

Race, Tea and  
Colonial Resettlement  
Imperial Families, Interrupted

Jane McCabe

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*For Bisumia, Jhapri Ghurkali,  
Ka Ngelibou Marlangiang, Norah, Prosoni  
and all of the women  
whose names have not been found*



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## List of Abbreviations

ANZ-C	<i>Archives New Zealand, Christchurch Regional Office</i>
ANZ-D	<i>Archives New Zealand, Dunedin Regional Office</i>
ANZ-W	<i>Archives New Zealand, Wellington Regional Office</i>
DGHA	<i>Dr Graham's Homes Archive, Kalimpong</i>
DPL	<i>McNab Room, Dunedin Public Library, Dunedin</i>
HC	<i>Hocken Collections, Dunedin</i>
NLS	<i>National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh</i>
OGB	<i>Old Girls and Boys (of Dr Graham's Homes)</i>
PARC	<i>Presbyterian Archives Research Centre, Dunedin</i>
SACHM	<i>St Andrew's Colonial Homes Magazine</i>

## Preface

On 2 October 2007 I arrived at Kalimpong, a small town in the foothills of the Himalayas in the Darjeeling district of northeast India. I was there to visit Dr Graham's Homes, a residential school that I believed my grandmother, Lorna, may have attended. Until a few months before, I had known nothing of this. All we knew of Lorna was that her father had been a British tea planter, her mother an Indian woman who had 'died young', and that somehow Lorna and her two siblings had ended up in New Zealand in the 1920s. Some years later, their tea planter father followed them, and lived out his days with Lorna, her husband and two sons at Pine Hill, on the outskirts of Dunedin in the South Island. The youngest son, Don, is my father. Lorna died in 1978, when I was five years old, having never spoken of her Indian background, nor of how and why it was that she came to New Zealand. Don was curious in his early years, but never pressed his mother for details.

Growing up, I think I was more curious than my father. Every Sunday we visited his childhood home at Pine Hill, a small cottage set on fifteen acres of steep, exposed land. Huddled in the tiny sitting room, I would stare at the remnants of a life in tea all around us: a portrait of Lorna's father, Egerton Peters, looking refined and out of place in these very modest surroundings; a polo trophy, inscribed with words about a winning team in Cachar captained by E. G. Peters; war medals, including Egerton's Assam Light Horse Volunteers service medal; and large frightening deer antlers, trophies of his hunting days. I remember Lorna, but my curiosity about these objects came after she was gone. They were frustratingly tangible in contrast to the formidable silence of the story that lay behind them: it was unknown and unknowable, mysterious and disturbing. I would take the medals down off the mantelpiece, turning them over and over in my hand, reading the fine print again and again. Listening, looking, touching. Willing the story to reveal itself through these precious things.

The story began to unfold ever so slowly after a very sad event in 1999, when Don's older brother, my Uncle Bill, passed away suddenly. Bill had never left Pine Hill; he remained a bachelor and lived a simple life in the rhythm of a ramshackle existence up there. When he died, there was a difficult question of what to do with the place. It had been in the family for nearly eighty years by

that time, but the cottage was hardly habitable and looking after the land was a challenging prospect for anyone other than Bill, who spent his days ranging around the property keeping one step ahead of rust and falling down fences and stray goats. Eventually my parents moved up to Pine Hill, brightening up and extending the old place, and felling pines to open up the view of the city and harbour far below. Gradually too, they began to clear out the inside of the house. Lorna's clothes were still in the wardrobe, some twenty years after she had passed away. The drawers and cupboards were full of the lives that had come before. Lorna had a habit of writing notes on all and sundry – bits of paper, old packets, the back of photographs – and folding them into books, and stuffing them into drawers.

My Dad had always been careful about papers, and keeping things, perhaps due to growing up with Lorna and witnessing her purposive writing and random filing. He found some things. There was Lorna's marriage certificate that listed her mother's name: Mary Fletcher. Oh. I felt deflated for an instant at the thought that there was no Indian mother – but only for an instant. Lorna's physical features and dark skin, which her sons and grandsons had inherited, left no room for doubt about our 'mixed' ancestry. But it was not until several years later that the breakthrough came. I was planning a trip to India, and in the final stages I visited Dad at Pine Hill to ask him again about Lorna, to look again at the old polo trophy – anything to find a lead to follow. He went through to his bedroom and returned with a packet of photographs. I had never seen them before. Dad had. He remembered looking at them when he was a boy. Inside were photographs of a young Egerton in England, later images of him on the plantation, and portraits of Lorna's siblings in New Zealand. Also inside this packet was a small brown envelope, marked 'Kalimpong school'. Dad saw my eyes flick to it. 'Don't know what that's about', he said, 'a school or something. Probably nothing.' Inside were two photographs, of groups of perhaps thirty girls, from toddlers to teenagers, dressed in white and standing outside roughcast buildings. On the verso were the names. There was Lorna, standing at the back with her hand on her hip, and her little sister Alice crouched at the front.

Everything unfolded quickly from there. Kalimpong was listed in the *India Lonely Planet*, which was in my bag that day at Pine Hill. On the tourist trail was Dr Graham's Homes, described as a 'working orphanage and school built in 1900 by Dr J. A. Graham, a Scottish missionary, to educate the children of tea estate workers.' I added Kalimpong to my itinerary and several months later, at the end of a journey that took me from China to Russia and Western Europe, I arrived in Delhi. My friend and I spent three weeks travelling across northern



India from Jaisalmer to Kolkata before flying to Bagdogra Airport, gateway to the eastern Himalayas. Met there by our Nepali guide and Tibetan driver, we visited Darjeeling, and joined the small throng of tourists trying (unsuccessfully) to catch a view of the magnificent Mt Kanchenjunga through the thick mists before finally making it to Kalimpong on 2 October. I was extremely nervous by this time, and could scarcely believe it when we were informed that Dr Graham's Homes was closed for the day – it was Gandhi's birthday, a public holiday. After a torturously slow day taking in the tourist sites that were open, we made an early start the following morning up the winding road to 'the Homes' as it was locally known.

Clutching the photograph of Lorna, I first met the headmaster. He was new to the role, and wasn't sure how to help me. But he instantly confirmed that we were in the right place, recognizing 'one of our cottages' in the background of the photograph. Then someone arrived to take us to the Homes museum. Here I was shown the original admissions book, where it was suggested I could find Lorna's name. I did. Running my finger along the tabulated row I immediately learnt some facts that seemed amazing after a lifetime of not knowing: her mother was Nepali (not 'Indian'), she was alive at the time the children were admitted to the Homes, and they had each spent fifteen years there. Then bound volumes of the Homes magazine, dating back to 1901, were brought out. I leafed through looking for Lorna, but it was not what I would expect of a school magazine. The pages were full of articles about the 'Anglo-Indian problem', fundraising, and committee reports, and not much at all about the children. Then I began to notice numerous references to New Zealand. There was a picture of two women in 'Wellington, New Zealand'. An excerpt from a letter told of milking cows in Middlemarch on freezing winter mornings. Middlemarch is a rural district very close to where I grew up in the south of New Zealand. It was disconcerting to find such a familiar reference here, in the foothills of the Himalayas. What was this about?

Before I had time to ponder this, another helper arrived, excited and a little breathless. He knew how to help us. We just needed to go to the office, and there was a person who could find my grandmother's file. We ambled down the path to what I think of now as the archive, where Mrs Ruth Glashan had been looking after the historic files for over forty years. As I began to explain my circumstances, Mrs Glashan interrupted, saying that she only needed my grandmother's name and approximate date of admission. Exiting without a word, she returned in what cannot have been more than three or four minutes, with Lorna's file – a stack of papers clipped together long ago. I was completely taken aback. I took

a moment, thinking of my Dad, and what he might want or not want to know, and how there was no turning back once I looked at these documents. I had always believed, as Dad probably feared too, that something really bad must have happened for Lorna to be so unwilling to talk about her past.

Turning my attention to what was before me, I saw application forms, and many letters. There were some parts I could read, but the writing was very difficult to decipher. There was something about insurance policies, and a letter written in 1917 about going to the colonies. I couldn't make any sense of it. Mrs Glashan sent me off after an hour or so, promising to copy the file and suggesting I visit again the next morning. And so it was that the following afternoon I wandered down the hill from the Homes via 'Woodburn Cottage', the cottage in the background of Lorna's photograph where she had lived for fifteen years. I had my photo taken in the exact same spot and continued down the hill, with a copy of the family file and a short history of the Homes in my backpack. I imagined coming back here for research. I felt like I had stumbled across a hidden part of New Zealand's history. I had studied history many years before and now wondered about the possibility of this as an academic project. And I thought about the others who, like Lorna, went to New Zealand, and I wondered about their descendants, and if they had grown up in the dark about their Indian heritage like we had. This book is the culmination of following both of these threads.



## Introduction: Family, Race and Narrative

Between 1908 and 1938, 130 young women and men of ‘mixed’ ancestry were sent from St Andrew’s Colonial Homes in Kalimpong, northeast India, to New Zealand. There they would complete the final stage of a planned transformation that began when their British fathers sent them away from their place of birth on tea plantations, away from their South Asian mothers and kin. Most had spent a decade at ‘the Homes’<sup>1</sup> (as it became known and is referred to hereafter), before embarking on the journey reserved for the ‘best and brightest’. In New Zealand they would be placed as household and farmworkers with Presbyterian families known to the scheme’s founder; from this protective setting they would leave behind the stigmas of race, illegitimacy and institutionalization, blending into a reputedly egalitarian society unburdened by concerns about racial purity. They would forget India, their birth families and the traumas of separation, attaching instead to settler colonial communities. In time, and over generations, their shameful beginnings would be entirely lost and the racial hiccup bred out.

The existence of this book attests to – and ensures – the failure of the future-forgetting aim of the scheme. That is not to say that the emigrants from Kalimpong did not attempt, albeit with good intentions, to shield the next generation from knowledge of their Indian heritage. As I will show, descendants interested in knowing more about this ancestry, myself included, have had to grapple with pronounced silences. We have proceeded with sensitivity, often after a parent’s (or grandparent’s) death, to find out what happened and to understand why they never spoke of it. In this task we are part of a global spirit of re-aligning ancestries, a reaction to a century characterized by upheavals, migrations and family secrets, and facilitated by digital technologies and greater ease of international travel. We are families of our times just as they were of theirs. As Deborah Cohen has argued, though the gulf between Victorian privacy and today’s confessional culture may seem wide, families in both historical moments have been part of a continual endeavour to define the space between public and private life.<sup>2</sup>

This book tells the story of the telling of a story. Its academic contribution is made within that riddle, exploring the way that archives and narratives, stereotypes and stories, have combined, conflicted and intersected over generations to arrive at this point of a public telling of a collective family history. Historians over the past two decades have cast a critical light on the colonial archive and its role in nation-building; and in a related project, scholars have looked to family histories as a means of decentring the nation as the primary entity around which the past is organized, tracing lives that have existed across boundaries and defied historical time frames.<sup>3</sup> Here I want to bring these concerns together to examine the role of archives – public and private, written and heard, colonial and current – in the construction of transnational family histories. Further, I connect these history-making ventures to national narratives, and, importantly, to relationships between nations. I argue that shifts in the relationship between India and New Zealand, and in their respective places within the British Empire, were deeply aligned with the archival renderings that would become the stuff of narratives woven by descendants of the Kalimpong emigrants.

## Family fragments

This book is structured around the lifeways of Homes graduates to New Zealand, yet it is continuously attentive to the larger familial framework within which their story unfolds. This framework addresses a scholarly gap between imperial and colonial families, a quest also at the core of Adele Perry's recent excellent work *Colonial Relations*.<sup>4</sup> Perry traces the history of an iconic Canadian settler family through a 'critical ethnographic conversation with the colonial archives', lifting this family from its visible, national place and repositioning it on the margins of empire.<sup>5</sup> With a purpose similar to Perry's I begin with a set of families at the other end of the visibility spectrum: the interracial tea plantation families of northeast India. My starting point is not one family but an entire category of family; one that was problematic, suppressed in colonial archives, and absent from the public record. They have not been called colonial families, nor have they been included in the 'empire families' from which many of them sprung.<sup>6</sup> My task is, therefore, to bring these families into view and to find a place for them in a moment where historians are extremely alert to the power of such positioning.

It is in an economic setting that I contend the tea families must be situated. Their existence was not simply a consequence of imperial circumstance; rather,

they were integrated into the development of the tea industry, which was built around an idealized plantation space that functioned as a microcosm of British rule. The autocratic planter might have been at the head of the plantation complex, but at its heart were the intimate interracial relationships that I believe the majority of planters engaged in. The families created by these relationships evidenced the adaptability of family formations to shifting economic realities; but they also reveal the weight of social pressure to suppress racial transgressions in British India.<sup>7</sup> We need to be mindful, too, that this was an era when familial ties had come to be viewed as unproductive – when workers needed to behave as individual profit-seeking entities. In the settler colonies, there was some adaptation of this idealized separation between work and family, since families were held up as the stable and moral nucleus around which new societies should be built. But India was not a settler colony, and by the late nineteenth century it held no acceptable place – and no ideological space – for interracial families.

There was, however, a space for ‘mixing’ in the developing racial politics of New Zealand. The state strategy of ‘racial amalgamation’ with Māori (the Indigenous people of New Zealand) was much lauded, and as Damon Salesa has argued, New Zealand’s international reputation as an exemplar of race relations was established very early, before it established any kind of ‘track record’ to earn the characterization.<sup>8</sup> This reputation became central to the operation of the Homes scheme; the relationship between the state and Māori was understood to align with a broader egalitarianism, which, from the Kalimpong perspective, made New Zealand an ideal destination for racially marginalized adolescents from India. The solution was, when framed in familial categories, to cleanly separate the children from their British ‘empire families’ and insert them into settler colonial families, which were more open to ‘blending’ across race and class lines. At the same time, their tea plantation origins were to be written out of existence, out of history, and out of the future.

In the following chapters I argue that there was no clean break, and that beneath the Homes archival record, the plantation children grew into adulthood by negotiating a place in kin structures that cut across all of these familial boundaries. To place the Kalimpong emigrants in a familial setting is to grapple with a complex transnational structure that spans distinct ideologies, economies, physical spaces and imagined futures. While the structure of this book follows the physical and social movement of children from plantation to institution, of adolescents from the institution to settler colony, and of adults negotiating a place for themselves in New Zealand communities, it certainly does not adhere to the associated narrative of progress and improvement. Instead, I redirect

the focus intermittently 'back' to the continued presence of their tea planter fathers in India, within the greater structure of their imperial families; to their mothers on the plantations, and wherever they might end up after the planters left India; and to the Homes in Kalimpong, which retained a role in connecting families and was considered 'home' by many emigrants. To simply label this complex configuration a 'transnational family' is clearly inadequate if we want to understand the strategies the Kalimpong emigrants used to make a history for themselves, and to begin to reconstruct their intergenerational familial narratives.

This attempt at reconstruction is profoundly affected by the archival inequalities that pervade these family histories. As Perry and others have argued, archives were not simply a by-product of colonialism but a tool used to produce it.<sup>9</sup> Antoinette Burton's scholarship taught me in my first excursions into the Kalimpong story that archives are 'fully fledged historical actors', and I have continued to treat them as such.<sup>10</sup> Here I am interested in the way that archives were used to prise apart problematic families into 'productive' components and to ensure that they would never re-form. Interracial tea plantation families were comprised of three distinct racial, economic and gendered types: British male plantation managers, South Asian female labourers and mixed-race offspring dependent on either or both parents for survival and facing an undefined future work-life. Together, they formed families regarded as wholly unstable and stigmatized, and prevented by social convention from being legitimated. Only by physical separation from such families could the child be 'rescued'.

But separation was about more than taking children out of problematic circumstances. It also meant that British planters, freed of responsibility to their illicit families, could retain their social standing, marry British women and produce white children, and continue their documented participation in imperial expansion, production and profit-making. At the same time the South Asian mothers could be discarded – from the record, from any long-term entanglement with respectable British men, and by extension, from the men's imperial families. The children were the most troubling component but also held the most promise of salvaging something from these unsavoury families, through reform into productive workers in settler colonies. A constant process of telling, reminding, forgetting, recording, writing, photographing and ordering the information about these parts was required in order for the Homes to make a bright, progressive narrative out of a highly sensitive, fraught entanglement whose undoing caused pain in every direction.

My composition of photographs from three different Kalimpong families in New Zealand (Figure 1.1) might stand as a metaphor for the difficulty of reconstructing coherent narratives from these extremely uneven archival inscriptions; it is also meant to signal the limits of the reconnections that descendants have brought about by travelling to India and to Britain. To reinforce this point it is useful to bring my analysis of a familial phenomenon into conversation with scholarship that addresses knowledge-gathering and -production in British India. I refer particularly to studies that have examined late-nineteenth-century practices whereby objects and images and information were not simply gathered but also typed and separated, then recorded in such a way as to facilitate cross-referencing.<sup>11</sup> I want to think about archives not just as distinct according to who might access them, or the form that they take, but also to consider the sequence of taking pieces of information that described a coherent whole in a moment of time and depositing them in the appropriate container (be it a file, a drawer, a memoir), each of which took on their own trajectories, and then connect this wider practice to the project at



**Figure 1.1** Family fragments: photographs from three different tea families represent the limits of reconstruction. Main photo: Woodburn Cottage group, Kalimpong, c. 1916, Lorna Peters standing far right with hand on hip. Author's collection. Left: Gilbert Langmore at Darjeeling. Courtesy Langmore private collection. Inset: Norah at Lakhimpur, Assam. Courtesy Gammie private collection.



hand – of attempting to fit together surviving/located pieces of families in order to imagine what they originally described, a century before.

This composite image (Figure 1.1) is the closest we might get to an interracial tea family portrait; I have found no photographs of a ‘whole’ family. There were, however, many portraits of the planters and they have made it into Kalimpong families’ private collections. For Figure 1.1, I cropped one such photograph, of Gilbert Langmore, taking out the wider, and very typical, scene of a planter participating in social life among other European men. The second photograph is very special. In all of my research this is the only image that has surfaced of the mother of a Kalimpong emigrant from a tea plantation. It has not been cropped. It measures about one inch square, and has obviously been cut from the corner of a photograph. The family has no knowledge of the story behind it. The woman’s name was listed in Homes documentation as Norah, and she was of the Khasi people in northeast India. Norah’s intense gaze carries a knowing quality; one that could not be more appropriate to her place here as a stand-in for all of the women who have been erased from our visual histories. When I think of my great-grandmother now, I visualize Norah.

The group photograph is the one that includes my grandmother, Lorna, as described in the Preface, outside Woodburn Cottage in Kalimpong. She is standing on the far right. For most of the descendants I have met, the only photographs we have of our Kalimpong forebears as children are like this – group photographs taken at the Homes which commit to future eyes their categorization as Anglo-Indian. They were captured for publication in the magazine produced by the Homes, and to send to planters who requested photographs of their children. By placing portraits of a mother and a father inside the group image I want to visually populate the children’s physical world with the thoughts that must have loomed large in their inner worlds, their dream worlds, which were still made of the stuff of their early lives. Despite the enforced distances and shifting configurations of the families (women, planters, children) over their lifetimes, each was ever-present in some way in the shared internal, intimate world that originally connected them.

## Anglo-Indians?

To include the tea plantation children uncritically under the broad categorization of ‘Anglo-Indian’ is, I believe, misleading, and a missed opportunity to build upon the ways scholars have theorized mixed-race communities in India,

especially those produced by interracial relationships after the 1857 rebellion when such crossing of racial boundaries was not supposed to be occurring. The tea plantations in the northeast were perhaps the last in a long line of specific sites that produced mixed-race communities in British India.

The term 'Anglo-Indian' was initially used to describe a British person resident in India; it was co-opted by the mixed-race community, previously known as Eurasian, in 1911.<sup>12</sup> The mixed community in India has the unfortunate characterization – perhaps unique, and largely true – of being rejected by both its native and European sides. While the particularity of identity on either side was the subject of considerable delineation and description, when these lines were crossed the offspring of many different nationalities (on the 'Anglo' side) and ethnicities (on the 'Indian' side) were compressed into an increasingly segregated Anglo-Indian community. Its earliest members sprung from sixteenth-century Portuguese encounters, and grew in number and complexity. Over time, any knowledge of original ancestry was lost in the quagmire of mixed-person marrying mixed-person. By the time the British tea planters arrived in northeast India, there was a substantial Anglo-Indian population in earlier sites of encounter (especially cities like Calcutta) who might look back five, six, seven generations to find a European ancestor. As scholars of this community have described, out of a blanket racial rejection developed a specific cultural identity – a segregated 'caste' that inevitably embodied aspects of hybridity but was invested solely with its British heritage.<sup>13</sup>

When Scottish missionary John Anderson Graham opened the Homes in Kalimpong in 1900, he did so in the midst of increasing debate about what had come to be seen as the 'Anglo-Indian problem', or the 'Eurasian question'. This was perceived as a city problem, where Anglo-Indians, it was claimed, lived scandalous lives, residing in slums and behaving in a manner that brought disrepute to the British community. Indeed the very existence of a mixed community was regarded as evidence of immoral British behaviour, and thus as a threat to rule.<sup>14</sup> These anxieties about racial mixing, as Durba Ghosh has convincingly argued, had always been present to some extent; but most scholars agree that the hardening of racial boundaries after 1857 made committed relationships between British men and South Asian women utterly unacceptable if 'respectability' was to be maintained.<sup>15</sup> Scholars do not suggest that this social pressure put an end to sexual relationships that transgressed racial boundaries, but it did drive them underground, removing any traces of their existence from colonial archives. As a consequence, studies by Laura Bear, Lionel Caplan and others have focused on the Anglo-Indian community as defined by the presence

of a *distant* European male ancestor.<sup>16</sup> There simply has not been evidence to corroborate the existence of families producing 'first-generation' Anglo-Indians in this later period, and hence an entire category of racial mixing in India has gone unconsidered.

Graham's intervention in the Anglo-Indian problem occurred, therefore, at a time when it would have been quite shocking to discover that British men were not only cohabiting with South Asian women but producing numerous children. His work in the Church of Scotland's Kalimpong mission in the 1890s led to this discovery, and Graham made it his life's work to provide a future for the mixed-race children he encountered on tea plantations. To this end he combined the discourse of child rescue in Britain with that which had developed around impoverished urban Anglo-Indians. Importantly, his plan also included 'rescuing' these city children as a means of tapping into an existing source of fundraising and to mask an activity that could be (and was in some quarters) understood as assisting tea planters' bad behaviour. I remake the distinction between these categories of children admitted to the Homes as a crucial prerequisite to analysing the emigration scheme. While Graham's rhetoric was based on tropes of Anglo-Indian destitution, it was the tea planters' children whom he was most anxious to send to the colonies, and they had for the most part grown up in anything but destitute circumstances. Furthermore, they carried none of the markers of Anglo-Indian culture, instead arriving at the Homes in Kalimpong from considerable immersion in their maternal cultures.

My analysis offers a new transnational – and generational – reading of Indian mixed-ness, the basis of which needs to be clearly articulated. Residents at the Homes were, I estimate, split evenly between plantation children and Anglo-Indian children from the cities. As I will show, Graham's vision of colonial emigration for all Homes children ran into immediate problems; in the first two decades of the scheme, only about 20 per cent were sent abroad. Of those 20 per cent, the large majority were tea planters' children, and most went to New Zealand. This overrepresentation is important, since this study centres on the process whereby plantation children were wrenched out of relatively comfortable existences and placed into a narrative of rescue and improvement. Those who did not emigrate (among them many plantation children) were placed in India, among the upper echelons of the established Anglo-Indian community, which historically had been managed into employment and housing in railway 'colonies'.<sup>17</sup> Graham sought innovative solutions for his graduates in India, but was essentially limited to the historically defined sites of employment and channels of movement.

Although Graham was open to sending his graduates to any of the settler colonies, New Zealand was the only one that ever granted entry to groups of Homes graduates. The first two young men were sent to Dunedin in 1908 and the final group arrived in Wellington, the capital city, in 1938. A total of 130 adolescents were sent from Kalimpong to New Zealand over this thirty-year period. Their arrival was distributed unevenly across these years as the scheme fluctuated in tandem with global and imperial shifts and upheavals. I refer to the emigration of these young people as a 'scheme' by virtue of its organization: chaperoned groups of graduates were sent from the institution to prearranged employment and housing at their destinations, and managed thereafter by local committees. Despite the emigration of these groups over a prolonged period, the scheme is remembered mainly for the difficulties Graham encountered. Lionel Caplan affords three sentences to it in *Children of Colonialism*, concluding with a statement from Graham's biographer that the 'Whites-only' policy of New Zealand and Australia 'was a constant source of irritation and sadness to Graham'.<sup>18</sup>

While New Zealand turned out to be the only destination for the emigration scheme, it was by no means a straightforward path for Graham, who was dogged in his persistence to continue sending Homes graduates there. He was persistent too in his efforts to convince Australian authorities to allow Anglo-Indians to enter. This attempted transfer of a mixed-race community from a 'conquest' colony to white settler colonies facilitates my transnational approach, and positions this study among those addressing the lack of comparative work on colonial states.<sup>19</sup> Graham's pressure on Australia and New Zealand to accept Homes graduates was documented in his public and private writings. The outcomes of his efforts highlight the need to bring the racial policies used to manage relations between the state and Indigenous peoples into conversation with 'raced migration' restrictions developed in the same era.<sup>20</sup> Both policies are regarded as crucial in building distinctive national identities and narratives, and they relate to each other in obvious and subtle ways; yet they are seldom examined together. Graham himself made explicit the connections between the two, through his many pronouncements that harmonious race relations in New Zealand was the reason for the scheme's success there, in contrast to the attitudes and actions of officials that he encountered in Australia. By this logic he smoothed the inherent complexity of transferring mixed-race adolescents steeped in South Asian diversity and social stratification into a settler colony built upon a simplified, binary understanding of race relations.

## Archives and methodology

The archival material used in this book is usefully placed into three distinct categories. The first is that generated by Graham, and stored at the Homes in Kalimpong and in the 'Kalimpong papers' at the National Library of Scotland (NLS) in Edinburgh. When I visited the Homes in 2007, I was shown three historical sources: the original admissions book, the *St Andrew's Colonial Homes Magazine* (hereafter *Homes Magazine*) and the Peters (my family) file. I was told that there was a file for every family that has had children resident at the Homes. All three sources were considered highly sensitive and were hence made available only to the families of those concerned. In 2012 I returned to Kalimpong with letters of permission from a number of families to obtain copies of their files. The NLS collection includes an almost-complete set of the *Homes Magazine*, plus private and published material relating to the emigration scheme – including notes typed by Graham in preparation for an autobiography (which was never published). All of these papers were accessible to the public. From these sources, mainly the *Homes Magazine*, I was able to compile a comprehensive list of the arrivals to New Zealand. No such data set was publicly available previously and probably does not exist.

Having compiled the list of emigrants I consulted the second category of archival material deployed here: that sourced in New Zealand and generated independently of the Homes. In the first instance this comprised a systematic search of online official sources for each emigrant, including electoral rolls, cemetery records, newspapers, and government records of births, deaths and marriages. Probate files and personnel files from the First World War held at Archives New Zealand were also utilized. The war files were the first documentation by the state of the early arrivals. From 1923 onwards, the Customs Department recorded the entry of all non-British migrants, and this was another useful source outside the Homes archive. These records helped to confirm the lists of emigrants, and, having located most of them in electoral rolls, I was able to build a coherent data set of their locations, occupations and marital status. A further outcome of these searches was tracing a number of people who I was quite sure were descendants of the emigrants.

In 2011 I wrote to a small number of families – fewer than ten – whom I traced through my preliminary research. From this initial outreach I established contact with five families who were all very enthusiastic about the project and keen to participate. Along with my own family, these are the 'six families' that I return

to in several chapters in this book, namely the Gammie, Hawkins, Mortimore, Moller, Peters and Spalding families. They were not selected according to any particular criteria, but they do represent a good geographical spread and very different levels of awareness about their Kalimpong heritage before meeting me.

The Hawkins and Spalding families were both resident in Auckland; they knew each other because their fathers had been friends, but they had no contact with other Kalimpong descendants. The Gammie family in Wellington was distinguished by the fact that both parents were Kalimpong emigrants. They knew many of the names on the list I had compiled and were in contact with descendants of other families, and they had fond memories of Kalimpong 'aunties' and 'uncles' during their childhood. In Christchurch, Dora Moller's son recalled visiting other Kalimpong families when he was growing up, but these connections had been lost. For the Mortimores of Invercargill, in the very south of the South Island, my letter was the first concrete piece of information they had about their father's hidden history.

I was stunned to discover that in all but one of these families at least one descendant had made the journey to Kalimpong and retrieved copies of their family file. Only the Mortimores had not, and with their permission, I photographed their file when I returned to Kalimpong in 2012. All of the families were extremely generous in allowing me to view their personal files and include their stories in this book. I first met them – and other descendants – in November 2011, when I took a month-long trip around New Zealand to gather information that comprised the third category of source material: interviews with descendants and access to materials held within their personal collections, including photographs, letters, official documents, and artefacts from the Homes and the plantations. There was a shared sense that it was time for this story to be told, and recognition that we could only further our understanding through a collective enterprise – as this has certainly been. These sentiments were repeated when I issued a press release about my research in January 2013, and many more families approached me. I continue to receive regular contacts through my research website.<sup>21</sup>

In my meetings with families I have seen hundreds of images – of planters in Assam and children at Kalimpong, of John Graham in New Zealand and emigrants visiting India, and of Kalimpong emigrants working and socializing together. Family albums trace the emigrants' journeys through adult life in New Zealand: working, marrying, having children and grandchildren, and enjoying the usual past-times. In the *Homes Magazine*, I have also seen photographs

of many New Zealand emigrants, in studio group portraits taken in Calcutta before they departed India or photographs they sent to Kalimpong from New Zealand. Often I have seen these same photographs in family collections. I have limited the number of group photographs of children at Kalimpong and emigrant ‘batches’ at Calcutta for inclusion here, because I wish to avoid repeating the spectacle made of those young people. I do understand that for many descendants these are the only photographs they have of their parent or grandparent as a child – I am in the same position – but because most readers will not recognize individuals in the photograph it is difficult to avoid reinforcing the racial problematization that the images represented, and indeed, created. Instead I have prioritized photographs from private collections; all but two images in this book were sourced from family albums. For the reader/viewer perusing these photographs, bear in mind that each was a landmark in a constrained family history, prompting curiosity and imaginative engagement, and working against the future-forgetting aspect of the scheme.

In methodology this study heeds the call of historians such as Tanya Evans who insist that academic historians need to engage more seriously with the methods and findings of family historians and genealogists.<sup>22</sup> The descendants I have met in the course of researching this book have provided much more than raw data about their family stories. In many cases they had already put considerable efforts into working towards their own conclusions, seeking a coherent history from the various materials they gathered and producing works for circulation within their extended families that brought together the fruits of their archival research, family photographs, reflections on their trips to Kalimpong, and understandings they have arrived at by reading academic histories. In my interviews with descendants we have shared our experiences and discoveries, and tried to reconcile differing perspectives; this was especially apparent when conducting small group interviews. Hence this book is well positioned to contribute to this burgeoning field, which is as much about learning from what family historians do, and why, and how, as it is interested in what they find out.

Family history has been revolutionized by the vast number of online sources that enable public access to a myriad of documents and facilitate connections to other branches of one’s family tree. The value of the Kalimpong case in light of this phenomenon is that it makes clear the racialized limits of these genealogical tools. For Kalimpong descendants, online searches can be very useful for tracing their British side, augmenting the material from the Homes archive. But on the

South Asian side, there is little to be found unless there is a specific connection to empire and a reason (read 'problem') to be put in the archive. Evans does discuss race in her chapter on the construction of Aboriginal genealogies, but again we might make the distinction between Indigenous histories that have been suppressed and to some extent recovered within a *national* project, and transnational stories that remain in limbo. This is exacerbated by the fractured histories of northeast India and of the Kalimpong emigrants' forebears, many of whom were caught up in labour migrations to tea plantations.<sup>23</sup> The lack of a narrative anchor – or a place of belonging, or a structure of accountability – for the Kalimpong stories is, I believe, as much a reason for the absence of the scheme from the public record as the stigma and silences of those who were sent away.<sup>24</sup>

### Reworking the narrative

While the archive assembled for the task of telling this collective familial history is incredibly rich, the many voices and audiences it comprises can be highly ambiguous. But a high degree of consistency *has* been found in the way we have constructed our narratives. We have reached for some powerful colonial stereotypes to make stories of our origins; we have grappled with profound silences about Kalimpong and how it was that our forebears came to New Zealand; and we have reached for national tropes to make sense of the desire to send children away from India, and to New Zealand. We have also gone to considerable lengths to address these silences and inconsistencies, travelling to India and Britain, knocking on doors of distant relatives, conducting research in archives, collating family information, transcribing letters from our Kalimpong family files, and thinking a lot about it all.

The structure of the book, which follows a life-cycle chronology, is made bumpy by this nonlinear journey along the path from what descendants knew before to when we learnt more. Section I challenges the assumptions that have fuelled speculations about our origins, looking first at family life on the tea plantation and then at the Homes in Kalimpong. Section II offers a new narrative of the emigration scheme to New Zealand, consulting a range of sources to counter the Homes story of progression over the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s. The final section reveals the transnational legacy of the scheme and the complex engagements between India and New Zealand that continued throughout the period of 'settlement', both here and there. The book culminates in a cacophony



of voices that I bring together in the final chapter – where descendants reflect on the joys and the challenges, the gains and the losses, of growing up and living with the legacies of this ‘Kalimpong family’ heritage. From my privileged position at the centre of this dialogue and exchange, I have been convinced of the value of detaching our histories from their institutional foundations, anchoring them instead in the making and unmaking of ancestral ties.

Section I

# India – Separations



## Tea Plantation Families of Northeast India

For many Kalimpong families in New Zealand, the ‘tea’ heritage was the most visible and least sensitive aspect of their otherwise mysterious Indian origins. Objects from plantation life and photographs of tea planters have been proudly displayed and treasured. Yet descendant imaginings of plantation life have deferred largely to imperial nostalgia and assumptions about exploitative capitalism, detached planters and family wealth. We have expected that the ‘Indian’ women that the planters cohabited with held little sway in the decision to send their children away to Kalimpong; and it has been very difficult to even imagine what the children’s lives might have been like before that separation occurred. In this chapter I interrogate these origin assumptions, and use a variety of sources to begin to bring colour and noise and movement to families that have been hushed from history.

These assumptions have of course been unsettled by descendants themselves when they have visited Kalimpong. Travelling around the Darjeeling region and sometimes venturing into Assam, they have received a very direct education in the specific geographies, diverse peoples and political climate of the eastern Himalayan region. Through travel and research descendants have found many records of the planters’ lives. The Homes files at Kalimpong have provided information about the children, although these too were filtered through the planters’ perspectives and carried by their words. When conducting research about their maternal forebears, however, descendants have felt a frustration akin to – albeit substantially different from – that of historians who have confronted the frequent exclusion of South Asian women from British colonial archives.<sup>1</sup> These structural inequalities are vitally important, but what I am interested in here is the familial structure that together they formed. The fragmented archival record makes it difficult to imagine the families in their original settings on a day-to-day basis – three-dimensional human beings, vocal, brushing by each other, sharing food and so on.

Previously, sources about these interracial tea families have been almost non-existent. The planters did not marry the women, nor did they write home about them, and thus no record was created. There were no birth certificates for the children, and they too have left very few memoirs. Some have spoken about their experiences. The novel *The Secret Children* was based on the recollections of a tea planter's daughter; it is a thoughtful and likely story woven from details she revealed late in life.<sup>2</sup> Michael Palin, while travelling through the upper tea districts of Assam for his *Himalaya* series, met the daughter of an 'illicit relationship' between a planter and a tea picker.<sup>3</sup> Because such liaisons were 'strictly forbidden', Anne grew up not knowing anything of her father, but in an extraordinary set of events – related by Palin in the book that accompanied the television series – was reconnected with her British family almost fifty years after her father's death. I want to counter this narrative of isolated, exceptional cases, and argue that planters in northeast India routinely cohabited with South Asian women and produced mixed-race children that must number in the thousands. Those individuals' dispersal along various lifeways has incurred an absence of opportunities or forums for telling the larger story.

Hence the value of the Kalimpong case is that it presents the opportunity to build a collective story for a subset of plantation children, because it did involve a systematic and documented intervention. The Homes' administrative procedures created an archive that at least affords a glimpse into the various circumstances that the children were sent away from. I begin the chapter by foregrounding the distinct geographical and political setting of northeast India, both today and in the colonial past. I then use sources generated by Assam planters in tandem with recent interviews to unsettle the terms 'planter' and 'coolie' and to enhance our understanding of the ways in which planters' relationships with South Asian women were enacted and lived. From there I delve into the Homes files for the 'six families' that will be followed throughout this book, where planters were required to commit details of their familial circumstance to paper.

## Tea districts of northeast India

Descendants in New Zealand trying to weave narratives from the scarce, often confusing information left by their Kalimpong forebears have been influenced by representations of India which ascribe a certain collectivity to

its people, underplaying the linguistic diversity, complex cultural texture and localized social formations that this nation contains. The association of the terms 'India' and 'Indian' with a particular set of images and circumstances has shaped our thoughts about the 'Indian mothers' of the Kalimpong children, and affected the likelihood of descendants travelling to India to research their family history.<sup>4</sup>

The experience of visiting Kalimpong is often described relative to the travel in other parts of India that precedes heading into the hills. Ron Gammie travelled with a small group from New Zealand to attend the Homes centenary celebrations in 2000. Like most visitors to northeast India, his trip began with a short stay in Calcutta. Although he expected this to be a challenging journey, he found the experience of Calcutta 'overwhelming'. But once in Kalimpong 'away from that, and you could just talk to people ... things were fine'.<sup>5</sup> He enjoyed idyllic accommodation at 'Orchid Retreat' and wandered at leisure around the township of Kalimpong. He described the contrast of expectations and experience in these distinct settings:

When you go back there ... the concept of India was nothing like what it's like up there, in Kalimpong, it's totally different. If you were going to put a blanket over what you think Indians are like, it's nothing like what it's like up there.<sup>6</sup>

While this group travelled without issue, others, particularly those who tried to visit Kalimpong in the 1980s, have had their travel disrupted by local agitation against the Bengali government. Indeed on my visit in 2007 I was confined to my hotel in Darjeeling for a day due to the calling of a *bandh* (strike) which saw a complete shutdown of services.

At the time I did not understand the motivations of this action, but I might well have made some strong connections between this political unrest and my ancestral ties there. As historians have recently claimed, the marginality of Kalimpong and Darjeeling today is in sharp contrast to their significance in the colonial era, and is only countered now by the occasional travel writer 'gushing' over their 'quaint charms' and media attention to natural disasters or political agitation.<sup>7</sup> These characterizations are all directly related to the colonial period. The British were interested in the region first for its strategic proximity to Tibet, second for its healthy climate as a place of respite for British officials in Bengal and third, among other commercial ventures, for its crucial contribution to imperial markets through establishment of the tea industry.<sup>8</sup> Had the region not been brought into British India for these reasons, it would not have been part of the territories handed 'back' to India in 1947. The agitation since the

1980s has been motivated by the claims of the majority Nepali population in the Darjeeling district for greater autonomy under, or independence from, the Bengal government.

Media portrayals of a 'culture of violence' and social unrest in Assam, along with governments warnings, have meant that descendants have been less likely to go there.<sup>9</sup> Richard Hawkins's children, Gilbert and Pam, have visited Kalimpong twice, the second time travelling onward to Assam and to the tea plantation their grandfather had managed. While they did so unimpeded, their movements were sometimes constrained. Aside from the value of experiencing those local conditions, the Hawkinses' visit is notable for two reasons. First, although Gilbert and Pam were keen to see their father's place of birth, they were primarily motivated by a desire to know more about their grandmother in response to the lack of detail about the women in the Homes records (I will return to this later). The damage incurred by the maternal separations in the previous generation is palpable in the action descendants like Pam and Gilbert have taken in order to correct it. There was no information about their grandmother at the plantation, and this relates to my second point: the Hawkinses were surprised to find that they knew more about the history of the plantation than the current management. There were no records there. Historians face the same challenge and attribute the marginalization of the region's history to archival dispersal and scarcity in the postcolonial period.<sup>10</sup>

So, as a primary intervention into the origin narratives developed by Kalimpong descendants, we first need to understand the distinctions between the region as a whole in the face of the national narratives and imaginaries of India. From there, some knowledge of the differences between the Darjeeling district (which includes Kalimpong) and Assam will bring a more nuanced understanding to the dynamics of plantation life. In the first instance, rather than representing the northeast as existing on the outskirts of India, it is usefully placed at the centre of the eastern Himalayas – the 'Indo-Tibetan frontier' – and portrayed at the centre of a cultural zone where national borders have been drawn across the intersection of many peoples (see Figure 2.1).<sup>11</sup> As Egerton Peters wrote in a letter to his Aunt Caroline in 1926:

Geographically we are not India at all, climatically we are not India. We belong to the large hilly and dense jungle tracts between Bengal to the West, Bhutan to the North and naturally connect up with the China hills and Burma. We're foreigners to Bengal and treated as such. ... Cachar district of Assam Province is my country and I never think of it as India at all.<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 2.1** Historic tea districts in Assam. Map created by Harley McCabe.

Although Darjeeling and Assam were administered separately by the British government and have distinct geographies, climates and populations, they were united in their categorization in the colonial era as ‘Tea Districts.’<sup>13</sup> This shared commercial interest to the British had consequences for the management of land and, importantly, inward labour migrations. In both regions, British men were brought in to manage the plantations. In Darjeeling, labourers were mostly drawn from Nepali populations, a large number of whom migrated towards these employment opportunities.<sup>14</sup> This accounts for today’s Nepali majority in Darjeeling. The British tendency to fix ethnicities to occupations saw many Nepali women employed as housekeepers in planters’ bungalows and subsequently drawn into relationships with British men. While Nepali people also laboured in Assam, the situation there was more complex. The coerced movement of large numbers of indentured labourers, known as ‘coolies’, from marginalized groups in other parts of India was to have a divisive legacy.<sup>15</sup> Much of today’s violence is a response to historic and recent migrations of ‘outsiders.’<sup>16</sup>



These distinct labour histories are an important precursor to reading my descriptions of plantation life further on. So too is the relative isolation of Assam, and proximity of Darjeeling to the Homes in Kalimpong. This 'isolation' is also important for understanding both the motivations for and the possibility of establishing interracial families on the Assam plantations. Further, the romanticized 'hill stations' of Darjeeling and Kalimpong came to occupy a very different place to the 'jungles' of Assam in the British colonial imagination.<sup>17</sup> Assam was understood chiefly as a frontier where civilization could tame the wild through the establishment of 'tea garden'.<sup>18</sup> The cultural and ethnic diversity the British encountered in Assam saw them struggle to bring the area under control, establishing an 'inner line' in 1872 within which it would govern to ensure the stable development of the tea industry.<sup>19</sup> But this rhetoric of building protected and predictable spaces within a frontier territory masks the reality of what the British did, which was to draw circles within circles around contested spaces to keep some locals out and coerce labour from regions disconnected to Assam in. In doing so they made an already dynamic cultural region more complex, more fractured, and less at ease with what it was.<sup>20</sup> These are the origin places of the Kalimpong narrative.

### 'Planters' and 'coolies'

I turn now to the peopling of the origin narratives. In the face of forbidding silences, descendants have often framed their life stories against two powerful and almost archetypal colonial figures: on the one hand, an imagined female ancestor, the powerless and unknown Indian woman, and on the other, the tea planter, forthright in his archival presence and the cause of 'great romantic visions' about familial wealth and social status.<sup>21</sup> The terms of the relationships between tea planters and Indian women, some of whom were recorded as 'coolies' in the Homes files, were expected to have been dictated by an enormous power differential. Planters are assumed to have lorded over their estates, living detached and privileged existences made possible by the exploitation of local labour. Like any stereotype, there are elements of truth to these characterizations; yet it is important to unpack both terms in order to construct a more meaningful picture of what the relationships between these two extremes on the spectrum of colonial entitlement might have looked like.<sup>22</sup>

For the planters, there are numerous records of their experiences in Assam in the form of diaries, travel guides or memoirs.<sup>23</sup> All followed a predictable

narrative, conforming to a colonial ideology that painted the planters as adventurers in, and tamers of, a hostile environment. They described hunting, social activities such as polo and picnics with other planters, tea production, labour management and the many threats to life in the ‘jungle’ – disease, famine, flooding and worker revolt. Unsurprisingly, none wrote of their own or others’ interracial relationships, nor the families that sprung from them.

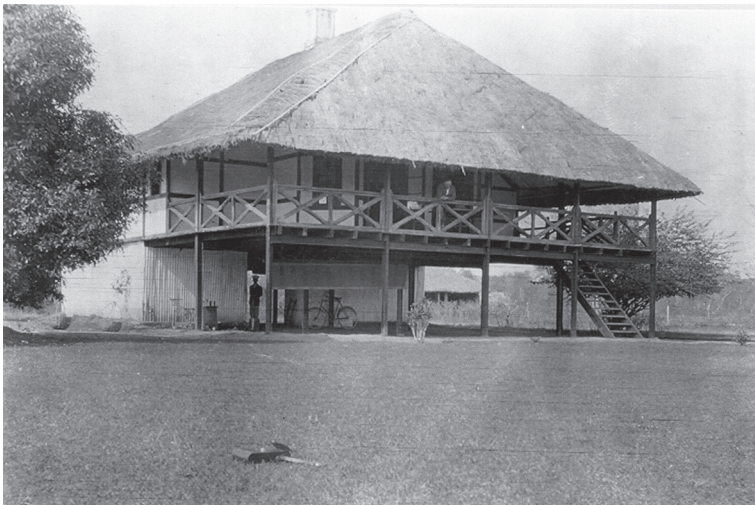
While these memoirs do more to reinforce than to unsettle romantic notions of planters, they do provide useful insights into how and why the men went to Assam. A family background in India was a strong impetus for working on tea plantations. P. R. H. Longley, who published a memoir of life in Assam (and later settled in New Zealand), wrote that he grew up in Darjeeling and ‘had always longed to be a tea planter’.<sup>24</sup> Likewise A. R. Ramsden, born in Assam in 1898 and educated in England from the age of six, returned to the region to work on a plantation in 1925. The Kalimpong emigrants’ fathers often followed a family tradition of working in India too. Egerton Peters’s grandfather was an East India Company agent and his father served with the Royal Engineers in India, Burma and Afghanistan.<sup>25</sup> The father of the Gammie children, John Perrell Gammie, worked on a tea plantation in Darjeeling and in the forest service.<sup>26</sup> His father had been a government scientist in the region.<sup>27</sup> It seems reasonable then to suggest that many tea planters were ensconced in ‘empire family’ structures, where generation after generation of men shaped their careers to fit British Indian requirements, and where a particular mode of family life emerged to cope with the attendant separations.<sup>28</sup>

Frank Nicholls, the father of five children sent to the Homes in Kalimpong and from there to New Zealand, was working in the London office of a tea agency when he was offered a transfer to Calcutta. Nicholls hesitated, after which ‘the big man then asked me if I would prefer to go out to a tea estate in Assam, as an assistant manager. There was no hesitation in my reply this time and I was elated at the idea and by the offer.’<sup>29</sup> His preference for a position that promised elevated status and a lifestyle that differed fundamentally to office work in a city – be it Calcutta or London – is revealing of those two key motivations for careering on tea plantations: status and adventure.

Photographs of bungalows (Figure 2.2) and colonial objects such as polo trophies passed on to Kalimpong descendants have reinforced imaginings of this planter lifestyle and fuelled speculation about ‘what happened to all the money’.<sup>30</sup> Yet Nicholls’s recruitment by a tea agency helps us begin to untangle notion of planters as wealthy entrepreneurs. Very few *owned* plantations. British men who wished to work on tea plantations applied to tea agencies, were interviewed,

assigned positions and transferred as the agencies required. Generic use of the title ‘planter’ disguised their progression through a labour hierarchy that began with the role of assistant manager and was followed by promotion to a manager, usually after ten years of service. Then there was the possibility of promotion to the highest role of superintendent, overseeing multiple plantations.<sup>31</sup> Men in all three roles were described as ‘planters’ in official documentation such as shipping records, marriage and death certificates, obituaries and the application forms to the Homes. Consequently the title and its various meanings were flattened and concretized in the kinds of documents that researchers routinely consult and weave into their family or academic histories.

In addition to not owning the plantations, these assistants and managers were not particularly well paid, as Peter Webster explained when I interviewed him in Wellington in 2011. Webster’s pathway to working on tea plantations in Darjeeling and Assam in the 1950s echoed those of previous generations. Webster was born in Bombay in 1926 to British parents, sent ‘home’ to be educated in England at the age of six and after spending more time in India in his teens, found himself working as a teacher in Kent. His career prospects were ‘pretty dim’ and he was eager to further his interest in mountaineering in the Himalayas. ‘The obvious place was the Darjeeling district,’ Webster recalled in his memoirs, ‘and the only jobs there still open to Europeans were in the tea industry.’<sup>32</sup> He applied to various tea agencies and was offered a place as an assistant with the Dima Tea Company in the Duars, near Darjeeling. Webster



**Figure 2.2** Planter’s bungalow, Assam. Courtesy Hawkins private collection.

became aware of the status that accompanied his new job as a 'tea planter' as soon as the SS *Strathmore* departed Tilbury for Bombay:

I travelled first class and quite suddenly, my life and social status were quite changed. From being an unqualified Prep school teacher with little chance of advancement, I had been elevated to the status of an assistant manager of a tea plantation in India with every chance of advancement, even possibly to be the superintendent of a number of plantations.<sup>33</sup>

Yet Webster was careful to make the distinction between social status and financial reward. While the lifestyle provided by the tea agencies was very comfortable, there was less money in tea than he had anticipated. 'Planters had an exceptional standard of living,' Webster explained, 'but actually you didn't get that well paid. You did compared to the workers, but you weren't affluent ... but you were well off, I mean you travelled first class and you had a big bungalow, and servants.'<sup>34</sup> Webster's assessment of the limited financial opportunities for tea planters is supported by other accounts, and by the application forms in the Homes personal files.<sup>35</sup> Many planters who sent their children to Kalimpong claimed that they were unable to pay 'full fees', as we will see further on.

Planters, as managers rather than capitalists, might therefore be reimagined as being caught up – albeit willingly – in the imperial drive to direct labour into 'frontiers' to facilitate the development of so-called empty lands. Like the coolies whose lives they presided over, and the women they entered into sexual relationships with, they spent most of their adult lives far from home. While some fathers of the Kalimpong emigrants did invest in tea, they were a very small minority, and they did so from a position of existing family wealth. Egerton Peters frequently lamented the precariousness of the tea industry in letters to his Aunt Caroline. In 1919 he complained that for the third year in a row they received no commission, remarking that it was 'alright provided one does not hope to retire and is not married'.<sup>36</sup> The Cachar district of Assam had endured six months of drought, 'while a few weeks hence we may be a flooded swamp'. 'India is famine stricken,' Peters continued, 'and our coolies have suffered dreadfully from influenza.' Peters's concern for the welfare of his workers was offset by his casual description of the expediency of plantation labour. Having 'lost' two hundred workers in the previous six months, he planned to 'replace them' with 'coolies from the famine districts'.<sup>37</sup>

The planters' daily routines bring further nuance to our understanding of their interactions with workers. Plantations were essentially small townships – self-contained spaces comprising an extensive infrastructure of roads, factory

buildings, workers huts (known as 'coolie lines'), markets, schools, hospitals and the planters' bungalows. They were populated by thousands of workers from various ethnicities and castes, with one European manager and perhaps an assistant. Although planters in Assam have been regarded by historians as particularly flagrant in their mistreatment of workers, they were also acknowledged to have occupied a risky and isolating position.<sup>38</sup> They had to be fluent in the multiple languages and dialects of the plantation to resolve employment issues and disputes among various groups.<sup>39</sup> High worker mortality rates necessitated repeated migrations of new workers from different regions, comprising various configurations of single workers and family groups, all of which added to the complexity of plantation life.<sup>40</sup>

Hence the term 'coolie' disguises gendered, ethnic and generational variation within the working population on tea plantations. And although there was an enormous power differential between planters and labourers, the workers did have the ability to disrupt the smooth operation of the estates. Women on plantations were regarded as posing a particular challenge to management. Longley recorded that 'more understanding and experience being necessary in dealing with the women, the senior assistant controlled the plucking and all works done by the weaker sex'.<sup>41</sup> An incident which he described as the closest he came to being physically attacked was sparked by an altercation with a group of women whose work he rejected.<sup>42</sup> According to Peter Webster, stories were rife of the dangers of being 'set up' by locals, who would accuse a planter of sexual impropriety and arrive at his bungalow en masse to exact retribution.<sup>43</sup> Whether or not this ever actually happened, it surely affected the mindset of new assistant managers. They arrived, often as teenagers, into complex social settings of which they had little or no knowledge. It was in the midst of this immersive experience – acquiring languages, learning tea production, adjusting to the environment, managing labour and resolving disputes – that British men became involved in sexual relationships with women workers.

These women, the mothers of the Kalimpong children, have been silent shadows in their family stories. Descendants are immensely frustrated by the solid brick walls that their archival silences have become. This is the one aspect of the Kalimpong scheme that has prompted unambiguously negative sentiment towards the planters and Graham, since it has deprived families of the opportunity to ever reconnect to their Indian heritage. Decisions made a hundred years ago to omit non-European women from the documentary record solidified into a permanent absence after the women – and anyone who might have remembered them – passed away. This erasure of their existence, in the Western bureaucratic

sense, has left an impression that the women were powerless, perhaps as silent in life as they were in the archives. One way of addressing this absence is to bring together the evidence we do have of the way their relationships with the planters were enacted and lived.

The high incidence of planters cohabiting with women workers is usually attributed to the tea agencies' policy of not allowing a British wife to be brought to the plantation until the men were managers, which as noted required an apprenticeship of ten years. This, along with the isolation of the plantations, is understood to have made interracial relationships inevitable.<sup>44</sup> The marriage policy was still enforced when Peter Webster was in the region in the 1950s, and he made the same link between the policy and high incidence of these cohabitations.<sup>45</sup> Webster first encountered his manager's 'mistress' on the evening of his arrival at the Duars plantation. The manager had become 'aggressively drunk' at a social club, and when Webster escorted him home he saw 'a sariied Indian woman run out from the bungalow to help him'.<sup>46</sup> He subsequently learnt that the woman, from the Chota Nagpur tribe, had been 'installed' as his mistress some years prior. The manager had 'a number of children by her and they all lived in a special house at the back'. Webster made particular note in his memoirs and in our interview that while the existence of the family was common knowledge, in three years of working at the plantation he never actually met the woman or the children and his manager never referred to them.<sup>47</sup> It was an open secret.

