

Entrepreneurial Spirits

By 1860, twelve years after original settlement, Dunedin was a straggling village of about two thousand inhabitants. It was a close-knit community that followed the Protestant ideals espoused by the founding fathers, and was focused on the development of small farms and businesses. Housing was basic, sanitation and water supplies were primitive, and in wet weather the simple tracks used as roads became almost impassable.

It was Gabriel Read's discovery of gold near the present day township of Lawrence in May 1861 that heralded the beginnings of the Otago Gold Rush. The size of the Otago Goldfields proved to be surprising, with an estimated one in four of the workforce employed in the diggings by 1861. The yield of 18000 kilograms of gold from the fields in 1863 surpassed that of contemporary California. The gold rush was to have a profound and lasting effect on the settlement of Dunedin.



The gold rush led to a massive influx of people and money to Dunedin. The resulting wealth created conditions for unprecedented growth and renewal in the town. In the second half of 1861 Dunedin's population doubled, and by the end of the 1860s it was

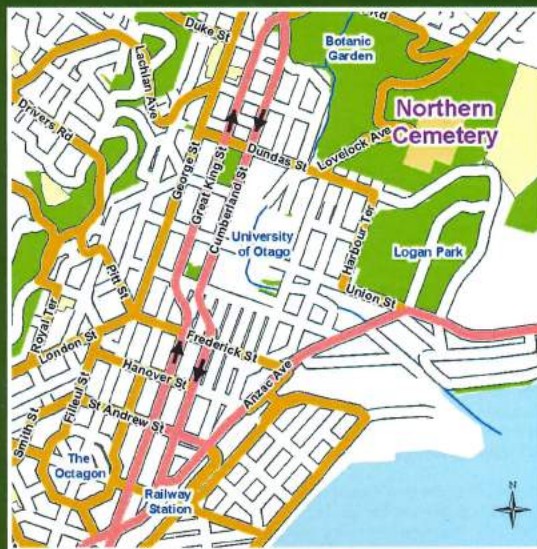
estimated at 15,000. People of many nationalities immigrated to Dunedin giving the settlement a cosmopolitan and lively new character. Immigrant miners' demands for amusement and entertainment led to the rapid establishment of businesses such as hotels and theatres to cater for them. During the mid-1860s, Dunedin's first generation timber buildings were being replaced with more permanent structures of brick and stone. Ongoing reclamation of swampy ground from the harbour provided areas of land near the town centre for the building of bonded stores, large warehouses and workshops. The developing commercial area of the town, centred on Rattray and Princes Streets, became the favoured site of insurance offices, financial institutions and banks.

Wealth generated by the gold rush during its first phase of 1861-1865 (after which time yields fell and miners began to migrate north to Marlborough) provided opportunities for entrepreneurs, some of whom went on to establish iconic Dunedin businesses. Many of these companies survive in some form or another to the present day. In Dunedin's Northern Cemetery you will find the resting places of businessmen like William Gregg, Richard Hudson, Charles Begg and others who built business empires based upon the products they sold. William Gregg specialised in the manufacture and importation of coffee and spices, Richard Hudson sold biscuits and chocolate, while Charles Begg imported pianos and sheet music. These people and others like them made a vital contribution to Dunedin's flourishing business community during the gold rush years.



Begg's Musical Shop

The immediate consequence of the gold rush was the transformation of Dunedin from a small settlement into the foremost city in New Zealand by the 1870s and its legacy persists to the present day.



**Sexton's Cottage
Northern Cemetery
Lovelock Avenue
Dunedin**

Telephone 03 471 8265

www.southernheritage.org.nz

info@southernheritage.org.nz

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Image of Robert Glendining courtesy of Hocken Library, Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago, Dunedin.

Northern Cemetery and Chingford Stables photography: Derek Smith.



The Gold Trail



Find out about the people buried in the Northern Cemetery whose businesses prospered during Dunedin's gold rush years.

Left: Robert Glendining

Below:
The impact of the Otago gold rush on the pace of building: Dunedin from View Street 1861 and 1870



Charles Begg

(c.1825-1874) Block 29, Plot 3



The enterprising company established by Charles Begg played a major part in establishing European music in Otago by providing the settlers with access to a full range of high class concert musical instruments and sheet music. When an early Dunedin family gathered for a musical evening, the chances were it was around a piano from Begg's.

