

ANDREW BURNS 1847-1943 and JESSIE CAMPBELL 1850-1917

Andrew Burns was born in Kilmarnock, Scotland on 26 March 1847. He was the son of Alexander Burns and Jean Burns (nee Nisbet)

The family emigrated to New Zealand in 1864 on the ship "Pariah" which landed at Bluff on 17 March 1864 when Andrew was aged a week short of seventeen. They settled in Invercargill, where his father became the librarian at the Athenium.

Andrew Burns worked as a journalist for the Southland Times and for the Otago Daily Times. In February 1868, together with Andrew Ferguson and John Ludford, he founded the Tuapeka Times newspaper in Lawrence. In October 1869, the owner of the Tuapeka Press and Goldfields Gazette (which had been established in 1866) proposed that Ferguson and Burns should pay them 150 pounds to close, as Lawrence was too small a town to support two papers.

They did so and merged the two papers. Ludford left the partnership in June 1870, and Ferguson and Burns continued to publish the Tuapeka Times. In 1876, they founded the Tapanui Courier. In 1877 Andrew Burns purchased a partnership in the Western Star, Riverton. In 1877, he sold his shares in the Tuapeka Times to Ferguson and left Lawrence for Riverton.

He then lived at Riverton until 1887 when he purchased an interest in the Marlborough Times and moved to Blenheim. He was clearly highly regarded in Riverton, judging by the newspaper report of a function held for him when he left the district.

At some time when he was living in the South Island, he was presented with an engraved tokotoko (carved ceremonial walking stick) which is now a family heirloom. According to my father, this was carved for him given to him by some Maori people in gratitude for some help he had given them. Attempts to find out who carved it and gave it to him, and what was the assistance he provided, have so far proved unsuccessful.

In 1890 he moved to Wellington and was on the editorial staff of the "Evening Post." He later acquired and edited the Hutt and Petone Chronicle. According to my late uncle, Douglas Burns (born 1910), by the 1920's " he was running a journal called I think 'The Dominion Farmers Advocate' from an office at Featherston Street Wellington which I think was the Dominion Farmers Building and later became the Reserve Bank. I remember an enormous stuffed moa in the main entrance lobby – I used to call in there and see him quite often." This was Andrew Burns last position before he retired.

He was for many years the NZ correspondent for the Daily Mail newspaper, London.

On 31 March 1869, "at Lawrence, Otago (in dwelling house, Gabriels Gully)" he had married Jessie Campbell, who came from Ashton, Gourrock, Glasgow, Scotland. She had been born in Paisley, Scotland. She was the daughter of John Campbell and Agnes Melvin. The witnesses were Andrew Ferguson, Peel Street, Lawrence, Newspaper Proprietor, and Marion Taylor, Peel Street Lawrence.

Jessie Burns was a direct (though somewhat distant) descendant of Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland in the fourteen century. Nothing is known of her arrival or life in New Zealand. She is also buried in Karori Cemetery.

Andrew Burns died at Beach Hospital, Otaki on 21 August 1943 aged 96. He is buried in the Karori Cemetery, Wellington.

Jessie Burns died at Wellington on 24 July 1917

Andrew and Jessie Burns had four sons:

Alexander Melvin Burns, born 13 January 1870 at Gabriels Gully. He lived in Christchurch was a journalist, and editor of the Christchurch Press from 1925-1937.

Andrew Nisbet Burns, born 5 September 1872 at Lawrence. He was a school teacher and school headmaster in the Wairarapa and Wellington.

John Campbell Burns, born 28 January 1880 at Riverton. He lived at Petone, and was also a schoolteacher and school headmaster.

Robert Nelson Burns, born 24 September 1886 at Riverton. He lived in Auckland and was a journalist for the NZ Herald and NZ Truth. In the 1920's he moved to Tonga, and later settled in Brisbane, Australia.

John Burns 2026

Sources:

Birth and death certificates- family collection

Douglas Burns – personal communications.

Newspapers in New Zealand – Guy H Schofield

Newspaper clippings – family collection

Tuapeka: Its Land and its People – Mayhew

Tuapeka Goldfields Museum