Given this explanation of the inevitability of the relationships, I wanted to know how it was that the relationships were enacted. Webster found the question difficult to answer. While he was aware that both of his managers 'kept mistresses', he was not privy to the details of the arrangements other than the visible evidence afforded by their presence in the planters' bungalows. Webster could only speculate as to how the relationships were initiated, suggesting that women of low caste were more likely to be taken as mistresses in order to minimize the potential social fallout. In some situations the woman lived with the planter; in others a separate bungalow was built for the woman and her extended family. According to Webster, tea companies 'frowned upon' cases where 'the mistress took over the bungalow and brought all her relatives in'.<sup>48</sup> Here, then, is evidence of the women's ability to make the arrangement work for them; and the presence of extended family challenges the belief that the women were always outcaste as a result of their relationships with British men. It also points to the economic advantages that might have been negotiated for the women and their families.

In order to understand the motivation of women to enter such arrangements, we can only surmise as to the negotiations that may have taken place. It is easy

to imagine the planters, who managed their workers with absolute power, selecting a woman who was unable or unlikely to refuse. But as we have seen, the complexity of social relations surely precluded such ease in many situations. Given the impoverished circumstances of migrant workers on plantations, these domestic arrangements may equally have resulted from negotiations with the women's families. During fieldwork for her beautifully nuanced ethnography of a tea estate in Assam, Piya Chatterjee listened for 'narrative traces' of these historical arrangements. She heard uncorroborated stories of both the 'offering' of women by their communities and the power of a planter to 'summon' a woman.<sup>49</sup> Gaiutra Bahadur's exploration of the life of her great-grandmother, an indentured labourer on a Guiana sugar plantation, also ventured into the territory of taboo relationships between planters and coolie women. Like Chatterjee, Bahadur found it difficult to find any 'truth' about the space the women occupied, describing it as a 'zone where coercion and incentive intermingled'.<sup>50</sup>

### Life in the bungalow

These hushed relationships potentially took on a different character when offspring were produced. A rumoured affair could become a quiet family; an opportunity for the planters, and for the women, to experience a kind of domesticity on the plantations that they might not otherwise have known. The addition of children also brings their testimony and memories to our efforts to reconstruct an image of life in the bungalow for an interracial tea family. In my interviews with Kalimpong descendants, several recalled plantation stories and memories passed on by their parents.<sup>51</sup> More immediate recollections were gleaned from my interview with Ruth Nicholls, the daughter of Frank Nicholls whose memoir of Assam was cited earlier.<sup>52</sup> Although Ruth was not one of the 130 emigrants sent to New Zealand under the scheme, she did attend the Homes in Kalimpong and her older sister, Sheila, was in the final group sent in 1938. Frank then took matters into his own hands and took Ruth and her three siblings to New Zealand, one by one, in the 1940s.

Ruth had no difficulty remembering plantation life. Although she was sent to the Homes at the age of four, she went home to the plantation every holidays and spent time there before leaving for New Zealand. She and her siblings enjoyed a 'comfortable' existence in the bungalow with their father.<sup>53</sup> They had day servants for all domestic and outdoor tasks, and *ayahs* (native nursemaids)

who arrived in the evening along with a night watchman. Ruth remembered close relationships with these household workers, and recalled life outside the bungalow with equal fondness (Figure 2.3). There was a large garden and tennis courts, and the children would often venture further into the ‘jungle’, free to wander while their father was working. Ruth understood the workers’ villages to be divided according to caste, religion and ‘sub-tribes’, and she and her siblings were not restricted in their interactions with these workers, who would ‘salaam us, because they knew who we were’. Ruth spoke a combination of Assamese and Bengali, as well as Hindi, which enabled her to communicate with everyone on the estate. She remembered this as an idyllic childhood in terms of both the freedom of life outdoors and their privileged existence in the bungalow:

We lacked for nothing. But that’s just something we accepted as given. And we used to play princesses ... I was Princess Margaret, June was Princess Alexandra, and Nora was Princess Elizabeth. We used to dress up in drapes and curtains [laughs]. And the servants used to laugh. They used to come and peekaboo.<sup>54</sup>

Ruth described a close relationship with her father. He and the children conversed in English; however, Ruth emphasized his fluency in many dialects and his understanding of the local ‘rules’, which enabled him to resolve disputes between the different groups on the plantation. Occasionally her father would use local languages to speak to the children, especially to emphasize particular



**Figure 2.3** The Nicholls children on the plantation in Assam. From left: June (with neighbour’s child on lap), Sydney, Nora and Ruth. Courtesy Nicholls private collection.



things, 'like, *jaldi jaldi*, hurry up. He wouldn't say hurry up, he'd say *jaldi jaldi*!' Ruth remembered her father as a 'bit of a loner'. There was no town nearby to visit. Her father's only social contact with other Europeans was with the neighbouring planter, who also 'had an Indian wife' and two children; and other planters occasionally called at the bungalow. Ruth's recollection of visiting Calcutta with her father to get a passport for New Zealand attests to this isolated existence. They only stayed one night but the whole family were 'agog' at the 'beggars' and crowds of the city. 'On the tea gardens everybody had a job', Ruth explained, 'there were some poor people yes but *nothing* like what we saw – oh!'

Ruth's description of her father's work routine was typical of the planters' duties, and she remembered it in some detail:

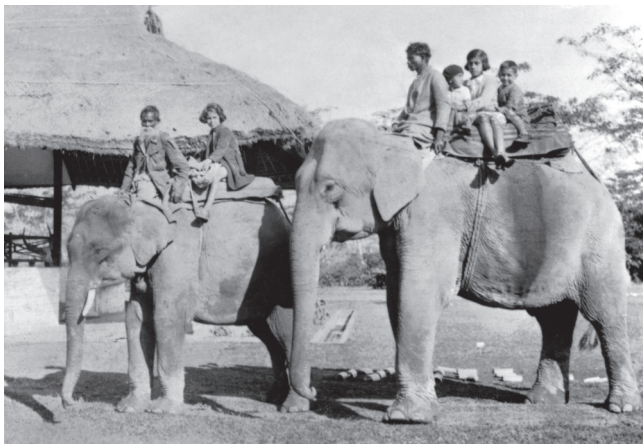
The daily thing was that he would be out and about to do his *kamjari* [work], which was [to] go and inspect the tea gardens. And he'd go along to the tea factory to see how the situation was in there, that everything was done correctly ... and then he'd come home at about 2 in the afternoon, and have a – because it was so hot you see – he'd go and either have a rest at the front of the house on a chair with his feet up, or go to his bedroom for about an hour. And then he'd have a cup of tea and off he'd go back [to work] until about five or six and then he'd come back and listen to the BBC news. And if we were in the lounge, shhhh, not a word, this is the BBC news, read by such and such. So we had to listen to all that.<sup>55</sup>

In contrast, Ruth had only scarce recollections of her mother, who had suffered a nervous breakdown and returned to live in her village when Ruth was three years old. She was Tanti caste, a Hindu group that originated in Bihar and were traditionally weavers; she died when Ruth was seven. Ruth knew that her mother's family lived on the plantation because she remembered being visited by them: 'Her brother was there, I know that, and his wife and children. I remember people coming in a group to see us, and they sat around, you see the bungalow has got this big entrance area, and they would sit in that entrance area, there were chairs all around, and some of them chose to sit on the floor, Indian style.' Even when her maternal family ventured into the bungalow, Ruth's status was clearly delineated from theirs.

Tales of plantation life have also filtered through to descendants of the emigrants. Ian Spalding's father, Tom, often told stories about plantation life – exotic tales of snakes and tigers – and passed on some recollections of life in the bungalow. While Tom's stories did not refer to his mother's place in the

home, he did speak of her role as a healer who administered to people on the plantation and in the surrounding districts. Likewise most of the stories Kate Pattison, a 1915 emigrant, told to her daughter Mary were about the jungle; ‘charging elephants, [and] she used to talk about leopards a lot’<sup>56</sup> (Figure 2.4). As for memories of Kate’s mother, Mary heard only one, of an incident that occurred when the tea planter was on leave and one of his daughters fell ill. He was angry to discover upon his return that the ‘witch doctors’ had been called in and the girls passed around in a circle on people’s shoulders above a bonfire. Notably, Mary believes that Kate and her sister lived in the village with their extended family, rather than in their father’s bungalow.

The Pattison family story raises the possibility of mixed-race children being absorbed into their mothers’ families, and thus an important question regarding the children’s future lives: what would have become of them had they not been sent to the Homes? Many descendants understand the Homes to have intervened in families that would have eventually been separated when the father returned to Britain. But did the planters’ departure necessarily mean that the women and children would be stranded and destitute, outcaste from their families? John Graham, founder of the Homes in Kalimpong, described the ‘local policy’, where planters paid the women a sum of money upon leaving India, which he disapproved of as an inadequate solution to a dire circumstance.<sup>57</sup> But evidence of children being absorbed into their mother’s extended family presents a different scenario. It was in this situation that Graham, and the tea-planting fathers, could



**Figure 2.4** The other side of plantation life: the Nicholls children riding elephants. Courtesy Nicholls private collection.

be said to have created Anglo-Indians out of children who could otherwise have been integrated back into their maternal family.

The acceptance of mixed-race children into their maternal families highlights the need to understand ethnic diversity in Assam in order to accurately reframe the Kalimpong narrative. The idea that women lost caste by being in a relationship with a planter rests on a generalized understanding of social structure in India. One community in Assam known to have absorbed mixed-race children in the colonial period were the Khasi people in Shillong. In her field research undertaken in 1990, Anne Selkirk Lobo described the Khasi community as 'located on the margins of Indian society, outside the Hindu caste system' with no established hierarchy.<sup>58</sup> In this matrilineal society, land is inherited by the youngest daughter. This and other sociological factors meant that there was scope for productive encounters between Khasi women and British men. According to Selkirk Lobo, non-heiress women took the opportunity to convert to Christianity for 'vast tactical advantage':

They crashed through the taboos surrounding their society and changed their lives. Christian schools, hospitals and churches would fit in quite well with their plan. They could send their children to learn English in the missionary schools and find gainful employment with the British. The terrors of sickness could be cured in the hospitals, and if they now had to congregate in a church instead of worshipping on their own in a field, they set out to do so. ... Conversion to Christianity, followed by marriage to a British man, altered their status of marginalised 'losers' to inclusive 'winners'.<sup>59</sup>

Selkirk Lobo drew clear distinctions between Anglo-Indian communities in greater India and that in Shillong. The latter were not dependent on jobs in the railways, police and telegraph departments, nor were they segregated into the living quarters associated with those occupations. There was also consistency in Khasi interracial families that distinguished it from the diffuse lineage characterizing the wider Anglo-Indian community; the mothers were all Khasi, and their British husbands were brought into Khasi social structure. Hence, the Anglo-Khasi community 'did not suffer a crisis of identity when the British left' and there was no exodus following Independence in 1947.<sup>60</sup> Selkirk Lobo's study points to the unexpected ways in which the diverse peoples of Assam might have regarded and acted upon the addition of interracial children to their families and communities. But of course segregation was only part of the 'problem' that Graham and the tea planters sought to remedy. The economic prospects on offer in the settler colonies were no doubt perceived as far brighter than local communities in Assam could offer.

## Six families: Separations

According to the recollections of Ruth Nicholls and the memories passed down to the children of Tony Spalding and Kate Pattison, the tea planters' children wandered freely around the estate, including the workers' villages and the 'jungly surrounds'. It was precisely these kinds of wanderings that prompted most British families in India to send their children 'home' to be immersed in British social and educational norms, at a safe distance from interactions with Indian workers.<sup>61</sup> For the tea planters brought up in 'empire families', it was at this juncture that the difference between their lives and that of their children became undeniable. They simply could not manage their interracial families using the model of their own childhoods. While planters could have sent their children to local mission schools, this would equate to a public admission of their indiscretion and exposure of the families that they worked hard to conceal from British society. Sending their children to the Homes signalled the planters' acceptance that the domestic arrangements that had enabled them to enjoy a familial existence on the plantation were limited to the early years of their offspring's childhood.

The process by which these separations were decided upon, enacted and formalized was documented in the Homes family files. The files were all collated in an identical manner: a cover sheet listed the names of the children included in the file and their admission numbers, and beneath the cover sheet were the application forms, despite being predated by the initial enquiries about admission. This re-ordering of documents attests to the bureaucratic control exerted by these 'official' forms, and the priority afforded to the paperwork that declared the terms upon which the children were admitted to the Homes and the circumstances from which they were sent. These documents were proof that guardianship had essentially been handed to Graham, not just for the term of the children's residence at Kalimpong, but for their futures as well. The form recorded information about the children's upbringing and education, the parents' statuses, the remuneration offered by the applicant and whether the children were to be trained for India or 'the colonies'. The rest of the file comprised all of the correspondence that was ever received about, or from, the children of that particular family.

Five of the six families introduced in Chapter 1 had retrieved copies of their family files from Kalimpong prior to meeting me; I obtained copies for the Mortimores on their behalf when I visited the Homes in 2012. Similarities in familial circumstances were immediately apparent upon comparing the

application forms and correspondence in the six files: all of the fathers of the children were tea planters; all were located in either the Assam or Darjeeling tea-planting districts; the majority of the siblings in each family were sent to New Zealand; and all of the children were first-generation Anglo-Indians – that is, their fathers were European and their mothers were non-European (and not Anglo-Indian). This accords with information I gathered over several years from many families in New Zealand; something like 90 per cent had their origins in tea plantations. Table 2.1 details the parents' nationalities and ethnicities, and location of their tea estates.

While there was some information about the mothers on the application forms, in the early years the Homes adhered to the colonial practice of excluding South Asian women from official records. For descendants, this erasure has brought great disappointment. Although not completely surprised, there has been hope, given the other sensitive information included in the Homes records, that the mothers' names might have been written down somewhere. Many descendants have travelled to Kalimpong or gone to considerable effort to obtain copies of their files chiefly for this purpose – to learn something, anything, about their female ancestor. After 1912, there was at least a space for the mother's name on the form. Despite this, Paul Moller wrote 'Nepali' for the mother's name and then under 'nationality' put a dot; he was not expecting, it would seem, to be asked for information other than her ethnicity. The other post-1912 applications did include the women's names, and some had additional information about

**Table 2.1** Parents' details on application forms

Father's name	Nationality	Mother's name	Ethnicity	District	Tea estate
Egerton Peters	English	Not recorded*	Nepali	Cachar (Assam)	Backola
Francis Hawkins	British	Not recorded*	Bengali	Margherita (Assam)	Makum
Paul Moller	Danish	Not recorded	Nepali	Darjeeling	Gamong
R. M. Mortimore	Scottish	Ka Ngelibou Marlangiang	Khasi	Sylhet (Assam)	Charkula
John Gammie	Scottish	Bisumia	Nepali	Tindharia (Darjeeling)	Nurbong
W. C. Spalding	Scottish	Prosoni	Tanti	Sylhet (Assam)	Adampur

Source: Dr Graham's Homes, personal files.

\*These earlier (pre-1912) forms only required the parents' nationality and whether they were alive at the time of admission. The fathers' names were recorded under the 'Applicant' section.

their caste and occupation. The problem then becomes one of finding a way to follow up on an individual who is unlikely to have ever been recorded anywhere else, and who was possibly at a distance from her own community. It is an enduring loss.

As to their own circumstances, the planters had to state the financial terms they offered and provide further information if they claimed to be unable to make full fee payment. There was a suggested fee structure, comprising an initial lump sum payment and monthly instalments, but allowances were made for those who could not meet these terms. The form required two referees. Supporting my argument that the families existed as an 'open secret' among the planters, most listed fellow planters as referees. Others who perhaps desired greater discretion listed churchmen. The final question on the application form asked whether the children were to be 'trained for work in the Colonies, or for India'. All applicants, with the exception of the mother of the Mortimore children, answered 'the colonies'.

The application form also requested details of the children's age, religion, health and education, adding to the picture we are beginning to build of their lives on the plantations before being admitted to the Homes. As shown in Table 2.2, their age upon admission varied greatly. Of the twenty children in these six families, eleven were over the age of five years and eight were ten years or older. This has consequence for later narrative building by their descendants, as the children sent to Kalimpong at a later age were more likely to remember plantation life. Despite their relatively advanced ages, only four children had attended school and none had received a British education. The Spalding boys had attained 'elementary Bengali' and the Mortimore children had attended a Khasi Mission School.<sup>62</sup> Only the Mortimore children had been baptized. Overall, the forms attest to the children's lack of exposure to European norms and thus to the role of the Homes in moulding them into substantively different social beings; they also indicate the diverse languages, customs and experiences that the plantation children brought to the cottages at Kalimpong, from which point onwards they would be treated simply as 'Anglo-Indians'.

For descendants perusing their family file for the first time, any disappointment about details missing from the application forms is often quelled by the unexpected quantity of correspondence they contain and the tantalizing stories that might lay within the crumbling pages covered in inky scribbles that will take time to decipher. Having viewed the files of many families, with their permission and encouragement, I can assuredly say that each contains the makings of a

**Table 2.2** Children's circumstances upon admission

Surname	Applicant	Date of admission	Children	Sex	Age	Father alive?	Mother alive?
Peters	Father	1906	Lorna	F	4	Yes	Yes
		1906	George	M	2	Yes	Yes
		1915	Alice	F	4	Yes	No
Hawkins	Father	1911	Richard	M	2	Yes	Yes
Moller	Father	1912	Charles	M	14	Yes	Yes
		1912	Dora	F	13	Yes	Yes
		1912	Peter	M	4	Yes	Yes
			Elizabeth*	F			
			Dennis*	M			
Mortimore	Mother	1917	Jane	F	10	Yes	Yes
		1917	Rend	M	7	Yes	Yes
Gammie	Father	1919	Betty	F	15	Yes	No
		1919	Fergus	M	12	Yes	No
		1919	Moira	F	10	Yes	No
		1919	Alison	F	8	Yes	No
		1919	Sheila	F	6	Yes	No
		1919	Gavin	M	4	Yes	No
		1919	Alexa	F	1	Yes	No
Spalding	Associate	1921	Charles	M	12	No	Yes
		1921	Thomas	M	10	No	Yes

Source: Dr Graham's Homes, personal files.

\*The application forms for Elizabeth and Dennis were not in the Moller file.

magnificent transnational novel. Many span decades and include letters from various branches of the family around the globe. They are emotive and poignant from start to finish, narrating everything from traumatic separations and questions about one's identity to mundane yet intimate renderings of everyday life written somewhere and sometime when a graduate's thoughts turned to Kalimpong. Most pertinent here is the initial correspondence from the tea planters to Graham, in which they were compelled to admit – and to create possibly the only written record of – the circumstances that prompted them to enquire about sending their children to the Homes. The planters' early letters also describe the process of deciding to admit their children, and the terms negotiated for fee payment. Here I look closely at this phase of correspondence in each family file in chronological order, beginning with the Peters family.

Egerton Peters first wrote to John Graham in 1905; a brief letter marked 'private and confidential' from Cachar, Assam. He stated that he had two children, 'a little girl of three and a half and a boy of 1½ years of age', asked if they were too young to be sent to Kalimpong and, if not, queried the conditions of admission. Peters noted that if a lump sum payment was required he would be unable to send the children.<sup>63</sup> In the following months a number of letters were exchanged between Peters and Graham negotiating financial terms. Peters was explicit in his desire that the children should stay 'permanently' at the Homes until being resettled in the colonies. His only mention of the children's mother was several lines of frustratingly illegible writing in his first letter. On the application forms she was listed as Nepali, and alive at that time. Peters reached an agreement with Graham to transfer an insurance policy in lieu of an initial lump sum, to be followed by regular fee payments. He arranged for the children to journey to Kalimpong accompanied by a 'reliable man' arranged by the Welsh mission.<sup>64</sup> In his final letter upon the children's departure, Peters asked that his children be treated with kindness and consideration, given that they had been raised 'mostly in the hands of natives, do not know a word of English, and will I'm afraid be difficult charges'.<sup>65</sup>

In 1909 Francis Hawkins, a planter in Margherita in the far northeast of Assam, wrote a similar enquiry to Graham about his fifteen-month-old son, whom he wished to send to the Homes when he reached two years of age. Unusually, the Hawkins file included a copy of Graham's reply, in which he instructed that Richard 'would be with us for at least 15 years before he could be emigrated'.<sup>66</sup> Regarding fees, Graham stated that 'of course we do not put the question of money in the first place', but added that 'as trustees for the money given by the public we have to be assured that the sum paid by guardians represent the amount which they can reasonably afford'.<sup>67</sup> Hawkins replied that he could not afford the lump sum but would pay the regular fees and arrange for payments to continue should he leave India or die 'before the boy is emigrated'.<sup>68</sup> Like Peters, Hawkins made repeated references to the colonial future. The letters of both men attest to the planters' limited financial means, but also to their willingness to make regular contributions. Graham's concern to extract the maximum amount possible from planters while still maintaining the charitable function of the Homes highlights the complex task of funding a private institution that attracted significant state support and public donations.

Hawkins contacted Graham again the following year and arrangements were made for Richard to be met at Dhubri – a town some four hundred miles



from the plantation along the Brahmaputra river – by a representative of the Homes. In an urgent letter on the scheduled date of meeting, Hawkins wrote that the ‘bearer’ was waiting with Richard but no one had arrived to meet them. The child, Hawkins suggested, could wait at Dhubri for a few days but would otherwise have to return to the plantation. He was ‘distressed at this unfortunate affair’, mainly because ‘if [Richard] comes back now I shall never be able to get him away again.’<sup>69</sup> As it turned out, the situation was resolved and to Hawkins’s ‘great relief’ his son travelled to Kalimpong as planned.<sup>70</sup> Hawkins’s concern that he might miss the opportunity to get Richard away from the plantation is highly suggestive of the power and the desire of Richard’s mother and perhaps her extended family to prevent him from leaving. The only record of this woman was on the application form. She was listed as Bengali.

Paul Moller, a Danish tea planter in Darjeeling, wrote to Graham in 1912 from ‘The Club’ requesting that his three children be admitted as soon as possible. ‘Their mother has been fighting hard against this,’ he wrote, ‘but it must be done.’<sup>71</sup> According to Moller, after learning of his impending transfer to a different plantation he had ‘persuaded her to send them up.’<sup>72</sup> Egerton Peters also sent his children to the Homes just prior to a transfer. Theirs was a mobile existence and these shifts clearly disrupted domestic arrangements specific to the plantations in which they were established. A Dr Seal met the family in Darjeeling and recommended to Graham that the youngest boy, four years old, be admitted. ‘About the two elder,’ he wrote, ‘we should think a bit.’<sup>73</sup> He was in favour of admitting the girl (Dora, aged thirteen) who he thought was ‘decently brought up’, but felt it was ‘a different thing to a boy of 14’, referring to the eldest boy, Charles.<sup>74</sup> On this advice Graham advised Moller that only the youngest boy would be taken. Apparently Graham was willing to refuse two fee-paying students rather than risk bringing the negative influence of adolescents who had grown up on the plantation into the Homes. However, Moller repeatedly appealed to Graham and Seal to reconsider, and all three children were soon admitted.

For the Mortimore and Spalding families, the applicant was someone other than the father. Consequently, the descriptions of their circumstances were more candid than those contained in the other family files. W. Mortimore, a Scottish tea planter, had followed what Graham described as ‘local policy’ by paying the mother of his two children a sum of money and refusing to accept further responsibility for them. The first letter to Graham on their behalf was written in 1916 by Annie Jones, the wife of a Welsh missionary in the Cherrapunjee Mission, near Shillong in the Khasi Hills. Jones opened the letter by referring

to other children that the mission had sent to the Homes, apologizing for her impending offer of 'more children in this time of uncertainty'. She pled the mother's situation as desperate:

There are two children here, the mother a Khasi, the father a Planter in the South Sylhet District, a W. Mortimore. The mother came up to her home not far from here when the father went on furlough about five years ago, and came under Christian influence, renounced her bad life and joined the church. She belongs to a proud family and in order to keep up the family prestige the money given by Mortimore did not last very long ...

Her people are anti-Christian, very much so, so that she is handicapped now in every way. She can't go out to earn money [as she would] have nobody with whom to leave her children.<sup>75</sup>

Jones went on to explain that she had 'tried to persuade her to send the children to Kalimpong when there was money, but she would not part with them as they were "so young"'. Having only enough money left to care for the children for 'a few months', their mother, listed on the application form as Ka Ngelibou Marlangiang, 'came of her own accord to beg of me to write to you today'. Known as Nelly, the children's mother wanted both of them to be admitted to the Homes, but was particularly concerned for her son to have a place. She offered to make small payments ('2/- or 3/- a month'), which Jones doubted her ability to pay, 'especially if she will be supporting the girl at home, but she may be able to [send] it – perhaps 4/- or 5/- sometimes if the two children are admitted and she could go to work'. Jones added that she had corresponded with Mortimore through a Reverend J. White, and learnt that he 'washes his hand[s] of the whole concern now and that the mother has signed not to trouble him after he paid the last 500/- in 1915'. Jones made a final plea on behalf of the children, stating that although Nelly was 'nominally a Christian', she was 'not one likely to devote herself to much self-improvement or to improve her children.'<sup>76</sup>

Jones's pleas apparently fell on sympathetic ears, and early in 1917 she wrote to notify Graham of the children's impending arrival, accompanied by Nelly. Such an arrival – children with their *mother* – would have been highly unusual for the Homes. Jones was apparently aware of this, asking Graham to arrange lodgings for Nelly for several nights, and penning the only written record I have seen acknowledging the mother's pain at this traumatic separation:

It will be a good deal of a strain for her for she is a very devoted mother and I often wonder that she has been brave enough to give them up. She is of a very respectable family in spite of her own wanderings in the past, she is not a

common class coolie woman at all. I just mention this that you may judge how [to] arrange things.

She *hopes* to be able to earn enough money to come and fetch her children sometimes for the holidays if she talks about this to you which she may or may not do. You need have no worries about consenting to this. They keep a clean respectable house.<sup>77</sup>

There was an undeniable boldness in Nelly's life choices. Her navigation of the separate but entangled worlds of a planter's bungalow, her 'proud' family home and the Cherrapunjee Mission brings to mind Selkirk Lobo's image of Khasi women 'crashing through taboos', and Bahadur's finding that coolie women used the opportunities colonialism presented to escape difficult social circumstances.<sup>78</sup> Returning home for the support of her family after her relationship with Mortimore ended, she then defied them (presumably for a second time) by converting to Christianity. By accompanying the children to the Homes at Kalimpong herself, she risked another negative reception. I have heard numerous anecdotes of women being turned away at the gate, no matter how many days they had walked to get there.

Although they were the children of a tea planter, the Mortimore family circumstance was exceptional in that their mother was the applicant. Because of this, we have a unique opportunity to consider the lifeway of one of the mothers, rather than only encountering her story at the point of intersection with the planter. The circumstance that preceded the children's admission was also notable for the evidence in the correspondence that Jones was not able to simply take the children from their mother and send them to Homes. Even in a situation where the children were separated from their British father, Graham did not have the power to 'remove' children to Kalimpong. But as the next chapter will show, he did have the power to ignore Nelly's choice of 'India' rather than 'the colonies' for the children's future placement. Nelly's dismayed reaction to this second separation supports my contention that the departure from India needs to be understood as a distinct moment in the Kalimpong story, rather than a smooth continuation of the journey from tea plantation to settler colony.

A second case in which the applicant was not the father, and hence greater detail was provided about the family circumstances, was the Spalding family. W. C. Spalding, a Scottish tea planter in Sylhet in the south of Assam, died while visiting Calcutta in 1920. A year after his death the executor of his estate, James Dewar, wrote to Graham about Spalding's two sons. Dewar's first letter included completed application forms and a lump sum of 4,000 rupees. 'The boys are bright and well-behaved', he wrote, 'and, under the circumstances, well

brought up.<sup>79</sup> Although the boys were ten and twelve years old, there was no recorded concern about their age. On their application forms they were listed as Presbyterian, and both had attained 'elementary Bengali' in schooling in Assam.<sup>80</sup> Their mother's name was recorded as 'Prosoni (Tanti Caste)', a 'garden coolie' who was alive at the time of admission. Dewar continued to correspond with Graham about the boys during their residence at the Homes. Himself a tea planter, Dewar hinted at his own familial problems, admitting in one letter that he had 'been unable to make headway with the mother of my own little girl as far as allowing the latter to go to school is concerned and I am disappointed'.<sup>81</sup> This again speaks to the agency of the women in negotiating with the planters over the fate of their children, and to the commonplace existence of interracial families among tea planters in this region.

For the Gammie family it was the death of the children's mother that prompted their admission to the Homes. Gavin Gammie, interviewed by his daughter in 2000, understood the shift to Kalimpong in simple terms. 'I'd be about four years when Mum died. So, our father couldn't look after us and he sent us up to Kalimpong'.<sup>82</sup> The first communication with the Homes on behalf of the Gammie children was penned by U. C. Duncan, of the Church of Scotland Mission in Darjeeling, who informed Graham that

Gammie of Nurbong has seven children. The mother I am told is dead and the children are living in a [*word illegible*] with some Lepcha woman to whom Gammie pays Rs 20/a month for their support – this is what I am told and I have no reason to suppose that the facts are otherwise. I was also told that Gammie has thought of sending the children to Kalimpong but that he had found it would cost too much.<sup>83</sup>

Duncan wanted to ascertain if Graham was aware of the family before proceeding further. He wrote again in June, exclaiming that 'there are seven children!'<sup>84</sup> The eldest was fourteen and the youngest was a year old. Gammie himself wrote to Graham several months later, asking that the children be admitted and trained for the colonies.<sup>85</sup> Describing his financial difficulties, Gammie offered a small monthly sum for each child and to make the Homes executor of his will. His estate contained shares in tea that he hoped 'if anything should happen to me it might be enough for their education'.<sup>86</sup> Like other planters, Gammie gave enough detail of his circumstance to elicit Graham's assistance and no more. This was in contrast to the way that his familial situation was described initially by Duncan, which communicated the scandal and intrigue that these interracial families prompted among the European community in the towns around the plantations.

Although outsiders like Duncan played a key role in promoting and facilitating admission to the Homes, the decision to send the children to Kalimpong in each of these families was ultimately taken by the children's guardian. When both parents were alive, it was the father's wishes that dominated.

Utilizing the correspondence contained in the Homes personal files that negotiated the children's admission, this chapter has significantly increased what we know of interracial tea plantation families in northeast India. The files disrupt any notion that these families can be generalized as social units organized solely around the unequal terms of colonial encounter. The workings of diverse ethnic groups, in communities often established away from home, affected the way that these hidden branches of 'empire families' functioned. It was the mobilization of labour around the British Empire that created the scenario from which they emerged, by directing 'planters' and 'coolies' into an isolated social setting. Imperial labouring was also to be the solution for their children, who were admitted to the Homes on the condition that they would be trained for work in the settler colonies and emigrated upon reaching 'working age'.

Hence, in this primary setting of the Kalimpong narrative, the first connection between New Zealand and India was made. The tea planters had already begun to imagine their children's future lives in settler colonies, far removed from the social worlds and geographic locations of tea plantations in Assam and Darjeeling. Graham's imperial network had a role to play too; as we have seen, missionaries and planters who had prior knowledge of the Homes facilitated the children's relocation away from the plantations. While the women held some sway in the decision to send their children to the Homes, they were very unlikely to have understood that a second shift would occur some ten to fifteen years later. This chapter has addressed the archival silences that have muted the volume of life in the bungalow, of the drama of sending the children away, and of the consequences for those left behind.

It is worth reflecting momentarily on those journeys away from home. Letters from Peters and Hawkins state that the children were taken to Kalimpong by associates, and neither man ever visited the Homes. It is heart-wrenching for descendants of both families to contemplate these little children undertaking lengthy and risky journeys in the company of a stranger. My grandmother was four years old, the age when children lay down their first memories, and think they know everything, and she no doubt felt responsible for her little brother. After travelling for several days on swollen rivers and then by rail

over completely unfamiliar territory Lorna and George were delivered into the arms of more strangers, the likes of which they may never have seen – white women – and whose language they did not understand. Perhaps they thought they would see their mother the next day, or the next. They never saw her again. From their father's perspective they were safely delivered from one British space into another, self-governing entities meant to protect them; yet for Lorna and George the 'wilderness' outside would have felt safer. What was this world they had arrived into?

## St Andrew's Colonial Homes

The Reverend John Anderson Graham opened St Andrew's Colonial Homes at Kalimpong on 24 September 1900. Drawing on a decade of local experience at the Church of Scotland's Kalimpong mission, Graham brought British theories of child rescue to the historic Anglo-Indian 'problem' and to the specific circumstances of British tea planters with interracial families in the northeast. His emigration scheme was unapologetically built upon severing the ties between mixed-race plantation children and their parents. After all, this was a time when British children were routinely sent to boarding schools, and for the children of 'empire families', as many tea planters themselves had been, this meant growing up on a different continent from their parents. But for the planters' children, prolonged residence at 'the Homes' was never interrupted by trips home or visits from a relative. And, crucially, many were destined to be settled at an even greater distance from their Indian and British families. On the children's behalf, Graham and the tea planters exchanged their genealogical existences for a colonial opportunity that they believed would offer a 'fair start in life'.

Graham attempted to soften the separation from birth families by integrating a familial structure into the Homes complex. The children would reside in cottages, cared for by British housemothers and 'aunties', with Graham the distant but kindly father figure. Built on a sprawling site located above the hill station of Kalimpong, this was to be another protected British space in India – indeed, the Homes became known locally as 'little Scotland'. The children's containment within this site, along with the practice of sourcing staff exclusively from Britain and the colonies, was intended to separate them not only from the racially precarious site of the tea plantation, but from any contact with the diverse communities residing in Kalimpong too. Along with being trained in manual labour and given a British schooling, the children were thus educated in the 'proper distribution of sentiment' towards their British ancestry.<sup>1</sup> This self-actualizing stigma about their Indian heritage was another means of combating any proclivity for the emigrants to look 'back' after being sent to New Zealand.

For descendants, this muted but powerful strategy helps us to understand why our Kalimpong forbears never spoke of their mothers, but were so comfortable putting their British tea heritage on display.

Graham's ideas sprang from the same imperial discourse that saw the state removing 'half-caste' children from Indigenous families in settler colonies, and the use of migration as a means of turning marginalized British children into productive imperial citizens.<sup>2</sup> Such ideologies were actioned in the United States too, with 'orphan' children sent to labour on the new frontiers.<sup>3</sup> In the first section of this chapter I locate the Homes in Kalimpong within this rhetoric, aligning it closely to British child migration schemes that, like Graham, claimed to act for the greater imperial good. Graham's scheme was complex because it involves race *and* emigration, and thus functioned differently to, for example, the Australian government's removal of mixed-race children from their Indigenous mothers. Unlike these nation-centred race policies that worked to contain and assimilate the offspring of racial transgressions, Graham's transnational scheme could only operate within an imperial (or global) framework – here was a Scottish missionary, in India, sending children to New Zealand. Settler colonial policies did intersect with the Kalimpong scheme later, when Graham attempted to send his graduates abroad and discovered that relationships between the state and Indigenous peoples had begun to coalesce into distinct national identities and racial politics, which in turn affected the enactment of restrictions on non-British immigration.

It is to the problem of emigration that I turn after briefly situating Graham's scheme in the rhetorical context. Here I am mindful of building upon – and addressing the gaps in – the works already written about the Homes. Two short histories have been written by former staff members at Kalimpong: Simon Mainwaring's *A Century of Children* and James Minto's *Graham of Kalimpong*.<sup>4</sup> Writing from an insider perspective means these works are steeped in local experience and have access to sources others do not; however, both are largely uncritical accounts of Graham's realization of a 'grand vision', and while they do contain some useful statistics about the emigration scheme in parts, there is little concrete information on what occurred outside of the Indian context. Historian Satoshi Mizutani's recent chapter on the Homes gives an excellent grounding in its theoretical constructs.<sup>5</sup> I aim to build on his work here by (a) consulting sources other than those generated by the Homes, (b) focusing on the children's experience and (c) analysing the development of the emigration scheme. Although Mizutani describes Graham's colonial vision as a landmark in the prolonged Anglo-Indian debate, 'recognized by the colonizing British as



almost the only means to put an end to the Eurasian Question', he does not discuss emigration beyond its ideological premise.

This chapter continues to build a nuanced collective narrative in several ways. First, it aims to counter the progressive accounts of the Homes scheme promulgated by Graham's promotion of the scheme and the invariably optimistic accounts in the *Homes Magazine*, by drawing upon interviews with more recent Homes graduates. Second, and using these same sources, I seek to provide a clearer picture of everyday life at the Homes. What was life in the cottages really like? Did Graham avoid the kinds of institutional abuses that have surfaced elsewhere in recent years? Third, correspondence in the personal files from the tea planters to Graham reveals their persistent interest in their children. Their concern unsettles the assumption that the Homes enabled planters to simply abandon their children. Though this surely occurred in some instances, descendants of the 'six families' have been surprised to discover letters that testified to the planters' concern for the well-being of their children – paying their fees, requesting photographs, enquiring as to their health, making provisions for their future and in some cases quite open expressions of affection and conflict about the separations they had brought about.

### A scheme among schemes

When Graham opened the Homes in 1900, he had just turned thirty-nine years old and had spent a decade working in the Church of Scotland's Kalimpong mission along with his wife Katherine. The dynamics of local and global labour migrations at the turn of the century shaped the way in which Graham imagined and constructed the institution. In Assam, the area under tea cultivation had increased from 26,853 acres in 1872 to 204,285 acres in 1900, an expansion facilitated by the movement of 750,000 workers from Bihar, Orissa and Bengal.<sup>6</sup> In white settler colonies, a wave of legislation that sought to restrict the entry of non-white migrants included the 1899 Immigration Restriction Act in New Zealand and the beginning of the White Australia policy in 1901.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile in Britain, migration as a means of 'rescuing' impoverished children was peaking. By 1900, Barnardo's homes had been in operation for thirty years and had established institutions in almost one hundred locations, sending thousands of British children to Canada.<sup>8</sup> A decade of awareness and first-hand experience of these phenomena furnished Graham with a unique multisited imperial perspective on both child rescue in Britain and the Anglo-Indian problem in India.

Graham's upbringing as a 'country lad' with his three brothers 'running barefoot over the moors' and assisting with menial tasks on the farm materialized in many aspects of the Homes in Kalimpong: the Homes children all went barefoot, Kalimpong was chosen for its healthy environment, and Graham possessed an unwavering belief in the remedial and productive value of disciplined labour.<sup>9</sup> He had initially worked in the Scottish civil service but was heavily involved in church activities that assisted impoverished city children. At the age of twenty-one he began his religious studies. Graduating in 1885 with an MA from Edinburgh University, Graham entered Divinity Hall, where he encountered Professor Archibald Charteris. Renowned for his belief in 'applied Christianity', Charteris founded the Young Men's Guild – the vehicle by which Graham achieved his aim of placement in an overseas mission. He and his new wife Katherine made the journey to Kalimpong in 1889, and for six years they built up the infrastructure of the growing, and ethnically diverse, hill station; establishing churches, schools and the Kalimpong Mela, an agricultural exhibition for local farmers.<sup>10</sup>

In his subordinate role to the head missionary at Kalimpong, one of Graham's duties was to visit planters in the surrounding tea districts. It was on these visits that he became aware of an aspect of the Anglo-Indian 'problem' largely concealed from public knowledge: the production of mixed-race children in an era that emphasized distance between British ruler and Indian subject.<sup>11</sup> The children lived existences considered racially perilous to European eyes – growing up on remote estates among their extended kin, local villagers and migrant labourers, lacking exposure to British norms and bereft of education.<sup>12</sup> Graham's notes on the domestic situations he encountered offer a further glimpse into the nature of the plantation families. While there was an element of shame in his discovery that it was common practice for planters to cohabit with local women, Graham recalled that these relationships were often 'real and tender', and he was affected by the planters who spoke openly about the 'absence of a hopeful future for their children'.<sup>13</sup> His descriptions, openly sympathetic to the planters and alluding to scenes of contented bungalow life, were never to be repeated publicly.

Regardless of the domestic routines the families had settled into, the question was what would become of them when the planters inevitably retired to Britain or elsewhere. Graham disapproved of the established convention whereby the planter simply made financial provision for the women and children upon his departure. Graham's primary concern was for the children, and he took it upon himself to find a solution. In 1895, he took three years' leave in Britain, travelling around Scotland to speak publicly about his work in Kalimpong and

publishing his book, *On the Threshold of Three Closed Lands*.<sup>14</sup> Addressing the General Assembly of the Young Men's Guild, he used familiar mission rhetoric to refer to the plight of plantation children, claiming that 'we have a fearful price to pay for our imperial honours and vast conquests in the wreck and refuse of human life which is left in the line of our march'.<sup>15</sup> Visiting Quarrier Homes in west Scotland, Graham was impressed by the housing of children in cottages dispersed on large estates, where ill-equipped parents were replaced by carefully chosen house-parents.<sup>16</sup> These idealized rural 'homes', regarded as an innovative alternative to the austere Victorian institution, provided a template for the physical layout at Kalimpong and Graham's emphasis on an in-lieu family to staff the cottages there.

Sending impoverished children to rural parts of Britain was not a guaranteed solution to a cyclic familial problem, however, and hence the appeal of colonial migration schemes such as those initiated by Emily Ward and Thomas Barnardo. These schemes were understood to offer a permanent solution to child poverty, and a timely injection of mouldable labour into the 'opening' of vast tracts of land in the settler colonies. Farm labouring youth could potentially become farmers in their own right, the schemes claimed, and at a safe distance from their birth families. In this neat imperial solution, Graham found a strategy that would form the crux of his emigration scheme for the thirty years that he sent graduates to New Zealand. Like Barnardo, Graham would face colonial resistance to orphan migrations as part of a larger refusal to being viewed as a 'dumping ground' for impoverished Britons. But as we will see, the Kalimpong scheme faced an additional problem to British child-rescuers, namely race, and the tightening of settler colonial borders against non-British migrants.

The belief in many quarters that Graham's plan to house and educate planters' children at Kalimpong was necessary, and sound, was evidenced by the financial support and patronage that was immediately forthcoming upon his return to India in early 1900. After meeting with Bengal government officials, Graham leased one hundred acres of land and received a government grant of five rupees per child per month.<sup>17</sup> The first edition of the *Homes Magazine*, published in February 1901, listed Sir John Woodburn, lieutenant governor of Bengal, as honorary president, and his predecessor, Sir Charles Elliot, as one of seven honorary vice presidents that included notable figures in Edinburgh, Assam and Calcutta.<sup>18</sup> The remaining members of the board were tea planters in the surrounding Duars and Darjeeling districts. Noticeably absent was the Church of Scotland, which to Graham's great disappointment bluntly refused to lend its name or assistance to a scheme that could be framed as providing a

convenient solution for tea planters' immoral behaviour. Instead Graham was reliant on government grants, charitable donations and the integrated support of the tea industry. The planters' regular fee payments for their own children were understood to subsidize unsupported children, and the tea agencies made donations to the Homes.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the heavy involvement of tea planters in the establishment, financing and operation of the institution, their role was effectively silenced by Graham's persistent deployment of the rhetoric of rescue. Like Barnardo, Graham publicly referred solely to destitute children in need of saving, when this label was actually only applicable to a minority of children under the care of either institution.<sup>20</sup> His private writings, meanwhile, left no room for doubt that the Homes was established to make social and educational provision for the planters' children.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Graham's description of the emigration scheme directly addressed the planters' desire to find a solution outside India for their children. However, apart from the declared involvement of planters on the Homes Board, and inclusion of their written opinions in the *Homes Magazine*, Graham never publicly admitted the nature or extent of their stake in the Homes – that over half of the children resident there grew up in the cosseted world of plantation bungalows, and that for them, being sent to the Homes represented a material *drop* in circumstances, though a projected rise in future prospects through colonial emigration.

### The solution/problem of emigration

John Graham was not the first to suggest emigration as a potential solution to the Anglo-Indian problem.<sup>22</sup> His scheme was unique, however, in its realization of the systematic and sustained transfer of Anglo-Indian juveniles.<sup>23</sup> Graham was clear about the aims of the 'Colonial' Homes from the outset. The original brochure listed the 'Object' as 'to attempt a solution of the problem by giving such a course of training as will fit the children for emigration to the Colonies'. The 'Need' was that 'the only real hope of amelioration lies in Emigration'. Since it was not possible to send the children directly to the colonies, they would first be made 'fit'. The 'Advantages' of the location at Kalimpong were 'its healthy site' to gain physical strength for the colonies, 'its isolated position' to keep the children away from 'injurious native influence' and its extensive grounds to provide training in 'the culture of the field, the garden, and the orchard'. 'Children who are manifestly unfitted for Colonial life', the statement continued, 'will be trained

for openings in India.<sup>24</sup> There was no question then of the fundamental place of organized emigration in the establishment of the Homes.

Early developments challenged Graham's idealized vision of colonial emigration. In the first instance, the roll grew so quickly that emigration was never going to be possible for all of the pupils. Graham initially imagined a total roll of about forty children.<sup>25</sup> The institution opened with six pupils, four of whom were domiciled European children. By 1902 there were seventy-two children in residence, and by 1910, 305. In 1922 the roll was capped at 625; even this Graham enacted with great reluctance given his original 'open-door' policy.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the strain of providing infrastructure for a larger student body, Graham and his supporters had to accept that increasingly restrictive border controls in the settler colonies would apply to educated Anglo-Indians. By 1907 Graham had changed his outlook considerably, telling the Calcutta Committee of the Homes that perhaps 'India should get the benefit of the children she herself had trained.'<sup>27</sup> In other words, placement in India became an option for not just those deemed 'unfit' for the colonies. According to Mainwaring, of the 500 pupils to have left the Homes by 1925, 115 had emigrated, the majority to New Zealand.<sup>28</sup>

Acknowledgement that colonial emigration would not be possible for the majority of Homes graduates had important ramifications for the development of the institution, not least because the rural labour that boys were trained for was organized very differently in India than it was in the settler colonies. In New Zealand it was anticipated that graduates would enter a 'free' labour market, earning wages that could be accrued as capital and put towards an independent existence as a landowning farmer; while in India the rural sector was economically precarious, organized around caste, and not seen as a pathway to Anglo-Indian respectability.<sup>29</sup> Hence the Homes training would potentially be defunct if immigration restrictions meant that its graduates would have to be placed in India. Graham attempted to ease any concern about this by stating that preparation for the settler colonies would produce graduates equally well suited to Indian placement.<sup>30</sup>

A series of articles in the early editions of the *Homes Magazine* reveals Graham's considerable efforts to ensure that training was matched with settler colonial labour shortages. He also sought reassurance from his colonial contacts that emigrants would be socially accepted there. In the second edition of the *Homes Magazine*, John Murray, a local tea planter, contributed an article on the social integration of Anglo-Indians entitled 'The Philosophy of Colonisation'. The article was a rebuttal to the suggestion – mooted by a Scottish planter – that

a 'Eurasian Settlement' might be founded in Australia. Murray opposed the idea, arguing that it was contrary to the Homes vision, which imagined its graduates 'entering Colonial life, not to found a colony of Eurasia':

A Eurasian Colony could never succeed. The idea has within it the very germ of decay. The success of social organization depends not on its exclusiveness, but on the diversity, and complexity of its members. ...

Is it not the exclusiveness forced by the condition of circumstances on the Eurasian community that has necessitated the very existence of the Homes? And to foster a policy tending to the formation of a Eurasian Colony, would be to defeat the object for which the Homes were founded. 'Forced exclusiveness' may well characterise the bar under which the Eurasian community in India is now suffering.<sup>31</sup>

The suggestion that a segregated Anglo-Indian community abroad would be destined for 'decay' highlights the belief that social integration was not only *possible* for Anglo-Indians in the settler colonies, but essential for their survival. Murray espoused clear ideas about where young Anglo-Indians would sit in colonial hierarchies should this integration be possible. Taking 'a lower place in the scale of being than the corresponding type of British Colonial', they would join the 'struggle for existence' in Australia on the following terms:

One of two things must happen. He will either cease to exist, or he will be absorbed in the dominant race. If in the struggle an endeavour be made to retain his distinction of type, he will be doomed to failure. ... At the very outset of his colonial career the Eurasian is by nature forced to take a subordinate position. His relation to the Colonial will be that of servant to master. Here, then, is the training ground, this is the starting-point, and yonder the goal, far off in the distant light.<sup>32</sup>

Thus Murray theorized a model by which Anglo-Indians might be absorbed into the white settler populations. The next step was to collect information about how this might work in practice.<sup>33</sup> In the same edition of the *Homes Magazine* an article entitled 'Fields of Emigration' proposed sending graduates to New Zealand. While the Homes was 'not yet in a position to send any of our children to the Colonies', the author (presumably Graham) advised that information was being collected wherever possible 'on this essential part of our scheme'.<sup>34</sup> The article cited correspondence from a farmer named James Fraser, a 'sturdy Scot' who was in Government Service in India for thirty-five years before settling in New Zealand. Graham welcomed Fraser's enthusiasm, which was in contrast to the 'fierce' suggestions by 'leading men in other Colonies' that

Anglo-Indians would not be welcome there.<sup>35</sup> Fraser described New Zealand as an ideal starting point for hard-working, self-reliant emigrants, and gave details of how to acquire and manage plots of land. Fraser added that 'in a generation or two Eurasian stigma of colour and helplessness would be lost'. Their offspring would be 'born Britons' which he described as the 'raison d'être of the whole scheme and an immense thing to look forward to'.<sup>36</sup> Fraser articulated an aim that underwrote the scheme but was seldom mentioned – that once settled at a distance from their origin families, the emigrants would be free to marry into the white settler majority and achieve racial dissolution in the generations that followed.

Fraser's belief in the merit of a strong work ethic, which could be used by otherwise 'helpless' populations to overcome the stigma of racial mixing and achieve self-sufficiency, was backed up by an Australian farmer in 1903. The correspondent, a former member of the Homes Board, described farming life in the colonies as 'very different to either at home or in India. Every man, it does not matter how large a scale he is, works'.<sup>37</sup> The particular value attached to farming in the settler colonies was again seen as requiring elaboration in order to make a case for the colonies as a destination. Graham's supporters were trying to convey that rural labour in the colonies was not equivalent to a coolie labouring on a plantation, but neither was it a means of achieving the status of their tea-planting fathers. It was somewhere in between, and thus ideal for Anglo-Indians. The 'orphan boys', the correspondent continued, would 'depend upon themselves. ... A boy who was not afraid to work could, easily, by the time he was 28 to 30 years of age, save enough to start a farm of his own'.<sup>38</sup> Murray, Fraser and the Australian correspondent all argued that Anglo-Indian men could progress from the subordinate position in a 'servant to master' relationship to being independent farmers. While women graduates were not mentioned in the early discussions of emigration, their placement in the colonies from 1909 generated a parallel discussion about the pathway towards 'independent' careers. Achieving financial self-sufficiency was another step in the permanent break away from their British and Indian heritage, and from reliance upon the Homes.

Encouraged by these positive reports about farming opportunities, Graham established a working farm at Kalimpong to train the boys for emigration. Between 1903 and 1905 a farm steading, farmhouse and demonstration farm of twenty-five acres were added. The farm was increased by fifty acres in 1906 and a 'demonstration farm building' was added in 1908.<sup>39</sup> At this time emigration was still a theoretical construct, about to be tested with the first emigrants leaving the Homes. In the interim, Graham had continued to accept tea planters' children

on the documented agreement that they would be sent to the colonies upon reaching working age. These included several children from the 'six families'; Lorna and George Peters, Richard Hawkins, and the Moller children were all resident at the Homes by 1908.

## Life at the Homes

The emigrants' reluctance in later life to talk to their children about the experience of living at the Homes is a part of the untold story that is often thought to indicate trauma. Those who did speak about their upbringing usually reminisced about the dramatic view of Mt Kanchenjunga rather than sharing details of their daily life. During their parents' lifetimes, descendants have respected this silence, treading carefully around what was a sensitive subject. Recent public reports of neglect and abuse of children in institutions of this era have no doubt affected the way their silence has been interpreted.<sup>40</sup> For descendants, there are two opposing narratives within which they might place their parent's story: on the one hand, an idealized upbringing in the spectacular landscapes of the Himalayan region, cared for by a kindly missionary; on the other, a decade or more isolated from their family in the strict confines of a Victorian institution. The aim of this section is to provide a meaningful sketch of daily life at the Homes, in order to enable a better understanding of why many emigrants so intently put the experience behind them, and to address the question of the extent to which the Homes felt like a home. Did staff and other pupils become a substitute for the children's own family? How were sibling relationships managed in a scheme based on familial separation?

Because little testimony exists from the New Zealand emigrants about their experiences at the Homes, here I utilize the memories of more recent graduates in tandem with written sources of the earlier period. These temporally distinct sources are linked by the notion that, unsurprisingly, the Homes experience gradually improved over time. Ruth Glashan, archivist at the Homes, attributed my grandmother's silence to her residing there in the early 1900s, when hardships such as cold, hunger, harsh discipline and bullying were most prevalent. In 2000, Anne Beckett interviewed her parents, Gavin and Isabella Gammie, about their memories of Kalimpong. Gavin emigrated with the last group to New Zealand in 1938 and Isabella arrived independently in the early 1940s. Throughout the interview they attributed differences in their experiences to Isabella's attendance in a slightly later period.<sup>41</sup> Simon Mainwaring's history of the Homes also refers



to a gradual lightening of discipline and greater attention to the extracurricular needs of the children from the 1960s.<sup>42</sup> Even so, graduates of the 1970s have likened their time at the Homes to military school and described being ‘at the mercy’ of the house-parents.<sup>43</sup> Recent testimony is thus integrated here to relay some first-hand reflections on growing up at the Homes, keeping in mind that the difficulties would have been more pronounced in the earlier period when the New Zealand emigrants were in residence.

Reflecting upon my own visit to the Homes in 2007, my initial impressions suggest that Graham’s desire to accommodate the children in something other than a typical Victorian institution was achieved, at least in geographical setting and use of space. By 1930 the Homes grounds covered 600 acres on a steep hillside above the township of Kalimpong. The classrooms were clustered near the entrance, but the cottages and other buildings were widely dispersed, separated by the undulating terrain and vegetation. This is illustrated in a photograph taken by a 1911 emigrant, George Langmore, on his return visit to Kalimpong in 1924 (Figure 3.1). Very little has changed since then, with no new buildings added. The lush vegetation that has grown in the intervening years conjures imaginings of an idyllic childhood in a tropical setting. On my second (and longer) visit, however, I gained a keen sense of the children’s regulated lives. Their existence revolves to a marked extent around cottage life. They are either at school, at their cottage or en route to one or the other. While the forbidding



**Figure 3.1** The Homes school buildings (centre front) and cottages with Kalimpong township at rear. Photograph taken by George Langmore in 1924. Courtesy Langmore private collection.

feel of large concrete structures is absent, a peculiar sense of isolation creeps in with the contrasting worlds of prayer meetings in dimly lit wooden cottages, the untamed foliage outside and the busy town of Kalimpong – just a few minutes' drive down the hill but somehow entirely separate.

