



MOUNT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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The Political Issue

Two Prime Ministers from Mt Albert ...One Born and One Bred

Robert David Muldoon

Robert (Rob) Muldoon was born to parents Jim and Mamie Muldoon in Auckland in 1921. Jim was an accountant who suffered a severe stroke in 1929. This caused him to lose his speech and the use of one of his arms. He was hospitalised and effectively removed from the family unit. From the age of eight, Robert only knew his father as an invalid visited in hospital. (1) He was bought up in Morningside by his mother and endured the hardship of the depression. He also saw a lot of his grandmother who was by all accounts a formidably, strong willed woman. Rob's grandmother, Jerusha, was a committed socialist and he developed an interest in politics, a potent ambition and an abiding respect for the welfare state under her influence. (2)



Prime Minister Robert Muldoon gives a speech at the opening of the Mt Albert Senior Citizens Rooms in 1977. Listening attentively are from right: Alice Wylie, Cedric Thompson, Joan Nash, Denis Nash, Peg Ensor.

At the age of ten, Robert Muldoon went to Kowhai School, New Zealand's first intermediate. While there, he sat the scholarship exam for Mt Albert Grammar School gaining a place. He must have been one of a number of clever boys who had been subjected to accelerated promotion in primary

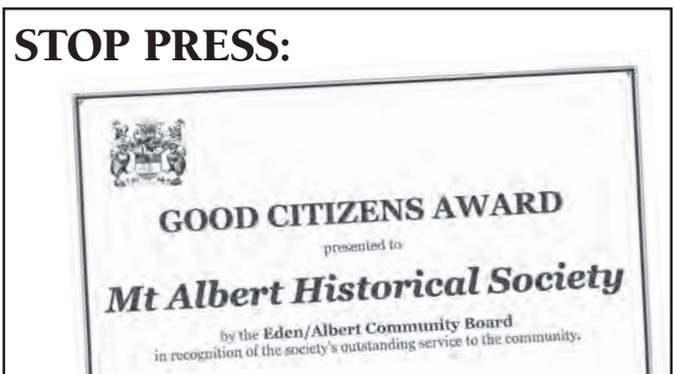
school because he was only eleven years old when he started attending MAGS. In the twenties and thirties there were many youthful and physically immature third and fourth formers at this school. Robert is described as a 'small, young boy' on entering MAGS. (3) He attended MAGs from 1933 to 1936 leaving school aged fifteen. He found work at Fletcher Construction as an arrears clerk. (2)

Muldoon trained and worked as a Chartered Accountant and as a Cost Accountant. He was elected National Party member for Tamaki in 1960 and held this office until 1991. Holyoake took him into the Cabinet as Minister of Finance in 1967. Muldoon was briefly Deputy Prime Minister (1972) and from 1974 to 1975 was Leader of the Opposition. He led the National Party to victory in the 1975 elections and served in the dual positions of Prime Minister and Finance Minister. (4)

According to Barry Gustafson, Muldoon 'was a populist conservative who sought, by and large, to defend by centralised and interventionist regulation the political, economic and social values and systems that the Liberals and Savage Labour Government established.' (5)

References:

- (1) [www.wordiq.com/definition/Robert Muldoon](http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Robert%20Muldoon)
- (2) Wolfe, R. *Battlers, Bluffers and Bully Boys*.
- (3) Stone and McMillan *'Tradition and Change'*
- (4) *Columbia Encyclopaedia*
- (5) web.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/aup/ Barry Gustafson



Helen Elizabeth Clark

'Helen Clark was the longest serving leader of the New Zealand Labour Party and became Prime Minister of New Zealand for three consecutive terms from 1999 to 2008. She was the first female Prime Minister to win office at an election and the fifth longest serving Prime Minister of New Zealand. She was the second woman elected to represent an Auckland electorate when she became Member of Parliament for Mt Albert in 1981, a position she held for 28 years.' Helen's electorate office was in the Rugby Buildings at 65 Sandringham Rd. She and her husband, Peter Davis own a home in Cromwell St, Balmoral.

'Ms Clark was a member of the New Zealand Labour Party for many years and held positions at every level of the party. She served as a member of the Party's New Zealand Executive for ten years. She was President of the Labour Youth Council, an executive member of the Party's Auckland Regional Council, a member of the Policy council, and Secretary of the Labour Women's Council.'