Charles A. Begg, the firm's founder, was a music enthusiast and "a practical expert in every branch of the music trade." He was born about 1825 in Aboyne, Scotland and as a young age was apprenticed to a firm of piano manufacturers in Aberdeen. In 1847 he opened his own business in that city and met with immediate success. "Begg's Pianos" became the rage across northern Scotland and some even found their way to Otago as prized possessions of the pioneers.

In 1861 Charles Begg, his wife Jessie and their two daughters, sailed for Dunedin where Robert Harris and his son John Begg were already in piano tuning and instrument repair service. The keenness of his ear was legendary and it was said that he could tune a piano to any of the pitches then in use without the aid of a tuning fork. Before the end of 1861, Begg had opened a piano-selling business in Princes Street. To increase his stock of pianos he experimented with building his own from local timbers and exhibited one such model with a rima case at the New Zealand Exhibition held in Dunedin in 1865, winning a medal. He then turned his attention to importing musical instruments from Europe and to building up the retail side of his business. His shop became the musical centre of Dunedin.

In 1867, a disastrous fire destroyed a complete block of Princes Street including the premises of Charles Begg & Co and all the company's stock. It was a severe blow to the business but it recovered from this setback and regained its former position. Charles Begg died in Dunedin in 1874, but his business went on in several forms over the years, even expanding to other New Zealand cities. Begg's still sells musical instruments today from its present location in Moray Place, one of many enduring Dunedin business successes originating from the prosperous times of the Otago gold rush.

William Larnach

(1833-1898) Block 100, Plot 4

Well known Dunedin identity William Larnach was closely involved with the continuing growth of the city from the late 1860s following the first phase of the gold rush.

Born in Australia, Larnach grew up on his Scottish parents' farm in New South Wales. Having tried gold prospecting in the Australian gold rush, he became a bank clerk, proceeded to the hazardous venture of setting up bank branches on the gold fields, and eventually became manager of the NSW branch. At that time he had married Eliza, the first of his three wives, who brought a sizeable dowry to the marriage to accompany both Larnach's familial wealth and the wealth he would accumulate through his own business ventures.



In 1867 William Larnach came to Dunedin, already New Zealand's largest city due to the gold rush, with his family. He had been appointed as manager of the new Bank of Otago. Larnach was a hard-working and vigorous man; he started his own successful business, Guthrie and Larnach, which dealt primarily in timber milling and the importation of household goods. He was also a board member of many other companies. He became a politician and was Minister of Mines, eventually representing Otago in the House of Representatives at Parliament.

William Larnach's main legacy to Dunedin has proved to be his castle residence on the Peninsula, which took three years to build from 1871 and a further twelve years to decorate, and his tomb in the Northern Cemetery, which was created by Robert Lawson as a scaled down version of the renowned architect's First Church design. Both of these structures remain as major tourist attractions to this day.

Alex & Thomas Burt

(1840-1920) Block 110, Plot 4

(c.1842-1884) Block 16, Plot 1

A&T Burt Limited was established in Dunedin in 1862 by Scottish brothers Alexander and Thomas Burt. From small beginnings as a plumbing and gas fitting firm, the company grew rapidly due to the impetus from the Otago gold rush, expanding to include metal founding, manufacturing and later retailing. A&T Burt Ltd remained a family owned business for over 100 years, and was well known throughout New Zealand.

Alexander and Thomas Burt were born in Scotland, Alexander in 1840, Thomas circa 1842. Alexander began work as a messenger boy for an ironmonger, before becoming a plumbing apprentice. Thomas was apprenticed to a firm of plumbers and brassfounders. In 1859 Alexander and Thomas emigrated to Australia along with their mother and a younger sister. The Burt brothers tried their luck on the Victoria goldfields but had little to show for their efforts.



Alexander travelled to New Zealand to join the goldrush at Gabriel's Gully in Otago in 1861, but again met with little success. While in Dunedin, on his return journey to Melbourne, Alexander met William Park, an acquaintance from his apprentice days, who offered him a temporary job in his plumbing partnership with James Curle, which he accepted. Prospects were good in Dunedin, the population was growing rapidly, industry was booming and skilled workers were needed to erect new buildings and provide amenities for the growing town. Alexander sent for Thomas and together they planned to open a plumbing and gas fitting business in a small shop in the Octagon. Opening day for their shop was delayed, however, when the Burt brothers heard of the huge gold discovery in the Dunstan made by Hartley and Reilly. Deciding to give gold mining one last go they joined the rush to Dunstan. This time Alexander and Thomas did well, striking gold, though both realised that lasting success lay with their business. A few weeks later they returned to Dunedin and began their plumbing business which thanks to their skill and experience soon prospered.

