



Alexander Stronach Paterson was born in 1849 in Kirkcaldy, a coastal town in Fife, Scotland. When he was 10 years of age his family moved to Belfast, where four years later, he entered employment with the White Star Shipping Company, one of the great

shipping lines of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Three years later, in 1866, he and his family migrated to New Zealand, joining his uncle James, who was already a prominent merchant and political figure in Dunedin, then New Zealand's most important city.

The young Alexander Paterson worked for a number of businesses before launching out on his own. In 1888 he founded the firm of A.S. Paterson & Co, an importing, distribution company that achieved its first major success importing cargoes of sugar during a period of short supply in New Zealand. Over the years the company expanded its range of commodities, trading in everything from grain and seed to fuel and oil, and branches were set up in each main centre.

With his outstanding success in business Paterson was able to indulge in his philanthropic pursuits. He was a generous benefactor of Knox College, and at age 79 donated some 3,000 books, oak bookcases, and money which enabled the college to form the Paterson Library. While he lived he continued to support the library with further donations of some 5,000 books.

He financed the purchase and installation of "Norma", the Dunedin Town Hall organ, with a gift of 16,000 pounds (over \$1m in today's money).

Paterson remained all his life a man of strong faith and was active in the Presbyterian Church in Dunedin.

At his death on 23 April 1940, aged 90 years, he was able to distribute the equivalent of \$4.6m in trusts, as well as establishing annuities producing annually some quarter of a million dollars.

He is buried in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery under a magnificent monument.