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HAMILTON GILMER Post 1882



Hamilton Gilmer

Family

Hamilton and his wife Elizabeth had six children all of whom were born on the West Coast at Greymouth. They were:

- **Dorothea** born 8 January 1873. Married **Charles William Ziele** (1870-1931) on 24 February 1903 at "Fern Glen", 102 The Terrace, Wellington. They had no children. Dorothea died 22 June 1927 at Woollahra, NSW. She was cremated at Rookwood Crematorium, NSW, and her Ashes placed at Bolton Street Memorial Park, Wellington.
- **Hamilton Andrew Hugh** born 8 August 1874. Married **Helen Davidson** (Born 1875 at Edinburgh, Scotland. Died 25 April 1934 at Wellington) on 10 July 1899 at St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh. They had five children:
 - **Hamilton John Herbert** (Born 21 April 1900 at Birkenhead, Cheshire England. to 23 July 1966 at Wellington). Married **Lois Christine Caro** (Born 1908. Died 28 December 1998.) Buried at Bolton St Memorial Park.
 - **Hugh Scobie Hamilton** (Born 1902, Cheshire, England. Died 1965 Hertford, Hertfordshire).
 - **Huia Richard Hamilton** (Born 1903 at Wellington. Died 2 July 1975 England).
 - **Helen Elizabeth Hamilton** (5 February 1904 at Wellington. Died 23 May 1987) Married **Peter Richardson Grant** (Born 1903. Died 26 Aug 1967) in 1927.

- **Dorothy May Hamilton** (Born 25 March 1907 at Wellington to 13 Jun 1989). Married **John Eastwick** on 25 February 1959.
- **Patricia Hamilton** (Born 13 August 1916. Died 4 August 1977) Married to **Eric Reeves** (Born 11 Feb 1895. Died 29 October 1979) in 1939.

Hamilton was married a second time to **Mary Elsie Williams** in 1934 at Wellington. She was born 15 March 1899. She died 1979 and is buried at Bolton St Memorial Park. Hamilton died on 23 October 1937 at Wellington. He was cremated and his ashes are at Bolton Street Memorial Park, Wellington.

- **Samuel Henry** born 1876. Married **Mary Clegg** in June 1927 at Marylebone, London, England. Samuel died 27 November 1948 and is buried at Bolton Street Memorial Park, Wellington. Mary was born in 1877 and she died on 16 September 1935 at Southsea, Portsmouth, England.
- **Knox** born 27 August 1878. Married **Elizabeth May Seddon** (25 March 1880 to 9 February 1960) on 3 February 1907 at Wellington. Two children: **Mary Hamilton Seddon Knox** (1911 to 2006) and **Jean Lindsay Seddon Knox** (1914). Knox died on 21 July 1921 at Wellington and is buried at Karori Cemetery.
- **Florence Elizabeth** born 12 September 1880. Married **William Edward Herbert** on 7 February 1906 at Wellington. They had three daughters: **Dorothy Elizabeth** (1907 to 1985), **Margaret Agnes** (1909 to ?) and **Betty Hamilton** (1911 to ?). Florence died on 17 November 1961.
- **Anne Henrietta** born 1882. Died 11 November 1882. Buried at Bolton Street Memorial Park Wellington.



Hamilton & Elizabeth Gilmer and Family c1883**Elizabeth Gilmer nee Hamilton****Duke of Edinburgh Hotel 1882 to 1886**

With purchase of the Royal Oak in 1881 Sam took over its management and Hamilton took over the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel from Sam. This was about a month after the dissolution of the Gilmer Brothers partnership in February 1882.

Hamilton applied for the license in April 1882 and this indicated that the property was owned by Thomas Mason of the Taita, Lower Hutt. This was formally confirmed with the licenses being granted in June 1882. On the first relevant electoral roll Hamilton is shown at Manners St and Sam at the Royal Oak Hotel.



1879 Manners St. Duke of Edinburgh Hotel (left) Wesleyan Church in distance

Throughout the period to 1886 there was little publicity of Hamilton Gilmer. There were only a few minor events that made the newspapers. For example:

- In August 1883 Hamilton was fined 5 shillings in the Magistrates Court for failing to keep a light burning from sunset to sunrise. An amount that was totally insignificant to him and everyone including the magistrate would have known that.
- On 22 September 1883 an information for Sunday trading was laid for supplying liquor to a well known Wellington solicitor. Hamilton defended the case pleaded not guilty and with the support of his counsel Mr. Gully, the case was dismissed.
- On 7 April 1884 a seaman was charged for stealing a bottle of brandy from the hotel. He was fined one pound or 2 weeks prison.

Hamilton's license was renewed each year as required without any issues. However, on 17 February 1886,¹ Robert Scott, who was previously the manager of the Brunner Coal Mine near Greymouth, announced that he had taken over the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel. Scott was to have a very short career in the hotel industry.

By 15 September 1886 Scott filed a declaration of insolvency.² His assets were stated as were stated as 2044 Pounds 13 shillings and liabilities as 2371 pounds 12 Shillings & 6 Pence. Of the liabilities the Hotel lease was valued at 900 Pounds with stock of 354 Pounds. As could be expected Hamilton Gilmer was a creditor and was owed 178 Pounds and his company Junction Brewery was owed 70 Pounds.³ The details of the case, show that Scott had paid Hamilton Gilmer 1100 Pounds for the hotel of which half was in cash. The balance of his payments to

¹ Evening Post 17 February 1886

² Evening Post 15 September 1886

³ Evening Post 18 September 1886

Hamilton Gilmer were at 3, 6 And 9 months. The receipts from the business could not support these payments and his other business commitments.