A&T Burt achieved national recognition when the firm won the contract to install gas lighting in the exhibition building constructed especially for the 1865 Exhibition held in Dunedin. With gasworks being established throughout the country, the firm remained well to the forefront in the provision of the new technology. The rapid growth of the firm and expansion into metal founding, manufacturing and marine engineering meant a shift to larger premises, first to Princes Street in 1866 and to a still larger site six years later in Cumberland St. The company also became involved in electrical engineering in the early 1900s, when they installed equipment on the Auckland power station and the Waipori hydroelectric scheme. Alexander managed the business side of the partnership while Thomas was in charge of the works. Following the death of Thomas in 1884 Alexander continued to manage the growing firm which by 1910 had six branches throughout New Zealand and one in London. In 1920 Alexander Burt died leaving his son William C. Burt as chairman of directors. Industry changes forced a restructuring of the business in the 1960s, which included the shifting of the head office from Dunedin to Wellington. The company was taken over by Steel and Tube Holdings Ltd in 1974 although A&T Burt continued to operate under its own name.

William Gregg

(1836-1901) Block 112, Plot 13

Gregg's has been supplying coffee, spices and other foodstuffs to New Zealanders for nearly 150 years, a lucrative Dunedin company that had its origins in the days of the Otago gold rush.



William Gregg was born in Ballymena, County Antrim, Ulster in 1836. He emigrated at a young age to Victoria, Australia, where he established himself as a coffee and spice maker in gold rush Ballarat. Gregg, like many Victorians, was drawn to Otago following the news of Gabriel Reid's gold discoveries in 1861. An astute businessman, Gregg realised that the real opportunity of the gold rush lay in winning the trade of the thousands of miners and settlers attracted to the goldfields. William Gregg arrived in Dunedin in late 1861, and commenced business from a shop in Moray Place, before taking over the Otago Steam Coffee Mills in Princes Street a year later in November 1862. While competition was fierce, Gregg's prior experience in the goldfields of Ballarat, along with extensive advertising, established his firm as the premier coffee and spice merchants in Otago.

By increasing and diversifying product lines and through successful participation in industrial exhibitions both in New Zealand and Australia, Gregg's business expanded, and began trading beyond Otago. During the 1880s Gregg established a factory in Pelichet Bay, eventually shifting his whole enterprise to Forth Street where it remains today. By the late 1880s Gregg's had begun manufacturing and in 1881 was the first New Zealand company to manufacture starch. It also became the first company to make wax vestas (matches) and had developed its own tin-ware plant and a chicory farm at Inchutha.

During the 1890s the company reached a crisis point when Gregg's investments in gold dredging companies failed. The resultant restructuring pursued by creditors left Gregg as manager, but now in a partnership. During this difficult time it was fortunate for Gregg that his wife was able to provide financial assistance. By the end of the 1890s the company's recovery culminated in its incorporation as a Limited Liability Company.

William Gregg died at the age of 65 in 1901, leaving the company he founded in a position to expand further into the markets of Australasia. Gregg's successors continued his willingness to experiment with new products. In 1955 Gregg's introduced Instant Puddings, followed in 1960 by Gregg's Instant Coffee, an innovation that changed the drinking habits of New Zealanders. Gregg's survives today as Cerebos Gregg's Limited, the result of a merger in 1984 with a New Zealand subsidiary of one of Britain's largest food manufacturers. In 1990 the Robert Harris coffee brand was added to the company, and more recently Atlantic Coffee Roasters was purchased in 2005.



Thomas Kempthorne

(1834-1915) Block 194, Plot 24



Thomas Whitelock Kempthorne was the co-founder of one of New Zealand's leading companies, Kempthorne, Prosser and Co. He was born in Cornwall, England in 1834 and emigrated to Melbourne, Australia, in 1854. After a brief stint as a labourer he found a position in the wholesale drug trade.

Kempthorne arrived in Dunedin in April 1863, sent by the Melbourne pharmaceutical firm of H. & E. Youngman to look at the possibility of expansion. When the company's managers did, Kempthorne, realising the potential in gold rush Dunedin, decided to stay and set up his own business. After various unsuccessful partnerships, Kempthorne, Prosser & Company was formed in 1870, when Kempthorne went into partnership with Evan Prosser, a Welsh chemist practising in the South Island.

