

# Robert Reyburn

of

Scotland and New Zealand

1810-1892

**Eminent Citizen of Whangarei, New Zealand**

By

**John Henderson of Stirling, Scotland**



**Reyburn House**

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**His Great Great Great Grandchildren  
Margaret, Heather and Kevin Nicol**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Cousins once removed of John Henderson of Stirling, Scotland**



**Robert Nicol, Kathleen (Reyburn) Nicol, Margaret Nicol  
Heather Nicol and Kevin Nicol  
1974 - Auckland, New Zealand**



**Kathleen (Reyburn) Nicol, John Henderson, Olive (Dale) Henderson  
Queen Elizabeth Park, Aberfoyle, Scotland - 1997**

**Robert Reyburn [Orchardist, Farmer, Politician]  
Born, 1810, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland - Died, 1892, Whangarei, North Island, New Zealand**

Robert Reyburn was born in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland, on the 4th of January 1810, sixth child [of nine] to Jean Thomson and her husband, John Reyburn - Bonnet-Maker of Kilmarnock and Coal Mine Share-holder in Hurlford, Ayr.

### Robert Reyburn of Kilmarnock

1. **Kathleen Lynette Reyburn** was born in Whangarei, North Island, New Zealand. Kathleen married **Robert William Nicol** son of Walter Nicol [born 16 Nov., 1886 in Falkirk, Scotland] and Dorothea Rosa Harrop on 21 Oct 1961 in Whangarei NZ. Robert was born in Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand. [He is 2<sup>nd</sup> Cousin of John Henderson of Stirling, Scotland who compiled this article on **Robert Reyburn of Kilmarnock**]

#### Second Generation

2. **James William Dawson Reyburn** was born on 15 Jun 1908 in Whangarei, New Zealand. He died on 29 Sep 1979 in Whangarei, New Zealand. He married Phyllis May Keyte on 15 Jul 1932 in Whangarei, New Zealand.
3. **Phyllis May Keyte** was born on 20 Apr 1908 in Whangarei, New Zealand. She died in Whangarei, New Zealand.

#### Third Generation

4. **James Rathbone Reyburn** was born on 7 Feb 1866 in Blythswood, Glasgow, Lanark, Scotland. He died on 23 Apr 1939 in Whangarei, New Zealand. He married Jessie Simpson on 3 Oct 1896 in Whangarei, New Zealand.
5. **Jessie Simpson** was born on 26 Jul 1874 in Whangarei, New Zealand. She died on 19 Sep 1936 in Whangarei, New Zealand.
6. **Richard Keyte** .Richard married Victoria Caroline Austin.
7. **Victoria Caroline Austin** .

#### Fourth Generation

8. **James Thomson Reyburn** was born on 10 Aug 1835 in Kilmarnock Ayr. He died on 10 Mar 1925 in Whangarei, New Zealand. He married Mary Wilkie Brown on 1 Aug 1862 in BlythswoodGlasgow, Lanark, Scotland Scotland.
9. **Mary Wilkie Brown** was christened on 5 Dec 1836 in Glasgow, Lanark, Scotland. She died on 20 Jul 1905 in Whangarei, New Zealand.
12. **Richard Keyte** .Richard married Ann State.
13. **Ann State** .
14. **John Austin** .John married Elizabeth Purley.
15. **Elizabeth Purley** .

#### Fifth Generation

16. **Robert Reyburn** was born on 4 Jan 1810 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He died on 21 Oct 1892 in Whangarei, New Zealand. He married Hannah Rathbone on 4 Aug 1834 in Macclesfield Cheshire.
17. **Hannah Rathbone** was born on 21 Jan 1810 in Macclesfield, Cheshire, England. She died on 4 Aug 1878 in Whangarei, New Zealand.
18. **James Brown** .James married Janet Dawson on 4 Aug 1834 in Glasgow Lanarkshire Scotland.
19. **Janet Dawson** .

