

A
LETTER
FROM
NEW ZEALAND

**THE LETTERS OF FOUR FAMILIES
FROM MEASHAM
WHO EMIGRATED TO
NEW ZEALAND**

STAN WHEATCROFT

A LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND

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Margaret Watts

Joyce Stanfield

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to:

Mary

And all past, present and future members of the Liggins' family

A LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND

INTRODUCTION

How often must members of the Liggins' family in Measham have said when they went to the front door after hearing the postman put something through the letter flap - "There's a letter from New Zealand"? Around the turn of the century four of my ancestor's families, from two generations, emigrated to New Zealand and quite a number of the letters that they sent home have survived to the present day. Their existence must be quite a rarity in itself and added to that the fact that the writer of the first group of letters wrote long, descriptive letters home, they all together paint a unique cameo of life in New Zealand in those early days.

How is it that these letters are still here today and who were these people that left England for a new life? To answer these questions it is necessary to give a little bit of family history. This will also help in identifying the people referred to in these letters.

My great-grandfather was Luke Liggins and he was the publican of "*The White Hart*" in Bosworth Street, Measham. His wife, Mary Ann, took over the licence of the pub after his death in 1876. They had eight children :- John William, Annie Elizabeth, Joseph, Thomas, William, Luke, Catherine and John. Of these John William and Thomas died in infancy.

Luke and Mary Anne's son Joseph with his wife Sarah and children were the first family to emigrate to New Zealand in 1884 and so the first group of letters are from them. Apart from the first letters that Joseph sent home, the rest were sent to his brother William. The reasons for this was that William was looking after Joseph's affairs in his absence and they were obviously very close and William was the head of the family in Joseph's absence. Also, apparently their mother could not read or write and therefore William would be the best person to read and explain Joseph's letters to her.

William lived in Loudon Terrace, Ashby with his wife Ellen, son Osborne and daughter Maggie and shortly after Joseph had emigrated he went to work for Davenport's the wine merchant in Ashby. You will hear more of Maggie later.

Joseph's sister Catherine married John Stanfield and they were my grandma and grandpa. John Stanfield had been lampman at Rugeley colliery and his father had been killed in a mining accident there in 1879. At some stage he left Rugeley and came and stayed at "*The White Hart*" where he met Catherine and started travelling from village to village selling ribbons and similar items "*on a tray*" (as I remember my mother telling me). Meanwhile Catherine had served two years as an indentured apprentice "*from the fifteenth day of April, eighteen hundred and seventy two, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. --- in the Art of Drapery and Millinery*" with John Wade who was the previous owner of the draper's shop in the High Street now owned by Mr. Taylor. She then started a small milliner's shop just round the corner in Bosworth Street, now owned by Miss. Barbara Atherley. A milliner's work in those days was to start with basic hat shapes and to decorate them to the customer's requirements. I am sure that John and Catherine's relationship would have started with him selling her his wares to decorate her hats. Later the three cottages opposite "*The White Hart*" were bought and turned into Stanfield's General Drapery Stores consisting of the Women's, Men's and Boot Shops. Catherine (Katie) and John had five children - William,

George, Ernest, Edith Catherine (my mother) and Osborne (who died aged 8 months). My mother married Harry Wheatcroft and they had two sons - John and Stan. At last and least you can see where I fit into the scheme of things.

Joseph's brother John married Emma and they went to live in Derby. They had five daughters - Molly (christened Mary Ann after her grandmother, but because she did not like these names or Polly, the familiar alternative, she was always called Molly), Alice, Dorothy, Ethel and Winifred. Ethel died at the age of seven with diphtheria.

Joseph's brother Luke married Charlotte and they had a shop in the High Street, next door but one to the present newsagents shop owned by Mr. Christian. Their shop was subsequently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Griffin.

This now leaves Joseph's remaining sister Annie Elizabeth. She married George Smith, a Measham builder, who built and lived in the house called "*Ashlea*" in Pegg's Close Lane. He built a number of houses in Measham and during my researches a distant memory came back to me; he had built a pair of semi-detached houses in Leicester Road called "*Tokomaru*" named after the town where the Liggins' family had settled in New Zealand. However, when I went to see them, they were not there and a new pair of semis was in their place. This was very disappointing but mining subsidence had left another mark on Measham. I still have a six foot wooden builder's level with the name G. Smith burnt on it in three places which has survived the ravages of time even if those houses have succumbed to the NCB.

Annie and George had a son Joseph and a daughter Mary Ann who was called Polly!

I shall refer to this Joseph as Joe Smith to avoid confusion with our first letter writer Joseph Liggins. Now Joe Smith married Edie and I never queried who she was until much later in the story of these letters. I did not start these researches until after my mother and all her generation had "*joined the majority*" as Joseph says in one of his letters. It is a surprising fact that one has to ask the correct question to discover all the information that one wants to find out and this Edie proves the point in question. The answer to the question "*Who was Edie?*" got the reply "*She was Joe Smith's wife*", but the answer to the question "*Who was Edie before she married Joe Smith?*" produced the answer "*She was Joe Smith's cousin!*". While my mother was alive she was the best known to me because they had always written to each other over the years, Edie being in New Zealand. She was in fact Joseph Liggins daughter Mary Edith who somehow and at sometime must have returned to England and stayed with one of her relation's families in Measham.

This was the third family to emigrate to New Zealand. They had three children in England and a fourth later in New Zealand.

I am afraid that now there is a sad part to the story. Annie and George's daughter Polly had married Jim Walker and they had the Post Office at Draycott. They were in the process of packing to follow Joe and Edie out when Polly died suddenly. Nevertheless, in spite of his bereavement, Jim emigrated taking with him his two young sons, Jamie and Roy.

I am at the moment nearing the end of transcribing Joseph's letters and I felt that now was a good time to at least start this introduction. It is September 1992 and a surprising calendar of events has happened since I started this "labour of love". I have remade contact with the Liggins family in New Zealand. They are Graeme and Linda Liggins, who still farm the original section

cut out by Graeme's great grandfather all those years ago in Tokomaru. Obviously, they are as interested in these old letters as I am and they are hoping to come and see England and Measham in the none too distant future. My son John's plans are nearly complete to leave here in the middle of November and to go and see as much as possible of New Zealand in the following six months. This work has become not only a story from the past but a story of the present and the future; who knows as to where it will lead?

THE LETTERS FROM JOSEPH LIGGINS AND HIS FAMILY

Joseph Liggins and his family emigrated to New Zealand in 1884 when he was 33 years old and his wife Sarah was 34. They had seven children, six of which were born in England whilst the seventh, young Joe, Joseph Huia Palmerston (JHP) was born in New Zealand after the period covered by these letters which is from 1884 to 1892.

Before coming to the letters themselves it is probably best to first explain the reason for them being kept for so long and also to describe the events that had happened to the Liggins family before they emigrated.

The earliest item that was found in the desk drawer was a receipt :-

Birmingham, January 24th, 1848

*Recd. of Mr. Luke Liggins the sum of Eight Pounds for half years rent of
The White Hart situate in Measham, in the county of Derby, due the Fifth
Day of January, 1848*

£8 . 0 . 0

*William Morrison
Executor of the late Thom. Hazelwood*

This was, of course, Joseph's father and he at some time later bought the freehold of the inn. Luke died in 1876 and left the income from his estate, including the inn, to his wife during her lifetime and on her death the estate was to be divided amongst his six children.

Joseph initially had a general store and off-licence at Coalville but this business was unsuccessful. He subsequently took another off-licence type business, this time at Netherseal, probably with Sarah's brother, for which he used as security his future share from his father's estate. The money orders which he sent with his letters were intended to pay the interest on this loan. This venture was also unsuccessful and its failure was undoubtedly a main reason in them deciding to emigrate to New Zealand where it seemed there would be every chance of starting again and making a success of their new life.

The letters consist of some twenty written by Joseph and two by Sarah, with several notes sent by their children. They fall naturally into three groups. The first two letters describe their voyage out to New Zealand and their arrival there. The middle group describes their life at Longburn which is now on a branch line off the main railway line between Palmerston North and Wellington. Joseph was manager of the dairy there. The last two letters are from Tokomaru where he started farming after clearing the bush on a new section of land. Tokomaru is on the Horowhenua Plain, which lies between the sea and the Tararua mountain range, near the

Manawatu River and it is a short distance along the main railway line from Longburn towards Wellington.

During the exchange of letters between us and the Liggins, they asked if there was any reference in these old letters to the school at Tokomaru which would celebrate its 100th anniversary in the Spring next year (1992). This made me go, out of turn, to the last two letters which were written from there. The second of the letters is dated 8th January, 1892 and in it refers to the work being started to prepare the area on which the school was going to be built. Needless to say the Liggins were very pleased to get copies of all these letters and this one in particular.

I had no idea at the start of this transcribing what the letters would reveal. I leave it to the reader to see what effect they have on you. One thing is certain, it is impossible to read them without in some way being affected by them.



Photograph of Joseph and Sarah Liggins before they emigrated to New Zealand



This photograph is of Joseph and Sarah's three sons, taken just before they emigrated: -

Charley aged 8 ½ years, Sam aged 7, and Harry aged 4 ½

A fourth son, Joseph Huia Palmerston (JHP) was born in New Zealand in 1894

They also had three daughters and their ages when they emigrated were : -

Katie 13 years, Edie 1 year 4 months, Maggie (Baby) 3 months

JOSEPH LIGGINS' FIRST LETTER

The voyage out and arrival at Auckland and Wellington in New Zealand.

Wellington, New Zealand

May 20, 1884

Dear Mother & All of you,

We had a pleasant voyage from Teneriffe to Cape Town but only saw two or three ships all the way. We arrived in Cape Town on the 7th of April and stopped to coal the entire day. We all had strict orders not to go on shore as the Captain said they would not be responsible for us and the ship would start as soon as the last bag of coal was taken on board. Notwithstanding this, as soon as the ship got to the side of the dock for coals, first one dropped off then another till at dinnertime no one was left on board but women and children. I went up amongst the first, Jonathan espied me from afar and came rushing after me. I had several hours in Cape Town and in the afternoon Sarah and the older children took a walk in the town. No doubt at one time the town did a fine stroke of business but it is quiet enough now.

I was struck with the very fine houses which were mostly brick and plaster and with the very wide streets, as wide as Ashby main street or wider. A tram runs from the docks to the town through it. I saw drays loaded with casks and drawn by strings of bullocks. The Cape Town people never seem to walk if they can ride, so that horses being cheap, a good one for £6, everybody seemed to be riding in light carriages or carts. The horses are light boned like good big ponies but are sleek, well cared for and swift, the climate seeming to suit them well. They were mostly driven by natives, a dusky, brown race or races from Kaffir to Hottentot. The men look well enough but the women in some cases are repulsive in feature but all appeared clean and swelled about the streets in gaily coloured prints and head dresses with naked legs and feet. They walk along on wooden soles which have a peg with a round knob fastened at the front, this peg is thrust between the large toe and second toe and the people go along slip slop just like as if they were all shod in the potteries. Even the tip top swells wear these battens and there are some swells here among the natives. The women display their colours and the very loud swells amongst the males wear a conical grass hat such as we see in pictures of Chinaman. This hat is stuck on the handkerchief which is worn as a headress. Then with a pipe and a stroll in the sun they are happy. I enquired the price of one of these hats. I was asked £1 for it.

Everything is exceedingly dear at the Cape except fish which is ridiculously cheap. You can buy four big ones, like large salmon, for 6d. We bought a few luxuries such as jam, sugar etc. and they are in some cases double the price that we can get them for at home. Bacon and cheese 1/6 per lb. and jam 1/-. Some of the people, being led astray by the steward who told them no one would go on shore, gave him orders for groceries which he handed to tradesmen. The poor people gave orders for what they expected would come to eight or nine shillings and they had to pay as much as £1 and £1 4s for them. I bought my own and those few came to about 11/-.

The Cape is a bad place now. I would rather stay at home on 2/6 per day than cast my lot at the Cape.

We sailed at night after we had coaled and in the morning found three stowaways who had been lucky enough to get on board during the scramble and hide themselves till far enough from land. They were set to work scrubbing the decks and carrying food for the sailors.

We now had a long voyage before us as you will see if you look at the map and no land till we got to New Zealand and what was worse we saw no ship at all after leaving the Cape till near the coast of Australia. The reason is that no ships come back this way but take advantage of the winds and currents of the Cape Horn route. We enjoyed ourselves very well however. We had a gale lasting four days once and what rocking and pitching we had. We were battened down to keep out the heavy seas so that we had not the comfort of light except that of lanterns. When we went for our dinner it was no unusual thing for a lurch to upset us and the dinner altogether. If we were on the windy side we used to slide until brought up with a bump by the bulwarks on the lee side. People got badly hurt in this way and to make matters worse they always got laughed at. I have seen women and men rolled over and over in the heavy seas we have shipped but it was no joke to be wet. If you got wet you had no accommodation for drying except by going to bed and getting someone to dry your clothes in the stoke hole.

Worst of all we could not eat the food and what we were allowed we were robbed of. We were only allowed a small loaf like a penny roll for each adult. Many people, myself amongst the number, agreed with the baker to find them an extra roll or two each day which he did at the rate of 2d for each small roll. Well! The consequence of that was that he, having only so much flour allowance, made extra rolls to meet the demand and of course the loaves kept getting smaller each day. We at last went in a body to the purser and doctor complaining of the scarcity of bread. They would not believe us until we pointed out to them that each adult according to the New Zealand Shipping Company's scale was allowed 8 oz of flour made into bread and our loaves were only about 6 oz instead of 10 oz or more as they should be when made into bread. Also our scale on our contract ticket allowed 14 1/2 ozs of flour more per week than the Shipping Company's scale. They at once saw their error and promised an alteration. We always after that had bread and to spare but unfortunately our voyage was drawing to a close before we had the sense to look at our contract tickets. The last week we had the luxury of fish meal so that all grumbling ceased.

Our joy at the approach of land was very much marred by the death of a little child who was committed to the waves, according to the rites of the Church of England, the day before we saw New Zealand. The sight was one to be always remembered. A thrill of horror ran through all like an electric shock as the body slid off the board and sank like a stone being speedily left behind by us as the ship sped on its way. The women gave a cry of horror and a salt tear flowed down the cheek of the man who had for years never known what it was to shed a tear. The father stood by the side of the rail and watched the body as it sank, his head on his hand and with the

appearance of a man who is just waking up from a horrible dream. His vacant look and grief stricken features I shall never forget. The mother was not there but the next day she came by the place and gave a cry of anguish as she looked on the place where her baby was thrown over.

We sailed into Auckland at 11 at night, May 2nd and the gun gave the signal to the townspeople, awakening the echoes of the high hills and making a dog on shore bark furiously. We were glad to hear even the dog's rough welcome as we had been so long without seeing the sight of land.

Next morning we saw the city of Auckland and it looked grand from the harbour. The neat wooden houses, mostly painted stone colour, were not close together as in England except on the principle streets, but were a good distance apart with evergreens, large native grasses and queer looking trees. They made such a picture as I had never seen or dreamt of. Large trees were all around it covered with a small amount of herbage, dotted here and there with trees. The cultivated land lies over the hills.

We did not get to land till Monday as the "Zealandia Mail" from Frisco was expected and had to go where we were we should unload. The "Zealandia" came in on Sunday night and we sailed in after she went out so that we were enabled to get off the ship the next day and walk up the town. Auckland is a very nice town. The shops are better even than home, they are large and display a great variety of goods in the windows. The Telegraph and Post Office is a very large one, as large as Nottingham Post Office and the business done in it is surprising.

Work does not seem over plentiful except for pick and shovel men and bricklayers. Pick and shovel men get 8/- and 9/- and bricklayers 12/- and 14/- and carpenters 12/- but, you see, here they do not keep a staff of men as in England but as a man takes a job he advertises for men, gets the job done, and discharges them when the work is finished. The consequence is men here are always on the move from one job to another. No man seems to stick to his trade; all take what offers. The carpenters work is done by most anybody, the stuff being sawn out and planed at the mills, it only wants knocking together. Consequently many labouring men have to put up there own houses in their spare time and very wise to as a four roomed house here, all on the ground floor, is rented at from 10/- to 15/- a week all clear

It is difficult at first for a man to get into work but when he has once started and is known, he gets along right enough, better I think than at home. The employers seem to have a dislike for "new chums".

Things in general are cheaper than I expected. Boots are about the same as in England; you may buy a suit of good clothes at from £2-10-0 to £4-00-0. Calicoes and woollen goods are about the same. Furniture is cheaper. It is made of native woods which take a beautiful polish and turns beautifully. The bedsteads, etc. are of turned wood and look beautiful. Sarah asked the price of a beautiful, full sized, turned and polished bedstead and it was only 25/-. Flour is a trifle dearer than at home but very little. Apples and other fruit are dearer although they say fruit is

plentiful. I suppose it is so high because of the price of getting it. Apples are from 3 to 4d and pears from 4 to 6d per lb. Onions 1d. Meat is the cheapest article here. The butcher's shops are indeed a grand sight. There are no small butchers here, all large and on a grand scale, owned principally by a company such as the "Gear Refrigerating Company" who export thousands of sheep. The shops are as high as a small house and the sheep are suspended in rows, as plentiful as rabbits in a poulterers shop at home, high above the heads of the shop people and are lifted down and up by long sticks with hooked ends. We saw mutton, fine shoulder and saddle, well fed, at 2d and half legs can be bought at 4d. Beef is 3d for rough pieces and 4d prime pieces and bumping weight, no such thing as ounces here. We saw people come to the butchers shop for their weeks meat and take away a quarter of sheep at a time.

I was struck, in traversing the street, with the generally respectable appearance of the people. All were well dressed, clean and orderly. I have not seen one ill dressed person since I landed. Poverty is here unknown. The wages are good and living cheap so that there is no excuse for an untidy person. But the people say that they are not doing well and the country is experiencing a depression somewhat the same as in England but the cheap living and the high wages consequent on the scarcity of labour make it so that it is not felt so bad as at home. But certainly the Colony is now in such a depressed state as has never been known. But new avenues of industry are opening up such as the frozen mutton trade, cheese making, etc. that will speedily bring to the country renewed prosperity.

We set sail from Auckland on Wednesday night after disgorging an amount of cargo that you would fancy would sink any ship. I had a visitor while there, Tom Carr had been written to by Mr. Harrison. He is resident in Auckland. He is aged very much indeed and looks as old and as grey as Joseph Latham does. He never invited me up to have a bit of dinner or tea with him and confined his remarks to the most common place, told me it was a long way to his house, etc. He might better have stayed at home, but what the devil can you expect from a parson and a Wesleyan at that. He would have been different to the rest of his brethren if he had stayed to pour oil and wine onto the wounds of the weary traveller.

We ought to have got to Wellington in 36 hours but instead of that we did not get there till Saturday. The wind was so very rough, all straight in our teeth, blowing through the rigging like a ship's horn, at times we could hardly hold our own. We experienced rougher weather than we had had all the way from England.

On arriving here we made our way to the depot. We found Mr. Harrison had inserted an advertisement for one (me) in several papers and there was one application from a company in this district so that I am staying on here till the result of my application is known. I have written them my qualifications etc., to which they have answered that everything is satisfactory and that there will be a meeting on Thursday when I expect to be appointed. I shall at the earliest opportunity then write you again.

The depot here is a different place to the one at Plymouth. The people on landing here are kept on the Government expense till suitable work is found or till

such work is offered as they consider good enough. After such work has been offered you must accept it or find another shop.

We have a room or rather two little (very little) rooms to ourselves, a nice fire - gas, and for food nice fresh butter - 1/2lb for 4 meals, 3 loaves a day and 6lbs of meat a day, the best that can be got, tea and coffee very good. Such a shop I never expected to find.

We were visited last Sunday by the M. H. R. Minister for Emigration. A plain, pleasant and kind man somewhat of the appearance of a gentleman farmer. This is not a bad place to shop at till work is obtained I can tell you. The government agent will write for you or telegraph for you to employers and send you to them so that work is obtained free of expense. We have the armed Constabulary Station in front of us, at the bottom of the hill, and the convict establishment behind us. We can see the poor fellows at work every day guarded by armed warders.

The hill we are on is named after the explorer - Mount Cook and is a hill entirely composed of clay. Fancy, the city is built of wood while clay is near them in profusion. But coal is dear here, it has to be brought from Westland or Australia. The bricks here (the convicts make them) are burnt with wood and are used to make a convict establishment here, the largest in the colony.

Talking of wooden buildings, the government building is built of wood; the largest wooden building in the colony. I counted 54 windows at one end only as I passed it. There are very many more at the front and back. The great drawback to the wooden houses is the danger from fire. It is not an infrequent thing to be awakened by the clang of the fire bells. The night before we came here the Scottish Church, one of the most beautiful wooden churches ever built and the finest in Wellington, was reduced to a heap of charred wood ashes and the fire brigade had a hard job to prevent the fire spreading. If it had caught the adjacent property, Wellington would now have been a mass of cinder as the wind was blowing right for the town and the supply of water was short as they are doing some engineering work on the hills to bring a greater supply. We have the water now but then there was none.

When you write let me know how you all are - Luke, John and Katie and the others. Tell one all the news. I shall not write again till we are settled which I hope will be next week. Jonathan has got work in a stables at £1-2-6 and all found. Sarah says she will write you all a long letter when we get settled.

She is well and so are the children, my only regret with them is having them so long away from school but we shall soon make them all right. We have the best of schools here free.

I have never felt better in my life. I believe the sea voyage has done us good. We can eat now I can tell you. I don't know how often Jonathan and I longed for the flesh pots of Egypt. I mean Mother's pork pie and coffee but now we have manna in the wilderness. I never ate so much meat in my life. We really cannot eat what we are allowed and we don't like to say anything so as to make it worse for the others.

The waste of meat in this country is simply scandalous. Enough to feed the poor of England if only they could get at it.

Of course you must one and all accept our best love and we hope you are all well. Tell Katie I will write to her individually and lengthily. Address at present to Harrison Wallsend Greymouth who will know of our whereabouts.

Read this to Uncle Ben and Aunt and remember us to All and Everybody. Tell John I will tell him about the country when I have fully examined it's people, etc.

I am yours affectionately,

Joe Liggins

"BRITISH KING"



Joseph Liggins and his family emigrated to New Zealand on board the "British King". They sailed from Gravesend on the 15th March, 1884. They arrived at Cape Town on the 7th April and did not land again until they reached Auckland on the 5th May. They finally reached Wellington on Saturday the 10th of May.

Apparently when ships were chartered to carry emigrants they did not enter harbour but stood off Gravesend and some photographs show small boats alongside unloading emigrants and their luggage onto the ship. Ships like the "British King" besides being driven by steam also had sails so that if the wind was favourable they would be set and the use of steam would be reduced to a minimum. Presumably the ships travelled via Cape Town, although the Suez Canal was open by this time, so that they would save the passage charge through the Canal and could make use of the prevailing winds along the route.

The total cost of the fare was £75 of which Joseph paid a third, £21-15-0, and the New Zealand Government paid the remaining two thirds, £53-5-0.

According to "Lloyd's Register of Shipping 1889-90", she was built by Harland and Wolff of Belfast in 1881 and the owners were the British Shipowners' Co. Ltd. of Liverpool. It would appear that all this company did was to charter their ships to others and so in 1881 she was chartered to The American Line and then:-

In 1883 the "British King" and the "British Queen" were both chartered to the New Zealand Shipping Co. and the Shaw Saville and Albion Line for four round voyages from London via Cape Town to Wellington and Lyttleton in New Zealand.

According to the "North Atlantic Seaway" she was chartered (1885-1886) by the Guion Line (Liverpool and Great Western Steamship Co. Ltd.) for "one round voyage across the Atlantic".

In 1889 she was renamed "Werkendam" and the new owners were Nederlandsche Americk Stoom Moats (Known since 1897 as the Holland - America Line) registered in Rotterdam.

In 1900 she was sold to the Russian owned Chinese Eastern Railway and renamed "Harbin". In March 1904 when Russia was at war with the Japanese she was scuttled by the Russians to block entrance to Port Arthur. Port Arthur was a fortress on the Southern tip of the Liaotung peninsula, Manchukuo (now Korea) and was formerly a Chinese naval arsenal at a most important strategic point commanding the Gulf of Pe-chi-li and the Yellow River's entry into the Gulf. It was captured by the Japanese in 1894 and leased to the Russians later. The Russians surrendered it to the Japanese on 1st January, 1905 after a stubborn siege and it was during this stage that the "Harbin" was scuttled at the entrance to the harbour to try and prevent the entry of the Japanese.

JOSEPH LIGGINS' SECOND LETTER

Karere, a Butter Manufactory, Palmerston North, Wellington, N.Z.

June 18th, 1884

Dear Friends,

The day I posted my last I had a telegram from here to come up and interview the directors of a butter factory here which is now being set up. After waiting about some few days and knocking about among the settlers I was appointed manager as I had produced satisfactory testimonials and passed a rigid enquiry as to my efficiency. I was engaged for 12 months, at a certain salary up to September, then at and after September another salary, as we shall not be able to do anything till September, our Spring. I have too a very nice house, wooden of course, with veranda at back and front, also a large garden, larger than the one I had at Measham with many young fruit trees: also butter and milk for own use.