A newspaper report⁴ on 19 October, 1886, indicates that the principal creditor, Mr. Bertie is the proprietor of the Duke of Edinburgh. On 3 December 1886 the License was transferred from Scott to Bertie.

In the early 1880's Hamilton Gilmer, while running the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel, was involved in a number of investments. Some of these involved mining companies. The investments we have identified were:

- The United Quartz Crushing Company (Limited) at Terawhiti. This company raised 3,000 Pounds in capital and Hamilton was named as a provisional Director.⁵
- The Island Bay Park Company which raised 5,000 Pounds to buy land suitable on which to build a racecourse. Hamilton was named as a provisional Director and was to have a long association with the location.⁶
- Golden Crown Gold Mining Company. Hamilton was named⁷ as a director but at a meeting six months later he was not re-elected to the role⁸.
- Anatori Gold Mining Company. Hamilton was named as being at a meeting of directors. on 12 December 1883⁹ also at a later meeting reported on 23 September 1884.¹⁰
- Terawhiti Wealth of Nations Extended Quartz Gold Mining Company.¹¹ Hamilton was named as a director.

During the period from October 1882, Hamilton Gilmer and John Hamilton had funded Hamilton's brother in law, John Knox Hamilton, into the New Zealander Hotel. John Hamilton protected his investment by living at the hotel for some twelve years but Hamilton Gilmer put in place a formal partnership arrangement to secure his position. This was dissolved in April 1885 by which time John Knox had demonstrated he could satisfactorily manage the hotel.

⁴ Evening Post 19 October 1886

⁵ Evening Post 26 April 1883

⁶ Evening Post 1 June 1883.

⁷ Evening Post 26 June 1883

⁸ Evening Post 14 December 1883.

⁹ Evening Post 12 December 1883

¹⁰ Evening Post 23 September 1884.

¹¹ Evening Post 8 March 1884

NOTICE is hereby given that the partnership hitherto existing between the undersigned, carrying on the business as a Hotelkeeper in and upon the licensed premises known as the "New Zealander Hotel," has been this day dissolved by mutual consent.

The undersigned John Knox Hamilton will in future carry on the said business; and will receive all debts due to and discharge all liabilities owing by the late firm.

Dated at Wellington this 28th day of April, 1885.

J. K. HAMILTON.
HAMILTON GILMER.

Witness to Signatures—
C. P. SKERRETT,
Solicitor, Wellington.

Evening Post 5 May 1885

Through this period, Hamilton also bought more hotels. These were the Oxford Hotel and the Commercial Hotel and also by April 1886 he had bought the Empire Hotel in Willis Street.

NOTICE.

To Hotelkeepers and Others Furnishing.

SALE OF FURNITURE
Of the Oxford Hotel,

ON TUESDAY, 24th, AND WEDNESDAY, 25th JUNE,

By Public Auction, on the Premises.

GEORGE THOMAS has received instructions to sell—

The entire Hotel Furniture, in lots to suit purchasers.

Sale to commence at 11 o'clock each day.

Catalogues will be printed and cards to view, to be obtained from the Auctioneer the day previous to sale.

Terms cash. No reserve.

N.B.—The Auctioneer would specially recommend those in want of furniture to attend this sale, as it is bona fide.

NOTE.—The sole reason for the above sale taking place being that Mr. H. Gilmer having taken over the lease intends to refurnish throughout in character with the hotel.

Tenders are invited for extensive alterations and additions to the Commercial Hotel in Willis-street. This hotel, as is well known, has changed hands, and is now the property of Mr. H. Gilmer, who intends making it a really first-class hotel property. The restoration will involve pulling down and rebuilding the whole of the upper part of the house, and opening out on the ground floor will be a diningroom 44ft by 19ft wide. The plans have been prepared by Mr. W. C. Chatfield, and the tenders must be sent in by the 24th inst.

Evening Post 17 June 1884

Evening Post 17 June 1885

As well as these purchases, on 1 April 1886, Hamilton Gilmer moved on to the Empire Hotel. This was reported in a expansive article in the Evening Post.¹² Hamilton had carried out a major renovation and restored the Empire to the first class hotel that it once was. Hamilton was following the formula evident from his early days at Greymouth. He had also succeeded with the publication of the report by the newspaper as he had done previously at Greymouth.

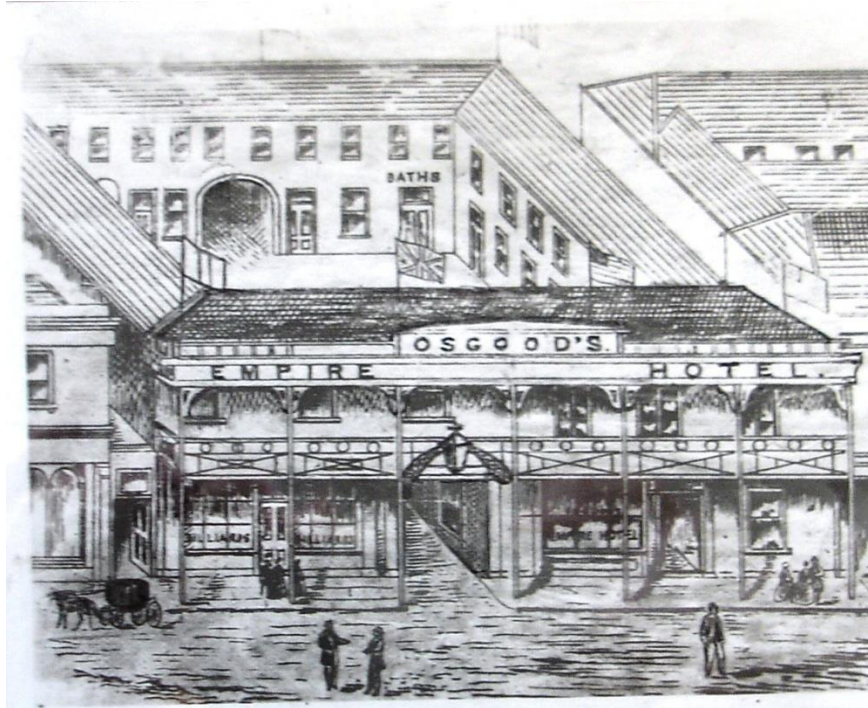
The Empire was an old Wellington hotel built originally in about 1855. The original owner was a Mr. Swinbourne who after ten years sold the hotel to James Osgood formerly of the Empire Hotel Dunedin. After some refurbishments Osgood opened on 4 February 1865.