The children's sudden departure from the plantation to the Homes, from family to strangers, is one that many descendants reflect upon when considering the hardships of their parents' lives. When Isabella Gammie's daughter asked her about the moment of separation from her mother, Isabella's immediate response was that they had *ayahs* whom they 'spent more time with'.<sup>44</sup> Her comment confirms that it was usual for the children to have *ayahs* on the plantation, and that separation from them was an additional – perhaps the primary – trauma they experienced when sent to the Homes. Other descendants of Kalimpong emigrants have relayed their parents' memories of the first days and weeks at the institution spent in quarantine. For many, this was the first time they had ever slept alone. It was, in one descendant's words, a stark contrast to the 'cosseted existence' of plantation life.<sup>45</sup> Ruth Nicholls, whom we met in Chapter 2, was sent to the Homes when she was four years old. She recalled being sent 'straight to the isolation area. And [I] cried and cried for two or three weeks.' She remembered 'sleeping in a ward, and not a soul around' and 'all these nurses in white garments and being poked and prodded and inspected'.<sup>46</sup>

For those who arrived as infants, there were no early memories of arrival or separation. Children under the age of five years were housed in Lucia King, the 'babies' cottage', until they were old enough enter one of the boys' or girls' cottages. As Gavin Gammie noted of his early years at the Homes, it was difficult to remember what it was like or to know what the impact might have been. He was four years old when he arrived at the Homes; others in the study families were as young as two. Even for children old enough to remember, there was simply no time to adjust or even to realize what had happened. As one later graduate recalled, 'I didn't know what hit me to be honest. I looked for my mother and she wasn't there. ... I'm falling out of the bed and she's not there to get me. ... You were pushed into the swimming pool, dragged off here, dragged off there, ... and you just didn't know where you were'.<sup>47</sup>

Daily life at the Homes demanded more than schooling and extracurricular activities; the children were immediately absorbed into rigorous work routines. Graham was reliant on the labour of the children from the outset, which he justified as necessary to avoid employing Indian workers and to inculcate the 'true dignity of manual labour'.<sup>48</sup> This policy was also an overt rejection of the caste system, with every child expected to take their turn to perform a range

of domestic tasks – a 1920 article in the *Homes Magazine* written by a female pupil described in detail the duties of the kitchen girl, the dining room girl, the lavatory girl, the lamp girl and so on.<sup>49</sup> Jane Webster, wife of the tea planter Peter Webster whom I interviewed for this study, volunteered at the Homes in the 1950s. An abiding memory of her time there was children kept constantly busy with unnecessary tasks such as ‘picking up leaves’ at 5.00 am, in what she understood as a battle against ‘Indian sloth’.<sup>50</sup> While the children’s labour was justified as a productive method of preparing them for colonial life, it was also a means of countering any lingering ‘native’ tendencies.

As to whether the children formed familial bonds at the Homes, much depended on their relationship with the housemothers and aunties in charge of each cottage (Figure 3.2). Discipline was meted out in a manner to be expected of an institution of this period. Mainwaring reported use of the ‘stick’ and infamous housemothers who beat bed-wetting boys with iron bars.<sup>51</sup> Ruth Nicholls talked about getting ‘cuts ... boys on the bum and girls on the hand’. But importantly, John Graham, the father figure whom the children all called ‘Daddy’, was not involved in carrying out such discipline. Eddie Lamb, a Homes graduate who ended up in England, recalled an incident where a boy was caught stealing and noted that this was the only time he ever saw Graham beat a student.<sup>52</sup> Although Graham looms large in any account of the Homes, he was for the most part a figure who was admired from afar. It was James Purdie, secretary from 1908 to 1946, who knew the boys and girls by name, and who offered regular counsel,



**Figure 3.2** ‘Ready for school’, outside a cottage at Kalimpong. Courtesy Gammie private collection.

while Graham was known to refer to them all as 'my dear boy' or 'my dear girl'.<sup>53</sup> Graham lived offsite in Kalimpong, and when he was at the Homes, children would follow him around excitedly trying to elicit some contact – a pat on the head, grabbing his hand – or comment from him. The only time they were guaranteed an individual audience with Graham was upon leaving, when he would offer them advice about the dangers of the outside world and present them with a Bible. Graham's aloofness inspired a sense of awe and a legacy of affection for him, which functioned as a powerful counterpoint to more difficult memories of the Homes upbringing.

Maintaining ties to one's birth family through relationships with siblings at the Homes was limited by the strict enforcement of gender segregation. The boys' cottages were all located in the area to the north of the school buildings and the girls' to the south. Boys and girls did not visit each other. They were schooled separately and took their manual training in different areas. Ruth Nicholls was placed in the same cottage as her older sisters, but only saw her brother Sydney on 'rare occasions like the school fete, the school sports day'.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, Gavin Gammie recalled only seeing his sisters on special occasions. One of Gavin's most difficult recollections was of not being informed that his younger sister, Sheila, died at the Homes.<sup>55</sup> Others had younger siblings arrive and were not told of their relationship, which seems to have been the case with my grandmother's younger sister, Alice. When I spoke with Ruth about these separations, she understood them as the staff's way of 'keeping an eye on us'. Safety was also Ruth's way of making sense of the high level of restriction and management of the children, contrary to the freedom that the sprawling grounds and untamed landscapes suggest:

*JM: My impression was that there is this nice big area, but really your life is quite restricted.*

Ruth: Yes, kept as safe as possible. And the only funny thing that went on was the beggars, and they'd come and do their chanting, from down at Kalimpong, down at the village. Only on rare occasions did we have a walk down to the village, what was it for, I don't know. ...

*JM: But that was quite rare, wasn't it?*

Ruth: Very rare. Oh our lives were so full and preoccupied with school and games and housework and cooking.<sup>56</sup>

Graham worked hard to inculcate a sense of family and a boarding school experience in the set-up of the cottages. Each housed thirty to forty children and was staffed by one housemother and an aunty. Sports days and other events were structured around



**Figure 3.3** ‘Homes birthday 1916’, Kalimpong. Courtesy Gammie private collection.

cottage loyalties (Figure 3.3). But the broad ‘Anglo-Indian’ categorization disguises the particular cultural dynamism of cottage life, where children from diverse origins were lumped together whether they grew up on plantations, with Anglo-Indian families in Calcutta, or in other circumstances. In this regard Graham was active in ‘creating’ Anglo-Indians, since the tea planter’s children were exposed to certain traits of that community – such as the dreaded ‘chee-chee’ accent – that they would not have otherwise been.<sup>57</sup> For their part, the plantation children brought their maternal language and culture to the cottages. The resultant hybridity is exemplified by the ‘Homes slang’, which combined English boarding school colloquialisms and frequently used Hindi terms.<sup>58</sup> Despite Graham’s best efforts, non-European cultural and linguistic habits from cottage life and the plantations persisted, all the way to New Zealand, as Chapter 8 will show.

This hybridity was apparent to some extent in the children’s meals in the cottages. On the plantations, the children’s diet consisted of a combination of British and Indian food. The same seems to have held true at the Homes. Ruth Nicholls remembered the diet as mostly ‘English’ food: ‘Porridge in the morning, maybe a fruit or two like banana and things you can add to it. And was it toast or plain bread? I’ve forgotten. And a cup of tea.’ The main meal was ‘soup and a middle course, and pudding. I was a fussy eater of course. Didn’t like the brussel sprouts.’ Although Ruth recalled the food being ‘English’, and based around meat and potatoes, they did occasionally have curry, which was ‘very mild, compared to when we went home, and had the real McCoy’.<sup>59</sup> The legacy of eating highly

spiced curries that will be discussed in Chapter 8 is perhaps indicative of a greater reliance on local food in the earlier period when self-sufficiency was not possible, or of abiding memories of the plantation.

Religious diversity was suppressed by the daily Christian rituals that dominated life at the Homes. In a group discussion in the documentary *We Homes Chaps*, every participant expressed a different response to this. Some stated that religion was forced on them; others felt that their cultural origins were never compromised; yet another remembered Christianity as a benign influence – singing nice hymns in church and learning English phrases. Ruth Nicholls remembers occasionally having multiple church services in one day and always having a service on Sunday. They said grace before meals in the cottage. She vividly recalls ministers visiting the Homes and giving sermons: ‘Launch out into the deep! That was one of the sermons. And hellfire and brimstone. That was do as you’re told or else you’ll go to hell you see.’ Ruth found the religious training a ‘bit overwhelming’ and life at the Homes in general to be ‘strict, very strict’. When I suggested that she must have looked forward to the holidays, she replied, ‘Oh yes. Freedom.’ I asked Ruth if it was hard to leave the plantation and return to the Homes after the holidays:

Of course! We used to cry and my Dad had tears rolling down his face, and the dog would get into a depression, and all the servants would come. Plus, the workers on the tea plantation, quite a few of them, would have heard that *babaluc*, that is children, were going back to school. And so there’d be a gathering. They’d do the *salaams*.<sup>60</sup>

Ruth’s case is enlightening because she moved between plantation life and the Homes, and thus her reflections bring immediacy to the racial and cultural dynamics of the parallel childhoods the two sites engendered. Her nostalgic memories of the plantation, which she would happily talk about at length, contrasted noticeably with her difficulty remembering aspects of life at the Homes. The Nicholls family exemplifies the situation where plantation children were undoubtedly ‘rescued’ from their future, rather than the present as Graham’s appeals suggested. Planters were convinced by the Homes emigration scheme, sacrificing domestic arrangements that in at least some cases functioned without issue, in order to achieve an idealized future in the settler colonies. It is important to note, however, that Ruth’s regular visits ‘home’ were exceptional. For most plantation children, holidays were remembered as a difficult time, when other children would go home and they would be left behind.<sup>61</sup> This was compounded

by uncertainty about their familial circumstances. While their bodies were kept busy from moment to moment, their minds were free to wonder about who their parents were, whether they were alive, and if perhaps their father might arrive one day as other fathers did.

Evidence of the planters' continued – albeit indirect – involvement during the period of their children's residence at the Homes challenges any simple thesis of abandonment. Although few children enjoyed a level of contact akin to that of the Nicholls family, the fathers from the case study families did express an interest in their children's progress and eventual placement. Examining their correspondence turns our attention back to the plantations and the continuance of life there after the children were sent to Kalimpong. The planters' definitive action in sending the children away from their mothers does not mean that the issue was resolved. It is likely to have been a source of ongoing tension in the bungalow, especially with the production of further offspring. The women's archival silence and the planters' functional attendance to their children's new circumstance should not disguise the fact that domestic life at the plantation was no doubt substantially affected by the sudden absence of the children.

Egerton Peters's communication with Graham evidently stopped for six years once the first two children were safely deposited at the Homes. That silence was sharply broken when Peters received a letter from ten-year-old Lorna in 1912. His response, addressed to her housemother, questioned the wisdom of putting his daughter in direct communication with him and asked 'whether it was quite fair without consulting me'.<sup>62</sup> Clearly rattled by the unannounced and unexpected breach of the distance between them, Peters declared that he 'should be delighted to hear from and write to the child if it did not appear to me to be against her best interests'.<sup>63</sup> He considered that 'the atmosphere of a tea garden and close contact with natives would be decidedly objectionable for her' and worried that she would 'expect later to be sent to me for holidays'. His letters betray the peculiarly malleable quality that people of mixed race were believed to embody. In her six years at the Homes, Lorna had apparently been transformed from a wild child who spoke no English to one whom Egerton Peters imagined could not bear to be in contact with her maternal family. Peters's letters during his children's time at the Homes suggest a man who struggled to come to terms with his decision to send them away, particularly after the death of their mother in 1911.

Peters's anxiety about the decision to deposit his children at the Homes was less apparent in planters' letters in the other family files. Francis Hawkins's letters for the duration of Richard's residence at the Homes dealt only with fees, apart from a moment in 1918 (some seven years after his son was sent to Kalimpong)

when he wrote that 'it suddenly occurred to me the other day that Richard gets no pocket money' and henceforth allowed an extra 2 rupees per month for this purpose.<sup>64</sup> In 1919 Hawkins retired to England to care for his mother. There is no evidence that he ever visited the Homes prior to leaving India. Similarly Paul Moller's letters dealt only with the payment of fees and sending another child to Kalimpong. James Dewar continued to check on the progress of the Spalding boys during their few years at the Homes. John Gammie wrote regularly to Graham, enquiring as to his children's health and requesting photographs of them.<sup>65</sup> Gavin Gammie later recalled that his father did make several visits to the school, but he only met with the older children. Like the children of other families, Gavin would have been unaware of his father's continued interest in his well-being. Life at the Homes can therefore be characterized as one of monotony and routine for the children, who moved towards an unknown future with little or no familial contact.

## Leaving India

Leaving Kalimpong and then India made complete the physical wrenching of the children from their birth families, and, as this section will demonstrate, this second removal was equally attributable to the wishes of their fathers as the initial despatch to Kalimpong. Despite the difficulties in achieving emigration, placement in the settler colonies was consistently portrayed as the most desirable outcome for Homes graduates and one that was offered as a reward for the 'best and brightest' students. In practice, however, the most influential factors seem to have been a tea planting father who pressed for emigration and was willing to finance the trip, and timing – reaching working age when groups of Homes graduates were being allowed to enter New Zealand. Fairer skin was also considered an important attribute for emigration. The wishes of the young people themselves were afforded minimal consideration. Their futures were another uncertainty that the children lived with until emigration was, often hastily, arranged.

The intermittent correspondence between tea planters and Graham over the course of their children's residence at the Homes was followed by a flurry of communication, equal in frequency and urgency to the initial enquiries, about where they would be placed upon reaching working age. This correspondence was the key forum for deciding upon destinations. The letters provide further evidence of Graham adapting his idealized vision in response to the practical difficulties of realizing emigration, by encouraging the fathers to play a more



active role in their children's futures than either side had anticipated. The planters' response to this was entirely negative. Egerton Peters, for example, was adamant that he had entered into a contract that included sending the children to the colonies. In 1912 Peters replied to a letter from Graham, the content of which left him 'much disturbed'.<sup>66</sup> He took offence at Graham's suggestion that he might take responsibility for the children when they had 'grown up', explaining his perspective in no uncertain terms:

When I sent these children to the homes, it was after long and anxious consideration. ... Since I sent them away I have regarded it as absolutely settled that they would be sent to the colonies by the St Andrew's Colonial Homes, and but for that understanding would never have parted with them.<sup>67</sup>

Peters apparently received a reassuring response to his concerns, but raised the issue again on several occasions between 1914 and 1917. A crucial point in this correspondence was Peters's heightened concern for 'Eurasian girls' who were educated and then 'turned out' to earn a living in India, which he believed could 'only lead to misery of the worst description'.<sup>68</sup> Peters's desperate frustration at the thought that he had made a mistake by sending his children to the Homes led to the revelation that, at least for him, there had been other options. 'Had I for a moment thought that they would be brought up at the Homes to no better future than to find such work as they may in India,' he wrote, 'I would have brought them up on the native side by preference.'<sup>69</sup> This supports the discussion from Chapter 2 about the possibilities for children to be accepted by their maternal families. Peters's final plea took immediate effect – probably because it coincided with plans to emigrate a group. Less than a month later he wrote of his 'great relief' that Lorna and George would be sent to New Zealand 'where they will have a fair chance in life'.<sup>70</sup>

Dora Moller, the second eldest of Paul Moller's children, was in the same group to New Zealand. In July 1920 Dora had written to Graham to thank him for allowing her to go to the plantation for a holiday. 'I have arrived home safely,' she wrote, 'Father was so pleased to see me. He gave me a hearty welcome.'<sup>71</sup> Six months later, just prior to her departure for New Zealand, Paul Moller wrote that Dora was 'still here and is very [lovely]'.<sup>72</sup> After she left Moller wrote again, to thank Graham 'for the way you have brought up Dora, it's a great credit to your big institution'.<sup>73</sup> In the same letter Moller informed Graham that he had been 'ordered home' (to Denmark) by his doctor and would not be returning to India. For his children still at the Homes, Moller wrote that 'as already indicated, I want them all to immigrate to N.Z., and arranged to make annual payments to cover

school fees until that time came. Meanwhile his son Charles wrote the first of a flurry of letters asking for help to join his sister in New Zealand. Evidently he had the opportunity to sail with her group in 1920, but for some unstated reason opted to work in India instead. This he seemed to regret soon afterwards, and he wrote regularly to the Homes asking for assistance to emigrate, which would eventuate five years later.

In 1924 John Gammie agreed to Graham's suggestion that his eldest children, Fergus and Betty, be sent to New Zealand ('if you think it would be a good idea') and promised to raise the required sum of 1,500 rupees by the end of the year.<sup>74</sup> Gammie expressed a desire to see his children before they left India, but struggled to organize a meeting in Calcutta because he was in the process of being transferred to another plantation. He asked that Fergus and Betty be instructed to write to him via the Homes, as otherwise 'letters might go astray and you will always know my address.'<sup>75</sup> Here we see the institution's role as a stabilizing presence in an interracial empire family; a function that would usually – in white families – be performed by relatives in England acting as anchors for their highly mobile and scattered families. As it turned out, Gammie did get to see the children, a meeting that left him satisfied with their upbringing at the Homes. His affective letter to James Purdie demonstrated his concern that the ties between siblings be maintained. 'They've kept that nice disposition they had as kiddies,' he wrote, 'and from what they told me I gathered that the family still had that love for each other which is so nice to see. ... It was so nice them recognizing me at once.'<sup>76</sup>

In a letter concerning his son Richard's future prospects, Francis Hawkins wrote of his expectation that 'in the course of a year or two he will be starting in life,' asking whether Richard exhibited 'any liking for machinery as I would like him to be apprenticed to engineering if he has any inclination that way.'<sup>77</sup> The following year Francis replied to a letter from Purdie regarding Richard's future:

As regards Dickie's future I note all you say re sending him to Britain. I should certainly like him to be sent out of India but my investments have not turned out as they promised and I am afraid I couldn't afford to keep him over here but I am prepared to find £100 to start him and am quite willing to leave the manner of doing this in Dr Graham's hands.<sup>78</sup>

Francis was apparently responding to a suggestion by Purdie that since he had returned to Britain, he might be able to assist his son emigrating there. Francis's desire to avoid direct involvement in his son's future could scarcely be described as subtle, and his reasons were thin; although he could not afford to 'keep' his

son he was able to find a substantial sum to see him settled elsewhere, the details of which he was happy to leave to Graham. Soon afterwards Francis wrote that he was pleased that his son would 'be started in something he has a liking for. ... I hope you will be successful in your efforts to place him in America.'<sup>79</sup> Richard was in fact sent to New Zealand in 1925 in the same group as Charles Spalding.

James Dewar had always been clear that the Spalding brothers should go to the colonies, and it was perhaps a more straightforward case given that their father had passed away and could take no further part in their lives. Dewar wrote to Graham in 1925, responding negatively to the suggestion that Charles visit his mother prior to leaving for New Zealand: 'Unless Charlie particularly wishes to see his mother before he goes away, I think it would serve no useful purpose if she went up to see him. She is not a good woman.'<sup>80</sup> The same issue arose when Charles's brother Tom was due to emigrate. In 1926 Charles wrote to Purdie from Te Awamutu in the North Island of New Zealand, and referred to an established correspondence with his mother. 'I got a letter from my mother,' he wrote, 'and she told me that Donald will be going to the Homes soon. She ask [*sic*] me if she could see me one day when I have some money and I answer [*sic*] the letter back, told her that I might see you some day. And she said she would like to see Tom before he goes to N.Z. I will be glad if Tom could see her before he comes here.'<sup>81</sup> Charles's level of literacy was noticeably lower than that of other emigrants, attributable to his age upon admission (twelve years). His request that Tom see their mother before emigrating, whom they would both have remembered very well, was not granted.

Although it seems Graham sought Dewar's opinion about Charles seeing his mother before emigrating, it is clear that the Homes were very wary of the prospect, and careful to avoid complicating the long-term separations from their birth families already achieved. As explained in Chapter 2, the mother of the Moller children had managed to keep the children on the plantation for some years prior to them being sent to the Homes. Dora's extended holiday at the plantation before leaving for New Zealand could indicate that she was also successful in negotiating some time with her daughter before losing contact with her permanently. Yet Dora's letter did not mention her mother, which could be explained in multiple ways – that she was no longer alive, or that their relationship was difficult, or simply that Dora knew Graham would not be pleased to hear of her reconnecting with her mother – but it does also leave open the possibility that Dora was allowed to visit the plantation *because* her mother was not present. The references to the women also raise the issue of literacy. The Spalding file subsequently contained correspondence from the boys' mother,

Prosoni; a typed, translated letter marked with her thumbprint. Literacy was a major limiting factor in any future contact with their children, and the women's understanding of this must have lent urgency to the desire to see them prior to leaving India.

What of Jean and Rend Mortimore, whose father was not in the picture and did not therefore provide the impetus for them to be emigrated? Evidently their mother, Ka Ngelibou (Nelly), had become literate while her children were at the Homes; however, this skill was used to protest their fate rather than exert any control over it. The Mortimore file contained two identical forms that preceded the first letter from Nelly. The forms were declarations signed by Jean and Rend, acknowledging the cost of passage to New Zealand as a 'debt of honour' to be repaid to the Homes as soon as possible in order that 'the money spent on my behalf may be available for another pupil of the Homes.'<sup>82</sup> The agreed sum was £40. Six days after these statements were signed, Nelly penned a letter from Shillong in Assam. 'Dear Sir', she began, 'I have learnt with much regret that my children Jean and Renrose have left Kalimpong for New Zealand on the 23rd of last month and this news comes to me like a shock and breaks my heart and I feel I cannot bear it until now I can write something to you.'<sup>83</sup>

Nelly was apparently aware that Jean and Rend were due to leave the Homes, as she referred to a previous request for a photograph of the children before they were sent away; but, crucially, she expected that they would be placed in India as she had requested on the application form. Though her letter followed polite conventions, Nelly's frustration was palpable. Having done everything possible to maintain contact with her children she remained powerless to have her pleas taken seriously at this utterly crucial moment. Resigned to the fact of their departure, she now asked only that the promised photograph be sent to her along with a 'full address' that would enable her to write to Jean and Rend in New Zealand. After all that had gone before, in the flick of an eye, Nelly's children were gone.

Of course this was a crucial juncture for the emigrants too. The danger of following the archive, and the emigration narrative, is to miss the distinction between the initial separation and leaving India. Being sent to Kalimpong often meant residing in reasonably close proximity to their place of birth. Although mothers who attempted to visit their children at the Homes were refused entry at the gate, the shift to New Zealand made the possibility of maternal reunion as adults extremely remote. Those placed in India were also limited in their capacity to achieve such reunions – due to the women's absence from the Homes records, and the practice of telling children that their mothers were deceased

when they were not – but there was at least the possibility of returning to the plantation and tracing their birth family.

Leaving India also meant leaving the institution in Kalimpong where these young women and men had grown up. It meant leaving friends that they had lived in close quarters with for more than a decade; the spectacular views of the Himalayas that they would all speak of in later life; the food, the chores and the daily routines; all of the drama of Homes life and all of the boredom; housemothers who would be vividly remembered for better or worse; and precious interactions with Graham or Purdie that would not be forgotten. For some, emigration also brought the keen anticipation of being reunited with siblings – and friends – already placed in New Zealand. They would carry the identifier of belonging to a particular cottage with them, and more bonds would be formed within the groups that set sail from Kalimpong.

These patterns of separation and reunion characterize both the origins and the legacy of the Kalimpong narrative. When they left the Homes, the emigrants were still embedded in complex transnational family arrangements, but they had little knowledge of this. Graham imagined their transfer to a distant settler colony as the final stage of extracting them from those circumstances, where temporary placement with local families would facilitate a complete break from problematic ancestral ties to India and Britain. The first graduates to depart Kalimpong for New Zealand did so prior to Graham ever visiting the colony. He sent them abroad on the same terms that their fathers had sent them away from plantations, with an idealized view of their destination based on knowledge gained and circulated through imperial networks.

The emigrants were delivered into a place with its own developing racial politics, its own gendered working norms suited to the requirements of an agricultural settler colony, and the reputation of a distinctly egalitarian society. Graham's efforts to formulate and circulate discursive connections between the two colonies – as outlined in this chapter – was a forerunner to a more concrete exchange of people and the formation of solid ties with settler families that would bridge the space between India and New Zealand. All along, the archival project to future-proof the physical separations continued: distancing the children from their mothers; creating Anglo-Indians out of tea planters' children; and placing them in a documented story of rescue, improvement and the opportunity to be part of not only a colonial family, but also the wider imperial family and indeed the dispersed 'Homes family'. This was always going to be a complex arrangement but it was deemed better than the simple bonds of birth.



**Figure 3.4** The 1925 emigrants on the SS *Janus*. Courtesy Milne private collection.

A photograph of the large 1925 group en route to New Zealand (Figure 3.4), which included Richard Hawkins and Charles Spalding, provides a contemplative counterpoint to the studio images the emigrants posed for in Calcutta and that Graham later circulated in the *Homes Magazine*. I have seen this photograph in several descendant collections. The image of these young people on the open sea is a powerful reminder of the reality of what Graham's scheme entailed, and their faces convey the anxious space they occupied – between their collective pasts and individual futures, between adolescence and adulthood, and between their ambiguous racial status as 'Anglo-Indian' and the hope of becoming 'colonials'. It also captures something of the spirit of those sea journeys. My grandmother, Lorna, wrote with a sense of liberation from the SS *Janus* (five years earlier) that was understandable given her fifteen years isolated at the Homes. Writing on behalf of 'your grown up cherubs from Kalimpong', Lorna's chatty letter related a steady stream of onboard intrigues and events.<sup>84</sup> Nostalgic memories of the 'dear old Homes, which we all long to see once again' had already become part of the way she understood her place in the world, and these memories were no doubt matched by her unrecorded imaginings of what lay ahead.



## Section II

# New Zealand – Settlement





## 1910s: Pathway to a Settler Colony

By 1905, debate about the prospects for settling Homes graduates abroad was overtaken by the pressing need to find placements for the young people deemed ready for work. While 1908 sits now as a clear marker of the beginning of the organized emigration scheme to New Zealand, the opening section of this chapter aims to capture the uncertainty about where – if anywhere – the emigration scheme might be realized, especially prior to Graham's tour of the Dominions in 1909. Young people's lives were subject to unapologetic experimentation as individuals and small parties were sent away from the isolation of Kalimpong, to Calcutta, where they saw the ocean for the first time. Chaperoned by Homes staff, they climbed aboard ships, enduring and enjoying lengthy sea journeys with multiple stops before eventually arriving at Port Chalmers, in the far south of New Zealand. There they were handed into what Graham hoped was the protective embrace of colonial families.

As the final stage of Graham's grand scheme for tea planters' children, emigration was both a beginning and an end. Beneath the rhetoric of work, improvement, and the greater imperial good, lay the belief that emigration completed the long process of delivery away from problematic tea families and into productive colonial families. This transition saw the Homes occupy a new place in the emigrants' life narratives. When they left India, the Homes family was to become their origin family, and Kalimpong the place that they should feel a nostalgia for. Other pupils and their in-lieu parents – 'Daddy' Graham, James Purdie, the housemothers and aunties – would be the people they missed, and wrote to, when they felt lonely in their new homes. Graham seldom stated this aim outright but frequently reinforced it. As he wrote after visiting the emigrants in New Zealand in 1909, 'Not one of the boys indicated the slightest desire to return to India, but their eyes moistened as they talked of the Homes and the old friends.'<sup>1</sup>

Extending the familial ideals of the scheme across the Pacific Ocean to New Zealand, Graham found a further point of connection to a settler colony whose

immigration policies had long been structured around kinship, family and local connections.<sup>2</sup> Yet in assessing Graham's claim that colonial resettlement placed the Kalimpong emigrants simultaneously into the greater 'imperial family', it is important to signal changes afoot in the relationships between the constituents of the 'messy agglomeration' that was the British Empire.<sup>3</sup> In the year before the first emigrants arrived, New Zealand became a Dominion, following Canada and Australia in taking steps to achieve greater autonomy and to be distinguished from 'conquest' colonies like India. This was also the era that settler colonies began to develop identities distinct from each other, and the racialized management of their populations – both Indigenous and non-white migrants – was a key component of this.<sup>4</sup> Graham was aware of New Zealand's reputation for progressive race relations and looked for evidence of racial harmony and 'blending' when he visited in 1909. His expectation that the rhetorical 'imperial family' would persist despite evidence of growing colonial nationalisms was signalled by his concerted efforts to develop infrastructures in New Zealand for supporting Kalimpong emigrants in the long term.

This chapter traces the establishment of the scheme to New Zealand, from early enquiries and the tentative departure of several graduates, to Graham's visit in 1909, and the subsequent emigration of larger groups into the fold of an emerging local Kalimpong community. In this section of the book – Chapters 4–6 – I deploy a variety of sources to disrupt both the progressive narrative of the scheme's development in New Zealand, and Graham's belief that the 'colonists' left India and their birth families behind upon emigration. One key distinction of the archives for the 1910s is that there is little, if any, government record of the emigrants' entry, despite their potentially problematic status under the racially restrictive immigration legislation enacted from the late nineteenth century. This, and the fact that the children from the six families did not emigrate until the 1920s, increases my reliance in this chapter upon documentary sources generated by the Homes.

A broad scan of *Homes Magazine* is nonetheless sufficient to demonstrate early uncertainty about the feasibility of the emigration scheme and of New Zealand as a destination. It also brings the emigrants' voices to bear for the first time, as excerpts of their letters were printed in the *Homes Magazine* as a means of promotion and also to cultivate the aspirations of other pupils. Though selective and largely positive in tone, these excerpts do include some candid portrayals of the difficulties of life in New Zealand, challenging the narrative of a smooth transition to the Dominion. Their letters also describe the development of a local 'Kalimpong community' through the maintenance of social contact

with other emigrants. As to continued involvement with their birth families, it is only towards the end of this chapter that I can begin to challenge Graham's assertions about the emigrants' turn away from India, using the men's enlistment documentation for war service.

## Tentative forays into the New World

Early editions of the *Homes Magazine* carried numerous articles that theorized the settler colonies' economic, environmental and social suitability as destinations for its graduates (see Chapter 3). This information was used to develop the training programme at the Homes and to extend the discussion of emigration as a solution to the Anglo-Indian problem. Not mentioned in these debates, but of equally pressing concern to the scheme, was the wave of racially restrictive border legislation enacted in the settler colonies and the United States at the turn of the century.<sup>5</sup> In New Zealand, it was the 1899 Immigration Restriction Act that adhered to this global trend. The absence of any discussion about these restrictions in the *Homes Magazine* was surely due in part to Graham's continued acceptance of planters' children on the proviso that they would go to the colonies. But judging from his later reactions to colonial objections to Anglo-Indian immigration, it seems Graham did not anticipate that the new legislation would apply to Homes graduates who were, in his eyes, European in every way that mattered.

The issue was brought to the fore – though still not mentioned in the *Homes Magazine* – in 1905, when the first boy was sent abroad from Kalimpong. An associate of Graham's in Calcutta, a businessman named D. M. Hamilton, put the young man on a boat to Australia. The difficulty he experienced upon landing prompted an exchange of letters between Hamilton and the manager of the Union Steam Ship Company in Dunedin, Charles Holdsworth. 'It was only after a great deal of difficulty that the authorities would allow him to land', Hamilton wrote, 'because he was a little dark in colour.'<sup>6</sup> Here, then, was the first clash of Graham's idealized emigration vision with the hardening of settler colonial racial attitudes. Hamilton sought information from Holdsworth about the situation in New Zealand: how the law was being implemented, the extent to which it reflected public opinion, and the likelihood of Homes graduates securing employment. Playing on the burgeoning reputation of New Zealand as 'more enlightened' than Australia, he hoped that Holdsworth and his countrymen would be more willing 'to give any decent lad or young woman a chance.'<sup>7</sup>

Holdsworth's reply was sympathetic, but he was reluctant to encourage the scheme. His advice regarding the law was straightforward; the 1899 Act did not exclude immigrants on the basis of colour and contained 'no bar' to Anglo-Indian emigration.<sup>8</sup> He enclosed a copy of the legislation with his reply. Regarding social acceptance, however, Holdsworth was decidedly less optimistic. His discussions with 'several people' led him to believe that it would be difficult to secure 'suitable employment' for the boys.<sup>9</sup> He conceded that there was demand for domestic servants, but argued that a local organization would need to take responsibility for young migrant women. 'Several of the churches take considerable interest in mission work in India,' he added, 'and it is possible that these may be able to do something.'<sup>10</sup> Holdsworth's response raised a question about the very sector of Dunedin society that would become crucial to the working of the scheme. To what extent might the missionary impulse, fostered overseas, find expression at home – by welcoming Anglo-Indian adolescents into New Zealand communities and households?

Almost three years later, in January 1908, came the first news of emigration from the Homes. An article in the *Homes Magazine* entitled 'Beginning Life's Battle' reported the departure of six young men 'to take their places in the world.'<sup>11</sup> The two 'fine European lads' destined for New Zealand were described as 'the first emigrants definitely set forth by the Homes', implying that there had been previous unsuccessful or informal departures. Emphasizing the cost and organization required, the article noted that 'favourable terms for their passage' had been secured with a Calcutta shipping company and that 'Miss Ponder of Waitahuna, Dunedin, is kindly arranging for their settlement'. Despite these favourable terms, the article invited 'any friends' with a particular interest in the scheme to meet the cost of the boys' tickets. The same article announced the placement of four boys in India, who 'came to us late and whose educational advantages had been limited.'<sup>12</sup> Hence this article is notable not only for reporting domestic and overseas placements together, but also for articulating the hierarchy of potential destinations in which emigration was reserved for the 'finest' – and the whitest. This was not the last time Graham would refer to his graduates as 'European' despite those who were domiciled (and not mixed race) comprising a tiny minority at the Homes.<sup>13</sup>

While local placement was less complicated and less costly than emigration, it too required the development of an active network to oversee the graduates from apprenticeship through to employment, and to find appropriate accommodation for them. Committees were established across India for this purpose.<sup>14</sup> The four boys in this 1908 article were sent to Sibpur Engineering College in Howrah

(near Calcutta), and 'kindly' promised subsequent employment in the motor workshops of 'Messrs. Kilburn & Co.' Graham was at pains to point out how they, like the emigrants, had benefited from the improving effect of the Homes, by being spared an upbringing in their 'limited' familial circumstances and through placement in work outside (and by implication above) that traditionally reserved for Anglo-Indians. The boys were, the article claimed, 'the first of the domiciled class to be trained for this branch of work.'<sup>15</sup> Though photographed in separate groups, the emigrants and the Howrah placements were dressed in identical attire: suits and ties, pocket watches, and knee-high boots pulled up over their trousers. The version of Anglo-Indian respectability cultivated at Kalimpong was necessarily understood to prepare the boys for destinations that differed enormously – in social structure, employment, and distance from their birth family and the Homes.

According to Graham's later notes on the scheme, it was Reverend James Ponder of Waitahuna in the deep south of New Zealand who 'received' the first two male emigrants in 1908.<sup>16</sup> Ponder was connected to Graham by nationality, vocation, mobility and family. Educated at the University of Edinburgh, Ponder spent time in Australia before visiting his brother and sister in Kalimpong, both of whom worked as medical missionaries there.<sup>17</sup> His experiences in India prompted him to join the ministry, and he returned to Edinburgh to study theology. Ponder was stationed at parishes in Victoria (Australia) and then Fiji, before a bout of ill health saw him travel to New Zealand to recuperate. He stayed. Inducted to the rural Strath Taieri (Middlemarch) parish in 1903, Ponder moved south to Waitahuna in 1906, and then to Wallacetown in 1918, where he died in office in 1920. Settled by Europeans in the 1860s, large run-holders in the parishes where Ponder ministered were now into their second and third generations of what were becoming notable Otago and Southland families.<sup>18</sup> As a fellow Scot who was widely travelled, had spent time in India and was in 1908 settled in the rural heartland of Otago, Ponder was well placed to be of great assistance to Graham (Figure 4.1).

Ponder publicized the settlement of the first two Homes graduates in Dunedin in an article in the *Otago Witness* in August 1908 entitled "'Kim" and His Brothers'. Expecting the readership to understand his reference to the recently published novel which 'most of us have read', he used Rudyard Kipling's portrait of Kim as the context from which to introduce the Homes scheme.<sup>19</sup> The novel was an 'eye-opener' to the condition of many Britons in India that was 'alas ... far more common than is known'. Downplaying the Indian ancestry of the Homes children, the article instead aligned their circumstance with 'the great



**Figure 4.1** Towns in New Zealand where early Kalimpong emigrants were placed. Map created by Harley McCabe.

flotsam and jetsam’ of domiciled Europeans in India. Ponder gave a detailed account of the Homes, and upon describing the children’s training in ‘industrial departments’ and farming, announced the placement of the two young men on a farm near Dunedin. ‘This article is mainly written,’ Ponder admitted, ‘with the view of securing similar openings for other lads.’<sup>20</sup> The girls’ training was described as ‘at present confined chiefly to lace-making’; however, the recently opened Steel Memorial Hospital at the Homes was to be used for nurses’ training,

and thus 'when a girl leaves the homes she shall be in a position to earn her own livelihood, besides being a well-equipped housewife.' No mention was made of emigrating these young women.

Ponder described the cottage system at the Homes and the aunties 'who by personal example show that work and refinement are not antagonistic', noting that 'one Dunedin lady has lately become an "auntie"' and that other New Zealand women were likely to follow her. The 'auntie' to whom Ponder referred was Mary Kennedy. The meeting to farewell her to the 'Church of Scotland's Kalimpong Mission' brought together the local community engaged in foreign mission work that Holdsworth had referred to, and was described in the Presbyterian publication *The Outlook*.<sup>21</sup> Among those in attendance was the notable Dunedin figure, and convenor of the newly established Foreign Missions, Rev. W. Hewitson, who spoke about his recent visit to India.<sup>22</sup> The convenor of Home Missions was also there, along with two overseas missionaries on furlough, including 'Rev W. MacKean, Kalimpong', who spoke to the congregation about the Homes scheme and the nature of the work in which Miss Kennedy would be engaged.<sup>23</sup> As we shall see further on, two sisters of MacKean's lived in Dunedin and were soon to become part of Graham's local support network for women emigrants.

The strengthening relationship between Dunedin and Kalimpong featured in an article in the *Homes Magazine* in January 1909 entitled 'Emigration', which informed readers that 'New Zealand does not close its doors so tightly as Australia'.<sup>24</sup> 'A year ago we sent there the first two boys and the experiment has, as far as we can judge, proved highly successful. ... Two more lads left for New Zealand on 5th December.' This assessment was preceded by an admission that while emigration to 'the freer and more robust Colonies' was initially one of the 'chief outlets we contemplated', the 'closing of Australia to Eurasians and the better prospects apparent in India' meant emigration was now 'less prominent' in the Homes vision. Despite this significant shift, and signalling Graham's stubborn persistence with the scheme, the article stressed that emigration was not 'being lost sight of and we believe that for certain of the boys and girls it offers by far the best career'. Enquiries had been received for 'mother helps' in New Zealand, and the Homes was hopeful of making arrangements to send young women to fill these roles. The article emphasized the Homes' innovative approach, informing readers that the two young men recently sent to New Zealand had been 'trained on the Farm and Mr Goodwin gave them a course of lectures on agriculture'.<sup>25</sup>

This 1909 article also brought news of emigration to a destination other than New Zealand. The accompanying photograph grouped five departees



together, listing them by destination rather than name: 'U.S.A. Emigrant [2], Renard Train, Sibpur College, New Zealand Emigrant.' The experiment to the United States began in similar fashion to New Zealand, with a Mr and Mrs Brown, who were involved in training on the Homes farm before leaving to settle as 'agriculturalists in Virginia.'<sup>26</sup> The Browns took a female graduate with them and sent for her brother and 'another lad' one month later. 'It will be interesting to learn how those three do,' the *Homes Magazine* article noted, 'and if the result is satisfactory we may be able, through Mr Brown, to arrange for more to go to the United States.'<sup>27</sup> As in New Zealand, farm labour was seen as the appropriate entry point; it matched graduates to the ideology of opening up the land, and allowed their new lives to begin within the protection of a family connected to the Homes.<sup>28</sup> In the United States, however, the scheme did not continue. There were no further reports of graduates emigrating to any of the settler colonies or to the United States prior to Graham's tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1909.

### Establishing a New Zealand community

The origins of Graham's later sentiment that New Zealand was 'the best place in the world for the boys and girls of Kalimpong' can be traced to his 1909 trip there. Instructed by his physician to take a health trip, Graham visited Australia and New Zealand to assess their suitability as destinations for Homes graduates. Although the title of his three-page report in the *Homes Magazine* was 'Australia and New Zealand', Australia took up just one-quarter of one page at the end of the article under the subheading 'A White Australia.'<sup>29</sup> Graham admitted that the 'cry for more people for the land [was] even louder than in New Zealand', but wrote nothing of the prospects for Homes graduates to settle there. Development of the tropical regions of Australia was the cause of much racial anxiety, he suggested, owing to the debate about the need for 'coloured labour' to work in such conditions. Omitted from this report, but noted in his diary, was Graham's frustration at the stubborn preoccupation of Australian officials with biological calculations of racial status. When he raised the possibility of special consideration for Homes graduates, these officials informed him that even if this was granted, it would only apply to those who were more than 50 per cent European blood, effectively ruling out those he was most keen to emigrate – tea planters' children.<sup>30</sup>

The New Zealand section of Graham's report, along with his brief diary of the trip, took an entirely different tone to that of Australia. Geographically he found it more suited to the ideal of working the land in a temperate climate. In terms of settler culture, Graham warmed to the familiar feel of Dunedin with its largely Scottish Presbyterian population.<sup>31</sup> And unlike the complex race questions under debate in Australia, in New Zealand he looked for signs of the reputedly harmonious relationship between British settlers and Māori. In the south, he noted the coexistence of Māori and Scottish place names; in the North Island, he met an 'old Māori lady – tattooed face, MacKenzie tartan dress', and visited a noted school for Māori girls run by a well-known Anglican missionary family.<sup>32</sup> In later reflections he would repeatedly credit the success of the scheme in New Zealand to the 'presence of Māori' and to the popular notion that 50 per cent of the Dominion's population 'had Māori blood' and that in time there would be 'complete fusion'.<sup>33</sup> This meant, he hoped, that Homes graduates with darker skin colour might be mistaken for part-Māori, which was something they could 'boast' of; and, whether visible or not, their mixed ancestry would be the norm rather than the exception.

Graham brought with him the first young woman (Aileen Sinclair) to be placed in New Zealand, and planned to visit the four boys already on farms. Upon arrival in Dunedin, they were greeted at the wharf by Aileen's brother Clarence, a 1908 emigrant, and David Kennedy, the father of the Homes auntie mentioned earlier in this chapter.<sup>34</sup> Kennedy was a Harbour Board official, and had written earlier in the year to the Customs Department to enquire about Kalimpong women emigrating to New Zealand.<sup>35</sup> The image of these two men waiting quietly together at the harbour, Kennedy eager for news of his daughter and Sinclair about to be reunited with his sister, speaks to the intricate ties that formed the nucleus of Graham's local network – individuals of diverse backgrounds brought together by familial connections to Kalimpong and intimate knowledge of the circumstances that underwrote the scheme.

Upon arrival Graham immediately set about calling on numerous individuals and their families to enlist their assistance.<sup>36</sup> Although the Ponders had assumed responsibility for placement of the men, Aileen Sinclair's arrival prompted the establishment of a more formal infrastructure of protection for the women. 'The care and supervision of the girls is an anxious and important matter', Graham noted in his diary, announcing the formation of a 'Committee of Ladies' to shoulder this responsibility. The chair of the new committee, Mrs Scott, was 'already connected to Kalimpong through her brother (Mr MacKean) one of our

colleagues.<sup>37</sup> Another member of the committee, Mrs Church, was the wife of a local doctor, and another sister of McKean's. Graham also sought out notable members of the local Presbyterian community. He met Reverend William Hewitson, who was present at the farewell for Mary Kennedy and had just taken up the role of professor at the newly opened Knox (theological) College. At St Andrew's parish, Graham met Reverend Dr Rutherford Waddell. St Andrew's had its own missionary scheme, and Waddell was a key supporter of numerous social reforms.<sup>38</sup> Graham no doubt felt at home among this Presbyterian community of men and women busying themselves with social problems associated with the 'old world' and attending to overseas peoples affected by continuing European expansion into the 'new'.

After a stay of one week in Dunedin, which included a trip south to Waitahuna to meet the Ponders, Graham headed north. The next day, the *Otago Witness* carried an interview with Graham, in which he spoke of his visits to the four emigrants working on farms around Dunedin. Though the work was strenuous and the days long, the boys' employers, Graham claimed, were 'perfectly satisfied ... finding them gentler and more refined than the ordinary work-a-day boy; perfectly reliable and trustworthy, and they never skylarked.'<sup>39</sup> These genteel traits, held up as positive by Graham, were to be more of a hindrance than a help to many of the male emigrants placed on larger farms. Graham gained an inkling of this when he arrived in Havelock North on the east coast of the North Island to visit the Chambers family, with whom the fourth male emigrant, Eustace Boardman, was placed, at a considerable distance from the southerners. The Chambers ran a substantial estate, comprising some 40,000 acres and incorporating vineyards as well as sheep and cattle. Graham conveyed important distinctions between the emigrants on small family farms in the south and Boardman's situation, which incurred a greater clash of colonial masculinities:

Eustace is but one of a number of 'hands' who live together in special quarters. This necessarily involves a different relationship between employer and employee from that which prevails on a small farm where the lad is practically one of the farmer's household. On the big station, he has to gain and maintain his own position among his fellows, usually a heterogeneous collection of free and independent workmen who are not inclined to err on the side of 'coddling' a new [recruit].<sup>40</sup>

Two days after returning to India, Graham noted in his diary: 'Magazine to Leonard, Clarence, Sydney, Eustace and Eileen, NZ.'<sup>41</sup> These first five emigrants,

along with his supporters in the south, formed the nucleus of the Kalimpong community in New Zealand. Graham's continued contact with them enabled him to use their progress to promote the emigration scheme, and they were useful informants of the local situation. Although his visit to Boardman exposed the challenges young men would face on large farms, Graham was in no way deterred from sending more; but his awareness did perhaps spur him to take care to place siblings in close proximity to each other. Five men arrived in Dunedin in 1910, among them Eric Boardman, who joined his brother in the North Island. The remaining four were dispersed around rural Otago and Southland. In 1911 a second female emigrant, Jean Mackay, and her brother John, were placed with farming families in the southern town of Owaka. A group of three men were placed on farms around Dunedin later that year.

In 1912 a full-page article appeared in the *Homes Magazine* describing 'the biggest farewell we have ever had' for a group of thirteen emigrants bound for New Zealand.<sup>42</sup> It gave the names of the party and described a social event to farewell them in Calcutta. The emigrants were to travel to Dunedin via Melbourne escorted by Mary Kennedy. The accompanying photograph of the group (Figure 4.2) exhibited a greater degree of formality than previous departures; the girls wore nurses' uniforms and the boys were attired in suits and knee-high boots. By January 1913, the Homes had received news of the



**Figure 4.2** The 1912 group to New Zealand. Mary Kennedy (housemother) at centre. Source: *Homes Magazine* 12 (1912), 38. Courtesy National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

safe arrival of the group. James Ponder wrote of the boys' placements, and Mrs Scott had 'no difficulty in arranging places for the six girls who, she reports, have made an excellent impression'.<sup>43</sup> The article included excerpts of letters from several of the young women. 'I must say we are enjoying ourselves immensely', one wrote from the ship, mentioning the kindness of 'the friends we have had in Calcutta, Rangoon and Penang all ready waiting to take us out to see the different places'. Networks, then, were not only vital at their destination, but at every point of their voyage. This was particularly true of Australia, where this group and all future Kalimpong emigrants would be required to 'tranship' and stay for several days (or more) while waiting for a boat to New Zealand. This large group proved highly visible, generating media attention and encountering difficulties at Melbourne and Hobart, as one of the emigrants detailed:

The Customs officers came on to the ship and would not allow us to land because we were Eurasians, but Mr Steel and Miss Kennedy got us ashore. It was partly through Lady Carmichael's letter of introduction that we were allowed in. ... We reached here (Hobart) early this morning. This time we were not allowed to go ashore because the man who started all this fuss wired to the officers here not to let us ashore. We hope everything will be alright when we land in Dunedin.<sup>44</sup>

Local media alerted the New Zealand public to the impending arrival of the group. The *Ashburton Guardian*, a small South Island newspaper, picked up the story from the *Calcutta Statesman* and offered a sympathetic reading of the 'Orphan Immigrants'. It listed their names and ages, and stated that the boys would be engaged in farm work, while the girls would become 'lady helps ... for domestic servants are almost unknown in New Zealand, and the "lady help" is treated as one of the family'.<sup>45</sup> The article noted that others had already been sent to the Dominion, but that the progress of this first 'large batch' would be watched with 'keen interest, for the Kalimpong training of self-help and self-reliance is just what is wanted in the colonies'.<sup>46</sup> The level of detail in this report suggests a Kalimpong influence in its authorship, and it echoed Graham's approach to the media – a tentative balance between the need for discretion and the desire for some publicity to promote the scheme. Three days later the same publication noted the arrival of a 'batch of Eurasian immigrants' in Melbourne.<sup>47</sup> No mention was made of the difficulties disembarking the vessel, but it did state that the group was accommodated 'under the superintendence of the Presbyterian Immigration agent'.

The group's arrival in Dunedin was reported in the *Wanganui Chronicle*, a North Island newspaper. The *Chronicle* stressed the structured nature of the scheme and the committees that would oversee their efficient work placements:

Amongst the arrivals by the Warrimoo was a batch of 13 European and Eurasian girls and boys ... under the charge of Miss Kennedy, of Dunedin, to be settled in situations secured for them in New Zealand by the Dominion Committee of the Homes. The party was met on arrival by the Rev J S Ponder (the honorary secretary for New Zealand), and Mrs W.L. Scott (convenor of the Dunedin Ladies' Committee) and the young immigrants were promptly forwarded to their respective destinations.<sup>48</sup>

Although this group tested the borders with larger numbers, their visibility was immediately reduced upon arrival when they were indeed 'promptly forwarded' to their employers and widely dispersed. Mary Ochterloney's letter in the *Homes Magazine* described docking at Dunedin, where half of the group disembarked and were met by their respective employers.<sup>49</sup> The remaining six, Mary among them, 'stayed on the ship' and journeyed to Wellington, where two of the young men were 'dropped off' along with Evelyn Fullerton, who was the only female emigrant to be placed in nurses' training rather than domestic service. The remaining three ferried to Picton where Ernest Hughes stayed, while Mary and her brother Robert took the train to Blenheim. Although these six were isolated from the Dunedin group, they formed the beginning of a cluster in central New Zealand. Wellington, in the far south of the North Island, and Picton, the port of Marlborough at the northern tip of the South Island, were connected by regular ferries. Graham's contacts in Marlborough may have been made through post-India careerists who were known to settle in this area.<sup>50</sup>

The size of the 1912 group indicated growing confidence in the emigration scheme. Reports in the *Homes Magazine* worked hard to convince readers that the emigrants were integrating into local society. Any concerns about the provision of ongoing support were addressed by printing excerpts of emigrant letters that showed community involvement and employers' letters describing the mutual satisfaction the scheme had brought about. But with the onset of the First World War, the likes of the 1912 'batch' would not be seen again until the mid-1920s. Two smaller parties were sent in 1914, the first comprising two women, the latter a group of three unaccompanied men. This brought the total number of Homes graduates settled in New Zealand in the pre-war period to thirty-three. The large gender imbalance at this stage (twenty-four men and

**Table 4.1** Arrivals by gender, 1908–14

Group #	Year of arrival	Men	Women	Total
1	1908	2	0	2
2	1909	2	0	2
3	1909	0	1	1
4	1910	5	0	5
5	1911	1	1	2
6	1911	3	0	3
7	1912	8	5	13
8	1914	0	2	2
9	1914	3	0	3
<i>Total</i>		24	9	33

Source: St Andrew's Colonial Homes Magazine.

nine women – see Table 4.1) reflected the careful placement of the women, who unlike the men were chaperoned from departure to arrival and beyond.

### Women and men at work

Prior to Aileen Sinclair's arrival in Dunedin with Graham in 1909, work prospects for the women emigrants were referred to only in vague terms. In 1908 Graham had stated that the girls' training at the Homes was intended to fit them for domestic, nursery and hospital positions in India, which would match them to the 'constant demand' for Anglo-Indian women for such roles.<sup>51</sup> Despite their fathers seeking admittance to the Homes on the condition that they would be trained for 'the colonies', the particularities of the girls' eventual placement there were absent from the early *Homes Magazine* debates and knowledge-gathering exercises. As Ponder noted in the *Otago Witness* article, the opening of the Steel Memorial Hospital in 1908 provided the first opportunity for formal nurses' training, and it was only Aileen Sinclair's emigration that prompted Graham's active consideration of the women's potential place in settler colonies. In 1910, the year following Sinclair's emigration, Lucia King cottage for infants was opened at the Homes. The cottage was used as a site for instructing prospective 'nursery nurses', most of whom were expected to emigrate to New Zealand.<sup>52</sup> A dedicated domestic science wing and specialist teacher were added in 1916.<sup>53</sup>

The question, then, was what purpose this gendered training ultimately served for the New Zealand emigrants. In his 1909 post-trip report, Graham claimed

that domestic service was a career that could bring financial independence for the women, given that, 'after a few years' experience, they could easily earn from £40 to £50 a year, with board'.<sup>54</sup> Yet it was not clear how this 'independent' career path achieved the scheme's wider aims of new beginnings and integration into local communities. For other (white) women entering settler colonies as assisted domestic servants, the role was seen as a pathway to marriage and motherhood, moving them from assisting colonial housewives and mothers to producing their own offspring for the growing colony.<sup>55</sup> Such a transition might have been envisaged for the Kalimpong women too, but it was certainly not mentioned in any of the early publicity about the scheme. Work, and addressing the domestic service shortage, predominated; along with the need to protect vulnerable young women from harm. Hence in the early years the focus remained almost exclusively on the women's work for – and acceptance into – other people's families, where they were socialized into gendered norms in New Zealand households.<sup>56</sup>

While the men's trajectories were more clearly defined, the experiences of the early emigrants suggest that the idealized pathway from farm labour to land ownership did not accord with rural realities of early-twentieth-century New Zealand. Graham's post-tour reports of the first four men portrayed them as settled and stable, but letters from all four printed in the *Homes Magazine* in 1911 reveal their highly mobile adjustment to the rural labour market and a different path to advancement than that envisaged by Graham. Leonard Williams, originally placed in Highcliff, wrote on behalf of himself and his brother Sydney in Central Otago, west of Dunedin. Both had left from their placement families, preferring to make their way in the colony together. While he was 'very sorry in a way' to leave his previous 'master', Williams described with optimism the life they were attempting to make as rabbiters, which they had read was a 'great money making' venture.<sup>57</sup> The capital they accrued was enough to buy meagre tools, a few essentials and tents to sleep in; a stark contrast to the protected setting of Presbyterian family farms.<sup>58</sup> Leonard ended his letter with 'many salaams', noting that they often thought of 'those charming times we passed at Kalimpong'. His letter, well written and delicately phrased, reads as a contrast to the rough life that he described. A portrait of Sydney accompanying the article showed a well-groomed young man in a three-piece suit, complete with a high-buttoned waistcoat and watch-chain on display.

