

Charles Towsey of Henley upon Thames in the County of Oxford Gentleman

Mary Harriet Sparks

H. B. Moorhouse

TOWSEY TALES

NAME: Mary Myllicent Monfries (née Towsey)

BIRTH DETAILS: 26 December 1876 Dunedin

DEATH DETAILS: 28 July 1952

CHART REF: Towsey Chart B1

MARRIAGE DETAILS: 26 February 1913 Wanganui, NZ

SPOUSE: Rev. James Inch Monfries

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Arthur John and Jessy Towsey's first child, Mary Myllicent, possibly known as Nettie (or Nettei) when young, was born in December 1876 in Dunedin.



Mary Myllicent Towsey

25 April 1877



Mary & Cyril Towsey January 1879



SS Albion



Mary Myllicent Towsey circa 1883

she was about six years old.

The picture of Mary and Cyril from 1887, was inscribed "for Livesey". It was presumably meant to be sent to their cousin, Livesey Ward in Honolulu.

In 1888 the family were living in Christchurch, when they all trooped over to Melbourne for the Great Exhibition, at which Arthur played the organ in the Exhibition Building.

They returned to Christchurch but then at the end of 1888, the family moved back down to Dunedin. This

The photo of Mary and Cyril, taken in January 1879, was just before Arthur John left for a year's stay in England and Germany and because it has been cut down, I assume that it was trimmed to fit into something which Arthur could carry on his long voyage. Jessie and the children departed Dunedin for Melbourne by the steamship SS Albion in the following month, on February 27th. Because this was just before steamships were introduced onto the voyage between Britain and the Antipodes, it is most likely that they took the faster steamship as far as Melbourne before joining a sailing ship to England.

The lovely photo of Mary, in 1883, was taken when



Mary & Cyril Towsey, 1887, inscribed for Livesey



Cyril, Mary and Jessie Towsey photographed at The Exhibition, 1889

might have been because Arthur thought that his prospects were better in the larger city, but was more likely so that he could be on the spot to push his application for Musical Director of the forthcoming South Seas Exhibition in Dunedin, at which the good quality photos of Cyril, Mary and Jessy were taken.

There is a report of a fund raising event for a local kindergarten in October 1890, listing the names of the various ladies in attendance, including Mrs.A.Towsey. It also mentions that "Miss and Master Towsey played a duet with great feeling and expression.

It was announced in October 1891, that Arthur Towsey would be moving to Auckland.

In November 1891, we again see that "Master Towsey and Miss Towsey performed very cleverly on the pianoforte". Later in the month, at the Otago Art Society's Gallery (in Dunedin), there was a duet by Miss Evelyn McLean and Master Cyril Towsey, followed later by a duet by Mary and Cyril.

When looking at the various photos of the young Mary and Cyril, dressed in their finery by their proud mother, we get a very real sense of them all as a normal family who could be living amongst us now. Looking particularly at the photos from the Exhibition in 1889, it is easy to imagine Cyril and Mary practicing their duets together, with the twelve year-old Mary getting annoyed, as all big sisters do, with her typically annoying, boyish ten year-old brother.

As shown in the article from the gossip page, 'Pars About People', the rest of the family did not follow Arthur to Auckland until May. In the meantime, Jessy and Mary seem to have been touring around the South and Cyril was studying in Germany.

A month after Mary and Jessy arrived in Auckland, there is a report in the society pages about what various women are wearing for day wear, or as the newspaper called it 'walking costumes'; "Miss Towsey; Fawn dress, large fawn and brown hat. Mrs.A.Towsey; Pretty light brown striped tweed costume, dainty little fawn and brown bonnet". Not very informative, but perhaps they had not yet got the hang of writing trivial gossip columns.