#### Sixth Generation

32. **John Reyburn** was born on 10 Aug 1767 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He died on 30 Nov 1845 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He married Jean Thomson on 30 Jul 1799 in Kilmarnock Ayr.
33. **Jean Thomson** was born in 1774 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. She died on 28 Nov 1864 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. The cause of death was Bronchitis.

Robert Reyburn married Hannah Rathbone at Prestbury, near Macclesfield, Cheshire, on the 4th of August 1834, and they had three sons: James Thomson Reyburn, Robert Reyburn and John Gee Reyburn. Little is known of Robert's his life up to 1859, except that he was involved in shipping and woollen-milling ventures in Glasgow. With Hannah and their two younger sons, Robert and John, he emigrated to New Zealand in 1859, and arrived in Auckland on the 'John Scott' on 7 March of that year.

Robert Reyburn Snr. quickly decided to move north from Auckland, and on the 29th of April 1859 he bought land at Whangarei from J. G. Petingale.

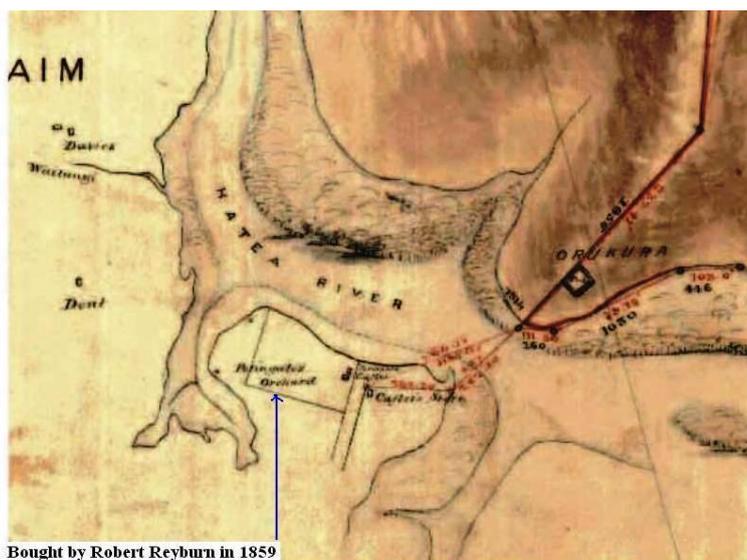


Figure 3. Detail of SO 784, showing Petingale's orchard in 1857.

Then, on 3 May, 1859. he also bought 226 acres at Maungakaramea near Whangarei with land order scrip. Reyburn acquired other allotments in the village and several larger blocks in the adjoining Whareora district. He continued the exporting of fruit and dairy produce which Petingale had begun. With his sons (James Reyburn had arrived in 1867) he also engaged in farming and shipping, and held shares in the ship 'Argyle', which provided a steamer service between Whangarei and Auckland.

## Introduction

The New Zealand Police are building a new police station in Whangarei at 88 Cameron Street, on the corner of Cameron and Walton Streets (Lots 2–4 DP149559) (Figure 1). This is the site of the former Settlers Hotel, dating to 1865. Stephen French of Davis Langdon Ltd., acting on behalf of the Police, contracted CFG Heritage Ltd to prepare an archaeological assessment of the Hotel (Campbell 2007) and to prepare an application to the New Zealand Historic Places Trust to destroy the archaeological remnant of the hotel under section 11 of the Historic Places Act 1993. Because of the tight time frames involved and the fact that the hotel site was covered over by an asphalt car park the assessment was limited to a desktop appraisal – it was not possible to assess the condition of the site prior to the investigation. The site was recorded as Q07/1280 on the New Zealand Archaeological Association site file. The excavation was carried out between 21 and 26 November 2007 under HPT authority 2008/127.

## Historical background

Adrienne Slocombe

In 1839 William Carruth from Scotland became the first European settler to take up permanent residence

two properties of 150 and 36 acres respectively for the sum of £290 (B1/15, LINZ Auckland).