I believe there is every prospect of making a long stay here for if things are satisfactory at the end of the 12 months I shall according to agreement have a suitable rise. As to my wage here I am well satisfied and that is saying much.

None of the directors know much of the business and it is the first butter factory, the only butter , in New Zealand. We cannot yet say what will be our success as the markets are untried and the shipping arrangements are anything but satisfactory. It is proposed to try first the Sydney then the London markets. You perhaps do not know that a great part of Australia is unable, from heat and drought, to manufacture dairy products and are dependant on outsiders. New Zealand, from its climate and rich soil, is eminently suitable to supply what they want.

I shall doubtless be able to please my employers and retain my situation. Even if this factory closed through no fault of mine, I should be able to obtain another billet because cheese and butter factories are springing up all over the country. There is such a glut in the wool market that the settlers have no other resource but to turn their attention to the dairy.

Cattle are cheap, a good cow and calf at heel may be bought at from £5 to £6. Grass is plentiful. Now it is mid-winter and in the pastures that have not been overstocked there is a good pulling up, half way to the knees. Cattle are never stabled here, they feed out all winter, there being very little frost to hurt.

This settlement is 13 years old and till last year there was no haystack in the district. The cows run out un milked, except for what the family requires, and in many cases with a great calf at their heels. This makes them very wild and they have to be fastened up, one at a time, by the neck, with a wooden lever pegged up when the cow's head is in and the rear leg tied to the wall on the other side. Philip will tell you this arrangement. Wheelwright Whitworth used to fasten cows, that came there, the same way and were of an unsociable temperament.

The floors are a quagmire. Dirt everywhere, never cleaned out I think, a veritable Augean Stable. This is hardly the fault of the settlers, they have so much work to do that such matters as these have to pass and many other things too or if anything wants doing they will do it in the most ready fashion and they will scheme for two days to do some little matter in a colonial manner (that is the term) where it might normally be done better in one.

They do not make good spenders. They will for instance, instead of buying hinges for a gate, sink a bottle shank downwards in the ground and let the bottom of the gate back upright revolve in the hollow. The top is sharpened off and put through a hole in a board and nailed on the top of the stump. A lantern is made by knocking off the bottom of a white glass bottle, the neck held upright in the hand and a candle stuck in the neck. They make Colonial bedsteads, tables and sofas much the same. The best dodge they have is that of obtaining water, all use the Abyssinian pump and get water in a day. We are trying to obtain the Artesian supply. Their ways are much different to our and here they might be copied with advantage.

Everybody are equal, all speak to everybody and shake hands with everybody. You never trip along the road but "good morning" of the settlers and "Tenarqua Pakelia" of the Maori greets you. False pride is utterly at a discount. Profane language is nearly unknown, the foul oaths of the home people would soon make them outsiders here. They are, in the country, industrious, godfearing and sober. In the town, often they are loafers, sceptics and drunkards. Drink here, as at home, is the curse of the country. Although licences are exorbitant, hotel keepers (they are all hotels here and very large) get rich and they may well. Nasty, abominable compounds are sold for ale and spirits and all at 6d per glass. It drives men mad. New Zealand has the unenviable reputation of having to care for more lunatics in proportion to the population than any other civilised country.

Places of worship are plentiful and of many various creeds from Church of England to Plymouth Brethren and Spiritualists. All clergy are equal here, except the bishops take precedence in their own flock, as at home.

A country farmer is often a M.H.R. (Member of the House of Representatives) and they are shrewd enough I can tell you. The people here are shrewder than the home people. They can detect a "new chum" in a moment and if they get the chance will learn him something. All are on the look out for one thing and one person. Money and the notorious No. 1.

People here are on the whole better off than the home people. Wages are good, when they are in work, and food is cheap. I bought 16lbs of mutton last Saturday for 3/4d. All nearly are possessed of a horse. Children ride to school on them and carpenters and bricklayers ride to their work. I was speaking to a railway overseer and he said that there were often as many as ten horses at a time tethered along the line, belonging to the natives, and if he wanted to send of them somewhere, he looked out who the nearest horses belonged to. Horses can be kept for little and often nothing and can be bought for £4 to £30. Light weeds can be got at any price. Maories breed

most of them. They will breed horses and pigs but cattle or sheep they will not. They grow potatoes and Indian corn. Indian corn is eaten after being steeped in water till soft and nearly decayed, when they consider it palatable. They also eat the bottom of rushes and wood maggots are a delectable treat eaten alive. They have a decidedly nutty flavour. I have reserved the pleasure of trying the dish as I wish to make a grand treat of it and expect to take half a days holiday for the purpose.

They dislike work as a rule and are really children of the Sun. Some are very rich as they hold very much land and are living on the sales. They are sociable, friendly and good tempered and are as much a subject of the New Zealand Government as settlers are. They have to abide by the same laws and are alike protected. Maories have no cause to grumble if the English Government will make a shoemaker's shop of the rear of Tawhiao and send him back there, they will be sensible. The men are fine men. The women, as a rule, have repulsive, hideous features. Grease and tobacco are the inseparable characteristics of the elderly women. A few of the young girls are as fine looking as any you have seen but they age prematurely and then live for ever, I think.

The Maories, male and female, ride well and are possessed of the finest horses in the country. We have the settlement of Maliwa Junna here close to us. Some of them sleep and live in their wooden churches or meeting houses on weekdays and worship there on Sundays. Others build little rush houses. They live all together with their own people. They are very lax in morals. They are blessed with few children, so few that their race from this cause is gradually disappearing. In time no doubt the Maori will have merged with the settlers into one race, just as with the Saxons and Normans. They are honest as a rule and will beg anything in creation sooner than work for it. They are never hungry as they will eat anything and dare not come out at night for fear of Typo, as they style his sable majesty.

This country here is a level one between large mountains and formed by alluvial deposit from the Manawatu river. Not a stone is to be met with except in the river. The soil is from 3 to 15 feet deep. The land is not yet all cleared, and on all farms black stumps from 3ft high to 40ft are sticking up all around and undergoing the slow process of natural decay after being partly felled and burnt. Among the ashes, after a burning, grass seeds are sown and there is a good bottom in six months. Amongst graze the cattle and sheep. Then comes the settlers eternal logging up and burning and fencing with wire or stab fences. Very few posts and rails as there is no suitable timber. Gradually, on good farms, thorn fences replace wood and as a specimen of the character of the soil and climate, thorn fences may be made by inserting slips of the thorn hedge. You cannot do it at home, try how you may. These slips are trees in three years.

Peaches are abundant and cheap. Pigs sometimes have them when there is a good season. Apples are dear but not scarce. They have a fictitious value and it will have to come down. Potatoes, shall you believe me when I say, from oft repeated assertions of the settlers, they can produce 20 tons to the acre. They are of a purple colour, very large and good eaters. They require the most careful cooking or they fall to pieces as they are so mealy. Indian corn is grown here to feed fowls and pigs.

I should like to describe to you a New Zealand bush but I cannot. Fancy a forest of evergreens choked up with enormous creepers, parasitical plants and giant ferns as tall as plum trees at home. No man can get in without an axe and once in, if he doesn't mind, never comes out again. Many people are here lost in the bush or drowned in the swollen ferries. There is a kind of tree called a Mata (as Martah); all a's are r in Maori except a in rates, no kind friend to alter that. A seed is dropped by the birds at the top of the tree and it grows there like a large root of enormous rushes and sends down a fibre to the ground. As soon as it touches there it gets thicker and gradually enclosing the Mata, it slowly but surely squeezes out the life of the old tree which ultimately rots leaving the new Mata master of the field with the curious phenomenon of two barks, one inside and one outside.

Then in more open spaces there are the enormous native grasses and flax higher than a man on horseback. The flax is so strong that hay is banded by one leaf instead of twisted bands and if a bit of string is wanted a shred of flax is the official substitute. I have seen Maori women ride with one for a stirrup. At present, this production has no commercial value but surely it will be a source of wealth some day. The woods are peopled by queer birds, beautiful bronze pigeons, Tui-Ball, Bellbird and giant hawks. At night, owls and Mawhawks (so called from its discordant note) make the night hideous. Larks are plentiful here and sparrows. Blackbirds and thrushes up Auckland way. Rabbits are unknown here. A penalty of £20 is enforced if it can be proved that anyone allows this pest to escape from captivity. In other districts they are a menace.

There are two things that we never expected. Mosquitoes in the Summer are a scourge and the frequent recurrence of earthquakes give the people a little excitement. All houses are wood with the chimneys outside. A few years ago all the chimneys here but one were levelled in a night. Crockery and chimney ornaments became dissatisfied and leapt from their shelves to the floor. Milk leaves the milk pans or parts with its cream. But little notice is taken of it as the people get used to it and they are not dangerous.

I have nearly expended my paper. We are all well and getting nicely settled in a home again after months of travelling. It is hard you know to have no place for the sole of your foot but shifting it here and there is terrible. I could not conscientiously council a man with a family to do as we have done. I cannot describe the discomforts, they must be experienced to be known. Young men can rough it here and have to often. I have been extraordinarily lucky in dropping in here. Many have to resort to the bush and fell trees for an existence at first. Many sons of gentlemen are here swinging the axe but they get settled eventually; it is the start that is all. People here will not employ "New Chums" if they can help it. All the ways are different. A home butcher is no use here. What man amongst them can shear and kill and dress a sheep in 4 1/2 minutes? It has been done here. Carpenters the same, they have to go at lower wages than a Colonial. Agricultural labourers are all out of it here. A good labourer would break his heart here. Shepherds are different too. The sheep all worked by dog and very seldom handled. All these new things have to be learnt and

increase the difficulties of a newcomer. My case is an exceptional one, there is a demand for butter and cheese makers and I am thankful and lucky.

In all my communications I shall tell you of the existing and true state of the country so that you may judge for yourselves. The difficulties are not slight and the inconveniences are so great that I shall never recommend others to follow me. Don't let this give you to understand that it is a bad country. It is far better than England and I like it very much better and shall earn more money with God's help and health. If any come out, they come of their own free will and after serious deliberations but I cannot advise them to do so and then I cannot bear any blame as to misrepresentation. Of course, I should rejoice to see any of us here and should do all I could for them but they shall not say that I allured them out.

Now as to the people most suitable. Farmers with money just drop on their feet. Agricultural workers are wanted and blacksmiths are an expensive luxury. Bricklayers are hard to get. Carpenters, there are many but all seem to get good work. Labourers get 8/-, blacksmiths 12/- and bricklayers 10/- to 12/- a day when they work 9 hours. The trouble is, as soon as the job is done, the men are not wanted and go for work at the next job. A carpenter, for example, may be working as man one month and the next is employer, having taken some contract. Good workmen stand the same chance as bad ones as all the wood is sawn and planed at the mills and only wants sticking together. Buildings are run up quick. Last Saturday there was not a batten up at the factory, today they are putting the roof on. When a man is once here and settled and got a circle of acquaintances, he has a hundred chances here to one than he would have at home. There is no poverty, no poor rate, no union. A person out of work in this district can exist by fungus collection (the fungus is exported to China for soup) or Auckland way by collecting Kauri gum for export to make varnish or ornaments. Fungus sells at 2 1/2d per pound and gum from £20 to £40 a ton. Maories chiefly do this, as it suits their rooting nature. Few white people do it, for if they do, they often become lower in the social scale than their savage neighbours.

I hope that you are all well. I do so want a letter. As soon as you know my address, write me all the news.

Dear Will, please send me a detailed account of how you are getting on with my insurance, etc. Tell me when you want some more money and how much. How does Mr. Wright seem? Is Peck alright and Orgills insurance, do they accept the money? Get the travelling password from Geo. A.O.F. Send me any book on butter and cheese manufacturies, large scale; also Bee Journal, please forward me. For which, take out of the funds, stamps and all; do not spend your money on these things, let mine do it. I hope Ellen and children and Aunt and yourself are well. Also, Mother, George and Annie and children, Luke, Katie and John, Philip and Aunt and Uncle Dobson (tell the old lady she would be in her element here - not far to get a few sticks to make the kettle boil), Tom and Annie etc., etc. ad lib. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the garden, will write as son as we get settled. I will write further and individuals as soon as I can turn round, but, you may know, my time is well filled up. My employment in the day and after that Sarah wants a nail up or one pulled out, a picture made or pulled to pieces in the evening and my ribs are sore with

new work. I am, pro tem, cutting wood and clearing etc., etc. I do not know if I have forgotten anything but tell Mother and the girls and boys that the letters that I send you are to them also and they must all write. Accept our well wishes and love to you all.

I am yours affectionately,

Joseph Liggins

JOSEPH LIGGINS' THIRD LETTER

The Longburn Letters.

Post Office, Palmerston North,
1884

Probably September,

Manawatu, Nr. Wellington.

Use stronger envelopes

Dear Will,

I am thankful for your help in arbitrating the loan. We are, as you know, a long way from friends and stand on our own merits so that we can have no help except out of our own finger ends. I shall send you some money when I draw part of my salary in December and will tell you what to do with it then. I came down to my last pieces of money. The money I showed you went piece by piece, first to one necessity and then another, till I began to be afraid that I should have to ask for a draw on account of salary but a kind providence provided that the money should just last till I drew my quarters salary and I still have one bright medallion called by the men of the world a sovereign and which coin is faced by a picture in relief of that unhandsome woman known to the unenlightened as Queen Victoria. Also, to bear it company, I have two crown pieces made in the reign of that lunatic farmer George, one of which my Mother gave me the morning I came away. These coins I always carry in my belt and wish to preserve them.

I am glad you sent me the account of Sudbury Dairy. Send all dairy news, lectures or departures in machinery that may come to your notice. I improved the occasion, as some parsons say, when they give a white garment, wings and all, to some lately departed piece of rascality, I wrote a leader in the Settlers Friend, an advertising medium owned by our Chairman of Directors for which he gave me thanks. Of course I did not think it necessary to say how much was friggid.

You will be glad to know that we shall start in three weeks. We have decided on a trademark - tree fern in a circle, words - Manawatu, New Zealand. We shall send to Sydney, India, China, etc. Jonathan, I have got engaged to assist me in the factory. I can depend on him and shall thereby keep out the colonials for whom I have no love. They would upset the trade and turn me out if they got the chance. They are too keen, all money and grab here.

Since last writing we have been visited by disastrous floods. The Manawatu, a few miles from here, overflowed its banks carrying stock, timber, trees, etc. away to the sea. Railway communication with Foxton (see West coast, North Island) was suspended for some weeks, the Maories having to paddle the passengers over who were going to and from Wellington. Goods accumulated at each side till the river was down and the road made good.

I have written Luke, John, Kate, Mother and Aunt and Uncle Dobson by this mail. Tell George Smith and Annie, Tom Ball and Annie No. 2, that we will write them in the next mail. Thanks for letter from Sarah's Mother. You know it's all very well, I can do nothing for them, done too much already. They should apply to their own sons who are in good positions, better than we are. I am grieved that you should have the annoyance of the people calling on you. They will leave off after the usual nine days; many thanks for your forbearance.

You will be surprised to know that Sammy Snelson's uncle is Chief Magistrate and Mayor of Palmerston. He is an auctioneer, has been out here a long time, is in a good position I believe and much respected. We had an Ashbyite named Dewes, a nephew of lawyer Dewes, apply for the office of milk seller here. He got the situation but threw it up and is now perambulating the country in company with Percy Leyland, a horse tamer with abilities as fine as Rareys, he will master and ride any horse in two hours time. I have seen nothing of the Carters or Booths and do not care to find them out. I believe that we shall get on alright here, the directors place confidence in me.

Give our love to Ellen and the children and accept the same yourself.

From your loving brother and sister,

Joseph and Sarah Liggins

JOSEPH LIGGIN'S FOURTH LETTER

Longburn Diary, Karere, Nr, Palmerston North

18th December, 1884

Dear Will,

I was not surprised to hear of Grandfather's death, he was getting a poor old man and I doubt his last days were not so pleasant as he thought they would be. I expected that the brass would go to where it did. You see our women folk brow beat him a bit and I knew he would never forgive them. Although the old chap was very much to blame over the Railway Inn. Pleased Luke is getting around again, he will have to be especially careful. You do not say if Ellen is strong again, I hope so.

I am glad that you left old Barker. You will be better off with Davenport's. They used to be straight people. Only, if you ever have to seek any orders, do not drink with anyone for company, give it away. Let people know, then they will not ask you.

I enclose order or draft, I don't know which is best and am enquiring for £10. How are they getting on at the house? You will have money out of this to pay my interest club, Roberts interest and insurance. If you have any money to spare when you go to Measham, go to Bob's and look round and see if they are well shod or what is wanted worst and buy them a pair of shoes each or what you think best, to the value of £1.

We are doing well here now, making good butter and giving satisfaction. I drew a nice cheque last week. We are working very long hours, from 6 to 1 and from 5 to 9. Sometimes all day, but we are at the busiest season; milk will come short directly. Then we commence pig killing and curing, etc. We are sending butter to England soon. I hope the venture will be a success. The shareholders and directors seem satisfied with the way in which the factory is conducted. There are very many butter and cheese factories starting all over New Zealand so that I think that, if I have my health, there is no fear but what I shall always obtain regular remunerative employment.

Thank you for the papers. I like to see the home papers, our daily papers are a swindle, full of gossip and scandal. No ability whatever required to start a rag here. Pay yourself for the Bee Journal and cost of postage; please continue sending them. If you have been at any cost on my account, deduct the money. I think I remember you took a trip to Wirksworth but I don't see the train fare on your statement.

We are all well here, only worried to death with the mosquitoes. I enclose a few I caught while I am writing this letter, off my face and hands. Look at their trunks. They shove them, right up to the hilt, into you like a shot; then gorge

themselves with blood but the worst is their itch afterwards and the rise in eruptions. They go for "new chums". Jonathan has been a perfect sight. The mosquitoes, on inserting their trunks, inoculate the system with a poison from the swamps which are plentiful here, many districts being undrained. This inoculation is beneficial as malaria does not attack people who are well bitten with them. They seem to die off on the first frost and come again in the warm weather.

There is a sand fly that bites badly too. These are little blue flies and stick to their whack well. They will let you kill them before they will let you go. Mosquitoes are cowards and are hard to catch. You can catch them when the trunk is inserted.

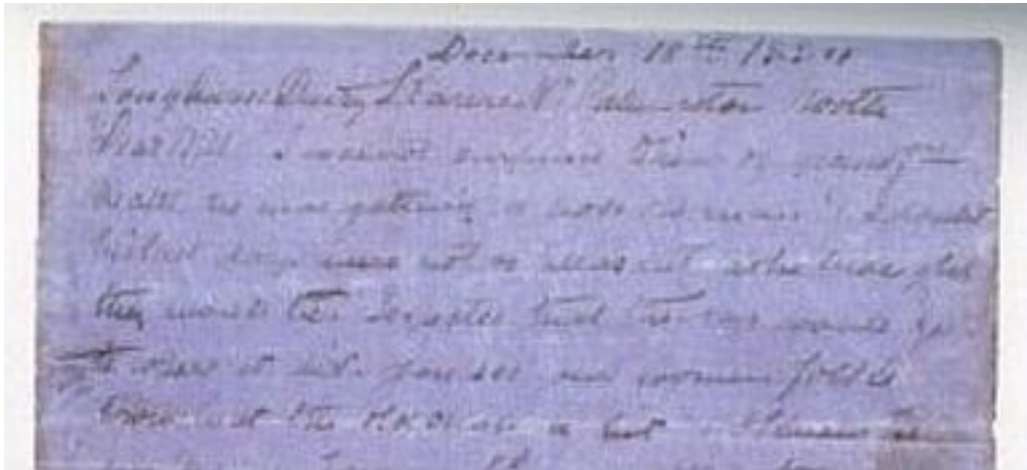
Sarah likes the place better than she did. She sometimes takes a trip to Palmerston and brings our breakfast to the factory every morning, which breaks the monotony. The receipt of a nice cheque, honestly wanted for grub, is a wonderful satisfying affair and smooths over many trifling inconveniences.

The children are fine and strong. The baby appears as strong as any we have had. She can walk and call us by our names. Edie and Harry seem to be the worse bitten by those mosquitoes. They come upon you, lean and thin like Pharaoh's lean kine and, if you let them stop, they will bloat themselves and appear like a bladder of blood.

Talking of our old friend Pharaoh, we have experienced three of his plagues; let me say in your ear. First the plague of lice which I believe invariably breaks out on a long voyage of an emigrant ship. Oh Moses! I will not describe next the plague of boils and blains which are an acclimatising experience. Third the plague of flies. Mosquitoes of all classes, colours and descriptions abound here. Meat in hot weather is instantly blown by a yellow fly with not germs but living maggots. There are some stingers too, that give you a dart like a wasp, then off they go. Moths are gigantic and numerous, they too leave a maggot on anything woollen.

We had a feed of eels the other day. Eels are plentiful. Boys put a lot of big worms on a string and attach it to a stick. The eels hang on and the boys throw them out over their heads and drop a stick across them. Fine sport, eel catching! We are now eating gooseberry pie, strawberries, young potatoes, etc. ad lib and have been doing so for a fortnight. The weather is not oppressive, just pleasant. The present weather is a phenomenon; we have rain now and again, which is short lived here as a rule in warm weather.

I am sorry than John thinks of stopping at home, the risk is too great to recommend. The workmen get high wages sure but work like niggers while at it. It would be better so in England - good work, good pay., but you know that the people who do the least work often get more money at home. An instance here are station masters, they earn less money than porters who do the lifting.



Joseph Liggins'

Fourth letter

with

reference to

[Money Order](#)

shown below

dated

31st December 1884



January 2nd, 1855

Unfortunately, I did not obtain the draft soon enough for last mail. I enclose first payment, second payment by another ship, perhaps in a fortnight. Christmas is over. No doubt you would be gathered together as usual. I should like to have popped in as usual but should like to come back here too, so that the nearest I could do was to keep wondering if you all were there. We had a Christmas pudding and schemed a Santa Claus for the children tho' they were in a stew the evening before thinking that there could be no fairies amongst the bush. I worked Christmas Day as usual. Everybody else made a great holiday of Boxing Day but of course we were fast.

I meant to have written more letters but have had my time so very fully occupied that I have had to write this by bits and snatches. We are going on well here, shall have a general meeting next month when no doubt we shall decide about going on again either to make cheese or butter. I have no doubt that I can stay on here if I wish and the money offered is sufficient. We are all well. Give our love to Ellen, Aunt and the children, also to yourself, Mother and Measham people. Sarah joins with me in congratulating you on the change in employment.

I hope you are all well.

6.30 a.m.

Milk is coming in, shall have to shut up.

With much love,

I am your affectionate brother,

Joseph Liggins

Another, like enclosed (draft), to follow before you can draw it.

In your letters be careful how Netherseal news is said.

Postmasters here open letters

JOSEPH LIGGINS' FIFTH LETTER

Longburn Dairy, Palmerston North,
Manawatu, Wellington, New Zealand

January 12th, 1885

Dear Will,

It will not be a long letter this time. I am writing to catch the mail tomorrow, please forward enclosed and charge me with stamps. Sarah's insurance must fall through. We can do better with the money.

Thanks for your greetings of the season, we wish you all a Happy New Year. We received your letter a fortnight ago. Xmas here is not like the Xmas you know. No meeting amongst relations, no nuts and wine in the afternoon, no cigars wheedled out of Mother to smoke on the road home, no-body to discuss church and state affairs with.

By the by, the papers here rage at the G.O.M. (Grand Old Man - the politician Gladstone) for his delay in annexing the Pacific Islands. Germany having drawn the feather over our eyes and stepped in. The Pacific Islands should be entirely Anglo-Saxon if we are ever to be famous and powerful now. An element of discord is introduced into our midst by the procrastination of the Government. If things are not worked better, Australia will separate from the Mother Country just like America did. They are strong enough to stand on their own bottom (pun intended?) and no doubt will do it. England would have no chance of reconquering it. We here are too much like England, blessed with too much coastline to be besieged. Supply could not be cut off, we have it in our midst. Men, money and materials too would not be waiting. I hope the warnings given by Australian organisations and delegates will be attended to 'ere too late. The scare of foreign aggression reaches us here. The coastlines of Australia and New Zealand are being defended. Gibraltar could be more easily taken than Auckland or Wellington. As you may see by the map and you may more thoroughly understand it when I tell you that the approaches are guarded by overhanging and high rocks, inaccessible from the sea. Once in, a foe could not get out again.

I am rather surprised that John Stanfield came to Measham to gain a livelihood. What in the world possesses them? What animal has he bought to gain his living by at the markets? Is it a lamb with six legs and two heads or other phenomenon or freak of nature charging 2d a head to see the exhibition. I do not know of anything else that would pay at the markets. Kindly fully explain the weird animal; it comprises such a range of species and genus's that I cannot fully grasp the situation. Then the shop at Measham; has a bomb shell fallen on the Price's camp? I hope they will do well but cannot see it. If he asks you any advice, tell him to sell the freak of nature and go to manual labour which is more honourable.

We are going on all right at the factory; shall have a general meeting in March of shareholders. I should not be at all surprised if we do not eventually make cheese.