'She was Minister of Housing, Conservation and Health in the Fourth Labour Government and served as Deputy Prime Minister between August 1989 and November 1990. She was Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition spokesperson for Health and Labour in 1992, and became Leader of the Opposition in 1993.'

'During her time as Prime Minister, she was active in policy development across economic, social, environment, cultural and international portfolios. As well as being Prime Minister, she was Minister for Arts, Culture and heritage, and Minister in Charge of the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service. She represented New Zealand internationally on many occasions.' (1)

Following the loss of the last election, Helen took up the number three job with the United Nations as the administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. On New Year's Eve 2010 she was awarded the Order of New Zealand, a distinction limited to only twenty living New Zealanders. (2)

References:

- (1) DPMC- *New Zealand Honours: Order of New Zealand Biographical Notes*
- (2) <http://tvnz.co.nz/national-news/nz-s-highest-honour-helen-clark-3321060>

The Mt Albert Electorate

Mt Albert was formed as a new electorate in 1946 and has always been represented by a Labour MP.



In 1947 there was a by-election when Arthur Richards, the former Member for Roskill, retired.

Warren Freer was then elected as a twenty six year old and went on to serve thirty four years in Parliament. He rose to the number three position in Labour's parliamentary hierarchy becoming a senior minister (1)

Helen Clark was Mt Albert's third Labour MP. She occupied the seat for twenty eight years. In her final election run, she won more than 20,000 candidate votes and finished with a majority of more than 10,000. However, her short notice resignation, following the National win, caused a by-election.(2)

In the 2009 by-election, Phil Goff favoured David Shearer over strong Labour supporters with local residential credentials: Meg Bates, Cr Glenda Fryer, Helen White. John Key dropped local National Party worker, Ravi Musuku, in favour of Melissa Lee. (2) On June 13th David Shearer, the Labour incumbent, was returned with a majority of 9,000.(3)

References:

- (1) *Valedictory speech of Helen Clark.*
- (2) *Mt Albert-the nearest place to Hell. David Beatson.*
- (3) *Election results. Wikipedia.*

M.A.H.S Dates To Remember

28th August (Saturday) 2pm.

Senior Citizens Rooms. Come and hear Cr Glenda Fryer speaking about the realities of the residential zoning. It's about our suburb! Followed by the A.G.M. Tea, coffee and light refreshments. Gold coin donation. (A.G.M voting for members only but everyone welcome.)

17th October (Sunday). Howick Historic Village trip. 12.45 am departure from Senior Citizens Rooms, return leaving village 4pm. MAHS is taking a bus load of members to the Howick Historical Village for an open day. The theme is 'The Good Life: Gardening, Cooking, Feasting.' The Howick volunteers will be dressed in period costume and MAHS members are welcome to do the same. Bring your own lunch or enjoy refreshments at the café. Cost is \$25 which includes bus and entrance fee. Numbers are limited by transport. RSVP Suzanne 846 6569, Jackie 846 6250.

10th December (Friday) 5pm. Alberton House. Christmas Cocktail Party. This year it is going to be even more spectacular. A special item been planned...but we're not telling what it is.....mark this day on your calendar.....

MAHS notes with regret the passing of **Noel Bow** on 24th July. Noel had been on our Executive Committee for almost two years and had been a very effective Treasurer for most of that time. Noel was a tireless community worker and will be warmly remembered for his involvement with the Lions Club and the Sandringham Community Centre. Our condolences are extended to family and friends.

The Executive Committee and the membership of MAHS would like to say a great big THANK YOU to **Kathryn Twort**. Kathryn was a founding member of the Executive Committee and fulfilled the role of Treasurer very ably for three years. We have all benefitted from Kathryn's quick, incisive thinking and fairmindedness. MAHS wishes her well in her future endeavours.

Women Who Love Women in Local History



The Charlotte Museum extends an invitation to all members of local history societies to come along, listen to a couple of speakers, look at their displays and generally get to

know them. **This event is on Sunday, September 12 from 2pm.** Unit 7a, 43a Linwood Ave, Mt Albert. (The Charlotte Museum is in the industrial complex but will be extremely well signposted for this event.)