The business involved the manufacture and importation of medical supplies and drugs, and as these were in short supply at the time it proved very profitable. They had a wide range of merchandise, from pharmaceuticals through to hospital beds, bandages, dental supplies, even photographic and household equipment. Their products enjoyed a reputation for quality and met a steady demand particularly from the goldfields markets in Central Otago and the West Coast. Head office for the company was located in Stafford Street. The success of the company became apparent, when in 1879 it became a limited liability company with a capital of £200,000. Due to this success, Kempthorne, Prosser and Company set up warehouses in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

Kempthorne built the alkali works at Burnside in Dunedin to produce sulphuric acid in response to a government initiative. The business boomed and branches were set up in Hornby and Wanganui. In 1886 Prosser left the company and moved to Australia. Kempthorne remained managing director of the company until his retirement in 1904. Thomas Kempthorne died in Dunedin on November 3rd 1915 after suffering a stroke.

Kempthorne Prosser dominated the New Zealand market for medical supplies and scientific equipment for almost a hundred years. However, a takeover bid in the 1970s for rival firm Dominion Fertiliser Ltd ultimately resulted, after complex business dealings, with the loss of Kempthorne Prosser in its historical form. The Burnside fertiliser works closed in the 1980s.

Anstiss Silk

(1839-1899) Block 57A, Plot 4

The Leviathan Hotel built in 1884 is one of Dunedin's oldest surviving hotels. Anstiss Silk's remarkable stewardship of the hotel has been memorialized by naming the recently renovated restaurant after her. As with so many of her generation, however, it was the Otago gold rush that drew Anstiss and her husband George to Otago.

Anstiss was born on 14th January 1839 at Totnes, Devon, England to Nicholas Mills and Ann Mills. Anstiss emigrated from England with her parents and brothers Henry and Edward, to Victoria, Australia on the ship Blackwall in October 1857. She married George William Silk in 1859 and they had four daughters. George moved to New Zealand as a steamer passenger on the Rongitoto, departing on 12th February 1868, with Anstiss and the family following him on the ship Albatross on 8th October of that year.

The Silk family settled in Otago at Lawrence. George mined for gold while Anstiss ran a successful baking and catering business. In 1867 George died from emphysema and asphyxia and was buried with Anstiss' parents in the Lawrence cemetery. Anstiss moved to Dunedin following George's death and in 1889 she took over the Leviathan Hotel. With 150 bedrooms, the Leviathan was then reputed to be the largest hotel in Australasia. She also kept in touch with her mining interests and purchased a mining company called Surprise Co. in 1891. Her company recovered a 2.3kg cake of gold from a mine at Northhorn and she had this on display at the Leviathan hotel. Under Anstiss' uncompromising management the business prospered.



She died at her daughter's home on 10th June 1899 and on 9th August 1899 the Leviathan Hotel Co. was incorporated to run the hotel. The Leviathan Hotel is still locally owned and operated, Anstiss, her brother Nicholas and his wife Annie are all buried in the Northern Cemetery.

Richard Hudson

(1841-1903) Block 196, Plot 65

Richard Hudson was born in 1841 in Chippenham, Wiltshire, England. At the age of 14 he went to sea, employed by the Merchant Service trading out of Bristol, returning a few years later to take up an apprenticeship as a baker. With few prospects for him in England, he set sail for New Zealand aboard the *Indian Empire* which arrived at Lyttelton, Christchurch, in 1865.



Hudson joined the rush to the West Coast goldfields but, having little success as a miner, returned to Christchurch and worked for a time with John Griffin, founder of another of New Zealand's great biscuit companies. Richard Hudson married Mary Ann Riley in Christchurch in 1868 and moved to Dunedin in June of that year. In Dunedin, Hudson arranged the purchase of a biscuit-making machine and began working from a small factory located in Dowling Street where he manufactured ship's biscuits for sale at the wharf. In 1869 he opened a successful coffee shop and used the profits from this to build a large factory in the former Masonic Lodge in Moray Place. Expanding the business, Hudson incorporated New Zealand's first chocolate-making plant within a few four-storey factory located on the same site, which also included a restaurant and boarding house. In 1900 Hudson & Co. shifted once more, this time taking over the former Albion Brewery site in Castle Street. In 1902 a disastrous fire swept through the building. Although Hudson had been suffering from poor health, he immediately put in place plans to rebuild. Within five months biscuits were again being produced. Hudson had wished to make provision for his six sons, and by the time he died in 1903 his sons were well placed to carry on the family business.

