838. In 1848 Mrs. Fulton decided on emigration to New Zealand as affording the best opening for her sons, James and Robert, and they (the sons) sailed in September. In 1852 she joined them with her youngest son Francis and resided on the property of her son James in West Taieri, Otago, and died there on 6th May, 1863.

It was this James, the fourth son of Robert Bell Fulton and Elizabeth Jane Stephenson, born at Futtighur 27th June, 1830, that we believe to be the builder of the Dunedin house "Lisburn House". James Fulton on coming to New Zealand had acquired the property of "Ravenscliffe" in West Taieri, Otago, where he farmed and took a very active interest and participation in the life of that area of New Zealand. He held from time to time the posts of Coroner, Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Justice of the Peace, Lieut. and later Captain of West Taieri Rifle Volunteers, Resident Magistrate for the Taieri, and afterwards the Dunedin Districts, Chairman of the County Council, member of such boards as the Education Board, the University Board. In 1879 he was elected Member of the House of Representatives for the County of Taieri, and held the seat till 1890, but did not re-offer himself as a candidate at the General Election in that year, but was shortly afterwards nominated to the Legislative Council by Sir Harry Atkinson, who more than once urged him to join his Ministry. As a Member of Parliament, he was an earnest supporter of the Temperance cause, of the Bible-in-Schools Bill, and of the extension of the franchise to women. He proved a most effective chairman of the "Sweating Commission", appointed in 1888 to enquire into the Working of the various factories in the then colony.

He married on the 22nd September, 1852, Catherine Henrietta Elliott, daughter of William Henry Valpy, a Judge in the Hon. East India Company's Civil Service.

The Honourable James Fulton died suddenly at Ravenscliffe on 20th November, 1891, and is buried in the West Taieri Cemetery with his wife and daughter.

Prepared by the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand ([www.cemeteries.org.nz](http://www.cemeteries.org.nz)) from information in *Lisburn House*, Dunedin, New Zealand, by T. Neill, as recorded on the website -

[http://www.lisburn.com/books/historical\\_society/volume4/volume4-6.html](http://www.lisburn.com/books/historical_society/volume4/volume4-6.html)