The Charlotte Museum's founder, Miriam Saphira, will describe how this community-based museum was established and what was involved in setting it up. She will describe the search for a museum, address compliance issues and funding. Miriam will give sound advice on the practicalities of starting up a museum. She will make historical societies aware of the challenges they face as well as describing what the museum has achieved.

Jenny Rankine, the museum's Co-ordinator and a MAHS member, will describe the differing attitudes to women who loved women in New Zealand since the early 1800s. For example, it is not commonly known that in the 1800s, openly loving relationships between women who lived together were widely praised or at least accepted.

There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion following both speakers. Drinks and nibbles will be served. Entry is by koha.

The Charlotte Museum is a museum of New Zealand lesbian history and culture. As well as being the only museum in Mt Albert, it is the only lesbian museum in the world. Its current displays include panels from past exhibitions of the history of lesbians over the decades in New Zealand and on lesbian theatre. Also on display are photographs from past events, including a 1983 peace trek around the East Cape and the centenary of the birth of Ngati Porou songwriter Tuini Ngawai, as well as art works, badges, quilts, and memorabilia.

The museum is open on Wednesdays from noon to 4pm, and on Sundays from 1.30 to 4pm. Contact the Charlotte Museum on 021 112 6868, email charlottesmuseum@gmail.com or see www.charlottesmuseum.lesbian.net.nz

M.A.H.S wishes to thank the Eden-Albert Community Board for the grant which will cover the costs of two newsletters and web page development. Thanks for your continuing support, folks!

Community Volunteering in Mt Albert in the Mid-20th Century

By Barbara Holt

Betty Archibald, born Herne Bay in 1909, after her marriage to Laurence Holt in 1933 lived in Ranleigh Rd and Mt Albert Rd until 1953 and from 1993 in two of its rest homes: Lexham Gardens at 304 Sandringham Rd and Everill Orr Village at 63 Allendale Rd before she died in 1998. Her younger sister Mollie, born 1912 in New Plymouth, after her marriage to Sam Leatham in 1934 lived at 6 Wairere Avenue, then from 1936 in a newly built house at 88 Kitenui Ave and after Sam's death in 1983 in a unit at 74 Asquith Avenue until her death in 1996. Their older sister Jean Archibald born 1905 in Herne Bay often stayed with her two younger sisters in Mt Albert and spent a few months in Everill Orr Village before she died in 1986. As married women Betty and Mollie were involved in many voluntary community activities in Mt Albert.

During their childhood their father Charles, a public servant, moved his family to 4 different parts of New Zealand. In 1917 their mother Beppy (nee Orr) became too ill to look after her 3 young daughters and died at the age of 42 in 1920. Between those years the girls lived separately in Wellington, Jean as a school boarder and Betty and Mollie with families of an uncle and an aunt. In 1921 Charles married his second wife Florence Woodroffe (1885 – 1969) who grew up in Lloyd Avenue (when called Mary's Lane), Mt Albert. His daughters lived with them in Dunedin until 1924 when Charles retired and bought a house at Takapuna, Auckland. There the girls joined the Methodist Girls Bible Class where they made life-long friends.

One was Margaret Bishop who later married Jack Lewis an accountant and lived at 55 Fowlds Avenue, Mt Albert. As teenagers Betty and Margaret attended Methodist BC camps where Betty received leadership training, along with some Maori girls. As a full-time student on a Sinclair scholarship at Auckland University College (1928-31), Betty became Women's Vice President of the Students' Association. She and Mollie both married when they finished studying for their B.A. degrees (after teacher training in Betty's case and part-time study in Mollie's case.



Betty as a 1931 graduand

They met their husbands, both accountants and past members of St George's Anglican Church Bible Class, Kingsland, in the AUC branch of the Student Christian Movement (SCM). Sam Leatham's parents lived at 16 Third Ave, Kingsland and then at 695 New North Rd, Morningside. Laurence lived with his mother and some siblings in Walters Rd, Sandringham from about 1920 - 1925. From the early 1930's when fewer children were born because of the Great Depression, until after 1946 when the Baby Boom started as men returned from the War, married women who had husbands in employment were not allowed to teach in New Zealand state schools. There were so few teaching positions available that training colleges were closed.

