

NOEL LEE BUCHANAN

Noel Lee Buchanan was born in 1848, so he was about nine years old when the family came to New Zealand. Being the only male son having children, his offspring are the only ones to carry the Buchanan name.

Noel attended Otago Boys' High School, and was the first Dux in 1863. His entry in the *Old Boys' Register* (Pearce and Fulton 1907) is shown below.



Noel Lee Buchanan

Buchanan, Noel Lee (63-65), attorney in N.Z. of Taitapu Gold Estates Co., Ltd., London; Taitapu, Collingwood. First Dux of School; eight years' practice in Dunedin as solicitor in firm of Messrs Bathgate and Buchanan; run-holder, Maniototo, for three years; 13 years farming in Canterbury; now as above. Father of 1709.

After leaving school, Noel worked as a farm cadet at Patearoa under his older brother Arthur, then later worked at the neighbouring Puketoi station, owned by the Murison family. According to *Early Runholding in Otago* he kept the station diary in 1867 and 1868. The original diary is in the Hocken Library, Dunedin.

Noel Buchanan was very interested in the local bird life, as quoted in an article by Alexander Bathgate (1922). Noel describes a journey from the West Taieri over the hills in February 1863 (from Fulton (1922) pages 121-122 and 281-282):

In the day time in summer it was a dream...

On top of the Rock and Pillar among the snowgrass were many large trunks of trees, said to be totara but possibly birch, and on the Lammerlaw we often came across moa bones on the surface, with on or near each collection of which were little heaps of gizzard stones of quartz...

The approaches to the streams were often steep. On every one of the sandy beaches there were dozens or hundreds of wading birds, dotterel and redbills chiefly, the stilt plovers apparently preferring the lagoons, and standing pools from the last flood well out on the plain. Above them circled and dipped flocks of small terns, sea swallows and whale birds, "making a cheerful noise," and a beautiful vision for an observant person with a love of nature and of all these creatures. This is what the place looked like in the year of the Dunstan Rush, and for many years afterwards it was full of life.

The Taieri Gorge was full of blue duck, and on the plain an occasional white crane made its appearance, only alas, to be shot for a specimen; and in the quiet waters, that curious little bird the dabchick was not unknown. The weka was everywhere, of course, and I was told of, but never saw, another small rail, as frequenting certain patches of raupo.

Jane McLaren Bathgate



Noel married Jane McLaren (Ginny) Bathgate in Dunedin in 1875. She was the eldest daughter of John Bathgate by his second wife, Mary McLaren. John Bathgate had come from Peebles, Scotland, to Dunedin in 1863 to manage the Bank of Otago. See Scott (1977) and McInnes and Hackworth

(1970) for details of the Bathgate family.

Noel was admitted to the bar as a barrister and solicitor on 4 November 1873, according to the records of the Otago District Law Society. He was in partnership with Mr Alexander Bathgate, as Bathgate and Buchanan, Solicitors. Alexander Bathgate was Jane's half-brother, the son of John Bathgate by his first wife. The dates of this partnership are not known, but reference to it is made in a news item in the *Golden Bay Argus* of December 30 1909:



Noel Lee Buchanan

The *Otago Witness* of last week says:-
Mr Noel L. Buchanan, the first Dux (1863) of the Otago Boys' High School, has consented to preside on the occasion of the re-union on February 4th. Mr Buchanan was for many years in partnership with Mr Alex. Bathgate under the style of Bathgate and Buchanan, solicitors. He now resides at Paturau, near Collingwood, Nelson, and is attorney and general manager of a London Co., The Taitapu Gold Estates (Ltd.). Old boys are coming from all parts of the Dominion, and an attendance of over 50 is already assured.

After his work as a solicitor, Noel had a farm at Bankside, near Rakaia in mid-Canterbury for 13 years, but very little is known of this venture.

Later, Noel became attorney and general manager of a remote gold mining operation at Paturau near Collingwood in the north-west corner of the South Island. Letters from Noel to the Collingwood Road Board in 1898 show that he was employed by Taitapu Gold Estates Ltd by that time. Noel was elected to the Collingwood County Council in 1905, and was chairman in 1909 and 1910. Minutes of

a meeting in 1914 record his departure from the Council.

More information about those times is included in *Collingwood* by Newport (1971) which mentions Noel on several occasions. Jane Buchanan (1940) wrote a vivid description of a flood at Paturau in 1897. She and Noel made their remote Paturau house into a comfortable home with a colourful garden.

After retiring from Taitapu Gold Estates, Noel and Jane Buchanan moved to Nelson, where they remained until they died – he in 1925, she in 1944. They had three children – Silvia, George and Phyllis.

Silvia Mary Buchanan

Silvia Mary Buchanan was born in 1876. She married Lt Col John Matson. They had two children; John Matson, now a retired lawyer living in New

The Buchanan house at Paturau
Tyree Collection, Nelson Provincial Museum



Zealand, and Peregrine Matson who was killed in England during World War II.

George Harkness Buchanan

George Harkness Buchanan was born in 1878 in Dunedin. He was a solicitor, practising first in Ashburton then in Christchurch, in the partnership Harper Pascoe Buchanan and Penlington. He married Barbara Cunningham Fairlie Sutton from Waitangi sheep station (Robertson 1986).

George and Fairlie's family are the only descendants retaining the Buchanan name. Their children are Denis, Neal and Shirley Buchanan, all living in New Zealand. Denis and Neal both became partners in their father's law firm. Denis's children are Ann, Roderick and Clare Buchanan; Neal's are Andrew, Celia, Robert and Bridget Buchanan; and Shirley's are Juliet, Belinda, Roger and Christopher Atkinson.



George Buchanan

Silvia, Phyllis and
George Buchanan



Phyllis Lee Buchanan

Phyllis Lee Buchanan was born in 1881 in Dunedin. She married Charles Richmond Fell. They lived in Nelson for many years; Phyllis later moved to Canada where she died. The Fell family included Cynthia who, with her descendants, lives in Canada, and Roderick and Pamela who both died young.



Noel Buchanan with
Pamela Fell



Shirley, Denis and Neal
Buchanan

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