Osgood ensured that the hotel was appropriately branded with his name.



Empire Hotel before Osgood

¹² Evening Post 10 June 1886



Osgood's Empire Hotel¹³

Hamilton Gilmer spent two months refurbishing the Empire and the newspaper reported on the results in a lengthy article:

¹³ Photo Turnbull Library Wellington

On the 1st of April last the Empire Hotel, long Wellington's premier hostelry, was in the condition of a dilapidated wreck. The lease of its former popular proprietor, Mr. Jacob Lichtscheindl, had terminated, and the hotel had been denuded of all its furniture, and had naturally fallen somewhat into disrepair. On the day named, however, Mr. H. Gilmer entered into possession, and in the short space of two months he has worked wonders, so that, whether inside or outside, the Empire never looked better or more comfortable than it does at the present moment. Outside it has been painted, the balconies both in front and rear improved, and the spacious courtyard laid down in concrete. The whole of the carpentering repairs required inside and outside, which were very extensive, were carried out in a most excellent manner by Mr. Murdoch. Inside, the house has been re-papered, repainted, and re-furnished throughout, no expense having been spared to make everything thoroughly homelike and comfortable. In addition to bars and bar parlours, public diningroom, billiard, commercial, and readingrooms, sample rooms, the Empire has three suites of private apartments and no less than 70 bedrooms, so that the task of re-furnishing it from entrance hall to attic was no easy or inexpensive one. The work was entrusted to Mr. J. L. Kimbell, of Lambton-quay, and he has performed it in a most tasteful and satisfactory manner. The furniture throughout is of the very best descriptions, that for the dining and other public rooms being upholstered in morocco, while the private suites of apartments are most beautifully fitted up, provided with pianos and every possible convenience. The billiard-room is very tastefully panelled, the couches upholstered in crimson plush, and the table is a new one by Geo. Wright, of London. The furniture of the bar parlours is in horsehair. All through the building excellent taste has been displayed in the selection of wall papers,

carpets, and linoleums. The painting, paperhanging, and decorating, was executed, we may say, by Messrs. W. and G. Tustin. Large and handsome mirrors adorn all the principal rooms, and in the diningroom and private sittingrooms clocks of the most artistic and *recherche* description have been placed. These and a number of very handsome silver epergnes and other table ornaments were obtained at the establishment of Mr. S. Kohn. Well-selected pictures grace the walls, and the ornaments and nicknacs are admirably selected and very plentiful in the various rooms. The bedrooms are all furnished in a cosy, comfortable manner, spring mattresses, neat iron bedsteads, and every item of the furnishing being of the very best quality. Handsome chandeliers light the dining and sittingrooms, the whole of the lighting and plumbing arrangements of the building having been overhauled and re-furnished by Mr. J. E. Hayes. Mr. Kimbell, in addition to the furniture, carpets, &c., also supplied the china and glassware; while the cutlery came from the establishment of Mr. Geo. Denton. The whole work of rehabilitating the Empire was conducted under the personal supervision of Mr. H. Gilmer, the lessee, who received a good deal of valuable assistance from Mr. B. Cohen, the well-known hotel broker. The Empire, we can now safely say, is not inferior in regard to its general accommodation to any hotel in this colony, and there are few that are so completely furnished with all possible convenience calculated to promote the comfort of lodgers. The kitchen has been thoroughly overhauled and, like every other part of the hotel, re-furnished, so as to allow the experienced *chef* employed full scope for the exercise of his art. Altogether Mr. Gilmer is to be congratulated on the enterprise, taste, and liberality he has displayed in re-furnishing the house so as to make it more than worthy of its former high reputation:

Beer Duty Tax Evasion Late 1880's

The Beer Duty Act 1880 established a three pence per gallon excise duty on beer. Evading this tax was difficult, beer brewing operations are large and difficult to hide but there were still attempts made to evade the tax.



1880 Beer Duty Stamp

Coincident with the introduction of the tax, the government employed inspectors to police the fixing of stamps. Numerous prosecutions followed. The Department of Customs investigator was Saul James Jackman who had been pursuing actions all over New Zealand since the introduction of the Beer Duty Act of 1880. He had a reputation for being a zealot and he had an incentive because he received a proportion of the fine as a reward.

In December 1888, a case was brought against Andrew Hamilton there were also cases against John Edmonds at Petone and Hamilton Gilmer's Junction Brewery. The Minister decided that the case against Junction Brewery should wait until after the other cases had been heard. This favoritism created a large scandal for the Government which ultimately led to the resignation of the Minister George Fisher.

Hamilton Gilmer had seen the harassing nature of the case against Andrew which had been drawn out to almost three months. He immediately offered to pay whatever fine or penalty the Government cared to levy on him and his company. His objective was to avoid prosecution and a similar long drawn out affair to Andrew. The Government decided to prosecute.