In the North Island, Eustace Boardman wrote of the many and varied situations he had held since Graham visited him in Hawkes Bay. The title of his article, 'A Rolling Stone in New Zealand', along with the introductory note from



the editor, communicated the Homes emphasis on geographic and occupational stability as a prerequisite for earning the title of 'settler'. 'The following letter from an Old Homes Boy has at least the merit of frankness!' the editor noted, adding that 'once he gets anchored' he could become 'a successful colonist'.<sup>59</sup> Boardman had moved numerous times since Graham's visit. Initially he took on contract work, but was only being paid fifteen shillings a week, while other men were being paid a shilling an hour. 'I asked for an increase', he wrote, but 'the master refused and I left.' Boardman continued:

Since then I was harvesting for a month with a shilling an hour and then a gardener for a private family. I did all I had to do in the garden and I left. Then I went to the mills where you get a shilling an hour and a shilling and threepence an hour over time. I stayed there for two weeks. I then left through an accident. Then I joined for another two weeks after and stayed there five days and then I left through the food not being good. I then went as a second cook in a hotel at 35s a week, stayed there two weeks, had a fight with the chief cook and left.<sup>60</sup>

Boardman described another four positions he had held and 'left' (at one he 'got the sack' for being 'too greedy') before working in a hotel for five months. From there he moved to a farm with 'the best boss to work for and I am still with him. That is my career since our parting'.

Boardman's description of his itinerant lifestyle was a forerunner to the future experiences of many Kalimpong men, and was a truer reflection of the organization of the rural labouring sector than Graham's antiquated vision.<sup>61</sup> The colonial reality posed a dilemma to the Kalimpong men. Placing them with respectable farming families was meant to facilitate their integration into rural communities from a place of protection. But as single migrants, the clearest way for them to take on the values of local (white) men was to display resourcefulness and enterprise, and to refuse poor wages. As David Roediger found in the United States, the process of new immigrants 'becoming white' often involved a strategic distancing from other minority groups.<sup>62</sup> In New Zealand, the men's actions can hence be understood as a means of avoiding negative association with 'Asiatic' migrants. At the same time, they entered the questionable category of 'self-seeking' single labourer when settler families were held up as the model for economic and social progress in the colony.<sup>63</sup>

The experiences of each of these men also reflected their individual personalities. In Boardman's letter there was an almost comic irreverence to all that Graham might have expected of him. This was in contrast to Leonard Williams, who sought 'your opinion if we have done right by taking on what

we have.<sup>64</sup> The other early emigrant, Clarence Sinclair, wrote an even more deferential letter that the editors headed 'In Praise of Farming'.<sup>65</sup> This letter reads as an intentional contribution to the ongoing discussion in the *Homes Magazine* regarding the relative prospects for Anglo-Indian men in various destinations. Sinclair wanted to 'stand up to those who condemn Farming'. He cited the reliance on 'Providence' as cause for his belief that 'there is no other work like Farming after all, don't you agree with me Sir?'<sup>66</sup> Sinclair's defence of farming illustrates his awareness of the differing regard in which such labour was held in India, and concern about what his counterparts there thought of his situation. Like all Kalimpong emigrants, Sinclair's transnational lifeway affected the way he made sense of his own progress in the colony and his place in local hierarchies.

For the women, the arrival of the 1912 group substantially increased the number of emigrants, from two to seven. The addition of five women was a test of the scheme and the workings of the Dunedin committee. An update from an anonymous member of the committee upon the arrival of Gertie Plaistowe and Molly Roberts in 1914 articulated its responsibilities, and the concerted efforts to place the women in close proximity to each other. Although both Plaistowe and Roberts were bound for placements further north, they were given a 'small reception' at 'Mrs C's place' in High Street, Dunedin, where the Kalimpong women gathered to spend the evening with them.<sup>67</sup> 'Anon' mentioned her reluctance to send the young women so far from Dunedin, commenting that Plaistowe 'will be lonely I'm afraid ... but I shall send her a companion next year'. As for the women already settled, the committee reported that Evelyn Fullerton, who had been sent straight to nurses' training in Wellington, was to return to Dunedin. 'Anon' would be 'glad to have her near me'.<sup>68</sup> Another unnamed emigrant 'did not shine in her first place but we brought her back to Dunedin and she has done so well since that a lady appealed to me to get her a girl like her'. The committee's role did not cease after initial placement, then, and it was active in sourcing employment for future emigrants.

Very few of the excerpts printed in the *Homes Magazine* described the women's domestic duties. The 1912 *Ashburton Guardian* article referred to the women as 'lady helps', a term that was used in Australia to attract a higher class of women to a lighter form of domestic work.<sup>69</sup> In the Kalimpong case the term was most likely used to ease the stigma around the 'servant' terminology, and to reinforce the public image of the emigrants as respectable, and indeed 'refined'. They were also referred to as 'mother helps'. In 1914 Nellie Savigny sent Graham a photograph of herself with the infant she looked after, writing that although they lived in a 'lovely house' she did sometimes feel like 'throwing

the baby out the window.<sup>70</sup> Apparently she shared a room with the child and seldom had an undisturbed sleep. Sharing such close quarters with the infant invites a connection with Savigny's early years on a tea plantation. Like many of the Kalimpong women, she had in the short span of her life dropped in status from being attended by numerous servants and one devoted *ayah*, to being 'self-sufficient' at the Homes, to performing household work and childcare for a settler colonial family.

After the arrival of the 1912 group, *Homes Magazine* articles about individual emigrants were superseded by full-page items about their collective experiences, collating many short excerpts rather than reprinting letters in full. For the women the excerpts chosen reported being 'part of the family' and meeting with the other Kalimpong emigrants on their afternoon off; for the men it was having a 'good boss' and displaying hardy attitudes to the challenges of farm work – milking cows in freezing conditions, working long days and so on. For both men and women, reports about others from Kalimpong became more frequent as the community grew and the likelihood of seeing an 'old boy' or an associate of Graham's increased. Hamilton Melville, who along with Adrian Andrews was working on the Gladbrook Estate in Middlemarch, wrote that he did not 'find NZ bad at all', that he and Andrews were having 'splendid times', and that two other Homes men were on a farm only six miles away.<sup>71</sup> Stuart Lemare, working on a farm thirty miles south of Dunedin, wrote of seeing Jean Mackay 'in town' and learning of her impending marriage.<sup>72</sup> Another Kalimpong man, James Bishop, met Miss Ponder at the 'Winter Show' (an agricultural event) in Dunedin. 'I did not know her', he admitted, 'but she guessed that I was one of the Kalimpong boys. We had a long chat concerning the Homes.'<sup>73</sup>

Ponder's 'guess' that Bishop was from Kalimpong highlights the visibility of the emigrants among the predominantly white population of Dunedin at this time. There was racial diversity in the southern city, with the local Kāi Tahu people, plus a Chinese community established from the time of the Otago goldrushes and other non-British settlers. There was also a mixed-race Kāi Tahu community on the Taieri plains, where many of the men laboured.<sup>74</sup> But in many settings the emigrants' racial difference would have been apparent, and for the men, their ability to blend in likely depended on the ways in which they accounted for themselves. Among the Presbyterian families the women were placed with, skin colour was an important communicator of their place in the household, and would have prompted curiosity. Dorothy Higgins alluded to this when she wrote positively that 'most of the people would hardly believe I come from India; they say I look more of a home girl.'<sup>75</sup> This kind of racial 'passing'

is an aspect of the Kalimpong scheme that is difficult to engage with since we cannot generalize about the appearance of the emigrants – which brings the legacy of their diverse northeast Indian origins directly to bear on their distant New Zealand experiences.

In distinctive ways, the young women and men from Kalimpong were isolated and faced difficult transitions in their work placements. The women moved in controlled channels within the confines of walls and doors, brushing closely with their host families. The men's experiences were characterized by forbidding landscapes, tough living conditions and the challenge of negotiating a place for themselves. Hamilton Melville's comment that his two Kalimpong friends were 'only six miles away' is revealing alongside Nellie Savigny's fears about her move 'away from Dunedin' to St Leonards, which was just five miles out of town.<sup>76</sup> While there was greater potential for the women to be included in family life, this was offset by the men's greater mobility, which allowed a fuller and freer integration into the labour market. As we have seen, the men were able to use this mobility to reconnect with siblings and others from Kalimpong. This would also be a feature of their war service.

## Encountering the state: The First World War

When war broke out in 1914 there were twenty-three Kalimpong men resident in New Zealand; another four arrived in 1915. Of these, twenty-two men (which Graham later claimed was the total fit to fight) volunteered for service with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF).<sup>77</sup> Their ability to enlist for the main forces without issue was immediately seized upon by Graham as another example of the openness of New Zealand opportunity structures for his graduates, a claim driven by a short-lived controversy at the outset of the war when Anglo-Indians were not permitted to enlist for the British forces in India. Within several months pressure from various groups saw this anomaly rectified.<sup>78</sup> Yet subsequent *Homes Magazine* reports made it clear that Anglo-Indians fought as a separate contingent, similar to the 'Māori Pioneer Battalion'.<sup>79</sup> While Graham accepted the differential treatment of Anglo-Indians (including *Homes* graduates) in India, this was not what he imagined for his New Zealanders. Full social integration was the primary reason for emigration to the settler colonies, and war service was a test of the boundaries of that ideal.

Documentation of the enlistment process is useful here for two reasons. It was the first recorded assessment of the graduates in New Zealand by people and

processes outside of the Homes circle of influence. Second, the various forms required the men to state outright their Indian connections and the familial ties that they gave primacy to. Up to this point, the Homes public archive had suppressed any evidence of lingering connections with their birth families other than siblings. The war files are an important counterpoint to this. The *Homes Magazine* focused on the larger 'Kalimpong family', creating a picture of a global community ignited by the sudden mobility of a large proportion of male graduates, who sought out each other on the battlefields and were assisted by the Homes network in Britain. At the same time, the New Zealand emigrants appear to have developed a stronger sense of national belonging through inclusion on equal terms in all aspects of war service for the NZEF: day-to-day operations, punishment and promotion, and post-war benefits. There is a strong sense in the regular 'Homes and the War' column that the emigrants regarded war as an opportunity to prove themselves – to Graham, to their New Zealand counterparts and to those colonial families and communities at 'home' that they had forged bonds with. Many credited their ability to cope with war service to the discipline and self-sufficiency of their Homes upbringing.

The details of the emigrants' Indian background declared in the enlistment documentation were revealing. First, the open declaration of their paternal Indian connections indicates the normative existence of such imperial careering at a time when India was still very much a part of the British Empire. Second, the files reveal specific information about the emigrants' origins that would otherwise only be located in their personal files at Kalimpong, which are not publicly available. Ten of the servicemen listed their place of birth simply as 'India'; two specified Assam and two Darjeeling; but the remainder recorded surprisingly diverse origins, from north and north-western locations to Hyderabad in central India and Travancore in the southwest. Third, official annotations showed that religious affiliation was an important counterpoint to race, or at least a contributor to a nuanced racial categorization: they were Presbyterian *but* Indian; or Indian *but* Presbyterian.<sup>80</sup> Finally, the files that contained details of the whereabouts of next of kin in India and Britain attest to continued correspondence with family outside of New Zealand.

It is clear from the documentation that next of kin was the most problematic part of the form-filling process for the Kalimpong men. Many crossed out and amended their initial responses. The 'History Sheet' specified that if next of kin was not local, soldiers should list their 'nearest relative' in New Zealand. Hence those from Kalimpong with siblings in New Zealand required only one person. For the others, a common and satisfactory response was to list family in India

(usually a sister, occasionally a father) followed by a 'friend' in New Zealand (usually their employer or another Homes graduate). The information they gave about their fathers varied. One listed his father's address as simply 'Assam, Bengal, India', while others named the tea estates where their fathers still resided. Several men had no family members listed as next of kin, only New Zealand associates. Overall the men's responses portray a widened sense of home and family; drawing birth family, Graham, colonial families and other Homes graduates into empire-wide kinship formations. Their complex transnational loyalties challenge Graham's overarching narrative of orphans easily attached to colonial families.

Reunions among the Kalimpong men began as they gathered at enlistment centres from various locales around New Zealand and continued as they headed overseas.<sup>81</sup> The 1916 issue of the *Homes Magazine* carried the first reports from the men serving abroad. In Egypt, Hamilton Melville reported from Zeitoun that he had 'met no Homes boy there' but had heard that Leonard Williams was wounded and recovering in England.<sup>82</sup> This was about to change. Melville was soon joined by Patrick Savigny, who wrote firstly from the Dardanelles and then from Zeitoun, where he met Melville and became aware of 'the boys turning out to do their bit.'<sup>83</sup> In the April 1916 issue of the *Homes Magazine*, Melville wrote from Egypt that there were 'at least ten of us around here.'<sup>84</sup> Their letters described battles as well as everyday life, and the hardships of war prompted reflection just as it did for other soldiers. These sentiments and their regular correspondence with the Homes further challenge the likelihood that their later silence was due to traumatic memories of their upbringing. Of course it also serves as a reminder that some of the men had no other family to write to and no other home to be nostalgic about. Richard Hall wrote a letter to Graham the night before going 'over the top', in which he promised to 'let you know as soon as possible how I am getting on if I am lucky enough to get through it'. He closed the letter with 'well, good-bye for the present, Sir, and love and good luck to you and the Homes. I am an old Boy, Dick.'<sup>85</sup>

War service facilitated mobility beyond occupying the battlefields of Egypt and France; it was also a gateway to Britain. After all of the effort to direct the men into rural New Zealand communities, due partly to the belief they were not welcome in Britain, war brought them to the place that for most Anglo-Indians was a distant and usually unreachable 'home'. But, according to the archives, it was the wider 'Kalimpong family' rather than their birth families that the men connected with there. Clarence Sinclair visited a housemother and told her that it was 'just because she was hard on me I have done so well in NZ.'<sup>86</sup> Robert

Ochterloney stayed with a Homes associate in Scotland, Mr Pirrit, while on leave.<sup>87</sup> Hamilton Melville also enjoyed the hospitality of the Pirrits, as did James Bishop, who had a 'happy time' with them and the two Homes aunties he met during the visit.<sup>88</sup> Pat Savigny wrote in 1918 that he had 'taken quite a fancy to the Old Country, especially Bonnie Scotland,' proving this affection with news that he had married a 'Scottish girl'.<sup>89</sup>

Although the men wrote of close bonds with others from Kalimpong and showed themselves to be thoroughly embedded in the Homes imperial network, they increasingly identified, and were referred to, as 'colonials' and 'New Zealanders' in the *Homes Magazine*.<sup>90</sup> In 1918 Richard Hall wrote from hospital in England of 'enjoying myself thoroughly here. The hospital is full of New Zealanders and the Medical Staff are all from New Zealand, so we make a happy family'.<sup>91</sup> In the same year, greetings were sent from 'Four Anzacs in France: Dick Hall, Hamilton Melville, Adrian Andrews and Tom Brooks'.<sup>92</sup> Melville wrote that he survived the battles of Messines and Passchendaele 'without a scratch, though many of my mates were killed ... I will now close with best wishes to all in Kalimpong and a carry on to the boys in Mesopotamia from the Anzacs in France'.<sup>93</sup> The greater New Zealand 'family', mateship and ANZAC allies were significant new terms deployed by the Kalimpong men in order to make sense of their part in the war experience.

Just as there is no evidence that race hindered the Kalimpong men's enlistment, nor did Indian ancestry prevent advancement within the NZEF. Robert Ochterloney and Henry Holder were promoted to Corporal, Ernest Hughes to lance corporal, and Sydney Williams and Patrick Savigny to sergeant. Savigny was the first of four Kalimpong men to receive the Military Medal. Hamilton Melville was awarded the Military Medal in May 1918 for 'acts of gallantry', and three months later received Distinguished Conduct Medal, a decoration only awarded on rare occasions.<sup>94</sup> These rewards for service were publicly touted by John Graham as testament to the calibre of the emigrants, whose actions and sacrifices he believed should bring tangible benefits to the individuals and the scheme; in his words, 'full citizenship'.<sup>95</sup>

The opportunity for social advancement that war held for the men did not have a parallel for the women, and publication of their letters waned as the *Homes Magazine* focused on the servicemen abroad.<sup>96</sup> There was some interest in their fortunes, including the announcement of a group of five women emigrants arriving in New Zealand in 1915.<sup>97</sup> A subsequent article praised the efforts of the women in 'keeping the home fires burning', but admitted that 'the question has been raised as to whether the girls were happy in the colonies'.<sup>98</sup> An emigrant

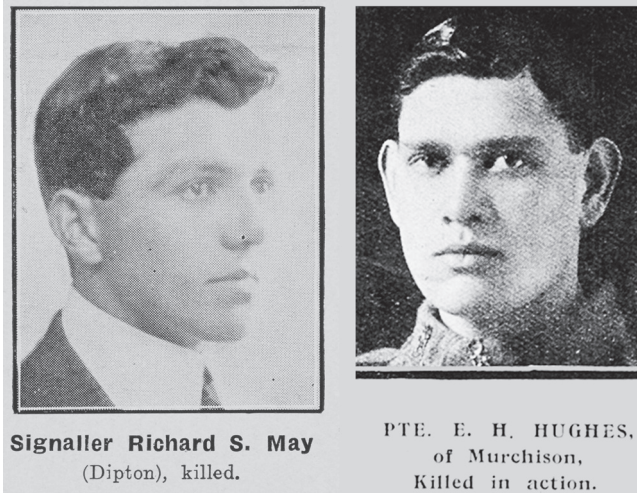
provided the answer, writing that she felt at 'home' in New Zealand and was a 'real Colonial'. The question of where their domestic service roles were leading remained unanswered, though the possibility of marriage was realized with the announcement of 'Our First Colonial Bride' Jean Mackay, accompanied by brief text but a large reproduction of her beautiful wedding photograph (Figure 4.3).<sup>99</sup> There was of course an important advantage for the women of not being directly involved in the war – they did not suffer the physical and psychological scars of battle that would affect the daily lives of servicemen who returned.

Ernest Hughes and Richard May, two Kalimpong men in the NZEF, were killed in action. Both were buried in France and their names inscribed on memorials there, and New Zealand newspapers published portraits and news of their demise (Figure 4.4).<sup>100</sup> Privately, their deaths had very different familial repercussions. Hughes's History Sheet (in his war file) made numerous references



**Figure 4.3** The wedding of Jeannie (nee Mackay) and John Henderson, 1914. Courtesy Gale private collection.





**Figure 4.4** Kalimpong men killed in the First World War. Left: Richard May, *Otago Witness*, 18 October 1916. Courtesy Hocken Collections, Dunedin. Right: Ernest Hughes, *Auckland Weekly News*, 29 August 1918. Courtesy Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-19180829-41-7.

to India. He listed his father's and his sister's contact details in India, and noted John Graham was his 'trustee'. It was Hughes's sister, working as a nurse at the Homes in Kalimpong, who was informed of his death and received his medals. Conversely, the only references to India in Richard May's documentation were his birthplace of Assam and a note on his enlistment form that he was a 'Full Blooded Parsee (Indian)'.<sup>101</sup> May listed his next of kin as his former employer, 'W Harrison (friend)', of Dipton, in Southland. Hence the remnants of May's remarkable twenty-four-year life, which began on a tea plantation in Assam, was dominated by the sustained intervention by the Homes in Kalimpong, took him all the way to New Zealand and ended on the battlefields of France, came to rest with a farming family in a tiny rural town in southern New Zealand whom he had known for a few short years.

A chance meeting with Michelle Sim, William Harrison's great-great-granddaughter, enables a rich telling of May's relationship with the Harrison family. Sim came across documents and photographs relating to May while organizing her forebears' archive. Her queries to older family members brought a persistent familial memory to the surface. May was remembered as an Indian farmworker whom William's daughter Carrie was 'quite keen on'.<sup>102</sup> According to the family story, any romantic relationship was discouraged due to his Indian ancestry.<sup>103</sup> A letter from May to Mary Harrison, William's wife, provides an

intimate glimpse into the strength of his relationship to the farming family. Written shortly after his arrival at Zeitoun, the lengthy letter gave a detailed account of life as a soldier in a foreign land. 'You do not know how grateful I am', he wrote, 'for all you have done for me, and the thought of you and Mr Harrison, Carrie, Jean, Bob and Jackie and all Grassmead in general is proof against every temptation in this city.'<sup>104</sup> For this young man, the protective bonds of a colonial farming family gave continuity to the values he grew up with in Kalimpong.

'What a lot I'll have to tell you when I get back', May wrote, 'but then that's only a chance.'<sup>105</sup> His death had a lasting impact on the Harrison family. Carrie kept two photographs of him, the letter to Mary, and newspaper clippings reporting his death.<sup>106</sup> One of the clippings noted that he was 'born at Assam, and was educated at Darjeeling, Northern India' and was 'offered the position of interpreter to Indian troops, with the rank of Sergeant, but declined promotion and went on to France with his unit.'<sup>107</sup> In celebrating May for prioritizing colonial loyalty over personal gain, the clipping also communicated his acceptance as a New Zealander. The persistence of his story through five generations of the Harrison family attests to the legacy of the bonds developed between some of the emigrants and their employers, perhaps especially those cut off from their origin families. Yet several generations later the loss of any detail about the Kalimpong scheme saw the Harrisons puzzle over how it was that an 'Indian worker' ended up in Southland in the 1910s, echoing the confusion of the Kalimpong descendants and gesturing towards the ripples created by the placement of the emigrants with families all over New Zealand.

This chapter has traced the transformation of the Homes emigration scheme from ambitious theory to realization on a small but significant scale in New Zealand. Setting out from Kalimpong in twos and threes, young men and women were received in a discrete manner by Graham's contacts. The men were distributed to farms large and small, which usually meant isolation from anything but tiny local settlements. While the women clustered in colonial towns, theirs too was an isolated existence. The contrast to the crowded and busy life at the Homes must have made this transition extraordinarily lonely. No wonder, then, that the emigrants eagerly anticipated new arrivals and wrote brightly to Graham of their individual and collective progress. The arrival of the 1912 group was a landmark in the scheme. While these larger numbers did not persist, the structures set in place in this period laid the foundation for the continuance of the scheme in the 1920s, and nothing like this level of organization was ever established in any other settler colonial destination.

Hidden from the Homes record was the emigrants' continuing place in their transnational families. Documents in the war files reveal this complex familial status, which in the first year or two after their placement bridged an awkward and formative stage between new settler colonial ties and persistent connections with paternal relatives in India and Britain. War service was also important for highlighting, and substantiating, the difference between placement in India and New Zealand. Fighting for the NZEF took the Kalimpong men overseas, made 'colonials' of them and saw them all return to New Zealand to be further integrated into the fabric of society there. For those placed India, the future was less certain, especially as the Indian nationalist movement gained momentum. But it was the question of raced immigration restrictions in New Zealand – absent from the archive in the 1910s – that would dominate post-war anxieties about the continuance of the scheme.

## 1920s: Working the Permit System

The 1920s was the heyday of the Homes emigration scheme to New Zealand. Several large groups arrived in the middle of the decade, and the *Homes Magazine* was brimming with letters and photographs of the new arrivals. These 'News of our Emigrants' articles portrayed not just individual progress but the development of a lively, multigenerational community, where young emigrants regularly socialized with each other and were supported by the previous generation, who were beginning to marry and produce families of their own. The opportunity to gather at the homes of the earlier emigrants was a key development that separated the experiences of the 1910s and 1920s arrivals. These were safe spaces for the new emigrants to talk about Kalimpong, easing the transition to New Zealand and creating the conditions whereby the community in the north, particularly in Wellington, developed along more open lines. Most of the descendants I have met in the north have known of at least one other Kalimpong family and they often recall regular social gatherings. The further south I travelled, the more individual the path the emigrants appear to have followed.

The fact that the scheme peaked in the 1920s accords with post-war opportunities for assisted migrant labour in New Zealand. But it goes against the reading of the heightened racial anxieties in the 1920s that brought a significant change in immigration legislation. The 1920 Immigration Restriction Amendment Act (IRAA) is considered a landmark in both local and global immigration restriction.<sup>1</sup> In New Zealand historiography, it is cited as the point beyond which new migrants from Asia could not cross the border.<sup>2</sup> The continuation of the Kalimpong scheme challenges this narrative of exclusion; but this assertion is not meant to diminish the impact of the legislation, which was enormously influential, regulating non-British migration to New Zealand until the 1970s.<sup>3</sup> The Act's power was in its simplicity. It required all migrants of non-British (or non-Irish) birth or parentage to acquire a permit before

entering New Zealand. The process was this: apply, and await a decision from the Customs Department. If the application was unsuccessful, no explanation was offered, and there was no right of appeal.<sup>4</sup> The IRAA became a model for other nations looking to implement legislation that avoided overtly discriminating against any particular community, yet was an effective tool of doing just that.<sup>5</sup>

The new legislation caused immediate consternation at the Homes; but as will be outlined in this chapter, emigration from Kalimpong continued and in fact increased after the IRAA came into effect. This cannot be attributed simply to the emigrants' British heritage since, as I will show, very few Anglo-Indians outside the scheme were granted permits. This chapter explores the reasons behind the favouring of the Homes graduates, as well as examining the new paper trail created by the permit system. The new legislation brought another significant shift – a geographic one. With the death of James Ponder in Southland in 1920, new supporters were found in the north and all new arrivals under the permit system disembarked at Wellington and were placed in the North Island. This brought the emigrants into different circles; many women worked for notable political families in Wellington, the capital city, and the men labouring in rural areas came into closer contact with Māori and Indian workers as they moved into different kinds of work. This reflected the encroaching economic depression, which also affected the fortunes of the emigrants already in New Zealand, and was highly gendered in its impact on the scheme.

These dynamics are explored in the first half of the chapter using Customs Department files, newspaper reports and the *Homes Magazine*. I then turn to the letters written by the emigrants from the 'six families' who arrived in the 1920s. In the Kalimpong files, these are first recorded utterings from the emigrants themselves. Their words reveal their initial feelings of isolation and loneliness, and their desire to please Graham by showing resilience in the face of their transition to life away from Kalimpong. They also make plain the continuing negotiation of their place in transnational families, asking questions about who their parents were, where they were, and why they had been sent away from India.

### Arrivals under the permit system

Three groups from Kalimpong arrived in relatively quick succession prior to the new legislation coming into effect: groups of seven in January 1920, six in June 1920 and six in early 1921. The group that landed in 1921 was the last to land

in the South Island and included my grandmother, Lorna Peters, her brother George, and Dora Moller. Lorna's bright letters written on the voyage were not published in the *Homes Magazine*, which was preoccupied with the change in legislation. The first 1921 edition carried an article entitled 'New Zealand and Our Emigrants: Will There Be Exclusion?' which connected the 'considerable difficulty' getting the previous group ashore to news of the IRAA:

There has evidently been fresh legislation passed on the line of what obtains in Australia. ... Our friends are afraid the door has been closed to us. That would be a big disappointment. We are making a representation on the subject to the New Zealand government.<sup>6</sup>

The editors were cognizant of the imperial issues at stake, and assumed that 'the legislation has not been passed with reference to individuals or indeed with special thought of India', given India's right to 'press for differentiation in treatment.'<sup>7</sup> The Homes' fear was that New Zealand would follow Australia by requiring 'more than 50 per cent of European blood'. If it would not continue its 'past generous policy', the editors 'pleaded' that the Dominion at least modify the rule to be 'not less than 50 per cent of European blood', thereby allowing first-generation Anglo-Indians, in other words the tea planters' children, to emigrate.<sup>8</sup>

In his annual review of 1922, Graham reported that uncertainty over the new immigration rules in New Zealand had prevented sending any graduates there, and that this 'made the task harder to get suitable openings for some boys who would have found their most likely sphere in farm work.'<sup>9</sup> The potential loss of a destination for ten graduates a year would have a major impact on the Homes, and not just in numbers; it struck at the institution's founding ideology, and risked losing Graham's 'grand vision' of emigration as a means of promotion. As it turned out, the scheme resumed and proceeded with confidence under the newly enacted permit system. The recorded numbers of Anglo-Indians entering New Zealand in this period provide the first evidence that the Homes scheme received special consideration from immigration authorities: fifty-four of the sixty-four 'Eurasian' entries in the new permit register in the 1920s were from Kalimpong.

Like the First World War documentation, enactment of the permit system created a new set of archival records for the Kalimpong narrative. Prior to the IRAA coming into force, the only documented evidence of arrivals was on shipping lists, as evidenced by an official's later admission that 'no information is available as to the number [of Anglo-Indians] admitted prior to 1922.'<sup>10</sup> From 1923 onwards, all migrants who entered New Zealand via the permit system

were recorded in registers organized by race and nationality. Copies of the permits were collated by year. These documents show the standardization of the process to get the Kalimpong emigrants into New Zealand; the occupation listed for all of the men was 'farm labourer' and for the women 'domestic service', their last place of residence was 'Kalimpong, Bengal' and their nationality was 'Anglo-Indian'. All were in possession of 'ten pounds', and all were in good health and of good character. Photographs were attached to the originals.<sup>11</sup> A separate file stored pre-application correspondence, apparently for those cases where the application did not proceed or where a permit was not granted.

Late in 1923 the first arrivals from Kalimpong under the permit system, a group of three young men, sailed unaccompanied into the care of 'that good friend of the Homes, Mr P. E. Suttie in Auckland'.<sup>12</sup> Suttie had worked for a jute company in Narayanganj and facilitated placements for Kalimpong graduates there.<sup>13</sup> Like other Graham supporters he continued his involvement after leaving India. The *Homes Magazine* noted that this was the first group to emigrate under the new legislation and that it was hoped 'many more of our girls and boys may enter the re-opened door'.<sup>14</sup> Careful navigation of the new legislation is apparent in the Permit Register, which shows that permits for this group were secured a full year before their arrival at Auckland.<sup>15</sup> In 1924 Suttie wrote that the new arrivals were 'scattered on different farms but on the same line of Railway', presumably to note that they would be able to visit each other.<sup>16</sup> Regarding the general employment situation, he informed the Homes that, 'on the farms, it is not difficult to find employment for suitable lads ... but the supply of labour in the towns is far greater than the demand'.<sup>17</sup>

In 1924, there was no emigration from Kalimpong to New Zealand, and only one Anglo-Indian was recorded in the permit register that year. The number of Anglo-Indian arrivals outside of the scheme remained low in 1925 and 1926 (three individuals and one family of four), but the same period saw forty new arrivals from Kalimpong (see Table 5.1). The preferential treatment evidenced by these numbers is also apparent in the shortened time frame between granting permits and the arrival of the emigrants. The person responsible for this ease in navigating tighter regulations was first mentioned in a celebratory full-page *Homes Magazine* article on the departure of the largest group yet, seventeen youngsters, in November 1925:

Our good friend, Mr A.W. Blair, Barrister, Wellington, had secured beforehand situations for all the party (that is a condition of obtaining a permit to land), and had found his labours much lightened as regards the boys by the most favourable

impression made on the Farmers who had engaged the previous year's band. There are many applicants for girls.<sup>18</sup>

For this group, permits were obtained just four months prior to arrival in Wellington and were not sighted until a full month after they arrived. This implies a much-smoothed transition from sea to land. The same applied for the 1926 group, also comprising seventeen young men and women. Their permits were granted only two months prior to arrival – about the time they departed Calcutta. Again, arrangements for 'settlement' of this 'fresh band' were made by Blair.<sup>19</sup>

Confidence in the scheme reached its peak with this 1926 group. In contrast to the immediate dispersal of the earlier groups, they made a highly visible entrance to New Zealand, alighting at Invercargill and visiting noted scenic spots around the South Island on their way to Wellington. Requirements for pre-arranged employment and accommodation seem to have been relaxed too. Roland Spencer, an earlier emigrant, was contacted by one of the new arrivals who was staying at the Wellington 'Salvation Hostel' while waiting for his employment to be arranged. Spencer had heard of a job opportunity and having secured agreement from the farmer, 'hopped into town and phoned up Mr Blair who soon let me take Donald away'.<sup>20</sup> It seems that once Blair, a man of some influence in Wellington's close political circles, had satisfactorily placed a number of emigrants, the bureaucratic requirements loosened. These larger groups set the foundations for the development of a well-connected and

**Table 5.1** Arrivals by permit date, 1920–9

<b>Date of permit</b>	<b>Date of arrival</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Number in group</b>	<b>Men (n=)</b>	<b>Women (n=)</b>
N/a	January 1920	Dunedin	7	4	3
N/a	October 1920	Dunedin	6	3	3
N/a	January 1921	Dunedin	6	1	5
December 1922	November 1923	Auckland	3	3	0
October 1924	February 1925	Wellington	6	4	2
August 1925	December 1925	Wellington	17	11	6
October 1926	December 1926	Wellington	17	6	11
December 1927	January 1928	Wellington	6	1	5
Unknown	January 1929	Wellington	5	0	5
<i>Total</i>			73	33	40

Source: Permanent Entry Record Books, 1921–9, Department of Labour, R1900-7319, ANZ-W.



active Wellington community, with the arrival of a relatively large number of emigrants in quick time, and the involvement of Wellingtonians who moved in political circles.

In the Customs Department files, the first reference to Blair's connection to the scheme appeared in a letter penned soon after the arrival of a group of five women in January 1928. By this time economic downturn had begun to affect the possibility of finding work for the men; but for the women, domestic positions were still available. With Blair's assistance this group had been granted permits just three weeks before arrival – well after they departed India. Mrs G. Kelly from Ashburton, south of Christchurch, wrote to the Department expressing her interest in recent press articles regarding 'Eurasian servant girls' and asking if any were available for employment in the South Island.<sup>21</sup> The controller of Customs informed her that she should communicate with A. W. Blair and provided an address for him. A handwritten note on the letter stated that 'applications are received by us through Mr A.W. Blair of Chapman, Tripp, Blair, Brooke and Watson, Solicitors.'<sup>22</sup> Kelly's enquiry indicated the effectiveness of publicity about arrivals as a means of advertising the availability of Kalimpong workers, and the response she received leaves no doubt that there was an established relationship between the Customs Department and Blair.

That publicity came at a cost. An editorial from the *Wanganui Chronicle* filed with the permit correspondence revealed the public debate prompted by press attention to the scheme. Documenting the numbers of 'Eurasian servant girls' that had arrived in the 1920s, the editor mused that 'it would be interesting to know what exactly has become of the original party.'<sup>23</sup> The Homes' emphasis on quiet absorption into settler families was not necessarily regarded in other quarters as a positive sign of acceptance or integration, here provoking a sense of unease. Quoting a report from the *Auckland Sun* about the 1928 group, the *Chronicle* was not without sympathy for 'these unfortunate girls' but asserted that 'the arrival of these particular immigrants should not pass unnoticed.'<sup>24</sup> 'They come from the plains of India', it continued, 'from squalid and indifferent homes, and though they are educated in mission schools, their standards of life must necessarily be very different from those ruling in the Dominion.' The article thus tested the limits of Graham's strategy of positioning the emigrants as reformed children of destitute families, rather than the children of tea planters.

The *Wanganui Chronicle* also challenged claims that the emigration scheme was providing essential labour, stating that 'at the present moment there is no shortage of female labour in the Dominion'. This public debate, brought to the attention of the Customs Department, was filed with the correspondence

regarding permit applications and annotated with a note that 'since Dec 1922 permits have been granted for 40 Eurasians to enter NZ. Of that number 33 have arrived'.<sup>25</sup> Evidently staff had been directed to acquire figures relating to the Homes scheme, though it was not directly named in the note. Despite evidence that the scheme was causing growing concern, Graham did get one more group of women into Wellington, in 1929. No date of permit issue was recorded. A note in the register recorded that the group had 'arrived temporarily 15.1.29 at Wellington and permitted to remain 20.6.30'.<sup>26</sup> The halting of male emigration after 1926 and temporary basis upon which the women entered in 1929 reflected the worsening economic situation, and mirror the restrictions applied to all assisted migrants.<sup>27</sup> While the women's situations were not as seriously affected by the economic depression as the men's, they too were refused entry after 1929.<sup>28</sup>

## Work and marriage

The gender imbalance of the 1920s and the tendency for the women to write more frequently than the men saw many more letters written by and about the women emigrants in the *Homes Magazines* in this decade, usually bringing news of marriage, children and establishing their own homes. Marriage for some meant greater mobility than when they were in domestic service; and notably, many single and married women placed in the South Island moved northwards in this period and connected with the growing Kalimpong community there. Mary Ochterloney, originally placed in Marlborough, wrote in 1921 of meeting regularly at Rosie Duck's (nee Cooper) Wellington home with Molly Chambers and Gertie Plaistowe. It was 'so nice to go to her house and to have somewhere which we feel like home', she wrote, adding that 'Thelma, Rosie's little girl is lovely'.<sup>29</sup> These women had previously comprised 'The Trio' in Christchurch (in the South Island). Another emigrant who moved northwards, to Napier, was Mary Roberts, who wrote of her impending marriage to Walter Ireland in 1922:

I can hardly realise it's nine years since I left the old homestead. ... Now I'm going to take another plunge. At the end of this year I am to be married. You may be sure I am looking forward to having a little home of my own, and some day when you can come and visit your old boys and girls, you will have to make your home with us.<sup>30</sup>

These early reports of the women's marriages provide some useful indicators about the way marriage attached the women to colonial society, and point to

the role of the Kalimpong family as substitute for their birth families in 'giving them away' to their new in-laws. Winnie Lawless, initially placed in Dunedin and settled in Wellington, announced her engagement on the same page of the *Homes Magazine* as Mary Roberts. Lawless suggested that a wedding veil made in the Kalimpong Lace School 'would always come in handy for Kalimpong girls'.<sup>31</sup> Many of the women were bridesmaids at each other's weddings. In the South Island, Kate Pattison wrote of six early emigrants that she had regular contact with, most of whom had been in the city for a decade. None were married and all continued to work in domestic service. It was clear that the pathway out of domestic service was marriage. Kate remained in contact with those who had moved northwards, noting that Molly Roberts 'seems to like married life'.<sup>32</sup> One southerner, Minnie Savigny, had married a labourer in 1921. Kate herself married a Southland labourer in 1925, as did Mavis Haslett. The demographic status of the Kalimpong women's husbands will be explored more fully in Chapter 7; however, it is worth noting here that their economic status was similar to that of the Kalimpong men. Many were rural labourers whose livelihoods (and families) would be seriously affected by the economic downturn.

Articles published in the *Homes Magazine* in the 1920s thus began to provide an answer to the question of the women's futures, and that was marriage. Women emigrants were strongly encouraged to follow the example of those who had already established 'homes of their own'. In 1929 Annie Brown wrote that while she occasionally saw the new arrivals, she had more frequent contact with the older emigrants, who had 'lovely comfortable homes'. She speculated that 'maybe I'll be the next to change my name after thinking I was a confirmed spinster! For is it not the best thing for us to do?' The editor inserted 'Quite right'.<sup>33</sup> Printed beneath Brown's excerpt was a letter from Dora Moller. On a visit to Dunedin, Dora found that 'nearly all the girls are married' and all were considering it.<sup>34</sup> 'We rejoice to hear those Marriage Bells,' the editor commented.<sup>35</sup> Marriage also brought the production of children not marked by the stigma of illegitimacy or exposed to their Indian heritage. Here was the ideal model for future-oriented colonial domesticity.

The increase in the numbers of women sent to New Zealand in the 1920s brought a greater interest in their fortunes, and it was correspondence from these new arrivals that dominated the columns of the *Homes Magazine* (Figure 5.1). Of the large 1926 group, several of the women wrote about their situations in Wellington. Connie Walker had 'a good mistress and a darling child to look after', Margie Smith was in 'a beautiful home' and Violet Allcard was living with the family of one of the barristers who arranged the permits.<sup>36</sup> Eva Masson wrote

of her idyllic residence with the mayoress of Blenheim who was ‘just like a mother to me. Every day she lets me go to the swimming baths.’<sup>37</sup> Margaret Fox was ‘getting on very much better now since I came over into the big town and I absolutely adore the two wee children I look after. Yesterday we gave a dance. I polished the floor of the dining room, which was used as the ballroom, in the Kalimpong style with bare feet.’<sup>38</sup> It was in these affluent surroundings, in stark contrast to their upbringing in the sparse interiors and communal living of the Homes cottages, that the 1920s women utilized their training, were socialized into New Zealand families and learnt their place in colonial hierarchies.

The men who had served in the First World War returned to the southern communities from which they had embarked. Unlike the women, they tended to stay in the south. Patrick Savigny was mentioned in a letter from his sister Nellie in 1920. The siblings were settled in the same neighbourhood in Dunedin and each was married with one son. Nellie had married Norman Thomson, himself a returned serviceman, and their house, set on half an acre of land, was bought ‘by the aid of government’.<sup>39</sup> Further north, Mary Ochterloney reported that her brother Robert had maintained his interest in football and was enthusiastically following South Africa’s rugby tour of New Zealand.<sup>40</sup> He had returned to the Marlborough district and although he was seriously wounded in the war, he had by Mary’s account resumed his former life. Notably absent from the post-war *Homes Magazines* were letters from the ex-servicemen themselves, many of whom returned home with serious disabilities. Graham’s thoughts upon visiting



**Figure 5.1** ‘Picnic at Wilton’s Beach, Wellington’, Dinning sisters at centre. Courtesy Milne private collection.

them in 1937 will be presented in Chapter 6 to give a clearer picture of the legacies of war service.

The men placed in the North Island in the 1920s encountered similar climatic and working conditions as their predecessors in the south, with instant induction into long days of work, undertaking a variety of manual tasks and enduring cold winters and basic living conditions. The new arrivals did send frequent news of the Kalimpong men clustered in rural areas around Auckland, Wellington and the central North Island. Clarence Bayley wrote in 1926 of joining a football league in Waiuku, south of Auckland, with Fergus Gammie.<sup>41</sup> Charles Spalding and Richard Hawkins wrote from the Auckland district on behalf of the men there, and made special comment about doing their own washing, cooking and cleaning. 'Tell the Fraser chaps to learn how to darn stockings,' Spalding quipped.<sup>42</sup> In the Wellington region, Tom Watson described farm labour as 'healthy and hardy', writing that he liked to 'jump up at 5 o'clock on a cold frosty winter morning, take a minute's run round and commence milking the four cows.'<sup>43</sup> Roland Spencer coped with early starts by focusing on the food that followed: 'A huge slice of bacon and egg, etc. Nothing to beat a farmer's grub.'<sup>44</sup> He wrote of hunting 'up in the bush' and bringing home 'a good dinner which consisted of five rabbits and one wild boar. ... It's great fun.'<sup>45</sup> Their colloquial language, hardy attitudes and humour highlight the aspects of the men's upbringing at the Homes that assisted their immersion into rural life.

Photographs of the men printed alongside their letters reinforced this image of robust young colonials. In 1927, Spencer sent a photograph of four Kalimpong men fishing on the Hutt River, knee-deep in water, with trouser-legs and shirt-sleeves rolled up. Like other photographs supplied by the men in this period, there was a marked departure from earlier portraits that featured impeccably groomed individuals posing seated in indoor studios. Photographs of the 1920s men were taken in groups, outdoors, in casual dress and relaxed poses that gestured towards their manual labour. Some sat astride horses. In one image Spencer reclined on a cane armchair on the porch of a small wooden hut, with a small dog in his arms, sleeves rolled up to his elbows and a large grin on his face. Kneeling beside him is another Kalimpong man (Horace Brooks) similarly dressed, with one hand resting on a working dog. Landscapes were visible and often dominant in the images, and the trappings of rural life were demonstrably integrated into their everyday lives. The open identification with farm labour marked by the publication of these photographs in the *Homes Magazine* suggests a shift in the stigma around agricultural work that was a preoccupation in the 1910s articles.

Unemployment began to impinge upon all assisted immigration into farm work in New Zealand from 1926.<sup>46</sup> This had consequences for the continuance of the Homes scheme and the daily lives of the young men already placed there. Roland Spencer wrote that he was 'trying to get jobs for a new batch of Kalimpong boys. ... I have hunted up and down to secure jobs but alas!'<sup>47</sup> If they were in the country, Spencer believed, 'we would easily lump them into work but the difficulty is to keep a job open till they come out.'<sup>48</sup> The fluctuating fortunes of agriculture due to environmental and economic conditions, plus the time lag between training and emigration, meant that farm work was always less secure than its domestic equivalent. Horace Brooks described his employer's efforts to 'secure billets for our boys who are ready for emigration' and his approach to 'Government Officials with a view to [securing] permits and commending Kalimpong boys to other farmers.'<sup>49</sup> Attempts by employers and emigrants to source new placements met negative responses as unemployment became a significant social problem, and one that Graham's connections to the Customs Department could not overcome.

The 1928 edition of the *Homes Magazine* carried the first report of Kalimpong men working as 'foresters', a role that was particular to the North Island. Clarence Bayley wrote that there were five Kalimpong men living in a 'Forest Camp' at Putaruru in the central North Island.<sup>50</sup> The men resorted to this work due to the difficulty of finding and retaining steady employment on farms, and it represented a marked departure from the notion of being 'billeted' with farming families. The forest workers reported again in 1929 on the work that many Kalimpong men were now engaged in. Emphasizing the strenuous and seasonal nature of the labour, Bayley described the working and living conditions:

The men camp in tents and assemble at the mess house for meals (breakfast and dinner). ... It is a far better paid job than farming, but as it is not a permanent job one does not fancy it much. The majority of those employed are Maoris and I must say they *can* plant. Most of them could plant three to four thousand a day if they really wanted to. I thought I was pretty good when I passed the test (800 plants a day), but I soon stayed cool when I heard the foreman recounting the tallies for the day.<sup>51</sup>

Living in 'camps' and eating in a 'mess house' was surely a long way from Graham's vision of the stabilizing influence of rural Presbyterian families; and from Bayley's report this work was also bringing them into closer contact with Māori labourers.<sup>52</sup> Though not mentioned in the *Homes Magazine*, forestry work would also have seen them working alongside 'gangs' of Indian settlers who worked as

scrub cutters and foresters in the central North Island.<sup>53</sup> The important dynamic here is that while Māori and Indian workers were historically engaged in this type of employment and then pushed *out* (by white men) as unemployment grew, the Kalimpong men were pushed *into* this type of work as opportunities for steady employment declined.<sup>54</sup> These economic forces are highly suggestive of the Kalimpong men's place in racial hierarchies – that is, their inclusion with the white majority, albeit at a lower working class level.

Inclusion in the white labouring class in this period was of little consolation to the men. Fergus Gammie was blunt in his assessment of this temporary work, bemoaning the required mobility:

Half the time I don't know where I am. I am on these jobs that last for a few months, then I go to another. It's like that all the time. Most of the last three years I have been in this forest planting pine trees. ... It's a terrible place this New Zealand for work at present; of course it has been bad for several years. It seems to be getting worse ... .<sup>55</sup>

The men's increasingly negative reports were printed directly alongside bright accounts of their female counterparts entitled 'Marriage Bells' or 'Making Homes of Their Own'. Recent women emigrants wrote of their employers' 'delightful' homes in seaside suburbs in Wellington and did not refer to difficulties securing or retaining employment. Cutting across this gender divide in economic fortunes was a high degree of social contact between the men and the women placed in the North Island. While such contact attests to a strengthening of the local Kalimpong community and its burgeoning visibility, this dynamic also raises the question of their willingness, or ability, to socialize and integrate with 'colonials'. Though Graham encouraged the emigrants to support each other, he was at pains to disperse them, particularly in the early phase. Letters in the 1920s suggest that the unmarried men and women, all of whom had limited time away from their work duties, spent much of their spare time socializing with fellow graduates of the Homes. Marriage, therefore, came to be regarded as a vital means of realizing full social integration for the emigrants, men and women alike.

### Six families: Emigration

Numerous children of the 'six families' arrived in New Zealand in the 1920s, often in the same groups.<sup>56</sup> The contents of these families' personal files enable a deeper examination of the dynamics of social integration described above. Each

contains correspondence from the emigrants to the Homes, especially in the period immediately after arrival in New Zealand, representing another major nub in the archival structure of the Kalimpong life narratives. The letters include many observations that were not published, and some show the marking out of paragraphs for inclusion in the *Homes Magazine*, evidencing the workings of that selection process. Their words illuminate the less visible difficulties of adjusting to daily life in New Zealand, which involved not only a myriad of encounters as they transitioned to a new social world, but also finding their places within the local Kalimpong community and their dispersed origin families. Correspondence with Graham and Purdie lessened as the emigrants found their feet, but contact with the Homes remained a crucial means of connecting with siblings and parents. Such were the complex workings of these disjointed interracial empire families.

Dora Moller, the eldest of the Moller children, spent time on the plantation before leaving for New Zealand in 1920. Her brother Charles turned down the opportunity to emigrate for some unspecified reason, which he later wrote was a 'foolish idea.'<sup>57</sup> By late 1921 Charles had changed his mind and wrote monthly letters for the next two years imploring the Homes to assist. Caught in the gap between 1921 and 1923 when uncertainties about the new permit system meant that no Homes graduates entered the Dominion, he spent those years working for the railways in various parts of India. Charles's correspondence indicated a high level of awareness of the racial, political and economic issues that fuelled debate over immigration rules. He read and gave his interpretation of the 1920 IRAA to Graham, and was aware that he would need to work through Homes channels to secure a permit.<sup>58</sup> Charles relayed information from his sister Dora, who told him that her employers, the Maunsells of Dunedin, would be willing to take responsibility for him.<sup>59</sup> Charles eventually gained passage alongside, though not officially a part of, the group of five women who arrived in 1928. Dora was at the port in Wellington to meet him.<sup>60</sup>

The first correspondence from Dora in the Moller file was written in 1925, by which time she had been away from the Maunsells for two years and had evidently been highly mobile. 'I don't know where I have not been and seen since I've left them,' she wrote from central Otago. 'I'll be here only till Easter, am going to the Lakes near Queenstown. I'm going to be working with an old couple as a companion help.'<sup>61</sup> Along with a friend she was hoping to take up business: 'We are going to have fruits, sweets and tea, so when you happen to come out to New Zealand you will have to come and have afternoon tea at our place.'<sup>62</sup> Dora's letter gives a different impression to the *Homes Magazine* accounts of



young women stable in either their employer's or their own homes. Over the next three years she wrote several letters from the Jenkinses' 'homestead', the elderly couple that she had referred to earlier. Dora wrote of her desire to visit Kalimpong again, relaying a conversation on the subject with her employers that conjures an intimate domestic scene and indicates the importance of even minor Indian connections with these host families:

Mr and Mrs Jenkins and I were just talking about sea trips. Mrs Jenkins doesn't think she would like the sea, Mr Jenkins thinks that a sea trip is not bad at all. Mr Jenkins has a great desire to see India. I told him if he ever took a trip to India not to forget to call at Kalimpong. He was at Bombay on his way to the front during the war. I love Mr and Mrs Jenkins, they are just like a father and mother to me.<sup>63</sup>

Letters from Charles and Dora expressed their continued emotional investment with their dispersed family. Each requested photographs and updates on the progress of their two siblings still at the Homes, and took an interest in whether they too would be sent to New Zealand. Neither Charles nor Dora ever received any letters from their father after leaving India, which caused great confusion and frustration. 'I cannot understand why father should treat us like this,' Charles wrote to Graham in 1921, 'and also it is so strange that you should not know as to his whereabouts knowing he has left you in charge of his children, his flesh and body.'<sup>64</sup> Charles's implication that the Homes was complicit in his father's neglect calls attention to its conflicting responsibilities to different members of the family. With two of his children at the Homes, and a planter who paid the bills on time, Graham and Purdie would be reluctant to upset Moller. Charles insisted that Graham should assist him and Dora in their efforts to force their father to communicate with them, describing himself and his siblings as 'unfortunate God's creations.'<sup>65</sup> After learning that two New Zealand emigrants, the Chaston sisters, were to be visited by their father, Dora wrote to the Homes in 1929 describing her feelings of abandonment:

By the way is my father still alive? I have written to him several times but I've had no reply yet. I wrote to him four months ago telling him of my intentions [to be married], even then I have had no reply. Mr Purdie can you explain to me why he does not write to us? I feel terribly hurt about it. When he said goodbye to me, he promised faithfully that he would write to me, and here I have been in New Zealand over eight years and I've had not even a line from him. I think he is evil.<sup>66</sup>

Paul Moller had continued to correspond with the Graham, mostly about practical matters such as fees for the children still at the Homes, but he did enquire about Charles and Dora. He had received their letters and told Graham that he was glad to hear of their progress.<sup>67</sup> The impression from Charles's and Dora's letters is that Graham denied knowledge of his whereabouts, or at least refused to act on their behalf in ascertaining his circumstances or the reasons for his silence. The scenario points to the delicacy of these familial arrangements, which had been permanently altered by the physical and bureaucratic intrusion of the institution. The systematic filing of all such correspondence meant that deeply personal matters were dealt with chiefly by managing the paperwork. The letters were stored flat in the 'file' with the graduate's student number written at the top of the page; notes were written between staff about how to deal with the enquiry and the date of reply was recorded. The practice of interleaving the letters of what was essentially a blind conversation has left a vivid paper trail of the Homes disruptive influence. While retention of the files has facilitated otherwise impossible family reconnections many years later, their contents lay bare the active part the Homes played in prising and keeping families apart in the first place.

After all his imaginings of a better future, Charles was initially disappointed with the situations he encountered in New Zealand, and frustrated at his inability to support his siblings. Upon learning of his younger sister Elizabeth's impending emigration in 1928, he wrote to the Homes to dissuade them from sending her, stating that he and Dora were 'absolutely helpless as far as assisting her goes.'<sup>68</sup> The 'Colour Distinction', he wrote, 'is worse here than in India, and we are all treated as "oh! only half-castes", or Indians.'<sup>69</sup> Charles had encouraged Dora to leave her domestic employment because the wages were too low, stating that, 'after all, we are not working for a name, but for wages – and will go where we are offered more wages.'<sup>70</sup> Drawing Dora into a masculine mindset that prioritized monetary reward over loyalty to employers, and dissatisfied with his own situation, Charles convinced Dora to combine their savings and open a confectionary shop in Auckland. Despite accruing enough capital to start the business, the Mollers still had to call upon the Homes network to branch out from the employment into which they had been placed. It was only through assistance from A. W. Blair (the former Wellington barrister, by then a judge in Auckland) that they gained consent to lease premises for the business. Presumably this plan did not eventuate as Dora was back with the Jenkinses the following year.

A copy of Graham's reply to Charles's pessimistic letter was stored in the Moller file. Graham wrote that 'in the same mail I had several other letters and I think in almost all cases the outlook was completely different.'<sup>71</sup> He suggested that Charles was being too sensitive about the 'colour bar' and needed to adopt a hardier approach to racial prejudice, which was merely evidence of ignorance and would be encountered anywhere. Graham offered evidence of his belief that 'New Zealand offers for the future a very much superior chance to India' by informing Charles that 'a Maori has just been appointed a Bishop' and that in 1909 'one who was of mixed race was acting as Premier of the Colony.'<sup>72</sup> As for Elizabeth, the younger sister, Graham advised that their father was strongly in favour of her emigration – further evidence of ongoing contact with Paul Moller. The following year a more upbeat Charles wrote to Graham expressing optimism about his future and real hopes of eventually owning a farm (which he later did). He offered suggestions about how to better equip the boys for farm work and provided information, as requested by Graham, about forestry work. This letter was the first of Charles's from which an excerpt was printed in the *Homes Magazine*.