I have today had two visitors from Forty Mile Bush, more inland than here, who wish me to go and lecture on cheese making sometime. I shall go to their meeting if I am asked, though not to lecture. Perhaps I may have a chance to go there at more money.

We have just received 101 pigs to feed. Are sending butter by the next cool steamer to England. Hope it will fetch a good price but do not feel sanguine as we are getting so near your Spring.

Do not be cross at my short letter. I am writing this in haste; while the machinery is running my attention is divided, so cannot make a good show for a letter. Will write again soon fully. Hope all is well with you and at home. Accept love from Sarah, children and self for you, Ellen, Aunt and children. Remember our love to Measham friends. The appearance of the money I sent speaks more for our well doing than many letters. I endorse the second payment for £10.

I am your loving brother,

Joseph Liggins

JOSEPH LIGGINS' SIXTH LETTER

Longburn Dairy, Post Office, Palmerston North,
Wellington, N.Z.

26th March, 1885

Dear Will,

You will think me a long time writing this time but I have kept waiting for more news till I might have sent two letters.

You will be surprised to hear that this dairy has suspended operations for the present. Like all other companies in New Zealand it is now having its baptism of fire and will be carried on by other than the present owners. The company started with too little capital apparently and after going for four or five months all the capital was spent. Yes, more than all of it, so that when the end of the rope was reached we stopped operations. A liquidator is appointed and the factory and plant will be sold, most likely to a small number of settlers whom I shall join and thus secure for myself a permanency. You know that my engagement lasts till June 1st. I am having a fine time since we stopped; the factory horse is at my disposal so that I ride out nearly every day collecting monies and otherwise assisting the liquidator. I dare say that the next time I write somebody will have purchased the place. I shall either be in the thick of it here or gone to another billet. I know of several new companies starting and shall apply as soon as I know what will turn up here.

Jonathan has a good billet at a hotel in Palmerston. He is a boots, £1 a week and tucker with any tips that he can lay hold of. I found him a very medium worker while he was here. I shall not have him again, he wants too much bossing.

There is a new land law for New Zealand where companies of 100 people can secure good land in blocks of 10,000 acres to form new townships. The applicants must be such as will make good bona fide settlers. The price per acre is £1 to £1-2-6, and 1/4 of the money to be returned to make roads. The payments, to extend over 10 years without interest, 1/10 of the money to be paid yearly and certain improvements to be effected thus:- 10 acres to be cleared the first year, house to the value of £10 the second year and so on, till I believe not less than 30 acres is cut down and laid out in grass. Settlers must I be bona fide, i.e. live on the place for three years or appoint someone else to live there. I have taken up 50 acres on these terms on the Tito Kowaru block near the Manawatu and Wellington railway. Thus I shall have a place to go on if at any time I wish to do so but this is unlikely as I shall do better at the dairy. Land here is better than any bank, from the time bush land is taken up, it is gradually and surely increasing in value. A retired fellmonger here named Hurst, about five years ago, bought 1500 acres at £1 per acre; he has effected some slight improvements on the front, other land had been taken up round him, roads had been made, etc. He has just now sold up for £3000 clear profit and the land is well worth that money to the purchaser. One of the settlers who wrote to join me

in the dairy has a deferred payment block of 300 acres. He pays a small rent each year which pays off the principle and he can pay all off at a months notice when he wishes. He has cut down this year, himself and a boy, about ten acres and was this year our largest milk supplier. Next year he can milk 60 cows and would want about £3000 to clear out. He came here about 8 years ago with just nothing only a big family of little ones and a very useful raw boned wife. He has now a houseful of children of whom four can milk.

We are now in Autumn and apples are hanging on the trees and bush fires are frequent. The bush is felled all through the Winter and at this time of year it is set fire to. The fire burns all but the logs and the trunks of the trees and then grass seed is sown amongst the ashes and it is fit for cattle in the Spring, say October. Some let the logs lie there till they rot, others log them up in piles and burn them. The first way is uglier, cheaper and best as they all rot in about ten years time and then the land is just as valuable as the other way where hundreds have been spent.

Regarding the winding up of our company, we have had some smart touches of journalism, one paper taking the side of the milk suppliers against the directors and myself, the other visa versa. When it became known that I had made an offer for the dairy (they did not know, at that time, but what it was for myself), one paper devoted a leader for my special benefit. This leader very nearly approached libel, however now it has retracted but I have to take the two papers to keep both their mouths shut. Now I am spoken of as blameless but if we get the place I shall be landed as that pushing industrious, practical and enterprising manager. I will send you both papers. The cost of both papers is only 5/- the quarter, but you cannot believe the scurrility they display to an opposition paper, or to a subscriber to such, if he does not take theirs as well. Anonymous answers to correspondents with their name inserted as "some transactions not fit for our columns" or "your letter as to Mr. -----, too personal". Articles, as in my case, verging on libel are too common. The newspapers are gods here.

It will give you some idea of the chance we are going in for when I tell you that £1400 has been spent in plant, buildings and land. We have now run for four months, the money is spent and an overdraft at the bank is to be met so that the place must be sold. Shareholders refuse to take up more shares and outsiders refuse to join in "the swindle". Our offer is £400 and we shall get it for that or a little over. If we do, our tickets are good for £150 each a year out of the place, besides them selling their milk and I drawing my salary. This is why I have been attacked by the papers for having the cheek to offer the sum above. But sharp practice is the word here, the man who successfully over reaches his neighbour is looked up to as a keen hand and universally admired.

You may have some idea of the size of Palmerston when I tell you that they are going in for a loan of £50,000 for drains and water supply. I had a friend call on me from the West Coast who says that Harrison is going in most royally. He has sunk half a million of money and now the place is stopped for money to carry the business on.

I shall write to Roberts and Roberts of Leicester to see if they will give me an order for cheese, so that I can ship it to them direct. I will let them to order as to size and colour.

Luke has written me for emigration information. I cannot recommend it to him; he can come if he likes but he ought not to come without sufficient means to carry him back if he doesn't like it. The sea voyage would no doubt cure him; many come for that complaint. Drapers are certainly at a discount in Palmerston. I must tell him the truth, if unpalatable. John is different, he is steady and would do well here and would get at least double his present wages, let it be what it may. I have made full enquiries and in his case they are satisfactory. If he is married, all the better. I believe that nomination is stopped without the full money but Mr. Bell, Agent General, 7, Westminster Chambers would give full information free.

I had a letter from some man who used to be at Moira, well known to George, a signalman, asking me for work as he was in Wellington and like many other "New Chums" could not get work anywhere and never will if he stays in the ports. He said mother had given him my address. I did not write to him; I could not help him in any way and I wish to be dead to all except our own people in England. Mother was most unwise to give my address without first asking your advice. She is unaware what serious injury such a course might do to me. Ask her not to remember my address if asked again.

Sarah and the little ones and myself are in the best of health. Tell Osborne that they have three and four stock whips a day, sometimes made by themselves, from flax and they are very long, up to 12 feet and they will crack like a rifle shot. They also gather the blue gum leaves to light the fire in a morning; they burn like firelighters and are very aromatic. We have a wattle in our garden foliage, beautiful but, if the seeds are cracked, stinks like arsafetide (phonetic, Northern England spelling of asafoetida - the thickened, fetid sap from a plant in the East Indies - ferula asafoetida - used as a stimulant and antispasmodic). In fact, we had to halt a grand joke by the children who thought to break one in the house but, when they found that this joke was always attended with a stinging sensation in the rear brought on by a vigorous application of a supple jack, the joke became stale. But at school one is often dropped and cracked under the heel. Windows are thrown open and a rigorous search made for the delinquent who usually gets beans.

We hope that you are all right at home, Ellen, the children, Aunt and yourself. I often wish we could send you a grand joint of meat. Here we can give the children a lump for breakfast. Last week we had a leg of mutton - 1/10.

I am writing home.

*With much love to all;
We are your loving brother and sister,*

Joseph and Sarah

JOSEPH LIGGINS' SEVENTH LETTER

This letter was probably sent with the previous letter dated - 26th March, 1895

Dear Mother,

You will be pleased to hear that we are all in good health and happy. William will tell you the news so that I need not again write that. I am pleased to gather from letters that you are well and doing fairly in your business.

I had a letter from Mr. Ball and in it he said he thought I was forgetting you. You know that I shall never do that but just lately we have been working very long hours indeed, Sunday too and even had not time to keep all my books as I should have liked and my letters have been far between and hurried. William will tell you we have ceased operations for the season. I may be here for another year or I may be in Haurera, North Island or Dunedin, South Island, both of which places are wanting managers.

Do not give my address to anybody except Will says so. It is different here to what it is at home. We are like the Ancient Son of Hagar, our hands are against everybody and their hands are against us. I know you thought, that in this strange country, home faces would help to make us happier, and so they should, but people here do better when they strike out a line for themselves and are independent of friends. From the tone of his letter I am afraid the man you gave my address to is much disappointed. He has been trying for work ever since he landed and could not obtain any. Nor will he till he takes an axe or a pick and shovel job. He will find it terrible hard but if he once faces it he will be all right. Although only four miles from Mr. Carter's son I would not see him and I shall not, till I am in such a position that he cannot fancy I want help.

You would like to see baby whose first word nearly is a Maori one. Kaiapoi means good. If anything pleases her she does not say "pretty" or "nice" but "Kaiapoi". "Kaiapoi Picanini Pakeha" say the children "good white baby". Maori children go to school and these children call themselves English. The other day, I asked a son of a chief - "Tito Pete Awe Awe" is his soubriquet, "What tribe are you?". "Oh same as English" was his answer. I wanted him to bring a "Waline" or wife for Jonathan but he said "Maori waline kahauri" - Maori women no good. Maoris will not work; just eat and walk about and sleep altogether, wrapped up in a blanket, and many walk about in the blanket and nothing else all day. They all have horses, and good ones at that, pigs and potatoes. In the Winter they eat maize which has been soaked till it is nearly rotten, then it is boiled over a big fire and when it is done they all sit round like a lot of old hens. After a while one will stick his paw in it and get burnt; draw it back and gabble away. Another has a go and so on till they can get on without being burnt, very much then they dine.

We have been terribly tortured with the mosquitoes but they are all gone now. It is Autumn here now and getting cooler. Directly it will rain every day for several

months. Then every hole is full of water, the cows have to be fetched up with horses and are driven up to the barn by a boy on horseback; the cow yards being up to their hocks in mud. A few days wind will dry this and it is as dry as a floor then.

There are no stones in the soil round us, we are living on river mud deposited perhaps ages ago very likely, as it is covered with bush now. This is the place for paraqueets, there are thousands here, they are a nuisance in the grain growing districts. Small birds are a nuisance and associations are being formed to poison them wholesale.

Sarah and the little ones join with myself in wishing you health, with our loves. Remember us to Philip, Aunt and Uncle and all at Measham.

We are your loving,

Joseph and Sarah Liggins

JOSEPH LIGGINS' EIGHTH LETTER

Longburn Dairy, Nr. to Karere, Palmerston North,
Wellington, New Zealand

October 5th, 1885

Dear Luke,

I have at last the information I wanted. The terms for nominated immigration are £10 payable in the colony, for each adult, to be agricultural, therefore I do not know if you would be eligible. There is a clause providing for special cases so that I think the difficulty could be overcome. But what shall you do when you get here? Do you want to throw up your profession and take to farming? If so, all right, if not the prospect is gloomy. I have today a cockney and a printer cutting firewood for us and they cannot earn 5/- a day whereas a good colonial would make 10/- to 12/-. I have before pointed out the disadvantages, all of which point to the need for more experience I much suspect, so that your coming here would rely solely on speculation and chance. Do not come if you have not money enough to go back with. If you still decide after all to come, send me a Postal Order to Palmerston North Post Office and I will nominate you out. You may do well as many do but you may do very badly as many do also.

Regarding myself, we have run nearly three months now and have made four tons of good cheese. Our stores are doing well so that altogether I am all right. All the children, Sarah and myself like the country and are well.

We had a total eclipse of the Sun here on the 12th Sept. The Sun was shining brightly at 6 a.m., at 7.30 we had to light a candle for to light us at breakfast. The Sun presented an unusual spectacle, a black ball coming across its face at one time completely covering it, then rays of red and yellow, of very great and unequal length shot out gloriously all round the edge of the Moon, then it gradually passed over. Birds prepared to go to roost and horses and cattle gathered in corners to lie down just like night.

Also on the 23rd July we had two sharp shocks of earthquake. A queer sensation they were, just as if someone was pulling the ground from under you and giving it a good shake; I cannot describe the feeling. We have had a good Winter and are experiencing some beautiful weather now. I have peas in blossom, bees about swarming and new potatoes are to be expected soon. For Xmas we propose suckling pig, green peas, young potatoes, also ducks we have that will do duty about then. We shall miss old faces but shan't we have a feed, though, by the by, if you are going by this way about then you might drop in. If you decide to come I shall advertise in the Wellington newspapers just before your arrival and will do my best with the merchants I know in Wellington and perhaps we may be lucky enough to get you in at your own business. If not, well I'll join you on some land. You won't starve, never fear. I have some trading contacts in Wellington now and my partner is a J.P. for the Hutt near Wellington and well known and highly respected. If you choose to try, I see no great fear but there is much luck about it.

If you go home at Xmas tell them I am writing them next mail so that if they have not had my letter they soon will have it.

Lavinia Morley talks of coming here with a Spare; I am writing her that you may perhaps be fortunate enough to come out in the same ship. I expect to nominate them after hearing from them. Their address is The School, Tomersham?, Ipswich. Do not buy anything to come out here with, you can get everything here. If I nominate you I shall say that I am your brother and agree to find you work, that will settle the nomination business.

I expect to join a land association - quantity of land 400 acres, terms 1/- an acre for 21 years then a re-lease at a higher figure. If you give the higher price you take the land, but if someone else, they pay you for the improvements up to £5 per acre. The land should pay enough to buy the freehold in that time with the rent so low, but bushfalling is heavy, heavier than you might imagine until you see the country.

I want to get a large dairy, as big as my partners have, but as you may imagine, I have entered quite deep enough. Speculation is rampant here, "one day the servant, next the boss or visa versa" said Mr. Weller.

Mr. Carter's son John is well known to my partner and is up to the earholes and will be a rich man or a sundowner (tramp who times his arrival at sundown to get a night's lodging) some day. He is a speculative builder.

Gold and silver are found near here and many companies are being formed so that this is likely to be a big place one day. My partner, Mr. Buick, is a claim holder and a trial of one ton is to be tested directly and we shall see if the mountains near us are gold or road metal.

You were talking of the Maoris; I do not see many of them now. I think they get less or move away. My helper here can talk Maori as well as any of them. We had an old chief in the other day and we showed him our milk vats, etc. and he kept exclaiming at each new thing with a deep sigh "Ha! The Pakelia. Ha! The Pakelia!" or "very clever white man".

I am living close to the factory now, in a very small house for this year but next Autumn we intend building a nice house near here and enlarging the stores. At present we are having 300 gallons of milk a day but expect much more, some of our larger suppliers not having started yet.

We respectable married people are shocked at so much immorality in the modern Babylon; what the d----- are you all after? The rage for morality has even got here, people want the age for consent raised to 21. If 61 had been named, perhaps it would have the same effect.

If you see the old faces before I write, then give our love to all. All here are well and all right. Write soon anyway. With much love from us all.

I am your affectionate brother,

Joseph Liggins

Regulations for Immigration to New Zealand

Nominated Immigration

Part 1.

Applications considered in the following cases:-

- a.) Nomination of seperated families.*
- b.) Nomination where relatives nominate relatives.*
- c.) Nomination of single women unrelated.*
- d.) Nomination of friends who are not included in above.*

Payment in cash in colony as follows:-

All persons over 12 years of age £10-00

Children under 12 years of age £5-00

Infants Free

As a rule nomination will only be considered for agricultural labourers and single women suitable for domestic service.

Nomination of tradesmen and provisioners granted subject to approval by the Minister for Immigration who will not grant passages except under very exceptional circumstances.

Writing next mail but if you decide before communicate Postal Order c/o Post Office, Palmerston North.

JOSEPH LIGGINS' NINTH LETTER

Longburn Dairy, Karere, Palmerston North, Wellington, N.Z.

Sunday, 17th November, 1885

Dear Will,

We were glad to hear that you were all well. I expect if I ever come home again I shall find many faces missing as each time you write someone has gone over to the majority. Poor Mat, last time I saw him I could see it was only a matter of time with him. Freddy Stevenson will now make the old man's tin fly, I presume. I received, along with the other papers, the paper on Ashby Baths. I am taking it to Palmerston soon to Mr. Snelson who is always pleased to hear Ashby news. He told me last time he should come home some day but he will know none of the faces. I can tell him more than he knows of his own people even. He will come and see the old places and pay his respects to the surviving Donington family and come home again.

He sells a good few cheeses for us each week by auction. You have no idea of a colonial auction mart, everything is sold there:- horses, tea, clothes, cheese, furniture, ad lib. The auctioneer buys all sorts of goods and a sale is always made up by himself or someone else. They are in fact cheapjacks in their manner of business. Snelson is a big bug here, he meets with the governor and does the spouting business.

People here are much exercised as gold and silver have been found in the hills near us, we can see them plainly in the hills about 18 miles off. Many claims have been taken up and a government inspection is to be made and trial crushings operated upon. Hope it will be right, as, if gold is plentiful, perhaps I can annex some of it.

You will be glad to hear that the factory is a first class success, the cheese is good and well liked. More milk is coming in and of course every milk supplier means a new store customer. We have perhaps 6 tons in the curing room and one of my partners has not yet sent any milk as his cows calve late. This gentleman has at present 3 farms here, besides his land near Wellington. The Palmerston storekeepers are coming round, our cheese is to be obtained in every store but three and these will come. They talked of boycotting us once but that works both ways you know. We can influence so many milk suppliers and so they dare not boycott for fear we would do the same. The fact is, these three storekeepers took up most of the shares in the business and lost them, so now their money and trade too is gone, as we sell many stores. No pounds or half pounds here but boxes of tea, bags of sugar, rice and oatmeal and tinned goods of all descriptions, even treacle is sold in tins - tinned in London. There is no screw put on here but people eat what they want because they can all afford it. Some may be short of money but they all have plenty in kind - milk, wool, beef, etc. One man is bringing over £1 worth of milk a day and all milked by his own family. His farm is 300 acres and he is paying for it by a nominal rent of £30 a year. I suppose he has not overlong to run before he has bought it.

We at present work up 400 gallons a day, we shall soon be up to our full capacity of 600 gallons. We keep 60 pigs and are buying more. Then we propose to run them round till Winter and bacon them. They all run loose and feed at the troughs where they like. We feed them all by drawing a plug at a whey vat. We can supply the whole lot in 2 or 3 minutes and not go amongst them at all. We keep running amongst them, what the ladies call "a fine old man", to keep the supply of pigs. You must know, ladies here are very careful in defining what they say. They talk thusly - a cock is a rooster, a boar is a fine old man, a stallion, they go the whole hog here, is an entire but I believe a bull is a bull here, Irish or otherwise, as with you.

I will send you our brand and trade mark in some paper. We commenced operations on the day of the total eclipse, the 12th November, and we therefore chose a total eclipse as a brand and trade mark. We do not wish people to understand that, Joshua like, we provided that the eclipse should take place on our opening day. We only wish to convey the delicate and unassuming notion that our article totally eclipses all others. You will observe that we are a very retired and unassuming firm. The eclipse was a sight to come here to see. We had brilliant sunlight at 6 and lighted candles at 7.30 to be able to breakfast. All nature was still and changed during the eclipse. A black ball gradually came over the face of the Sun and at the height totally obscured it, then, very long rays, red and yellow, shot out at different places from the Sun across the sky, the rays being blood red and of very peculiar shapes, then the Moon glided away and all was as before. Photos were taken of it but they are, as you may fancy, no guide whatever of the sight. That which made it beautiful i.e. colour, is wanting but our brand mark, you know, if it does not show the colours, etc. as they actually were, shows how the Sun ought to have done it.

We also had an earthquake in June. It was a regular shake up and the pleasure of it was intensified by the thought of falling chimneys, ornaments flying off the shelves and the notable example of our friends Korak, Dathau and Aliorim (????). We had two distinct shocks. Chemist shops are all wired, a rein is placed on shelves and chimneys are built outside. Also houses are mostly built of one storey.

People and papers say trade is bad here now, but I at present, after seeing the bad trade at home, I think the folks here do not know what bad trade is. Let there be races here, many hundreds will go through a gambling machine called a totalisator and sweeps and consultations amount to immense sums. But no doubt the price of wool this year is a terror for New Zealanders and many losses are made by run (?) holders. The system is mortgage upon mortgage, so that a time like this falls heavy. But profits as a rule are very large and banks can afford to wait and not press. The interest here is 8 to 10 per cent for overdrafts, yet the large profits, made as a rule, amply cover this large interest, a profit alone you would say. Bankers here have cast their lines in pleasant places.

Luke talks of coming out, so does Lirvinia Morley. I have told them straight so that they may not like the risk, which you may know from your reading of these letters. It is a risk and a chance, no other name will do. No man can say to another "Come! You

will do well". By that time the man himself may be a swagman on the Wallaby or carrying his blanket, frypan and billies (or small tin cans like paint kettles) from place to place after work and camping out in a log or whare! (Maori rush house). Take as an instance of my meaning - I came out to go to the Grey! I am about as likely to go there as to go to Rio Janeiro.

Mosquitoes are slack this year, great praises! Glory, etc.! Not much wet for them to breed in. I had a swarm of bees last Sunday. My helper had new potatoes today. Last Sunday, our tooth power was lamb and gooseberry pudding. We are preparing a great feast for Xmas, suckling pig and other unsavoury small matters. We all miss the home Xmas though but we shall bear it better in fullness than in leanness.

I hardly expect this letter will arrive by Xmas as the mail leaves here on the 22nd (Nov.) by the "Aorangi". So that I suppose I must wish you all a Happy New Year. I have not heard from John, his wife takes so much attention he has not even time to send an old newspaper. Read my letter to Mother, Aunt and Uncle Robert, also let the others see it. Tell Mother that I put all the news in your letter and am in fact writing to her through you. Tell her we are all "first class" and if we ever come back we shall certainly come to see you all.

Tell me when you are out of funds. I hope this will find you all well both at Ashby and Measham. Also hope Ellen is stronger. There is not much illness here except colds contracted at night or diphtheria from the stagnant water in the many creeks. Illnesses here have a short course, the people get better or die soon. We have all had excellent health since we arrived here, nothing to grumble at except the mosquitoes and boils which are rather common and the ride is for them to appear and not appear for they come in such very unmentionable places. I can assure you this is a subject not to be rashly sat on.

If this place is a success it is not unlikely that I may have to tell you that we have another factory in another part of this district. We have already had invitations to do so. We have had a very mild Winter, not much rain, consequently mosquitoes are non-est. At present we have grand weather but strong winds. It blows here harder than at home. Also the nights are much colder although the days are so warm. The nights are usually cold except in Summer when the bush is set on fire to burn the fallen trees for clearing, then the air is very hot indeed. We shall have great fires here this Summer. The mountains I have told you about, we can see they have in many places been felled from base to summit so that we shall see a grand sight. Every man gives notice to his neighbour so that all can burn at once.

Love to All, Mother, Ellen, Aunt, children, yourself and all at Measham.

With much love, I am your affectionate,

Joseph Liggins

Please suspend Bee Journal.

SARAH LIGGINS' FIRST LETTER

This letter was written to William's wife, Ellen, and her Aunt who was living with them in Ashby.

Longburn Dairy, Karere.

November 18th, 1885

My Dear Ellen and Aunt,

It will soon be two years since we left home. It seems almost impossible, time goes so fast. I ought to have written sooner, you will think me unkind but Joe has kept writing and I kept putting off but he says I must not miss this mail.

You will be glad to know I like the new home we have come to; we are very comfortable and Joe is doing well in the factory. They have a nice lot of cheese already and are making nearly 20 a day now. My little house is close to them, so I can run in sometimes and peep how they are getting on.

We are all well; the children being here, they go into the bush sometimes and have some fine climbing over the logs and often falling. It was all very strange at first, not a face we knew or a friend. We found some nice people up here; kind pleasant people - one old lady saw us in the train and asked Joe if he was the Manager for the factory and would have us go to her place. She came again to see us and was very kind. I often go to spend a few hours with her.

We have a good school close to, Wesleyan service on Sunday and afternoon Sunday school for the children, we are about 4 miles from Palmerston church.

We often talk about you and think we should like to see you all but Joe has a lot to do at the factory and I have plenty to do in the house so the time goes by and we have not much time to think or murmur for home and we have a lot to be thankful for. I am sorry to think we had to come away as we did but I hope in time we shall be able to make things right. I wish we had come out when we left Coalville, it would have been much better for us but we must make the best of it.

I want you to please go and see my poor old Aunt Dobson and please tell me how she is. If she is in want, give her a £1 from Joe for Xmas and he will pay you. I should not like to think she was in want; she may not be here another Xmas and she has been very kind to me when I had no one else.

You know, dear Ellen, how kind an Aunt can be and no one could be kinder than she has to me. Please to give my dearest love to her and ask her to send me word how she is getting on and if she is in want for anything.