It was reported on 23rd September, 1892, in the Dunedin and Auckland newspapers, that "*The friends of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Towsey will be pleased to hear that they have received very satisfactory accounts from their son in Germany, and that his master speaks in glowing terms of his musical ability. He also writes himself in good spirits and delights in his work. Mrs.Towsey and daughter were to have left for home this month but have postponed leaving until news of the cholera abating.*"

We see in the society pages that month, amongst the descriptions of what the ladies were wearing at an orchestral concert; "*Mrs.Towsey, handsome evening dress of black lace and jet, Miss Towsey; crème frock.*"

It was reported in November 1892, that the steamship *Habsburg*, had cleared Sydney on 5th November, bound for Bremen, in Germany, via Melbourne, with Mrs. and Miss Towsey aboard.

Judging by the photo of Mary in Germany at 15 years of age, she seems to have become a bit of a chubby teenager.

Mary & Cyril Towsey play a duet Among the ladies who take an interest in the kindergarten, and who, of course, were present, I noticed Mrs Reynolds, Miss Bathgate, Mrs Joachim, Miss Freeman, Miss Wimperis, Mrs A. Towsey, Mrs Henderson, Mrs Shand, Mrs Dymock, Mrs Paterson, Mrs Teevan, and Mrs Downie Stewart. The musical selections were very good. Miss and Master Towsey played a duet with great feeling and expression.

October 1889



PROFESSOR Towsey, of musical celebrity, has been an object of considerable interest for the last few months to the eligible and unattached young ladies of Auckland. Now, to the dismay of the dear demoiselles there has arrived a Mrs Towsey and a Miss Towsey, the latter of whom is as old almost as the youngest of the aforesaid demoiselles. Why don't all the married men grow beards and look old, and then the dear girls wouldn't be so apt to make these mistakes, which are a trifle disconcerting.

28th May 1892



One of Mary's daughters, told me that one of her memories from that trip was that her auntie in England wore very strange clothes.

This would of course have been either her Aunt Gus or her Aunt Connie; Arthur's two unmarried sisters who stayed behind in England, and who did not make careers out of music.

At that time, corsets were worn by every fashionable lady and, by the time of

the arrival of sweet, young, innocent, conservative Mary from the colonies, tight lacing had reached its extreme manifestation. This was the practice of lacing corsets as tightly as possible, so as to produce not just a slim, hourglass figure, but also to promote a correct, upright posture. The slight drawback of this fashion, was that women could not breathe, hence the booming sales of smelling salts, to revive them when they fainted.

Women of strong character, particularly those who were disinterested in the attentions of men, like Gus and Connie, formed the Rational Dress Society in 1881. The broader movement was referred to as the Dress Reform or Rational Dress movement and concentrated on eliminating anything that distorted the figure and made any sort of healthy exercise impossible. The main target of this movement was of course the corset, but also included heavily weighted dresses and tied down cloaks that restricted the movement of the arms.

I do not know how long Mary and Cyril stayed in Europe that time, but we know that Cyril was in a school play back in Auckland at the end of August, 1895.

On the fourteenth of August, 1895, at their home in Hobson Street, Auckland, Jessie Mackay died of Typhoid, after an illness of just fourteen days, the last eight of which had been in a coma.

Mary meanwhile, despite a two year diet of German food, had managed to lose that teenage chubby look and, at eighteen years of age, was sporting the very latest English fashion; a bird's nest atop her head.





Cyril, Mary & Arthur John Towsey, 1898

THE MUSICAL UNION.
FIRST CONCERT OF THE SEASON.

CHORAL HALL,
MONDAY, JULY 10, 1899.