Fisher had disagreed with his Premier on a number of issues but his involvement and actions in the Beer Duty cases of Andrew Hamilton and Junction Brewery, as a friend of Hamilton Gilmer, led the Premier to ask for his resignation.

In mid 1889 several reports appeared in the Evening Post about a merging of Junction Brewery with the Staples Brewery. Martin Kennedy, one of Hamilton Gilmer's business colleagues from his Greymouth days, became aware that John Staples was in financial difficulties. Because of increasing competition in the hotel industry Staples had been forced into buying a number of hotels through which he could sell his beer. He was struggling to meet his commitments and was very interested in any arrangements that would stave off bankruptcy.¹⁴

¹⁴ Kelburn, King Dick and The Kelly Gang, Kevin Bourke.

Kennedy had put together a syndicate of West Coasters made up of himself, Hamilton Gilmer, Maurice O'Connor and Felix Campbell. Kennedy, acting on behalf of the syndicate, offered to purchase the Staples Brewery outright and pay off Staples debts of more than 10,000 Pounds.

Under the agreement Hamilton Gilmer and John Staples put in hotels while Kennedy, Campbell and O'Connor put in cash. The sale price was fixed at Government valuation (very possibly understating the worth of the business) and each of the partners held 12,000 One pound shares in the company.

The West Coast Syndicate contained successful business men from the Greymouth. Kennedy was a trader and financier with interests in gold and coal mining. O'Connor was a contractor with interests in timber milling and shipping and Campbell (along with Kennedy) had been a director of Wealth of Nations Gold Mine and the Dispatch Foundry in Grey mouth.¹⁵ Hamilton Gilmer and Martin Kennedy had also been directors of the Brunner Coal Mine.¹⁶

An advertisement elsewhere announces the completion of the negotiations for merging the old-established brewery business of Mr. John Staples in a Limited Liability Company, under the title of J. Staples and Co. (Limited.) The new company also, we understand, absorbs the business of the Junction Brewery Company. The managing director of the new concern will be Mr. Martin Kennedy, and Mr. H. Gilmer and John Staples will also have seats on the directory. Great improvements are contemplated, by which Staples' brew will not only maintain, but largely extend, the high reputation it already enjoys.

Evening Post 1 August 1889

¹⁵ Kelburn, King Dick and The Kelly Gang, Kevin Bourke.

¹⁶ Grey River Argus 16 June 1874

THORNDON BREWERY.

HAVING sold my interest in this business to the new firm of J. STAPLES AND CO. (LIMITED), I beg to tender my warmest thanks to my patrons in Wellington and surrounding districts for their generous support during the past 30 years, and beg to solicit a continuance of that support for the new Company, of which I am a large shareholder.

JOHN STAPLES.

Referring to the above, we beg to intimate that we have this day taken over the Brewery business hitherto carried on by John Staples.

The business will be continued at the Thorndon Brewery as formerly, and to ensure the maintenance and widespread popularity of Staples' Beer, and, if possible, improve on it, extensive improvements and additions will be made to the premises and plant.

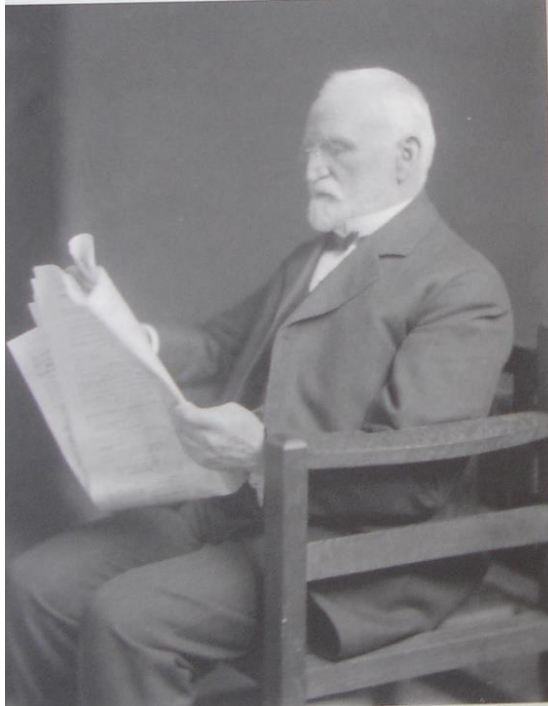
All accounts which may be incurred by this Company from this date must be rendered to the Secretary for immediate payment.

J. STAPLES & CO. (LIMITED).

M. KENNEDY,
Managing Director.

Thorndon, 1st August, 1889.

Evening Post 1 August 1889



Martin Kennedy

John Staples disposed of his shares within a year and the other four shareholders split the shares among themselves. Kennedy reduced his holding substantially towards the end of 1899 although he continued as Managing Director.¹⁷

We understand that Mr. Martin Kennedy has disposed of his interest in the Staples' Brewery Company to a local syndicate. The price is said to be £32,000.

Evening Post 6 December 1899

The remainder of the shareholders and their descendants retained their shares for some thirty years until the company was merged with NZ Breweries in the 1920's.

At its beginning, Staples had direct control over supply agreements with forty hotels mostly within Wellington. The company started a campaign of expansion by buying up hotels and by 1900 had doubled the number it owned or controlled in the city. The risk of prohibition in the period was not a concern because the industry believed that forced closure of a selected number of hotels in an area did not reduce overall consumption of beer but rather increased the turnover and therefore the value of the remaining hotels.

The company continued to increase its dominance and by 1905 owned and controlled most of the 48 hotels in Wellington. In addition Staples, not surprisingly, was the largest brewer in the Wellington region.