Emigration had the opposite effect for the Peters family as it did for the Mollers. After more than a decade of refusing to have any direct communication with his children, Egerton Peters wrote to the Homes within weeks of their departure from India, asking for addresses for Lorna and George in New Zealand.<sup>73</sup> For Peters, their settlement in a distant colony paved the way for re-establishing a relationship with them. The Homes, however, still played a role in managing the physical and social distances that separated them. Upon receipt of a letter from Lorna that described difficulties with her work, Peters wrote to Graham on her behalf, and later gave updates of her favourable progress.<sup>74</sup> George, on the other hand, apparently needed 'a strong hard hand over him', and his father felt that 'some hardship will do him a lot of good'. Peters continued to correspond with the Homes regarding his third child Alice who was still in residence there.

Alice emigrated in 1926, soon after Peters himself travelled to New Zealand. Peters purchased a farmlet in Pine Hill where he planned to run a poultry farm. Both daughters lived with him initially, but Alice stayed for only one year before taking up a domestic position with a family north of Dunedin. George and Alice each wrote letters to Graham in the 1920s describing their enjoyment of working in rural Otago. Both were published in the *Homes Magazine*.<sup>75</sup> In 1927 Egerton Peters replied to a letter from James Purdie asking whether he could offer employment for Kalimpong boys. Peters reluctantly informed Purdie that he could not 'employ a hand, except for some team work to put in coops we do

everything ourselves and a very hard life it is too. ... Birdie [Lorna] and Alice are both well and great workers.<sup>76</sup> This was not the last time Peters would respond to requests for assistance – for employment opportunities and for information about economic conditions in the colony.

John Gammie retained regular contact with the Homes after his two eldest children were sent to New Zealand in 1925; unsurprising considering he still had five children resident there. Gammie wrote several letters organizing the emigration of Moira and Alison, who arrived together with the large 1926 group. Betty wrote the first letters from New Zealand, telling Graham of her initial loneliness in Auckland where there were few other Kalimpong emigrants. She waited until this phase had passed before writing to Graham, expressing gratitude for her upbringing at the Homes and stating that although ‘when I first arrived I thought that I would never be happy ... now I have changed my thoughts.’<sup>77</sup> Fergus, whose report on forestry was included in the *Homes Magazine*, had in an earlier (unpublished) letter outlined the reasons that he and Richard Hawkins had left their initial placement:

At the time I was working for him, he only gave me £4 a month. At that we used to get up at 2.30 in the morning summer and winter. ... You can see for yourself he was not paying us fairly. One would think it is good to stick to one master, but we cannot when he does not pay us the right amount. I’m getting £7–10 a month at present, and I might get more later on. We get up at 6 in the morning.<sup>78</sup>

Although Fergus was aware that it was precisely this traditional form that Graham hoped would support their adjustment to rural life, the reality bore little resemblance to the musings of Graham and others as they theorized solutions to the Anglo-Indian ‘problem.’ These letters, aside from their suitability (or otherwise) for inclusion in the *Homes Magazine*, were an invaluable source of candid information for Graham about the developing situation in New Zealand.

The Spalding brothers were sent to New Zealand in close succession, Charles in 1925 and Tom in 1926. Charles wrote from a Te Awamutu farm one free afternoon, describing Christmas Day celebrations and concluding that ‘I like New Zealand very much, hills all around us, some like Kalimpong and I like the farming too.’<sup>79</sup> Both men wrote in upbeat tones, in letters that revealed a fascinating coexistence of social worlds. Their reminiscences of India informed and were remembered alongside life in the North Island, and they ended their letters with ‘best Salaams’ to the Homes. They worked in close proximity to each other, and socialized with the same Kalimpong men. Thomas wrote in 1927 of joining a hockey team with Richard Hawkins and Charlie Watson,

and of their hope ‘to win the cup for Aka Aka.’<sup>80</sup> The Hawkins file contained no correspondence from the 1920s. Richard was an only child and retained contact with his father independently of the Homes.<sup>81</sup> However, Richard’s arrival in the same group as Charles Spalding saw him included in many of their letters. At one time Tom Spalding, Fergus Gammie and Richard Hawkins were all working together in the Auckland region (see Figure 5.2). Tom and Richard were to remain lifelong friends, and their children are still in contact with each other some ninety years later.

The Mortimore siblings arrived together in 1926. Rend wrote to James Purdie having just started work near Wellington after ‘two weeks holiday’ during which their placements were organized. Rend’s letter highlights the Homes’ efforts to keep siblings together where possible. ‘Mr Blair was going to send me to Auckland to work there,’ he wrote, ‘but I told him that my sister was working in Wellington.’ Rend was then placed closer to Jean.<sup>82</sup> Jean wrote a long letter some months later of living in a ‘sweet little cottage’ with an ‘awfully kind mistress.’<sup>83</sup> Like the Spalding brothers, Jean sent her ‘best salaams’ to all at the Homes. Nostalgic thoughts of Kalimpong were intertwined with her descriptions of Wellington and were also present in her daily tasks: ‘You should just see me doing shopping, not like how you do shopping in India. You see we have to carry our own parcels, no coolies to carry them for us.’<sup>84</sup> Again the Homes performed the role of an extended family at ‘home’; receiving observations about everyday



**Figure 5.2** Tom Spalding, Fergus Gammie and Richard Hawkins, Auckland region, c. 1930. Courtesy Spalding private collection.

life that only carried meaning for those with experience in common, and that were more safely enclosed in an envelope for an overseas destination than shared with a local acquaintance, or an in-law, or a child.

Interleaved with this correspondence from Jean and Rend were several letters from their mother, Nelly, written from Romai tea estate in Assam. She thanked the Homes for sending photographs of her children, but was dismayed that she had not received letters from either of them since their arrival in New Zealand. Nelly pleaded for the Homes to continue to assist her now that 'Mrs R. Jones frm Cherrapungee is away to Wales' and she could 'find no other [*word illegible*] who can help me in bringing my children and me closer together.'<sup>85</sup> Almost a year later Nelly wrote with the same complaint about the absence of direct correspondence with her children. In letters to the Homes written soon after this, both Rend and Jean referred to miscommunications with their mother after sending letters to her that she never received. Nelly's letter is a powerful reminder of the emigrants' continuing presence in their mothers' thoughts. Despite being relatively empowered by her literacy, Nelly existed, in fundamental ways, outside of the structured channels of communication that might put her in direct contact with her children. Her dependence on the Homes to assist her is another way in which the institution was embedded at the very heart of these broken families:

Romai T.E.  
P.O. Dikom  
10th Feby 1928

I am very glad to know that both of my children are keeping good health, by god blessings, as the same attends me up here thank god. But, the thing is, I feel rather uneasy of having no news from my children, anyway I leave it to you, as I have nobody to do on my behalf but I hope that god will bring them back to me again. How [I] long to see them, but god himself know the thing best. I am poor and helpless and I have no way to do a search them such everything I depend upon your honour as I know fully well that you will not fail to send my address to them.

Well I close with thousand thanks

Yours obedient servant  
Nelly<sup>86</sup>

The gendered gulf that proscribed Nelly's hugely frustrating battle against the forces that simultaneously empowered British men was a long way from the challenges faced by the emigrants in New Zealand. Yet gender distinctions

continued to structure their experiences in the 1920s too. Domestic service was accepted as a site of socialization and containment rather than a means of achieving upward mobility, and it was marriage that the Homes identified as the pathway to full social integration and advancement for the Kalimpong women. Although many of the men married in the 1920s, this was not reported in the *Homes Magazine*, nor is there any evidence that their newly established family homes became places for the emigrants old and new to gather. For the men, the legacy of war experiences and the encroaching economic depression were the dominant forces in this period. Even before the Homes stopped sending men from 1926, the *Homes Magazine* reports demonstrated that despite being placed in employment soon after arrival, many men soon joined the ranks of itinerant workers.

Letters from the emigrants have brought a new depth to our understanding of the family sagas that were playing out beneath Graham's confident promotion of the scheme. Despite the changing times, Graham continued to couch his publicity in the original rhetoric of impoverished children being made ready for colonial labour. The photographic record in albums held by descendants tells a different story. Their images capture a particular spirit of that time, especially for the young women, with many photographs of them dressed in 1920s garb, socializing, posing around cars and on the beach. This was also the decade that saw several tea planters arrive in New Zealand to be reunited with their children – the father of the Chaston sisters (Figure 5.3), Egerton Peters and Hugh Dinning, who along with his two daughters provided



**Figure 5.3** Gwen and Mary Chaston with their father and Mae Sinclair (right) in New Zealand. Courtesy Milne private collection.

a memorable setting for social gatherings in Wellington. Others received inheritances from their fathers and used this to advance their position in New Zealand and to support Kalimpong friends. Thus the emigrants who were still connected to their British families bypassed some of the difficulties of the economic depression. As the next chapter will show, the emigration scheme itself possessed no such exemption.



## 1930s: Decline and Discontinuance

From 1929 to 1937, immigration authorities in New Zealand adhered to a firm 'closed door' policy to any new arrivals. The devastating impact of the global economic depression silenced any debate about the Kalimpong scheme, and John Graham accepted the economic justification for not allowing any further groups to emigrate. By 1937, Graham was hopeful that better economic conditions might mean the scheme could resume. As a 75-year-old, he visited New Zealand for a second time, meeting his former pupils, many of whom were now middle-aged, and lobbying the government. Graham was pleased with the fortunes of those he met and encouraged by the official response to his queries. He departed New Zealand further convinced of its leading role in the British Empire on the question of race relations, and did see one final group into New Zealand in 1938. The following year, however, in the context of pre-war pressure on immigration authorities from European refugees and an upsurge in enquiries from South Asian mixed-race communities as India headed towards Independence, the scheme was finally halted.

In addition to economic downturn, this period was marked by important shifts in British imperial rule. The Dominions assumed greater autonomy in governance, while in non-settler colonies, nationalist movements that had made strident demands of Britain following the First World War continued to gain momentum.<sup>1</sup> Indian nationalism had reached a position by the 1930s that meant Britain's withdrawal was viewed as not only inevitable but imminent. This prospect was greatly troubling to the Anglo-Indian community, and a point of discussion for British and Indian officials alike.<sup>2</sup> From a Kalimpong perspective, these imperial and global dynamics presented an enormous challenge: economic depression and the indefinite removal of New Zealand as a destination hampered placement of Homes graduates, and British withdrawal from India would threaten the institution's very existence. How and where did a Scottish institution, set up for the children of British tea planters and funded largely by British interests in India, fit in an independent India?

The archive of Graham's hectic and very public tour communicates his deep concern about this eventuality. The records left by his visit included two diaries, transcripts of his broadcasts on National Radio and numerous newspaper articles. In this chapter I make extensive use of his personal diary, entitled 'Pour Les Intimes', which offers a different angle on the Homes narrative of the emigration scheme. Here Graham walked into the homes of graduates he had not seen for decades, met their children, learnt of their early hardships and through his own filter recorded their successes and failures. The diary provides a useful snapshot of the community in 1937, and lights up Graham's network of Presbyterian and ex-India supporters around New Zealand. These records mark a brief but important moment in building the collective narrative, because in the years prior to Graham's visit there was a significant reduction in their archived stories. The *Homes Magazine* carried very few reports of the New Zealanders in the 1930s, and the family files were also noticeably bereft of correspondence.

The immigration files too were quiet in the 1930s, yet they do contain information useful for continuing to illuminate the policy that was applied to Anglo-Indians, and within that category, the Homes emigrants. Previous anxieties about the social and economic absorption of migrants with Indian ancestry were displaced by the late 1930s by a broad rejection of any 'half-caste' migrants. Given his many claims about New Zealand's progressive racial politics, Graham expressed considerable shock at this justification for ending the scheme. As Damon Salesa has shown, New Zealand state policies towards mixed-race peoples changed in the interwar period.<sup>3</sup> But Graham was not privy to such subtleties, clinging to his belief that New Zealand provided 'striking proof' of Lord Olivier's claim that racial mixing created individuals who were 'potentially a more competent vehicle of humanity.'<sup>4</sup> Prior to 1939, what Graham read, saw and heard about Māori in New Zealand was a steady source of inspiration to continue with the scheme.

### Immigration policy and the Kalimpong scheme

A memorandum in the Customs Department file headed 'Policy followed during the year 1931' makes plain the difficulty of obtaining a permit to enter New Zealand in the depression era. Five categories of Race Aliens were listed: Chinese, Indians, Syrians, Palestinians and Other Race Aliens. In total, one Syrian child and '8 wives and 25 children' of Indians living in New Zealand were granted permits. No permits were issued to 'other coloured people' except for

the Japanese wife of a New Zealand resident and two Anglo-Indian families 'of superior standing'.<sup>5</sup> Aside from these two Anglo-Indian families, no permits were issued to 'alien' migrants in 1931 who did not already have family resident in New Zealand.

The differential treatment of Kalimpong emigrants within this restrictive regime highlights the ad hoc nature of policies developed to implement the permit system. Like any community involved in chain migrations, changes to immigration policy caused great anxiety. But as the Customs Department memorandum demonstrates, there was a continued emphasis on kinship during this restrictive period, at least for Indian families. Yet the same concessions were not made for Kalimpong emigrants, whose siblings were effectively blocked from joining them when the scheme halted in 1929. This distinct treatment of Anglo-Indians is also apparent in the Memorandum, where it was their 'mixedness' rather than their 'Indianness' that determined their inclusion in the 'other race aliens' category; and Anglo-Indians were the only 'new' migrants from any of these categories allowed to enter in 1931. Their 'family' status probably explains why they were granted permits while the Kalimpong emigrants – single and seeking unskilled employment – were not. These subtleties aside, the distinct treatment is important because it disrupted the Homes practice of sending siblings to the same destination.

The policy change also created uncertainty about the rights of exit and re-entry for those already in New Zealand. The only letter in the Customs Department file regarding Anglo-Indians between 1929 and 1937 was one that sought clarity about the citizenship status of a Homes graduate. Mrs J. A. Tripe wrote the letter in 1932, requesting advice about taking her 'Eurasian maid' to England. Unsure if the woman would be allowed to land and reside there, Tripe queried, 'If she wished to come back to New Zealand, would she have a right to re-enter?'<sup>6</sup> This question of citizenship and mobility would continue to trouble the Kalimpong emigrants. Stability in the Dominion can be read, as it was by Graham, as evidence of contented settlers whose heads had been turned away from India; but it also indicates a fear of not being allowed to return, especially when Anglo-Indians were being denied permits. In Tripe's case, the permit register contains no record of her Kalimpong employee returning to New Zealand in the 1930s; presumably the uncertainty over her re-entry saw her take up employment in another household.

The halt to the emigration scheme in 1929 weakened the threads connecting Kalimpong and New Zealand, and this was evident in the reduction of content regarding those living abroad in the 1930s editions of the *Homes Magazine*.

This archival quietening can be linked to various causes. First, without an emigration scheme to promote, there was less motivation to include reports about graduates' progress overseas, despite the professed desire to promote continued connections among the dispersed Kalimpong family. Second, there was perhaps a scarcity of source material, with no eager new arrivals writing letters in the initial lonely phase of settlement, and little positive news for others to report in the depression era. Third, financial tightening may have reduced the size of the 1930s editions, since it was circulated free of charge. In 1931, for the first time, no issues of the *Homes Magazine* were published, probably due to Graham's absence from Kalimpong that year (discussed below). Finally, the scarce mention of New Zealand surely suggests the declining relevance of the Dominion to Indian interests, and vice versa. The shifting dynamics of the British Empire affected the audience and circulation of this vehicle of imperial fundraising, and this was reflected in its content.

Changing priorities at the Homes were evidenced more directly by Graham's activities in the 1930s. In 1931 he was appointed moderator of the Church of Scotland, which saw him spend eight months away from Kalimpong. One of the topics he often spoke of during his tenure in Britain was unrest in India as the nationalist movement gained momentum.<sup>7</sup> Graham's concern about where Anglo-Indians might fit under any new regime saw him encourage them to seek a more 'harmonious' relationship with Indians, which he saw as a necessary shift if Homes graduates were to find employment in an independent India. Late in 1934 Graham delivered a lecture to the Royal Society of Arts in London entitled 'The Education of the Anglo-Indian Child' which reiterated this concern.<sup>8</sup> Appealing for British and Indian support, Graham apologized to Indian audiences for the Anglo-Indian tendency to act with 'partiality towards their Western kin.'<sup>9</sup> James Minto traced these sentiments to Graham's 1921 address to the Calcutta Committee, in which he stated that

one of the best lessons we can teach the youth of the domiciled community of our schools is to be proud of their motherland. ... An undoubted weakness of the domiciled community in the past has been in cherishing too often the thought that because of blood relationship with the paramount Power, they were entitled to special privileges. At the Homes we have sought from the beginning to emphasise the thought of the brotherhood of the people of India.<sup>10</sup>

The Homes, of course, did no such thing. Even Minto, a great supporter of Graham's, was bemused by the blatant contradiction between this sentiment and the Homes' original vision and the ensuing decades of activity, which sought

to turn the children entirely away from their Indian heritage, and wherever possible, away from a future in India.<sup>11</sup>

While Graham had previously spoken positively to Indian audiences about his graduates' placement in India, his imagined integration of Anglo-Indians into an Indian 'brotherhood' demonstrated a much-heightened concern for the fate of the community. A survey of *Homes Magazine* articles reporting Indian placements in the 1910s and 1920s revealed that Graham was careful to establish a place for his graduates among his British contacts in India, utilizing existing channels of employment and housing for Anglo-Indians as well as creating new ones that continued their historic segregation – a far cry from this call for integration with all Indians.<sup>12</sup> By the mid-1930s, some years after the last group was emigrated and with India's withdrawal from Empire looking likely, this rhetoric assumed a more prominent and urgent place in Graham's thinking. Yet he had not given up on his original 'colonial' solution for Anglo-Indians. In 1937, at the age of seventy-five, Graham returned to New Zealand, hopeful that the improved economic outlook would aid his call for the emigration scheme to resume, and knowing that this would be his last opportunity to meet his former students and to reflect on the successes and failures of his grand scheme.

### 'Pour Les Intimes': The associates

The Kalimpong emigrants' later silences regarding their Indian heritage have led to speculation that they received a specific directive to be discrete about it. Graham's very public visit to New Zealand in 1937 would seem to contradict this possibility. He spent six weeks touring both islands, visiting Kalimpong emigrants in their homes and meeting their in-laws and friends. He gave press interviews and advertised his presence in local newspapers; broadcast twice on National Radio; delivered numerous sermons; and addressed schools, church groups, rotary clubs and a Women's Temperance Union meeting. In his public appeals for the scheme to resume, Graham spoke candidly about those who had already emigrated, naming individuals and employers. His personal diary of that trip, entitled 'Pour Les Intimes', reads as an open letter to his family and recorded candid assessments of those he met. An edited version of the diary was published in the *Homes Magazine*. In his diary and in the many public accounts of his tour, there is no indication that Graham sought

to conceal the emigrants' Indian heritage nor the terms upon which they had entered the colony.

Graham's diary makes explicit the deep involvement of the Presbyterian community in the emigration scheme. In Wellington 'dear old Rev J.H. MacKenzie', a Presbyterian minister, met him at the train station.<sup>13</sup> He stayed with the MacKenzies for a week and met many members of the local Presbyterian community. In Christchurch, Graham stayed with 'Mr Armour, the minister of Knox Church'.<sup>14</sup> The Armours took him to church meetings and to visit Kalimpong emigrants, and arranged a reunion on the evening of his return to Christchurch. In Dunedin, Graham stayed with a Homes graduate, George Langmore, but was otherwise hosted by the Presbyterian Church. He was driven by Dr Dickie of Knox (theological) College to two institutions run by the local Presbyterian Services Support Association (Ross Home for the elderly and the Glendinning Cottage Homes for children), addressed meetings at Knox College and conducted services at two Presbyterian churches. On a day trip to Gore, in the south, he was hosted by the local Presbyterian minister, Mr Barton, who organized a missionary meeting and gave an account of the two Kalimpong women settled there, before putting on an afternoon tea for the women and their families. Auckland was the only place where Graham did not record meeting with the Presbyterian community in his diary; however, local newspapers reported that he was entertained by the Presbytery and delivered two sermons there in the days before he departed New Zealand.<sup>15</sup>

The other main constituent of this network of supporters was ex-India settlers. Graham's diary affords a unique glimpse of this community in 1930s New Zealand.<sup>16</sup> Of the sixty-five associates Graham mentioned in his diary, at least twenty had stated connections to India. Four were ex-planters, five were related to missionaries in India, another four had previously worked in the medical field there, one was ex-army and another was on furlough from working on the Indian railways. He met a teacher at Waitaki Boys School in Oamaru who had stayed at the Homes in Kalimpong on a climbing expedition. Graham met others with Indian connections by chance and took opportunities for eliciting new assistance. While visiting a tourist attraction in Rotorua, for example, he met an 'old retired planter from Kandy, Ceylon, WWAT Murray, 84 years of age, came here for health, with a programme of 2 years more globetrotting'.<sup>17</sup> Graham found many points of contact through him 'with people in Ceylon, South India and Jersey'. Murray was a friend of Sir Herbert Newbiggin, who Graham had hoped to meet but had missed by a few days. He left a message for Newbiggin with Murray.

Others with connections to India heard of Graham's visit and sought him out. In Nelson, a Mr Anderson-Smith heard Graham's first radio broadcast and arranged to meet him. Anderson-Smith had been a tea planter in Assam for twenty-two years and his family in Glasgow had employed a Homes graduate. Another who contacted Graham was the former health commissioner of Bengal, who had visited Kalimpong in 1907. After working on a number of tea estates in Ceylon, this visitor (who had the distinction of being the only person Graham recorded meeting but whose name he forgot) had settled in Auckland. Numerous associates were connected through both India and the church, and they were not exclusively Presbyterian. The Anglican Bishop of Wellington, who Graham found to be 'most sympathetic' to the Homes scheme, had two brothers working as missionaries in India. In Dunedin, Dr North, who had employed Kalimpong women, was formerly a medical missionary with the Baptist church in East Bengal. The minister of the Lyttleton parish near Christchurch, Mr Stevenson, was related to an 'aunt' at the Homes.

The people of greatest interest to Graham on this visit were those in political circles who could assist his attempts to have the emigration scheme resumed. Associates in Wellington arranged a lunch for Graham with the governor general, Lord Galway, soon after he arrived there, and Galway then advised Graham 'whom to see on the subject' of emigration.<sup>18</sup> This culminated in an appointment with the acting prime minister, Peter Fraser, on Graham's return to Wellington after touring the South Island. The meeting was set up by Charles White, a barrister and long-time supporter of the scheme in Dunedin and Wellington. White escorted Graham to the meeting. Graham later recorded his intentions for the meeting in his diary, referring to the extant connections between Wellington politicians and the women emigrants:

My object was to get the Government of New Zealand to allow us to resume sending more boys and girls. I had a good argument to make in my experience of the OGBs [Old Girls and Boys] in N.Z. Mr Fraser is the Minister of Education, a Presbyterian and a Scotsman. His wife too knows of the good service given by our girls. He was most sympathetic and asked me to send in a formal application which he could lay before his colleagues.<sup>19</sup>

Graham noted that some members of this first Labour government were held in suspicion by 'the more conservative element. But Mr Fraser is not one of these. I found he had a knowledge of India and many of the present Indian conditions. We are now certain of sending a batch in autumn.'<sup>20</sup> As with his 1909 visit, Graham's

confidence was at its highest point when he met educated men of influence who sympathized with the scheme, shared his Scottish Presbyterian origins, knew something of the particular conditions of India and with whom he could now claim a personal connection. He was known as a tireless campaigner, and the 1937 diary certainly supports that characterization.<sup>21</sup> But for the emigrants, his visit evoked an emotive response and was a chance to reconnect with an important figure of their childhood.

### ‘Pour Les Intimes’: The emigrants

In his final broadcast the day before he left New Zealand, Graham stated that he had ‘had personal contact with nearly all’ of the 119 Kalimpong graduates settled there.<sup>22</sup> In his diary, he recorded meeting around 75 in person. Including those whom he heard news of but did not meet, the number is closer to 100. While Graham referred to the men and women in similar numbers (49 women and 45 men), he only actually *met* 27 of the 45 men named, compared to 48 of the 49 women. Thus he saw almost twice the number of women as men. This statistic reveals the persistently isolated and impermanent nature of the men’s work, in contrast to the relatively dense clustering of the women in urban centres. As Figure 6.1 illustrates, the majority of those Graham met were in the four main centres of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. There was a broader dispersal of the men around the regions, a higher proportion of men in the South Island than women and a greater concentration of women in Wellington. This clustering in the capital was partly due to the higher numbers of female than male arrivals in the 1920s, most of whom were placed in Wellington.

These gendered geographical trends were reflected in attendance at social gatherings recorded by Graham. In Dunedin, the two get-togethers were held at the homes of Kalimpong men, one of which was specifically for the ‘Old Boys’; while in the North Island, the women hosted numerous dinners and social events, and attended the reunions in much higher numbers than the men. The first gathering in Wellington, at Reverend MacKenzie’s home, was attended by seventeen Kalimpong women and only one male graduate; and a similar disparity was evident at the ‘great party’ hosted by Didsbury family in Wellington. In the photograph taken to mark the occasion, there were twenty-three Kalimpong women and five men present (Figure 6.2). Notable among the guests in the





**Figure 6.1** John Graham’s journey around New Zealand, 1937. Map created by Harley McCabe.

photograph was Janet Fraser, wife of the acting prime minister and an active supporter of the women in Wellington. Another evening was held at the home of Mary Gibson (nee Ochterloney), a 1912 emigrant. In Auckland, Alice Stewart (nee Peters) hosted a ‘big gathering’, which Graham found ‘so happy that I didn’t get to the hotel till 12.30am.’<sup>23</sup>



**Figure 6.2** Reunion of Kalimpong emigrants with John Graham at the Didsbury family home, Wellington, 1937. Courtesy Gammie private collection.

Graham emphasized his enjoyment of these functions in his final broadcast from Auckland, where he reflected on his experiences over the previous six weeks:

No experience has given me a keener thrill of pleasure than to see – at the Re-unions we have had – the light-hearted, happy camaraderie and affection they have for each other. They have certainly imbibed much of the sense of humour, good-natured leg-pulling and vivacious banter so characteristic of New Zealanders. They have successfully dug themselves in to good purpose.<sup>24</sup>

This comment provides a useful insight into Graham's assessments of his graduates' integration. He noted twin accomplishments of absorption into the host community evidenced by the traits they had 'imbibed', plus the maintenance of strong bonds to their fellow settlers. While this closeness to others from Kalimpong could be cast in a negative light, Graham was satisfied that they related to each other as 'New Zealanders'. In his public broadcasts Graham emphasized the emigrants' contribution to their communities and to the nation, but privately he seemed as much buoyed by their domestic contentment. He observed their situations through a discrete and detached paternalism, writing of the men as looking 'manly' and 'successful', and taking pride in the women's

community and family involvement. For men and women, his most consistent accolade was for happy marriages and children with bright prospects.

Of the first four emigrants, Graham met three: Leonard Williams and Clarence Sinclair in Dunedin, and Eustace Boardman in Napier. He called first at Williams's place of business, a 'master's tobacconist's shop' on Stuart Street, in the centre of Dunedin city. Williams recognized Graham at once and gave him 'an affectionate greeting.'<sup>25</sup> Graham then called on Clarence Sinclair, who was 'more restrained in his welcome and didn't even ask us in.'<sup>26</sup> Graham's explanation was that Sinclair had married a 'keen Catholic', and he attributed his lack of attendance at the social functions to Sinclair's employment as a night watchman. Williams, however, not only attended the party but also hosted the final gathering in Dunedin at his 'delightful home', which he shared with several in-laws who were 'all well educated'. 'Len's boy promises to be a clever young man', Graham added, noting that Williams added a 'special gift' to the combined offering of the Dunedin community, 'a walking stick with a silver label "J.A.G. from No.1" – referring to his being the first of the emigrants'. The ease with which Graham located Williams and Sinclair, neither of whom had prior notice of his tour, attests to the continued functioning of the Kalimpong community in the south.

In Napier, Graham wrote a detailed entry on the fortunes of Eustace Boardman. Boardman was the emigrant who reported on life as a 'rolling stone' in the early 1900s. Now Graham heard the full story of the incident that ended his initial placement, which can be read both as a clash of distinct colonial masculine types and an expression of Boardman's forthright personality. A foreman who was a 'drunkard' disliked Boardman 'because he spoke to him of his carelessness and drinking.'<sup>27</sup> This eventually led to a physical altercation, where Boardman 'struck him [the foreman] with a hoe and cut his face'. Boardman 'confessed' to his employer and left. Graham relayed the incident in his diary in order 'to show what some of the early boys had to put up with'. He met Boardman and his family at Molly Ireland's home. Though the family were 'not so refined as the Irelands', Graham found Boardman to be 'a well-built intelligent man who has done many different things', including having his own business which had folded after the devastating 1931 Napier earthquake.<sup>28</sup> Any concern about Boardman's current occupation, which he noted as 'odd jobs in connection with shipping', was overridden by his children's prospects. One son was working in the Woollen Mills and 'his second who is a baker in Auckland was one of the best swimmers in the Hawkes Bay district.'<sup>29</sup>

George Langmore, a 1911 emigrant who had visited India in the 1920s, hosted Graham in Dunedin. Graham was impressed by Langmore's wife and two teenage daughters, and his 'cement double-storied' home (Figure 6.3).<sup>30</sup> He mentioned the 'soft carpets' that came from Glasgow, and that George had named the house 'Lopchu' after his father's tea plantation – testament to the enduring transnational connections that the emigrants embodied and made tangible in their new homes. Graham's conclusion that Langmore 'must have done well' was characteristic of a degree of restraint in his enquiries. Langmore drove Graham around Dunedin locating 'Old Boys' and arranging a social evening. Several attendees were returned servicemen, but because they all 'looked successful' Graham made no mention of their war service, nor their particular occupations. His report on Terence Buckley was typical of the concise assessments he made:



**Figure 6.3** John Graham with George Langmore and his daughters, Dunedin, 1937. Courtesy Langmore private collection.

Terence is a particularly sweet affectionate and gentlemanly lad, doing well and with a little car of his own. He has the reputation of helping any O.B. in need. He corresponds regularly with his brother in London. He is not married.<sup>31</sup>

Throughout the diary there is occasional mention of the men's occupations. Of the sixteen men whose occupation Graham did state, almost all of those who had arrived in the 1920s were engaged in rural labour. In contrast, only one of the earlier emigrants was active in the rural sector, and he owned his farm rather than being an itinerant worker (see Table 6.1). The transience of the later arrivals, which we learnt of in Chapter 5 via the *Homes Magazine* reports, had continued through the 1930s and affected their ability to meet with Graham. Some travelled long distances to meet him in urban centres; others were included in a list compiled by Graham towards the end of his diary of those he had not met due to them being in an 'isolated situation' or because their whereabouts was uncertain.<sup>32</sup> Graham spent considerable time 'tracking' several individuals, with limited success. His search for Donald McIntyre involved the greatest detour and suggests a genuine concern for his former charges:

We started about 9am for Masterton to seek out Donald McIntyre who we had been told was working there. That meant going back towards Wellington for 85 miles. ... Alas we could not find Donald. The P.O. people said he had gone to Dannevirke, nearly a year ago but no one knew his address. So we went back over 85 miles to Dannevirke! We were no more successful there. But the Farmers' Union Secretary was to send out that evening a circular to all the members asking if anyone knew about him. ... [We] got back to Napier at nightfall ... a journey in all of 252 miles.<sup>33</sup>

Graham's diary sheds light on the reality of life in the rural sector in New Zealand for the men and the women. While in his Auckland broadcast Graham stated that many of the men were still employed in the agricultural sector and that this was the appropriate entry point for them, it was quite apparent from his diary that the majority of Kalimpong men found their place in urban employment and suburban family life. The one emigrant who did own a farm did not receive any special mention. Four of the women had found their place in farming through marriage. In Levin, Graham visited Mary Woodmass (nee Greig) and her family, who farmed seventy-five acres of land. Another Kalimpong woman had married 'a farmer boy' in Christchurch, a smaller holding of five acres on which they milked cows. Lorna Peters, my grandmother, was described by Graham as the 'undoubted leader' of the poultry farm at Pine Hill, and Ellie Davenport ran a strawberry farm with her husband near Auckland. Graham's diary is thus a

**Table 6.1** Men's occupations by year of arrival (as per Graham's diary)

Name	Year of arrival	Occupation	Marital status	Location
Leonard Williams	1908	Own business	Married	Dunedin
Sydney Williams	1908	Telegraph master	Not recorded	Auckland
Eustace Boardman	1909	Labourer	Married	Hastings
Clarence Sinclair	1909	Night watchman	Married	Dunedin
George Langmore	1911	Attendant	Married	Dunedin
Robert Ochterloney	1912	Gold miner	Unmarried	Picton
Edward Snelleksz	1912	Farming	Married	North Canterbury
Adrian Andrews	1915	Labourer – public works	Not recorded	Balclutha
Victor Snelleksz	1920	Farm labourer	Not recorded	South Canterbury
Tom Greig	1923	Gardener	Not recorded	Auckland
Hugh Muspratt	1923	Farm labourer	Unmarried	Rotorua
Richard Hawkins	1923	Farm labourer	Unmarried	Kaitaia
Charles Watson	1925	Forester – public works	Not recorded	Rotorua
Tom Watson	1925	Forester – public works	Not recorded	Rotorua
Donald McIntyre	1925	Farm labourer	Not recorded	Dannevirke
James Reid	1926	Civil service	Not recorded	Wellington

Source: 'Pour Les Intimes', Dr Graham's Diary 1937.

useful counter to *Homes Magazine* reports that generally portrayed women as either domestics or married. It demonstrates that farming was available to the women through marriage, that these enterprises were heavily reliant on their labour and were often run as partnerships.

As to the unmarried women's work, Graham recorded three as being employed in roles other than domestic service (see Table 6.2). All three lived in Auckland. Evelyn Fullerton, the 1912 emigrant who was sent straight to nurses' training, was a district nurse; Alison Gammie was working at the Presbyterian Girls Orphanage; and Alison Stuart was a dressmaker's presser. All other unmarried women mentioned by Graham remained in domestic service, and here too he found cause for praise. Eva Masson had been working for Mr and Mrs Green in Nelson for four years, and when Graham asked whether they were happy in the arrangement, all answered positively. 'Eva is bright and full of fun', Graham wrote, 'ready to laugh on all occasions. ... She like all of them would talk about Kalimpong for a week.'<sup>34</sup> In Dunedin, Kate Sarkies was 'a big success

as a mother's help'. Sarkies took Graham to see two former employers, both of whom were 'devoted to her'.<sup>35</sup>

Graham's positive assessments aligned closely to national narratives of egalitarian social structures and the 'democratic' family home. Even in the 'best of homes', he wrote in his diary, when the 'help' had her day off 'the mistress looks after the supper herself or with the help of the husbands'.<sup>36</sup> Graham reiterated this point in an amusing and lengthy tribute to the 'dinner wagon' in his Auckland broadcast, which repeated his persistent claims about New Zealand's 'simpler' social structure that matched the values of the Kalimpong Homes:

It might be used as an all-New Zealand emblem and put on the corner of the National Flag. It is a time-save and its usage is not confined to the women's sphere. The New Zealand man shares in domestic duties. ... Under the law of the land domestic helps have certain days and evenings off ... and then mother has to take up the domestic's duty in the kitchen and the husband pushes along the emblematic wagon, and even helps to wash up the dishes and clean the shoes. This all conduces to simpler and more real social relations.<sup>37</sup>

Graham looked for these qualities in the homes of the Kalimpong women who were married. 'Mary Ochterloney (Mrs Gibson)', he wrote, 'has a nice home with

**Table 6.2** Women's occupations by year of arrival (as per Graham's diary)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year of arrival</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Location</b>
Evelyn Fullerton	1912	District nurse	Unmarried	Auckland
Mae Sinclair	1912	Domestic service	Unmarried	Christchurch
Gertie Plaistowe	1914	Domestic service	Unmarried	Christchurch
Kate Sarkies	1915	Domestic service	Unmarried	Dunedin
Anne Brown	1920	Domestic service	Married	Nelson
Kate Edbrooke	1920	Domestic service	Unmarried	Wellington
Mary Greig	1920	Farming	Married	Levin
Lorna Peters	1920	Poultry farming	Married	Dunedin
Amy Gollan	1925	Domestic service	Unmarried	Auckland
Alison Gammie	1926	Orphanage worker	Unmarried	Auckland
Eva Masson	1926	Domestic service	Unmarried	Auckland
Alison Stuart	1926	Dressmaker's presser	Unmarried	Auckland
Mary Howie	1928	Farming	Married	Christchurch
Ellie Davenport	1929	Fruit farming	Married	Auckland

Source: 'Pour Les Intimes', Dr Graham's Diary 1937.

a good husband and three fine children.' Rose Duck (nee Cooper) 'looks like Mary, fairly stout. She too has a good husband who is a delicate man, and two daughters.'<sup>38</sup> Molly Ireland's (nee Roberts) husband was described by Graham 'as a comedian, and everyone calls him Wally. He exercises his gifts in the interests of charities especially for poor children.'<sup>39</sup> In Dunedin he 'saw a great deal of Mary Pattison who got married lately to a Mr Robinson, a very nice well educated blonde New Zealander' – a telling statement about spouses who would help to erase from the next generation the skin colour that inscribed a lifetime of racial difference upon the emigrants.

Others had not fared so well. Graham described several women as having a 'hard life', which he variously attributed to poor choice of marriage partner, ill health, death of children and the economic depression. In these cases Graham concluded with optimistic comments about better prospects ahead. The hardships Graham observed on his visits to the returned servicemen were likewise balanced against signs of domestic happiness and the promise of improvement with the next generation. Some received state support, which Graham took as evidence of their treatment as full citizens.<sup>40</sup> In Dunedin, Hamilton Melville was 'much broken down' as a result of being 'badly gassed in the war', and suffered from asthma and 'occasional fits.'<sup>41</sup> But his wife was 'such a nice woman', Graham wrote, and 'they have one fine boy'. Melville's wife owned their home in Belleknowes, a relatively affluent suburb adjacent to the town belt. Melville was compensated for his war wounds and received '6s a week extra allowance because of the D.C.M.' He was using the extra allowance to pay off a radio, which Graham associated with his intelligence and 'interest in world affairs'. In Dunedin Graham also heard news of Edward Snelleksz, who was 'badly disabled in the War' through his brother Wilfred, who hoped that Edward's children (there were six at that time), 'will be better off'.<sup>42</sup>

Another who lived with the legacy of the war experience was Llewellyn Jones. Jones had a letter published in the *Homes Magazine* in 1930 describing his slow return to work after a long period of disability. By 1937 he was resigned to his inability to live independently. Graham visited him at Sunnyside mental institution in Christchurch, where he was a voluntary patient. Attesting to the psychological scars of battle, Graham noted that Jones could 'leave any time he likes, but he doesn't feel he could bear the strain of the outside world'.<sup>43</sup> Jones was reportedly 'delighted' to see Graham. A second Kalimpong inmate at Sunnyside did not recognize Graham and was a more serious case, having been confined to the institution permanently as a result of a criminal conviction. His mental



illness was present prior to leaving India, Graham wrote, and was the reason that he had not served in the war. Graham's conclusion that he was 'one of the cases we should not have emigrated' signals his reluctance to find any negative outcome of the scheme itself.<sup>44</sup> Graham visited two other Kalimpong men in mental institutions, both in Wellington. One was 'well behaved and helpful' but had 'no hope of recovery', while the other had suffered a nervous breakdown after a business failure and was soon to be released. Like the support extended to returned servicemen, in Graham's eyes the provision of these care facilities testified to their eligibility for and inclusion within wider state services and hence was still regarded as a positive outcome.

The tendency to attribute all ills experienced in the post-war period to war service can be seen in the way Graham wrote about the returned servicemen.<sup>45</sup> War service was only ever mentioned to explain or justify difficulties the Kalimpong men were facing. Robert Ochterloney was an example of this. When Ochterloney failed to show at the arranged meeting point, Graham and his driver spent two hours searching the town, albeit 'a small one', and were about to give up 'after telephoning up to the mines from which he came' when someone suggested they could find him at a certain hotel. Indeed they 'found him in the bar!' Graham exclaimed.<sup>46</sup> Ochterloney was living the lonely life of an unmarried gold miner, and admitted to Graham that he had 'gone back' after his promising start. Testimony to this effect was given by a local 'gentleman' who knew Ochterloney well and remembered his former days as 'a strong temperance man ... a fine worker on a farm, [and] a noted football player'. Reminding readers of his diary that Ochterloney was 'seriously wounded in the Great War', Graham was hopeful after extracting promises from him to 'give up spirits', write an account of his work as a miner for the *Homes Magazine* and, notably, to write to his mother in Darjeeling. 'I am sure that if all his friends help him he will change,' Graham concluded.

As to the 'six families', Graham's diary speaks to enduring contact between siblings, many of whom emigrated separately. All three Gammie sisters attended the party at Alice Stewart's (nee Peters) home in Auckland. They passed on news of their brother Fergus's marriage and children, as he lived south of Auckland and was not able to attend.<sup>47</sup> Dora and Charles Moller were both married with children in Christchurch, an outcome which no doubt pleased Graham after Charles's earlier angst-ridden letters. The Mortimore siblings, Rend and Jeanette, were not mentioned in Graham's diary but both were present in the photograph taken at the Wellington reunion. As noted in Chapter 5, Egerton

Peters's arrival in New Zealand led to a family reunion in the south. This did not persist, however. When Graham visited Lorna on the poultry farm in Pine Hill, her brother George was not mentioned, and Alice was settled in Auckland. And although the Spalding brothers continued to have a very close relationship, they too were separated by distance at the time of Graham's visit. Tom was in Kaitaia, north of Auckland, while Charles was in the reunion photograph taken in Wellington. (In fact Charles died suddenly, soon after Graham left New Zealand.) Richard Hawkins was also in Kaitaia. He made the journey south to Wellington to attend the reunion there, a return trip of 1,200 miles, and again to Auckland, almost 400 miles return, for the final gathering.

The eagerness with which the emigrants met Graham in 1937 challenges any simple connection that might be drawn between their later silence and the trauma of family separations and prolonged institutionalization. Lorna Peters, who never spoke of Kalimpong to her children, hosted Graham for an afternoon at her home. While the Peters family do not appear to have attended any of the gatherings in Dunedin, the fact that George Langmore took Graham to Lorna's home suggests her continued association with the Kalimpong community. Graham christened Lorna's first child and she kept his note of this in her Homes Bible. Richard Hawkins was another who refused to discuss his heritage with his family in later years, but as noted above he travelled huge distances to meet Graham. Among the photographs Richard's children found in his collection was one of him bidding Graham farewell at the port in Auckland with other Kalimpong emigrants. Descendants of Peters and Hawkins have been surprised to learn of these meetings.

The memory of Graham's visit is still alive with the descendants who are old enough to remember it. Mary Milne vividly recalled her mother's (Kate Pattison's) anticipation of the event and emotive response to meeting him; and Richard Cone (Dora Moller's son), who was one year old at the time, still has the book Graham signed and gifted to him.<sup>48</sup> It was a brief moment in the lives of the Kalimpong emigrants but one that must have stirred all manner of thoughts and reflections; one final chance to meet the man many still referred to as 'Daddy', with fresh news of Kalimpong and of old 'aunties' at the Homes and other graduates. It is understandable that even those who were reluctant to engage with other Kalimpong emigrants would take the opportunity to meet with him, and to show him how well they had done. Graham's departure may also have started to close some doors on the emigrants' ponderings of their pre-New Zealand lives.

## 1938: The final group

Graham's initial justifications for resuming the emigration scheme centred on imperial relationships and the caution with which the Dominions should approach any actions that overtly discriminated against India. He revealed his intentional shaping of this public rhetoric in his diary, where he noted the invitation to broadcast on National Radio and promised to send a copy of the speech to his family in order to 'show you my attitude in approaching the New Zealanders'.<sup>49</sup> While he referred to the plight of Anglo-Indians in similar terms to his 1909 visit (they had been wrongly treated as 'step-children' rather than 'our own kith and kin'), his speeches now aligned with the political realities of India in the 1930s, promoting a sympathetic view of his 'adopted home' as 'the birthplace of leading religions and the home of deep philosophies ... with a brilliant record of thinkers and scholars'.<sup>50</sup> Quoted in the *Evening Post* on 30 June, Graham argued that although British citizens entered India freely, Indians were subject to 'unfair restrictions' when entering British territories. 'If they [the Dominions] were not careful,' Graham warned, 'they would find that entry into India was also restricted.'<sup>51</sup> Indirectly, his sentiments point to the crucial differences in mobility between the white branches of British imperial families and these 'step-children', whose movements – along with their Indian relatives – were subject to a high degree of regulation.

Graham's second broadcast was made from Auckland the day before he departed New Zealand. His message was less political and he spoke with a renewed confidence in colonial settlement for Anglo-Indians based on his experiences of the previous six weeks. Using his graduates' labours and war service, Graham claimed that they had 'fully approved themselves as good and helpful citizens'; while their marriages demonstrated that they were 'taking a worthy share in all phases of the social organization'.<sup>52</sup> Thus at a time when the government was reconsidering the policy of excluding 'outside labour', Graham asked that they allow more Homes graduates to emigrate. Careful as always to rule out any possibility of an influx, Graham added that 'we can only send a small number each year, for, although we have 610 children in residence in our settlement at Kalimpong, other openings are more feasible for the majority'. Appealing to local pride in New Zealand's egalitarian reputation, Graham described the Dominion as 'the best part of the Empire' in the quality of home-life, the lack of class distinction and freedom from colour prejudice which the 'presence of Maori has doubtless produced'.<sup>53</sup> 'In this matter of colour,' Graham lauded, 'New Zealand is peculiarly fitted to become the teacher of the whole Empire.'<sup>54</sup>

Graham left New Zealand on the 10 August 1937. Seventeen 'OGBs' were at the harbour to see him off. 'They all had varied coloured streamers to which we hung on till they were broken by the steamer leaving the dock,' he wrote. 'We all tried to keep our spirits up but I could see tears in many eyes and my own were not dry'. He and his protégés continued to 'signal to each other' until they faded from view. The final words written in Graham's diary as he sailed for the United States and Canada were that his 'heart was sore to part with the children and with New Zealand', and he 'almost felt I wished I could stay there beside them'.<sup>55</sup> In November the *Evening Post* carried a story of Graham's account of his tour to an Edinburgh audience. Graham repeated his belief that 'there is no colour prejudice in New Zealand', and stated that the practice of 'increasing the number of Anglo-Indians among other peoples' (presumably the white peoples of the settler colonies) should continue.<sup>56</sup> Comparing the three Dominions he had visited, Graham described Canada as the 'chief centre' of the British Empire, New Zealand as the 'most British of the colonies' and the one which impressed him most, and Australia as 'very friendly, except on the question of colour'.<sup>57</sup>

This high praise of New Zealand's racial policies and confidence in sending more Homes graduates there was soon to be tested. In September 1937 the Customs Department logged an internal correspondence regarding Graham's application to send another group. Graham's letter itself was not contained in the file. It was referred to in a letter from the controller of Customs, E. D. Good, to the minister of Customs that mentioned the meeting between Charles White, John Graham and Peter Fraser. The letter stated that Graham had recently traced the emigrants settled in New Zealand and found them 'well established as worthy citizens of the Dominion'.<sup>58</sup> The controller explained that 'in 1929 it became expedient to discontinue the practice of granting permits in such cases', and that Graham sought the renewal of the practice of issuing of permits 'in a few approved cases each year'.<sup>59</sup> Good then referred to a memorandum attached (but not in the file) where 'the position regarding the issue of permits to Eurasians during the years 1922-1929 is set out'. While the Department had no information about the scheme prior to 1922, Graham's figure of 120 was repeated as the total number of emigrants up to that point, who were on average eighteen years old when they arrived. Good set the case out plainly for the minister:

It seems to me that there are three main factors which require discussion before a decision is reached:

- (1) Whether there is scope in New Zealand for the employment of such children as domestic servants, farm labourers, etc.

- (2) Whether from a racial viewpoint, they can readily be absorbed into the population of the Dominion.
- (3) Whether by reason of the fact that they are of British nationality and partly of European race, they should receive special consideration.<sup>60</sup>

In answer to his own questions, Good stated firstly that he believed the children were 'thoroughly trained' for employment and that 'in addition there is evidence of a real shortage of farm labour and domestic assistance in the Dominion.'<sup>61</sup> Against this, however, he 'venture[d] the opinion that it is open to question whether the importation of labour from other countries will provide a satisfactory solution of the problems raised by the present scarcity of labour, and I would not, on this score alone, recommend that a favourable consideration be given to Dr Graham's request'. Good here was complicating Graham's simplification of the 'labour shortage' as a problem that could be solved by filling it with marginalized adolescents. If the scarcity of farm workers and domestic servants was caused by a local (white) reluctance to take on the lower echelons of work (rather than an under-supply of workers), did 'importing' labour from other nations represent the best solution? The issue of race is strongly implied in the phrase 'imported labour'; British immigrants were certainly never referred to in such terms.

The 'racial question' was the one that Good found the 'most difficult to dispose of'.<sup>62</sup> Although he understood that some of Graham's graduates were 'almost completely European in outlook' and it was 'no fault of their own that they are of mixed blood ... the fact remains that persons of mixed blood are not regarded, generally, as being the most desirable type of immigrant for reasons which are readily apparent'. The shift of the problem to 'mixed blood' rather than Indian heritage weakened Graham's appeals to colonial authorities to be sympathetic to India. Good added that it was necessary to bear in mind that being British subjects 'it may be thought possible to relax the general rule to some extent'. The question was 'really one of policy', he continued, which could not 'be regarded entirely on the same basis as (say) that of the immigration of Chinese'.<sup>63</sup> After making ambiguous suggestions for finding a compromise, perhaps allowing a small number of Homes graduates to enter, Good received a reply from the minister and obediently drafted a kindly worded letter of refusal to Graham.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the rejection of his 1937 request, Graham remained publicly confident of sending another group. The July 1938 edition of the *Homes Magazine* included an excerpt from a New Zealand publication, *The Listener*, regarding Anglo-Indians being 'frozen out' of traditional occupations in India, after which

the editor added, 'New Zealand doesn't freeze them out.'<sup>65</sup> Indeed permits were granted to one final group from the Homes, who arrived in November 1938. The conditions of their entry were temporary; it was fifteen months after their arrival that a note in the permit register stated that they were 'now permitted to remain permanently'.<sup>66</sup> Their arrival was reported in a New Zealand newspaper under the heading 'Farm Workers: Eurasian Youths'.<sup>67</sup> A photograph of the group was printed on the front cover of the December issue of the *Homes Magazine*. The same edition included an article entitled 'A White Australia' by a church minister in Melbourne, who bemoaned the Australian immigration policy regarding Anglo-Indians:

Since 1907 more than fifty young farmers have gone from the Homes to New Zealand, and have proved their value to the community, as the open door into New Zealand to-day proves. And Australia shuts them out. Meanwhile Italians, Germans, Jews, Austrians in great numbers are pouring into our shores. I am very thankful that they are. ... But why on earth bar the Anglo-Indians?<sup>68</sup>

It was in this pre-war context of increasing pressure from non-British migrants seeking refuge in New Zealand and Australia that the scheme was finally halted. Two articles on the same page of the *Homes Magazine*, one announcing a party to go to New Zealand in autumn and the other responding to the numerous queries about emigrating received from 'likely young Anglo-Indians', were actually related in ways that were not yet apparent.<sup>69</sup> The pathway to New Zealand established by the Homes was sought out by Anglo-Indians with increasing frequency as the situation in India worsened, and as information about the 1938 group circulated. This publicity was becoming a double-edged sword. The Homes advised other Anglo-Indians to write to the Customs Department, claiming it could only support its own pupils.<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile the Customs Department was fielding these enquiries, including one that specifically referred to the 1938 group from Kalimpong. An internal correspondence agreed that although the Department would 'have to admit' that a Homes group had been allowed to enter, it was not to be regarded as a precedent and the enquiry was to be refused in accordance with the 'general policy' regarding Anglo-Indians.<sup>71</sup>

And so, perhaps unsurprisingly, the group that the Homes hoped to send to New Zealand in autumn was not granted permits. News of this rejection was reported in the *Homes Magazine* and picked up by the *Evening Post* in Auckland. Graham later wrote of receiving a cable from 'Mr C. G. White, Barrister, Wellington, Chairman of our NZ Committee' which simply read: 'Government

grants no more permits.<sup>72</sup> The *Evening Post* story, subheaded 'No Eurasians for New Zealand', reported that the group had been refused admission on the grounds that 'no half-caste Tongan, Fijian or Anglo-Indian could be admitted'.<sup>73</sup> The article cited a statement from the *Homes Magazine* that 'we used to be proud of the contrast between the freedom of New Zealand and the exclusiveness of Australia regarding emigration. It is nothing short of a tragedy to have New Zealand shut against the Anglo-Indians'.<sup>74</sup> Graham expressed a similarly emotive response, particularly regarding the 'half-caste' rationale for refusal, writing that 'the assignation of these races seems absurd'.<sup>75</sup> Restating his belief that most New Zealanders were a blend of Pakeha and Māori, Graham felt that they 'should be the last to base their exclusion on such grounds as of mixed blood'.<sup>76</sup>

This chapter has argued that the connections between Kalimpong and New Zealand, and the archive created by these connections, were deeply aligned with the continuation of the emigration scheme. In previous decades, when groups were regularly arriving in the Dominion, the *Homes Magazine* often carried news of New Zealand. This ceased in the 1930s, until being briefly reignited by Graham's 1937 visit. His diary provides a thoughtful and detailed snapshot of the situations of the Homes graduates in New Zealand. While useful, it is an assessment by a man who had a particular understanding of success, and strong reasons for painting a positive portrait of the young people he sent away from India many years before. The reflective tone of Graham's diary perhaps indicated his awareness that the road ahead would be a challenging one for Britain. It certainly inflected his stage of life, as an elderly man who knew that he would never see the New Zealanders again.

Graham's descriptions of the men and women whom he sent out in their youth are reminiscent of the tea planters' earlier assessments of the young adults that the Homes moulded from their children. For Graham, it was the employers, in-laws and local communities that he was grateful to for shaping his former charges into adult New Zealanders. Even in his private diary, Graham never attributed any negative aspects of the emigrants' situations to the New Zealand social context. Negative situations were explained by pre-existing conditions, character flaws, war service and economic depression – challenges that were beyond the control of the Homes and not unique to New Zealand.

A noteworthy absence in Graham's commentary was the local Indian community. He spoke positively about aspects of Indian culture, but not in a way that related it to New Zealand or New Zealanders in anything but the desire to keep India within the bounds of the British Empire. It was only on a superficial,

political level that the Homes scheme was spoken of as connecting India to New Zealand. Yet this neglected both the maternal heritage of the Kalimpong emigrants and the fact that many had siblings placed in India. As the next chapter will demonstrate, the strain for New Zealanders with siblings in India had been raised during his tour. While Graham did act on these concerns, he did not record them, continuing to withhold any thoughts about the emigrants' continued cultural and familial ties to India from the Homes archive.