Between 1932-34 Jean Archibald, B.A., Dip. Ed., worked as National Secretary of the SCM in Wellington before going to teach at remote Maori schools in Northland and on the East Coast of the North Island. During the time Betty's first 3 children and Mollie's 4 children were being born and raised (1934 – 1944) Jean asked her sisters to look after two teenage Maori girls, Merimeri Rapata born 1920 and Mira Petricevich born 1921. With the permission of Merimeri's parents and Mira's father, her mother having died when she was aged 5, Jean brought these girls down from Te Hapua School to receive secondary education in Auckland. For 3 years from 1936-38, the girls stayed in Mt Albert with the families of Betty and Mollie for weekends and short holidays while they were boarders on scholarships at Queen Victoria School for Maori Girls in Parnell. However, this school did not prepare girls to go to University. So in 1939 Merimeri lived full-time with the Holts and Mira with the Leathems while Laurence and Sam paid for them to attend Faigan's University

Coaching College for one year and sit for Matriculation. In 1940 the girls continued to live with these Mt Albert families while they attended Auckland Girls' Grammar School.



Merimeri and Mira c. 1941.

In the following years while they went to Training College full-time and Auckland University College part-time, Merimeri and Mira made their own living arrangements, but knew they were welcome to return to Mt Albert for help when they needed it. From 1941-42 Betty looked after Mira's 18-month-old niece whose father was at the Second World War and whose mother was in Green Lane Hospital being treated for TB. Merimeri and Mira became leaders in the Maori Women's Welfare League (formed in 1951) and prominent in the education field - as Mrs Merimeri Penfold now aged 90 and with an honorary doctorate from Auckland University and Dame Mira Szaszy (who died in 2001) believed to have been the first Maori woman to graduate in NZ.

In 1938 Betty became a member of the Auckland Committee of the Federation of University Women (FUW). One of the Mt Albert women who attended its meetings with her was her school and university friend Marjorie Evans (nee Granville -Jones) B.A. (1909 -93), of 6 Summit Drive. Her parents married in 1908 in New Zealand after migrating from Queensland. In 1935 she married Stan Evans who worked for the Auckland Harbour Board. His family migrated to New Zealand from England in 1921. Mrs Gladys Jenkin (died 1999) of 103 Alberton Ave was another woman who went to FUW meetings with Betty. A Presbyterian, she had an MA degree and was married to Jack H. Jenkin, a teacher of woodwork, accounting and art at Mt Albert Grammar School and they had four children. Another friend of these women was May Fisher of 20 Douglas St (now Ave) whose husband Vic was curator of Ethnology at Auckland Museum. In the 1940's all the children of Betty, Mollie and these friends attended Owairaka School (founded 1929).

Also in 1938, Betty and Laurence became active in the Mt Albert Branch of the Labour Party. Leaving their two children in Auckland with friends, they attended the May 1938 L.P. Conference in Wellington because Laurence, on an L.P. list of approved candidates for Parliament, was looking for a seat to stand for. In 1939 the Mt Albert L.P. Women's Branch asked its members to boycott the services of GP's. The latter were refusing to accept the terms of the Labour Government's proposal for them to provide free maternity services to all women. That was why Betty gave birth to a son at home with a midwife in attendance on 14 September 1939. That month the GP's accepted the Government's Maternity Benefit proposal.

Betty, Mollie and their husbands (who had both been on the Auckland Committee of the League of Nations Union when their father was Secretary of it) stopped going to church on principle before World War II began. Laurence (1898-1970) was declared unfit for service as a soldier but became a member of the Home Guard in Mt Albert. Sam Leathem (1905-1987) was a conscientious objector. He was not sent to prison like others he knew because he was employed by Ambler & Co. Ltd; it was declared an essential industry because the clothes it produced included uniforms for the NZ and American armies. To ease his conscience Sam took only a private soldier's rate of pay while the war lasted and gave the remainder to a social service organisation. From 1942 until 1946 Stan Evans worked in various Air Force camps around NZ.

Between 1942-47 Mollie and Sam Leathem became care-givers of and then legally adopted two of Merimeri Rapata's younger sisters from the Far North. They attended Auckland Girls Grammar when there were very few other Maori girls there, one then training as a teacher and the other as a nurse. Both married from Kitenui Avenue in the 1950's. Betty's elder daughter remembered helping her deliver leaflets in support of two women who were Labour Party candidates for the Hospital Board, Mrs E.E. Snookes (of Onehunga) and Mrs E.A. Beavan, in the 1940's.