¹⁷ Kelburn, King Dick and The Kelly Gang, Kevin Bourke

Most of the hotels acquired by Staples were sold to lessees. This overcame legislation directed at tied houses in which as a condition of the lease the lesser was obliged to purchase their beer from the brewery which owned the hotel. This restrictive clause was simply taken from the lease and inserted into the sale and purchase contracts.

By 1903 Hamilton Gilmer was by far the largest shareholder in Staples as shown on the following list and it appears that he may have purchased most of the shares sold by Martin Kennedy. His business partner Allen Maguire was also a substantial shareholder.

Name.	Occupation.	Shares.
Kennedy, Martin	settler	1503
Kennedy, Mary	settler	3750
Campbell, Felix	merchant	36,700
O'Connor, Maurice	contractor	27,700
Gilmer, Hamilton	settler	43,474
McArdle, Owen	secretary	4810
Staples, Martha W.	settler	616
Gasquoine, Wm. C.	clerk	247
Mowbray, Wm. A.	clerk	1500
Grace, Agnes Mary	settler	3000
Maguire, Allen	contractor	10,500
Collins, Wm. Ed.	M.D.	3450
Duncan, John	merchant	6000
Rawson, Herbert P.	dentist	1500
Wardell, Herbert S.	settler	600
Wardell, Lucy C.	settler	900
Wylie, Andrew	solicitor	375
Skerrett, Charles P.	solicitor	375
Joseph, Jacob	settler	3000

Staples Shareholders¹⁸



1894 Staples Brewery Thorndon Hamilton Gilmer 5th Man from Left

¹⁸ Kelburn, King Dick and The Kelly Gang, Kevin Bourke Sourced from The Petrel 21 March 1903

In November 1896, Hamilton Gilmer sold the Empire Hotel to Joseph Mandel and we believe he would have made a substantial profit on his original outlay.

The freehold of the Empire Hotel, Willis-street, has been purchased from Mr. Hamilton Gilmer by Mr. Joseph Mandel, formerly of Wellington, and now proprietor of the Club Hotel, Masterton. We understand that the price is £20,000. Possession of the hotel will be taken by Mr. Mandel on 1st March, 1897, when it is intended to replace the present building by a very fine hotel, which it is estimated will cost £20,000.

Evening Post 5 November 1896

It was at this old hotel, too, though many years later, that the settlement of the first disagreement that occurred between the City Council and the Harbour Board over the reclamation was sealed with the unsealing of wine corks at a sumptuous banquet. Reclamation has gone on ever since without serious trouble, until to-day the once wave-lapped Empire Hotel has been left standing in the very heart of the business centre of the Empire City.

Mr. Swinbourne sold out and Mr. Osgood, who succeeded him, enlarged the premises and employed the first barmaids in the city. Mr. P. Moeller, subsequent-

ly proprietor of the Occidental Hotel, Lambton-quay, succeeded Mr. Osgood, and was succeeded in turn by Mr. Leichtscheindl, who after many years of occupancy gave place to Mr. H. Gilmer, from whom the present licensee (Mr. J. Mandel) took possession and has carried on the old business with credit and success. It is his intention to erect on the site of the present building a handsome pile which will be in keeping with the splendid premises built by him on his Victoria-street frontage. It may be mentioned that Mr. Mandel, on his arrival in Wellington from Austria 24 years ago, put up at the Empire, which 21 years later he became proprietor of.

Evening Post 28 August 1900

On 17 April 1897, Joseph Mandel commenced advertising that he was rebuilding the hotel after a fire. On 6 May both Hamilton Gilmer and Mandel advertised their notices for the pending change of license on 4 June 1897. Both notices were dated 13 March 1897. Mandel's notice contained a footnote to the effect that "Mr. Joseph Mandel is the owner of these premises."¹⁹ Indicating that he had bought the freehold as well.

As well as being involved with the Empire Hotel, Hamilton continued to have other interests in the hotel industry. In 1894 he was on the committee of the Licensed Victualler's Association. He also continued to own the Island Bay Hotel which he had bought in 1893. He initially leased the hotel to others but in 1897 the Island Bay Hotel Licence was transferred to him. Rather incongruously in July 1897 Hamilton was named by the Posts & Telegraphs Department as the Telephonist for Island Bay.²⁰ Perhaps this was because his hotel had the only telephone in the

¹⁹ Evening Post 6 May 1897

²⁰ Evening Post 23 July 1897

area. However, he showed an interest in the area and was a member of a three person deputation to have a school established there on a one acre parcel of land provided by Jacob Joseph.²¹

At this time Hamilton also owned the Western Hotel making alterations to it in January 1898. Later in the year he was fortunate that an adjoining building caught fire but the hotel was not damaged.²²

In 1898 the newspaper reported the purchase of "Fern Glen" at 102 the Terrace. This became the family home and we are told it had a tennis court, stream and a beautiful garden.

auCTION mart, Featherston - street. There was an exceptionally large attendance. The most important lot offered was the fine freehold property on Wellington-terrace, comprising an acre of land (frontage 186'ft), and the two-story 12-roomed residence, "Fern-glen," belonging to the estate of the late Mr. Charles D. Barraud. For this property the bidding commenced at £2000, and quickly proceeded by bids of £250 up to £4000, at which price it was purchased by Mr. Andrew Wylie, as agent for Mr. Hamilton Gilmer.