## Section III

# Transnational Families



## Independence

*What is to become of Kalimpong? Are the Indians taking it over? A good thing Dr Graham isn't alive to see what seems to be the fate of a brilliant dream and undertaking.<sup>1</sup>*

Annie Larsen (nee Brown), a 1920s emigrant, posed her pessimistic questions to James Purdie in 1951, after India had gained Independence from Britain, after John Graham had died, and at the beginning of the decade when the Kalimpong settlers (as I refer to them hereafter) consolidated their place in New Zealand society. Her bluntly stated sense of alienation towards 'the Indians' communicates a stark detachment from her own heritage and reflects the British leanings of the Anglo-Indian community. This chapter interrogates the notion of independence from multiple perspectives: individual, national, racial and familial. Indian nationalists had always been dogged by British paternalism regarding their readiness to rule. To what extent, then, might we draw a parallel between India achieving political 'adulthood' and the Kalimpong settlers standing on their own two feet in New Zealand? With Graham deceased, and their tea-planting fathers returned to Britain, the severing of ties between India and Britain took on greater emotive significance. In this chapter I argue that the Kalimpong settlers' stoic, silent turn towards a New Zealand future was profoundly affected by Indian Independence.

Few scholars have explored the ripple effects of Indian Independence in former settler colonies. In New Zealand, Tony Ballantyne has shown that there was considerable local interest in Indian politics in the early twentieth century, as has Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, who argues that, contrastingly, in the post-Independence period India became 'rather peripheral to New Zealand's view of the world.'<sup>2</sup> The Kalimpong scheme provides excellent ground upon which to extend these studies, by exploring the transnational reverberations of this declining relevance for families that were spread across India, Britain and New Zealand. As we have seen in previous chapters, these dispersed families

had been operating in a particular way, often through the central node of the Homes at Kalimpong, for some decades. How would they, and indeed the greater 'Kalimpong family', function in this changed political structure? As I will argue, the archival ruptures brought about by Independence again highlight the multiple ways in which political shifts are directly tied to the making and unmaking of familial narratives.

For Homes graduates, Independence intensified the aspiration of family reunifications outside of India, and this put pressure on those already settled abroad to assist those 'left behind' to emigrate. During 1950s and 1960s, the era when many descendants were laying down their early memories, aspects of the dispersed Kalimpong family dynamics were becoming concretized. Kalimpong settlers perhaps gave up the hope of ever visiting India, or seeing their mothers again. This kind of internal closing off surely goes some way to explaining their subsequent silence over their Indian heritage. So too does the finding that while some New Zealanders were able to assist their siblings to gain entry permits, others were not, and never saw each other again. Bringing together the narratives of two substantively different strands of Kalimpong families – the outward-looking Indian strand and the inward-looking New Zealand one – this chapter crosses over national narratives, exploring assumptions about the settled nature of New Zealand versus the unsettled nature of India in the 1950s through the experiences of individuals and families who had to find some kind of resolution to their own life stories.

In important ways this chapter is the transnational culmination of this book, certainly from the perspective of the original Kalimpong settlers. The sections oscillate between India and New Zealand, beginning with an outline of the process of 'Indianization' at the Homes that was already under way before Graham's death in 1942. I then locate the Kalimpong settlers within the opportunity structures of mid-twentieth-century New Zealand, using a survey of electoral rolls from 1946, 1949, 1954, 1957 and 1963. This data was collected as a means of stepping outside the main narrative structures under examination thus far, the Homes and the familial, to assess the New Zealanders' geographic and social mobility according to official sources. To some extent, my findings accord with the Homes narrative and Graham's positive claims about the scheme after his 1937 visit. Beneath this veneer of success, however, the drama of families fragmented by the scheme continued to play out. Hence I return to the Indian context, reopening the files for families that had siblings placed in both India and New Zealand.

## 'Indianization' at the Homes

With the emigration scheme halted by the New Zealand government and British withdrawal from India widely regarded as inevitable, John Graham's focus turned entirely towards placement of Homes graduates in India and mending the historically difficult relationship between Anglo-Indians and their Indian 'brethren'.<sup>3</sup> Graham was to spend the last few years of his life attempting to build a new sensibility into his institution in the hope that it would continue to have some relevance in a nation that would soon sit outside the British Empire. His public rhetoric on the matter was backed by changes at the Homes to appease local interests. In 1939, for example, Graham responded to pressure from the Nepali community in Kalimpong by allowing five Nepalese children to be admitted as Homes boarders.<sup>4</sup> There had always been an allowance for 25 per cent non-Anglo-Indians, but in practice there were never more than a handful of local pupils, none of whom were boarders. Graham expressed his reluctance over the matter, writing that the Homes was 'founded for a definite class of needy children and is supported as such'. As Simon Mainwaring states, Graham's fundraising network was 'primarily interested in a community that had a British connection'.<sup>5</sup> His hand was forced as the British connection waned.

Graham did not live to see the change in governance of India. He did celebrate fifty years of service with the Kalimpong mission in 1939. Already an elderly man of some frailty, Graham had a series of heart attacks in 1940 that left him gravely ill. Although in name he continued as superintendent, his duties effectively ceased. Graham died on 15 May 1942. His biographer, James Minto, emphasized the local outpouring of respect in the multicultural funeral proceedings: the road through Kalimpong was lined 'with an astonishing concourse of people', the service was conducted in Nepali, and lamas from the Kalimpong *gompa* paid a ceremonial tribute.<sup>6</sup> Minto noted the extensive coverage of Graham's death in the press in India and Britain; his passing also received mention in New Zealand publications.<sup>7</sup>

James Purdie's appointment to the position of acting superintendent after Graham's death provided some continuity for the New Zealand community. Purdie had been secretary at the Homes since 1908 and it was he, rather than Graham, who had kept up correspondence with many of the New Zealanders. But it was Reverend James E. Duncan, a Scot born in Darjeeling, who would lead the Homes into the new era. Arriving from Scotland in 1944, Duncan took on an institution in financial crisis. Four cottages had closed during the Second

World War and the roll had dropped to 500 pupils. Duncan was forced to look for alternative means of support in a changing social and political climate. Rani Maharaj Singh, national president of the YWCA and wife of the first Indian governor of Bombay, delivered an address at Kalimpong for the 'Homes Birthday', the last in British India, in September 1946. 'I have come to claim you children for the land of your birth', she stated, 'the time has come for you to know and love and serve the real land of your birth ... and finally to give up the prejudices with which you have unconsciously looked upon her glorious culture.'<sup>8</sup>

Britain's withdrawal from India on 15 August 1947 had immediate consequences at the Homes, with two significant measures implemented by the board on 1 October. The first was a change of name for the institution, removing the 'St Andrews' and 'Colonial' to be simply known as 'Dr Graham's Homes'. The second was to raise the ceiling of non-Anglo-Indian pupils to 40 per cent. Duncan's reward for these changes was a grant of one lakh rupees from the Indian government, a much-needed donation given the Homes' total debt of over two lakhs.<sup>9</sup> A process of 'Indianization' was put in place through the language of instruction and local teaching staff. Sri C. Rajagopalachari, governor of West Bengal, visited the Homes in May 1948 and addressed both issues when he stated that 'you must begin by getting the teachers and house staff, or whoever it may be, to talk to the boys and girls in Hindi.'<sup>10</sup>

James Purdie relinquished his role as secretary in 1946, but did not leave Kalimpong permanently until 1951. Archival practice in this period reveals the shifting allegiances and uncertainty over the future of the Homes. Despite Purdie's lingering presence, the personal correspondence he received from graduates between 1947 and 1952 is held with the Kalimpong Papers at the National Library of Scotland (NLS) in Edinburgh, rather than in the files at the Homes in Kalimpong. Evidently Purdie regarded these letters as belonging to him and not the institution. The subsequent deposit of the letters at NLS also opens access to material that sheds light on the eventual emigration of many Homes graduates; more so than if they had been stored in family files at Kalimpong.<sup>11</sup> Of the large stack of letters Purdie received between 1947 and 1952, only a small proportion originated in New Zealand. The rest were written by graduates in locations around the globe; firm evidence of the eventual emigration of many of those placed in India. In this way Independence, a key driver of this exodus, softens the perceived disruption caused by the Homes emigration scheme. In other words, settlement outside India became a likely scenario even for the graduates who were not 'sent' to New Zealand.

The content of the letters to Purdie in this period illuminate the process of renegotiating relationships to this institution that was being 'Indianised', an institution that had been central to the functioning of many families and of course to the larger 'Kalimpong family'. From 1947 onwards, New Zealanders who wrote to staff at the Homes mostly did so when they required information (such as birth certificates); they began their letters by introducing themselves as former pupils and then made their requests. Their correspondence with Purdie, on the other hand, was more personal, updating him about their own situations and those of other graduates. The earliest letter from New Zealand in the Purdie collection was received from Thornton Kennedy, a 1938 emigrant living in Palmerston North. Attesting to the vertical (i.e. intergenerational) reach of the Kalimpong network, Kennedy gave news of not only others in the 1938 group, but also of several 1920s emigrants. Yet according to Kennedy, the majority of 'our boys and girls' were in Auckland or Wellington; already the early southern settlers were slipping out of the Kalimpong collective memory.<sup>12</sup> Also of note in Kennedy's letter was his hope, and expectation, that Purdie would be able to reconnect him with his siblings placed elsewhere. As the last link to the early graduates, Purdie remained a pivotal presence in the broken and dispersed Kalimpong families.

These letters to Purdie reveal the continued arrival of small numbers of individual Homes graduates around the time of Independence. Unlike other Anglo-Indians who wished to enter New Zealand in this tumultuous period, they had family and friends to call on for assistance with permit applications and settlement. Frank Donaldson, for example, was married with several children when he arrived in 1948. He initially stayed with Betty Hall (nee Gammie) in Auckland, who hosted other new arrivals too. Within a year, Donaldson had bought a house and was working for the Customs Department.<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Storey wrote after emigrating in 1947 that New Zealand was a 'great country' and asked for Purdie's assistance for George (presumably his brother) to follow. 'There is no need for a permit', Storey suggested, just proof of being a 'British subject by birth'.<sup>14</sup> Immigration rules were a common topic in the letters to Purdie, and the various advice offered suggests that policies regarding Anglo-Indians continued to be unclear in what was a period of significant change in the spheres of immigration and citizenship in New Zealand.<sup>15</sup>

The uncertainty around these rules also resulted in rifts between siblings (or friends) when requests for assistance were not met. It was not always possible to secure permits, and there was perhaps an understandable reluctance to risk one's own uncertain status in order to 'sponsor' a new entrant. Here then was



another point of rupture for many families and further cause for silence in subsequent decades. Inevitably, the cracks between the Indian and New Zealand branches of these families widened as the common imperial existence that was integral to the Homes scheme was severed. Unclear rules of entry affected the Kalimpong settlers' desire or capacity to ever travel back to India; indeed, apart from war service, most never travelled overseas after placement in New Zealand.<sup>16</sup> Descendants have attributed this reluctance – at least in part – to their parents' awareness of the continuing restrictions on Anglo-Indian migration and uncertainty about their own largely undocumented status.

### Settlement: 1950s New Zealand

The reluctance of Kalimpong settlers to travel internationally in their later lives might also be attributed to the nature of their early 'mobility', which comprised two significant upheavals, first from the tea plantations to Kalimpong and then across the ocean to New Zealand, both involving painful separations and journeys into entirely unfamiliar surroundings. This history of coerced movement is an important platform from which to consider their subsequent local stability. All faced a period of adjustment after initial placement in New Zealand, which has been traced in the preceding chapters using reports from the *Homes Magazine* and letters from the Kalimpong files. In this section, electoral roll data reveals that for majority of emigrants the initial adjustment period was followed by a marked tendency for geographical stability. Thus, as the possibility of participating in any meaningful way in their extended imperial families faded, the Kalimpong settlers established robust new branches of those family trees – firmly woven into the fabric of suburban life in 1950s New Zealand, yet invisible to both their British and Indian origin families. The Kalimpong settlers worked, they voted, they owned homes, they served on school committees, and they raised their children as 'New Zealanders'.

A scan of electoral rolls over five election years (1946–63) gleaned data for the majority of Kalimpong settlers. Of the 130 emigrants, 14 died prior to 1946, and 3 left New Zealand. Two of those who left returned to India: Peggy O'Brien contracted an eye infection shortly after arriving in 1925, was quarantined for a month and then 'ordered to return' by New Zealand authorities; and Mary Chaston, a 1920 emigrant, left in 1936 with plans of completing nurses' training there.<sup>17</sup> The third was a veteran of the First World War who moved to Australia.<sup>18</sup> Excluding the three who left and those who were deceased by 1946, the maximum

number of persons who could be included in the survey was 113. Of those, 85 (39 men and 46 women) were located in at least one of the electoral rolls for this period.<sup>19</sup> Locating them among the wider population of New Zealand required collating the full range of private and public sources deployed in this book, cross-referencing in multiple ways to confirm individual identity with absolute certainty. Two observations are thus immediately possible: first, almost all of the emigrants stayed in New Zealand, and second, most were located in the electoral rolls, indicating a high degree of incorporation into civic life.

For geographical location, I used the addresses listed in electoral rolls to group the emigrants by province. I wanted to know where the emigrants settled, the extent to which they moved away from their initial region of placement, and their mobility during the study period. Regarding settlement, Wellington had the highest number of emigrants in each of the five years (around 30 per cent), followed by Auckland and Otago at around 20 per cent. While these three regions were expected to dominate given the initial placement of emigrants there, the proportions did indicate a definite northward drift, away from Otago, and a clustering in Wellington. Still, over half of the emigrants (forty-seven of the eighty-five) did settle in the region where they were placed. Stability during the study period was remarkable, with only twelve of the eighty-five emigrants moving to a different province. Several of those who moved did so at retirement age: George Langmore, Leonard Williams and Helen Savigny all moved from Dunedin to the North Island for this reason. Setting this rate of movement alongside other local studies suggests that the level of transience among the Kalimpong emigrants was low in both absolute and relative terms, but it also conformed to the pattern among the colonial populations at large of a slowed rate of interprovincial migration after marriage.<sup>20</sup>

The electoral roll data revealed a gendered difference in geographic mobility, in reverse to the earlier transience of Kalimpong men.<sup>21</sup> In the study period (1946–63), the women were more mobile than the men, especially in moving away from their initial province of placement. Of the twenty-two women placed in the South Island, fifteen had moved north by the late 1940s. The three who relocated to Wellington all became active in the local Kalimpong community. Esther Graham and Dora Moller moved northwards with their farmer husbands, Esther to Marlborough and Dora to Canterbury, and each established connections to others from Kalimpong in their new places. Therefore, although marriage was a determinant of where the women settled, they showed a strong inclination to seek out other Homes graduates. In contrast, of the twenty men placed in the south, only eight moved northwards. The three who settled in

Auckland – Sydney Williams, Henry Holder and Eric Boardman – all went there immediately after returning from war. John Graham did not meet any of them in Auckland in 1937 and they are not known to have been involved in the local community. The numbers are small but there is a definite sense that the development of Kalimpong communities in the north was characterized by these dynamics – earlier women settlers moving northwards and connecting with later arrivals, hosting events and providing opportunities for social contact that left an indelible mark on the next generation, who developed close relationships to these much-loved ‘aunties’.

Gender was significant for a different reason when collecting occupation data. As other researchers have noted (and acted upon), women were recorded in the electoral rolls only as ‘Married’ or ‘Spinster’.<sup>22</sup> For the Kalimpong women, information from private sources indicated that many, both married and unmarried, worked throughout their lives. I will return later to the women’s actual work, but my response to this hurdle when using official sources was to analyse the occupational information from the electoral rolls for their husbands instead, in order to at least gain a sense of how the married women fared economically. As it turned out, the number of Kalimpong women’s spouses and Kalimpong men was almost identical, and their occupations early in the period suggested they occupied a remarkably similar economic status. Since the Kalimpong women all married pākehā (white) men, my response to a gender issue facilitated a unique ground upon which to test race as a limiter of social mobility.

Comparing the two groups of men suggests that Indian ancestry did not hamper the Kalimpong men’s advancement into higher occupations.<sup>23</sup> Knowing that they all began their working lives in New Zealand as farm labourers, there was a general and definite trend of upwards mobility, since none listed farm labour as their occupation in the final electoral year of the study period. Moreover, compared to the women’s spouses, fewer were engaged in manual or unskilled labour. Those among the Kalimpong men who did continue to labour at the lower end of the occupational spectrum were variously employed on the railways, in factories, or as general labourers. This aligns with the urbanization of 1950s New Zealand, away from the rural sector and towards increased opportunities in manufacturing or in public works like the railways – somewhat ironic given the historic (and continued) association between railway work and the Anglo-Indian community in India.<sup>24</sup>

Setting aside the movement ‘up’ from farm labour, several of the Kalimpong men who arrived pre-1921 achieved a clear rise in occupational status during

the study period. Sydney Williams, the 1908 arrival who wrote to Graham when he and his brother took up rabbiting and seasonal work in Central Otago, eventually settled in Auckland. In the electoral rolls he moved from an initial entry as a 'faultman', to the rest of his career as a 'line foreman'. Henry Holder, another early emigrant who moved to Auckland, was a 'manager' for the first three electoral roll entries and 'accountant' in 1957. Wilfred Snelleksz, a 1920 emigrant who was placed and stayed in Dunedin, was a 'timberyard man' for the first two electoral years and a 'clerk' for the last three. Snelleksz's son-in-law described Wilfred as having an 'excellent career' in this clerical role for the Labour Department where he acted as the 'chief rehabilitation officer' for returned servicemen.<sup>25</sup> Descendants of Holder and Williams were similarly positive about their fathers' career progress and job satisfaction.

Others among the Kalimpong men moved upwards in occupational status by establishing their own business. Leonard Williams (Sydney's brother) owned a hairdressing and tobacconist business in Dunedin for over thirty years. James Bishop was a grocer in Wellington for all of his entries in the electoral rolls. Tom Spalding was listed as a motor mechanic between 1949 and 1954, before using his tea planter father's inheritance to purchase the business and become a 'garage proprietor' for the remaining years of the study period. Tom Watson was a milk vendor in 1946 and a poultry farmer for the next three entries. Only two other men ended up owning farms. Charles Moller had one listing as a 'poultry farmer' before being listed variously as 'farmer' and 'dairy farmer' for the rest of the study period. Richard Hawkins was a farm labourer for the first three electoral years (and for the twenty years prior), and became a dairy farmer in his own right in 1957 as a result of winning a ballot for returned servicemen. This very small number of farmers is an important finding given that the entire scheme was predicated on the idealized trajectory of moving from farm labourer to farmer.

The seven men who arrived in the 1938 group were noticeably higher in occupational status than the earlier emigrants. Only Hamish Tweedie was ever recorded in an unskilled occupation, and he moved upwards to a position as a storeman. Of the other six men, two were recorded as clerk or public servant, two were carpenters, one was a lineman and one an insurance agent. None worked in the rural sector (during the study period) and none were self-employed. These often white-collar occupations placed the final group in employment that was far more conducive to settlement than rural labour. Unsurprisingly then, the 1938 group were very stable in location too. All five men who settled in Wellington lived in the district of Lower Hutt. These differences between the

1938 male arrivals and their earlier counterparts can be attributed to the rise in education standards at the Homes, and to the reduced emphasis on farm training when emigration to New Zealand halted in the late 1920s. In addition, several of the 1938 group gained experience in clerical positions in India while waiting for an opportunity to go to New Zealand, and during their service in the Second World War.

Despite not being trained for farm work, the 1938 group entered New Zealand upon the same justification as the early emigrants: to fill rural labour shortages. The family archive and memories passed down by one 1938 emigrant, Fred Leith, provide a fascinating insight into the disjuncture between the circumstances of the later emigrants and the original model for emigration into which they had to fit. Leith's descendants have documents that he brought as evidence of his qualifications from the Homes and La Martiniere College in Lucknow.<sup>26</sup> A letter from the principal of La Martiniere College gave a glowing account of Fred's sporting and military achievements, and his general 'ability, diligence ... and pleasant personality'.<sup>27</sup> Fred then worked as a clerk for a shipping firm in Calcutta before joining the 1938 group to New Zealand. Fred's high standard of education, leadership roles and work experience would perhaps have surprised readers of the *Evening Post* article who were informed of the group's arrival thus: 'The shortage of suitable farm labour in New Zealand was alleviated to a small extent yesterday by the arrival of a small party of Eurasian Youths at Wellington under a scheme arranged by the St Andrew's Homes in Kalimpong, India.'<sup>28</sup>

The story of Fred's early life in Wellington passed on to his children was that he hated his initial position on a farm, as it meant living in a 'shack' on the property and performing menial labour that he had no training for.<sup>29</sup> The situation was resolved when Fred responded to a reprimand from his employer by telling him that he was an accountant, not a farmer. Immediately, Fred was given a room inside the house, and soon found clerical work in the city. He was living at the YMCA when war broke out several months later. Fred relished the opportunity of war service, achieving the rank of sergeant-major and, according to his son, regarding the war as the 'highlight of his life'.<sup>30</sup> Fred re-sat his accountancy degree at a New Zealand university after the war, and went on to have a long career in accounts work. Though his son believed his 'colour' prevented him from achieving promotion commensurate to his duties, Fred's story illustrates what might be thought of as a 'false start' in the Kalimpong men's farm placement – a downward movement from previous employment in India that was largely hidden from the public record. It was up to the men themselves to correct this mismatch as they found their place in local communities.

The women too had to adjust to the reality of situations that had been portrayed as almost glamorous in the *Homes Magazine*. In 2014 I met one of the women from the 1938 group, Beryl Radcliffe, still alive and well at ninety-three years old, living independently in Australia. As soon as we sat down to talk, Beryl made an unprompted statement: 'My only regret is that no one ever asked me if I wanted to go to New Zealand.'<sup>31</sup> In a sharp reminder of the uneven social settings they had to navigate over the course of their lives, Beryl spoke of resenting her initial domestic placement because she was 'treated like an Indian' or 'a coolie' – expected to eat separately from the rest of the family. Furthermore, she understood emigration to New Zealand as being sent away from India and a further rejection by her father, rather than an opportunity. Beryl's only positive memory of her initial placement was that the problems she had with the family led to her friendship with Janet Fraser, the wife of the politician Peter Fraser, who intervened in the situation and assisted her into a hospital nursing position. Talking to Beryl revealed the real ambiguities of this lifeway. She was very bitter about the separation from her family and about early difficulties in New Zealand, yet a portrait of Graham and of the 1938 group were on prominent display in the sitting room of her modest home in Queensland.

From a descendant perspective, even without details from their parents about this early period, there is an expectation that the transition to life in New Zealand, towards that stable 1950s existence, must have been a difficult one. Descendants have also understood their parent's turn away from India with the arrival of their own children. But what has remained suppressed in the *Homes* narrative and absent from familial stories are continuing ties to Kalimpong and to greater India.

## Two families: Across the divide

A narrative of uncertainty for those placed in India presents a stark contrast to the story of stable settlement in New Zealand in the 1950s. In fact, both of these narratives have been integral to the development of the other. Most descendants believe that their parents were fortunate to be placed in New Zealand. Even if there are strong feelings around the familial separations and cultural loss brought about by the scheme, it is assumed that placement in India would have been more difficult. These same beliefs were evident in the 1950s, and affected the experiences of *Homes* graduates in different destinations. Correspondence between siblings and friends kept Indian events current in the everyday lives

of New Zealand emigrants. In turn, the aspirations of those 'left behind' in India were shaped by news from abroad, which saw emigration, an increasingly central aspect of Anglo-Indian identity, kept firmly in their minds.<sup>32</sup> A rich understanding of these dynamics is afforded by the Homes personal files for the Moller and Gammie families, both of whom had siblings 'stuck' in India in the 1930s. Their letters afford glimpses of day-to-day life for graduates in India, moving along established Anglo-Indian circuits but within the Homes network and with a surprising degree of continued involvement by Graham.

Peter Moller was the fourth of Paul Moller's children to leave the Homes. He was preceded by Dora, who went to New Zealand in 1920; Charles, who chose not to emigrate with Dora and then regretted it; and Elizabeth, who was in the 1925 group to New Zealand. Peter's correspondence with Graham tells us not only of his own movements in India, but of his two brothers who were placed in India and later settled in New Zealand. His letters, which continued for over thirty years, were often motivated by requests for assistance with local employment and possible emigration. He first wrote to the Homes in April 1925, two months after he had been placed with the Government Telegraphs in Calcutta. Peter was living at a boarding house with Mrs Rogers in Sooterkin Lane, where he had 'every comfort I require', but asked that more Kalimpong men be sent to the boarding house as he was lonely 'living in a house where there are no other fellows from my school'.<sup>33</sup> Eight months later, Peter wrote from another boarding house in Calcutta. In this and many other letters Peter complained that a career in telegraphs was not as 'bright and prosperous' as he expected.<sup>34</sup> He pleaded with Graham to assist him to secure the next opening for a 'jutewallah'.

Peter devoted much space in his letters to expressing his regret at not studying harder and choosing telegraphs as a career. His requests for assistance show the extent to which Indian placements continued to rely on Graham in employment matters. In February 1926 he wrote to Graham after reading about jute apprenticeships in *The Statesman*, asking Graham to 'make a way' for him by 'giving me a letter directing me to the Head Office, alongside with a strong recommendation letter'.<sup>35</sup> In late 1926 he wrote from the YMCA in Calcutta, noting his expectation that Graham would 'drop in' on his way back to Kalimpong, and mentioning five telegraph trainees from the Homes who were staying there. Peter later recalled a guest at the YMCA giving a presentation on opportunities for any Kalimpong men with a 'Senior Cambridge Certificate'.<sup>36</sup> He also described reunions of Homes graduates. His letters contain ample evidence of an active and dense network of connections that provided residential, occupational and social support to those living in Calcutta.

In these letters Peter also asked about emigrating to New Zealand with his brother Charles.<sup>37</sup> In 1925 he wrote that, unlike Charles, he was ‘not so very anxious to go to N.Z. quite so soon, as I should like to know and experience India more for myself’.<sup>38</sup> Thus he would still like Graham to ‘transfer his services to the jute’ and hoped that this would allow him to save enough for his passage to New Zealand.<sup>39</sup> In 1926 he wrote of meeting with Charles and discussing their prospects. Evidently they both regarded Charles as better qualified for emigration; Charles suggested he would emigrate first and Peter could follow ‘a few months later “God willing”’.<sup>40</sup> Two months later his plans were more concrete: ‘Chas has privileged me to go out with him to N.Z.’ he wrote, ‘so could you kindly fill in all the necessary items in my form, and let me know what else requires to be done’.<sup>41</sup> As with his desired transfer, emigration was seen by Peter as only being achievable with the assistance of the Homes. Peter reported that Charles was anxious about the likelihood of securing entry permits, but their hopes were kept alive by news of the group soon to depart for New Zealand:

By the way our school batch will be sailing on the 26th this month. What lucky souls they are? I always seem to be very unlucky! How many children are sailing out this time? I remember last year’s happy crew. I drove with them to the docks, and when I landed there, I didn’t in the least bit feel like returning back.<sup>42</sup>

Peter’s description of seeing the emigrants off at Calcutta reveals a level of connection between the New Zealanders and those placed in India that might not otherwise be imagined. The *Homes Magazine* often described social functions in Calcutta where local businessmen, clergymen and politicians gathered to see off the emigrants; but no mention was ever made of other graduates being present. The separation created in the pages of the *Homes Magazine* between those placed in India and those sent abroad masked some very real connections between the two. The option of going to New Zealand was kept to the fore of Peter’s thinking in several ways: contact with his brother, seeing off groups from Calcutta, reading the *Homes Magazine* and his own correspondence with emigrants. He wrote regularly to his sister Dora and several others in New Zealand, one of whom sent him a ‘bundle of N.Z. papers’.<sup>43</sup> ‘There’s not a soul amongst the lot of them that regrets having left India,’ he wrote, ‘they all write cheerful letters regarding their life and new surroundings’.<sup>44</sup> His words speak to the unsettling, everyday consequences of Graham’s belief that news of the emigrants would be a source of hope for those who remained in India.

For the next decade, Peter’s letters alternated between ‘Telegraph Bachelors Quarters, Atul Grove, New Delhi’ and ‘Northview Quarters, Simla’ where he and



five other telegraph workers from Kalimpong spent April–October to escape the heat of the Delhi summer. Their movements were determined by historic routes, residences and occupations specific to Anglo-Indians in India; yet he wrote in a similar tone to letters from the men in New Zealand, of a ‘merry gang’ of Homes men progressing well, and sending birthday greetings and thanks for the *Homes Magazine*. Unlike the New Zealand reports, however, these letters from India were rarely published in any length. Again we witness the archival consequences of Homes priorities, here favouring the emigration scheme as a persuasive means of generating funding. Another contrast between the New Zealanders and the Indian placements illuminated by Peter’s letters was that of proximity, to ‘home’ but also to political unrest. In 1930 Peter wrote of his impending visit to Kalimpong: ‘I intend taking three months leave and mean to make an absolute rest-cure holiday of it. To me there is no better suited place than good old Kpg for this.’ He was unable to ‘confirm the rumour afloat up there that there will be five of us coming up ... as we are all doubtful of our positions in this present chaos and waiting to see how we are going to be affected by it.’<sup>45</sup>

Peter’s queries about emigration were revived later in 1930 when he wrote that he was ‘sorry to hear that New Zealand was compelled to close its doors to us due to the unemployment there’, particularly because he was hoping that his younger brother Dennis, who was about to leave the Homes, would be sent there. He asked whether Purdie thought that New Zealand would ‘close its doors to us for good?’ and pleaded that every effort be made to send Dennis.<sup>46</sup> Two years later he asked that Dennis be ‘grafted into the jute business, now that he is about to leave school.’<sup>47</sup> Several months later he wrote again pleading for assistance with his younger brother, lamenting that ‘my influence in this respect would not be giving the boy a fair chance of getting the best – which you only can give.’<sup>48</sup> By 1933 Dennis was working onboard the SS *Nurjehan*. Satisfied with this seafaring career for his brother, Peter did not write to Graham again until 1936, when he announced his intention to marry, and requested birth and baptismal certificates to make this possible.<sup>49</sup>

In 1947, some months after Britain’s withdrawal from India, Peter wrote to the Homes superintendent, James Duncan, from Calcutta, where he was spending time with Dennis and his family.<sup>50</sup> There was no indication that the upheavals around Independence spurred Peter into seeking emigration until 1951, when he referred to correspondence with the New Zealand trade commissioner in Bombay. His enquiries coincided with letters regarding the same from Dennis, who emigrated to New Zealand in 1953 and encouraged Peter to follow upon his impending retirement. Peter was ‘favourably disposed to this’ but suggested

it was 'too premature to make a final decision now'.<sup>51</sup> This letter also carried the news that his eldest sister, Dora, had died, leaving two teenage boys. Peter closed by noting his 'permanent' change of address, back to Atul Grove in Delhi. He had 'at last been allotted quarters' and ended his letter saying, 'I am very comfortable now'.<sup>52</sup> His final letter was written to the Homes superintendent in 1956.<sup>53</sup> His thirty-year correspondence with the Homes narrated a life that was punctuated by recurring thoughts of joining his family in New Zealand; yet it is clear that he too had found a settled place in the 1950s in an independent India, as many Anglo-Indians did.

Over a similar time frame, the Gammie family file contained much correspondence regarding three siblings 'left behind' in India. The first letters of the 1930s, however, focused on the branch of these families that was rarely mentioned, the British side. On 20 October 1930 H. E. Tyndale, a planter and friend of John Gammie's, wrote to Graham informing him of Gammie's death in his bungalow the previous afternoon and requesting information about the remaining children in the Homes. As he had not left a will, Tyndale took it upon himself to visit one of Gammie's five siblings, George, while on leave in England. George then wrote to Graham in Kalimpong promising at least his portion of his brother's estate to the Homes for the upkeep of the children. George's letter shows the extent to which British relatives were shut out of these interracial families, stating that 'the existence of this family was absolutely unknown to me and it was a great shock to me to know the truth'.<sup>54</sup> He was now faced with making decisions about the children's futures based on the information relayed by Tyndale, but required clarification: 'I understand that my brother sent money also to New Zealand? Do you happen to know how much he sent and to whom? I am sorry to give you so much trouble but I am so hopelessly in the dark'.<sup>55</sup> George's interest in his nieces and nephews speaks to a missed opportunity to be a part of his brother's family, owing, one assumes, to John's expectation that his siblings at home would take a dim view of his interracial family.

The eldest four Gammie children had all been sent to New Zealand over the course of the 1920s, leaving Gavin, Alexa and Kathleen at the Homes when their father died. Gavin was placed in Calcutta in the early 1930s. His first letter to Purdie was written in 1933 from Birkmyre Hostel, a residence for Kalimpong boys in Calcutta. He and two other graduates had been placed at Balmer Lawrie, a manufacturing company, and were 'finding no difficulty whatever' with their employment; however, they were feeling the cold, and he requested some winter clothes be sent to them.<sup>56</sup> A year later Gavin wrote again, claiming that he had 'nothing to grumble about and with all my school pals down here I feel quite

at school again.<sup>57</sup> From Gavin's letters, it is clear that Birkmyre was fulfilling its purpose as a centre of support and familiarity for the young men placed in Calcutta and, like Peter Moller, he continued to seek the Homes' assistance in employment matters from within this protective network. Two years later, in mid-1936, Gavin wrote to Purdie with a clear purpose:

This letter is to remind you that the three of us, J Thompson, G Daunt, and I have finished our 'Electrical Training' in Balmer Lawrie. Ours was a three year course which concluded on May 15th. We are still hanging on as apprentices, but I should be very pleased if you will give us some advice regarding our future welfare.<sup>58</sup>

Family matters were also a high priority in these letters to Purdie, initially prompted by a death notice in a local paper for a J. W. Gammie in *The Statesman* in 1934.<sup>59</sup> Gavin wanted to know whether this was a relative, and asked too about his father: when had he died? What details did Purdie or Graham have about him, and his extended British family? In 1936 Gavin continued to press for this information, asking for 'as much information as you can concerning my parents' and a birth certificate, given that he was 'about to start on my own'.<sup>60</sup> This belief that he needed to know about his background in order to move forward included a desire to contact his mother, writing in a very matter of fact tone that 'I don't know whether my mother is alive or not, but if she is will you tell me her address'. As we learnt in Chapter 2, in his twilight years Gavin understood that he was sent to the Homes because of his mother's death. Here the archives reveal that it was only later in life that he can have made sense of his upbringing in this way. Coming to terms with these early separations and unknowns was a lifelong process, a blinkered journey through obfuscated documents, missed opportunities and unasked questions.

The next letters regarding Gavin were written early in 1938, when he was dismissed from his employment at 'Roslyn Dairy Farm' in Rangoon. His employer, Miranda Wisaham, wrote to Purdie about the situation, as did Gavin. While Wisaham complained that Gavin was disrespectful, his version of events echoed his brother Fergus's complaints in New Zealand. 'It was not through bad temper alone that I left,' Gavin explained, 'but that we on the farm were not getting fair-play.'<sup>61</sup> Having received letters from Fergus and Betty informing him that he was to go to New Zealand, Gavin hoped that 'this last episode will not let down my chances'. He asked Purdie to recommend him 'to any farm, if possible a dairy farm', while he waited for the opportunity to go to New Zealand.<sup>62</sup> Five years after his departure from the Homes, Gavin was still working very much

within the Kalimpong support network with the expressed hope of emigrating. The following year Gavin wrote from a dairy farm in Opotiki, in the North Island of New Zealand, thanking Graham for 'the privilege in being sent out' and responding positively to advice of the amount he would be required to repay the Homes for his travel.<sup>63</sup>

The youngest sibling, Kathleen, emigrated alongside Gavin in the 1938 group. Like Gavin, she had worked for Miranda Wisaham in Rangoon prior to departing India. Wisaham's letter informing Purdie of Gavin's dismissal was primarily to tell him that Kathleen had arrived safely accompanied by 'the ladies'.<sup>64</sup> Her letter indicated that she was a regular employer of Kalimpong graduates, and she gave news of two housemothers, Miss McCrie and Miss Shaw, taking leave at the farm. Wisaham hoped that upon returning to the Homes they would 'tell you and Dr Graham of our little world here'. Here was another segregated imperial space – like the Homes in Kalimpong, the tea plantations in Assam and railway colonies for Anglo-Indians, set up as havens from the unruly country outside, tasked with 'keeping India at bay', and in this instance an important stop on the Homes circuit.<sup>65</sup>

The other daughter of Gammie still in India, Alexa, was placed with the Barnes family in Cachar, Assam, in 1936. This saw Alexa, the child of a tea planter, returning to a tea-planting district to work in her modified status as an Anglo-Indian domestic worker.<sup>66</sup> This proximity to her origins with such a clear downward progression makes it plain why Graham was less inclined to publicize the placements in India, and the children's tea-planting heritage. Alexa was well placed according to letters from her employer, but things soon took a troubling turn, stimulating a flurry of correspondence between Assam, New Zealand, England and the Homes. In November 1937, Alexa wrote an anxious letter to Purdie, explaining that her sister Betty had asked Graham (while he was on his 1937 tour) to send herself and Gavin with the next group. Meanwhile Mabel Barnes had suggested that she accompany the family to England for their upcoming leave. Purdie, presumably made confident of the future of the scheme upon Graham's advice, advised Alexa go with Barnes and emigrate after returning to India.

When he was making preparations for sending the 1938 group to New Zealand, Graham wrote to Alexa at her Assam address asking if she would join them. Mr Barnes replied to Graham after opening the letter in Alexa's absence, noting the 'awkward situation' that Alexa was in England and not due to return until October 1939.<sup>67</sup> Graham wrote that he understood the difficulty in 'getting her back here in time' and suggested putting her off 'for another year'. He noted,

however, that 'she should go ultimately, because all the other members of her family – something like seven – will be in New Zealand'.<sup>68</sup> As the time drew near for the 1938 group to depart, Betty and Fergus wrote separate letters to Purdie imploring that Alexa should be included in the group that would bring Gavin and Kathleen to New Zealand.<sup>69</sup> There were no replies to these letters in the file; however, a short reply to Barnes stated with confidence that Alexa would 'go with next year's band'.<sup>70</sup> Graham's desire to see the Gammie family reunited was laudable, but it was his confidence in the resumption of the scheme that caused Alexa to miss the final opportunity to emigrate to New Zealand.

Alexa's distraught reaction upon learning that her siblings had gone to New Zealand ended her employment with the Barnes family.<sup>71</sup> The Homes committee in London stepped in, offering to find her 'a post ... for the return voyage to India' through the 'Ayah's Association in London'.<sup>72</sup> Remarkably, the only way to realize emigration from this situation was to utilize Graham's British network to get back to India and realign herself with the Homes. The London office did find assistance through the 'Amahs' and Ayahs' Home', which secured a post for Alexa with a Mrs Clark who was returning to Rangoon.<sup>73</sup> From there, Alexa wrote to Purdie asking for a position with Miranda Wischam 'until it's time for me to leave for N.Z.'.<sup>74</sup> She then wrote from the Clarks in Rangoon describing her unhappiness with the work. In August 1939 arrangements were made for Alexa to travel to Kalimpong, and from there she was placed with a family in Baluchistan. Alexa apparently settled into life there. Her sister Betty wrote now only of her sadness that 'she [was] the only one left behind'.<sup>75</sup>

Alexa's future was perhaps a typical outcome for the Homes women who were placed in India. Eighteen months after her arrival at Quetta, in Baluchistan, her employer informed Purdie that Alexa was to marry a British soldier.<sup>76</sup> Alexa wrote from England in 1943, where she and her husband and baby had 'arrived home just a few days before Christmas'.<sup>77</sup> 'I am quite settled down', she wrote, 'and enjoying life here.' She requested a birth certificate, noting that 'I do need a birth certificate in this part of the world'.<sup>78</sup> Alexa wrote once more to the Homes, in 1951. Descendants of the Gammie family in New Zealand confirmed that Alexa stayed in England for the rest of her life, which caused some strain with her siblings though they did maintain contact.<sup>79</sup> This relationship was improved in the years prior to Alexa's recent death with a welcome visit from her New Zealand nephew and his family. Like Peter Moller, she reached a point in life beyond which the prospect of emigration to New Zealand lost its appeal. But like many Homes graduates who settled in England, there was the issue of proximity to her British family, which must have caused some unease.

## The Wellington community

In New Zealand, a series of events after Independence mark the beginning of the collective memory for Kalimpong descendants in Wellington, and help to illuminate the complex and affective functioning of a local community connected on the multiple axes of birth, marriage and the Homes upbringing. The first event was the marriage of Gavin Gammie to Fred Leith's sister, Isabella, late in 1949. Theirs was to be one of five marriages between Homes graduates, three of which involved Gammies. Fred and Gavin had both emigrated with the 1938 group, while Isabella was another graduate 'stuck' in India during the 1940s. She entered New Zealand in February 1947 after a concerted effort from Fred, along with his father and James Purdie in India, to have her leave India prior to Independence. Isabella was one of only eight Anglo-Indians who had been granted permits by July that year, and even this gained political attention as enquiries from India, Burma and Ceylon increased significantly.<sup>80</sup> She was listed in a response to a parliamentary question about Anglo-Indian immigration, and singled out as an example of the policy of admitting a small number under 'special circumstances'. As the response articulated, 'In the case of I. N. Leith, her brother had previously been admitted to New Zealand and had served overseas with the New Zealand forces.'<sup>81</sup>

On New Year's Day 1950, Margaret Olsen, a former housemother settled in New Zealand, wrote to James Purdie about 'The Wedding', held at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church in Lower Hutt, the district in Wellington where numerous Kalimpong settlers lived. Olsen named twenty Homes graduates among the guests, which imbibed a 'real Kalimpong atmosphere'.<sup>82</sup> All of the Gammie siblings except Alexa were present. Olsen wrote about the wedding with great sentimentality: 'If you had been there Mr Purdie the picture would have been complete. You would have been proud to see the faces of the old boys and girls as they met that day and see the two Kalimpongites united.'<sup>83</sup> Reflecting on the challenges of her own role at the Homes, she asked Purdie to 'tell the Aunties of Kalimpong that it is well worthwhile, when in later years they meet their old girls and boys again, to see their faces, and the reality of their appreciation.'<sup>84</sup> Olsen's involvement in the wedding reminds us of the continued place for former housemothers in Homes graduates' lives and the wider Kalimpong family; and that this familial attachment was often reciprocal, especially for the housemothers who did not marry or have children of their own. When Olsen died many years later, she left the photograph albums of her Kalimpong life to Sylvia Slater, the only child of two 1920s Homes emigrants.

The next memorable event brings the South Island community into the frame, but again highlights regional disparities between north and south. In 1952, Ella Horgan and another staff member from Kalimpong spent ten weeks travelling the length of New Zealand, showing a film about the Homes called 'The Lollipop Tree' and collecting donations. Horgan's list of signatures in a letter to Purdie during the trip was noticeably bereft of southern supporters. In Dunedin, the women did meet 'your old friend Mr Kennedy', who 'enjoyed the film'; however, the gathering Kennedy organized in a Presbyterian Church there 'wasn't well attended.'<sup>85</sup> Kate Wilson (nee Pattison, a 1916 emigrant) wrote to Purdie about Horgan's visit to Christchurch, noting from the film that things had changed since her day: 'We had no servants when I was in school, I think those children are spoilt, don't you?'<sup>86</sup> In Wellington, the response was more positive. Several descendants, young children at the time, remember viewing the film at an event Horgan described as a 'grand reunion'. It brought together Kalimpong settlers, their spouses and children, who all watched the film and sang 'Happy Birthday' to the Homes.<sup>87</sup> These were the descendants who grew up knowing about the Homes, with nostalgia for Kalimpong and affection for their fictive kin, but still affected by the silence that will be discussed in close detail in Chapter 8.

Skipping ahead fourteen years to 1966, a third and very special event reunited the Wellington settlers as they reached retirement age. They were formally invited to Government House for morning tea with the governor general, Sir Bernard Fergusson.<sup>88</sup> The last British-born governor general of New Zealand, Fergusson's specific connection to the Kalimpong settlers is not known, though he did have military connections to India. His knowledge of the Kalimpong scheme most likely reflects the close relationships that continued between the women and the influential Wellington families that employed them in the 1920s and 1930s. The photograph taken that morning reinforces the evidence of social status discussed earlier; the coming of age of a group of people who found a place in the respectable working classes (Figure 7.1). Descendants have been surprised to discover in the Homes files that many of their parents were still in contact with Kalimpong at this time, most commonly writing to the staff there to request birth certificates in order to apply for a pension.

Official links between the Homes and New Zealand also continued. These sporadic reconnections affected and were facilitated by the existing Kalimpong community. A 'second wave' of emigration saw half a dozen individuals from the Homes 'sponsored' to New Zealand by local families in the 1960s; and James Minto, a long-serving principal, visited New Zealand in 1965 and 1968.<sup>89</sup> By this



**Figure 7.1** Kalimpong settlers at Government House, 1966. Front row, at centre: Lady and Sir Bernard Fergusson. Courtesy Gammie private collection.

time the Homes functioned largely by offering a British education to fee-paying students both locally and from other parts of India, while continuing with a sponsorship programme for Anglo-Indians and other disadvantaged children. The last British tea planters did not leave India until the 1970s, and remarkably, the tea agency policy restricting British women on the plantations to managers' wives persisted, and thus offspring of white planters and local women continued to be sent to the Homes until this time.<sup>90</sup>

Despite the policy of 'Indianization' at the Homes, it was not until 1971 that the first non-European principal, Bernard Brooks (presumably Anglo-Indian or Indian Christian), was appointed. Brooks visited New Zealand three times in the 1970s as part of a wider Homes outreach to Commonwealth countries in difficult times, meeting with Wellington settlers and their families on each occasion.<sup>91</sup> Financial problems also spurred the last-known visit to New Zealand by a Homes principal, Howard O'Connor, in 1990. By this time the Homes was severely caught up in the political unrest stirred by local groups resentful of Bengali governance of a majority Nepali community. It was this agitation – mostly economic but occasionally violent, with forty deaths in Kalimpong in the first few months of 1988<sup>92</sup> – that disrupted the travel of the earliest New Zealand descendants who travelled to Northeast India, seeking information about their



elderly grandmother's intriguing and often troubling family history that ended abruptly with an 'orphanage in India.'

Four letters written in 1951 draw together the transnational lifeways explored in this chapter. In July, Peter Moller wrote to the Homes from New Delhi about the prospect of emigrating to New Zealand, listing the names and addresses of his three siblings there which he asked to be passed on to the New Zealand ambassador. Six weeks later in Wellington, Isabella Gammie sat down and wrote a letter to James Purdie, and touched on the way that having children of their own caused the Kalimpong settlers to reconsider their own early lives. She related a conversation with her brother Fred, whose son John was five years old and, as Isabella reminded Purdie, the age that Fred was when he was sent to the Homes. Fred had asked Isabella 'whether I could imagine him sending young John away now?'<sup>93</sup> This was a new and difficult vantage point from which to reconsider their past. In October, Annie Larsen also wrote to Purdie from New Zealand, expressing in stronger terms her alienation from the land of her birth and probably her maternal ancestry, as cited at the beginning of this chapter. Then, two weeks before Christmas, Alexa Gammie, now sister-in-law to Isabella, wrote to the Homes from a 'new address' in England, explaining that she and her family were in a council house. 'I must say that we are settled down at last,' she wrote, requesting her 'health records' and thanking staff for the regular copies of the *Homes Magazine*.<sup>94</sup> The past was becoming the past. In different national settings the emigrants had moved on from the uncertainties of their early years, giving themselves some solid ground to find distance from all of that, but continuing to engage lightly with their Kalimpong past. Fortunately, and perhaps deliberately, these intermittent reflections left traces for the next generation to pick up.

## Recovering Kalimpong

*He used to talk about looking out the window and seeing the mountains. ... He couldn't quite remember the recipe for chapatis, and over the years he tried to make them, but he loved his curries. I remember sitting down at the table one time and we were all perspiring and he wasn't. But he was very quiet about it, didn't say too much. And he just didn't want to go back.<sup>1</sup>*

The Kalimpong settlers' 'silence' about their heritage has emerged as the most powerful and often perplexing intergenerational legacy of the Homes emigration scheme. Almost every descendant has informed me that questions asked of their parents about their Indian heritage were met with responses that indicated significant discomfort or unwillingness to talk about it. The consequent reluctance to talk about any aspect of their childhood has puzzled and intrigued their children and grandchildren, who simply wanted to know something about this thread of their family history. As Gilbert Hawkins's above comment beautifully illustrates, whisper-fine glimpses of India in these otherwise silent histories have been woven together by descendants in their attempt to forge narratives out of barely anything at all. The descendants' visits to Kalimpong to fill these silences from the 1980s onwards have triggered a decisive turning point in the narrative, which I have argued throughout this book to be tied in multiple ways to the shifting relationship between India in New Zealand, be it in the sphere of politics, empire, economies, immigration or imagination.

In this chapter, the phrase 'Indian heritage' encapsulates the circumstances of the Kalimpong settlers' birth, racial ancestry and upbringing at the Homes. These three components were each linked to major stigmas in the early twentieth century regarding illegitimacy, race and institutionalization; and here I attempt to tease apart these separate strands within the broader context of shame.<sup>2</sup> The drive to understand parental silence has preoccupied Kalimpong descendants in the same moment that historians have turned their attention to family secrets and shame. Deborah Cohen's argument that family secrets were a means of

delineating and managing the borders between private and public spheres has been highly influential in my analysis of the descendant testimony presented in this chapter. It is with a light touch that I bring together the many voices and stories that I heard in a variety of settings over the course of conducting this research.<sup>3</sup> I begin with parental silences and then move to other aspects of the descendant experience: contact with the local Kalimpong community, being 'mixed race' in New Zealand, material and cultural legacies, and travelling to Kalimpong to find out more about their parent's early lives.

Tanya Evans has argued for 'explicit engagement with the needs, wants and methodologies of family historians' in order to synthesize otherwise disjointed histories, and to find the meeting point between genealogists who tend to work through the material 'backwards' and academics who move 'forwards'.<sup>4</sup> In this framework my own position has been one of working backwards to my grandmother, and then across to the other emigrants' families, encountering descendants as they reached the point of intersecting interest. Building a collective narrative was an iterative and mutually reinforcing process; descendants possessed rich material about their family stories and informed opinions about the historical context, but were often bereft of knowledge of the larger scheme. The more they told me of their individual stories the more nuance I could bring to collective narrative, and to my engagement with the next person I encountered; and for descendants, knowing more about the scheme and of other families' pathways changed the way they understood their own stories. This chapter thus represents a constant interplay between the twin processes of addressing the absence of the Homes scheme in the public record and recovering a collective memory of the descendant community. I attempt, above all else, to bring the spirit of this ongoing and very affective – and effective – collaboration to the page.

## Silences

I was interested to hear your interview on National Radio recently. My Dad was one of the 1912 arrivees, H. S. Holder, and like so many Kalimpong kids spoke little about his experiences at Dr Graham's school or the circumstances prior to his attending.<sup>5</sup>

Lou Holder's first words of communication with me were typical of the way descendants have broached the subject of their parents' Indian background.

The perception that the Kalimpong settlers did not speak freely about their heritage is something that has, almost without exception, been acknowledged as a reason for their children's and grandchildren's curiosity. Here I aim to break down that generalized sentiment into a more nuanced understanding of a silence which has occurred across a spectrum – from not offering information, to a reluctance or refusal to answer questions, to outright denials of any Indian heritage, concealment and intentionally misleading their families. There has also been considerable variation in the reverberations of those silences in the next generation. Most descendants I have been in contact with grew up with some limited knowledge of their Indian heritage and filled in the gaps in later life, often after their parents' deaths, through research and travel. Others had no inkling of the scheme that brought their parents to New Zealand until I contacted them. In some families this has meant prior confusion about whether their ancestry was Indian, Māori or European. Some have known a considerable amount about their parents' backgrounds, but all were unaware of the scale of the emigration scheme.

Gavin Mortimore phoned me the day after receiving my letter, in which I suggested his father, Rend, was possibly a Kalimpong emigrant. 'You've told me more about my father in one letter than I learnt in 60 years,' Gavin informed me.<sup>6</sup> He was delighted and had already shared the relatively minor information from my letter with his six siblings worldwide. Gavin told me of conversations at their many family gatherings that would always come back to speculation about the origins of his father, who died in 1978. Rend had never talked about India – they 'quizzed him' to no avail. Rend's children would usually conclude that he must have been assisted to come to New Zealand after fighting in the Second World War, which was the earliest knowledge they had of him. 'But then,' someone would say, 'what about Aunty Jeanette?'<sup>7</sup> For the family to learn that their father had lived in Wellington and laboured on farms for twenty years prior to settling in Invercargill was as much of a revelation as the Kalimpong background. Despite this sudden burst of information from an unexpected source, the details immediately rang true to Rend's descendants and were accepted wholeheartedly.

Several similar cases of revelation emerged when the University of Otago issued a press release about my research early in 2013. Newspaper articles and an interview on National Radio brought numerous descendants forward. One listener was reminded of a friend's father to whom 'something horrible had happened' in his past.<sup>8</sup> When I rang her friend, she was interested, but negative about the possibility of her father, Donald, being a Kalimpong emigrant. I did

have a name on the list of emigrants that matched his, but it was a reasonably common name. As she began to tell the story of her father's removal from India on a 'ghost ship' to then be raised at an unknown orphanage in Wellington, I began to suspect that this was a family story that concealed a Kalimpong background. The only other detail the woman had was that the 'Indian nurse' who had apparently accompanied him on the ship took a lifelong interest in him, and they knew her as 'Aunty'. When she said the name of the 'Aunty', the Homes link was confirmed, as she was a well-known Kalimpong settler. Donald had died only a few years before, aged ninety-one. The topic of his childhood was one that his children knew they were not allowed to mention, as this would make him extremely agitated and upset. Their mother would always stop them if they started asking him about it.<sup>9</sup>

In both of the aforementioned cases, the descendants at least knew that their ancestry was Indian. Deborah French's family did not even have that knowledge. According to her great-granddaughter, Deborah 'was sent to New Zealand at about 15 years old and never spoke about her experiences. In fact, we grew up believing we were French until she died in the mid-90s when we found a yearly Kalimpong calendar and letters from the school'.<sup>10</sup> In another family, the two children of a male settler had formed differing opinions of his heritage. One believed that their ancestry was Indian, the other Māori. This had repercussions for his many descendants, as his great-grandson wrote:

Growing up I always believed I had a trace of Indian heritage but in my teen years I realised that there was no proof available to me. ... I think the worst thing is just not knowing something, or being unsure of something. People notice I have darker bloodlines than most British settlers and usually think it's Māori and I have been unsure of how to address their observations. ...