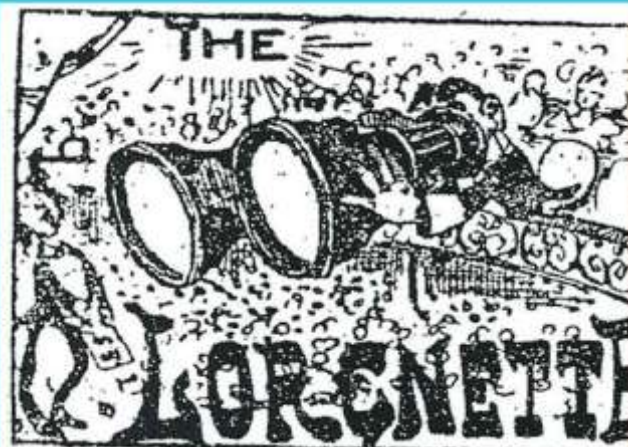
Solo Vocalists :
MADAM LAURA DAW, MISS ANNA RUGE,
MESSRS HAMILTON HODGES, GUNNE
and WILFRED MANNING.

Duet :
MISSES MARY TOWSEY and MAY WHITE.

Instrumentalists :
MESSRS S. AND J. JACKSON
MR ARTHUR TOWSEY (Organ).

Tickets, 2s and 1s, to be obtained from any
member of the Society; also, Messrs Eady's,
Williamson's, Partridge's, Hoffmann's West's
and Wildman and Lyell's, where Box Plan
opens THIS (Tuesday) MORNING, July 4, 10
a.m.

J. F. W. COOK, Business Manager.



Miss Mary Towsey made her
debut as a vocalist, and acquitted herself
with credit. This lady has a sweet
soprano voice of fair flexibility; she is
also confident, and sings without the
faintest suspicion of effort. Miss Towsey
was heartily applauded, and acceded to an
imperative recall.

6th May 1899

Moving into the 20th Century, we see that the family in Auckland, now consisted of just Arthur and Mary. As would have been expected in those days, Mary would have taken over the duties of lady of the house, though they also had a maid to do the dirty work, whilst Mary devoted her time to a range of charities and to singing, for which, having received the best of coaching from her father, she was getting very good reviews.

We see also at this time, that Mary is usually in attendance at the various society functions, including a couple at the Governor's mansion.



the ball in aid of the Society for the Protection of Women and Children, and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and also those who so willingly assisted them, had every reason to feel gratified with the result of their labours. No more successful society function has taken place in Auckland for many a day, and the financial result will be a substantial addition to the funds of a society which does a good work amongst the poor and oppressed. The Choral Hall was transformed beyond all recognition, walls and ceiling being completely covered with bright-hued flags, which formed a gay background for the garlands and festoons of lycopodium, palms, and mirrors which adorned the walls, and the many Japanese lanterns which depended from the ceiling.

The stage, arranged as a drawing-room, was a perfect bower of beauty. The back was lined with moss green curtains, which hung from the ceiling, the same green covering the tiers of seats, the entrance to which was through an arch of trellis work adorned with creepers and wisteria. A larger arch, similarly adorned, formed the entrance to the stage from the centre of the hall. The floor was carpeted and handsomely furnished with lounges, rattan chairs, with soft silk cushions, while in front, behind, and on all sides, was a profusion of beautiful pot plants, palms, cabbage trees, etc. The portico at the entrance to the hall was enclosed, decorated, and furnished with seats for tired dancers, and the right ante-room, also decorated, formed a promenade. A sub-committee of ladies had charge of the supper arrangements, the table being beautifully adorned with autumn berries, leaves, etc. The supper was both dainty and abundant, all the dishes being contributed. The Society were also indebted to friends for the flags, pot plants, furnishings, etc., and also to the willing workers who assisted in decorating, which included a party of bluejackets, kindly sent by Captain Noel, of H.M.S. Wallaroo.

The ball was under the patronage of His Excellency the Governor and the Countess of Ranfurly, the Vice-Regal party including Lady Constance Knox, Viscount Northland, A.D.C., Miss Julius, Major Alexander, the Hon. C. Hill Trevor, A.D.C., and the Hon. H. C. Butler, A.D.C. The officers from the British and American warships were also present. A feature of the evening was a cotillion, in which the Government House party took part. The cotillion, which was carried out under the superintendence of Mesdames T. Morrin, Hope Lewis, O'Rorke and Bloomfield, created great interest and amusement. In the first set of lancers the Countess of Ranfurly danced with His Worship the Mayor; His Excellency the Governor and Mrs Bedford (president of the Society); Mr F. E. Baume, M.H.R., and Lady Constance Knox; Lieutenant Sticht (U.S.S. Wheeling) and Miss Julius; Mrs Mitchelson and Lieutenant Rideout (H.M.S. Wallaroo); Mrs C. M. Nelson and the Hon. H. C. Butler; Mrs W. Coleman and Major Alexander; Mrs Benjamin and the Hon. Hill Trevor.