Between 1946 - 1948 both Betty and Marjorie Evans were elected to the Owairaka School Committee, its first women members. Chairman Ivan Day remembered them as two stalwarts indeed. (1979 Golden Jubilee



Mrs Marjorie Evans, the only woman on the 1948-1950 Owairaka School Committee.

booklet). Between 1948 -1951, Betty was a School Committee member of Avondale Intermediate School when three of her children attended it. In 1949, Betty, Mollie and Marjorie delivered leaflets in Mt Albert campaigning against compulsory military training for young men. As 77% of adults voted for it in a referendum that year, the Labour Government re - introduced it in 1950 but abolished it in 1958. Also in 1949 and subsequent years, all available members of the families of these three women collected money and clothes for CORSO (The Council of Organisations for Relief Services Overseas) in and around Mt Albert. Sam Leathem was Chairman of its Auckland Branch.

In 1951 Betty was invited to join the Women's League of the Unitarian Church at No 1a Ponsonby Rd by her Methodist Bible Class and university friend Ailsa Barr nee Gittos of 25 Benfield Ave, Mt Albert. Ailsa was Secretary of this League at the time while her husband Bill Barr was a chemist who taught Sunday School at the Mt Albert Presbyterian Church. Betty became a member of the Unitarian Church and at its League's meetings discovered they sent 2 delegates to the National Council of Women. She then arranged to become a delegate herself to NCW from the FUW. In 1952, when her fourth and last child started school (at Mt Albert Primary) Betty became Secretary of the Auckland Branch of the NCW when it was very busy looking at proposals for a National Women's Hospital. From 1949-53 Betty was on the School Committee of Auckland Girls Grammar School and from 1953-59 on the Auckland Grammar Schools Board.



1953, Betty with a patient and another volunteer.

Between 1952 - 57 Mollie and Sam Leathem became legal guardians of two boys from England sent to New Zealand to have a better life. In 1953 there were not enough trained nurses available to keep all Cornwall Park Hospital's geriatric wards open. Mayoress of Mt Albert Mrs Clarice Anderson then organised teams of women to be voluntary nurse aids there. Betty and Mollie took part in this effort 1 day a week. In 1960, Clarice stood unsuccessfully as National Party candidate for Mt Albert against the sitting Labour MP Warren Freer. At this time only 9 women, 6 from Labour and 3 from National, had been elected to the NZ Parliament. Yet between 1919-60, 53 women were candidates on 101 occasions.

Mollie also did voluntary work at the Girls' Home in Allendale Rd and at the Salvation Army's Bethany home before becoming a paid Adoptions Officer for the Social Welfare Department in 1960. In 1951, there was a severe shortage of teachers and Marjorie Evans, who had been away from teaching since the 1930's, then joined the paid staff of Owairaka School. She retired from teaching in 1969.

After the Holt family left Mt Albert in 1954 to live at Torbay, Betty became the NCW's Auckland Branch President from 1955 – 60 and 1966-1970, an elected Hospital Board member for 15 years and was appointed to other Government committees whose members were not paid at this time. Betty also wrote 4 books: 2 fictional - *All This and the Family Too* (1960) and *Jennifer Grant, NZ nurse, a career book for girls* (1965); and 2 non-fictional: *Women in Council*, a history of the NCW of NZ (1980); and *Women for Peace and Freedom*, a history of the NZ Branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (1985). Between 1962-74 Betty started and edited an NCW magazine called *Woman's Viewpoint*. She was made a JP and received an OBE for her services to the public in 1975.



1959, Mollie Leathem

Our Streets

Mt Albert Borough Council was created in 1911. It was granted city status in 1978. During the 1938 street re-naming programme many local streets were named after past Mayors. This seems to have solidified a tradition of naming a street or other public amenity after the Mt Albert Mayor. Here are some examples of this trend, if you have others please send them to carronboswell@hotmail.com

Coyle St in Sandringham was probably named after Mt Albert's first Mayor, Michael John Coyle. He held this office from 1911 to 1914. (1)(2) The Reserve in Pt Chevalier was re-named **Coyle Park** in 1941 after him. Previously, this piece of land had been the site of an infectious diseases hospital.

McLean St was named after Murdoch McLean who was Mayor of Mt Albert from 1914 to 1917. Curiously, this road's name was originally Murdoch Rd but was changed in 1938 to avoid near duplication with Murdock Rd, Grey Lynn.