Petingale settled on his waterfront property that included the future site of the Settlers Hotel and in 1849, in a letter to relatives in Auckland, he states that “at ‘Whangarei Mains’ he had got an excellent home, a profitable herd of cattle and had established an orchard of four acres planted with a variety of choice fruit – oranges, lemons, limes, pomegranates, passionfruit guavas, strawberries, currants, apples, pears, mulberries, filberts, plums, gooseberries, figs, grapes and peaches.” He also had flowering shrubs, hops, bees and pigs (Mossong in Pickmere 1986).

Petingale was reported as making a considerable income by exporting fruit to Auckland. He was also credited with being the founder of commercial fruit growing in Whangarei, an industry that thrived to such an extent that, some years later, Whangarei was to become known as “the garden of Auckland” (Pickmere 1986).

From a plan of the Parahaki Block drawn in 1857 (SO 784, Figure 3) Petingales orchard appears to lie to the west

in Whangarei. Local Maori under Iwitahi of Parawhau built him a whare on the shoreline near where the bridge crosses the Hatea River today. In 1840 his brothers Robert and John arrived and in 1844 a 968½ acre Crown Grant was purchased by William Carruth of Otahuhu, farmer, and Robert Carruth of Adelaide, settler (B1/10, LINZ Auckland). The extent of the claim can be seen in Figure 2. It included the future site of the Settlers Hotel as well as much of the present commercial centre of Whangarei.

The brothers brought with them tools, implements, household articles and everything necessary to carry out farming operations including seed wheat from Scotland. At the time the land where Whangarei now stands was covered in bracken, tea tree scrub and the poisonous ‘tutu’ (tupukihii) and, with no timber available in the vicinity, a raupo whare was built for the new arrivals. The brothers then set about farming operations and by 1842 they had about 30 acres under cultivation in wheat, maize and potatoes (Pickmere 1986). An article in the *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator*, 30 April 1842, reports that wheat stacks were present on the Carruth property.

The Carruth brothers subdivided and began selling their land within two years of the date of purchase. In 1844 John George Petingale of Auckland, merchant, purchased

of Walton St although it is not altogether clear whether or not it included the future Settlers Hotel site to the east.

● Robert Reyburn arrived in Whangarei in 1859 and purchased 42 acres 36 perches of Petingales property (including the Settlers Hotel site) for the sum of £2300 (1B/717, LINZ Auckland).

Reyburn’s occupation on the Certificate of Title was given as “gentleman.” He also advertised in the *Daily Southern Cross*, 18 February 1862: 1, as the Whangarei agent for *Emma Eliza*, a schooner of 23 tons making weekly runs between Auckland and Whangarei.

Reyburn continued to maintain Petingales orchard and ran a dairy herd as well. He then had some of his property surveyed into sections with streets on a grid pattern, that he named after members of his family. This subdivision was to form the nucleus of the present commercial centre of Whangarei. ●

## The Settlers Hotel

A sketch plan of Whangarei (Figure 4) indicates that there is already a small building on the corner of Walton and