Mrs (Dr) Inglis, pretty heliotrope silk, with chiffon trimming; Mrs Cheeseman, pale blue merveilleux combined with black lace; Miss Z. George, dainty white silk; Miss Haven, dainty white silk; Mrs Metcalfe, black silk; Miss Metcalfe, white silk, trimmed with ecru net and lace; Miss D. Metcalfe was charming in pink and creme striped floral silk; Miss Kissling, black; Miss Ireland, black satin, relieved with emerald green, transparent sleeves; Mrs Dargaville, black satin striped gauze over silk; Miss Dargaville, pretty white silk, tucked and inserted with lace; Miss M. Cotter, pink silk veiled in lace; Miss W. Cotter, dainty creme satin; Miss Lusk, black, trimmed with ecru lace; Miss Waller, pretty heliotrope crepe de chene; Miss Thompson looked lovely in pale pink; Mrs Colbeck, black; Misses Laird, yellow and white silk respectively; Miss Connolly, pretty black frock; Misses Myers, creme and pink silk respectively; Miss Doris Boulton, white silk trimmed with lace; Miss Towsey, pink silk veiled with spangled gauze.

13th June 1903



The Mothers' Union is one of the many institutions to which the Countess of Ranfurly has given her personal aid during her residence in the colony. The members, who include women of all ranks, will ever remember her kindly interest in their affairs. Her Ladyship entertained the several branches in the Auckland district last week at an "At Home" at Government House. Upwards of 600 guests attended, and were received in the drawing-room by His Excellency and Lady Ranfurly. Thence they passed on to the ballroom, which was tastefully decorated and furnished with extra seating accommodation. An earnest address was given by Bishop Neligan, and a short musical programme arranged by Mrs Parkes, was gone through. The contributors were the Countess of Ranfurly, who sang "Home Sweet Home" and the "Vale of Avoca" very sweetly; Madame Chambers, Mesdames Parkes, Stebbing and Wylie, Misses Towsey and Ansley, Messrs Stebbing and Hodges.

20th June 1903



It must go sorely against the grain with Arthur Towsey to have to quit the musical charge of St. Matthew's almost on the eve of the removal into the new stone church. But the health of one of the members of his family requires her removal from Auckland, and seeing a professional opening at Wanganui, the veteran organist and choirmaster has decided to move on. Mr Towsey has now practised his profession in three out of the four chief centres of the colony—Christchurch, Dunedin, and Auckland—and his musical experience in New Zealand has extended over forty years. In both Dunedin and Auckland he has conducted the orchestral music at big colonial exhibitions, and in other ways has left an abiding mark upon the musical culture of the population. The Auckland Liedertafel, which practically owes its existence to him, is one of his best monuments here, and on the organ of St. Matthew's he has done solid and artistic work.

28th May 1904



THE garden party given on Saturday afternoon by Mr and Mrs James Kirker to the Auckland and visiting bowlers and their lady friends was a delightful wind-up to a most enjoyable week of bowling contests and festivities. "Tara," Mr and Mrs Kirker's beautiful house and grounds in Wallace street, Ponsonby, was thrown open to the visitors, of whom there must have been upwards of a thousand. Many passed the time watching the games Auckland *versus* the South, played on Mr Kirker's private bowling green, which finally resulted in an easy win for Auckland. Others spent an enjoyable afternoon on the trimly-kept lawns and in the orchard, meeting and conversing with friends and enjoying the hospitality of host and hostess. Tea and all the delicacies of the season were served in a large marquee, where a staff of attendants were kept busily employed.