My daughter had to do a school project and present on her family tree and I had to explain the uncertainty to her as well so it's really not a nice feeling. Just finding out about this little information you have amazingly discovered brought tears to my eyes.<sup>11</sup>

This testimony raises the issue of appearance, the telling factor that for many Kalimpong emigrants raised curiosity. The 'dark complexion' noted in some earlier documentation had often disappeared from families by the next generation, as Graham and others hoped and theorized. In others, it has continued to show for several generations. In my own family, my father and my brothers inherited Lorna's dark skin and eye colour. Because of this, there was never any question about the mixed-race heritage, plus we knew she came

from India because of the tea-planting memorabilia on permanent display in the family home. Numerous descendants have testified to a similar situation, where the tea-planting heritage, and hence the knowledge of India as the place of birth, was never hidden (yet never really spoken about). This perhaps is a pointer to the changes effected by Indian Independence. Whereas for the next generation, admitting to an Indian heritage suggested something exotic, this was not the case when India was under British rule. The great unknown for many families, then, was how and why they migrated to New Zealand. When my mother asked Lorna in the 1970s about where she had grown up, Lorna underlined her unwillingness to talk about it, simply saying, 'You wouldn't want to know.'

Yvonne Gale's family story was very similar to mine. Her grandmother, Jean Mackay, was sent to Dunedin in 1911 with her brother John. Yvonne began to research her Indian background some years after Jean's death. As with the Peters family, colonial objects and photographs prompted curiosity from childhood onwards. Yvonne's father remembered regularly receiving five pound boxes of tea from India, and Yvonne credited a photograph of Jean and John in Singapore, en route to New Zealand, as 'spiking her interest'.<sup>12</sup> Piecing these fragments together with an otherwise total absence of information, the only plausible explanation for Jean's descendants was that her tea planter father took the children on a world tour and abandoned them in New Zealand. Unlike Lorna, Jean denied her ('obvious') Indian ancestry, which made it difficult to ask questions about the topic. As Yvonne recalled, 'We did bring it up, but she was so adamant that she didn't have any Indian heritage – you just had to stop asking her.' The only time Yvonne remembered Jean 'letting something out' about her Indian background was a reference to plantation life, which Yvonne 'didn't know was the truth or not – about peacocks in the garden, and having servants. But that, and the grandmother I knew, didn't go together'.<sup>13</sup>

The perceived dissonance between Jean's New Zealand life and that which came before speaks to the gap in social meaning between 'having servants' in India and New Zealand; but it is also a reminder of the working class status that the Kalimpong settlers had come to embody by the time the next generations came along. Moreover, without a close understanding of the connections between discrete locations in the British Empire, Jean's stories were difficult to believe. As Yvonne stated, she struggled to make a coherent narrative from a story that took her grandmother 'from India, to Owaka. It just seemed a huge jump'. When Yvonne sent the information from the Homes file to John's (Jean's brother) family, his widow phoned her in tears, saying that John had tried to talk about it, but they had not believed him.<sup>14</sup> Lou Holder's father, Henry, 'never talked about'

his upbringing, but did share many adventurous tales. Lou felt that Henry went to some lengths to invent 'extravagant stories' about his background to conceal the truth.<sup>15</sup> Another descendant, Brian Hepenstall, wrote that his grandfather 'never said much about his past. He was a great storyteller so it is hard to know the truth about some of the things he said.'<sup>16</sup> Niall Allcock described his father in law, Wilfred Snelleksz, as 'a great orator ... but not very open' regarding his Indian heritage, although his Indian parentage was never denied. Niall felt that Wilfred was proud of his ancestry despite refusing to discuss the specifics of his background.<sup>17</sup>

The stigmas that surround the Kalimpong story regarding race, illegitimacy and institutionalization have a complex legacy in these silences. While the emigrants' shame about their parents not being married has not been directly referenced in descendant testimony, there would certainly have been efforts to conceal this mark against their respectability. Race and institutionalization, however, were commonly believed by descendants to explain the reluctance to divulge details of their Indian heritage. George Langmore called his house in Dunedin 'Lopchu' after the tea estate his father owned, and he and his wife visited India several times. But according to his granddaughter he 'never talked' about India, and while the upbringing at Kalimpong was never hidden, the fact that he was Indian was.<sup>18</sup> Mary Gibson's (nee Ochterloney) daughter remembered being 'excited about telling her teachers and schoolmates all about myself' on her first day at school, but was told by her mother 'not to mention anything about India.'<sup>19</sup> She felt her mother's shame 'as if it were my own' from that day forward. For others, the primary stigma was the trauma of growing up in an institution, due to separation from family or conditions at the Homes. Fred Leith was remembered by his wife, Joan, as being 'very expressive about his gratitude to Daddy Graham and Daddy Purdie. But he never talked about his life at the Homes.'<sup>20</sup> Mary Milne recalled the Dinning sisters describing the Homes as a private school for tea planters' children 'and were very indignant about it being looked at as anything else.'<sup>21</sup> When I asked if the Kalimpong women spoke of a desire to revisit the Homes, Mary recalled Nancy Dinning saying 'she'd *never* go back to *that place* again. She said "It's become an orphanage so we won't be going back there"<sup>22</sup>.

In contrast, Tony (Tom) Spalding's children, Margaret and Ian, did not sense a particular silence around the Indian heritage when they were growing up. They were 'always aware' of the Indian ancestry, plantation life, and the circumstances that led to their father being sent to Kalimpong and later to New Zealand. However, Ian felt that his father 'portrayed the Homes as a boarding school, not

as a “home” type of thing’ and both he and Margaret struggled to remember their father sharing any information about Kalimpong:

Margaret: He used to sing ‘Remember St Andrews and old Kalimpong’.

Ian: And stories of walking down in the cool mornings from Grant Cottage, through the – what’s that flower? – cosmos, orange cosmos. He loved cosmos. And he used to walk down and it was misty and he had these huge rows of those. But not a lot of school memories, mainly from the plantation.<sup>23</sup>

Both Margaret and Ian attributed their father’s lack of discussion about the Homes simply to it being an experience that did not lend itself to the same storytelling as plantation life did. This again raises the question of what we mean by ‘talking’. Answering questions and telling stories are two very different things. Because the Spaldings never felt that information was being withheld from them, they had less need to ask questions. Margaret and Ian fondly remembered their father’s pact with his brother Charles that ‘they wouldn’t marry until they could live in the manner which they were accustomed to on the tea plantation. ... So you see I think the plantation was always a foundation of their lives really.’<sup>24</sup> Hence for those emigrants who remembered plantation life, this provided a positive framing for their lives that was not available to those sent from their place of birth in very early life.

The Kalimpong emigrants’ reticence in talking about the Indian heritage has also been understood as a generational trait and one that did not necessarily originate with difficult memories of their upbringing. Sydney Williams seldom talked to his son, Vic, about India, the Homes or his early life in New Zealand. Nevertheless Vic felt that his father had a good life in New Zealand and enjoyed his career with the Post and Telegraph Department. While he had been interested to learn more about the circumstances of his father’s background from the family’s personal file held at the Homes, the information did not significantly alter Vic’s understanding of his father’s life.<sup>25</sup> Sylvia Slater, the only daughter of Kalimpong emigrants Connie Walker and Horace Brooks, shared a similar sentiment. Her parents’ generation was one that did not talk freely about personal matters, and if information was not offered, children were not encouraged to ask.<sup>26</sup> While there were many ways of interpreting the silence around this heritage, one common thread that I noted in my experiences with Kalimpong families was that the recovery of archival information prompted very animated conversations among descendants. This is still a highly emotive subject, but silence is not the way descendants cope with their emotions. The boundaries between public and



private space, as described by Cohen, are not guarded as they were in the early twentieth century.<sup>27</sup>

## Communities

I think the Dinnings were a bit uncomfortable with people knowing that they came from India. Because one thing I can remember when we were little, they had a big gathering of OGBs [Old Girls and Boys] at their house ... and then we went to St Ninian's church in Karori which I think was their church. And they showed the film 'The Lollipop Tree'. But I think the Dinnings never divulged to friends that they'd come from India, they said that they'd come from England I think. But they were lovely.<sup>28</sup>

How was it that an open and vibrant group of people were nevertheless remembered for their silence about the very heritage that connected them so closely to each other? Anne Beckett's description (above) of the Dinning sisters revealed something of the subtle workings of the Kalimpong community in Wellington. Although the Dinnings' house was a focal point for gatherings, they were also remembered for their concealment of their Indian heritage. This contradiction is partly explained by the Dinnings' assertions about the Homes being a private school for the children of tea planters, rather than a home for mixed-race children; and there is general sentiment among descendants that while the Kalimpong emigrants might have spent a lot of time together, they did not talk about their school days 'as such'.<sup>29</sup> But the community also seemed to function on a tacit understanding that some were more accepting of their Indian ancestry than others. This issue was accorded a sensitivity and respect that was due at least in part to the very high regard in which the emigrants were held by the next generation of this community.

Whether or not the emigrants 'talked about it', contact with others from Kalimpong usually meant descendants had some awareness of the Homes. I have found evidence of close, lifelong relationships with fellow emigrants in all of the main urban centres. Particularly in the North Island, there has been a practice of descendants referring to the Kalimpong friends of their parents as 'Auntie' and 'Uncle'. When I first met with the Gammie family (Gavin and Isabella's children) and Sylvia Slater in Wellington, they referred constantly to aunts and uncles, some of whom were blood relations, others not. (Another descendant spoke of not realizing that an 'aunty' was not a blood relative until

very late in childhood.) The Gammie family forged lasting ties between the Wellington group and settlers further north, since Betty, Alison and Moira lived in Auckland, Fergus in Hamilton, and Gavin and Kathleen in Lower Hutt; plus the Kalimpong spouses of Alison, Gavin and Kathleen each had siblings in the North Island. Like the Gammies, Sylvia's parents were both Kalimpong emigrants. As neither of her parents had siblings in New Zealand, and Sylvia was an only child, her family *was* the Kalimpong community. She and the Gammies thought of their relationship as akin to being cousins. Despite this closeness, Sylvia does not remember her parents ever talking about Kalimpong, unlike 'Uncle Gavin and Auntie Isabel' who, as even Sylvia recalled, often reminisced about their upbringing.

In our first meeting, the Gammie family collectively remembered frequent gatherings, as well as several occasions where principals of the Homes were hosted by the Dinnings or the Gammies on visits to New Zealand.<sup>30</sup> When the same people were interviewed as a group a year later, Anne Beckett suggested that the 'big gatherings' probably did not occur as often as she originally thought, 'but it's just that looking back they were quite memorable.'<sup>31</sup> The occasions when they did all get together were remembered for the delicious curries, and the children sitting together on the floor while their parents reminisced about aspects of life in India in their distinctive Kalimpong accent. The Dinnings' house in Karori was 'quite grand, and large, almost like a palace' in Anne's recollection, with 'lots of ornaments ... and lovely china'. For the Dinnings, and several other unmarried emigrants, substantial inheritances from their fathers brought some continuity to their pre-Kalimpong social status, at least in material circumstance. Mary Milne, who grew up in the South Island but moved to Wellington in her late teens, also had strong memories of the Karori house:

You'd have afternoon tea at 3 o'clock at the Dinnings. That was right on – everything was precise on time, meals and everything. It would be like high afternoon tea, it would always be nice, silver tea service, lovely china teacups and serviettes. They were very ladylike, and that was the British way ... everybody used to remark on going to the Dinnings for afternoon tea.<sup>32</sup>

Apart from the bigger gatherings, several descendants have recalled regular visits between the Dinnings and their parents. Anne Beckett said that her father, Gavin Gammie, 'would go and prune their trees or help with the garden, just things like that. And we'd always go and have a meal there.'<sup>33</sup> Likewise the Dinnings would catch the bus and the train to come and visit her parents. Mary Gibson's (nee Ochterloney) granddaughter remembers taking her to the Dinnings' house

and leaving her to spend the day with them.<sup>34</sup> Many descendants also remember visiting Mary. They all speak of these relationships as being very supportive, whether that meant financial assistance or housing or simply a place to stay when they were on holiday. Mary Milne recalled that when she and her husband were travelling north the Dinning sisters would always suggest Kalimpong people that they should stop off and visit on the way. I asked the Gammie group interviewees about other occasions that they might have gathered:

*JM: Were there any other activities – sporting, clubs – that brought the OGBS together?*

Sylvia: Not that I'm aware of.

Anne: Just getting together for tea.

Sylvia: But no sporting events, or ...

Jim: But what about the card night at the Brookes?<sup>35</sup> [*laughter*]

Anne: The cards eh! There were a lot of cards – Auntie Lucy liked the cards.

Sylvia: Yes fair enough, there were cards [*laughter*] ... and the horses. The horse-racing at Trentham.

Anne: Oh yes, Trentham, picnics!

Sylvia: Picnics, and everything.

Anne: I can remember Colin Bayley being there once. A picnic under the tree.

Sylvia: Yes he was there, and Hamish, Katherine ... Auntie Lucy. Yes, the races bought them in, over at Trentham. And as you say, picnics. And I can remember us running up all the old steps, collecting the tickets [*general agreement*].<sup>36</sup>

I have spoken to numerous descendants of Kalimpong families from the Wellington region during the course of this research. Most could name at least four or five Kalimpong emigrants that their parent kept in contact with, and they describe a community in which there was much humour, close bonds and a special affection for these unique individuals that were a much appreciated presence in their childhoods. Ruth O'Connor, daughter of Margie Smith, wrote that 'as children we were never told of mother's background, which I felt was a great pity because it was something different.'<sup>37</sup> However Ruth had begun her letter by naming many of the Kalimpong women who she remembered from her childhood:

Firstly many thanks for the magazine pages you sent, have found them most interesting. Many of the names listed on the Permit Register are so familiar to me, the likes of Constance Walker, Alice Smith, Margaret Fox, Lucy Tweedie were all our 'Aunts'. They would all come to our home on a Sunday afternoon, play cards and have a curry – which I didn't like!<sup>38</sup>

Molly Chambers was another who developed very close relationships with other Kalimpong families in Wellington. Her son, Clyde, was able to provide detailed information about seven of the women in the 1937 Wellington photograph with Graham, including the whereabouts of their grown children. Their families spent holidays together and supported each other in a myriad of ways. Given this closeness, Clyde 'never thought' to ask those who had grown up at the Homes about their background. He did say that Molly was a little bit embarrassed about her heritage and that there were a couple of 'rough moments' that made her a bit introverted. But he also said that they knew about the Homes, and that Molly always admitted that her mother was Indian and her father British.<sup>39</sup> However when her granddaughter went to India to find out more about Molly's upbringing, she avoided questions about where she had grown up and would 'shrug and either say nothing, or say that she didn't know.'<sup>40</sup> As in every case, there were gender, generational, familial and individual dynamics to consider in unpacking the way that the community (and the silence) functioned. My impression is that the closeness of the community in some way functioned to protect the silence from specific queries. As my father has said, Lorna was 'just Mum', and he did not think to ask questions. Clyde's sentiment regarding the 'aunties' was very similar.

Further south, in Christchurch, Gordon Cullinan kept in touch with two emigrants in Dunedin, Terry Buckley and Harry King. Gordon's daughter-in-law, Gaynor Cullinan, remembered visiting Harry and his family in Dunedin and attending get-togethers in Christchurch.<sup>41</sup> Gaynor knew that the men had come from the same place in India, but no further information was ever offered. On one occasion she asked Harry directly about the Kalimpong background. He looked to Gordon and Terry and 'deferred to them,' as they indicated that he should not talk about it.<sup>42</sup> But Gaynor emphasized that the occasions on which the men were together were 'very special,' they were 'very happy together,' and while Gordon was 'disappointed' by the lack of correspondence with his parents, he regarded his background and emigration to New Zealand positively. In my own family, Lorna concealed from her family the Kalimpong connection to two women in Dunedin with whom she had lifelong friendships. When I asked my father if Lorna ever spoke of India, he remembered particular occasions prompting some memories:

Don: Probably when I was about midway through school she might have talked – I might have asked more then, because we were doing things at school or something. I remember asking her about what different words were in India for tea and milk. ... But then we'd have the wee trips to Port

Chalmers. ... She'd talk a wee bit then because she was going to Mrs Mac's and that would remind her of coming over here.

*JM: So Mrs Mac was someone that she worked for?*

Don: Yes at the church ... she must have – probably helped at the church.<sup>43</sup>

Some time later I discovered that 'Mrs Mac' was in fact Mrs McDonald (nee Kennedy), the Dunedin woman who travelled to Kalimpong in 1908 to volunteer at the Homes, and after her return in the 1920s was mentioned in the *Homes Magazine* as a supportive presence for the emigrants. Although my father had suspected she had some connection to Lorna's early life in Dunedin, it had never occurred to him that she was linked to the Indian background. After all of the occasions we had talked about Lorna's silence, which had never particularly concerned my father, the information about Mrs Mac prompted a strong response from him. 'Why didn't she tell me!' he exclaimed. Another Kalimpong emigrant, Lorna's 'best friend' Mae Sinclair, used to frequently stay with the family at Pine Hill. Don knew that Mae was Indian, but was unaware that they had grown up together and been sent to New Zealand as part of the Homes scheme. Any talk about India would be hushed before the children could really understand what was being said:

*JM: So [Mae] used to stay here [at his home in Pine Hill]?*

DM: Yes, they were real good friends. ... She used to come up on Saturday afternoon, in the taxi, and [as] we got older and had cars we'd take her home on Sunday night. But she was nice, always tidying up, she was busy, busy, busy all the time. You'd come out here at 7 o'clock in the morning and she's dusting everything [*laughs*].

*JM: Did Mae look Indian?*

DM: Oh yes. Very much. She had quite a small face, round sort of face, always had her hair tied back in a bun, and quite dark. She seemed to be darker than Nana.

*JM: So did you think they'd come here together? That they'd come from the same place?*

DM: Yes, we sort of knew. They'd talk about things together sometimes, and you'd listen in, and think a wee bit about it [*laughs*]. But they were pretty shrewd. Mum would soon – if it got too deep she'd whip onto something else so quickly you wouldn't know.<sup>44</sup>

Dunedin was also the place of Mary Milne's early childhood with her mother Kate Pattison, whose house in Broad Bay was often visited by the 'Indian girls' (as Mary refers to them). Although the family moved to Gore and Invercargill before settling in Christchurch, Mary had strong childhood recollections of

the women in Dunedin, whom her mother remained close to throughout her life. Like other descendants, Mary felt that her childhood was greatly enriched by the Kalimpong people who were an integral part of her family. She shared many humorous and colourful stories with me, and her memories portray Kate's friends playing an intimate role in her family life, as a few snippets show:

*JM: So the memories you have of the 'Indian girls' in Dunedin then, that's from your very young life ... they must have made quite an impression.*

Mary: They did, because they were so happy and always laughing and always full of love. You could never do anything wrong. And Auntie Kathy, as I say, she was such a darling.

*JM: And they all called you darling didn't they?*

Mary: Oh yes, 'darling', and 'pet', and my aunty would always call me 'dumkey', 'little dumkey', whatever that was, some term of endearment.

*JM: In Dunedin, you lived in Broad Bay, and the 'Indian girls' used to come and see you at your place?*

Mary: Oh yes ... some of the girls would come out and stay at our place in Broad Bay the night. ... It was just so happy, it really was. They'd all be cooking together and making curries. I mean, we were brought up on curry. And they used to sit up on the verandah ... and we're down here playing ... and we'd turn around and they'd be leaning over the balcony ... 'Oh Kate', they'd say, 'they're darling little girls, they're beautiful little girls.' We thought we were the only little girls in the world at that stage.

*JM: What did your Dad think of these Indian girls coming over to visit?*

Mary: He thought it was wonderful. Because they were always nice to Dad. And it was good for Mum and Dad, I mean he'd come in from working on the roads, in depression times and they would all be laughing and chattering away, and they'd be so pleased to see – 'so pleased to see you Bill', they'd all say. And they all used to hug one another. It was a nice relationship. ... Auntie Kathy would say to Dad, 'now Bill, I don't think you should have said that to Kate', and 'you know you shouldn't have spoken to little Mary like that, she's not a naughty little girl'. That was her favourite – she'd always say, 'no you're not a naughty little girl, you're a good girl darling.'<sup>45</sup>

## Being mixed race in New Zealand

With limited information about their Indian heritage, most Kalimpong descendants grew up with a generalized sense of being mixed race. They

were (and are) often thought to be part-Māori. Exploring this aspect of their experiences contributes an interesting layer to the growing scholarship on interracial communities in New Zealand.<sup>46</sup> As noted previously, Graham made repeated public statements that New Zealand was an ideal destination for his graduates due to the absence of colour prejudice and acceptance (and prevalence) of racial mixing between British and Māori. This was an outsider's perspective. Few mixed-race Māori claimed this ancestry during the era of assimilation.<sup>47</sup> Graham's public rhetoric seems to have been an oversimplification of even his own beliefs, as letters to his graduates revealed that he was not surprised that they experienced some hardships owing to their darker skin colour. Graham was apparently satisfied that New Zealand at least allowed his graduates to cross the border and to find a place for themselves in which they could quietly raise their families. His great hope was that both the colour and hence the discrimination would completely disappear in subsequent generations. Graham's biographer, James Minto, echoed this sentiment in his assessment of the emigrants' fortunes, noting that many married New Zealanders and that 'in another generation the Indian connections will probably have been forgotten'.<sup>48</sup>

Few descendants had ever heard their parents speak of discrimination or racial slurs, but most expected that the emigrants would have experienced both. The nature of any such discrimination was complicated by the common perception that the emigrants were part-Māori, as Graham had anticipated and regarded positively. The reactions of the emigrants depended on whether people assumed that they were part-Māori, part-Indian or neither, and on how they felt about those categorizations. According to her granddaughter, Mary Gibson (nee Ochterloney) lived in an area where there were many Māori, and so preferred that people thought she was Māori rather than Indian.<sup>49</sup> I encountered this attitude on numerous occasions, particularly in the North Island where there is a much higher Māori population.<sup>50</sup> Several male emigrants married Māori women and produced families that are strongly connected to their Māori heritage. Hence the attitudes of the wider Pakeha community towards Māori, plus the proximity of Kalimpong families to Māori communities, have affected the nature of the experiences of the emigrants and their descendants.

The relevance of geographical location goes beyond the northern-southern divide or regional variation in the density of the Māori population. The testimony of two Kalimpong families who settled in northern areas demonstrates the complexity of everyday life in ethnically diverse rural communities. Their memories challenge Graham's simplified version of New Zealand social relations,

and in the first of those two families, reveal the direct impact of racial prejudice upon the Kalimpong emigrants. Richard Hawkins's family grew up on a farm in Puni, a rural locale serviced by nearby Pukekohe – the town well known in the history of New Zealand race relations as the birthplace of the White New Zealand League.<sup>51</sup> Pam's recollection of racial segregation in Pukekohe contrasted with her initial answer about the family being 'white' among the Puni community:

*JM: We've talked a bit before about Pukekohe, about the ethnic diversity there.*

Pam: Oh, at Puni school, yes. We had the Māoris, the Chinese, the Indians, and us, the whites. But yes, Pukekohe – in those days it was a bit ... we didn't really realise until we had grown up what it was really like. It was a nice place, but the street was divided. We called it the 'Māori side' down the bottom, and in the picture theatre the Māoris were only allowed to go downstairs. And if Dad wanted a haircut, he was only allowed down the bottom of the street because of his colour. Nobody up the other end of the street would cut his hair. He never ever said anything negative about it. So he may have had lots of thoughts but never ever told us children.<sup>52</sup>

Tony Spalding's two children grew up in Awanui, a small rural community even further north. Like the Hawkinses, they differentiated between their acceptance in this tiny community and the reputation of the nearby town of Kaitaia. Margaret firstly connected their acceptance to the high proportion of Māori:

I can remember – probably when I was about twelve – realising at some stage that I was very fortunate because I was totally accepted by the Māori children. Probably half of the children were Māori, and I was always accepted because of my brown skin. My father was accepted as well. Whereas some of my Pakeha friends ... they suffered from it a bit, because they were Pakeha, from the Māori children, but I never ever ever felt that.<sup>53</sup>

Margaret also stated that their parents sent them to Awanui school, unlike 'the people on the road next to us [who] were all sent by bus to Kaitaia school, and that was the racist thing. ... So we were lucky that our parents were never ever racist.'<sup>54</sup> This was something that caused confusion in interviews – people assumed I was asking about their parents' racism towards others, rather than the other way around, which demonstrates the fluctuation between thinking of their parents as white or as different, part of the majority or marginalized. This points to the perception of mixed-race people as interlocutors, referred to by Margaret when talking about the broader impact of her Indian heritage, which she believed gave her a 'sort of tolerance of other people, and an understanding



that I can meet anybody at any level and ... they seem to be able to relate to me.' Margaret also linked the presence of a sizable local mixed-race community (which sprung from intermarriage between Māori and Yugoslav immigrants in the early 1900s – 'what we called Māori-Dallies') to the family's high level of integration, which was required to successfully run the only garage providing petrol and mechanical services to a large rural area.<sup>55</sup>

As discussed earlier, Margaret and Ian stated that they were 'always aware' of their father's Indian background and ancestry. 'I don't ever remember not knowing that my father was part-Indian,' Margaret said. 'Or suddenly being made aware of it,' Ian added. Margaret elaborated further on the way she answered questions about her ancestry: 'When people would say, "Are you Māori?" I would say "No, I'm Indian, my father was Indian, part-Indian".'<sup>56</sup> Margaret used the common terminology for mixed race in New Zealand, 'part-Indian' or 'part-Māori', which does not imply affiliation to a particular community (in contrast to the Anglo-Indian community in India), nor does it employ the colonial 'language of fractions.'<sup>57</sup> Margaret's way of answering questions about her Indian heritage also illustrates the importance of colour and appearance. Unlike Richard Hawkins's children, whose appearance would not suggest any non-European heritage, Margaret and Ian have both often fielded questions about their ancestry because of their colouring. Hence, Pam and Gilbert could only comment on their experience of *being* mixed race, while Margaret and Ian could additionally consider the impact of being *perceived* as mixed race. The distinction between these two increases the breadth of experiences for Kalimpong descendants.<sup>58</sup>

My finding that many Kalimpong descendants bemoan that they do *not* carry any visible reminders of this heritage was one of many indicators of the profound shift in societal attitudes to race in just one generation. The Gammie family have a very lively remembrance of Gavin's involvement in a confrontation after he was refused alcohol because the barman thought he was Māori.<sup>59</sup> He took considerable offence at this suggestion. Another descendant remembered their parent showing concern for grandchildren born with dark skin, believing that they would 'have a hard life'. Others, as already mentioned, preferred to be thought of as Māori. When Sylvia Slater's skin darkened over summer, her mother, Connie Walker, called her 'my little Māori'.<sup>60</sup> In contrast to the varying reactions of the emigrants, their descendants have all spoken of their Indian heritage positively. This shift in attitudes has coincided with, and is no doubt related to, the increasingly multi-cultural composition of New Zealand's population. An important element in the resurgence of the Kalimpong narrative is the greater acceptance and visibility of the local Indian population. Mary

Milne (in her mid-eighties) used an older terminology to express this new kind of social interaction:

I think it was lovely, Mum being half-caste Indian. I always used to say, 'Oh I'm an eighth.' And then Sabita, my friend – she's Indian – she said to me, 'Do you realise you're quarter?' And I said, 'For goodness sake, I've been saying I'm an eighth.' 'No girl!', she said, 'you're a quarter.' I said 'Oh, that's very nice.'<sup>61</sup>

## Legacies

Aside from skin colour, most Kalimpong descendants have been able to identify some tangible reminders of their British Indian heritage, which becomes more visible when looking at the community collectively. In this section I begin by exploring Indian cultural legacies (food and language), then a Kalimpong legacy (accent) and paternal British ones (plantation stories and colonial objects). Looking firstly at language, Richard Cone remembered his mother, Dora Moller, being 'quite fluent' in Hindi and wanting to teach it to her sons, although she never did.<sup>62</sup> Mary Milne recalled the Kalimpong women in Dunedin speaking and writing Hindi 'for a start', but felt that they 'lost interest' as they carried on with their new lives. In later years her mother would say, 'I should have taught you girls Hindi', and would sometimes sit down and try to write in Hindi. Mary also remembered mentioning the language to Margaret and Nancy Dinning, who indicated that they had 'forgotten that part of life' and did not want to speak Hindi.<sup>63</sup> Pam Gardiner remembered her father teaching them 'Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of *pani* [water]'.<sup>64</sup> When I first met Gavin and Isabel Gammie's children, they spoke of their parents often using an Indian language to swear at each other. I broached the subject again in a recorded interview:

*JM: I think you mentioned last time that there were some language things that came through, phrases that they used? [immediate laughter]*

Anne: I know Mum and Dad used to curse each other in – what's that thing Mum –

Ron: *[reels off a long Indian phrase to lots of laughter]*

Anne: Oh that's right.

Ron: Yes because after we went to Kalimpong we went to Nepal, and the evening after we went for the walk, and there were some young kids around ... they would have been about 16 or 17. ... I said that [the Indian phrase] to them and they looked at me and they laughed. ... But I can't remember what it actually meant *[lots of laughter]*.

Anne: I can remember being on holiday at Smith St in Hamilton and Mum said that to Dad and I said 'what does that mean?' and, [*gestures that she won't tell her*] and I said 'I'll ask Uncle Ferg' and she said 'NO you don't!!' And she used to say [*kera mai...*]. I don't know what that meant. And Mum always called Dad a 'lhata', which I gathered was a stupid oaf, or something similar, something derogatory.

*JM: Do you know what language it is?*

Anne: I don't know.

Ron: No I don't know.

Anne: No idea!<sup>65</sup>

A related topic is the Kalimpong accent, which many descendants have noted as the Indian legacy that most differentiated their parent. Given the stigma around accent in India, which was an important determinant of Anglo-Indian's position on the spectrum from British to domiciled and mixed race, it is interesting to speculate on how it might have been received in New Zealand. For descendants, the accent is something they remember fondly. Wellington descendants sometimes used the Kalimpong accent when recounting memories of their parent, describing it as a combination of Indian accent and a Welsh sound. Anne Beckett had a childhood memory of hearing someone talking to her parents at a sports game, and she thought he spoke 'just like Mum and Dad, and it did turn out that he was from Kalimpong. At the get-togethers they would all just fall into this way of talking, all the same. They had a real lilt.'<sup>66</sup>

References to food have already frequently appeared in the excerpts in this chapter, and it is the most tangible legacy of the Indian heritage in Kalimpong families. Eating Indian food in 1950s and 1960s New Zealand was significant because it not only meant eating food that looked, smelt and tasted different, but also required preparing and cooking meals in a particular way, and locating unusual ingredients. Mary Milne recalled that when they gathered, the women would 'sit on the porch and be chatting away in Hindi, eating soup and picking stones out of the lentils ... boiling up the rice and drinking the rice water.'<sup>67</sup> Later when Mary travelled to Fiji and stayed with an Indian family, she described feeling 'at home' when they engaged in identical food rituals, which she had never seen outside her family home.<sup>68</sup> George Langmore also loved to cook Indian food. His granddaughter remembered him sourcing pickles and tea from India throughout his life.<sup>69</sup> Ron Gammie stated that, 'apart from having curries, which were a really great thing to have, I would have classed myself as a Kiwi'. Anne Beckett's husband Charlie supported that sentiment, stating that

it was really a 'school culture' that they brought to New Zealand, rather than an 'Indian culture', and that 'the only Indian thing I know is Mum (Isabel Gammie) and her curries'.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to tastes in food, dining habits (from plantation bungalows) were brought from British India to New Zealand by the emigrants and the planters who followed. Egerton Peters and Hugh Dinning were not the only tea planters to visit or settle with their children in New Zealand. Richard Hawkins's father arrived in New Zealand in the 1960s to spend the last few years of his life with his son and young family. Although he did not share stories of plantation life with his grandchildren, he made a strong impression on them. Pam thought that 'he spoke like the Queen' and Gilbert noticed his very different habits:

We were typical Kiwi family, we'd roar in for tea – and he'd turn up for tea, in his suit, tie, and you had to have a napkin with a napkin ring on there, and a solid – a silver knife and fork there like this, and I'd just look [and think], like where's this joker come from? And he did that right up until the end.<sup>71</sup>

Although Gilbert saw his grandfather's behaviour as contrary to their own 'Kiwi' way of life, many descendants have found a legacy of plantation life in the Kalimpong emigrants' tendency to be 'very particular' in a variety of ways. Edward Snelleksz's grandson described him as 'incredibly gentlemanly' and 'in fact, a bit overboard' about his concern with manners and hygiene.<sup>72</sup> Although Vic Williams remembered his father for his deft manual skills (another trait common among the male emigrants), he too described his father as 'a wonderful gentleman', who 'dressed for lunch'.<sup>73</sup> Pam Gardiner remembered her father 'always dressed spic and span, nothing out of place'.<sup>74</sup> Tony Spalding's daughter directly connected his memories of having a *punkah wallah* at the dining table at the plantation with his later concern that things were arranged in a particular way: 'You always had to have your napkin beside you, even if it was your lunch or breakfast, the table settings had to be just perfect. He was very particular about those sorts of things'.<sup>75</sup>

The final legacy of the British fathers was financial bequests. In some families this was a source of discontent; in others it was regarded as evidence of their lifelong concern for their children's well-being. Tony Spalding purchased his business in Awanui with a trust fund held by the Homes from his father's estate. Mary Milne remembered being about twelve years old when her grandfather passed away 'in London or wherever he was'. 'All of a sudden, out of the blue, we've got a grandfather', she said.<sup>76</sup> Although her mother's claimant

rights were contested by relatives in England, the sum awarded financed much-needed renovations on their Loftus Street house. Yvonne Gale believes that the events following her great-grandfather's (Jean McKay's father) death created significant disturbance in their Dunedin household. 'Dad talks about a huge row in the family,' Yvonne said. In their case an inheritance was not forthcoming, and this caused a rift between Jean and her husband that was never mended. Judy Wivell believed that her grandfather, George Langmore, received financial support from his father's family in England, with whom he had regular contact.<sup>77</sup>

As Durba Ghosh's work has shown, wills are a useful source for addressing absences in records pertaining to South Asian women.<sup>78</sup> The Spalding family obtained a copy of their tea-planting grandfather's will in Britain, which showed that he left the sum of 15,000 rupees to 'Prasanna Tati of the family of Chintamani Tati Kurma Tea Estate' (the mother of his children) and the remainder of his property to his sister. Their understanding is that Prasanna used the money to buy an amount of land sufficient to provide for her future. The reading of a will was perhaps the time that some British families found out about other branches of the family. Wills are also useful for addressing archival absences about the women who did not marry. When Gertie Plaistowe died in 1983 she had cash assets of almost NZ\$10,000 and valuable furniture items including an 'Indian brass table' and other items possibly inherited from her father. She bequeathed two-thirds of her cash assets to the Homes in Kalimpong.

Although the unmarried women did not produce their own families, they were certainly part of the Kalimpong family and are remembered through their relationships with descendants. As we have seen, the Dinning sisters' house was a place to socialize. Also in Wellington, Amy Gollan used her substantial inheritance (£6,000) to buy a house in Lower Hutt, and when Gavin Gammie was building a house nearby he and his family lived with 'Aunty Amy'.<sup>79</sup> Their circumstances also suggest that some maintained a presence in their extended 'empire families' from a distance. Eva Masson, a 1926 emigrant, worked in Nelson until 1981. When she died in 1998, her death notice described her as the 'loved Auntie of Malcolm and Robert Junior, and Norma and Jim Ellis, all of London'.<sup>80</sup> Contact with Eva's extended family revealed that these were her paternal relatives. For descendants, contact with the British branch of their families has usually been that of a reconnection rather than a continued one, sparked by travel to Britain to research their family history. Often the first step in tracking those relatives has been a trip to the Homes in Kalimpong.

## Return to Kalimpong

And so nothing much was said until I was about 18, and I asked my father, 'how about going back to India?' He said 'this is the first time in my life that I've had a family around me and I don't want to leave it. I'm not interested in travelling or anything.' So that was the end of that. It took many years before I started to think about it again.<sup>81</sup>

A surprisingly high proportion of descendants that I have been in contact with have made the trip to Kalimpong to retrieve information and see for themselves the circumstances under which their parents grew up.<sup>82</sup> Most of this travel has happened from the 1980s onwards, which coincided with a greater ease of international travel and with India becoming a much more common tourist destination for New Zealanders – another way in which the Kalimpong narrative has been influenced by connections between New Zealand and India at a broader level. As Gilbert Hawkins said, when he first thought about going to India, very few people that he knew of went there. 'In those days, everyone went to Australia,' he explained. The timing of this travel also coincided with the period in which many of the original Kalimpong emigrants died, which brought a nostalgic interest in knowing more and the opportunity to do so without upsetting their parents' delicate relationship to their past. These journeys have also been prompted by the discovery of photographs or documents among their parent's possessions that led them to Kalimpong. Many descendants had been reluctant to carry out research into such a sensitive area when their parents were still alive, while some were actively discouraged or misled. Mary Howie's granddaughter wrote that Mary was 'horrified when I told her that I was going to start looking into my family history' and as a result she had 'not really pursued this side of my ancestry'.<sup>83</sup>

The contrast between descendants' mobility and the Kalimpong emigrants' stability warrants some exploration here. The strategies of silence and stability used by their parents to make a new start were a poignant precursor to their children's subsequent mobility as a means of disrupting the silence and reconnecting with the past. What is remarkable, like the shift in racial attitudes, is how quickly that transition occurred. In one generation, descendants have been secure enough in their 'New Zealandness' to turn back towards a heritage that for their parents was something that threatened the possibility of their social acceptance. The journey to Kalimpong has been viewed as an opportunity

to answer questions about family heritage, but also as a means of giving purpose to an existing desire to travel. Many descendants, myself included, have been quite happy that the only way to find out more was to pack one's bags and go to Kalimpong. Certainly in my own case, there was a prolonged frustration with stories that had 'worn out'; stories that had been heard and misheard so many times, and changed and misunderstood to such an extent that they held no possibility of disentanglement. Some fresh 'evidence', as simple as photographs of the place my grandmother might have inhabited, had the potential to add new life and new possibilities to a family history that had come to be thought of as shrouded and mysterious.

If I could generalize about descendants' responses to visiting Kalimpong it was a combination of sadness at the discovery of certain details about their parents' upbringing, but also in the realization that it was chiefly the stigma of being born into an interracial family that prevented discussion of this background – a stigma that descendants understood, but did not themselves share in any way. They have been amazed and surprised to find the Homes in a similar state to what it would have been when their parent lived there, and impressed by the beauty of the landscape. For many the motivation to go to Kalimpong was simply to stand on the ground that their mother or father had grown up on, particularly for male descendants. Gilbert Hawkins was surprised by his emotive response when he found himself in the precise location of his father's childhood, which was essentially unchanged:

That first time we went there they said it was virtually the same condition as when your father was there and we walked around, up the hills, and into the dormitory. It was rather, mmm, it sort of gave a certain amount of closure to it.<sup>84</sup>

Gilbert found his father's name inscribed into the head of the bed in what they knew to be Richard's cottage. His sister Pam, who visited Kalimpong separately, stood at the foot of the stairway in her father's cottage and wondered 'how many times he went up and down there, and did they ever dare slide down the banister!'<sup>85</sup> Many people have found visiting the dormitory room in the cottages to be a moving experience. Seeing forty beds close together brings home in a very direct way the nature of 'orphanage' life, regardless of what they know of Graham's motivations to provide a better future for Anglo-Indian children (Figure 8.1).

When Ron Gammie attended the Homes Centenary in 2000, his parents' reminiscences allowed him to connect in very direct ways to Kalimpong life.



**Figure 8.1** Gilbert Hawkins pauses to reflect in the dormitory where his father grew up, Kalimpong, 2005. Courtesy Hawkins private collection.

Ron was surprised by the extent to which the visit heightened his interest in his parents' history. 'I almost need that real element for it to mean – well not to mean a lot, but to really understand it,' he explained.<sup>86</sup> When I asked him which aspects of his visit brought the most emotional response, his answer conveyed the very real sense of reconnection between this distant site and New Zealand towns (in his case Lower Hutt) that many descendants experienced:

On the road below the school ... it winds down to that Rilli River. I guess that's where for me it was the most emotional, because that's where there were a lot of young kids. ... I remember them [his parents] talking about going down and swimming in the river. But there were lots of moments, just things like seeing the names [of his parents' cottages] and you knew what a part of it [they were] – and here you are, so many miles away.<sup>87</sup>

The recovery of information through the Homes practice of retaining correspondence in a 'personal file' for all previous students was an unexpected bonus for many who have travelled to Kalimpong, and in retrospect this information has become the most 'amazing' part of that journey. Other descendants have received copies of the files in the post after making contact with the Homes. The information they contain has often brought about a complete transformation in their family narratives. For the Spaldings, who had never had reason to suspect a negative aspect to their father's upbringing, some letters in the file 'took a while to come to terms with.' Margaret and I went into



a great funk for about a week', Ian told me, for 'we couldn't imagine that this had been my father's life.' It seemed to them that Tom's upbringing had been 'glossed over', particularly the separation of the boys' from their mother.<sup>88</sup> In addition, the Spalding file revealed that a third brother, Donald, whom Tom said had died prior to Ian's visit to India in the 1970s, had actually still been alive at the time. Although this information had a positive outcome in their eventual reconnection with Donald's daughter, their initial response was one of betrayal by an otherwise 'very honest' father. For Yvonne Gale, reading letters written by her grandmother and her great-grandfather had the opposite effect. 'I was amazed,' Yvonne said. 'It showed a side of my grandmother I didn't really know when she was alive. ... It completely changed my thoughts about her. I was a little bit in awe of her considering she had another language, and that she'd travelled the way she'd travelled. We knew nothing about that.' The letters also showed a surprisingly caring side to her great-grandfather. 'We thought that the two of them had been abandoned,' Yvonne said, 'so our opinion of her father wasn't very high. That changed it.'<sup>89</sup>

In seeking information to fill the gaps incurred by their silences, we descendants have ended up privy to information that the emigrants themselves did not necessarily have. Concealment began with their fathers, and Graham, both of whom kept information from them. When we ponder their silences, we might consider that part of the silence may have represented a genuine lack of information about central aspects of themselves. Perhaps at the core of the stigma and the pain was the simple fact of not knowing who your mother was, or what became of her, or why your father sent you away. Speculating about such sensitive matters is one thing when perusing letters written by a great-grandfather over a century later, but raised very different feelings for the Kalimpong emigrants, many of whom knew very little about their own parents. The extent of this missing genealogy that Homes graduates wrestled with over their lifetimes was expressed with incredible poignancy in a letter from a New Zealand emigrant to John Graham in the 1920s, who simply asked, 'Who are my parents? Will you please write to me and let me know what I am?'<sup>90</sup>

Lou Holder's sentiments after visiting Kalimpong were common to many descendants who regretted that their parent or grandparent did not feel comfortable talking to them about it before it was too late. 'The Kalimpong heritage was something I had always wondered about,' Lou said, 'and I was very sorry to have not pressed it when my father was alive and been able to

talk to him about it and possibly taken him there.<sup>91</sup> But I would (and did) say to Lou that there were reasons why those discussions did not take place. In hindsight it may seem a simple thing to persist with a line of questioning, but in real time, in any given moment, it can be incredibly difficult to broach a subject that an elderly parent wishes to avoid, especially if the reasons for that reluctance are not known. My own understanding of the silences in the Kalimpong story is that there was a process by which the emigrants reached an acceptance of their past, which took time, but which once settled gave the impression to the outside world that all was forgotten. The slightest stirring, however, could instantly raise that sediment, disturbing the present moment, and making it murky with past memories and emotions of surprising intensity. There is no separation of the good and the bad when it comes to the emotions stored inside our precious memories, especially when delving into the stuff of childhood and family. While the return to Kalimpong has been an adventurous, emotive and tranquil journey for the present generation, there is an enormous gap between those sensations and the distant, complex memories of those who left it a century before.

### ‘Final thoughts’

It seems apt to draw this final chapter to a close with the responses given by descendants at the end of their interviews, when I invited them to add any final thoughts. Several spoke of wanting to know more about their Indian grandmother. Margaret Matterson said that while she felt her Scottish and Irish heritage were important to her, she would ‘love to know more about my Indian side, would love to have known my Indian grandmother.’<sup>92</sup> Yvonne Gale also identified her maternal Indian ancestor as the only part of the story that she had not been able to fully explore, but viewed that as ‘an impossibility’. She spoke of a friend who was looking further back into the family line, ‘but that totally doesn’t interest me. It was just Granny [Jean] and her life. Her story.’<sup>93</sup> I had a strong sense with Yvonne that after a sustained period of research, she had let the story rest. Learning about my research and meeting me had stirred up her engagement with the family story, but in a more limited way. For Yvonne, and for many descendants I met, learning of the larger community was a welcome opportunity to dip again into their family history, almost like an epilogue to the research they had already done. Nothing would ever

approximate the very personal and intense journeys of discovery that they had already been through.

The lingering gap which is the absence of information about the Kalimpong emigrants' mothers echoes Cohen's discussion of the present preoccupation with 'talking' as inherently better than 'not talking'.<sup>94</sup> We might just as soon ask ourselves why it is that we *do* talk, as ask a former generation why they did not. But I think descendants would say that the problem with 'not talking' was that future generations were left with a gap in their family line. In our way of thinking, there is nothing that carries so much stigma that it is worth sacrificing a branch of one's family tree. It is difficult for descendants like Gilbert Hawkins to accept that despite their full commitment to this research, they can only put 'Bengali' in the space for their grandmother, with nothing but blankness further down the line. Even so, Gilbert found the whole experience of travelling to Kalimpong and Assam very meaningful:

While I was milking the cows tonight, I was just thinking about how it has all affected me, not knowing at the time. I've always felt that I'm a bit different ... and you often wondered, well, where do you actually come from. So that's become quite a big part of my quest to at least find out a little bit about India, or the area [we've] come from. It wouldn't be completed until I've found something out about my grandmother, but I don't think that's going to happen.<sup>95</sup>

Final thoughts about the merits of Graham's scheme have brought forth conflicting opinions. Lou Holder was shocked and upset by the cold manner in which his Indian grandmother was treated, as evidenced by the letters in his father's file. After speaking with Lou, he sent me an email to clarify his opinion of the Homes, stating that although he was 'initially distressed by the actions of my Grandfather and Dr Graham towards my father and his mother' he was also 'eternally grateful' that his father was given an opportunity to settle 'in a more caring environment probably than if abandoned to the streets of India'.<sup>96</sup> Those present for the Gammie group interview had differing opinions of the Homes, but agreed on their good fortune as a result of their parents being placed in New Zealand. Graham himself would probably be surprised at the turn towards India that the next generation has exhibited, despite and even because of the heritage fading over time. His inability to foresee the anxiety that blank family lines would cause illustrates the function of a kind of forgetfulness that in his time was a precursor for a new beginning. And although he lauded the relationship between settlers and Māori in New Zealand, it is unlikely that he

had any sense of the deep connection with Māori culture that many Kalimpong families would develop, as expressed in Anne Beckett's response to meeting with me and learning of my research:

I think part of this thirst to know as much as I can about my parents comes from my journey learning Te Reo Māori [Māori language]. I am truly inspired by so many concepts and values within Māori culture. For instance there is this premise that you have to walk backwards into the future, always acknowledging those people and experiences that have preceded you and have helped shape your individual identity. ... In a way, I see your research in that same light, Jane, for you are uncovering the history of a group of people who share a common kinship and your research is going to bring their stories to light for so many of their descendants.<sup>97</sup>

## Conclusion: A Transcultural Challenge

In November 2014 I held a 'reunion' of descendants in Dunedin to bring together many of the families who had been part of my research. I began the three-day event by providing brief introductions for everyone who was there, and then delighted in moving to the side while more than seventy descendants enthusiastically shared their stories and experiences with each other. The publication of this book represents another landmark in our narrative journeys, but this is a living history. We all continue to engage intermittently with our family stories and with each other. I regularly receive new contacts through my research website, and have met many more families and seen many more files than I could include here. Every single family has contributed to this book; all have enhanced my understanding of the scheme, of the diverse circumstances that preceded Kalimpong, and of the processes by which we have recovered their family stories. Bringing the living into this study was the decision that enabled my exploration of the making and unmaking of the Kalimpong history.

This collective approach has heightened the meanings attached to the legacy of the scheme. Our reunion was a happy occasion but it was also an opportunity to ponder the difficult pathways of the Kalimpong settlers and the irrevocable losses incurred down the generations. They have transferred the feeling of a 'Kalimpong family' to us, somehow, and certainly the Homes did become a kind of origin place for the emigrants – especially those who did not remember what came before. But while it is a space we share a common history with, let me be clear: we do not come from Kalimpong, it is not our home, it is not our origin. The Homes was a stopping point. Our South Asian grandmothers (or great-grandmothers) were shut out of its territory, and our tea-planting grandfathers (or great-grandfathers) were too afraid to go there. Our paternal line traces to Britain, with families that sprawled across the empire. On the maternal side, it is impossible to generalize about our ancestry given the prolonged period of upheavals and migrations of people into and around northeast India. Even if we have some details about Her, in order to draw a line that connects us, we need to know – or at least be able to imagine – where it goes beyond that.

Looking in the other direction, to the New Zealand future, I have traced distinct regional developments along community lines between north and south. The drift northwards is difficult to fully explain. It is partly due to the pattern of placements; certainly the warmer climates of the north would appeal; and perhaps the presence of Māori and Indians in greater numbers has had an effect. This regional distinction was apparent at the reunion too, with only one Dunedin family (apart from mine) present and one other from the South Island. The rest came from all over the North Island. And so I want to return to the story of my grandmother, Lorna, as a way of acknowledging the earlier settlers and the Dunedin origins of the scheme that had completely dropped off the Homes radar by the time three nurses – graduates from Kalimpong – were placed there in the 1960s. One of the women told me that she had no idea that others from Kalimpong had been placed in Dunedin, until one afternoon when she was walking home, up a hill (as tends to be the case there), with many bags of shopping, and a passing motorist stopped to offer her a ride. She was startled to discover within a couple of minutes of chatting that he had come from Kalimpong too, many years before.

When I look at photographs of Lorna now I see something different than before (Figure C.1). There is a world in the background that I could not see before, and this changes the way she appears in the scene. This reimagining calls to mind Sara Ahmed's work, especially her attention to direction, orientation, the powerful language of backwards and forwards and the benefit of inverting our perspectives.<sup>1</sup> I look at images of Lorna now and I think, how did she keep it



**Figure C.1** Lorna Peters at home in Pine Hill, Dunedin, c. 1970. Author's collection.

all in? How did she never talk about it? And then I remember that Dad says she did talk about the mountains, and the heat of the summer, and the borders of the countries. But there was so much more.

The Peters's photographs from India look different now too, part of a story that has coherence where before we had to leap from imagined exotic origins to a humble Pine Hill destiny, with nothing in between. There is a photograph of the SS *Janus*, Lorna's ship to New Zealand. Dad remembers it being on the sideboard when he was growing up, and not knowing who the names written on the back belonged to. I look at them now and they are so familiar it is hard to believe they ever lost their meaning. They are the names of the five others from Kalimpong in Lorna's group, and over the years she had written in what I realize now are the dates of their deaths, beginning with her brother George, in 1947, who died due to an anaesthetic while undergoing a routine operation, and followed by Dora Moller in 1953. Lorna must have been in touch with others from Kalimpong, or perhaps was kept informed by her good friend Mae Sinclair, the 1912 emigrant who was her 'best friend'.

Like other families, my engagement with Lorna's story has continued over the years of this project. While I have not pursued any further research myself, the 'discovery' of my family by Peters relative in England has supplied much new information, including the letters Egerton wrote from Assam to his Aunt Caroline that I cited in the early chapters. Most importantly, my British cousin several times removed had also found that most elusive thing – Lorna's mother's name. She was Jhapri Gurkhali.

Names are important. From Jhapri Gurkhali to Lorna Peters feels like a leap of more than one generation. I am unsure how I might bridge that gulf between them. This gulf was created because our histories have crossed not just oceans and nations, but also cultures and ethnicities. These multiple crossings have affected our attempts to recover and reconstruct our stories. It is difficult to contemplate tapping into community histories in northeast India. It is so far away. Yet I am heartened by Michael Rothberg's reminder that *memory* is 'not afraid to traverse sacrosanct borders of ethnicity and era.'<sup>2</sup> We do have the capacity to make meaning of the meandering internal sense of our histories, even if we have to face structures and walls at every turn in order to make a story to pass on to the next generation.

# Notes

## Chapter 1

- 1 I also follow the convention among former pupils and staff to refer to the Homes as a singular subject and to omit apostrophes that would usually apply. For example, ‘Homes scheme’, ‘Homes graduates.’
- 2 See Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Living with Shame from the Victorians to the Present Day* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), *passim*.
- 3 For colonial archives, see Antoinette Burton (ed.), *Archive Stories: Facts, Fiction and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Ann Laura Stoler, *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995). For tracing families, see for example, Stephen Foster, *A Private Empire* (London: Pier 9, 2010).
- 4 Adele Perry, *Colonial Relations: The Douglas-Connolly Family and the Nineteenth-Century Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- 5 *Ibid.*, 3.
- 6 Here I am referring to their absence not only from British family trees but also from scholarly work. While Elizabeth Buettner’s *Empire Families* is laudable for its focus on the relationships around which the staffing of British India was structured, the book is devoid of South Asian or Anglo-Indian perspectives. Buettner, *Empire Families Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- 7 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 32.
- 8 Damon Salesa, *Racial Crossings: Race, Inter-marriage and the Victorian British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 241–2.
- 9 Perry, *Colonial Relations*, 1.
- 10 Antoinette Burton, ‘Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories’, in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fiction and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 9. Burton’s work framed my original incursion into the Kalimpong story: Jane McCabe, ‘Letters from Kalimpong: A Tea Planter’s Journey towards “Home” with His Anglo-Indian Children’ (PGDip. diss., University of Otago, 2009).



- 11 See Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); and Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
- 12 For a summary of the various names applied to the community, see Laura Bear, *The Jadu House: Intimate Histories of Anglo-India* (London: Transworld Publishers, 2000), 287–91.
- 13 Two key works locate the colonial legacy in a still-disturbed Anglo-Indian present: Laura Bear, *Lines of the Nation: Indian Railway Workers, Bureaucracy and the Intimate Historical Self* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); and Lionel Caplan, *Children of Colonialism: Anglo-Indians in a Postcolonial World* (Oxford: Berg, 2001). One of the key segregating features of the community was that it had no caste as the term is understood and practised in South Asia; but Bear also describes the community as a ‘railway caste’. Bear, *Lines of the Nation*, 8–9.
- 14 Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 46.
- 15 Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), passim.
- 16 The Government of India Act 1935 defined an ‘Anglo-Indian’ as ‘a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein’. Bear, *The Jadu House*, 291.
- 17 Bear, *Lines of the Nation*, passim.
- 18 Caplan, *Children of Colonialism*, 132.
- 19 Deana Heath, ‘Comparative Colonialism, Moral Censorship and Governmentality’, in *Decentring Empire: Britain, India and the Transcolonial World*, ed. Durba Ghosh and Dane Kennedy (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2006), 229. See also Deana Heath, *Purifying Empire: Obscenity and the Politics of Moral Regulation in Britain, India and Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 20 See Tony Ballantyne, ‘Writing Out Asia’, in *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand’s Colonial Past* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2012), 53. ‘Raced migration’ is Radhika Mongia’s term. See Mongia, ‘Race, Nationality, Mobility: A History of the Passport’, *Public Culture* 11, no. 3 (1999): 527–55.
- 21 See [www.kalimpongkids.org.nz](http://www.kalimpongkids.org.nz). At the time of writing I have had contact with the families of 72 of the 130 emigrants, comprising many hundreds of people all over New Zealand.
- 22 Evans articulates her position in ‘Secrets and Lies: The Radical Potential of Family History’, *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011): 49–73, and applied the methodology to her recent book *Fractured Families: Life on the Margins of Colonial New South Wales* (Sydney: Newsouth Publishing, 2015).