Give my love to Uncle. Write to me soon and tell me how you all are. How is Aunt? I hope well. Tell her I have the last short note she wrote to me. She said she did

not think she would see me again this side of the grave. Tell her if we don't meet again here we will in a happier home. I'll know her kind old face again. I should dearly like to see you all again and you know I am living in the hope of doing so. I don't think I should be quite so contented if I thought I should not. If ever we are able to come and see you it will be some years first but we are all in good health. Edith and baby are quite little women. Baby can talk quite well now. She is a funny little thing; we are all very fond of her and I must tell you she is the baby and I am very glad. Katie said her mother wanted to know how we were. Please tell her and give my fondest love to Mother, Aunt Katie; tell them we are all well and I will write them all soon.

I am writing to my sister Mrs. Ball. I wrote to my sister Lizzie the last mail. She thinks she would like to come out. I don't think she will come. I have no doubt she would do very well if she came.

I hope you will write to me soon and tell how you are all getting on and about my poor old Aunt. We shall soon have Xmas now; it seems so strange here, just mid-Summer. So hot just at Xmas, I can't say I like it like the home Xmas. We shall think of you all on that day and you must give a thought to us. Fancy a good dish of strawberries on Xmas day?

People do feed here. Meat is very cheap; best beef 4d a lb., leg of mutton 3d a lb., butter 6d a lb. Winter clothing is rather dear and very poor. Sewing is very dear, they charge from 14/- to a £1 for making a good dress; when I say a good dress I mean well made. Women charge 4/- and 5/- per day washing and some charge 6/-; so you may guess by that I do my own washing and sewing. I don't think they will get many of our shillings. I find plenty to do with all the children's mending and the washing and house work but I am contented. I do the best I can and we want for nothing so I have much to be thankful for. I often trouble about my old Aunt and wish she was here with me. I am afraid she often wants for things. You will not forget her will you?

I will have to say good bye now. With my dearest love to Aunt, yourself and William.

Kiss the little ones for me; give both your Aunt and mine a kiss from me and write to me soon.

Your loving sister,

S.E. Liggins

P.S. The children send kisses and love to their cousins. Katie wants a letter from her cousin, Osborne. I would very much like little Maggie's likeness. I have not Aunt's, nor Ellen's, nor William's. Would like photos of all.

KATIE'S LETTER

This is a letter from Joseph's daughter Catherine Harriet to her Uncle William and was probably enclosed with the other letters sent for Christmas 1885/New Year 1886 (spelling unchanged) :-

My Dear Uncle,

I know you would like a letter from me. We are all well and happy. Baby can walk and call mama and dada and say Happy day. Harry is the little nurse while we are at school.

One day a moury man came to the door and he wanted a hat and he came and said "kaiapy the poiti" (? spelling) that means - very good the hat. The moury women are so dirty with no boots no stockings and only a blanket round the legs and no hat on.

We have six pigs and a horse to ride on; girls as big as me all have a horse to ride on. I have put a piece of flax in the letter to show you that is what the boys make their whips off. Please show it to Joe.

We all send our best to Auntie Osborne and Auntie Ellen, Nana and all of you. Is Osborne and Maggy growing much? I should like to see them. Tell Grandma, when you see her, I am going to write a long letter to her. I am your best love, with kisses for you all. I am your loving niece.

Catherine Harriet Liggins

JOSEPH LIGGINS' TENTH LETTER

Longburn Dairy, Karere, Palmerston N., Nr. Wellington

20th May, 1886

Dear Will,

I have been a long while writing this time but waited until I was sure I could spare the money enclosed. The season for cheese making being over in about a fortnight we now know partly how we stand tho' till the season is a little finished and stock taken we cannot determine it exactly. We have on the whole had a successful run. Our Sydney and Brisbane shipments were as a trial a failure, the excessive heat of that tropical climate melting the cheese in the boxes, but to compensate for this we have established a good name in the colony. So good indeed that Messrs. Turnbull & Company, the largest firm in Wellington, have purchased the whole of our present stock and say they will undertake to sell all we can make in ensuing seasons.

Our pigs have paid as well. Our stores are doing a fair trade. I believe before next season we shall considerably increase the number of partners, not because the affair is risky, but to secure more milk. Then the affair will be co-operative. I suppose not more than twelve milk suppliers and myself as manager will be the ticket. Then we shall be a strong firm practically independent. Palmerston itself has done all it can to break us. The Mayor, our late Chairman, was going round the store to get them to boycott us. He even ordered away Turnbull's representative because they purchase our cheese. But we still progress and defy them. Next season we propose to supply stores to milk suppliers at nearly cost price thus striking a heavy blow at the storekeepers and (as we purchase stores from Turnbull) pleasing our purchaser of cheese. The fun is rich. You cannot understand bitter feeling against us, it is cheap advertisement.

In about a fortnight I and my helper will be building new cheese rooms and new stores (shop you call it) and generally fitting up for next season which commences on September 1st when we shall have double the quantity of milk that we have had last year, thus considerably adding to our chances of success.

This Saturday there is a map meeting called to take up land under the Special Settlement System on the New Railway here. I shall be in it if it comes off. The payments extend over ten years; land here makes money i.e. land costing £3.00 say per acre and spend another £4.00 per acre on it, then say in three years time that lands' lowest value is £10.00 per acre thus putting by £2.00 a week in earned or unearned increment. I hope to have a nice piece in a few years to live on if I like or put someone else on if I do not want to leave here.

See, I am appointed School Committee man, astonishing what drifts to the surface in these regions. Thanks for papers. The honourable Bryce was in our place, he called as he was coming home by train. The appellation given him as stated by Rusden was Kohuli (murderer) not Kohuri. But it was false, the political strategic move was true enough but the settlers would at that time been murdered in their houses but for the form of this same "Honest John Bryce" as he is called by the whites.

I see you were having a severe winter, we were having a very genial and enjoyable summer and only this week has premonitions of winter made their appearance. Today the rain is heavy. The rivers are full up now, the ferry over the Manawatu is broken down and an immense land slip in the gorge necessitates no less than three coaches running to meet at these obstacles in about 15 miles. One of our suppliers has been trying to get home for a week and he is only about 20 miles away. Many are drowned at this season trying to find the fords which may have been there as they came, but were washed clean away as they came back. A friend of ours one day (in company with a Chinaman), attempted to ford a river, the settler going first and got through swimming all right but on looking round for his companion, saw only his horse swimming bravely to shore and gave up all hopes of John, but John turned up all right, for he was clinging to the horse's tail. It seems they always slip off behind and clutch the tail when the horse swims, thus lightening the horse. I have never heard of the horse being missing, they swim well! The man is too often struck by the horse when he strikes out.

We are all well, children and Sarah hearty. I do not think any of us would like to live in England again except for the pleasures of home and family associations. I am sorry to hear of Luke's illness. I almost expected him to turn up here, but this illness has made me give up that idea, although many previously rheumatic people being restored to health on the voyage and here although the winter is so very wet. I think it is worth a trial if only for the voyage here and back if he does not like it. I hope he is better. I would write him but don't know where he is. I will try to send him a letter home. John never writes, how is he getting on? Tell him to save all his money, he might come here yet. Any family yet? Katie too increasing responsibilities, I am afraid I shall not know all my own relations when I come to see you. I am glad you are all well with you; hope Ellen and Aunt are stronger. Mother keeps about the same I hope. This winter has no doubt been heavy with Uncle Robert and Aunt.

I enclose Bankers Draft for £10.00 to pay interest and any other small items for them but deduct these littles you have given them from it and continue to do the same. You cannot afford to tip them for me, I am better able to pay it.

Thanks for Netherseal news, give my best wishes to enquirers.

I hope to send Ellen some plumage from native birds I shot this Winter to adorn her hat or the youngsters. The plumage is fine.

I will write further as soon as we have settled how we work the place. I hope to make a little in the turnover.

Give love from us all to Mother and all at Measham and Aunt, Ellen, youngsters and yourself. Annie Ball has not written so far as yet. If you see Mr. Peak, tell him we are well, we shall get him to act for us at the proper time. Many thanks for your many attentions to my affairs.

I am you affectionate Brother

Joseph Liggins

JOSEPH LIGGINS' ELEVENTH LETTER

*Address now from this :- Longburn Dairy, Longburn,
Nr. Wellington*

Sunday, August 29th, 1886

Dear Will,

I have received your newspapers from time to time with the welcome news that all are well. I sent you a Bank Draft for £10 which no doubt has come to hand but you did not say so in your newspapers. You will know how to spend it, i.e. on the interest and for any odd comfort they may require and to defray any expenses you may be put to on my behalf. With respect to the Club, it seems to me, tell Mother, that the expenditure is now quite uncalled for and it will be better to give it up. I am so very far away that although I expect to see you all again some day, I do not anticipate that the Club will benefit me in the least. If I were ill I could not expect to ask for pay even in an extreme case. I hope that Providence will not allow me to be so poor so that the £15 will be any temptation to keep up the payments.

I will at once leave this and enter on the fortunes or opposite which have befallen us since my last letter. You will see from the newspaper paragraphs now and then that I am blessed with success and am taking a certain position amongst my fellows. Part of this is no doubt due to my connection with the head of our firm who is a first man amongst the best in the district, impressing much influence, being a large holder of property, a man of business, a man of the world and a magistrate.

We commence operations again on Wednesday next with a much brighter prospect than last year. We made up a balance sheet the other day and our venture has shown on the credit side of the sheet about £250 after paying all wages, milk accounts, etc. We have a meeting tomorrow evening and perhaps our positions may be strengthened by a few more settlers of means joining us, thus ensuring us that necessity - a good supply of milk during the season and making us practically master of the situation as far as the price and quantity of the raw article is concerned. One of the largest merchants in Wellington has promised to take the whole of our cheese this season at market prices. Our pigs have returned us 100% profit and we this season propose bacon curing thus increasing our profit we hope. Our stores has so increased that we have taken on this week a clerk and storekeeper to look after that particular branch.

It is important here to deal in barter or rather to push goods off instead of cash as much as possible, this again assists us to push off our cheese on to the merchants. It is much more a necessity to go on in this way than I can make you, who are amongst

monied men, understand. We are buying now - shoes, drapery, tinware and small ironmongery, so that we hope better things this time than last season.

Since I wrote you last, a railway station is placed just opposite the factory and in about 2 months the new line will be opened to Wellington. I was in the Empire city the other day opening business places for our products and I was satisfied with the result. I bought 2 pineapples at 6d each, amongst other things for the children. I find all but one of my shipmates have left Wellington and are now spread far and wide. This solitary individual being of John Bonnets class evidently a non-success and is now loafing about the House of Representatives getting little jobs of writing from the members and is one of the grumblers who do so much harm to this colony. He is one of the chaps who ought to have never left England. There is plenty of room for the right chap, i.e. young farmers with say £500 or £1000 to bring here. No other men are wanted as a rule.

I had a very nasty fall down the cellar through a ladder slipping last season and I am very lucky and very thankful to say I am without a broken limb though I hobbled about my work with a broom and a stick in most agonising pain for weeks but I stuck it like a Briton, grinned and bore it. If I had knocked up all would have been up. No one could take my place and consequently things would have been very black. I got all right in time and am now sound in wind and limb.

Baby got an ugly burn from a teapot but with great care and prompt measures is now all right and I do not expect even a mark to stay. Her face escaped.

You have read of Terawera. For some months previous to the outburst we had frequent shocks of earthquakes and old colonials said that the shocks coming so often was good as we should have no heavy shock but on the night of the eruption we were awakened out of our sleep with what I took to be awful and unusual thunder and with vibrations of the earth. The noise was as the noise of a minute gun but louder like an awfully heavy thunder clap but not rolling thunder. I could not make it out at all. The reports occurred at regular intervals from midnight till dawn and their regularity gave people strange ideas as to their cause - "Warships in distress in the straits", "The Russian ship "Vestria" connonading Wellington or Foxton", old "Slip" (an old identity) our horse getting out of the paddock by first kicking down the fence (a fault of his) and, nearer than these guesses, "Tougarino" the volcano unusually active. We anxiously awaited news and learnt that Terwawera, an extinct volcano, had thrown out half the sides of the mountain; that a whole tribe of Maoris had become simply a history of the past. All the beautiful pink and white terraces, the work of ages, one of the worlds wonders, an attraction to all tourists and a source of wealth to the unfortunate tribe, had been blown up and hopelessly destroyed. Ngaires or warm lakes, geysers etc. had all disappeared and fresh ones are broken out. But most awful was the shower of heavy mud which, for ten miles, fell silently crushing, by its very weight, animals, birds, human beings and dwellings to the ground. Painful stories are told of this awful shower. Two Maoris, Father and Mother, had each a child of theirs and leant over them to protect them from the mud and for a while kept it off but at last the man, feeling oppressed, shook off

the mud from his back, rose and called to his waiine to get up and escape but silently and unknown to him life had fled during the unequal struggle and he was alone. He escaped with his child I believe. I have not space to dwell on this. The shower extended in one direction 10 miles and was caused by the volcano dust being thrown so high as to reach a cooler stratum of moist air, it then fell with the awful result stated. Parties have inspected, as near as they dare, the scene of the catastrophe but at present little is known what changes have taken place. So many active cones have been made and the crust of the earth is so thin that none but madmen can attempt it at present. The price of stock has been considerably affected by it; the unfortunate settlers being forced to drive them off the mud to the Auckland market, thus overstocking the market. Our distance from the scene is about 160 miles, the concussions were heard at Blenheim in the South Island.

The town of Palmerston has raised a loan of £50,00 so that for a time money will be plentiful here. There is no doubt that the article in the Standard you sent to me has somewhat checked the reckless borrowing of New Zealand although some of its remarks were highly unjust as the country is well able to bear much heavier burdens than she has yet to bear. It is the injudicious and unremunerative borrowing schemes that ought to be checked, not such schemes as railways which as a rule are money well spent in opening up the country. Papers here are very quiet on the matter although they all know of it and prefer not to stir up to make a bigger stink. I am glad you sent this paper otherwise I should have been without the key to several motions in the House. The Premier urgently and fiercely advocating no more borrowing for some long time or, as I think, till the confiding British public have had time to get over the fright.

I neglected to tell that I travelled from Wellington with Messrs. Bryce, Macarthur and Wilson, all M.H.R.s, the other day. I do not know if Bryce really committed the murders attributed to him. I must say, from his looks, appearances are undeniably "agin him" and I think the murder of Europeans was I think just cause for his action. The other day we expected another row. The natives building on land belonging to white men at Masicua Saranake. They numbered about 250 but the sturdy settlers came in the afternoon and stockwhipped the Maori out of the place and arrested the leaders, amongst them being Bryce's old bloodstained enemies. The Maoris travelled I believe. I heard a sturdy colonial say "the fun was glorious". You see some of the same settlers were children of the murdered whites and they came prepared to fight and when they arrived made no bones about the matter and in the face of the old chiefs axes and the long poles of the younger Maoris achieved a speedy, bloodless victory. All men applaud them for their prompt action. I may tell you that Bryce took command at Saranake without orders and slipped out of Wellington as H.M. Governor General was coming in the harbour; arrived at the scene and cowed the Maoris. Settlers do not wait long in these matters and a few white families massacred would be the death warrant of hundreds of Maoris. Many of my fellow settlers here, even now, advocate enslaving them and making them work for their tucker. Of course, this can never be tried, it is all illustration of the latent hatred between the races. I may say this hatred alone is not extended to the wahines who prefer a "man" of theirs to be a paketia not a Maori. The proof of this is the number of half-castes, that is a plain argument and some of the half-caste women are very

handsome. A Russian at a ball in Wellington, given to the officers of H/M Bertwick, was asked how he liked the Wellington beauties, "Oh!" he said "They are really handsome women but" said he turning to a half-caste "These women are absolutely glorious". You know the Russians merge with their conquered natives. We do not, except en passant. Speaking for myself, I do not like the Maoris. They anoint themselves with shark oil and stink like the devil. I suppose if I were at liberty for a game with them, I should require a clothes peg with patent close grip for a nose holder, I can't overget it.

To return to the factory, we have enlarged it. Built a cheese room, fitted with reversible shelves, 40ft by 25ft. I have also made three more rooms to my dwelling house. A reporter will come down soon, I will send you his remarks.

If you see Abraham Bailey, tell him he should come out here. I will write him. All are well and happy, Charlie is big enough to milk the cow for me and the lads get the firewood. Sarah now like the place better than England, though I do not think she would admit it. I like the place where I best support my family. I called to see young Carter at Petone. Tell Mr. Carter he misses him. He was removing his goods to a new residence. I shall call again whenever I go to Wellington. There is no doubt Carter is doing well. I know nothing of any other home friend.

Give my love to Mother and read her my letter. Also from Sarah and the children. Also to yourself, Ellen, Aunt and children, Aunt and Uncle Dobson. Please do not neglect a little suitable present now and then to them. Also George, Annie and little ones; Katie and John; John and Emma and chips; Tom and Annie and all friends, who never write but cross my mind many times in a day sometimes. I hope you are doing well at your business. How and where is Cartwright? Glad May changed his mind. I have never written Netherseal yet. Remember me to Lilley and Carter, to whom I shall write.

I am your loving Brother,

Joseph Liggins

I expect to be Postmaster.

JOSEPH LIGGINS' TWELFTH LETTER

Longburn Dairy, Longburn Junction,
Nr. Wellington, N.Z.

February 4th, 1887

Dear Will,

I will not commence by excusing myself for my delay in writing, as you know nothing but not having the time would have prevented me from writing before. I have received your papers and letters all right from time to time; many thanks for local newspapers.

You will all be pleased to know that we are going on all right. We are just now in the very thick of the milk season. We started with a lot of milk and have run up to 900 gals. of milk per day. Of course this has taken more hands, we have been forced to employ a storekeeper who acts as clerk for us too. The store trade has improved considerably; we in the month of December sold £308-2-3 worth of general stores. This means more profit than you would expect at home as 20% is taken on many things though we have to pay very heavily for freight, insurance and wages, etc.

We have made a great quantity of cheese and have now about 20 tons, as the sale of cheese this season has been slack owing to the very good season they are experiencing in Victoria and Queensland, our usual market for cheese, and also because many new factories have been started both in the North and South Islands. Still we are sending to our Wellington firm a ton a week to a standing order which will gradually lower our very heavy stock. To enable us to work the increased quantity of milk we have had to build a larger new cheese room and have purchased, from Corbett's, Shrewsbury, 8 new double presses. The larger supply of whey has enabled us to keep more pigs and we have now some two hundred. We don't know to 40 or 50 as they run loose in secure paddocking, feeding from large troughs in the open, and we count them as we kill them. Probably we shall have upwards of 100 bacon pigs; we thus this season commence bacon curing and smoking. Notwithstanding that in consequence of very heavy rain for some months after we commenced operations, our cheese room, which was built of white pine sawn off the green log, was a very bad place for new cheese and we had a good few damaged thereby. Still, as we are making such a large quantity this season, this unwelcome check will not be felt by us. The greater loss was in the labour that was required to keep the cheese decent. As you know labour here is a serious item. We now employ a storeman; myself, a male helper and a female helper in the factory, also Sarah has lately helped me with the cheese, so that 5 hands are always employed. We found that our helpers were so abominably lazy and not to be trusted that it was an imperative necessity for Sarah to lend a hand too and things have gone on much better since, though the work is very fatiguing.

I have been very hard worked as I find that milk in this country is not to be depended upon for cheese making by keeping the overnight milk till morning

althoughwater may be liberally run round it and the cooler nights are the most deceptive, in consequence the evening's milk has to be turned to curd at once and the whey run off, then the curd will keep. This performance entails being at work from 7 in the morning till 10-30 at night. Lately Sarah, with the girls help, made up the nights cheese for me once a week when I have taken what I call my day off and gone to bed at about eight. Tonight I am taking my day off in writing this letter. Sundays too you know. But in the latter end of May I can take a long Sunday and can sleep as long as I like as dairying will be stopped for the Winter months.

I believe we shall do very well this season but cannot tell positively till the end of May when we take stock and when I will further inform you of the state of the poll.

Since writing you last the Wellington line has come close to us and a station built just opposite us. This has much improved our property; if I can get a photograph of the place then I will, then you will see what it is like. We have had the front repainted and lettered thusly:- Buick and Co., Cheese and Bacon Manufacturers, Drapers, Grocers and Ironmongers, Purchasers of Farm Produce and Longburn Store. Letters not less than eight inches, words not less than six feet long. It is more than probable that my present partners, one or both, may leave me this season and probably one of the great Wellington merchants may join me in the working of the place. This would be a great advantage as the difficulty of the disposing of the cheese would be overcome. You have not the slightest idea of the difficulty of disposing of goods either for cash or exchange out here. We may grow or manufacture produce here but that, by no means, means that you are going to sell it. Hundreds of tons of potatoes have this year rotted in the clamps and butter is not to be even looked at from this same cause, over supply, and no demand.

We are selling our cheese simply because we are large purchasers of stores, but other factories are full up and cannot at present sell. So that you see the advantage of being connected with a merchant. If this idea of mine turns up to be correct my partner or backer, one or both, will probably be Messrs. H and G Turnbull and Co., Merchants, London and New Zealand.

Now, of ourselves, we are all well although fairly hard worked; we have all we require in food, clothing, shelter or money for the present, and the future prospect is cheering. Katie stays at home now for a few months; all the others, except Edie and Maggie, go to school and they are all well and happy. Tell the youngsters that the children here have all several fowls of their own and they collar all the eggs they lay and it is very surprising that, although Sarah has as many fowls of her own, her hens apparently do not lay at all and the children's fowls lay at least four eggs each hen per day, not mentioning the cock who doubtless is answerable for all the rest. So, as their Mother's hens are such poor layers, they make a fine market of their eggs by selling them to her. They invest their capital in "lollies" (sweets), marbles and other works of the -----, I mean pomps and vanities of this wicked world.

Part of the plagues of Egypt are again in season with us, mosquitoes with a vampire thirst are always with us. Flies in the early morning bite like fury and fleas, that you can hear drop on the floor as they jump off you, are numerous and hungry.

The mosquitoes we can smoke out. The flies do not bother us except in the early morning, but the flea is always with us and as I sit I feel them up my legs where they aspire to the most secret and tender of places, unmentionable and otherwise, and then bite like demons. Your fleas are as Lilliputians to our Brogdignagians.

We have had no serious disturbance since the terrible "Tarawera" volcanic display. Slight earth shakes but not much. The season now is hot, very, 120 degrees in the shade sometimes and we have a drought. Artesian supplies are giving out, the milk has decreased at least 150 gals. per day in less than three weeks. My cheese room has registered 85 degrees and the fat run out of the cheese notwithstanding a wooden extra cover to the roof and ventilation and liberal supply of cold water. I cannot tell you how we longed for Mother's small beer. The beer here is expensive and unwholesome. Do not run away with the idea that we can get no beer here, we have a case of Bass bitter and Sarah makes hop beer and we these mix to make a gigantic drink and even then forget the small beer.

8th February

I am now in Wellington selling cheese and have done very well. I haste to write this while I wait for dinner. I will write again, soon as I can, but will write longer letters in the Winter.

I have not yet taken up any land and perhaps never may, but will watch my opportunity. Many people get bitten in speculation. I am more wary now I hope. I hope some day to be able to purchase a cleared farm so that we can take it a little easier when we are tired of so much work.

A friend of mine has gone to the Old Country to be cured of cancer of the tongue, a Mr. Sly. I hope to come some day (soon), I was going to say soon, but that cannot be. It may be many, many years yet, but I believe that I shall see you all again yet, but I shall come back here again.

Tell Mother and all that we are all quite well. That we are pretty much as we were when we left only my head begins to shine at the crown and I am getting a little grey round the jaws and am a stone heavier. Sarah is well too. Only just now the work is a little too long. Katie is housekeeper. Charlie boss of the cow. Sam and Harry are always off bathing, crab fishing, eel catching and other intellectual amusements and generally arrive home with the arse out of their breeches or other deplorable calamity. Sam was off all one day bathing and his back was peeled by the sun. I hope to direct their energy after a while to earning their "tucker" by milking.

I am glad you are all well, give our love to all.

I must perforce conclude as the enemy "Time" is on my heels

Love to all,

*I am Your Affectionate Brother,
Joseph Liggins*



Longburn Dairy

Eleventh Letter

Since I wrote to you last, a railway station is placed just opposite the factory and in about two months time the new line will be opened to Wellington.

Twelfth Letter

We have had the front repainted and lettered thusly :-

*Buick and Co., Cheese and Bacon Manufacturers,
Drapers, Grocers and Ironmongers
Purchasers of Farm Produce
Longburn Store*

SARAH LIGGINS' SECOND LETTER

This is the second letter from Joseph's wife, Sarah, but this time it is sent to her mother-in-law, Joseph's mother, and to her two sisters-in-law, Annie and Catherine (my grandmother).

There is no date on this letter but from its contents it would appear to have been sent before Christmas 1886.

Longburn Dairy, Karere

Saturday night

My Dear Mother, Annie and Katie,

I will write to you all in one letter and then I can write a long one. I intended writing many times and have neglected doing so. We have received your letters and were glad to hear all were well. I am glad to tell you we are all well.

