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ALICE CATHERINE 1885 to 1963

Alice Catherine was the eldest child and only daughter of John Knox and Alice Julia Hamilton. There is no record of her birth but other records indicate that she was born in Auckland in about 1885 between May and November. This was about two years before John Knox and Alice Julia were married.

There is speculation as to whether Alice was John Knox's child with Alice or with another woman. Also, she may have been Alice's child with another man. We cannot be certain but the view is that she had Hamilton features and that it is possible that John Knox was her father. On the other hand, her birth in Auckland makes this less likely particularly as John Knox was still in his early days at the New Zealander Hotel and unlikely to have ever been in Auckland. Without a birth certificate we cannot be conclusive.

We presume Alice had a good education as her brothers had and was given every opportunity by her parents. She was about 16 when her father died and would have known him a lot better than her brothers. Alice was seen to be a little different from her brothers. There was an obvious age difference and she appeared to be "delightfully vague" and was seen to be rather eccentric.

We have no knowledge of Alice's childhood, schooling or early life. Unlike one or two of her brothers there are no newspaper reports and the earliest reference is in 1925, when she was forty and her engagement was announced. It is of interest that this was in the social column "Women in Print" in the Evening Post.

The engagement is announced of
Miss A. C. Hamilton, only daughter
of Mr. J. K. Hamilton and the late
Mrs. J. K. Hamilton, Wellington, to
Mr. A. H. Chard, of Kent, England.

Evening Post 23 September 1925

Alfred Henry Chard

Alfred Henry Chard was born about 1888. He was known as **Harry**. There is no New Zealand birth record for him and this is consistent with the engagement notice that he was born in the United Kingdom.

Alice and Harry married on 4 November 1925 at Kent Terrace Presbyterian Church, Wellington. The marriage certificate records Alice's age as 41 and Harry's as 36. Harry was the son of **John Henry Chard** and **Elizabeth Ann Martin** and he was born in Kent, England in about 1889. His occupation was shown as "Seaman" and he had been previously married to Nellie Stack in 1912 and they divorced with the Decree Absolute dated as 1 January 1921. They had one child.

The earliest detail we have of Harry was in 1910 when he stood for election to office of the Wellington Wharf Labourers' Union. He attained the office of Vice President.¹ This success implies that he would have worked on the Wellington wharves for a number of years and was well known to the electors.

Not long later towards the end of 1913 there was a major national strike of waterside workers and Harry appeared to have a lead role in Wellington. He was mentioned as presiding over a "strike demonstration" at Oriental Bay. He was also quoted as referring to a "friend's" advice on the way workers in America combated force used against them. Essentially he was arguing in an indirect way for the use of force in the strike. A newspaper article the same day said "*A certain Mr. Chard has invited the Justice Department to take him to court...*"² This in fact occurred in 1917:

An arrest which caused something of a sensation yesterday was that of Alfred Henry Chard, who is alleged to have been "wanted" in connection with the great strike of 1913. This morning Chard appeared before Mr. L. G. Reid, S.M., in the Magistrate's Court, to answer the following serious charge:—"On 28th November, 1913, did attempt to procure certain unknown persons to commit the murder of certain unknown persons, to wit, special constables serving in Wellington."

Chief Detective Boddam applied for a remand till to-morrow, and this was granted. On the application of Mr. H. F. O'Leary, who appeared for Chard, bail was allowed in the sum of £50 and a surety for a similar amount.

Later on in the morning Chief Detective Boddam obtained leave to mention the matter. The alleged offence, he explained, took place three years and a-half ago, and many of the material witnesses had left the Dominion. Under these circumstances, he was instructed to offer no evidence, and to ask the Court to dismiss the information without prejudice.

Mr. O'Leary consented to this course. At the same time, he desired to draw attention to a version of the alleged affair, which appeared in one of the morning papers and which suggested that Chard had decamped to San Francisco. In case anything transpired in the future, Mr. O'Leary wished to make it clear that Chard remained in New Zealand two years after the alleged offence, and had only been absent from the Dominion for a period during the past twelve months, when he was engaged on a San Francisco steamer.

The Magistrate dismissed the information without prejudice.

Evening Post 4 May 1917

¹ Evening Post 29 July 1910

² Evening Post 29 November 1913

Harry did not volunteer for service in the war but as it progressed there was need for reinforcements to replace the many troops killed or wounded. Call-ups were introduced and on 25 April 1918 Harry was among a number Called Up. His address was shown as 63 Manners Street. However, Harry's colleague in the Seaman's Union appealed the decision in his and several other cases. The case was heard on 21 June 1918 and the board reserved its decision, sine die. However, the war was drawing to a close and a few months' delay would have been enough for Harry to avoid the prospect of being involved.

ADULTERY.

Alfred Henry Chard sought dissolution of marriage with Nellie Chard on the ground of her adultery with Samuel Stock. Mr. J. A. Scott appeared for the petitioner, who said the marriage took place in 1912, and there was one child of the marriage. In 1917, while petitioner, a seaman, was away at sea, his wife misconducted herself with co-respondent, a miner, and two other children had been born. Admission of the co-respondent's paternity of these in the shape of birth certificates was put in. After hearing corroborative evidence, his Honour granted a decree nisi, with costs on the lowest scale against co-respondent.