Evening Post 22 March 1898



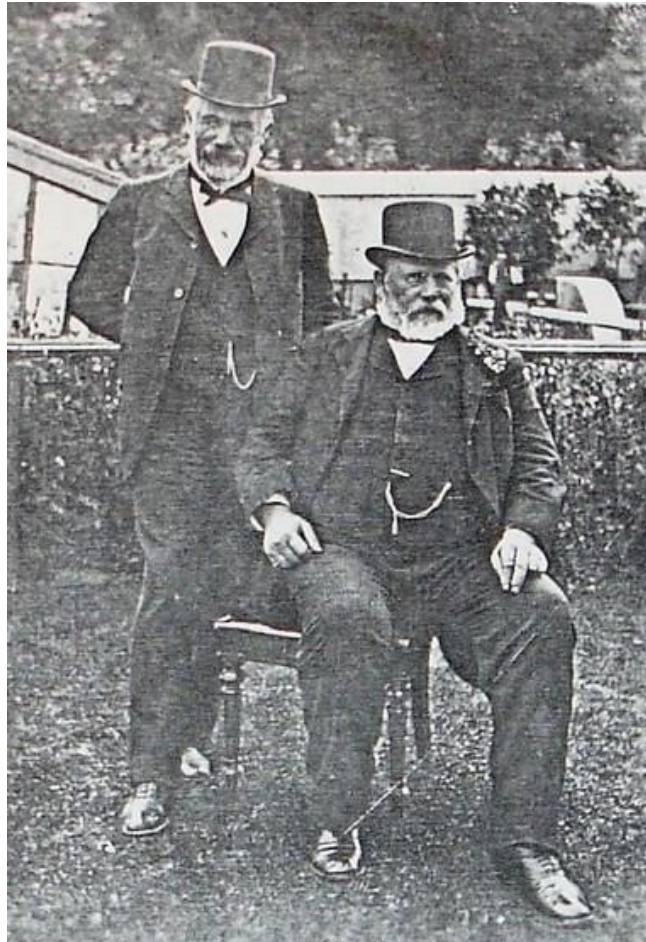
Elizabeth at Fern Glen c1898

²¹ Evening Post 30 March 1898

²² Evening Post 8 August 1898.

Hamilton Gilmer and Richard Seddon were good friends and both were members of the New Zealand Liberal Party. They had known one another from their time on the West Coast where Seddon lived at Kumara south of Greymouth. They were both members of the West Coaster's Association in Wellington.

Seddon was a long standing member of Parliament and was Premier from 1893 until his death in 1906. He was often accused of cronyism appointing friends to various positions. The Seddon and Gilmer families were brought closer together by the marriage of Hamilton's son Knox to Seddon's daughter, Elizabeth May.



Hamilton Gilmer & Richard Seddon c1905

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Hamilton Gilmer had a seven year term as a member of the upper house, Legislative Council. He was appointed by the Premier and served from 22 January 1907 until 21 January 1914. He was in his early 70's for most of this period. We have been told that during this time he did not make a single speech.

During this term, Hamilton with his wife and son Samuel took a trip to "*the Old Country*", They were accompanied by his friend and business partner Allen Maguire and his son John. They left Auckland on 13 April 1910 on the ship *Moroa* sailing to Australian ports and on to Columbo, Aden, Suez and Marseilles arriving in London at the end of May. In London, Hamilton was reported as attending the New Zealand Pavilion of the Japan-British Exhibition.²³

The Hon. Hamilton Gilmer and Mr. Allan Maguire and party, who have been touring the Old Country, intend leaving London for Sydney by the Macedonia on 16th October. After a brief stay in Australia they will depart for Wellington in time to arrive for Christmas. Mr. John Maguire, son of Mr. Allan Maguire, will not accompany the party home to New Zealand, as he is remaining in England in order to study medicine. There is a likelihood that Mr. Samuel Gilmer, who journeyed with his father to England, will remain abroad longer than was at first thought.

Evening Post 20 September 1910

Hamilton's tour of the old country included a return to his home town Castleblayney. Here he erected a headstone on his father's grave at St. Maeldoids Church Cemetery in the heart of Castleblayney. He would also have visited the old family farm at Mullaghnee which at that time was owned by his half brother's (William) wife Mary Anne (nee Lockhart). William had spent a few years in New Zealand and married Mary Anne on his return to Ireland in 1886. William died in 1891 and the farm passed to Mary Anne at that time. After William's death, Mary Anne went to her mother's home at Mulladuff where she taught at the Mulladuff school.

Hamilton's only other family member in Ireland was his eldest brother James who had died in 1906.

²³ Evening Post 16 July 1910



**Hugh Gilmer's Headstone St Maeldoids Cemetery Castleblaney
Erected by Hamilton Gilmer 1910**

In 1910, Elizabeth still had family living at the Hamilton farmhouse at Annalittin and we believe that they would have visited there. At that time, Elizabeth had two sisters Anne and Jane who lived at the farmhouse and two brothers, William and Hans, had remained in Ireland. William worked the family farm.



Annie, Ellen, Andrew, William, wife Ellen son Willy 1915 Annalittin.

Hans was the eldest of Elizabeth's brothers and he remained in Ireland leaving the family farm and obtaining his own land at nearby Drumdreeny. He died in 1928 about five months after his sister Elizabeth. In his will he left 50 Pounds to Elizabeth repaying an amount she had lent him. Perhaps this loan was made during her visit in 1910?

The Gilmer's returned to New Zealand on the ship *Moldavia* leaving London on 23 September 1910 and arriving in Sydney on 5 November. They left Sydney on the *Ulimaroa* and arrived back in Wellington on 9 November 1910. While John Maguire remained in England, Samuel returned home with his parents.

On his return Hamilton continued to carry on business much of it with his partner Allen Maguire (a fellow Director of Staples) with whom he bought and leased out properties. However, Maguire died on 27 March 1915 at the age of 72.