You asked me to tell you about the children and I will try to do so. I am very glad to tell you they are all quite well and happy. They have a good school to go to, only a half mile to go. Katie, Charley, Sam and Harry go, Edith is going after Xmas, they wont have them before they are five. They have some very nice school companions, really superior people; many of them drive out in their carriages or ride on horse back and have their pianos and many of Katie's companions are learning music. Katie, thinks how she would like to learn. One family, close here, have just had one sent out from home, cost 60 guineas. They are quite well to do people I think, their folks at home are well off, they send a box out twice a year full of clothes for the children.

Clothing here is not like it is at home. The things are very poor cheap things, not a bit of good. Calico, unbleached, worth making up - 6d, shirting for Joe and the boys - 10d and very poor at that, boys' worsted stockings 2s and so poor, women's 3s. Things are all like this in the drapery, the things all seem so poor and last no time. I bought some socks for Joe - 2/6 and they lasted no time. My opinion is they send out all the old stock from home and many other people think the same. Boots are very dear, boys' Charles' size - 12 shillings, and men's - 22 shillings, mine - 14 to 18 shillings, girl's - 12 shillings and upwards, and sewing, they forget how to ask at all. I do all I possibly can but, mother will know, it takes a lot of sewing for six little ones and the boys jackets and trousers.

I miss Katie terribly, how I often think, what would I give if she could come for a few weeks and set me up a bit. I machine all the binders for the cheeses so I have a good bit of work. I do over 3 dozen a day. I wanted a plain dress making, it was a bit of grey, homespun. I told them "just for the house"; how much do you think? Only 16/-! I don't think they will see the colour of my shillings again. I have to do hundreds of yards of machining for that money.

Labour is very dear. No one goes out to wash for less than 4/- a day and some charge 5/- and 6/-. You may guess I don't trouble them. If they go to sew, they charge 3/- and 4/-.

One great blessing is that provisions are very cheap; 2d, 3d, 4d and 5d, very best steak beef ; I got a splendid leg of mutton this week for 2s 1d weighing 10 lbs. Bread is the same as home, sugar and tea the same, butter 6d in the Summer and 1/- in the Winter. Eggs 6d per doz. now, sometimes 2/- in the Winter. Ale and beer you cant get under 6d per pint, awful stuff; we often say we would like a glass of mother's best ale at supper time. I make hop beer and it is very good.

I think I must try to tell you something about myself now. I felt it very much at first being away from you all. It seemed so lonely sitting alone at night and not being able to run across and see you for a few minutes. Joe was at work very late and I did feel strange sitting and thinking of you all. I am getting used to it now and I have a good deal to do you will know, eight of us are not a little job to wash and mend for. I find all my time well filled up, I haven't much time to get lonely in. I often think on a Sunday night how I would like to come in as I used to years ago and have a bit of supper with you. You know I never had very much love and care from home, I was turned out middling young to sink or swim. I always had a kind word and a smile when I came over, it used to seem more like coming home than anywhere else I went to. My poor old aunt was more to me than my mother and I think cared more for me. Will you please give my very dearest love to her and uncle, tell them we are very comfortable and that we are better off than ever we should have been in the old country. We are all hoping, if we live and all is well, we will come and see you again someday; it is something to look forward to, but we have a lot to be thankful for. I wish we had come a few years earlier but we must try to make up, as well as we can, for what we left undone.

Joe is working very hard. They are having 800 gallons of milk a day and are making a great lot of cheese and I could not tell you how many pigs, almost 200. Joe is making about 30 cheeses a day, some of these are about 40 lbs each. They are very busy, he has not time to write, I must give his best love to you all and tell you he is well.

The factory is a great expense, they have three men at work besides himself and the wage is so big, 8/- a day, but we are hoping if all is well in a year or two's time they will see something to encourage them. They will be very busy now till the end of May and then they stop cheese making for three months and kill the pigs and do any building they may want.

They have just put me 3 new rooms on my house. We are beginning to get a home together. We have bought no furniture except 2 chairs and a bedstead until now. You know we had our beds and blankets and so Joe made the children some bedsteads out of some pieces of wood that he had given to him and he made us tables and forms out of our boxes and we managed very well. You see we did not know if we would settle here and it would d not do to buy much, you can't move furniture about, they charge so much. We have just bought a few things to make a little sitting room and it will be very comfortable. I am putting it straight this week. Wouldn't it be a treat if you could come and see us as you used to in the old days? I often wonder, shall we see each other again? I don't think my people care very much though; Annie, though she cried so much when I came away, has never answered my letter, Lizzie

does not trouble us much. I wrote to mother and Harriett, but no letter. I would like to hear from my mother, I don't know why she has not written but I am hoping to get a letter some day.

Katie said she would like to send the children a little present. I can assure her it would be a great pleasure to the children for they think much of even a card their uncle Willie sends sometimes. I don't see any way unless I get Katie to buy me a few things some time - calico and stuff for shirts and stockings and prints, it is so hot here in the Summer (it is just coming on now and young potatoes and gooseberries are ripe. I think perhaps another Xmas, if we are all spared, I shall be able to send £5 and get you to lay it out to the best for me, then, if you like, you could send some little things for the children.

They are nearly always talking about what they had at grandmas and what they did at grandmas and do you remember this and that?

Now my dear mother and sisters I think I have written you a good long budget of news and will have to say goodbye now.

Kiss the little ones for me and give a kiss to aunts and all of you.

Your loving daughter and sister,

Sarah E. Liggins

JOSEPH LIGGINS' THIRTEENTH LETTER

Longburn Cheese Factory
Palmerston North
Manawatu, N.Z.

10 July, 1887

Dear Will,

It is some time since you heard from me. I have not hitherto been able to sit down quietly and write anything like a letter but now it is our winter and I have more time at my disposal although our store business has increased so much that even now both my time and that of the storekeeper and helper is pretty well filled up. We buy butter from the settlers in lieu of cash and make it up and send it to Wellington and are disposing of cheese and bacon made this season. We reckon that we are, this season, the stock (stores) to the good, so that should reap the reward of our labours in a good dividend. We started 2 years ago with the bare factory land etc., value £450, now we have assets of about £3,500; in fact the business has grown so much that we are going to increase the capital so as to satisfy the bank. We have hitherto worked on monies borrowed from the bank but hope to do less with them from now and save interest. The interest we have to pay will startle you - 9% is the price of our overdraft out here and up to 8% for mortgaged money. So you see what we have to bear so that all is not exactly gold that glitters.

We are now selling in our store an average of £230 worth of goods per month with profits from 15 to 25 %. We have this month purchased milk to the amount of £1750 but the milk and cheese receipts this season show a loss in consequence of over production and the Australians having had a wet season. Also, they handicap us with import duty of 2d per lb on cheese and bacon and 1d on butter, other factories this season have made a dead loss. We have made a small profit on the whole affair in the face of bad markets, a fearfully hot season and a heavy percentage etc. Our freight, wages and expense account is £450 on factory alone. Taking things all round we are well satisfied and are assured that we shall in future seasons make a good profit because the price of milk will be lowered and we shall secure long terms of payment so as to induce the settlers, as much as possible, to purchase stores in payment of milk accounts. We in turn getting orders from merchants for cheese, etc and in the general scramble picking up a little by the wayside. Absence of money makes this kind of business inevitable. It is one great system of barter. This will be remedied shortly as outside markets are found from time to time, money, e.g. hard cash, will come in.

We have slaughtered 120 pigs and have 100 running around ready for next year. We have a smoke house and smoke all the bacon and hams. In spite of this, flies attack the bacon and lay skippers so that you have to push off the bacon at the earliest opportunity. We have a lot now and in the Summer shall be quite out, declining to take the risk of the flies. It is more difficult to cure shoulders and hams here than at home. Unless you are

very careful it does not get cured at the bone, as the thick parts do not get properly cold. I find my Mother's teaching in bacon curing comes in handy now and tell her there is no better way; no one can cure better bacon than us. We only differ in curing by the help of sugar which concoction mollifies the action of the saltpetre and in smoking, of course, only smoked bacon will sell here. We, this season, have turned a good deal of butter, at the latter end of the season, as cheese was a glut. Our butter is a favourite brand in Wellington and commands the pinnacle of prices, thanks to hints picked up at Sudbury. Mother cant make butter like the Sudbury people, but that does not hinder her bacon from being good. The English farmer has been all wrong for making good butter to keep, i.e. look at the foreign butter commanding the best price in the English mans own markets. So much for the factory.

You will perceive I am a landholder and will be surprised at the price, but before you go into an ecstasy over this matter recollect it is covered with dense bush which is costly to clear and to grass and to fence. It takes years to make a farm. Years do the most for it. Money cannot clear it alone, the wood has to rot after being burnt and although some stumps are rotted in three years others are as hard as ever in ten. The stock riders have to chase bullocks over logs that an English hunter would refuse and that at full gallop; hopping this log, twisting after an unruly bullock here or using his heels at some fightable bullock there. Seldom coming a cropper, while his rider, on a saddle with short stirrups and a cushioned protuberance on each side for the knees to fit in so as to lessen the rider's chances of coming off, while he uses his short handled, long lashed stock whip without mercy. A whip with which he can draw blood at every blow and is a cruel instrument in his hands. I cant crack one and should take off a bit of an ear if I tried hard but they swing it round once and then with a crack like a pistol shot it falls full on the sides or flanks of some unruly or loitering bullock.

I was pretty well advised in the land and have secured one excellent and one fair section. I went over it the other day and had a rough time. The bush is very thick or rather the undergrowth and saplings. Supplejacks, which are like lines in all directions, and as fast as you clear your face, your legs get entangled and so you go twisting, bending and creeping any way but the orthodox way of travelling. I expressed my regret at my ancestors dispensing with the use of caudal appendages as I could have got on better and being encumbered with a gun I did not get on well at all, especially as my three colonial friends tried to run me off my legs. They succeeded in tiring themselves well and said I behaved well for a "new chum" but I did not let on how tired my legs were.

There are also bush lawyers, not briars but they have like hooks on them on thin sprays which whip you well when trying to disentangle yourself from their embraces. The New Zealand nettle too, a shrub whose sting you feel for days after shaking hands with him. The first I saw I thought the leaf an old countryman of mine and felt his leaf with my hand, my friendly greeting was rudely rejected and after that time I set him down as an acquaintance whom I could not on any terms become familiar. Gigantic tree ferns, nikau palms, cabbage trees and ferns of many varieties are there in abundance

and are flourishing but for a brief time. Beauty must retire in the presence of utility. Soon it will be the home of the sheep who grow fat on the grasses growing in the ashes of the burnt bush and whose profit is 33 % each year. There is a small stream flowing right through the sections. A few miles away this stream forms a beautiful waterfall which apparently falls right from the summit of the mountains at the back and falls clear, hundreds of feet. I have not yet penetrated to the fall but we intend a trip to it some day and shall explore over the range if we can get there.

Regarding our noble selves, I believe we are all right and happy, the children are growing well, tear their clothes, fight and madden unhappy parents somewhat as we used to do or worse for we never had the scope for our abilities in this direction as they have. They are at present indulging in dreams of riches by gathering fungus from fallen bush. An article of New Zealand export consumed by the Chinese and is one of the mysteries in the production of soups and on a par with the delectable swallow's nest soup, worms, puppies and so much thought of by the heathen Chinese. It grows like large ears in great profusion on rotting Taura tree logs. Children and women and Maoris gather it, dry it and obtain 3d per lb. for it from stores such as ours who again sell it to Wellington receiving 4 or 4 1/2 d or more as the market is.

Charley and Sam have been to the bush with a man cutting lines for fallers and came home tired but with enough to talk about for weeks. Sarah and I are getting a little older I believe but have the best of health. By the bye, one of these sections is Sarah's own property and I shall clear it and stock it well so that she will have a homestead as long as she wants one. I, of course, if we build a house on it shall only be living in on sufferance and with the sword of ejection hanging over my head. This is near the railway and is 25 acres of really good land for a homestead. The other land is 2 1/2 miles back in the bush and inaccessible to women, children, traps and even horses (to ride) for some time but this is a matter for borrowing on the security of the rates.

We have no more children than you know of and not likely to I think Praise be to Allah. We were surprised to see Katie's boy so big, just think of that, never seen the little fellow and he so big. We regret Ellen's trouble in regard to her sister. That is a trouble we have not known and hope we shall not for many years yet.

We could almost see George dressed in the robes of brief authority at the feast of Whitsuntide. The poor maid would again be made a countess I expect and the good Ale of Basses dispensed by host Reid would wash down; the good cheer banishing brief care and making their faces rose as the blushing rose of June.

Very sorry to hear of Price's illness. After your account of his symptoms I expect the worst news of him. Glad John is getting on well. What in the world is Luke after to be out of work? Why, in the name of fortune, does he not try New Zealand? He might get some land in time and I believe by my help could get some work suitable for him in Wellington. This is a new country and the chances are many and just contain the elements of risk sufficient to make it exciting. Will send order for money for Robert's

interest, tell the lawyers, as soon as I can square up for the season, i.e. within three months.

Give love to Ellen and aunt Osborne, children, to Mother and Philip, uncle and aunt Dobson. By the way, Tom ought to stand up, tell Robert I do not like his evident idea to screen Tom in a just debt. To George and Annie, John and wife Katie, John L., to all children too numerous to catalogue and to all enquiring friends. Thank Mr. Carter for his sympathy.

With our best love to yourself,

We are your brother and sister,

Joseph and Sarah Liggins

KATIE'S LETTER

The following letter is from Joseph's daughter, Catherine Harriet, and is sent to her cousins, William's son and daughter.

Dear Osborne and Maggie,

I hope you are both well and your mama and papa are too. Are you getting on all right at school? Edith goes now. Harry is getting on fine at school. He has beaten Sam. Sam is not getting on very well, he does not like school.

Father has bought a lot of land and such a lot of pigeons are there and wild pigs.

Now, dear cousins, I will say "Goodbye".

Give love to Mama and Papa and Auntie.

Your loving cousin,

Katie

Kisses from --- ---

Mama, Dada, Katy, Charlie, Sam, Harry, Edith and Maggie

JOSEPH LIGGINS' FOURTEENTH LETTER

Longburn Dairy

1st December, 1887

Dear Will,

I have been some time wanting to write, I have held aback to secure Robert's money. Sarah has helped me out this time. I was glad to have your photo with Ellen and the children. I fancy you and Ellen do not look so strong as you did. Children are growing fine. I have placed it in a place of honour on our parlour mantel piece. I showed it to Mr. Buick the other day and he made the remark that my brother was evidently a gentleman. I concurred in the opinion. I am glad you sent it as it seems to bring you nearer to us. You shall have one from us first opportunity. I am glad all are well.

Since writing last, prices have been very low indeed, cheese has been produced far in excess of consumption so that makers have had a trying time. It has had a good effect though, the home steamers are now carrying many tons of butter and cheese, which will relieve us. This season we are doing better and we have already sold all cheese up to date anyway fit to consign. We have also sold a great quantity of "Longburn" butter which we take off by means of the separators before we make the milk into cheese. The cheese is liked better, is firmer and sounder, so that taking everything into consideration we expect to make up for last year's losses and have something handsome to the good. Also we are paying 1/2d less per gallon for milk and the suppliers are giving six months credit which prevents interest being paid for use of money. We are doing £300 per month in the store and are at present receiving 880 gallons of milk per day. We also have a good market for the pigs, porkers of 70 to 80 lbs. sell at the low price of 2 1/2d per lb. dead weight. While other factories have lost 3, 4, 5 and 6 hundred pounds last year, we have, by reason of the store, been able to keep going pretty level. The outlook this season is good. We only take milk now from the store customers so that we have a chance of two profits. The profit that we charge on ironmongery, drapery, etc. is 25%, on general grocery about 15%, but freight, interest, wages, etc. are very heavy. We are paying, every week, from £13 to £15 in wages. Taking all in all, the outside world says that we have the best thing on the coast, but we, behind the scenes, know that it is not so good as they think. Still we are doing very well. Last years glut was a sneezer. Many factories have changed hands and been let and I believe that the time is coming when the companies will either stop or limit the output; then we shall pull it in.

In the matter of the bush farm, we have 25 acres fallen on mine and the whole of Sarah's making 50 in all. I have had it fallen pretty cheaply, from 30/- to 33/- per acre. Next comes fencing, sowing seed and stocking with sheep. I want to do it all without borrowing if I can, then we shall feel it do us good. If we borrow we cannot get money for less than 8% and the broker will charge 2 1/2 % for getting the money. If all is well we

shall have a good flock of sheep soon. The land will carry 1,000 sheep and sheep pay 30%, so you see it even pays to borrow at the high rates prevalent here. Everybody borrows and nearly everybody is mortgaged up to the hilt. I don't like it though and shall fight shy. Sheep farming is a nice occupation here; nothing to do only look after the fences and once a year be very busy with the shearing. If you get disgusted with the old country, you can come here and vegetate as a sheep farmer. Own opine(?) and fig tree, own lamb, chicken and ham and all that, you know. There appears to be no doubt that we shall eventually drift out of dairying into sheep farming. The lads will be a great help then. They all elect to be farmers; Sam says he will buy a farm and a wife and if he has more lads than he can do with at home, he will send them out and make 'em earn money.

I was at Retone(?) not long ago and stayed a night with John Carter, talked over English news and had a very rosy evening with him. He has aged much, his hair is plentifully sprinkled with grey. I also found Newbold is a friend of his but, as yet, I have not dropped across him. They were very glad to see me and are coming up to see us sometime.

We never here of or from Luke. How is he getting on? We are glad to hear all the rest are pretty well and getting along alright. Give our love to mother and to all and several. Tell them we are all right, plenty of work, plenty to eat and drink and wear and are not short of the needful to meet our requirements. We are not amassing a gigantic competency but keep gaining ground a bit, are getting a little bit older, a bit stiffer about the joints and for myself have ominous signs of grey appearing about the jaws and over the ears. I am also getting a little stouter; if I require to cross a fence, I don't jump it but quietly get over it in a sedate way as becomes one who is reaching on to the 40's.

I must tell you Charley has gained a bronze medal, I stand corrected as he says it is a silver shield, for good attendance at school and Sam a certificate. We also walked away with two first prizes at the agricultural show here and a Highly Commended for cheese. We also took the prize for most points in dairy produce. Our butter is reckoned the best on this coast. We shall send some to England next month so if you fall across a butter stamped "Longburn" you will know that we have had something to do with it. We may send some cheese but that is problematical. Australia is shutting her doors against us. Melbourne actually proposes 4d per lb. duty on New Zealand cheese and butter, so we cannot send there.

Now receive my benediction. Receive our best love for you and yours and the same to mother and all the rest.

I am your affectionate brother,

Joseph Liggins

SARAH LIGGINS' THIRD LETTER

This letter was written by Joseph Liggins' wife, Sarah, to William and Ellen Liggins, Joseph's brother and sister-in-law, and to her grandmother. It has the same date as Joseph's letter and obviously travelled to England in the same envelope.

December 1 st. 1887

Longburn Dairy

My Dear Ellen and William and Grandma and all at home,

You will think us a long time in writing but we are so very busy in the factory now; it is our busiest time that some days we are both at work until 8 and 9 at night and then we seem too tired to write but we could not let the old year pass without writing to ask how you all are and to wish you each and all a very happy new year and to ask how you all are and to tell you we are all well.

I am sending in this letter a Post Office order to you and I want you to pay the interest with it. The money I am sending is what I have worked for and very hard too and we could do with it ourselves but I want to help what little I can. Since Joe has taken up a bit of land and the factory, it takes all the money he has but I am helping in the factory and I will try to send a little sometimes.

Joe tells me it is £2-10 for uncle's interest and will you please get aunt Ann some coal and a dress and boots and give them some thing to get a good Xmas dinner. I would not like to think they are in want at Xmas time. If you have a few shillings left please pay one of uncles clubs with it and you will oblige me very much. I hope you do not mind doing this for me, I have no one else to ask. I think Joe is going to write a few lines if possible. He is quite willing I should send a little money to aunt and uncle. I am nearly always thinking about them; I would not like to think poor old aunt was in want and not help her a bit while I am able. She was the best friend I had when I was a child and I can't forget it.

Now, let me tell you about ourselves. We are getting on very nicely. We have to work very hard but we hope some day to have a home of our own when we can do so much with it. We have to pay so much to have a days work done, a woman to wash is 5/-, and to come to do a day to sew is 3/- to 3/6 and with a girl is 8/- to 10/- and not very good at that some of them. So we do with as little help as possible. Katie is getting very useful now, the boys and Edith go to school. Katie stays home half the day, cleans up half the kitchen and cooks the dinner and goes to school in the afternoon. She is getting quite a big girl and is so much like her grandma. I will have all their photos taken soon if all goes well and send you them.

We were so pleased with yours and the children, it is a very good one. How the children are growing and how well they look. We did not think Ellen was looking quite so well as when we left home. I hope she is well. Tell us how she is when you write. Will you ask aunt Osborne to please send us her photo. I would be so pleased to have it to look at sometimes. We were very pleased too with Katie's little boy. Ask her to get her baby taken on her knee and send us. Ask Annie and George (Smith) to please give us a chance of seeing their shadow sometime and Mary Anne and Joe (daughter and son). We would very much like one of John and his wife (Emma) and their babe (Alice). Am I asking too much? Well never mind, think for yourselves how nice it will be to look at all your faces some times.

I don't know what to think of my sister. She has never written a line to us since we came away. I would very much like to hear from her and have a photo of them all if she would not mind sending them. If Luke comes home this Xmas, give our very best love to him and ask him to write to us. Ask John and Katie and Annie to please send us a letter when they have time. Tell them to fancy how much they would like a letter if they were all these miles away from home. Think of us this Xmas, we shall often think of you. The children all send kisses to their cousins.

With very much love,

Wishing you all a very happy new year,

Your loving sister,

Sarah Liggins

Tell grandma we shall often think of her this Christmas time. It makes one think of days gone by.

Give our best wishes to John and Emma. Tell them I missed count with the photographs, I will send them one next time if I can.

KATIE'S LETTERS

The following letter is from Joseph's daughter, Catherine Harriet, to her uncle William.

Dear Uncle Willie,

Please send my letter to uncle and auntie Dobson and tell them we often talk about them. I would like to see them again. I wonder if we ever shall. We would like some of her nice pears. I have had only one pear since we have been here.

Many kisses and love from,

Mother, Father, Charles, Sam, Edith, Maggie and Katie

This letter is from Catherine Harriet to her cousins, William's son and daughter.

Dear Osborne and Maggie,

I wish you a Happy Christmas and Happy New Year. I suppose you are quite a little man now, Osborne. I saw yours and Maggie's photograph. Maggie is such a lot like our Maggie. You haven't altered as much as I thought you would have done. I thank your Mother and Father for the photos.

I have got two pet lambs and Maggie plays with one just like a doll. Do you go to school and learn your lessons, Maggie? We all go to school; Charlie got such a nice medal for good conduct. He passed his standard and is in the fifth now. Sam, Harry and Edith go and learn their lessons fine.

The dog has eight pups, such nice ones and the cat had three kittens. The pigs, you couldn't count them if you tried. I have got such a nice flower garden. The gooseberries and strawberries are nearly ripe. I suppose the snow is on the ground now with you.

Now, dear cousins, I will conclude. Give my love to your Papa and Mamma and Aunty Osborne with many kisses from all to all.

From your loving cousin,

Katie

JOSEPH LIGGINS' FIFTEENTH LETTER

Longburn Dairy,
Near Wellington, New Zealand

14 June, 1888

Dear Will,

We read your letter containing budget of news with much interest as you may know. We are truly sorry to hear of Ellen's ill health and sincerely hope that the trouble was only temporary. We hope that long ere this she will be restored to complete health. You do not look well in your photograph. Is it possible you will have to turn sheep farmer here to benefit your health and Ellen's?

Miss Osborne's letter was welcome and we hope she is in good health. She must be a godsend to you in your time of trouble. We are glad to hear that Luke is well and anchored and hope that he will do well and not give indiscriminate or too long credit. If he finds he really cannot keep headway, tell him to not loose all his money, as there is still a chance for willing workers with brains, though many fail to reach the summit of their ambitions out here.

A friend of mine here brought out two friends in Luke's trade and they got situations at once and are I believe doing fairly well. Kate's shop must be inspiring. Luke sent me a sort of bird's eye view of it all, out of his own head, but what a blessing it must be to the street generally. I hope that the Jubilee clock is in no way obscured. Glad to hear that mother's health keeps pretty good and Philip, to all accounts, must be getting " quite corpulent, Mr. Ball". John's work is steady and a good workman always holds his own. We are glad to hear that they are all fairly well. We read the account of T. Bales accident and are afraid to hear later news as we doubt the shock would be great. He ought to get substantial payment as compensation. We hope for the best.

You will be glad to hear we are all well and still pegging away. The factory is closed for the season and Sarah is now in the house taking a well earned rest, if I can call it so where there are six children. She has helped in the factory all summer; the men were so fearfully careless that we were obliged to quit them early in the season. We have been successful in turning out a good amount of cheese this season and we sent some to London which realised 51/- and 53/- per cwt there. This pays us well and we intend to send a large quantity next trip. Our butter to the same market realised 90/-. This is not so payable to us, although the price will be a temptation to many here to go in for butter and expect you will have large quantities from here next Spring or rather your Winter and Autumn. We sold cheese in the colony pretty well, at low prices. We have not so much in stock now, perhaps 12 tons. This we shall clear before September, I have no doubt. Our large customer in Wellington still sticks to us and he may well. They make better profits on it than we do, but the home market will put us in a better position. The store is doing a steady business.

