

WINIFRED CAMPBELL LEARNS TO COOK

EXCEEDINGLY PRETTY CHICKENS

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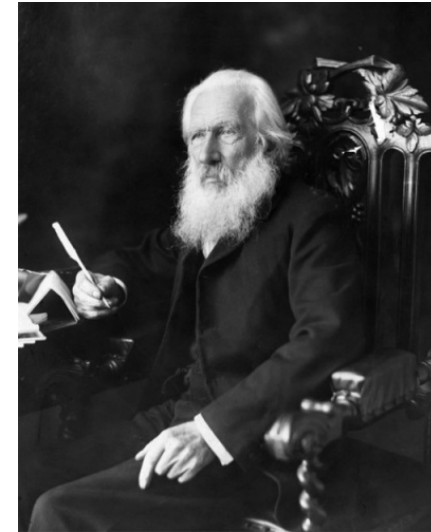
I first met Winifred Campbell when I was researching my book on the history of toys in New Zealand—*Hello Girls and Boys*. Personal accounts by children of their play are rare, and those from the 19th century even rarer, so a letter written by young Winifred to her father in the 1870s describing a game she and her girlfriends had been playing using some sort of toy guns was unusual. The reason her correspondence survived was that her father, Sir John Logan Campbell was an assiduous collector and filer of paper. Her letters to her parents survive in very large numbers dating from when she was eleven years old in 1875 until both her parents' deaths in 1912.

This paper would be describing little more than a footnote in most biographies but the quantity of archival material relating to Winifred and her family means that we can examine in detail a minor part of her story, the attendance for five weeks at a London cooking school, against a background of marriage negotiations, Victorian gender politics and Imperial colonial connections.

To understand why Winifred was attending a cooking school in London 1885 we first need to meet her father.

John, (later Sir) John Logan Campbell is known colloquially as 'The Father of Auckland.' Son of a younger son of minor Scottish nobility Campbell trained as a doctor and set out for Australia. However, the sight

of New South Wales in the grip of a major drought encouraged him to continue to New Zealand where together with William Brown, a lawyer he had met on the voyage, he decided to abandon medicine and become a businessman. Brown and Campbell bought themselves an island, Motukorea or Brown's island at the entrance to Auckland Harbour and awaited the land sales which were planned for New Zealand's new capital where in Campbell's words they proposed settle down as 'small landsharks.'¹



John Logan Campbell 3 Nov 1817 – 22 Jun 1912

The partnership was extremely successful and their wealth grew with the city. In 1848 Campbell returned to Europe for a 'grand tour' and repeated his visit in 1856 and on the voyage he met and later married Emma Wilson, a member of the wealthy Cracroft Wilson family from Canterbury. The couple had four children, two of whom died in infancy and two daughters, Ida and the youngest, Winifred. Ida was later to die, aged 20, leaving Winifred the only remaining child.²

¹ <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1c3/campbell-john-logan>

² Stone, R.C.J., *The Father and his Gift*