In another marquee ices were supplied, and the heat of the afternoon made them most welcome. Mr and Mrs Kirker received their guests in front of the house, a constant stream of visitors arriving for more than an hour and a half. Mrs Kirker wore an elegant gown of black and white flowered silk muslin over glacé silk, and a pretty black and white toque and parasol *en suite*; Miss Kirker was daintily attired in creme with stylish hat; Lady Campbell wore a handsome black gown and mantle, and bonnet relieved with violet; Lady Stout was tastefully dressed in black voile, and stylish black hat; Mrs Dr McDowell, handsome black gown, and hat wreathed with pink flowers; Miss Sommerville, very pretty black and white striped silk gown, and hat to correspond. pretty white hat; Miss Court (Thames) looked nice in tussore silk frock inserted with lace to match, and hat trimmed with flowers; Mrs Basley, rich black brocade gown and black toque; the Misses Basley wore very pretty frocks of creme and turquoise blue voile respectively, inserted and trimmed with ecru lace, one sister wearing a black picture hat and the other pale blue to match her dress; Miss Towsey, pretty white muslin dress trimmed with lace, pale blue folded silk belt and black hat.

23rd January 1904

The nature of Mary Towsey's ailment that required her departure from Auckland, was never specified. Perhaps it was something like asthma. One wonders also, if the climate at Wanganui, which was not too far south, would really be that much different to that of Auckland.

We do not hear any further news of Mary's health and she certainly has no trouble singing, as some of the following newspaper cuttings attest. You will notice also, that Cyril was a regular visitor, being a relatively short rail journey away in Wellington.

As to the position to which Arthur was removing himself, neither has that been announced. He did not take up the position that one might expect, as choirmaster and organist, until late in 1906, when the incumbent left town.

Wanganui 1905



MR. CYRIL TOWSEY'S RECITAL.

There was a very good attendance at St. Paul's Hall last night to hear the pianoforte recital given by Mr Cyril Towsey. Mr Towsey is not unknown in Wanganui, and the audience went with the expectation of hearing something good, and were not disappointed in that respect. To all who were present it was evident that the recital was a fine musical success. A great factor in the recital was the magnificent piano specially brought from Wellington by the Dresden Piano Company. This instrument is a Steinway, and is admitted by competent critics to be the finest in New Zealand, and we can safely verify this statement. Its tone is beautifully rich and finely modulated. Mr Cecil Towsey's opening item was Chopin's Ballade in A flat. This fine piece was skilfully rendered, and showed Mr Towsey as an exceptionally fine pianist. An item that was enthusiastically encored was Schubert's "Adagio" from Fantasie in C, Chopin's Polonaise in C sharp minor, which was admirably rendered and well deserved the encore, fine expression being thrown into all the passages. Greig's "Lyric Pieces" afforded an opportunity of showing fine technique, as from the light movement of "Papillous" we proceed to the weird "Voyageur Solitaire" and the allegro movement of "Au Printemps." This item was also encored.

The finest item was undoubtedly Cropin's "Marche Funebre." It was indeed a pleasure to hear Mr Towsey's version of this "Funeral March," and too much cannot be said in praise of it. Miss Towsey was in good voice and sang with good effect. Her enunciation is remarkably clear—a rarity among singers, and both her items were splendidly rendered. "For All Eternity" (Mascheroni) was particularly fine, and the harp and violin obligato made it a real treat. The usual encore was demanded to show the appreciation of the audience. Miss Towsey's other item, "It Came With the Merry May, Love" (Tosti), was also finely sung, and demonstrated the fact that Wanganui is indeed lucky in possessing such a singer. Mrs Hughes Johnson was in exceptionally good form with her harp, and her items last night delighted the audience. Oberthur's Gavotte and its beautiful echo effects is indeed a beautiful item, and brings out all the qualities of a fine harpist. Mrs Johnson's manipulation of her instrument impressed all present, whose appreciation was shown in the demand for an encore. In "Ave Maria," Mr Frank Hatherly showed that he is a fine violinist, and he gave an impassioned rendering of this soul-stirring piece. Mrs Johnson accompanied on the harp, and again demonstrated her versatility as an harpist. On the whole the concert was an unqualified success, and greatly enjoyed by the music-loving portion of Wanganui.