My land is now ready to put sheep on (60 acres of it). I shall buy 100 wethers soon so that I shall be sending you some wool soon. Do not run away with the idea that I have enough loose cash to purchase these sheep. The auctioneers here take bills at 3 months. This enables many to stock up, as, by the time the bill is due, the large merchants advance on the wool, on the sheep's back, at a low rate of interest, say about 9%. This makes it pay. You know there is one great advantage we have here, the rent in the shape of interest does not come to more than a trifle per acre and no Winter food has to be saved, so in spite of mortgages and heavy interest on advances, farmers here still make good headway. Now I am able to stock the land, my burden is much relieved and I shall be able to report good progress from time to time. I may say the profits on sheep are really good if wool is at all a fair price.

I have a man at work on the place. All the work he does is by contract so that I only need to visit the place about once in 2 or 3 months to pass his work. He has a slab and shingle house and is quite happy.

You will be glad to hear I was appointed chairman of the School Committee last meeting. The honour is not great but it shews confidence on the part of the householders. Our own school here is good and I believe New Zealand children are in advance of the children at home. The teacher is paid by the number of passes, so the children are pushed on. Education is free here. This is a pleasant fiction as we are heavily taxed for it, not by a direct tax but by taxes on imports. The tax on imports is heavy, on such articles as crockery up to 50%, on others such as guns 25%. The list is a p?????. There is one advantage, everyone pays, as no man can eat his dinner in his house without paying tax in some way. The nails in his boots, his watch, tea, sugar, paper collar, English shirt, plate, knife and fork, all subscribe their small quota to the Government, who have in times past spent it wastefully, put now retrenchment is the ticket. We send a man to legislate and if he doesn't retrench or blind us with soft sawder (flattery), he only figures at the govt. house for a brief term. The longest at 3 years. Many queer fellows are sent to represent us. A rangitikei (?) squatter, who sat in the house twice, was asked if he believed in Elementary Education. He thought a bit and answered that he considered that children ought not to have anything in the Elements. This bright answer called forth from an admirer after the meeting "I wonder what the hell-e-meant by that observation?". This was John Stevens. Mr. Macarthur, another sitting member, I heard say, when he was taxed at the preliminary public meeting that he ought not to sit as he cheated at Euchre (a card game). He appealed to the audience that that was the very reason why he should go, as, if he was man enough to cheat sharpers at Euchre, he would be able to hold his own in that large assembly where the great game was a game of Euchre really and that his constituents would benefit by his remarkable powers of cheating. He went and has been returned again and has been a good member too.

The political atmosphere is now clouded with the great question of defence and the Chinky or Chinaman who comes to these colonies in hundreds at a time and never settles singly but in companies. Their morality is damnable. They are good workers and at low

wages. They can live on the smell of an oil rag, hence white men with families cannot compete with them and are crushed out of some industries. They cry in Australia for the Australians and so the Chinaman will have to stop or Australasia will be a second United States. You at home have no idea how numerous, wealthy and self reliant are the Australians. The old country will have to help her in this or as surely as China tea separates America and England, so surely, Chinamen separate Australasia and the mother country. Australasia is a big child and can nearly walk.

My partner, Mr. Buick, had a narrow escape lately. Heading bullocks, he and horse turned somersault over a bullock. All fell, Mr. Buick at bottom. He has had a near go with this mysterious bovine and is now a very much damaged man. I am glad to say he is now able to do a little business. His death to us would have been a disaster, he is recovering slowly and his life is safe now.

We had a photograph taken of the factory and group; we will send a copy or two home when they come to hand. You will have to make a few do, they are so very expensive.

Love to all from all of us here,

Sarah will write soon,

I am your affectionate brother,

Joseph Liggins

Remember us particularly to Mother and Robert and Aunt Dobson.

JOSEPH LIGGINS' SIXTEENTH LETTER

Longburn Dairy, Nr. Wellington
1889

January 8 th.

Dear Will,

I ought to have written long ere this. I have been waiting till I could screw out the £5 here enclosed. I will send a further £5 next month so as to arrive for the next payment of interest. I am glad to see from yours that all are well. The changes with you seem to come more seldom than with us here. It seems from your letters just about the same old style as when we were with you.

I shall be writing again very soon so will just give you an outline of our doings this time as the mail goes out today and we are very busy just now, up to the neck in business and work.

The factory is getting on well this season. There has been a severe drought in Australia so that New Zealand produce has fetched high prices. We have done very well with the cheese and ever since the first lot was ready we have been sending away 1 1/2 to 2 tons per week, all to one firm. We are sending it away very new and obtain remunerative prices.

The farm is doing well. I have 60 acres in grass now. On this 60 acres I have at present 230 sheep. I have this season sent home 2 bales of wool and one bale of lambs wool. To let you know the profit on sheep, I will tell you of my first trial in that line.

I purchased 100 ewes in lamb for £50 cash and in two months these ewes lambed, 70 lambs, a small percentage. Then I sheared the sheep and obtained 7 lbs of wool per head, worth 7 1/2d per lb. Also the lambs, 3 lbs lambs wool per head, worth about the same money. Thus I have now the ewes as profit worth now about 7/6 per head:-

<i>Cost</i>	<i>Now Value</i>
<i>100 sheep £50</i>	<i>100 sheep @ 7/6 37-10-0</i>
	<i>70 lambs @ 6/- 21- 0-0</i>
	<i>700 lbs wool @ 7 1/2d 21-17-6</i>
	<i>210 lbs lambs wool @ 7 1/2d 6-11-3</i>
	<i>£86-18-9</i>
	<i>Balance £26-18-9</i>

These figures are the lowest so that the sheep have anyway realised 50% in 6 months. Wool has risen twice since I sent mine away, so these figures may be on the lowest

scale. Of course, next year the profit increases more. The increase in lambs is alone a profit. There will be more lambs next year as they were young sheep this year.

EARTHQUAKE

We had a boomer here a few weeks ago; shook the steeple off Christchurch cathedral and frightened our folks here very much. Quite a roar came first and then an up and down motion like a ship struck with a big wave. This was a long one, perhaps some thirty seconds. No further harm done, only fright.

FIRE

We were aroused out of our beds one night by the crackling noise and glare of fire. As it happened it was only one of our store rooms, the smallest, in which a fire had been lit the previous day. we all put in an appearance in great dishabille and kept the fire from spreading by judicious sprinkling with water. Had I partaken of the wine of Gulliver, I cold easily have kept the fire to one place by resorting to his expedient. £10 of logs not covered by us; it was the only building not covered.

Mr. Carter was up here for a day and a night last week. He is doing well again; has many contracts going and has speculated in building land this time. I think Newbold seems unspeculative and is jogging along quietly. He has had a serious illness in his family to contend with.

We are all well, except perhaps too much work. I have a slight touch of rheumatism in my writing hand which makes my letter shorter than it should be.

It is getting better now. Have been a little overworked but now we have more help. Received your cards, many thanks. We hoped ere this to have been able to send you a photograph of ourselves.

Love to all in haste,

Your affectionate brother and sister,

Joseph and Sarah Liggins

JOSEPH LIGGINS' SEVENTEENTH LETTER

Longburn
1889

June 21 st.

Dear Will,

Your letters to hand and all are right. There altogether does not seem to be much alteration in home affairs. I am glad to hear that you are all in fair health. I read your newspaper paragraphs with much interest in respect to the bellringing. Of course, I can have no knowledge of the extent of your proficiency as a team, if that is the right term, but from the card you sent me stating the surprising number of changes you can ring in a given space of time, I should say you are getting very clever in the art of tintinnabulation. I had to look at the dictionary to get the proper spelling (The spelling is correct but this word means - the sound of the ringing of bells. I suspect that the use of it was one of Joseph's jokes. The correct word for bell ringing is campanology). I have no doubt your muscles are as hard and firm as a gladiators by this time. I think you are very wise in taking up the matter as your health will materially benefit from it. As you say, I have not sufficient exercise, that is, outdoor, manual or walking. My occupation is somewhat conducive to fat and not muscle.

With respect to Philip's idea of selling the inn and embarking in farming; I am certain that it is impossible legally. No title could be given to the purchaser whatever and therefore no man would invest his money. The only way would be to let the place to a brewer, house and furniture included, that is, such furniture as was on the place when the will was proved. Then again, farming in the old country is too unremunerative to sell a good house like that for. If only mother were a few years younger, I would advise letting the house and taking up sheep farming in this colony. The profit would be sure and the risk not so great as embarking in the venture at home. But even then, I would recommend, that if the property was leased or purchased with money accumulated on rents from mother's property, that the venture be in her name. I do not think it would be wise to go into farming at all, it would mean more work for mother. If I was in her place and tired of the business, I would either take a cottage and live quietly on the rents and let Philip take up some light occupation near home, or I would take a smallholding in this country. It would never do for her to embark in any pursuit that should bring on an increase of work and care. There is not the least necessity for that. If Philip has private means of his own and wishes to embark in any other pursuit then we have no say in the matter. But as I said before, to deal with the property and furniture, etc. belonging to mother is a legal impossibility as any solicitor would explain if his opinion was invited. The only possible way it could be done would be to obtain the signatures of all the children but even if that were done, the assignees, as in my own case and Luke's, would not deliver up their security without the cash down and that would mean the deduction of all sums owing to any person on the security of the property from the purchase money. This would of course mean that the amount that could be touched would be too ridiculously small to tempt any sane person to dream of the matter any further. Mother's position now is sound and tenable and for her sake alone, if there were no other

cause, the matter must stand as it is. Her best position is to receive the rents or, best of all, to live on her own property. She can see how it would work out to let it by taking the instance of grandad's proerty at Moira. If she lets the place, one of her own children should have the house. I have no doubt it would bring a fair rent. If none of the children want it, then it could be sold to Bass or Wright or Davenport, all three are good men.

With regard to ourselves, I have lately been appointed postmaster here and telephone operator. The fixings are to be put in at once.

I have raised money on my section and shall have 140 acres fallen this year so that I shall soon, if all goes well, have a good mob of sheep. The sheep I have are doing well and I have had little loss by death or accident. I shall have enough bush down this season to enable me to put a man in charge who will look after the sheep, fence and straighten up the place a bit, i.e. log up, burn stumps, etc,etc.

With regard to the factory, we have had a fair run and have done somewhat better in the cheese market although just now there is a check to the sales, but still we shall be able to quit slowly at a remunerative figure. We have at present 17 tons in stock. This will be sold during the Winter. We have a freezing works going up close to here (if the shares can be sold) and there will be over 100 men employed so that it should give an impetus to our store trade. We do a good business in the store but you can have no idea of the lax system of credit out here, and this, taking into consideratiopn the fact that a good deal of the population of New Zealand is a floating one, gives to all trades an element of risk that is exciting not to say exhilarating. We endeavour to keep the elements of risk as low as possible but with all our care we now and again have a creditor who does the Pacific Slope.

We are endeavouring to let a piece of our section for an hotel. I hope we manage it as it would bring a good deal of trade and would better enable us to sell the place when we are tired of dairying. Of course, we may hang on till some of the children are capable of taking up the running. With regard to my bush sections, you know when I bought it it was an impenetrable (almost) bush. Now there is a road right up to the place and in a short time we shall connect with Palmerston, so you can have some idea of the progress of settlement here. Of course we obtained a loan from the Government to cover the expenditure and the rates are struck to pay off interest and loan in 26 years, interest at 5%. Also the rates are low, my own being, up to the present, under 10/- per year. I was across the Tokomaru and Shannon district the other day and was surprised at the amount of land in grass. What was bush is now open country and settlers' houses are dotted all over the place. I call it clear, you would call it a mass of stumps and logs, but never mind, it carries 5 or 6 sheep to the acre and the logs are a shelter to the stock and them gradually decaying enriches the soil.

I have managed to raise £15 to pay the interest this time.

You will remember us to Aunt and Uncle Dobson, tell them we are well, all of us. Also read my remarks to Mother in the matter of the house. She will know that I think for her in the matter. Give her all our love (I will write her personally soon) also to Ellen, children, Aunt, yourself of course and do not forget all our brothers and sisters, etc., etc., too many to mention, but all remembered by us; and all enduring friends.

We are your affectionate brother and sister,

Joseph and Sarah Liggins

JOSEPH LIGGINS' EIGHTEENTH LETTER

Longburn,
1889

September 13 th.

Dear Will,

It seems a long while since I wrote to you. Time slips by and I keep blaming myself for not writing. Then the next I hear the mail is in and I am too late for another fortnight. I was glad to hear from your later letters that all are pretty well and am glad to know that mother keeps in pretty fair health.

Before I forget it, regarding Charley Laytham, he would be all right here if he has say £300 and he would do far better with it here than at home. An intelligent man like he is would be all right with his money. I would assist him all I could. If he requires further information let him write to me, I will tell him the plain truth of the matter. What he would require to do is to buy out some small cockatoo and keep sheep on the land and vegetate, you know, just like that personage spoken of on mother's jug - "eat his own lamb, chicken and ham, etc." Tell him he would be all right, besides, the low prices that are being charged for passage, money would not prevent him coming out, having a cruise round and going back if he did not like it. If he decides to come, tell him to come steerage and to call on me as soon as he lands. His money, to place in the Bank of New Zealand in London and bring out drafts or such other papers as the bank recommends. He requires to bring as little luggage as possible, just a blanket or two and a change of clothes. He should wear his own old clothes till he lands and then throw them away. If he had been twenty years younger it would have been all the better but when you hear of old fogies coming out at 70 you feel that 40 is rather juvenile. Young folks do best out here as bush farming is as much a work of time as labour, it takes some few years for the logs to decay and the young trees to grow. Since I know more of the colony now, I can see pretty well that the young industrious people do very well out here indeed. But, if you are not young, you must bring some money with you to enable you to buy a cleared section, then you catch up in the race and make a good living.

I had two people call on me for work the other day. One came out under the auspices of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the other, to explain how to freeze the rabbit and sell him in London or Ostend. Both these parties were apparently respectable, one was perhaps 50 and the other 40 years of age and both of a type not wanted here, consequently they are loafers and sundowners. If the P.C. to Animals man put in his spoke at any of the runs he would be likely to get the stockwhip. The rabbit man found people here knew more about freezing than he did. Speaking of freezing, the Longburn Freezing Co. will be registered next week, £15,045 is already subscribed. As these works are directly opposite our place of business, we expect good trade out of it. Mr. Buick will no doubt be on the permanent directory. Many people will be employed there so that we believe we shall do better in the store besides the increase in value of the property. I shall be able to tell you more of this industry in future letters. I at present have not seen one in work but the amount of sheep killed and frozen at these places is astounding. The sheep too are all the best, 2 year wethers and maiden ewes. Old sheep are never sent as they freeze a bad colour. We here eat them but as you know the price is low. I happen just to have my last months meat bill hanging close to me; I copy one line:-

Aug 5 5 lbs rump beef and leg of mutton 2s 10d

You will be finding out the loss in not having New Zealand mutton in consequence of the strike. What asses those men are for not unloading the meat.

I hear that a settler here is going to cut up his farm into building allotments so that a little town will doubtless spring up here. We have lately had the Post Office handed over to us. I am now postmaster for Longburn. We have also a telephone so that we can receive and send telegrams to the whole of the civilised world. Sarah and Charlie are my assistants, so that we all have a hand in it. Mr Charles takes the mails across and Sarah works the telephone when I am not handy. The pay is not very much, £10 per year only and 3d on each telegram. Still we think it will pay us as people must call for their letters and may buy something at the same time.

You have asked me several times how we got on for a place of worship; we have had no regular place till now. A little Methodist chapel has been put up here lately, close to us; we have assisted somewhat towards its erection, so that we now have a decent, handy place to go to. Before times, as you are aware, the services were held in the school room. We get some funny preachers sometimes, terribly long winded and who like to hear the sound of their own voice. They have a tune starter like old Thomas Ady used to be. Sometimes the tune is well known to the tune starter and nobody else, then we have a fine effort in the way of a solo. Some of the preachers at some of the places cannot read so, of course, a good sermon is to be expected, he then tells you he cannot preach but can testify and so he testifies for an hour or so. Some of the hearers (listeners) are almost as bad, I knew one old lady who could not read but she could sing, so sometimes she got the book upside down and sang away just as well as if all was right side up.

With regard to the farm, the lambs are just now lambing so I cannot tell you the percentage of increase. Many settlers have lost a lot of hoggets this Winter with lung worm. I have escaped pretty well having plenty of feed for them. I have raised the wind to fall the remainder of the bush, 133 acres, so that I shall then have about 250 acres in grass and 133 acres in standing bush. I am having a little house put on one section for the man to live in, then next comes the fencing. There is a good profit in sheep but, as you may think, it has all to go on again for some years to effect improvements.

The place is getting a bit civilised now, roads are being made and settlers are building homes and improving their land generally. When the freezing works are in good swing there should be a prosperous place at Tokomaru and the surrounding country.

We commence cheese making next week for another season. This last season we made a distinct profit and shared £72 between us. The outlook this season is not so good. The Australians have plenty of rain so they can grow their own produce, our surplus will have to come to London this season, so you may get some of our cheese. There is a good deal of New Zealand butter sent to London now. I expect there will be a great quantity sent home this season.

Charles is getting a big lad now; I expect in the cheese season he will have to stay home half a day anyway and assist in the store. The mails, making them up and the telegraph business takes up such a deal of time, there are so many different documents and forms appertaining to

the Post Office. Frequently, when you are busiest, some fellow comes in and wants to know, for instance, if there is a post town at some obscure place in a corner of Hades and how many stamps it will take to carry a letter there and if it is necessary to take out an insurance against fire. All this takes time you know.

Katie is a regular housewife and can tell the dimensions of a pudding or joint of beef as well as the best. The other boys are at present the hewers of wood. Sarah is in good health but perhaps not quite so round as she has been. She has a good deal to do in the Summer but she does not mind that so long as there is a distant prospect of doing a little less in the future.

Sometime, at an early date, if all goes well, I shall be sending some more cash but I cannot very well manage to do so till after the shearing. You might in your next letter let me know how affairs are getting on pecunarily. I suppose John will be all right at Derby and getting good wages. Luke, I reckon, will be filling his ledger with good marks. Katie, I have no doubt, will be doing fairly well. She has the knack of looking up the profits that will stand her in good stead. George, of course, is all right and I am glad to hear Joe (George's son, Joe Smith, who later emigrated with Edie and family to New Zealand, see later letters) is tackling work. Tell him King Demos is a king here (?).

How is Ellen and Aunt getting along? Better I hope. And yourself and the youngsters? Osborne will be looking up the Pacific Ocean, sometime now, to see where his Uncle lives. Mother, I know, will be all right; her trade and house are good ones. I hope her health will remain good. Tell her we hope to come and see her as soon as the youngsters are old enough to take charge. I expect Philip will be approaching Falstaffian dimensions, good ale and not too much to do is conducive to good condition. How are Robert and Aunt Dobson getting along? Same old style I suppose. Tell them when the freezing company commences we shall send a lamb for you all to taste how good it is. The flesh pots of Egypt did not hold better meat than it will be.

Love to yourself and all your people, to Mother and all our folks at Measham, To Aunt Dobson, Robert, and all, sundry and general.

From your affectionate brother and sister,

Joseph and Sarah Liggins

JOSEPH LIGGINS' NINETEENTH LETTER

THE TOKOMARU LETTERS

There is a gap of nearly two years between this letter and the last one, which was dated - Longburn, 13 September 1889. It is possible that other letters were written from Longburn but, if so, they are no longer in existence.

This is the first letter we have that was written from Tokomaru and it would appear from its contents that it is in fact the first one from there.

Tokomaru, Near Wellington, N.Z.

17 August, 1891

Dear Will,

You will have often looked for a letter from us. I have deferred writing from time to time but at last have to face it. There is nothing to cry about but would have liked to give you better news. We have, however, lost everything. Bad debts, failure of milk supply, bad market, adverse circumstances have all combined in the end. We are not alone in this. The factories all over New Zealand have come to and are coming to this situation.

You will be glad to know, however, that the land that Sarah bought has come in handy and we are now living on it making cheese and butter. "Butter and Cheese and Whey". We have 24 good cows and expect to make up to 30 this Summer. The land is 60 acres. We lease 98 acres grass too and are about to take another lease of 100 acres. The bush is being fallen now. We live in a very nice house of four rooms. I ought to know it is a good one for I built it myself. It is not so big as we should like but hope to put on a few more rooms. We face the railway and are perhaps 2 chains back. We have about 1 1/2 or 2 acres fenced in for a garden and have planted 150 apple and other fruit trees. We have the makings of a good place here. The boys now are getting big and help me to milk, fence, gather and sow grass seed in the season and in fact are getting to be very handy. Katy of course is housekeeper and Sarah makes the cheese and butter and bosses around generally.

We hope to go into sheep eventually but shall have to get the fences up and a good bit of other work before we can do that. We shall be able to get along nicely and no doubt get over our loss and put something by.

I had a letter from Luke saying Mother would like to hear from us. When you read her this, tell her that we are pretty comfortable situated here; in fact many an overburdened man at home would like to swop.

We have not a school at present but have a school reserve which the settlers have fallen and grassed and expect to get a school on this summer. The money is provided for it, we have hardly enough children but there are a good few couples here who are patriotic so we shall jog along with a few for a time and shall have to board



The Liggins' outside their First Home at Tokomaru

[Nineteenth Letter](#)

*We live in a very nice house of four rooms.
I ought to know it is a good one for I built it myself.
It is not so big as we should like but hope to put on a few more rooms.*

From Left to Right : -

Edie - who returned to England when she was in her early twenties and later married Joseph Smith

Joseph and Sarah Liggins

Joseph Junior – Joseph Huia Palmerston (JHP)

Maggie – baby in the letters

Katie – eldest daughter

William Liggins – Joseph's brother, to whom most of Joseph's letters were sent, and who stayed with until his family come out to New Zealand

the schoolmaster amongst us somehow, as he can't hardly live in a tent and will want someone to cook his tucker.

We are getting a through road made now so that we shall be able to ride or drive to town soon; at present we have only the railway and they stick it on. We had them through a while ago. They are rated pretty heavy. So we outvoted them and got a loan of £5000 for the road and have saddled them with the bulk of the rates in spite of their opposition.

We are having very good weather now although we caught just the tail end of your frosts. It has been the hardest winter known here but what we have is nothing. You would not call it hard weather at all. Now is our nicest time as we have no mosquitoes. I may say that we have plenty in the season. Pharaoh's flies are not a patch on them. We put muslin curtains over the beds. A woman here wraps her legs in paper so you can fancy the mosquitoes can bite.

We are now very busy tree planting - shelter and fruit and are getting ready for getting in the crops next month. We are planting some alder, oak, ash, willow, etc. so that the place will be somewhat like home some time.

We grow here buckwheat and linseed amongst other things and when in flower we look quite gay.

We shall not be able to see you as soon as we intended now but hope to see you after the boys get up a bit and the place can be left. The steamers take passengers very reasonably now. Many people go out home and back. The steamers are pretty crowded with passengers and no doubt it will get cheaper as other lines are getting in opposition to carry mutton.

There is a great freezing works at Longburn now and they turn out a lot of sheep. They have all the latest appliances, engines and electric light, etc. The freezing machine is I believe - Haslam's, Derby.

We got your papers by the bye and were much interested with the Queen's visit to Derby. Thanks for same. We are all well and very busy, plenty to do. We trust this will find you all well at home. Give our love to mother in particular, accept the same yourselves and to all generally, there is so many but we mean all without exception. Shall write again soon now.

With love from all,

We are Your Loving Brother and Sister

Joseph and Sarah. Liggins

Sarah wishes to give her love to Aunt and Uncle Dobson

JOSEPH LIGGINS' TWENTIETH LETTER.

This is the last letter that we have from Joseph. We do have cards, however, sent at Christmas time, etc. It is likely that the main reason for no further letters being kept was, either that Joseph's affairs in England, that his brother William was taking care of for him, were largely resolved, or William, having emigrated himself, was no longer there to save later letters. These existing letters were probably handed over to my grandfather, John Stanfield, when he took over caring for Joseph's affairs, after William had emigrated to New Zealand.

*Tokomaru, Near Wellington, New Zealand
8th January, 1892*

Dear Will,

We were very glad to receive your letter as we had not heard from anyone at home for a long time. We were glad to see that all of ours seem to be in good health and all appear the same as when we left home only older. I noticed you are getting grey and bald. I have been watching my own head growing balder and balder for such a long time that I can feel for you in this respect. I do not know but what we should look remarkably well, bald headed and with spectacles. Glad to know mother keeps in good health. She has been very strong and I hope she will keep well for many years yet. I am pleased that Philip is hale and hearty. Note that your children are getting on well and that Osborne is tackling shorthand. So did I, I trust that he will stick to it as I am sure it will be useful, no matter what his occupation later. Your letter reminds me that he must be almost a man now. What are you going to make of him? You did not say how Ellen was. Glad Aunt Osborne is all right. Glad to know that Davenport's entrust you with travelling and I need not say to you - beware of being led into tasting too often yourself. We boys had a lesson on that, written in large letters.