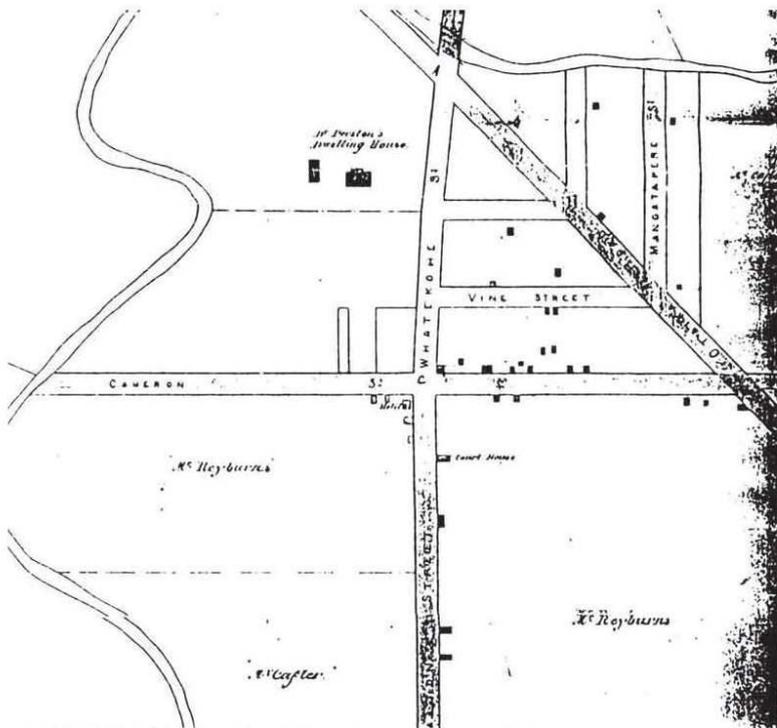


Figure 4. A sketch plan of Whangarei town made during Reyburn’s tenure (1859–1865). A small building labelled ‘Hotel’ can be seen near the corner of Cameron and Walton St. National Archives/Whangarei Museum.

● Cameron St labelled 'Hotel' during the time the land was owned by Reyburn. This was probably leased to George Naylor who used it as a hotel. Pickmere states that there was an ordinary sized house on the property at this time that was known as Naylor's Hotel (Pickmere 1986).

On 1 May 1865 Reyburn sold Lots 30 and 31 of section 9 to George Naylor of Whangarei. Naylor paid £65 to Mr Walton, who held a mortgage over the property, and 5/- to Reyburn (B2/223, LINZ Auckland). Once the purchase was completed a new hotel was quickly built and a license applied for immediately. ●

The hotel was constructed of wood and was two and a half stories high. It had a gabled roof covered in shingles and a lean-to, probably a kitchen, at the rear. The windows were made in the twelve-light style that was typical the time. A verandah was positioned along the Walton St frontage with a Settlers Hotel sign above it and a building, probably the stables, was located at the back (Figure 4).

The *Daily Southern Cross*, 3 May 1865: 5, Licensing Meeting notes that

The last application was presented by George Naylor, for a license to a house now in course of erection by him, to be called the Settlers' Hotel. This application was signed by 99 persons. After considerable discussion, the license was granted to Mr Naylor by five votes to three.

Naylor opened his establishment on 1 July 1865 as advised by the advertisement shown in Figure 6, which

ran for several months, having successfully obtained the required Bush License.

Mrs Naylor, sometimes known as Mother Naylor, was a kind-hearted, motherly woman who often lent a hand to people in need (Rust 1935). She also kept a wary eye open in case of theft as can be seen from a report from the Magistrate's Court published in the *Daily Southern Cross* in 1866 (Figure 8).

The hotel was utilised on many social occasions from hosting lunches for cricket teams to hosting the dinner following the Agricultural Show (*Daily Southern Cross*, 20 March 1872: 3). Cricket was popular with the pioneers. The first game in Whangarei was played on 10 January 1861 and by 1866-67 it was well established. The headquarters for the cricketers was the Settlers Hotel and on practise days they flew a large white flag from the flagstaff. The flag was adorned with three stumps, a bat and a ball and the letters W.C.C. Dr Perston's paddock opposite the hotel was the cricket ground (Rust 1935).

Rust (1935-36: 2005) tells a story against the proprietor concerning three of his fellow countrymen A, B and C who lived on the outskirts of Whangarei:

Every Saturday night they foregathered at 'Mother Naylor's Hotel. One night A arrived with a fine turkey to sell. He asked Naylor if he wanted to buy. "How much are you asking for it?" "Oh I suppose three and sixpence is a fair price." "Huh" said Naylor, "it is only worth half a crown to me." "All right" said A, "where shall I put it?" Mine host went out to the yard and put it

Figure 5. The first Settlers Hotel in Walton St, Whangarei. William Dent is seated on the horse and the group on the verandah include Mr and Mrs Naylor (proprietors) and Mr A. Thomas, Drummond Te Wake Collection The Northern Advocate.



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Robert Snr. became closely involved with the Presbyterian Church and community in Whangarei. By June 1859 he was present at the meeting of Presbyterian settlers when it was resolved to build a church. He was one of four elders and a member of the committee. A year later the congregation set up a day school, of which Reyburn was superintendent for a year. He also ran a library from his own premises, and was librarian and vice chairman of the Whangarei Literary Institute.