In 1930 the company went through another change in its ongoing development, being amalgamated with the local branch of English chocolate-maker Cadbury Fry to become Cadbury Fry Hudson. In 1973 the company became Cadbury Schweppes Hudson in a further merger, and in 1991 Richard Hudson's great-great-grandson became managing director of Cadbury Confectionary Ltd, as the company was known from then onwards. Finally, in early 2010 Cadbury was taken over by the American multinational company Kraft. Richard Hudson's business, first established in the late 1860s and still in existence today, is a prime example of the many Dunedin companies that flourished in the propitious times of the Otago gold rush.



Percival Neill

(1842-1936) Block 17, Plot 2

Dunedin's golden age of the 1860s saw the rise to prominence of two business entrepreneurs, Percival Neill and Robert Wilson, who through their mercantile undertakings helped to establish Dunedin as the commercial centre of New Zealand. Business rivals throughout their own lives, their two companies, Neill & Co. and Wilson & Co., later merged to form the well known company Neill Neils.

Percival Clay Neill was born in Belfast in 1842 and was trained in business there. In 1859, he emigrated to Melbourne, where he joined McCallum & Co, a firm of Melbourne merchants. He was sent to Dunedin in 1863 as the firm's resident partner. In 1866 Percival Neill joined a rival Melbourne company James Henry & Co., and successfully developed its Dunedin business, before going on to buy out the company, which was incorporated in 1882 under the new name of Neill & Co. The business grew quickly by providing goods to a population grown wealthy from the gold rush. The company's huge bonded store was one of the city's first substantial buildings occupying a whole block, giving its name to Bond Street, in the heart of Dunedin's commercial district. Percival Neill diversified his business interests into a wide range of activities and was prominent among Dunedin's business elite. Neill held the office of French Consul from 1873. He was a member of the first Harbour Board and the local Chamber of Commerce and was a director of many companies, while also providing monetary support and advice relating to the city's progress. Percival Neill died in 1936.



A tourist attraction to this day, Chingford Stables were built for Percival Neill in 1880. The stables housed Dunedin businessmen's horses. The building is constructed of basalt. The stables no longer house horses but are used as a venue for private and public events.

Neill & Co's competition with rival company Wilson & Co. came to an end in 1963 when they merged the grocery and liquor trade. The wholesale grocery operation was sold to J. Rattray and Sons in 1979.

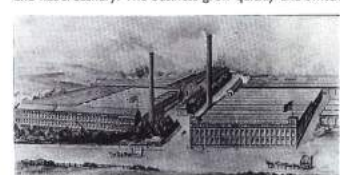
Robert Glendinning

(1841-1917) Block 40, Plot 12

The wealth generated within the city of Dunedin by the gold rush created favourable conditions for business entrepreneurs Robert Glendinning and John Ross to establish and develop what was to become the largest wholesale and manufacturing enterprise in New Zealand at the time.

Robert Glendinning was born in Dumfries, Scotland, on 20th March 1841. His parents were John and Isabella Glendinning. After finishing his schooling Robert served an apprenticeship with a local draper. In 1862 he emigrated to Dunedin on the ship *Evening Star*.

In August 1862 he and his partner, Mr John Ross from Caithness, Scotland, established a drapery business. This was sold four years later to Messrs Brown, Ewing and Co. Ross and Glendinning then founded the present extensive company of Ross & Glendinning, importer and retailer of soft goods, draperies, clothing and haberdashery. The business grew quickly and switched from retailing to



wholesaling and manufacturing. Glendinning managed the local firm and Australian contracts, while Ross managed the London office. Robert and John had sound Scottish educations and good Presbyterian ethics. These qualities, along with their careful management style and willingness to use production systems that utilized modern machinery, meant that the business flourished.

The business was diversified after the investment boom in the 1870s and this enabled the company to prosper in spite of a local economic downturn. In 1900 Ross & Glendinning became a limited liability company and by 1906 the business included four sheep stations, worsted and woollen mills in Kalkorai Valley, a clothing factory in High St, a hat factory in Stafford St, and warehouses throughout the country. At its height the chief establishment and its branches numbered one thousand industrial workers, with a further one hundred people employed as managers, department heads, warehousemen and clerks. The company was in operation for more than a century. In 1966 Ross and Glendinning was taken over by UEB (United Empire Box) Industries, with rival Mosgiel Woollens purchasing the Roslyn Woollen Mill in 1969.

Robert Glendinning's business interests extended well beyond the management of his own company. He was the chairman or director of numerous organisations. Robert Glendinning died on 23rd June 1917 survived by his wife and four children.