Now of ourselves; you are right, we do not and are not likely, I trust, to know what want is. We in fact are pulling together fairly well. We want nothing but a little hard cash would make things run easier. Our cows have turned out a good lot of cheese this season. We expect to buy about 6 more for the winter. Altogether now, calves and milkers we muster 60 head. Pigs, hens and ducks plenty so that if we are at any time short of meat, we make a raid on the pigs or fowls.

We, last week, as it was New Year, killed a grand lamb and had peas and new potatoes, all of our own growing of course. It is pretty hard gardening amongst the stumps. We use a grubber and chop in the spuds. They come out all right and next time it is easier. We have now growing - maize, buckwheat, linseed and a few peanuts besides other things that you know of such as potatoes etc. We have just arranged for the lease of 70 acres near us at a reasonable rental, so trust to jog along.

We however do not know if we shall stay here ourselves altogether as we have joined a small farm association in Taranaki. I, Charlie and Katie are nominated for

200 acres each. The children's names are on as no person can, under the rules, hold more than 200 acres each. We of course arrange, as many others do, as above.

The land is bush, leased from the Government for 50 years. 200 acres rent will be something like £10 per year, 1/3rd of which is spent on roads. At end of term, option of remaining for another term at valuation same overall rental; all improvements paid for at valuation if do not elect to stay on. No purchase clause at present but expect it as soon as present ministry is kicked out. Surveyors are at present at work on it and will be finished about June next when the sections will be balloted for. There is 45,000 acres taken up, so it is a big place; a township 200 acres is to be surveyed and sold by Government in the centre block. I have not seen the land but hear it is good. If land is to our mind we may possibly find it to our advantage to live on it, then we could give up cow spanking and become gentle shepherds which is far easier and more profitable.

The boys, of course, will help us to clear the section and then we can help them on to a new place of their own if they wish it or the place will keep the lot if they choose to stay at home. I will tell your more when I know what the land is like. I forgot, there is no rent for two years, two years rent and cost of survey capitalised and extends over term of lease.

We are very busy now cutting grass seed - rye, cocksfoot and timothy. We have done well up to now but have had heavy rains but have about finished. Then comes fencing, building new cowsheds etc. Plenty of work. I am a tidy hand at building now; every body here can use a saw. The outer buildings I split myself, walls, roof and all out of bush timber and a very nice building it makes too.

Sarah has a lot to do, cheese making every day. Katie is housekeeper helped by Edie and Maggie. The boys are my aide-de-camps. We however are all in the best of health. We are troubled with such a lot of rain and mosquitoes in millions. My word, this season, they are terrors. I hear of some people in the bush who have been driven out and we have another six weeks of it yet.

Written on the back of one of the sheets :-

I find that I have missed this page. We regret to hear of Sarah Prices death.. If we remember right, it was the second girl, we remember her as a rather nice quiet girl. We did not know Newbold came over, we never see him now, he never comes this way and we do not go into Wellington. How is Luke doing? I think he might stand a shoe in the new township at his trade. First comers would do best. I do not know when it will be sold.

We at present have no school here but at the last meeting of the Education Board it was arranged to put up the school, so that will be better. Otherwise, we should have had to send our children, the three youngest, about 7 miles on horseback to Linton.

We are quite 15 miles from a church but when the school is up, we shall be able to have a service there sometimes then, but I can assure you, we have never felt, as you may say, "comfortable" in a church since leaving England. Trust we shall be better off at Stratford.

We now have better roads right through the country so we are pretty well off. They will be a great convenience in moving stock.

This is a long letter and it is getting late. Sarah wants me to go to bed as I call all hands in the morning. Expect to hear from you soon. Will write again if anything new. Will write no matter what luck.

Love to you all,

We are your loving,

Sarah and Joseph Liggins

JOHN STANFIELD'S DIARY FOR 1903

Joseph Liggins came back to England on more than one occasion after he wrote these letters. Probably the first time was in 1903, as is recorded in grandpa John Stanfield's diary for 1903. Extracts from this diary are listed below together with one or two other interesting items.

- 14 May Joseph sailed for England*
- 26 June Went to London to meet Joseph and Sarah*
- 27 June Very hot day. Left London by the four twenty*
- 1 July Katie and Edith (John's wife and daughter) went to Matlock with Joe and Sarah.*
- 15 July Katie went to Ashby flower show with Joe and Sarah.*
- 16 July Katie went to Lichfield with Joe and Sarah.*
- 21 July Katie went to Birmingham with Joe and Sarah.*
- 22 July Went to Netherseal with Joe and Sarah.*
- 6 August Katie went for a drive with Joe and Sarah and Mr. and Mrs. Venn.*
- 11 August Went to Birmingham with Joe and Sarah.*
- 15 August Summoned at Swadlincote - passive resistance.*
- 17 Sept £107 for sale of work at Baptist Church.*
- 20 Sept Family gathering at George's ("Ashlea" in Pegg's Close Lane, George Smith's house, he married Annie, Joseph's sister.*
- 24 Sept Went to London to see Joe and Sarah off for New Zealand.*
- 25 Sept Joe and Sarah set sail for New Zealand, 2-10 p.m.*
- 3 Oct Summoned at Ashby - passive resistance.*
- Opened shop at Overseal 18 October 1901.*

This is the only information that has survived about the visit. Three months would have seemed a long while at the start of the visit but must have passed all too quickly. Leaving, at the end, would have been almost like emigrating all over again but this time with the difference that there were families of loved ones at each end of the voyage. Mr. and Mrs.

Venn are mentioned in the Tokomaru School and District Centenary 1893-1993 book but it is not known whether they had already emigrated to New Zealand by this time and were home on holiday like the Liggins.

We believe that he came “home” again, at least once more, to persuade a German specialist in flaxmilling to emigrate. Subsequently in 1913, an experimental German mill was built alongside the original “Ashlea” mill (1904-22). All of Joseph’s sons worked at the mill at some time or other, including his “son-in-law Joseph Smith”. This statement, made in the Centenary Book, was the first indication that I had that Edie, Joseph’s daughter, had married the son of George and Annie Smith. Another of Joseph Liggins nephews, Osborne Liggins, also worked at the mill for some time; he was the son of William Liggins, to whom most of Joseph’s letters were written and this family was the second family to emigrate.

Perhaps you will have already asked the question “Why was John Stanfield summonsed for passive resistance?” I have tried to find out what this situation was and I think it probably was as follows :-

In 1902 the Balfour Government passed a very important reform - The Education Act. This act abolished the old School Boards and enabled a system of secondary and technical schools to be created and placed all state aided education in the hand of the local authorities - county and borough councils. Its main defect was that it failed to settle the religious problem. The local authorities henceforth maintained all elementary schools, including those founded by the various religious bodies - the Church of England, the Roman Catholics, the Wesleyans., etc. Nonconformists complained that the ratepayers were being forced to keep the Church schools in existence and some people objected altogether to religious instruction in schools.

John Stanfield was a Baptist and it is very likely that he was one of those objecting to this situation. We don’t know exactly what form this passive resistance took.

Additionally, at the back of the diary, were these three recipes which you might like to try.

Rheumatic Lineament.

1 oz. Laudanum

1 oz. Strong liquid ammonia

3 oz. Soap lineament

3 Oz. Belladonna

Indigestion

Sal Volateli

Chloric Ether

Tincture of Gentian Root

2 drams each

Elder Flower Vinegar

Cut off flower buds from stalks, 2 quarts

1 pint white wine vinegar Let ferment for 14 days in a jar and then strain off. to every pint add 1 lb lump sugar and boil for ten minutes.

A teaspoonful for a dose

to every pint add 1 lb lump sugar and boil for ten minutes.

A teaspoonful for a dose

THE JOSEPH LIGGINS FAMILY AFTER THE LETTERS

How did the Liggins family fare after the writing of these letters? Their new life turned out to be a success. You may already have realised this knowing that Graeme and Linda Liggins, until very recently, still farmed the original section of land at Tokomaru on which his great grandfather and his family had settled more than one hundred years before. The newspaper cutting below describes briefly how they fared.

Golden Wedding of Mr & Mrs Liggins Pioneers of Tokomaru District New Zealand

Today marks the fiftieth anniversary of the wedding of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Liggins, two of the pioneers of the Tokomaru district and who are amongst the best known and most highly respected settlers on this coast.

The couple were married at Hulland, County of Derby, England, by the Rev. Charles Evans, and came to New Zealand in the ship "British King" 39 years ago. On their arrival they went to Longburn, where Mr. Liggins took up the managership of the cheese factory, which had just been opened there consequent upon the commencement of the dairy industry in the surrounding districts. This position he relinquished after a period of five years service in order to take up dairying on his own account at Tokomaru.

At this time the construction of the Manawatu Railway had not been completed, and the roads, as may be expected in this period of the history of the Manawatu line, were little more than tracks. Mr. Liggins, by his indefatigable energy and perseverance, gradually worked up a reputation as a Friesian breeder, until now he is known in this connection all along the West Coast.

He is the owner of seven farms and is milking 500 cows, the majority of which are pedigree Freisians.

For a number of years, Mr. Liggins also devoted his attention to flaxmilling but, owing to the

ravages of yellow leaf disease, he ceased growing flax, and is now using the land for dairy farming.

Mr. Liggins was the first man to put forward the proposal of the drainage of the Makerua district and is the Chairman of at present undertaking important banking and drainage work, estimated to cost £100,000. He is also a director of the Tokomaru cheese factory and a former director of the Rangiotu combined industries.

Mr. & Mrs. Liggins, in common with the other settlers in the district, shared many trials and privations that fell to their lot. When they went to Tokomaru they had the fellowship of six other settlers. To Mr. Liggins is due a great deal of the credit for the present state of prosperity of the Tokomaru district. At all times he has taken a keen interest in anything pertaining to the residents, and especially in regard to agricultural improvement he is responsible for the bringing of the district to its present state of prosperity.

Although 72 and 73 years of age respectively, Mr. & Mrs. Liggins are hale and hearty and enjoy the best of health. They have raised a family of four sons and three daughters, who are as follows :- Messrs. Charles William, Samuel Luke, John Henry and Joseph Huia Palmerston Liggins and Mesdames Catherine Harriet Williams (Tokomaru), Margaret Gardner (Pohangina) and Mary Edith Smith (Makerua).

Joseph died in January, 1929 at the age of 78 and Sarah, his wife, died in August, 1930 at the age of 80. Her obituary at that time said that in addition to the seven children, there were twenty nine grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. It is very pleasing to know that after all the problems and hard work that they endured during their early years in New Zealand they subsequently led long and successful lives on the land that they had cleared and farmed at Tokomaru.

THE LETTERS FROM WILLIAM LIGGINS

AND FAMILY

There are only four letters in this group and of course they were all sent to John and Katie Stanfield, who were Joseph's and William's brother-in-law and sister, and were my grandfather and grandmother. As has already been explained, John Stanfield took over the responsibility of looking after Joseph's affairs in England, as well as William's, when he also emigrated to New Zealand.

After going through all of Joseph's letters and seeing the considerable volume of information contained in them, it came as a rather depressing thought that there were only four letters in this group. This situation was not helped by realising that, although the first letter from William was given to the pilot of the ship on which he, William, was emigrating, this letter had no date on it. Also, the second letter, written by William's wife, Ellen, was dated 22 nd March, 1917. This leaves a gap of some 25 years between Joseph's last letter and these letters with nothing identifiable by date in-between.

The first questions that came to mind were - can anything be found out about this long empty period and - when did William and his family emigrate to New Zealand? I suspect now, in retrospect, it may have been a case of not being able to see the wood or possibly the New Zealand bush for the trees because, if the bits of the jigsaw were there, they refused to fall into place. It seemed a good idea to try and draw a graph of William's age against the dates of certain relevant events and see if this helped to shed any light on this empty period.

William was born in 1855 and from this graph it is apparent that by the time of his mother's death in 1894 he was already 39 years old and in the following year he signed a release under the will of his mother. This confirms that he was still in this country in 1895 when he was 40 years old and starting to be a little old to emigrate.

At the other end of the vacuum, Ellen's letter in 1917 was during World War 1 and so they probably emigrated, at the latest, before this began, say 1913. So the period for their possible emigration has reduced somewhat to between 1895 and 1913, a period of 18 years, but this is still a long time.

If one bears in mind William's increasing years, they would probably emigrated towards the beginning of this period but against this idea is the fact that my mother stayed with them during the weekdays when she went to school in Ashby from 1900 to 1904, by which time William would have been aged 45 to 49.

To further confuse the situation apparently, the only known photograph of William is in front of the bungalow at Tokomaru standing with Joseph Liggins and his family and in this he certainly looks middle aged. This photograph is on the cover of this book. If this photo could be dated then of course we would know at least an early time when William was in New Zealand. In it Young Joe, Joseph's youngest son is aged about 5 or 6 and he was born in 1894. Therefore the photo was taken in about 1900 with William aged 45 and Joseph aged 49.

This date for William to be in New Zealand appears at first to conflict with the time that my mother was staying with them in Ashby. Fortunately, the clue to resolve this apparent impasse is to be found in William's first letter, which he gave to the pilot, and where

he says :- “ I am so far comfortable and no one has yet been put in my birth. Ellen will show you her letter -". This statement quite clearly indicates that he emigrated first and his wife and family emigrated some time later, by which time my mother had left school and no longer needed to stay with them.

So, if the above assertions are correct, we at least know that William emigrated about the turn of the century and all that can be said after that is, that it is a pity that there is such a long break between Joseph's letters and William's letters.



William and Ellen Liggins' children, Maggie and Osborne

THE STORY OF THE RING

There is also one other interesting event that happened at the time of William's family's emigration. They lived in Number 3, Loudon Villas, Ashby-de-la-Zouch and my father, Harry Wheatcroft, lived with his parents in Avenue Road there. Loudon Villas are opposite the end of this road. He had become engaged to William and Ellen's daughter Maggie and when she was going to emigrate with her mother, she had wanted him to emigrate with them. However, he could not be persuaded and so he stayed behind. The engagement came to an end. she returned her engagement ring to him. At this time my mother would have been perhaps 15 years old and would have met Harry when she was staying with her aunt and cousins

At some time later, a friendship must have sprung up between them, which developed over the years, through the first war, until they got married in 1922, probably 16 years and more after Maggie emigrated.

Maggie subsequently married Will Aston, probably in New Zealand.

The engagement ring had three rubies in a bar along the ring. Now, at some stage, Harry gave my mother this ring although she would never admit that it was her engagement ring and she had the bar of rubies turned at right angles to the ring and that was of course how I always remember it. When my mother died, the ring passed to Mary, my wife, and at that time neither of us knew of the rings origin. With the rubies at right angles it was impossible to wear another ring with it and so we decided to have the bar of rubies turned back in line with the ring, as it had been originally, although we did not realise it at the time, and that is how the ring is today.

There is one small item to mention at this point that shows how different things were then to how they are nowadays. There is a card from my mother to her brother George, which is undated but would have been after the first war and before she married my father. He was a cabinet maker and carpenter and had caught his finger on a nail and it had "gone wrong" so that he had to go to hospital. The card reads :-

" Had Harry over last Thursday night, and he had only come out of Ashby Hospital that day. He has had a poisoned hand and has been there ten weeks, he did look bad"

The hand was subsequently paralysed and eventually he had to give up woodworking by hand.



The Ring

THE FIRST LETTER FROM WILLIAM LIGGINS

S.S. REUMUEIA (?)

Friday

Dear John and Katie,

I have just time to drop a line which I am trying to send by the pilot who, leaves directly, and let me again give you every thanks for great kindnesses. I am so far comfortable and no one has yet been put into my berth.

Ellen will show you her letter and I shall write you again from Tenerife.

Goodnight and God bless you all,

Yours,

William

LETTER FROM ELLEN LIGGINS

This letter is from William's wife, Ellen,

22-3-17

William will write soon.

*The School House,
Ararata,
Hawera,
New Zealand*

My Dear Katie and John,

I shall try to write to you as much and as often as possible. First, I thank you so much for all the Burton Chronicles you have sent, we have posted them to Osborne and Maggie, for they so like to see the home news, and the patterns you also enclosed for me. They all come in useful, also the crochet patterns.

We were so glad to hear of you all being safe after so many air raids having taken place, and hope you may still be protected.

Neither Osborne nor Will were drawn in the ballot last week. Needless to say we were very pleased. The ballot is drawn every month here and we get so anxious near the time for fear they should be drawn. They are all well, Sarah and Katie have been to see Maggie and Will, and Osborne was there last week. He frequently has to go to Wellington with troops from Palmerston North. He says Maggie and Will are quite well and very comfortable and happy.

I hope you got my letter telling you what a nice holiday we had at Christmas. We have only had one shower of rain since we returned home and it has been frightfully hot and water has been very scarce. But today it has been raining gently and we are hoping it will continue to do so. Bush and grass fires have been ranging all round us. A week ago a Moari man set fire to some thistledown and twigs and it spread so rapidly that thousands of acres were on fire, all at once, and the sheep farmers had to rush to get their sheep and cattle out of the flames and the poor sheep dogs got their feet burnt badly. These dogs are wonderful creatures and at a sign or a whistle from their master they will bring up hundreds of sheep and if they miss any, back into the gullies they go back and search for them again. They will fetch up cows for milking in the same way, or take them to market for sale and their master sits on horseback and simply whistles to them. They know what he means. I often watch them as they pass by, it is very seldom their master has to speak to them, and if he does have to do so, it is woe betide it (poor dog), it knows it has been disobedient and then it is chastised.

I must leave off now as it is bedtime, half past eight, (don't laugh) and will finish my letter tomorrow, all being well.

I just forgot, we always go to see our friend, Mr. Ogle, on Friday night, the weather permitting. He is our great friend and they are the ones that so often take us to Hawere on Saturday. He has got a Ford car and for some reason or other it stuck us up twice in coming home last Saturday, and William and Mr. Ogle had quite a go

with it. William helps him if anything goes wrong, to the best of his ability. We do have some nice outings with them.

I will try to write more on Sunday, we may go to Hawere on Saturday unless the car gets the hump again and wont go.

24 th March

Now I will try and finish my letter to you. We have had a letter from Maggie and Will today. They had a surprise visit from their Uncle Joe last Wednesday. He and Sarah were in Wellington and Will happened to be in when they called Maggie says Will and Joe had a long chat, so you see, they all call to look them up.

I hear young Joe (Joseph Liggins' son, JHP, he was in the New Zealand army at that time) has been to see you. I am sorry his health has not been too good; his complaint (scabies) is a tiresome thing to have, Osborne once had it rather badly. I hear Alice is running him round, he left his lady love behind in Palmerston and she had just heard of his safe arrival in England when we were at Palmerston at Christmas. I expect Harry_(my father) too will be leaving for the front soon.

Now I must close with every good wish to you all. I hope Edith will write soon. Be sure to give our love to Ernest, Willie and Alice,, Edith (baby), George also big Edith, and Polly, Jim and boys.

Love to yourselves.

From your loving,

Ellen and William

The people referred to at the end of this letter are:-

Harry	Harry Wheatcroft, my father
Ernest	Ernest Stanfield, son of John Stanfield and my uncle
Willie and Alice & aunt	Stanfield, son and daughter-in-law of John Stanfield and my uncle
George	George Stanfield, brother of John Stanfield and my great uncle
Edith (baby) cousin	Willie and Alice Stanfield's daughter, Edith Winifred, and my
Big Edith	Edith Stanfield, daughter of John Stanfield and my mother
Polly, Jim and the boys	The Walker family, Polly had married Jim Walker. (See the next group of letters) Polly was Annie Elizabeth (nee Liggins) & Joe Smith's daughter. (Annie Elizabeth was Joseph & William's sister) The boys were Jamie & Roy

LETTER FROM MAGGIE

This letter is from William's daughter, Maggie, who had married Will Aston.

"Ivanhoe"
16, Cumbral Place,
Aramoho,
Wanganui, N.Z.

2 . 11 . 24

Dear Uncle & Aunt Katie & everybody,

Just a few lines from us to wish you all a very happy Xmas. Your election news has just come to hand and we note with surprise a return of the Conservatives. We read all home news with great relish and thoroughly enjoy the Burton Chronicles you send to Father. I think you will know that we live next to them.

Will bought this 1/4 acre & has built a Californian bungalow. He thinks of adding a sleeping porch shortly, the climate is lovely in Wanganui in the Summer for sleeping out of doors. Will is a great gardener. He is like Uncle John and spends all his spare time in the garden. The house has been up a year or more now so you can imagine the garden is getting into nice condition. It is rather a big proposition to break it in from the rough. We have two lemon trees, the rest of the fruit trees are peaches, nectarines, pears, apples, plums and Will looks forward to planting more fruit trees next season. I must close now and hope that all are well and wish every one a very happy Xmas.

Love and best wishes from

Maggie and Will Aston

WILLIAM LIGGINS' SECOND LETTER

This letter is from William to his sister and brother-in-law.

14, Cumbral Place,
Aramoho,
New Zealand

March 1. 1925

Dear John & Katie,

Your letter enclosing the Birth Certificate came to hand all right and I thank you for getting it for me. You did not say how much it cost but if you let me know I will send it on to you. I am pleased to tell you that I obtained my "Licence to Teach" and am hoping it will be of some advantage.

The schools have not yet reopened after the Xmas holidays for a serious epidemic of infantile paralysis broke out in January and the Health Department ordered all schools and places where children were likely to be gathered together to be closed. All the picture places, picnics and concerts were discontinued as far as children under the age of 16 were concerned. We had very hot weather in December and January and this is thought to have brought the disease out. Now the weather is cooler and cases are falling off. In Wanganui the reports are "no cases for 4 days" but in other places there are numerous cases. I hear that schools are likely to reopen about the 10 th March, so I hope to be at work again soon.

During Xmas time we spent 10 days at Tokomaru and saw most of them except that I could not see Jim Walker or the boys.

Joe Smith's children have grown very much. Annie is at Palmerston North Hospital as a Probationer Nurse and is getting on well. Harry is going to learn the cabinet making and George is the farmer. Edith was not quite up to the mark as the hard work in the hot weather is very trying. We also spent a time at Osborne's; both Osborne and Amy have not been very well and they wisely reduced their herd and are taking it a little easier with the result that their health is improving.

Will and Maggie are quite well and comfortable. They send their love to you all.

Ellen and I are much as usual only getting older. I have been very well since I recovered from the operation.

Trade out here is good and both sheep and milking farmers have done well. Wool has been making an excellent price and no doubt woollen goods will be high for a time. We have a woollen mill near us where they are making up New Zealand wool into rugs, blankets and cloth, etc.

We hope Katie is feeling better. She, like us, is feeling the advance of years and none of us can do as we have done before but we are very loath to admit this. We are glad to here of Willie, Ernest and Edith and of their families - remember us to all of them and I hope Willie is improving.

Remember me to Mr. Leawood, Mr. Farmer, John Bowley and any other old friends.

How is Luke? I wish I was in the position to help him.

When you see or write to them, remember us to them.

Now, with love and best wishes to you both from Ellen and myself,

I am

Your loving brother,

William Liggins

THE WILLIAM LIGGINS' FAMILY

CONCLUSION

Very little more is known about this family other than what is indicated in these letters. Maggie married Will Aston and as far as we know they had no children. Osborne Liggins married Amy Hart and nothing more is known of them.

There is a photograph of Osborne as a soldier in the 1914-18 war with the caption that he became a Sergeant Major in the New Zealand army. It also says that William, his father, stayed with Joseph and was a school teacher. Presumably he stayed with Joseph before his wife came out to join him. Also, it says that Osborne worked for a time at Joseph's "Ashlea" hemp mill.

There is one picture postcard sent by Osborne to my Mother addressed to :- The Wharf, Measham, Nr Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire, England. It is inscribed "On Active Service" and has two censor marks with a date stamp :-

FIELD POST OFFICE T.Z 11 FE 19.

It has a picture of Cologne Cathedral on the one side and on the other is the message:-

Dear Edith,

This is a picture of Cologne Cathedral, a beautiful structure. One of the sights of the city. It cost 20 million Marks.

How is everybody? Have not heard from you lately. Hope you are all well. We have had a fall of snow and sharp frosts. Plenty of skating here. Have you had a go on the canal this year yet? Had a letter from N.Z. All going well. Hoping to hear from you soon.

*With love,
Osborne*

I wonder how many of the New Zealand young men were in the war and visited the Measham people when they were on leave. In addition to Osborne, those we know of were:-

Joseph (JHP) - Army Service Corps. - Joseph Liggins' youngest son
Len Wilton - Medical Corps. First World Medical Corps.
Arthur Jones

A photograph of the Tokomaru and District Roll of Honour shows that there were fifty six men who took part in the Great War, of which fourteen were wounded and ten made the "Supreme Sacrifice".



Jim and Polly Walker with their first son, Jamie

THE LETTERS FROM

JAMES W. WALKER

As you will have seen earlier, Jim Walker's wife, Polly, died as they were packing to emigrate to New Zealand, this was in February, 1919. In spite of this sad situation, and perhaps partly because of it, his resolve to emigrate was unchanged and this he did shortly afterwards with his two sons, Jamie and Roy.