Then, in 1862, he became a justice of the peace. Reyburn was a strong advocate for the interests of Whangarei in local politics. He supported the movement for separation from Auckland, and pushed for proper representation on highways boards for each district in the Whangarei area. He was a highway trustee for the Whangarei District in 1864, and for both the Whareora and Whangarei Districts in 1868, remaining in the latter position for a number of years. In 1866 the Auckland Provincial Council responded to a financial crisis by cutting much of its funding to schools. An Act of 1867 provided for the funding of education by levying rates on land and property, and charged the highways boards with administering the levy. Reyburn strongly opposed these moves. He was appointed one of two members of the Board of Health for the Port of Whangarei. Apparently reluctant to offer himself for provincial government, he was nevertheless member for Marsden from 1869 to 1873, and was the first chairman of the Whangarei High School Board in 1879. The Reyburn estate, 'Eglington', comprising 42 acres of what was originally Whangarei Mains, later became the business centre of Whangarei. Along with Henry Walton and Dr Augustus Perston, Reyburn initiated the development of the city. All three are commemorated in the names of city streets.

Hannah Reyburn died in 1878 and in 1880 Reyburn travelled to Macclesfield where he married Hannah's sister, Mary Anne Lane, a widow, on the 14th of September 1880. He lived in Macclesfield for eight years before returning to New Zealand alone.

A man of integrity, direct and often uncompromising - he called himself a moderationist. After many years in local affairs, he died at Whangarei on the 21st of October 1892 and was buried in the old mission ground cemetery, Whangarei.

## Historic Reyburn House

Reyburn House is the oldest existing settlers' home on Whangarei's Hatea River. Originally built as a home for Robert Reyburn of Kilmarnock, who arrived in Whangarei in March 1859 from Glasgow, the first part of the house was built between 1865 and 1875. It began as a small cottage that was later expanded into a villa with verandas. The house was constructed from lapped kauri weatherboards topped by a corrugated galvanized iron roof, internal walls were framed using rough sawn kauri scrim board, tongue and groove kauri and ceilings of board and batten. The attic space was originally used for bedrooms and finished with tongue and groove match lining. Additions were made on the western side of the house in about 1894. A new gable-ended roof was erected over part of the building at that time.

In about 1895, a veranda with a concave roof was added to the north side of the house to give protection from the sun. This was painted (in the fashion of the day) with red and white stripes. The final major addition to the house was built in 1900 when the house was extended on the eastern side with two more rooms and a central hall with an ornate arch. The veranda was also extended at the same time. The rooms became formal spaces with coffered ceilings.

The house was originally sited between the Hatea River overbridge which brings traffic from Riverside Drive into the city, and the present Regional Council building. A large pohutukawa beside the busy intersection stands near the house's original site.

When the Reyburns moved to Auckland in 1910, the life of the house changed. In the early 1900s, the area around Reyburn House evolved from residential to light industrial, and a street along the waterfront immediately in front of the house became a principal traffic route. In September 1932, a building line condition on the frontage of the water was imposed and in 1950, the property lost still more land to road widening.

In the period from 1910 to the early 1960s, the house had a chequered history, it was divided into two flats and rented by a variety of tenants over many years. The Harbour Board acquired the property under the Public Works Act in the early 1960s, and in December 1964, stated that the site was needed for harbour improvements. In 1966 after negotiations with the Northland Society of Arts, the Harbour Board agreed to lend Reyburn House to the Society as a place for its activities. A Widening of the traffic route in 1976 resulted in the first relocation some 10 meters back on its site. In 1984, the Society was asked to buy the house from the Harbour Board for the nominal sum of \$10.00. It was moved to its present site in 1986 – its third and final resting place.

In 1985, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust declared Reyburn House a Category II historic building. In 1998, an extensive restoration and renovation project was begun with funding from the lotteries Commission. Extensive work on the gardens surrounding Reyburn House, including many planting in keeping with the era in which the house was built, was also done at this time.