Hamilton also continued to own hotels separately from his involvement through his shareholding and executive roles in Staples Brewery. He also owned the Grand, Trocadero Private, and the Clyde Quay Hotels through to 1919. He also was involved with the West Coaster's Association being elected a vice president and Committee member in 1912.²⁴

With the return of service men from the War, Hamilton strongly supported the RSL. He and Allen Maguire (and after his death, his estate) owned the building used by the RSL. Hamilton provided his share of the building rent free, foregoing an amount of about 1200 Pounds.

Another long standing involvement of Hamilton was with St Peter's Church. He was a member of the Church's Bazaar Committee and later was an office bearer for many years of the St Peter's Club and in later years as a Trustee. Hamilton was recognized in reports as being very generous with donations.

We are fortunate to have some comments about her grandfather from his grand daughter Mary Jerram²⁵

"When Grandfather was alive we had to go to 11 am Church at St Peters, Willis St. He went to Church to be seen, and had no great religious convictions. We don't remember Grandmother going to Church.

They sat in the front pew and Mary wondered if he could read at all because, she had to find the place in the prayer book.

He was so Irish, that it was very difficult for her to understand what he said.

She said that he seemed to be quite fond of her. He sat in hall when she had the flu and he used to leave her little presents

The only person Hamilton was frightened of was his wife. He had a little office in BNZ Bldg, Lambton Quay, Willis St corner. He always gave us ½ Crown (2/6) when we saw him. He used to walk from The Terrace to work with Robert Hannah of Hannah Shoes.

He was a bit of an old villain. He died of prostate, refusing an operation. He died in agony and wouldn't listen to his doctor son, Hamilton.

²⁴ Evening Post 4 July 1912

²⁵ Recorded by Tim Jerram at Taupo 26 January 1992 when Mary was aged 80.

When he died the funeral came down Boulcott St and up Willis St to St Peter's Anglican Church. We were looked after by Aunt Loui (Seddon) but she wouldn't allow us to look from window. The blinds were all drawn."

Elizabeth's grandchildren, Mary and Jean, had to see her every Sunday when they came back from Church. They had to stay 20 minutes and used to watch the clock, and used to say "make haste slowly". They would take turns talking to her. Mary was scared stiff of her. In good mood she put lollies on the mantelpiece

They never really knew her apart from as an invalid looking out the window at Fern Glen over the tennis court and beautiful garden. She didn't talk much, just grunted. She had two nurses to look after her, one in the evening, and the other during the day. She used to cough and spit and was treated by Dr. Arthur. She brought up the family, and only used to interfere in the business when he was throwing out tenants.

Hamilton Gilmer died on 25 June 1919. There were extensive obituaries and coverage of his funeral in the newspaper:

A familiar figure passed from the business life of Wellington last night by the death of Mr. Hamilton Gilmer. Mr. Gilmer was in his 81st year, and his health had been failing for some weeks.

Mr. Gilmer was born in Ireland, at Broomfield, in the County Monaghan, in the year 1838. He arrived in Victoria some time in the year 1861, and after a brief look round the Victorian goldfields, sought his fortune in New Zealand. He was one of the earliest of the gold-seekers in Gabriel's Gully, and he followed the developments of that time until the discoveries on the West Coast called him. In the stirring days of Hokitika, Staffortown, and other places he prospered modestly, and eventually he settled down to a business career in Greymouth. In 1871 he paid a visit to his native place, and there married Miss Hamilton, with whom he returned to Greymouth. In 1881 Mr. Gilmer transferred his interests to Wellington, where he spent the rest of his life. He was attracted to the place by his belief in its future as the political and commercial centre of the Dominion. His judgment proved correct, and in the development of Wellington, which he foresaw, his work was a considerable factor. Though possessing many of the qualities which would have assured his success in public life, Mr. Gilmer was not attracted by politics. He worked quietly

for the success of his adopted country, but sought none of the rewards of service. His only term in politics was as a member of the Legislative Council from 1907 to 1914. He was a prominent member of St. Peter's Church. It was in the business life of the community that Mr. Gilmer was chiefly known. His great sagacity and business courage brought him success, and many enterprises throughout New Zealand owed their prosperity to his interest. His qualities were those of the pioneer—sterling integrity, justice in business, and that generosity of disposition which has come to be regarded as a trait in the characters of the men who made the West Coast their resting-place in the early days. The late Mr. Gilmer had wide business interests. Among other positions he was managing director of Staples and Co., and a director of the Atlas Assurance Company. Mr. Gilmer leaves a widow and three sons and two daughters. The sons are Dr. Hamilton Gilmer, Mr. Knox Gilmer, and Mr. Samuel Gilmer. The two first-named are well-known citizens of Wellington. The third is a solicitor, at present in England awaiting demobilisation after war service with a unit of the Imperial Army in the Palestine campaign. The daughters are Mrs. Ziele, of Sydney, and Mrs. (Dr.) Herbert, of Wellington.

There was a very large attendance at the funeral this afternoon of the late Mr. Hamilton Gilmer, who for a great many years was one of Wellington's prominent citizens. The chief mourners were Dr. H. Gilmer and Mr. Knox Gilmer (sons) and three grandsons of Dr. Gilmer. Messrs. W. E. Bethune, R. Wilberfoss, T. Madden, G. H. Dixon, Frank Hamilton (Nelson), and Phipson attended at the family residence, Wellington-terrace, as pall-bearers, and the vestrymen of St. Peter's acted in a similar capacity at the church. Amongst those who paid a last tribute of respect were the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. W. D. S. MacDonal), the Mayor of Wellington (Mr. J. P. Luke, C.M.G., M.P.), Sir John Findlay, M.P., Hon. C. Samuel, M.L.C., Mr. Cyril Ward (Christchurch), representatives of the Bank of New Zealand, Messrs. J. Staples and Co., Ltd., Government Insurance Department, and other branches of the mercantile community. The service, which was of an impressive character, was conducted by Archdeacon H. Watson, Vicar of St. Peter's, who also officiated at the graveside at Karori. As the mourners left the church the Dead March in "Saul" was played by the organist, Dr. Fyffe. Amongst the numerous wreaths was one from Sir Joseph and Lady Ward.