1st November 1905

The slower pace of life in Wanganui, compared to Auckland, probably suited Arthur at his age, but we must wonder at Mary's thoughts on removing from the Auckland social set. She was not though, moping about at "The Camp", which was the name of their house in Guyton Street.

Whilst Arthur was performing regularly at various musical functions, particularly organ recitals at St. Paul's Hall, Mary seemed to be just as regularly engaged in singing, to much acclaim from the critics, who praised her clear enunciation.

But Mary was not limiting herself to music. We also see occasional results of various tennis matches in which she was involved. There is also a report of her winning the fawn-coloured Pug section of the local dog show, with her little pooch called "Pinky Panky Poo", named after a popular song from several years earlier that rather incredibly claimed to be a Chinese love song.

Mary was also involved in the local branch of the Red Cross and a couple of years later, joined the WSPCA; that is, the Wanganui Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. We see that Arthur joined at the same time, which begs the question; did Mary drag her father along, perhaps with heart-rending imaginings of what if someone tried to hurt sweet, little, flat-faced, wheezing Pinky Panky Poo?

WANGANUI ORCHESTRAL CLUB

The Wanganui Orchestral Club are to be congratulated upon the success of their second concert of the present season, given before a crowded audience in St. Paul's Hall last night. The programme was much in advance of anything yet attempted in Wanganui, and the manner in which the different selections were interpreted reflected the highest credit upon the club. The orchestral items rendered were Guilitt's overture, "Marionettes," Tschaiowsky's "Chant Sans Paroles," Lionel Monckton's "Country Girl," and Wagner's "Flying Dutchman." Mr. Herbert Collier, the hon. conductor, had the orchestra under perfect control, and the selections were rendered with a preci-

sion, confidence, and delicacy that was much admired and frequently applauded. The soprano vocalist, Miss Towsey, sang "A Song of Sunshine," "Long Ago," "Husheen," and "A May Morning" most attractively, her clear enunciation, perfect phrasing, and ease of delivery being most pleasing in effect. Miss Florrie Scapens, in her violin solos, showed wonderful command over her instrument for one so young. The vocal quartettes rendered by Messrs. A. and C. Tarrant, C. Jensen, and H. Neverman were nicely balanced and well sung, the voices harmonising admirably. Mr. W. J. James sang "Fiona" in good style. Special features of the concert were the fine cornet playing of Mr. G. Buckley in the orchestra, and Mr. Towsey's accompaniments, which were greatly admired.

19th October 1904

The Rev Monfries, of Manunui, is spending a few days in town.

Wanganui Chronicle **6th June 1912**

The Presbyterian Maori Mission Farm at Matapuna, near Taumarunui, under the Rev. J. I. Monfries, is doing good work in giving a practical farm training to native lads, of whom half a dozen are in residence at the present time. The farm is one of 200 acres of excellent land with 40 acres under cultivation and 1000 fruit trees planted. Accommodation has been provided for 20 boys.

30th October 1912

This tiny newspaper clipping from the Wanganui newspaper says a lot more than its few simple words.

It says that either through contact with her cousin, Egerton Ward, or through Egerton's direct initiative, Mary Towsey had been introduced to the widowed James Monfries.

We can speculate as to why, at 35, Mary was still not married. With her fine education, singing talent, good looks and accessory dog, she would, to use the parlance of the day, certainly have been a good catch, so we must assume that she was not too bothered.

Apart from the excuse of looking after her father, and Pinky Panky Poo, she may well have thought it nicer to maintain her independence.