Grants received in 1999 from the Whangarei District Council and in May 2000 from the ASB Charitable Trust have enabled the completion of the major restoration of Reyburn House, Approximately \$400,000 and hundreds of volunteer hours have been spent restoring Reyburn House and its surrounds. Recently the Society has put in sprinklers into the building, the original bedrooms upstairs will become a museum housing memorabilia and photographs of the development of Whangarei's Town Basin, Reyburn House and the many people who have lived and worked in the area.

### More Ancestors of Kathleen Reyburn – Great Great Grand-Daughter of Robert Reyburn (1810-1892)

#### Fifth Generation

16. Robert Reyburn was born on 4 Jan 1810 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He died on 21 Oct 1892 in Whangarei, New Zealand. He married Hannah Rathbone on 4 Aug 1834 in Macclesfield Cheshire.  
17. Hannah Rathbone was born on 21 Jan 1810 in Macclesfield, Cheshire, England. She died on 4 Aug 1878 in Whangarei, New Zealand.  
18. James Brown . James married Janet Dawson on 4 Aug 1834 in Glasgow Lanarkshire Scotland.  
19. Janet Dawson .

#### Sixth Generation

32. John Reyburn was born on 10 Aug 1767 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He died on 30 Nov 1845 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He married Jean Thomson on 30 Jul 1799 in Kilmarnock Ayr.  
33. Jean Thomson was born in 1774 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. She died on 28 Nov 1864 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. The cause of death was Bronchitis.  
34. James Rathbone was christened on 24 Feb 1790 in Macclesfield, Cheshire, England. He died on 31 Aug 1863. He married Mary Elizabeth Gee on 3 Jan 1809 in Macclesfield Cheshire.  
35. Mary Elizabeth Gee was born on 11 Oct 1792 in Hyde Cheshire.

#### Seventh Generation

64. James Reyburn was christened on 19 Mar 1732 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He married Anna Connell on 2 Jul 1761 in Kilmarnock Ayr.  
65. Anna Connell was born on 23 Jun 1737 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland.  
66. Hugh Thomson was born on 10 Jul 1726 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He married Agnes Aitken on 22 Dec 1760 in Kilmarnock Ayr.  
67. Agnes Aitken was christened on 17 Mar 1737 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland.  
68. Robert Rathbone . Robert married Hannah Pickford on 25 Mar 1788 in Macclesfield Cheshire.  
69. Hannah Pickford was christened on 21 May 1758 in Congleton, Cheshire, England.  
71. Hannah Gee .

#### Eighth Generation

128. James Reyburn was born in 1700 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He married Agnes Cadow on 29 Jun 1727 in Kilmarnock Ayr.  
129. Agnes Cadow was born on 5 Jan 1701 in Auchinleck, Ayr, Scotland.  
130. Robert Connell was born on 12 Apr 1709 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He married Ann McArthur on 24 Nov 1728 in Kilmarnock Ayr.  
131. Ann McArthur was born in 1707 in Kilmarnock Ayr.  
132. Hugh Thomson was christened on 11 Jul 1691 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He married Agnes Gemmil on 2 Jul 1719 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland.  
133. Agnes Gemmil was christened on 15 Mar 1694 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland.  
134. John Aitken . John married Margaret Muir on 25 Oct 1714 in Kilmarnock Ayr.  
135. Margaret Muir .  
138. Will Pickford . Will married Sarah (Pickford).  
139. Sarah (Pickford) .

#### Ninth Generation

258. John Cadow was born in Auchinleck, Ayr, Scotland.  
261. Janet Todd was born in 1687 in Kilmarnock Ayr.  
264. Hugh Thomson was born about 1665 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He married Agnes Harper about 1690 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland.  
265. Agnes Harper was born about 1669 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland.  
266. Matthew Gemmil was christened on 14 Jun 1660 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland. He married Elizabeth Dawson in 1687 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland.  
267. Elizabeth Dawson was born in 1662 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland.

#### Tenth Generation

532. John Gemmil . John married Janet Boyd in 1645 in Kilmarnock, Ayr, Scotland.  
533. Janet Boyd .