Funeral Evening Post 27 June 1919

Amongst other well-known citizens, in addition to those whose names were mentioned in The Post yesterday, who attended the funeral of the late Mr. Hamilton Gilmer were Mr. Samuel Gilmer and Mr. Andrew Hamilton (brother and brother-in-law respectively of the deceased gentleman), Mr. P. S. Lawrie, Colonel C. G. Morice, Lieutenant-Col. H. J. M'Lean, N.Z.M.C., Councillor L. M'Kenzie and Mr. J. R. Palmer (Town Clerk), Messrs. J. H. Richardson, W. B. Hudson, G. Robertson, P. Muter, and G. W. Barltrop (representing the Government Life Insurance Department). Messrs. J. W. Macdonald and J. Zachariah (Public Trust officer), Messrs. William Watson, B. M. Litchfield, and Alfred Smith (representing the Bank of New Zealand), Rev. H. Van Staveren, Mr. C. M. Luke (President of the Central Chamber of Commerce), Mr. Haydon (Messrs. Speight and Co., Dunedin), Hon. W. J. Geddis, M.L.C., and Messrs. R. A. Loughnan and G. H. Dixon (representatives of the New Zealand Times), Mr. E. A. Blundell (Evening Post), Mr. H. W. Lever (Bank of New South Wales), Mr. Robert Hannah, Mr. A. E. Donne (Wellington Woolen Co.), Mr. L. O. H. Tripp (Italian Consul), Mr. Maurice O'Connor (Messrs. J. Staples and Co.) The interment was made in the Bolton-street Cemetery.

Funeral Evening Post 28 June 1919



Headstone Hamilton Gilmer Grave Bolton Street Memorial Park Wellington

Hamilton's Estate and Will

Hamilton's estate was valued at the very significant amount of 300,000 Pounds.²⁶ The Executors were Thomas Madden, Brewery Manager, and Henry Lever, Bank Manager. The main provisions were:

- Elizabeth, Hamilton's wife: all household, furniture, plate, linen, china, books, jewellery, stores, cars and all other domestic and personal articles.
- The Children's Ward Wellington Public Hospital 100 Pounds
- Elizabeth to receive an annuity of 400 pounds, to be paid quarterly free of deductions. Also a further annual sum to pay rates and taxes for 186 the Terrace and pay for the gardiner and the driver of Elizabeth's car.
- Dolly Ziele an annuity of 150 Pounds until the estate is realized and a trust established.
- His brother, John Gilmer, 30 shillings per week for life. (John died on 25 October 1919)
- St Peter's Anglican Church an annual sum of 100 pounds for ten years.

Hamilton also established a Trust for his five children to advance and pay to all, save and except Dolly Ziele, a sum not exceeding 1000 Pounds per annum. If any of the children were to die during Hamilton's lifetime leaving issue, these were to stand in place of the original beneficiary. The share of Samuel Henry was not to vest absolutely in him and the Trustees were to retain an interest.

Hamilton Gilmer left a large estate and his Will was complex. It is not surprising, therefore, that in 1921 there was an action before the Court which was essentially to clarify the Will especially in relation to Dorothea's interest. The outcome clearly was that Dorothea would benefit from her share of the estate during her lifetime.²⁷

Elizabeth Gilmer's Estate and Will

Elizabeth survived Hamilton for almost ten years. She died on 31 January 1928.

The death is announced of Elizabeth, widow of the late Mr. Hamilton Gilmer, a well-known former resident of Wellington. Mrs. Gilmer passed away at her residence, "Fern Glen," Wellington terrace, after having been an invalid for a considerable number of years. Mrs. Gilmer was formerly a Miss Hamilton, of Greymouth, and Mr. and Mrs. Gilmer in their early married life lived there. Mrs. Gilmer leaves two sons, Dr. Hamilton Gilmer, of Wellington, and Mr. Samuel Gilmer, of London. Her surviving daughter is Mrs. W. E. Herbert, at present abroad with Dr. Herbert and her family. The late Mr. Knox Gilmer was the youngest son; the elder daughter, Mrs. Charles Ziele, of Sydney, died about a year ago.

Evening Post 1 February 1928

²⁶ Testamentary Register, Archives of New Zealand Wellington.

²⁷ Refer to Dorathea Zieel's story for details of the outcome of the Court Case

Elizabeth's estate was valued at 19,730 Pounds for Probate purposes. Her Executors were Walter Bethune Estate Agent and Sidney Arthur Medical Practitioner. She bequeathed Walter Bethune 300 Pounds for managing her affairs over her lifetime. Her other bequests were:

- Hamilton Andrew Hugh 35 Ordinary shares and 7 Preference shares in Bank of New Zealand
- Samuel Henry 30 Ordinary shares and 7 Preference shares in Bank of New Zealand

- Florence Elizabeth 35 Ordinary shares and 7 Preference shares in Bank of New Zealand as well as her house at 186 The Terrace as well as all her plate, linen, china, glass, books, pictures, furniture and other household and personal effects.

- Her Trustees upon Trust 35 Ordinary shares and 7 Preference shares in Bank of New Zealand..This fourth share was to be held in trust for her two grandchildren Mary Hamilton Seddon Knox Gilmer and Jean Lindsay Seddon Knox Gilmer in equal shares on attaining the age of twenty one years.

The rest and residue of her real and personal estate not otherwise disposed of equal amounts to her three children and her trustees.