Thomas Benjamin Clay was one of the few mayors who did not have a street named after him. Clay St was considered during the name changing programme but was discarded probably because of negative connotations. So, Seaview Tce kept its name! Clay was Mayor from 1917 until 1921.

Alfred Ferdinand and Clarinne Bennett lived at 52 Lloyd Ave from 1929. Alfred had been Mayor during the rubbish tip furore in 1921 when the dreadful state of the Morningside Dump made national headlines. Following the headlines, an enquiry was made into the state of Auckland's tips. The 1938 re-naming programme aimed to remove duplicate names. Albert St was just around the corner from Lloyd Ave and was one of many so-called in Auckland. Its name was changed to **Bennett St** after the Mayor.

Rhodes Ave was named after Leonard Edgar Rhodes, Mayor from 1923 to 1931. Rhodes put a proposal to raise the gigantic sum of 749,000 pounds before ratepayers. They supported raising this loan which was to be spent on roading, drainage, reserves and public conveniences. In 1927 new council offices were opened in Morningside, New North Rd.(3)

Wilfred Fosberry Stilwell was Mayor from 1931 until 1933. He was supported by the Morningside Ratepayers Association and fought a bitter campaign against the previous incumbent, L E Rhodes. Stilwell halted Borough expenditure and allowed no allocation for new works of any description. Borough staff was reduced, wages were cut by 10%, rates were raised by 11% and capital expenditure was reduced by two thirds. Among the more outspoken against Stilwell's policy was a young councillor, Harold 'Jock' Barnes, who later appeared on the opposite side in the national industrial scene. Belmont Rd was re-named **Stilwell Rd** in 1938.

Raymond Ferner gave his name to **Ferner Ave**. Raymond Ferner was Mayor from 1933 to 1936. In 1934 he had half of the Borough staff wages restored, and the following year the other half were restored. In 1936 he proudly noted that in the previous three years his council had laid 22 miles of concrete footpaths, seven miles of sewers and sealed ten miles of road. Ferner Ave was originally known as Belmont Ave but the name was changed in 1938.

Henry Albert Anderson was Mt Albert Mayor for 23 years. (Up until this time all the Mayors, except for L E Rhodes, had served one term only). **Anderson Park**, between Preston Ave and New North Rd is named after him. His wife, Clarice, was awarded an O.B.E for her public activities and the Mt Albert Public Library is dedicated to her. This couple lived in 'Ainslie', a grand two storeyed villa on Allendale Rd. Clarice is well remembered for hosting fund raising events in this home. Luncheon parties and bridge parties were held here. ('Ainslie' had been the family home of a previous Mayor, Murdoch McLean, but has been demolished.)

Our Streets. cont...

The recreation hall, known as **The Frank Turner Stadium**, was opened by the Governor-General, Sir Bernard Fergusson, in 1965. It had been built with funds raised by the Gymnasium Club, the Lions Club, the Golden Kiwi and the Mt Albert Borough Council. The Mayor, Francis Gordon (Frank) Turner, pointed out that this was the first time a municipality had built a recreation hall. He said that the Mt Albert War Memorial Hall had been the first amenity on the eight acre Civic Centre reserve. Next, was the recreation hall and then he expected an Olympic type swimming pool to follow! We are still waiting.....(4)

Francis Ryan was Mt Albert's last Mayor. He held this position between 1968 and 1989. **Francis Ryan Close**, a housing development off Alexis Ave, is named after him. His Deputy Mayor, Alice

Wylie, had the **Alice Wylie Reserve** named in her honour. This was the site of the Wilks house, the Mt Albert Industrial School and finally, Mt Albert Grammar's School House. School House was removed and the land was acquired by Mt Albert City Council. Alice Wylie moved that the land be named the 'Burch Street Reserve' but Athol Morris (a Labour Councillor from Kingsland) said 'We would like it to be named the 'Alice Wylie Reserve.' Alice said 'That was one of life's astonishments!' (5)

References:

1. Scott, Dick. In *Old Mt Albert*
2. *Auckland City Libraries: Street Names*
3. *Auckland City Libraries: Auckland Mayors*
4. *Mt Albert Community Library. Vertical File.*
5. *MAHS Newsletter 6.*

