



Walter Riddell was born February 20th 1838, middle child of a family of six born to William Riddell and Janet Bell. The family lived in Allangillfoot Cottage, Eskdalemuir, Dumfrieshire Scotland.

Walter followed in his fathers footsteps and became a craftsman joiner and with his father was employed on the estate of the Duke of Buccleugh.

On December 27th 1861 Walter Riddell married Wilhelmina Brown Glendinning, daughter of James Glendinning and Elizabeth Brydone of O'er Cassock, just a few

miles up the valley from Allangillfoot. A few months later they boarded the sailing ship *Grassmere* bound for New Zealand.

The *Grassmere* departed from Glasgow on April 28th 1862 and berthed at Port Chalmers, Otago four months later on September 5th.

On arrival Walter and Wilhelmina lived in the Immigration Barracks in Dunedin as houses were difficult to get. Finally they managed to rent a house with the Roy family with whom they had shared a cabin on the voyage out. But at the '*steep price of 25 shillings a week for four rooms*' they looked for alternatives. Together with the Roy family they leased some land in Smith Street and built a house with two separate entrances.

In 1864 their first child Elizabeth Brydone was born, and Walter bought a block of land at Sandymount on Peggy's Hill on the Otago Peninsula.

They named the farm *Ivy Bank* and embarked on the long job of clearing the land, farming dairy cows and raising eleven children. These early years were a great struggle. But Walter was philosophical and used to say "*There are things you can help and things you can't help, and the things you can help, you help, but the things you can't help are not worth worrying about*".

Walter drew the plans and built the Pukehiki Presbyterian Church at Highcliff starting in 1867 and finishing in March 1868. He felled and milled timber from his own farm and also made the furnishings. He carved the original pulpit from Oregon, the railings from heart rimu, and made the 6 metre long pews from Kauri. The 'tongue and groove' timbering 1^{1/2} inches thick is thought to have come from Dunedin buildings in which the 1865 New Zealand Exhibition was held. Two winged extensions were made to the church in 1881 giving the building its cruciform configuration. At the same time high arched vaulting was constructed to support the roof and a bell tower built over the porch. Fine upstanding Presbyterian as he was, Walter must have cursed the church roof for no sooner had he got it on, then it blew off in a gale.

In 1871 Walter was appointed foreman of works at Larnach Castle where he stayed for 10 years, and built the famous hanging staircase. This steady income made life easier for them.

Springfield on the Highcliff Road was the site of the first cheese factory on the Peninsula. Walter Riddell was one of the eleven settlers who formed the Otago Peninsula Cheese Factory Company in 1871

In 1892 Walter was asked to accept the position of Manager of the Taieri and Peninsula Milk Supply Company. The company was going bankrupt and most of the staff had left and the bank threatening to foreclose, but Walter persuaded the bank to give him one year. The company flourished becoming the largest dairying concern in the southern hemisphere incorporating 58 creameries. Taieri & Peninsula butter on one occasion secured the World's Championship for butter at a London competition for dairy produce at Liverpool.

Walter designed, built and patented many pieces of machinery for the butter factory and for his farm.

Walter and Wilhelmina moved to Dunedin about 1901 and settled in the Cheese Factory manager's house at 7 Great King Street. The site is now occupied by the Countdown Supermarket car park.

Wilhelmina died in 1909. Walter lived until the grand age of 84 and spent his last days at his daughters' house in York Place. He died in July 1922.

Other Information regarding his children

William was the second child born in 1865, he from Otago University and was admitted as a Barrister & Solicitor in 1898. He had a long and successful career retiring from the position of Principal Magistrate for New Zealand. He was awarded an OBE.

James was born in December 1866. James acquired a farm at Okio Flats, Wickliffe Bay. In November 1932 James was killed when his stirrup broke and he fell from his horse whilst riding along the beach at Papanui Inlet.

John Riddell, born in 1869. He took over the farm at *Ivybank*, and developed the lime kiln and crushing plant on Sandymount Road.

Walter born 1876 graduated in mining from Otago University. He then worked on the Otago scheelite mines, Denniston coal mine and Coolgardie Western Australia. He came back to New Zealand to sit for the examination for a Mine Manager's certificate. But died from ptomaine poisoning in 1905 at the age of 29 and was buried the day of the examination.

Helen married Robert Arnott in 1916, they were together only a few short days when Robert left to fight in Europe in WWI. Robert was killed at Flanders at the end of 1917. (Robert is mentioned on the grave site). Helen married a second time later in life to John Mahoney. He is buried in Oamaru with his first wife.

Most of the family are buried close to Walter & Wilhelmina's grave except son William who died in Wellington.

Walter, Wilhelmina and their children, Walter, James and Helen are on the main gravestone. Walters' father is also there but not marked, though he is remembered on a gravestone back in Eskdalemuir, Dumfriesshire. There is also a son Walter who died of whooping cough at three weeks old, similarly unmarked. As mentioned, Robert Arnott is also acknowledged on the plot.