Evening Post 11 Aug 1920

Harry continued his involvement with the Seaman's Union and in 1921 was its President.³ He was also elected to the Union's Grand Council.⁴ In 1923 Harry stood for election to the office of Secretary of the Federated Seaman's Union and was resoundingly defeated by the incumbent, W. T. Young, by 811 votes to 110. Harry responded by suing Young for 400 Pounds damages for libel. The case was heard in the Supreme Court and in the evidence Harry alleged that prior to the election ballot Young had distributed a circular stating the Harry was a member of a "scab" union. The judge found the libel was proved and awarded Harry 150 Pounds damages.⁵ However, the action meant that Harry's political career with the union was finished and there were no further reports of any activities.

With this background it is easy to understand that Harry was not warmly welcomed into the Hamilton family. The Hamiltons in Wellington were part of the social scene. They were well-off and were continually mentioned in the social columns. He had a reputation as a "gold digger". In family circles, he was not spoken about and his name was never mentioned. When the younger

³ Evening Post 11 January 1921

⁴ Evening Post 4 October 1922

⁵ Evening Post 13 July 1923

children asked about him there was never a response.⁶ Evidence can be found to support the view that Harry had found a partner that would allow him to live well without further work at least not in the hard world of a seaman and in the crude political world of the unions.

Following their marriage in 1925 there were numerous newspaper reports of the Chards holiday to Europe. The first report below indicated that they were already in London and it appears they left in early 1929.

Mr. and Mrs. Chard (Wellington) will leave for Paris at the end of September. After a month in the French capital they will continue south, intending to spend the winter on the Riviera, making their headquarters at Nice.

Evening Post 24 September 1929
London Personals dated 23rd August

Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Chard (Wellington) left London at the end of September, and spent several weeks in Paris on their way to Nice, where they remained until the end of March, and came back to London again by way of Paris. They made a number of delightful trips from Nice. It had been their intention to go down to Torquay at an early date, but, unfortunately, Mrs. Chard has been obliged to go into a nursing home for an immediate operation. All being well, she and her husband will visit Scotland later to see the latter's mother and sister, and then they will go to Ireland to see relatives of Mrs. Chard.

Evening Post 15 May 1930
London Personals dated 10th April

A similar report appeared about three weeks later.⁷

⁶ Ian Rennie Hamilton

⁷ Evening Post 6 June 1930 Personal News London 2nd May

Alice and Harry finally made it home Wellington on 22 December 1931. They were Second Saloon passengers on the *Rangitane*. They had a trip of about two and half years no doubt fully funded by Alice or her mother.

The Chards were shown as booked on the *Wanganella* for Sydney and Melbourne in August 1935. We are uncertain of whether this was a holiday or whether they were leaving to live in Australia. Unfortunately, Alice's mother died later on 28 August and we presume they would have returned for her funeral.

We have not identified any further events for Harry until his death on 5 March 1951. He committed suicide by throwing himself under a train at Flinders Street Station, Melbourne. The death notice indicated that he was living in Spring Street which has always been a very fashionable address. It could well be that they were staying at the Windsor Hotel which at the time was the place to stay in Melbourne.



A 63-years-old man, Alfred Henry Chard, of Spring Street, city, was killed last night when he fell from a platform at Flinders Street station, and was run over by a train. He was dead on arrival at Royal Melbourne Hospital.

The Argus 6 March 1951

His body was taken to the Melbourne Crematorium at Fawkner after a Service.

It is not recorded just when Alice returned to Wellington from Australia but she then lived for several years at a small private hotel in Hill Street, Thorndon. Her brother, Andy, by then widowed, attended to her welfare.

We believe Andy settled most of Alice's bills after she returned to Wellington. When she died in May 1963 her estate was valued at a mere \$5,400. Alice had a large sapphire ring which Queenie and Mavis had coveted for years. They were certain in their belief - and told Bill and Jack - that Andy had got his hands on the ring when Alice died and that he had snaffled the "enormous" sale proceeds. After Andy died, Ian found Alice's "jewel beyond price" in his father's safe and Ian told Gavin of the find. Mary, Gavin's wife, had also by then been innocently infected with the contagious sapphire "disease". Gavin and Ian agreed that they would have the ring valued and then give it to Mary as a Christmas present.

Apart from a few little diamonds surrounding the sapphire, the large stone itself turned out to be a rather elegant fake and was only worth a paltry few hundred dollars. *"I'll never forget the look on Mary's face when we gave her the ring - first on seeing the ring itself and next on reading the valuer's certificate. The perpetual family arguments were at last buried."*⁸

⁸ Ian Rennie Hamilton

There was little doubt that Harry Chard got all the good pickings before, we suspect, Andy and Jack turned off the dripping Melbourne tap in the early 1950s. If that sapphire ring had been worth anything at all, Harry would doubtless have dealt with it years before in Melbourne. Maybe it was after he had had the ring appraised in Melbourne that he found his last hope had gone and that the only thing left was a one-way ticket to Flinders St.

Alice died on 18 May 1963 and she was cremated at Karori on 23 May. There is no recognition that her ashes were placed in the family grave there. This is consistent with her testament that her ashes be scattered. However, it is believed that her brother Andy could well have had them placed in the family plot. It is the kind of thing he would have done. He had a sense of family history and he would have cared that her ashes were placed in close proximity to the remains of her parents.