Anyway, it is fair to assume that as James had previously been married to a strong, competent

woman who had died, he was not the sort of man to try to keep his wife in a servile position, so perhaps this helped Mary in her decision to marry the Reverend Monfries, in February 1913.

You can read more about the life of James Inch Monfries in his own Towsey Tale.

I have heard that after their marriage, James and Mary Monfries lived on a farm at Taringamotu, which is just north of Taumarunui, but still within easy commuting distance of the training farm at Manunui. Perhaps they wanted a little more privacy in which to bring up their children.

James and Mary Monfries wasted no time in building a family, which they seem to have done with the sort of organizational efficiency otherwise utilized in turning out trained Maori farmers.

Their first child, Violet Jessie Monfries, was born in March 1914. Their second, Flora Jean, was born two years later. Two years after that, came their third; Mary Veda and their last, who apparently did not survive infancy, was Joline Hope in 1920.

None of these births were officially recorded, giving a somewhat pioneer image of Mary giving birth alone in a log cabin amidst the mountains of the King Country.

I do not know when exactly, but before too much time had passed, Arthur decided that he wanted to be closer to the bowls club.

I noticed one reference to him going down to Wanganui to play, but his solution was to move to Cambridge. He might have chosen this location because it was between his daughter and his son, in Hamilton, but it might have been because there was a position available as church organist; a task that would not have been too taxing and, more importantly, because they had a good bowling club.

In about 1920, the Monfries family also moved close to Cambridge, to a place called Monavale, where they leased



Taumarunui Railway Station, circa 1920



Circa 1922: A. J. Towsey at bowls club with granddaughter, Violet Monfries

a farm. They must have stayed there until the early 1930s when, because of the financial pressures of the Depression, they moved to a smaller farm at Cambridge, on the Hamilton Road.



Circa 1926: Cyril Towsey visiting the Monfries farm.

I met Violet Monfries in 1998, when she was eighty four years old, living in Cambridge in a retirement village. At that age she was still in perfect health and, like her grandfather, standing tall and straight. She was also still driving her own car.

When I asked for her impressions of her grandfather, she told me an interesting story that was similar to one told by Cyril's second son, Pat, who was born in 1918.

Violet mentioned that one day, her grandfather gave her quite a large amount of money to go to the shop. She lost the money and was most distraught, but her grandfather was very sweet and loving. All of her memories of him are of that gentle, loving old man.

At some point in the lives of the Monfries family, perhaps when farming their small plot near Cambridge was simply not profitable enough,



James studied to become a County Engineer; managing the building of roads.

It was whilst doing this job, that he jumped off the running board of a moving truck and the jolt somehow dislodged the retina in one of his eyes, leaving him blind in that eye. For some reason the other eye then also went blind in sympathy and he spent the rest of his life sightless.

The family moved up to Auckland, where James learnt Braille and basket work at the Blind Institute.

James and Mary spent the rest of their lives in Auckland, in the suburb of Sandringham.

Of Mary and James Monfries' three daughters, Violet married James Francis in 1944, but quickly decided that she preferred the single life, divorcing him two years later, to the day. She remained single for the rest of her long and healthy life; dying in 2005 at 91 years of age.

Mary and James's second daughter, Flora Jean, married Arthur Edward Macgregor Laird in 1940. They had three sons between 1940 and 1944, all of whom are still living.

Flora died in 1991. Her husband died in 1980.

Mary Veda Monfries, who was born in 1918 at Taumaranui, married Nelson Bowman Body in 1943. They had two sons, in 1946 and 1947 then a daughter in 1951.

Mary Veda died in 1997 and her husband died in 2000.

Their eldest son, Graham, died in April 2013.

We see in these two later photos of Mary Monfries, the warm smile of someone who has lived a long and happy life.

James died in March, 1952 at 77 years of age. Mary Monfries, nee Towsey, died just four months later.



**Violet & Mary Monfries
circa 1950**