His "Power of Attorney" reads :-

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that I, JAMES WILSON WALKER, of Measham in the County of Leicester being about to leave England and to reside abroad do this twenty second day of April, one thousand nine hundred and twenty hereby appoint JOHN STANFIELD of The Wharf, Measham aforesaid draper to be my attorney for the purposes hereinafter mentioned :-

Polly (Mary Ann) was the daughter George and Annie Elizabeth Smith and Annie was the sister of Joseph and William Liggins, who of course by this time, had been in New Zealand a number of years.

Jim Walker and his family were in fact the last group to go out, as Joe Smith emigrated in 1912, but as Jim's letters cover a relatively short period, 1922-4, it is better to include them here. Joe Smith's letters cover the period 1917 to 1939.

Previous letters have been transcribed mostly in their entirety but these letters of Jim's have been edited further as they have some parts which are of no interest today.

Mrs. Kennedy was their housekeeper while the boys were small.

These letters are again written to John and Catherine Stanfield.

Very recently a picture postcard has come to light which is of the ship S.S. "Ayrshire" and is written by Roy Walker when he was on board this ship and they were actually emigrating to New Zealand. Roy was born 17th May, 1908 and so he would have been 12 years old when he wrote this card. It reads :-

Dear Cousin,

We are having a grand time with the officers on board. We have been having nice weather most of the time but one day we were all very sick but I fared best. We stop at Newport in two days.

Give my love to all.

Roy

It was posted at Newport, Rhode Island, USA on the 22nd July, 1920 and is addressed to Miss. Stanfield (my mother), The Wharf, Measham, Leise. This misspelt and incomplete address caused problems with the postal authorities because in blue crayon is written "Try England", then "Masham", where it was sent because there is a date stamp - Masham, Yorkshire 7 AU 20 and finally "Try Measham, Leics. -Atherstone.

From this card it would appear that there was quite a long period between Polly's death and the time when Jim Walker finally decided to emigrate.

JAMES WALKER'S FIRST LETTER

*Kaihinau Road,
Makerua,
Nr. Shannon,
New Zealand*

Sunday, June 18 th, 1922

Dear Uncle and Aunt,

I had your letter the other day, dated 3 rd May, and was very pleased to have all the news and also to hear that my letter had arrived regarding the policy. I have not written as often as I would have liked to have done, but I knew Joe (Smith) was writing to you regularly as to how we were in health, etc. That, I am thankful to say, has been good ever since we came out and the boys have never had any trouble bar accidents.

I can see my way, with the help of the policy, to carry on for another season, when I hope to be more established and trade conditions should be better. The policy will cover the overdraft which I have at the bank and which was guaranteed by Joe Smith (£200) and apparently they have found out that as his overdraft is covered by another (Joseph Liggins), so Joe cannot stand for me. They are insisting on it being squared up, although in addition to the bond, they hold a Bill of Sale on all the stock, which I had made out to Joe to safeguard him. Joe has been a real friend to me and he has done what he could.

I believe there is just a living in the place at present and, by cultivation in time, it will give greater returns. Most of it is called out here "unimproved land", that is, after felling and burning the bush, grass seed has been sown. A lot of it now wants logging and clearing for the plough but that takes time. I did about seven acres last season and am hoping to get some more done this.

Now I must close. Remember me to all at home.

Your affectionate nephew,

James W. Walker

JAMES WALKER'S SECOND LETTER

*Kaihinau Road,
Makerua,
Nr. Shannon,
New Zealand*

1 st August, 1922

Dear Uncle and Aunt,

I got your most welcome letter yesterday, the last day in July, and also the draft from D.C. & M. Bank. I had just about given it up and was making other arrangements to carry over till I should hear from you. When it arrived you can imagine how relieved I was to see it.

I think I told you that the bank wanted the overdraft squaring and ,although their security was good, they were getting quite nasty about it. I believe they have been doing this to a good many people. However, I have been able to put that matter right and prospects are looking much better for the coming season. The last owner has promised to reduce the interest on the mortgage, so altogether, things are looking much brighter and I am starting the new season with an easier mind than I have had for a long time. It will take a while to get round, but it looks as if the corner has been turned and that is something.

With regard to the policy, uncle, you do what you think best, though I should say it would pay better to keep it, as it should come to about £170 and only two more premiums to pay. Ask the Company what it will realise on expiration. Anyway, I will be agreeable to anything you think best. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your sending on the draft on your own account before the matter was settled.

I have not been able to send on the money yet for the other policy but will send it on out of my next cheque. If however it does not arrive in due time (about 13 th Sept.) you might send a cheque on for me.

Glad to hear Willie has got a little car, it is just the thing he needs to get about with, especially if it is a self-starter. No horse to feed, groom or stable. I hope all the family at Overseal are well.

We are all well in health, the boys especially and appetites!!! They are still going to school as usual, though Jamie can leave at Xmas if necessary, both are in standard 6.

Mrs. Kennedy is still with us but she is expecting to get a house of her own at Xmas, so we are pretty comfortable in the house, which is a great thing. That first 6 months of batching (living in bachelor accommodation) is like a nightmare still when I think about it.

Now I will close but will write again soon when I have settled matters. With warmest love to Auntie, yourself and all the family.

I remain your affectionate nephew,

James W. Walker

JAMES WALKER'S THIRD LETTER

25 th October, 1923

Makerua,
Nr. Shannon,
New Zealand

Dear Uncle John & Aunt Katie,

It has been on my mind for a long time now that I ought to write to you and I have wanted to but the days have been so full of work, that by the time everything was done, I didn't feel up to writing.

Jamie left school at Xmas and Mrs. Kennedy left here. This was not an unmixed blessing as she was hard to get on with and since then we have been doing for ourselves. Roy has also now left school having gained his proficiency too and, so with their help, the work is getting on faster. I am hoping to do more cropping this season than I have done yet. If it were only the ploughing and working of the ground, it would not be too bad but when you have to saw and split up the logs that lie on the ground, then take them off and burn them, level all the hillocks to make them ploughable, dig out all the stumps and roots, then fence it in, for which you have to split posts and battens, and, as I have done this Winter, cut a road out of the hillside to get your horses and implements up, well it is some work and it takes time.

I was over at Joe's when your letter arrived announcing the arrival of your first grandson (my brother Jack) and that Edith and the baby are doing well. Please accept my heartiest congratulations and convey to Edith my warmest regards. I hope she will soon be strong and well again. She was always fond of children, so now she has her own. I know what a fuss she will make over it; there wont be another like it in Measham or anywhere else, I am sure.

Our friends, Mr. And Mrs. Tansley, who came out with us, returned home in May last and I had a letter from them the other week to say that they had arrived safely in Nottingham and had taken a small cottage just outside the city. I think he would have liked to have stayed here but Mrs. Tansley had been ailing for some time and wanted to get back home. I fancy she got very homesick, in fact most of us do but generally we wont admit it. I know I did when Miss. Thixton arrived here unexpectedly for a few days. She said it was her last visit before she returned home to Derby. This was the first we had seen or heard of her for 18 months and we did not know where she was. She appears to have been all over New Zealand, teaching at various places and is now at Christchurch, South Island. She says she is staying there until early next year when she proposes to return to Australia to visit some friends there. Afterwards, she will return home direct, so I presume this that we shall not see her again before she departs.

I see your remarks about Joe in your letter. He has had some bad bouts of late and is very thin and careworn looking. I don't think he is very strong

constitutionally and it is only his nervous energy that keeps him going sometimes, but I think it is worry that bothers him more than work. All the rest of his family are well. George is now a big strong lad and does a lot of work on the farm. Annie is quite a big girl and has improved very much of late; she does a lot of the housework, is a good cook and relieves her mother a good deal. Edie is still the old bustler she used to be and prefers the cowshed work to the housework unless it is washday and scrubbing day. Then thing hum around a bit. Harry and Joey are rather thin but they are both growing fast, which no doubt accounts for their thinness but they are all right.

That is one thing I am thankful for, all three of us have enjoyed good health ever since we came out hear. You would hardly know the boys now. Jamie is not extra strong but wiry, Roy is the bigger and broad with it and will be pretty hefty if he keeps on, certainly his appetite is already.

Now I really must stop, though now I have got started, I feel as if I have a lot more to tell, but I will write again soon.

With warmest love to you both and to all our folks,

I remain your affectionate nephew,

James W. Walker

A happy Christmas to you all at "Home"

JAMES WALKER'S FOURTH LETTER

*Kaihuia Road
Makerua,
Near Shannon,
New Zealand*

14th February, 1924

Dear Uncle John,

I received your welcome letter the other week and was glad to hear you were all well, with the exception of colds. I hope you all had a happy time at Xmas. I was thinking of you all on Xmas day at Measham; how you would be gathered around a real Xmas fire, joking and laughing and perhaps someone wondering what we "exiled" folks were doing on that day. I went to Tokomaru to Harry Liggins (Joseph Liggins' son) to dinner and the boys stayed at Joe's (there are more young people there) but I came back to Joe's and spent the evening with them.

It is Summer time here and it has been very hot this year and talk is on the prospect of early haymaking. The boys have really taken to this new way of life and are pictures and strength. That is one thing I am thankful for. They may have lost something in the way of worldly goods and other advantages that they do not realise at present but they have never had a days illness since they came here.

Roy is taller than I (that is not saying much) and as broad as he is strong. The other day I saw him taking the scim milk to the pigs from the cowshed, about 50 yards, two tins in each hand, about 140 lbs. of milk. I said "What are you doing that for, Roy?" The reply was "What's the good of going twice, when you can do it in one go?". Jamie is lighter but hard and wiry and more active.

I suppose you hear from Joe so often that you know all about them. They are much as usual at the present time though Joe is very thin. Our boys are often over there and I go too.

We have now been thirteen months on our own since Mrs. Kennedy left and there is always plenty to do when I get in. I try to keep things as comfortable as possible.

We are starting the New Year with brighter prospects. Our season opened up bad with a late Spring and no grass. I told the previous owner that he must reduce the interest rate and, after consideration, he did, so things are improving all round.

I see by the papers that you had a pretty rough Winter; frost and snow and floods. We, in turn, have had a long hot Summer which started at least a month earlier than I have seen since I came out here. All January we were busy haymaking, helping our neighbours, who in turn helped us. I have a nice little stack from about

seven acres, mostly clover, which I had seeded after I had ploughed it up. It was the first time it had ever been ploughed.

Did I ever tell you about the little heaps of stones we came across? There is no stone at all in this land but, when you plough up a piece of new land, you are almost sure to unearth a little heap of black pebbles, about the size of hen's eggs. They tell me that this was where the Maoris had a camp fire in the old days when the land was covered in forest and that they must have carried them from there from some stream, a good long way off.

Now I must close. Roy has ridden over to the weeknight service in the school and will be back soon.

Warmest love to Auntie, all the family, and yourself,

I remain Your affectionate nephew,

James W. Walker



Jim Walker with his two sons, Jamie and Roy.
when they had left school

CONCLUSION

Life was obviously very difficult for Jim Walker in the early days of his life in New Zealand with his two sons still at school and only a housekeeper to look after things at home. The photographs that we have of him show that he was not a physically strong man and he would have found that cutting his farm out of the bush would have been almost impossible for him to do. However, he survived these first years and subsequently made steady progress with the help of his two sons when they left school.

Jamie subsequently became a bank manager in Palmerston North. Roy became a civil engineer and worked on a number of large schemes including one in Pakistan. After its completion in 1958 he came to England, with his wife Lilian, and stayed with my Mother at "The Wharf".

In the letter where Jim congratulated his uncle on the birth of his first grandson - this was my brother Jack Wheatcroft.

The other family to whom he refers was Joe Smith, his wife, Edie, and their children and it was he who wrote the last group of letters which follow.

THE LETTERS FROM JOSEPH SMITH

We know exactly when Joe Smith, his wife Edie and their three children emigrated to New Zealand. They sailed from Woolwich on board the Shaw Saville & Albion Line S.S. "Mamari" on the 12th November, 1912. There is a picture post card of the ship sent on this date addressed to my Mother, Edith Stanfield, with the simple inscription "Best Love, Joe & Edie". There is also a railway carriage sticker stating "North Staffordshire Railway - ENGAGED" and inscribed "From Burton Station To Euston Station, Date 11 Nov. 1912" with the remark on the back "Taken off Carriage Window, He rode through Measham for London, Nov. 11th, 1912. There is also a penny from Joe given to my Mother. Apparently, in those days, pennies were exchanged as tokens wishing prosperity on the recipients.

The three children were George, Harry and Annie, their fourth child, Joseph, was born later in New Zealand. My Mother and Joe (senior) were cousins as their mothers were sisters and so it was perhaps natural that a correspondence between her and Joe's daughter Annie was maintained for many years after these letters were written. Unfortunately, none of these letters now exist but a number of photographs do, of all the children's families. Contact has now been lost with all of them but perhaps one day, possibly with the help of the present New Zealand Liggins', we shall be able to make contact with these families again.

Now is perhaps a good opportunity to point out that these four groups of letters involve four Josephs and to avoid any confusion it is worth saying how they relate to each other. Joseph Liggins was the first to emigrate and his youngest son, who was the only child of his born in New Zealand, was Joseph Huia Palmerston, often referred to as JHP. This present group of letters are written by Joseph Smith, son of Joseph's sister Annie who had married George Smith and his son, also born in New Zealand, is often referred to as Young Joe.

It is a pity there are only five letters in this group. There were obviously many more and my Mother was obviously familiar with all this family's doings but at the time that she was alive I had no interest these things and so this information has been lost. However, these letters, although quite short, reveal quite a lot of interest.

They span the years from 1913 to 1939, a period of 26 years. From the first letter it would appear that Joe probably worked for his uncle Joe at Tokomaru. From the second letter, written in 1917, he appears to have taken up the venture in the flax mill but by the time of the third letter, written in 1925, he is a farmer on land at Makerua, near Shannon, the next township to Tokomaru on the railway line to Wellington.

The final two letters are both written in 1939. In the first of these he refers to Miss Wheatcroft who was my Auntie Hettie. She was companion to Lady Cooper who lived in Park Lane, London and her husband, Sir Daniel, had interests in Australia and New Zealand. It was while on a trip there with them that she visited Joe Smith. There is a photograph of her there with Joe and his son Harry in front of a nearby hydroelectric power station which presumably had only just been completed.

There are also photographs of Joe when he visited England in the Summer of 1930. He came on his own "for health reasons" as he was said to be suffering from scabies. Certainly he looks very thin on the photos but was probably a bit of a "creaking gate".



Joseph Smith with his wife Edie (nee Liggins)

and their three children

George, Harry and Annie

Their fourth child, young Joe, was born later in New Zealand

JOSEPH SMITH'S FIRST LETTER

This letter from Joe Smith has no date on it but from its contents it would appear to be the first in the group and was probably written at the end of 1913, about a year after their emigration at the end of 1912.

Tokomaru

Dear Uncle John, Aunt Katie And Cousins,

I was pleased to receive your letter and to hear that you were going on all right. Trade must be good when you say you are thinking of procuring a new car. My word! And I shall not be there to take a run, never mind I cannot have all these good things all at one time.

I received your statement (of my affairs in England) but why you should go to this trouble I do not know as I do not need this sort of thing from you. However as luck would have it I have discovered something that is either an omission on your part in not including it in the expenses or George Orgill of Swadlincote has not sent on a renewal notice for my Prudential Assurance policy. I see all the others are there except for this. I will write Orgill and find out why he has not sent on the renewal notice and if it is now too late to make any further payments I shall expect a rebate on those that I have already paid in. Please don't go to any more trouble, you have quite enough to do for me already although I know you do not mind and for which I thank you very much. You said it was a real pleasure for you to send on this amount and I knew it would be.

Bert Williams (the husband of Joseph Liggins' eldest daughter, Kate) has secured another piece of ground adjoining his place. I did think of having a cut of this myself but there were things that were not quite accessible so I must bide a wee.

The latest venture is a flax mill, Harry knows a place for sale. There are 700 acres including the mill, etc. and the price is £21,000 and we have the cheek to make enquires about this small affair. I do not know how we could purchase it, but we are talking a lot about it; they require £3,000 cash and I have about 300d and Harry likewise. I do not think anything will come of this and I fancy I see you smile. I am doing the same grin while writing, but if you were out here with your pile I think I would see you taking a cut at it. This place turns out one ton of hemp a day, value £23-0-0 and costs about £14-0-0 to produce leaving a net profit on the output of £9-0-0 per day, as prices are now, or £2,800 profit per year. Now form your own idea of Dad's income, only he gets about £20-0-0 per ton for his grade and turns out two tons per day.

So much for flax. I shall send you a bit of a statement of my affairs after Saturday as I have then been in receipt of wages twelve months by that time. Perhaps you will think I ought to have done better but it has been like refurnishing a house again, you know the many things that are required.

Well, I must now close as bed calls me and I have to be out earlier tomorrow than usual. Osborne is still T.T. since the affair you mentioned.

All join in love,

Your affectionate nephew,

Joe

PS George said he had such a nice dream. He dreamt that Aunt Katie, Uncle John and cousins Ernest and Edie had come out here and he could see all their faces once again in dreamland. I wish I could dream!

JOSEPH SMITH'S SECOND LETTER

Wartoa,
February 21 st, 1917

Dear Uncle John and Aunt Katie and Cousins,

I have not heard from you again this week. I expect I shall get a letter next week as I see there is a boat about to arrive. I consider that we here are very fortunate to get letters at all and I am sure it is nice for you to know how we are by our letters to you, even though they may arrive at irregular intervals.

Well, we are running full tilt at the mill and pulling out a good tally but the weather this two weeks has been very catchy. I am sure we cannot grumble considering the very wet time we have had to contend with during the Winter and Spring. It has been most exceptional and even now we are not getting what you could call real Summer weather. We may possibly have a much milder Winter to make up for it.

We have been very busy this last week preserving and bottling fruit. We have dealt with plums, peaches, nectarines and a quantity of greengages, also some blackberries. I should say we have put away about 150 lbs. of fruit; not so bad. I think we have enough to see us the year round, but sugar is such a price, I think we are very lucky to have such a stock. You would like some of the peaches and nectarines, these are really nice fruit and make splendid jams. Not bad for desert tell Edie, in fact, I wish you were here to have a feed.

I suppose you may have seen Joe Liggins (JHP) by this time and had all the news. We heard from him this last week and he was somewhere at sea but of course could not state where. You will be able to write and tell us what ports he called at and not get your letters censored, but he could not do so.

Our engine driver (for the mill) comes from Birmingham and has got the real brogue. He has been to Australia and is now with us. How strange it is how people run against each other. Then again I was in Temoha on Saturday last and was introduced to a Mr. Short, who also hailed from Birmingham, and, by the way, remembers selling a horse to Jaques Smith, you know, the man against Tamworth. I can assure you we rubbed noses.

Well I must close my epistle now as bed calls me; I intended writing to you last night but Harry Liggins came in and kept me from so doing. Tomorrow night I have an invite to a 21 st birthday, a young man named Hyde who I expect will come to England; he is a good boy.

I hope Ernest is going on all right. We all send our love. Hoping you are all well.

Your loving nephew,
Joe

JOSEPH SMITH'S THIRD LETTER

Makerua
Shannon

27 January 1925

Dear Uncle John, Aunt Katie and Cousins,

I did not write you last week. I was so very busy and tired too and people popped in to see how the invalids were which took up all my time. Also, we were getting in my hay and things were humming. Anyway, we got the invalids better and the hay in without rain. Edie and Joe are about again; perhaps not quite as good as before, but on a fair way to sound health.

Edie wont be able yet to go one day a week to help them at Tokomaru and bring up their clothes to wash, starch and iron like she used to before she was ill.

Well, we got a real good crop of hay! They tell me it was the heaviest they have seen in Makerua, so the Lord has blessed us still further, in fact Harry Brown says he never saw a crop like it in the old Country. It was nearly all clover with a mass of red clover flowers and again no rain on it so you can imagine I am very pleased with myself.

We have had Annie down for a short time on two occasions and she looks real well and likes her position immensely.

Now, I nearly had to turn in and not finish your letter tonight as an old friend, Jim Kinnel, just popped in, a man I had not seen for some years, and he has stopped very late. In fact he has only just gone, so I must close, my clock says 25 minutes past ten and it will soon be four in the morning, so I know you will excuse me.

We all send our united love and best wishes for the New Year.

Your loving nephew,

Jo

JOSEPH SMITH'S FOURTH LETTER

Makerua
Shannon
3 May 1939

Dear Uncle and Cousins,

I received a letter today and note that Miss Wheatcroft is to stay with you. Kind regards to her from us all here. We talk of her and of when she was here. She may be along again for the Centennial Celebration.

I do not know what success this will meet with as the Labour Government has put on such severe import restrictions and in many cases as just blocked certain articles from coming at all. I call it scandalous but they have given a 40 hour week to workmen, increased their wages and spent all the money, in fact, more than they had got. You know, they issue their own notes now. Just fancy, slaughter men earning from six to eight hundred pounds per annum and 40 hours per week, but this is correct! Our election was last October and Parliament has not yet met and now it is the 3 rd May. The Labour Government just settles what it wants and the opposition has to stay at home; it is a dictatorship. Our Financial Secretary, John Nash, is now on his way to England to help to fix money up, they are just taxing us all ends up. They say they do not wish people to own money or property, you know, just enough to go on with. Now they will not allow anyone to send more than £5-0-0 in money away from New Zealand as there has been a lot of money sent away to Australia for investment.

I am pleased to say I have been just a little better but never any day much good, but just jog along. Edie is keeping good and I think as fit as ever with the exception of being say a bit older.

Well, must close now

Fondest love,

Joe

JOSEPH SMITH'S FIFTH LETTER

*Makerua,
Shannon,
4 September, 1939*

Dear Uncle and Cousins,

My thoughts are with you very much at this time and I am wondering whether you will get this letter or not due to the state of things. We got the news over the wireless telling us that a state of war has been declared. A thing no one wanted I am sure. We are very anxious for you as you are much nearer the seat of warfare than we are. Our trust must be more than ever in God and our prayers must be united for a speedy peace.

We are keeping fairly well but a lot of rain.

I have no doubt our letters will be censored and perhaps not sent but I am posting this on the chance that you will get it.

More than ever our love to you each.

From your loving nephew,

Joe

CONCLUSION

The last letter in this series was written by Joe Smith at the outbreak of war, in September, 1939. On first thoughts it seems a pity that these letters end when the war starts with all the momentous events that were to follow. However, for all these families they have already experienced their most momentous event in that they have emigrated to a new life on the other side of the world.

Thinking back to the two letters written by Joseph Liggins' wife, Sarah, and remembering how lonely she was in the new life, it is easy to realise how she must have felt when William Liggins and his family joined them. When the other two families also joined them in the same district they must have been considerable help to each other. They obviously were all very close to each other and all kept in close contact with their relations that they had left behind.

It is just a year since I started transcribing these letters and, from knowing nothing about my New Zealand relations, things have changed to a surprising degree. Reading the letters now, particularly those of Joseph and Sarah Liggins, they take one back to those times and make one feel that they came through the letter box only yesterday. How fortunate we are that they have survived through all the years and how things have changed from those early days. For example it is now possible to fly to New Zealand in a day or so. What a difference to Joseph and his family's sea voyage in 1884.

A book is being prepared at Tokomaru to celebrate the 100 th Anniversary of the school there and I know that certain items from these letters and photographs will be included in it. The most significant item is likely to be that part of Joseph's letter in which he refers to the site being prepared for the school. It will be very interesting to see the book when it comes out and is sent to us by Joseph's great grandson and his wife, Graeme and Linda Liggins.

POSTSCRIPT

I completed the transcription of these letters in 1992. I printed out a number of copies and sent one to Linda and Graeme Liggins in New Zealand and that was virtually the end of the exercise.

It is now March 1996, surprisingly it is nearly four years since the transcription was completed and certain events have happened since then. Firstly, my son John has visited the Liggins in New Zealand and also met Martin Smith there. He is the son of young Joe Smith and the grandson of Joseph and Edie Smith.

The book on Tokomaru arrived as a present for Christmas 1993 and was far more comprehensive, both about the Liggins families and about Tokomaru itself, than I ever imagined it could be. It was in this book that I saw the first suggestion about Edie Liggins had married Joseph Smith. It was in a photograph of three men, two of whom were described as being Joseph Liggins' sons and the third, which was Joseph Smith, was described as being Joseph Liggins son-in-law. There is also another clue, mentioned in Joseph Smith's first letter, where he is writing about considering buying a flax mill and refers to Joseph Liggins flax milling - "Now form your idea of Dad's income" but I had not noticed this at the time when I transcribed the letters. In a recent letter from the Liggins they confirmed that Edie in fact came to England, in her early twenties, for a holiday and stayed on, eventually marrying Joseph Smith and having the first three of their four children in England. Apparently then she felt homesick for New Zealand and persuaded her somewhat reluctant husband to let them to go to New Zealand. The Liggins are due to visit us in May and they are bringing with them a school project completed by Amy Smith, who is Martin's daughter, and which is about her great grandmother Edie. This will be one of the many things that we shall all want to talk about when they visit.

At the end of last year I decided to update my pc and printer and this present printing of the letters is the result. I think it has made them much more easy to read and this I hope has made them even more interesting.

THE
END