- 23 Evans, *Fractured Families*, 57–81.
- 24 See Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonisation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), for an excellent discussion of contests over the public space for memorializing histories.

## Chapter 2

- 1 See Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing about House, Home and History in Late Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay Reading the Archives', *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (1985): 247–72.
- 2 Alison McQueen, *The Secret Children* (London: Orion Books, 2012). The author describes her mother's gradual but incomplete telling at <http://www.alisonmcqueen.com/about/the-secret-children/>.
- 3 Michael Palin, *Himalaya* (London: Phoenix, 2009), 225–6.
- 4 See David Arnold and Stuart Blackburn, 'Introduction: Life Histories in India', in *Telling Lives in India: Biography, Autobiography and Life History*, ed. David Arnold and Stuart Blackburn (Permanent Black: New Delhi, 2004), 2.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Interview with Ron Gammie, Wellington, November 2012.
- 7 Tina Harris, Amy Holmes-Tagchungdarpa, Jayeeta Sharma and Markus Viehbeck, 'Global Encounters, Local Places: Connected Histories of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Himalayas – An Introduction', *Transcultural Studies* 1 (2016): 43.
- 8 Alex McKay, *Their Footprints Remain: Biomedical Beginnings across the Indo-Tibetan Frontier* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 67.
- 9 See Samir Kumar Das, *Governing India's Northeast: Essays on Insurgency, Development and the Culture of Peace* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), 12. In 2007 my travel insurers would not cover Assam and so I did not travel there. The New Zealand government rates travel to the northeast 'high risk': <https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/india>.
- 10 Harris et al., 'Global Encounters, Local Places', 45.
- 11 McKay, *Their Footprints Remain*, 67.
- 12 Egerton Peters to Caroline Peters, 6 April 1926, Peters private collection, London.
- 13 A publication by the Indian Tea Association included the following areas under 'Tea Districts': Darjeeling and Terai, Jaipalguri and Duars, Darrang, Nowgong, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Cachar and Sylhet. *Maps of Tea Districts* (Calcutta: Indian Tea Association, 1930).

- 14 Harris et al., 'Global Encounters, Local Places', 48.
- 15 Jayeeta Sharma, *Empire's Garden: Assam and the Making of India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 5; Jayeeta Sharma, 'A Space That Has been Labourled On: Mobile Lives and Transcultural Circulation around Darjeeling and the Eastern Himalayas', *Transcultural Studies* 1 (2016): 63–4; and Rana Behal and Prabhu Mohapatra, 'Tea and Money versus Human Life: The Rise and Fall of the Indenture System in the Assam Tea Plantation, 1840–1908', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 19, nos. 3/4 (1992): 142–72.
- 16 Das, *Governing India's Northeast*, 3.
- 17 Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 183–4; Sharma, *Empire's Garden*, 43.
- 18 For an evocative description of the 'metaphors of redemption' these landscapes came to represent, see Piya Chatterjee, *A Time for Tea: Women, Labour and Post/colonial Politics on an Indian Plantation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 52–3.
- 19 See Jayeeta Sharma, 'British Science, Chinese Skill, and Assam Tea: Making Empire's Garden', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 43, no. 4 (2006): 451; Peter Robb, 'The Colonial State and Constructions of Indian Identity: An Example on the Northeastern Frontier in the 1880s', *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 2 (1997): 258; Sanjib Baruah, 'Clash of Resource Use Regimes in Colonial Assam: A Nineteenth Century Puzzle Revisited', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 28, no. 3 (2001): 119.
- 20 See Yasmin Saikia, *Fragmented Memories: Struggling to be Tai-Ahom in India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), *passim*.
- 21 Interview with Yvonne Gale, Wanaka, February 2013.
- 22 Sharma, 'A Space That Has been Labourled On', 75.
- 23 See, for example, Frank Hetherington, *Diary of a Tea Planter* (Sussex: The Book Guild, 1994); A. R. Ramsden, *Assam Planter* (London: Gifford, 1945); George Barker, *A Tea Planter's Life in Assam* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co, 1884); P. R. H. Longley, *Tea Planter Sahib* (New Zealand: Tonson Publishing House, 1969); Frank Nicholls, *Assam Shikari: A Tea Planter's Story of Hunting and High Adventure in the Jungles of North East India* (New Zealand: Tonson Publishing House, 1970).
- 24 Longley, *Tea Planter Sahib*, 13.
- 25 Alistair Gordon, *George Peters and His Descendants* (London: Alistair Gordon, 2008), 174, 217–19.
- 26 'John Perrell Gammie', Obituary, unknown publication, Gammie private collection, Hamilton.
- 27 'The Late Mr J.A. Gammie', Obituary, unknown publication, Gammie private collection, Hamilton.

- 28 Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), passim.
- 29 Nicholls, *Assam Shikari*, 11.
- 30 For my reading of this kind of engagement with tea ephemera, see Jane McCabe, 'From Polo to Poultry: A Planter's Legacy', in *The Lives of Colonial Objects*, ed. Annabel Cooper, Lachy Paterson and Angela Wanhalla (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2015), 275–9.
- 31 Roy Moxham, *Tea: Addiction, Exploitation and Empire* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2003), 121.
- 32 Peter Webster, *The Past Is Another Country: The Autobiography of Peter Webster, Part Two 1947–1953* (Wellington: Peter Webster, 2010), 40.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 41.
- 34 Interview with Peter Webster, Wellington, November 2011.
- 35 See, for example, Tony Ballantyne, 'Mr Peal's Archive: Mobility and Exchange in Histories of Empire', in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fiction and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2005), 89.
- 36 Egerton Peters to Caroline Peters, 5 April 1919, Peters private collection, London.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 Rana Behal, 'Coolie Drivers or Benevolent Paternalists? British Tea Planters in Assam and the Indenture Labour System', *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 1 (2010): 32–3.
- 39 Moxham cites a superintendent who suggested that a European assistant 'ignorant of the language' was 'worse than useless.' Moxham, *Tea: Addiction, Exploitation and Empire*, 121.
- 40 Sharma, *Empire's Garden*, Chapter 3, 'Migrants in the Garden', 79–116; Rana Behal and Prabhu Mohapatra, 'Tea and Money versus Human Life: The Rise and Fall of the Indenture System in the Assam Tea Plantation, 1840–1908', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 19, nos. 3/4 (1992): 158.
- 41 Longley, *Tea Planter Sahib*, 19.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 50.
- 43 Chatterjee notes similar stories, *A Time for Tea*, 164.
- 44 Simon Mainwaring, *A Century of Children* (Kalimpong: Dr Graham's Homes, 2000), 5; James Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1974), 53–4.
- 45 Webster felt that the policy was 'purely economic'. It was simply too expensive to bring British women to the plantations and to provide appropriate surrounds for them and any offspring. Interview with Peter Webster, Wellington, November 2011.
- 46 Webster, *The Past Is Another Country: Part Two*, 48.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 49.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 92; interview with Peter Webster, Wellington, November 2011.
- 49 Chatterjee, *A Time for Tea*, 164–5.

- 50 Gaiutra Bahadur, *Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 150–1.
- 51 As I will explain in the next section, many of the emigrants were well over the expected age at admission to the Homes and would certainly have been able to remember the years preceding it; and although it was unusual, some of the children visited the plantation for holidays and again prior to emigrating.
- 52 Ruth's married name is den Boogert but she preferred to have her maiden name used in the text for clarity.
- 53 Interview with Ruth Nicholls, Auckland, November 2012.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Interview with Mary Milne, Wellington, November 2012.
- 57 John Graham, Typed notes, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, NLS.
- 58 Ann Selkirk Lobo, 'Matrilineal Anglo-Indians', in *More Voices on the Verandah*, ed. Lionel Lumb (New Jersey: CTR, 2012), 203–4.
- 59 Ibid., 204.
- 60 Ibid., 209.
- 61 Buettner, *Empire Families*, 25–71.
- 62 Application Form, 19 December 1921, Spalding file, DGHA; Application Form, c. March 1917 [undated], Mortimore file, Dr Graham's Homes Archive (DGHA).
- 63 Egerton Peters to John Graham, 8 December 1905, Peters file, DGHA.
- 64 Egerton Peters to John Graham, 19 April 1906, Peters file, DGHA.
- 65 Egerton Peters to John Graham, 22 April 1906, Peters file, DGHA.
- 66 John Graham to Francis Hawkins, 6 January 1910, Hawkins file, DGHA.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Francis Hawkins to John Graham, 21 October 1910, Hawkins file, DGHA.
- 69 Francis Hawkins to John Graham, 21 March 1911, Hawkins file, DGHA.
- 70 Francis Hawkins to John Graham, 30 March 1911, Hawkins file, DGHA.
- 71 Paul Moller to John Graham, 10 December 1912, Moller file, DGHA.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 C. E. Seal to John Graham, 6 January 1913, Moller file, DGHA.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 A. V. Jones to John Graham, 21 September 1916, Mortimore file, DGHA.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 A. V. Jones to John Graham, 20 February 1917, Mortimore file, DGHA.
- 78 Bahadur, *Coolie Woman*, 92.
- 79 James Dewar to John Graham, 20 December 1921, Spalding file, DGHA.
- 80 Application Form, 19 December 1921, Spalding file, DGHA.
- 81 James Dewar to James Purdie, 27 October 1926, Spalding file, DGHA.
- 82 Video interview with Gavin and Isabella Gammie, 2000, Gammie private collection, Wellington.

- 83 U. C. Duncan to John Graham, 28 April 1919, Gammie file, DGHA.  
 84 U. C. Duncan to John Graham, 19 June 1919, Gammie file, DGHA.  
 85 J. P. Gammie to John Graham, 30 October 1919, Gammie file, DGHA.  
 86 Ibid.

## Chapter 3

- 1 Ann Laura Stoler, 'Intimidations of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen', in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 2–3.
- 2 See Shurlee Swain and Margot Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire: Child Rescue Discourse, England, Canada and Australia, 1850–1915* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).
- 3 See, for example, Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- 4 James Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1974); Simon Mainwaring, *A Century of Children* (Kalimpong: Dr Graham's Homes, 2000).
- 5 Satoshi Mizutani, *The Meaning of White: Race, Class and the 'Domiciled Community' in British India, 1858–1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 138.
- 6 Rana Behal, 'Coolie Drivers or Benevolent Paternalists? British Tea Planters in Assam and the Indenture Labour System', *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 1 (2010): 35.
- 7 Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Chapter 6, 'White Australia Points the Way', 137–65.
- 8 In 1904 alone, Barnardo's sent 1,266 children to Canada. See Mary Collie-Holmes, *Where the Heart Is: A History of Barnardo's in New Zealand 1866–1991* (Wellington: Barnardo's New Zealand, 1991), 20.
- 9 Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, 2.
- 10 Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, 4.
- 11 On the victory of the ideology of difference over similarity, see Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). As discussed in Chapter 1, Durba Ghosh argues that anxieties about racial mixing were present long before 1857. Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- 12 See Elizabeth Buettner, 'Danger and Pleasure at the Bungalow', in *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), chapter 1, 25–62; Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of*

- Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 122.
- 13 John Graham, Typed notes, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, National Library of Scotland (NLS), Edinburgh.
  - 14 John Graham, *On the Threshold of Three Closed Lands: The Guild Outpost in the Eastern Himalayas* (Edinburgh: R&R Clark, 1897).
  - 15 Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, 7.
  - 16 Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, 60–1. Quarrier Homes housed 1300 children at this time. Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 64, 131.
  - 17 Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, 6; Mizutani, *The Meaning of White*, 143–4.
  - 18 ‘Board of Management’, *SACHM* 1, no. 1 (1901): 1.
  - 19 Peter Webster understood that ‘it was cheaper for [the agencies] to give money to the Homes than have [to support] the [British] wives’, and that planters were routinely instructed by the agencies to send their children the Homes when they were ‘discovered’. Interview with Peter Webster, Wellington, November 2011. Minto also references the tea companies’ contributions in *Graham of Kalimpong*, 62.
  - 20 As Mary Collie-Holmes suggests, Barnardo’s use of emotive storytelling highlighted ‘the most pitiful cases’, when many youngsters paid for their accommodation and were merely assisted to find employment. Collie-Holmes, *Where the Heart Is*, 14.
  - 21 John Graham, Typed notes, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, NLS.
  - 22 Lionel Caplan summarizes attempts by British organizations such as the Madras Emigration Society to send Anglo-Indian men to Australia in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Caplan, *Children of Colonialism: Anglo-Indians in a Postcolonial World* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 131–2.
  - 23 Mizutani, *The Meaning of White*, 138.
  - 24 John Graham, ‘St Andrew’s Colonial Homes’, Printed brochure, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, NLS.
  - 25 Graham, Typed notes, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, NLS.
  - 26 ‘The Open Door’, *SACHM* 22, nos. 1/2 (1922): 3.
  - 27 Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, 22.
  - 28 *Ibid.*, 38. According to the numbers collated for this book, seventy-seven graduates had been sent to New Zealand by 1925.
  - 29 On the precarious conditions of rural labour in India, see Sugata Bose, *Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital: Rural Bengal Since 1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 48–51; and S. J. Patel, ‘Agricultural Labourers in Modern India and Pakistan’, in *The World of the Rural Labourer in Colonial India*, ed. Gyan Prakash (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 47–74. In the same collection Dharma Kumar explores the links between caste and occupation. Kumar, ‘Caste

- and Landlessness in South India', in *The World of the Rural Laborer in Colonial India*, ed. Gyan Prakash (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 75–106. One of Graham's supporters also researched agricultural systems in India; see Harold H. Mann, *The Social Framework of Agriculture: India, Middle East, England* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1967).
- 30 'New Zealand and our Emigrants', *SACHM* 21, nos. 1/2 (1921): 6.
  - 31 Murray, 'The Philosophy of Colonisation', *SACHM* 1, no. 2 (1901): 28.
  - 32 Ibid.
  - 33 Tony Ballantyne's influential work on the circulation of knowledge around the British Empire has structured my understanding of this dialogue. See Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2012).
  - 34 'Fields for Emigration', *SACHM* 1, no. 2 (1901): 29.
  - 35 Ibid.
  - 36 Ibid.
  - 37 'Queensland as a Field for Emigration', *SACHM* 3, no. 1 (1903): 29.
  - 38 Ibid.
  - 39 Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, 15–17.
  - 40 Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire*, 3.
  - 41 Video recording, interview with Gavin and Isabella Gammie, 2000, Gammie private collection, Wellington.
  - 42 Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, 85–9.
  - 43 *We Homes Chaps*, DVD, directed by Kesang Tseten (Kathmandu, Nepal: Filmmakers Library, 2001). Kesang Tseten was a resident of the Homes in the 1970s. He filmed the documentary at the Homes centenary in 2000, where he conducted a series of group and individual interviews with graduates of the 1970s.
  - 44 Video recording, interview with Gavin and Isabella Gammie, 2000, Gammie private collection, Wellington.
  - 45 Personal communication with Joan Cudby-Leith and Martin Leith, Levin, 15 November 2011.
  - 46 Interview with Ruth Nicholls, Auckland, November 2012.
  - 47 Interviewee in *We Homes Chaps*, DVD.
  - 48 Graham, Typed notes, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, NLS.
  - 49 Mary Braid, 'My Daily Life in the Homes', *SACHM* 20, nos. 1/2 (1920): 8.
  - 50 Personal communication with Jane Webster, Wellington, November 2011.
  - 51 Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, 13, 20.
  - 52 Ibid., 153.
  - 53 Ibid., 20–1.
  - 54 Interview with Ruth Nicholls, Auckland, November 2012.



- 55 Video recording, interview with Gavin and Isabella Gammie, 2000, Gammie private collection, Wellington.
- 56 Interview with Ruth Nicholls, Auckland, November 2012.
- 57 As Warwick Anderson has argued, 'The colonial reformatory thus produced – not eliminated – the in between.' Anderson, 'States of Hygiene: Race "Improvement" and Biomedical Citizenship in Australia and the Colonial Philippines,' in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 96. For an explanation of the chee-chee accent, see Caplan, *Children of Colonialism*, 64–5.
- 58 See Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, Appendix Five: 'Homes Slang', 191–8.
- 59 Interview with Ruth Nicholls, Auckland, November 2012.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Mizutani suggests that the Homes directors were 'almost obsessively concerned' about negative influences of visits home, to cities or plantations, and asked parents to sacrifice their desire for contact with their children by allowing them to stay at Kalimpong for the holidays. Mizutani, *The Meaning of White*, 150–1.
- 62 Egerton Peters to Miss McRie, 23 February 1912, Peters file, Dr Graham's Homes Archive (DGHA), Kalimpong.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Francis Hawkins to John Graham, 19 September 1918, Hawkins file, DGHA.
- 65 John Gammie to John Graham, 28 July 1920; John Gammie to John Graham, 17 November 1920, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 66 Egerton Peters to John Graham, 28 April 1912, Peters file, DGHA.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Here Peters is likely referring to ideas about Anglo-Indian women's sexuality and fears of them becoming involved in prostitution. Egerton Peters to John Graham, 20 October 1914, Peters file, DGHA.
- 69 Egerton Peters to John Graham, 27 July 1920, Peters file, DGHA.
- 70 Egerton Peters to John Graham, 21 August 1920, Peters file, DGHA.
- 71 Dora Moller to John Graham, 17 July 1920, Moller file, DGHA.
- 72 Paul Moller to John Graham, 14 December 1920, Moller file, DGHA.
- 73 Paul Moller to John Graham, 8 January 1921, Moller file, DGHA.
- 74 John Perrell Gammie to James Purdie, 12 March 1924, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 75 John Perrell Gammie to James Purdie, 29 November 1924, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 76 John Perrell Gammie to James Purdie, 10 December 1924, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 77 Francis Hawkins to John Graham, 9 May 1923, Hawkins file, DGHA.
- 78 Francis Hawkins to James Purdie, 7 May 1924, Hawkins file, DGHA.
- 79 Francis Hawkins to James Purdie, [undated], Hawkins file, DGHA.
- 80 James Dewar to John Graham, 20 October 1925, Spalding file, DGHA.
- 81 Charles Spalding to James Purdie, 24 May 1926, Spalding file, DGHA.
- 82 Jean and Rend Mortimore Declarations, 2 November 1926, Mortimore file, DGHA.

- 83 Ka Ngelibou to St Andrew's Colonial Homes, 8 November 1926, Mortimore file, DGHA. Renrose is a conflation of her son's first two names: Rend Rose.
- 84 Lorna Peters to John Graham, 1 January 1921, Peters file, DGHA.

## Chapter 4

- 1 'Australia and New Zealand: Notes and Impressions', *SACHM* 9, no. 4 (1909): 59.
- 2 W. D. Borrie, *Immigration to New Zealand, 1854–1938* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1991), 151–2; Angela McCarthy, *Scottishness and Irishness in New Zealand since 1840* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 48–51.
- 3 Tony Ballantyne, 'The Theory and Practice of Empire-Building: Edward Gibbon Wakefield and "Systematic Colonisation"', in *The Routledge History of Western Empires*, ed. Robert Aldrich and Kirsten McKenzie (London: Routledge, 2013), 89.
- 4 Radhika Mongia, 'Race, Nationality, Mobility: A History of the Passport', *Public Culture* 11, no. 3 (1999): 328.
- 5 These Acts were generally aimed at the Chinese but affected Indian and other non-white migrants too. See Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2.
- 6 C. Holdsworth to D. M. Hamilton, 15 August 1905, Union Steam Ship Company Records, AG-292-005-004/135, Hocken Collections, Dunedin (HC).
- 7 For a review of the historiography addressing New Zealand's reputed egalitarianism, see Melanie Nolan, 'Constantly on the Move but Going Nowhere? Work, Community and Social Mobility', in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. Giselle Byrnes (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press), 357–88. See also Erik Olssen, Clyde Griffen and Frank Jones, *An Accidental Utopia? Social Mobility and the Foundations of an Egalitarian Society, 1880–1940* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2011).
- 8 C. Holdsworth to D. M. Hamilton, 15 August 1905, Union Steam Ship Company Records, AG-292-005-004/135, HC. As scholars of the Indian community in New Zealand have shown, this legislation was never an effective means of preventing Indian immigration as it was common practice to 'cram' for the language test and cross the border unimpeded. See Jacqueline Leckie, 'Indians in the South Pacific: Recentred Diasporas', in *Recentring Asia*, ed. Jacob Edmond, Henry Johnson and Jacqueline Leckie (Boston: Global Oriental, 2011), 64; and W. H. McLeod, *Punjabis in New Zealand* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1986), 69.
- 9 C. Holdsworth to D. M. Hamilton, 15 August 1905, Union Steam Ship Company Records, AG-292-005-004/135, HC.
- 10 *Ibid.* Hugh Morrison notes the predominance of the Otago and Southland regions in both the number of committees and missionaries sent to India. See Hugh

- Morrison, “‘But We Are Concerned with a Greater Imperium’: The New Zealand Protestant Missionary Movement and the British Empire, 1870–1930”, *Social Sciences and Missions* 21 (2008): 97–127.
- 11 ‘Beginning Life’s Battle’, *SACHM* 8, no. 1 (1908): 5.
  - 12 Ibid.
  - 13 Racial theories of the time meant class and climate were understood to affect racial status and thus ‘poor whites’ and ‘domiciled’ Britons were often problematized and categorized as Anglo-Indian. See Laura Bear, ‘Miscegenations of Modernity: Constructing European Respectability and Race in the Indian Railway Colony, 1857–1931’, *Women’s History Review* 3, no. 4 (1994): 536; David Arnold, ‘European Orphans and Vagrants in India in the Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 7, no. 2 (1979): 114.
  - 14 By 1910 there were twelve committees: Calcutta, the Central Provinces, Asansol, Burdwan, Nagpur, Bhagalpur, Jamalpur, Benares, Jhansi, Jubbulpore, Bihar and Orissa. Simon Mainwaring, *A Century of Children* (Kalimpong: Dr Graham’s Homes, 2000), 18–20.
  - 15 ‘Beginning Life’s Battle’, *SACHM* 8, no. 1 (1908): 5.
  - 16 John Graham, Typed notes, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh (NLS).
  - 17 Register of New Zealand Presbyterian Ministers, Deaconesses and Missionaries 1840–2009, Presbyterian Archives Research Centre (PARC), accessed 20 March 2012, [www.archives.presbyterian.org.nz/Page191.htm](http://www.archives.presbyterian.org.nz/Page191.htm). Ponder’s brother was a tea planter in the district prior to studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh. See Alex McKay, *Their Footprints Remain: Biomedical Beginnings across the Indo-Tibetan Frontier* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 72.
  - 18 See Eric Skinner, *Waitahuna Memories* (Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1947) and for Middlemarch, see Helen M. Thompson, *East of the Rock and Pillar* (1949; reprinted, Christchurch: Capper Press, 1977).
  - 19 J. S. Ponder, “‘Kim’ and His Brothers”, *Otago Witness*, 12 August 1908.
  - 20 Ibid.
  - 21 ‘Departure of a Lady Missionary for India’, *The Outlook*, 21 March 1908, PARC. The reference to the Church of Scotland’s mission rather than the Homes indicates the scheme’s unofficial church status. No other mention of the scheme has been located in *The Outlook*, although Graham’s death was reported in 1942.
  - 22 ‘Departure of a Lady Missionary for India’, *The Outlook*, 21 March 1908, PARC.
  - 23 MacKean missioned for two decades in Sikkim, interspersed with time in Kalimpong. See Alex McKay, ‘The Indigenisation of Western Medicine in Sikkim’, *Bulletin of Tibetology* 40, no. 2 (2004): 25–47; and Cindy Perry, *Nepali around the World* (Kathmandu: Ekta Books, 1997), 92–3 (reference supplied by John Bray).
  - 24 ‘Emigration’, *SACHM* 9, no. 1 (1909): 7.

- 25 Ibid. This focus on education was both a help and a hindrance for the young men whose acceptance was affected by the developing stereotype of the ideal 'Kiwi bloke', which included a distrust of 'book learning'. Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male* (Auckland: Penguin, 1996), 1–43.
- 26 'Emigration', *SACHM* 9, no. 1 (1909): 7.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Linda Gordon's *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) is one example of a scheme built around 'orphans' being sent to the American West.
- 29 'Australia and New Zealand', *SACHM* 9, nos. 3/4 (1909): 59–61.
- 30 Dr Graham's Diary (DGD) 1909, transcribed by James Purdie, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:1, NLS.
- 31 'The Land of the Sahib: "Kim" and His Sisters', *Otago Witness*, 1 September 1909.
- 32 DGD 1909, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:1, NLS. The school was run by daughters of the Williams family.
- 33 John Graham, Typed notes, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, NLS; 'Dr Graham on Outlook for Anglo-Indians', *The Statesman*, 4 February 1939. Damon Salesa noted the circulation of these same theories. See Salesa, 'Half-Castes between the Wars: Colonial Categories in New Zealand and Samoa', *New Zealand Journal of History* 34, no. 1 (2000): 112–13.
- 34 Dr Graham's Diary (DGD) 1909, transcribed by James Purdie, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:1, NLS.
- 35 D. Kennedy to Customs Department, February 1909, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, Archives New Zealand, Wellington office (ANZ-W). The department's reply reiterated the theoretical ease of negotiating immigration controls, advising that 'there is nothing to prevent natives of India who are not suffering from any physical defect from entering the Dominion so long as they can write out the necessary form of application, in any European language'. Immigration Department secretary to D. Kennedy, 17 February 1909, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, ANZ-W.
- 36 John Graham, Typed notes, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, NLS.
- 37 Dr Graham's Diary (DGD) 1909, transcribed by James Purdie, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:1, NLS.
- 38 Waddell was an advocate of prison reform, kindergarten and women's suffrage, and a key critic of the 'sweating' system. See Simon Rae, *From Relief to Social Service* (Dunedin: PSSA Otago Inc, 1991), 26.
- 39 'The Land of the Sahib: "Kim" and His Sisters', *Otago Witness*, 1 September 1909.
- 40 'Australia and New Zealand: Notes and Impressions', *SACHM* 9, nos. 3/4 (1909): 60. I have written elsewhere on this clash of masculinities: Jane McCabe,

- 'Remaking Anglo-Indian Men: Agricultural Labour as Remedy in the British Empire, 1908–1938,' *Gender and History* 26, no. 3 (2014): 438–58.
- 41 DGD 1909, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:1, NLS.
- 42 'Farewell to our New Zealanders,' *SACHM* 12, nos. 3/4 (1912): 38.
- 43 'News from our Emigrants,' *SACHM* 13, no. 1 (1913): 12.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 12–13.
- 45 'Orphan Immigrants: On the Way to New Zealand,' *Ashburton Guardian*, 17 December 1912.
- 46 *Ibid.*
- 47 'Local and General,' *Ashburton Guardian*, 20 December 1912.
- 48 'Local and General,' *Wanganui Chronicle*, 24 December 1912.
- 49 'News from our Emigrants,' *SACHM* 13, no. 1 (1913): 13.
- 50 James Beattie, *Empire and Environmental Anxiety: Health, Science, Art and Conservation, 1800–1920* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 59.
- 51 Satoshi Mizutani, *The Meaning of White: Race, Class and the 'Domiciled Community' in British India, 1858–1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 175. See also Alison Blunt, *Domicile and Diaspora: Anglo-Indian Women and the Spatial Politics of Home* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).
- 52 *SACHM* 12, no. 3 (1912): 39.
- 53 'The Domestic Science Block,' *SACHM* 16, no. 1 (1916): 8–9.
- 54 'Our Girls as Colonists – Their Prospects,' *SACHM* 9, nos. 3/4 (1909): 61.
- 55 Barry Higman, *Domestic Service in Australia* (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 88.
- 56 Studies of schemes that trained indigenous women as domestic servants for white households have identified this as a key site of racial and cultural assimilation. See, for example, Victoria Haskins, 'Domestic Service and Frontier Feminism: The Call for a Woman Visitor to "Half-Caste" Girls and Women in Domestic Service, Adelaide, 1925–1928,' *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 28, nos. 1/2 (2007): 125–6. I address these issues in more detail in: Jane McCabe, 'Settling in, From Within: Anglo-Indian Lady-Helps in 1920s New Zealand,' in *Colonisation and Domestic Service: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Victoria Haskins and Claire Lowrie (New York: Routledge, 2014), 63–78.
- 57 'After the Bunny in New Zealand,' *SACHM* 11, no. 1 (1911): 7.
- 58 For the precariousness of the life of a rabbit, see Charles J. Ayton, *Diary 1899–1904: Goldminer, Rabbit and Peat-Digger of Central Otago*, ed. John Child (Naseby, New Zealand: Maniototo Early Settlers' Association, 1982).
- 59 'A Rolling Stone in New Zealand,' *SACHM*, 11, no. 2 (1911): 25.
- 60 *Ibid.*
- 61 Miles Fairburn argues that New Zealand suffered from a marked lack of social structure due to its rapid rural development in *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies*:

- The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850–1900* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1989); and David Roediger found evidence of the rejection of the terminology of servant and master in the United States from the early 1800s. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1999), 47.
- 62 David Roediger, *Working towards Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 156.
  - 63 Tony Ballantyne, 'Writing Out Asia', in *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2012), 58.
  - 64 'After the Bunny in New Zealand', *SACHM* 11, no. 1 (1911): 7.
  - 65 'In Praise of Farming', *SACHM* 11, no. 1 (1911): 8.
  - 66 *Ibid.*
  - 67 'For the Old Boys and Girls', *SACHM* 14, no. 2 (1914): 27. 'Mrs C' is likely to have been Mrs Church, wife of a Dr Church who had a practice in High St, and who Graham met on his visit in 1909.
  - 68 *Ibid.*, 28.
  - 69 'Orphan Immigrants: On the Way to New Zealand', *Ashburton Guardian*, 17 December 1912. In New Zealand, Jean Holland found evidence of 'semi-genteel' women brought in as 'lady-helps'. See Holland, 'Domestic Service in Colonial New Zealand.' MA diss., University of Auckland, 1976, 63–4; and Higman, *Domestic Service in Australia*, 148.
  - 70 'For the Old Boys and Girls', *SACHM* 14, no. 2 (1914): 29.
  - 71 'For the Old Boys and Girls', *SACHM* 15, nos. 3/4 (1915): 43.
  - 72 'Our Colonials', *SACHM* 14, no. 4 (1914): 70.
  - 73 *Ibid.*
  - 74 See Angela Wanhalla, *In/visible Sight: The Mixed-Descent Families of Southern New Zealand* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2009).
  - 75 'Our Colonials', *SACHM* 14, no. 2 (1914): 28.
  - 76 'For the Old Boys and Girls', *SACHM* 14, no. 2 (1914): 29.
  - 77 John Graham, 'The Call of India', Wellington broadcast, 4 July 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:1, NLS.
  - 78 'Anglo-Indian Recruiting', *SACHM* 16, no. 2 (1916): 19.
  - 79 'An Anglo-Indian Company', *SACHM* 16, nos. 3/4 (1916): 32. See Christopher Pugsley, *Te Hokowhītu A Tu: The Māori Pioneer Battalion in the First World War* (Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2006).
  - 80 The men's responses in the field for 'religion' on the front page of the History Sheet was in every case annotated with 'Indian', and 'Presbyterian' was often written alongside their declaration of birthplace in India. Lachy Paterson discusses the importance of religion in shaping the response of New Zealanders towards Indian troops in "The Similarity of Hue Constituted No Special Bond of Intimacy

- between Them”: Close Encounters of the Indigenous Kind’, *Journal of New Zealand Studies* 14 (2013): 27.
- 81 I explore the men’s overseas service in more detail in Jane McCabe, ‘An Ideal Life: Anglo-Indians in the NZEF’, in *Endurance and the First World War: Experiences and Legacies in New Zealand and Australia*, ed. Katie Pickles, David Monger and Sarah Murray (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 196–214.
- 82 ‘Egypt and the Dardanelles’, *SACHM* 16, no. 1 (1916): 11.
- 83 *Ibid.*
- 84 ‘The Homes and the War’, *SACHM* 16, no. 2 (1916): 19.
- 85 ‘The Homes and the War’, *SACHM* 17, nos. 3/4 (1917): 16.
- 86 ‘The Homes and the War’, *SACHM* 16, no. 2 (1916): 19.
- 87 ‘Some Letters from Our Soldier Boys’, *SACHM* 16, nos. 3/4 (1916): 32.
- 88 ‘The Homes and the War’, *SACHM* 18, nos. 1/2 (1918): 2.
- 89 *Ibid.*
- 90 ‘A New Zealander on Leave’, *SACHM* 16, no. 2 (1916): 19.
- 91 ‘The Homes and the War’, *SACHM* 18, nos. 1/2 (1918): 2.
- 92 ‘Birthday Greetings’, *SACHM* 18, nos. 3/4 (1918): 19. ANZAC is an acronym for Australia and New Zealand Army Corps. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds critically evaluate the ‘nationalist myth’ connecting ANZAC and identity in *What’s Wrong with Anzac? The Militarisation of Australian History* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010).
- 93 ‘The Homes and the War’, *SACHM* 18, nos. 1/2 (1918): 2.
- 94 Statement of the Services of Hamilton Melville, 15 November 1918, NZDFPR: AABK 18805 W5549 0080084, ANZ-W. The DCM was awarded to only 525 New Zealanders from 1899 to 1970.
- 95 ‘New Zealand and Our Emigrants: Will There Be Exclusion?’, *SACHM* 21, nos. 1/2 (1921): 5.
- 96 Martin Crotty discusses this gender imbalance in ‘Australian Troops Land at Gallipoli: Trial, Trauma and the “Birth of the Nation”,’ in *Turning Points in Australian History*, ed. Martin Crotty and David Andrew Roberts (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009), 108.
- 97 ‘Girls for New Zealand’, *SACHM* 15, no. 2 (1915): 20.
- 98 ‘Our New Zealand Girls’, *SACHM* 18, nos. 1/2 (1918): 7–8.
- 99 ‘For the Old Boys and Girls’, *SACHM* 15, no. 1 (1915): 6.
- 100 Hughes was recorded on the Grevillers (New Zealand) Memorial at Pas-des-Calais and Richard May on the Caterpillar Valley (New Zealand) Memorial at Somme. Commonwealth War Graves Commission database, accessed 27 June 2013, <http://www.cwgc.org/>.
- 101 Description on Enlistment, Richard May, 20 May 1915, NZDFPR: AABK 18805 W5549 0079619, ANZ-W.

- 102 Written communication from Michelle Sim, 29 January 2013.
- 103 Ibid.
- 104 Richard May to Mary Harrison, 24 September 1915, Harrison private collection, Dipton, Southland.
- 105 Ibid.
- 106 'For the Empire's Cause', newspaper clipping (unknown publication), and 'Signaller R.S. May', *Otago Witness*, 8 October 1916, Harrison family archive, Dipton, Southland.
- 107 'Signaller R.S. May', *Otago Witness*, 8 October 1916.

## Chapter 5

- 1 Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, 'Immigration Restriction in the 1920s: "Segregation on a Large Scale"', in *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Chapter 13, 310–34.
- 2 See, for example, Jacqueline Leckie, 'Indians in the South Pacific: Recentred Diasporas', in *Recentring Asia*, ed. Jacob Edmond, Henry Johnson and Jacqueline Leckie (Boston: Global Oriental, 2011), 64; Manying Ip, *Home Away from Home: Life Stories of Chinese Women in New Zealand* (Auckland: New Women's Press, 1990), 15.
- 3 See my article addressing the narrative of exclusion: Jane McCabe, 'Working the Permit System: Anglo-Indian Immigration to New Zealand in the 1920s', *New Zealand Journal of History* 48, no. 2 (2014): 27–49.
- 4 Rieko Karatani has noted similar processes in Britain. Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship: Empire, Commonwealth and Modern Britain* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 73.
- 5 Alison Bashford, 'Immigration Restrictions: Rethinking Period and Place from Settler Colonies to Postcolonial Nations', *Journal of Global History* 9 (2014): 32.
- 6 'New Zealand and Our Emigrants: Will There Be Exclusion?', *SACHM* 21, nos. 1/2 (1921): 6.
- 7 Ibid. This was a reference to the special provisions for Indian migrants, as imperial subjects, requested by the British government. See Jacqueline Leckie, 'The Southernmost Indian Diaspora: From Gujarat to Aotearoa', *Journal of South Asian Studies* 21 (1998): 172.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 'A Short Review of Year's Work', *SACHM* 22, nos. 1/2 (1922): 3.



- 10 Controller of Customs to Minister of Customs, 13 September 1937, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, Archives New Zealand, Wellington Office (ANZ-W).
- 11 Permanent entry permits to enter New Zealand, Department of Labour, R15971851, ANZ-W.
- 12 'New Zealand Emigration', *SACHM* 24, nos. 1/2 (1924): 11.
- 13 P. E. Suttie is mentioned several times in R. S. Finlow, *Memoirs of the Department of Agriculture in India: 'Heart Damage' in Baled Jute* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co, 1918).
- 14 'New Zealand Emigration', *SACHM* 24, nos. 1/2 (1924): 11.
- 15 Permanent Entry Record Books, 1921–1926, Department of Labour, R19007319, ANZ-W.
- 16 'New Zealand', *SACHM* 24, nos. 3/4 (1924): 36.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 'The New Zealand Emigrants', *SACHM* 26, nos. 1/2 (1926): 14.
- 19 'Our Emigrants' First Impressions of N.Z.', *SACHM* 27, nos. 1/2 (1927): 11.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 G. Kelly to Customs Department, 29 January 1928, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, ANZ-W.
- 22 Note to letter, G. Kelly to Customs Department, 29 January 1928, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, ANZ-W.
- 23 'Eurasian Labour', *Wanganui Chronicle*, 23 January 1928, filed in General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, ANZ-W.
- 24 Ibid. The story ran in the *Auckland Star* ten days earlier: 'Eurasian Domestic: Homes in New Zealand', *Auckland Star*, 12 January 1928.
- 25 Memorandum, 27 January 1928, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, ANZ-W.
- 26 Permanent Entry Record Books, 1921–1926, Department of Labour, R19007319, ANZ-W, 160.
- 27 W. D. Borrie traces the steady downturn in assisted migration from 1927 onwards in *Immigration to New Zealand, 1854–1938* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1991), 166–7.
- 28 G. R. Hawke, *The Making of New Zealand: An Economic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 125–6.
- 29 'For the Old Girls and Boys', *SACHM* 21, no. 4 (1921): 28.
- 30 'Old Pupils Overseas', *SACHM* 22, nos. 3/4 (1922): 33.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 'Dunedin Gossip', *SACHM* 24, nos. 1/2 (1924): 14.
- 33 'Making Homes of Their Own', *SACHM* 29, nos. 3/4 (1929): 55.
- 34 'Marriage Bells', *SACHM* 29, nos. 3/4 (1929): 55.

- 35 Ibid.
- 36 'For the Old Boys and Girls', *SACHM* 27, nos. 1/2 (1927): 21.
- 37 'Our Emigrants First Impressions of New Zealand', *SACHM* 27, nos. 1/2 (1927): 11.
- 38 'New Zealand', *SACHM* 28, nos. 3/4 (1928): 45. Margaret was referring to the tradition at Kalimpong of polishing wooden floors with bare feet in a rag.
- 39 'Making a City Home', *SACHM* 20, nos. 3/4 (1920): 29.
- 40 'The Wellingtonians, N.Z.', *SACHM* 21, nos. 3/4 (1921): 28.
- 41 'For the Old Boys and Girls', *SACHM* 26, nos. 3/4 (1926): 34.
- 42 Ibid., 35. Fraser is the name of one of the boys' cottages at the Homes.
- 43 'Good Milkers Wanted', *SACHM* 25, nos. 3/4 (1925): 47.
- 44 'For the Old Boys and Girls', *SACHM* 26, nos. 3/4 (1926): 35.
- 45 'New Zealand', *SACHM* 27, nos. 3/4 (1927): 43.
- 46 Borrie, *Immigration to New Zealand*, 166–7.
- 47 'Drought and Unemployment', *SACHM* 28, nos. 1/2 (1928): 17.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 'Unemployment', *SACHM* 28, nos. 3/4 (1928): 44.
- 50 'A Forester', *SACHM* 28, nos. 3/4 (1928): 44.
- 51 'Forest Stations', *SACHM* 29, nos. 3/4 (1929): 54.
- 52 Māori had played a crucial role in itinerant rural work since the late nineteenth century. Richard Beresford Nightingale, 'Māori at Work: The Shaping of a Māori Workforce within the New Zealand State 1935–1975' (PhD diss, Massey University, 2007), 105–8.
- 53 Jacqueline Leckie, *Indian Settlers: The Story of a New Zealand South Asian Community* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2007), 48–52; W. H. McLeod, *Punjabis in New Zealand* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1986), 108–9, 121.
- 54 Nightingale notes that the number of Maori employed in forestry fell significantly between 1926 and 1936. Nightingale, 'Māori at work', 149.
- 55 'Another Forester', *SACHM* 1929, nos. 3/4 (1929): 54.
- 56 The November 1926 group, for example, included Rend and Jane Mortimore, Thomas Spalding, Alison Gammie and Alice Peters.
- 57 Charles Moller to James Purdie, 2 August 1922, Moller file, Dr Graham's Homes Archive (DGHA), Kalimpong.
- 58 Charles Moller to John Graham, 21 January 1922, Moller file, DGHA.
- 59 Charles Moller to John Graham, 14 July 1922; Charles Moller to James Purdie, 2 August 1922, Moller file, DGHA.
- 60 'Kalimpong in Wellington', *SACHM* 28, nos. 1/2 (1928): 17.
- 61 Dora Moller to James Purdie, 8 March 1925, Moller file, DGHA.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Dora Moller to James Purdie, 27 June 1927, Moller file, DGHA.

- 64 Charles Moller to John Graham, 14 October 1921, Moller file, DGHA.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Dora Moller to James Purdie, 7 July 1929, Moller file, DGHA.
- 67 Paul Moller to John Graham, 18 January 1926, Moller file, DGHA.
- 68 Charles Moller to John Graham, 8 July 1928, Moller file, DGHA.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 John Graham to Charles Moller, 24 August 1928, Moller file, DGHA.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Egerton Peters to John Graham, 18 January 1921, Peters file, DGHA.
- 74 Egerton Peters to John Graham, [undated] c. October 1921, Peters file, DGHA.
- 75 Winkie (Alice) Peters, 'Daylight Saving Bill and Cow's Tails', *SACHM* 28, nos. 3/4 (1928): 44; George Peters, 'New Zealand Shepherd', *SACHM* 30, nos. 3/4 (1930): 45.
- 76 Egerton Peters to James Purdie, 22 November 1927, Peters file, DGHA.
- 77 Betty Gammie to John Graham, c. August 1925 [undated], Gammie file, DGHA.
- 78 Fergus Gammie to James Purdie, c. May 1926 [undated], Gammie file, DGHA.
- 79 Charles Spalding to John Graham, c. March 1926, Spalding file, DGHA.
- 80 Thomas Spalding to John Graham, c. 1927 [undated], Spalding file, DGHA.
- 81 Personal communication with Pam Gardiner, Auckland, November 2011.
- 82 Rend Mortimore to James Purdie, 23 January 1927, Mortimore file, DGHA.
- 83 Jean Mortimore to James Purdie, 3 March 1927, Mortimore file, DGHA.
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 Ka Ngelibou to St Andrew's Colonial Homes, 14 March 1927, Mortimore file, DGHA.
- 86 Ka Ngelibou to St Andrew's Colonial Homes, 10 February 1928, Mortimore file, DGHA.

## Chapter 6

- 1 Rudolf von Albertini, 'The Impact of Two World Wars on the Decline of Colonialism', *Journal of Contemporary History* 4, no. 1 (1969): 18–21; Richard Smith, *Jamaican Volunteers in the First World War: Race, Masculinity and the Development of National Consciousness* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 4; Laura Tabili, 'We Ask for British Justice': *Workers and Racial Difference in Late Imperial Britain* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), 16–17.
- 2 Laura Bear, *Lines of the Nation: Indian Railway Workers, Bureaucracy and the Intimate Historical Self* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 105–7.

- 3 Damon Salesa, 'Half-Castes between the Wars: Colonial Categories in New Zealand and Samoa', *New Zealand Journal of History* 34, no. 1 (2000): 105–7.
- 4 John Graham, Typed notes, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, NLS. Damon Salesa cites this same quote from Olivier, in 'Half-Castes between the Wars', 112–13.
- 5 Memorandum, 1931, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, National Archives New Zealand, Wellington Office (ANZ-W).
- 6 J. A. Tripe to Customs Department, 8 July 1932, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, ANZ-W.
- 7 James Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1974), 106.
- 8 The lecture was also published: John Graham, 'The Education of the Anglo-Indian Child', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 83, no. 4279 (1934): 22–46.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 40.
- 10 Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, 120.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 120–1.
- 12 I explore placement in India in more detail in Chapter 7 'Alternate Futures', in Jane McCabe, 'Kalimpong Kids: The Lives and Labours of Anglo-Indian Adolescents Resettled in New Zealand between 1908 and 1938' (PhD diss, University of Otago, 2014).
- 13 'Pour Les Intimes', Dr Graham's Diary (DGD) 1937, transcribed by James Purdie, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, National Library of Scotland (NLS), Edinburgh, 30.
- 14 DGD 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS, 33.
- 15 'Notes in Passing', *Auckland Star*, 14 August 1937.
- 16 Aside from James Beattie's attention to the community in Nelson, little scholarly attention has been paid to British settlers who arrived in the Dominion via non-settler colonies. This is unsurprising given that their entry into New Zealand did not require any differential treatment from settlers who came directly from Britain; it was, however, a decidedly different path and one that is worthy of future research. James Beattie, *Empire and Environmental Anxiety: Health, Science, Art and Conservation, 1800–1920* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 59.
- 17 DGD 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS, 45.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 30.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 40.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 'His handshake melts the most hardened sinner', one businessman claimed. Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, 62.
- 22 John Graham, 'Kalimpong, India', Auckland broadcast, 9 August 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS.
- 23 DGD 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS, 46.
- 24 John Graham, Auckland broadcast, 9 August 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS.

- 25 Ibid., 35.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid., 43.
- 28 Ibid., 42. The Napier earthquake remains New Zealand's worst natural disaster, causing widespread devastation and taking the lives of 256 people.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid., 35.
- 31 Ibid., 38.
- 32 Ibid., 47.
- 33 Ibid., 42.
- 34 DGD 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS, 32.
- 35 Ibid., 36.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 John Graham, Auckland broadcast, 9 August 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2NLS.
- 38 DGD 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS, 31.
- 39 Ibid., 42.
- 40 Historian Gwen Parsons has analysed the post-war benefits available to returned servicemen in New Zealand. Reading her findings with the Kalimpong men in mind, they appear to have been included and excluded on similar terms as the wider population. Gwen A. Parsons, 'The Many Derelicts of the War? Great War Veterans and Repatriation in Dunedin and Ashburton, 1918 to 1928' (PhD diss., University of Otago, 2008).
- 41 DGD 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS, 35.
- 42 Ibid., 38.
- 43 DGD 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS, 40.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Parsons, 'The Many Derelicts of War?', 12.
- 46 DGD 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS, 33.
- 47 Ibid., 46.
- 48 Interview with Mary Milne, Wellington, November 2011. Cone private collection, Christchurch.
- 49 Ibid., 31.
- 50 John Graham, 'The Call of India', Wellington broadcast, 4 July 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:1, NLS.
- 51 'Future of India', *Evening Post*, 30 June 1937.
- 52 John Graham, Auckland broadcast, 9 August 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid.

- 55 DGD 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:2, NLS, 48.
- 56 'World Union: Missionary's Hope', *Evening Post*, 3 November 1937.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 E. D. Good to Hon Minister, 13 September 1937, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Eurasians, Anglo-Burmese, Customs Personal File, R18786833, ANZ-W.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Mark Fagan, for the minister of Customs, to John Graham, 21 September 1937, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, ANZ-W.
- 65 'Anglo-Indians – Frozen Out: From the "Listener"', *SACHM* 37, no. 2 (1938): 10.
- 66 Permanent Entry Record Books, 1926–1938, Department of Labour, R19007318, ANZ-W.
- 67 'Farm Workers: Eurasian Youths', *Evening Post*, 22 November 1938.
- 68 'A White Australia', *SACHM* 37, no. 4 (1938): 27.
- 69 'New Zealand Notes', *SACHM* 38, no. 1 (1939): 5.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Controller of Customs to Hon. Minister, 13 February 1939, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, ANZ-W.
- 72 John Graham, Typed notes, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, NLS.
- 73 'News of the Day', *Evening Post*, 15 November 1939.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 John Graham, Typed notes, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:15:1, NLS.
- 76 Ibid.

## Chapter 7

- 1 Annie Larsen (nee Brown) to James Purdie, 28 October 1951, Purdie Letters 1951–2, 6039:14:2, Kalimpong Papers, National Library of Scotland (NLS), Edinburgh.
- 2 Tony Ballantyne, 'India in New Zealand', in *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2012), chapter 4, 99; and Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, 'In the Shadow of the Empire: India-New Zealand Relations since 1947', in *India in New Zealand: Local Identities, Global Relations*, ed. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2010), 168–9.
- 3 James Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1974), 120.
- 4 Simon Mainwaring, *A Century of Children* (Kalimpong: Dr Graham's Homes, 2000), 62.

- 5 Ibid., 63.
- 6 Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, 146–8.
- 7 Ibid., 148–9. In New Zealand, Graham's death was mentioned in 'Cables in Brief', *New Zealand Herald*, 18 May 1942, 6, and the Presbyterian newsletter, *The Outlook*, PARC, Dunedin.
- 8 Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, 67.
- 9 One lakh = 100,000 rupees, around US\$1,500 at current exchange rates, equivalent to around US\$30,000 when adjusted for inflation.
- 10 Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, 72.
- 11 Andrew May used this collection for his article, 'Exiles from the Children's City: Archives, Imperial Identities and the Juvenile Emigration of Anglo-Indians from Kalimpong to Australasia', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 14, no. 1 (2013).
- 12 Thornton Kennedy to James Purdie, 28 July 1947, Purdie Letters 1947–9, 6039:13:2, NLS.
- 13 Frank Donaldson to James Purdie, 25 January 1949, Purdie Letters 1947–9, 6039:13:2, NLS.
- 14 Kenneth Storey to James Purdie, 11 August 1947, Purdie Letters 1947–9, 6039:13:2, NLS.
- 15 The 1948 Citizenship Act initiated the formal process by which New Zealand citizenship was conferred. In 1949, this national citizenship was extended to Indian residents. But as Malcolm McKinnon suggests, family connections still largely determined the granting of permits: *Immigrants and Citizens: New Zealanders and Asian Immigration in Historical Context* (Wellington: Institute of Policy Studies, 1996), 41.
- 16 Known exceptions to this were George Langmore, who visited India several times, and two Kalimpong women who went abroad in the 1930s: Kate Sarkies visited her brother in India, and the Dinning sisters were taken on a European tour by their tea planter father, who returned to New Zealand with them.
- 17 'Back from New Zealand', *SACHM* 26, nos. 1/2 (1926): 20. [title not recorded] *SACHM* 36, nos. 3/4 (1936): [page number not recorded].
- 18 John Graham, 'The Call of India', Wellington broadcast, 4 July 1937, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:8:1, NLS.
- 19 New Zealand Electoral rolls, accessed March 2012, <http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/>.
- 20 See Brian Heenan and Sarah Johnsen, 'To and From, There and Back: Gender in Spatial Mobility', in *Sites of Gender: Men, Women and Modernity in Southern Dunedin, 1890–1939*, ed. Barbara Brookes, Annabel Cooper and Robin Law (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003), 226–57; Tom Brooking, Dick Martin, David Thomson and Hamish James, 'The Ties that Bind: Persistence in a New World Industrial Suburb, 1902–22', *Social History* 24, no. 1 (1999): 55–73.
- 21 See Chapters 4–5 in this volume.

- 22 This exclusion of women's labour from official data, along with the difficulty of ascertaining men's marital status, prompted a collection of essays on gender in Dunedin. See Barbara Brookes, Annabel Cooper and Robin Law, 'Situating Gender', in *Sites of Gender: Women, Men and Modernity in Southern Dunedin, 1890–1939*, ed. Barbara Brookes, Annabel Cooper and Robin Law (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003), 2.
- 23 Occupational codings from Olssen and Hickey's 2005 study gave structure to this assessment. Erik Olssen and Maureen Hickey, *Class and Occupation: The New Zealand Reality* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2005), 57–90.
- 24 See Laura Bear, *Lines of the Nation: Indian Railway Workers, Bureaucracy and the Intimate Historical Self* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), *passim*.
- 25 Personal communication with Niall Allcock, 26 July 2013.
- 26 J. G. Taylor to Whom It May Concern, 4 May 1937, Leith private collection, Levin.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 'Farm Workers: Eurasian Youths, Party from India', *Evening Post*, 22 November 1938.
- 29 Personal communication with Joan Cudby-Leith (Fred's wife) and Martin Leith, Levin, 15 November 2012.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Interview with Beryl Mortimer (nee Radcliffe), Queensland, Australia, January 2014.
- 32 See Lionel Caplan, 'The Spirit of Emigration', in *Children of Colonialism: Anglo-Indians in a Postcolonial World* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 129–55.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Peter Moller to John Graham, 1 December 1925, Moller file, DGHA.
- 35 Peter Moller to John Graham, 15 February 1925, Moller file, DGHA.
- 36 Peter Moller to John Graham, 16 April 1927, Moller file, DGHA.
- 37 As outlined in Chapter 5, Charles decided against emigrating with his sister Dora in 1920 but changed his mind soon afterwards and wrote frequently to the Homes requesting assistance in order to do so.
- 38 Peter Moller to John Graham, 21 December 1925, Moller file, DGHA.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Peter Moller to James Purdie, 2 August 1926, Moller file, DGHA.
- 41 Peter Moller to James Purdie, 24 October 1926, Moller file, DGHA.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Peter Moller to James Purdie, 24 October 1926, Moller file, DGHA.
- 45 Peter Moller to James Purdie, c. 1930 [undated], Moller file. Peter was likely referring to labour unrest that reached new heights in 1930. See Sugata Bose, *Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital: Rural Bengal since 1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 163–4; Bear, *Lines of the Nation*, 99–105.



- 46 Peter Moller to James Purdie, 10 November 1930, Moller file, DGHA.
- 47 Peter Moller to John Graham, 4 July 1932, Moller file, DGHA.
- 48 Peter Moller to John Graham, 29 November 1932, Moller file, DGHA.
- 49 Peter Moller to John Graham, 25 October 1936, Moller file, DGHA.
- 50 Peter Moller to James Duncan, 4 November 1947, Moller file, DGHA.
- 51 Peter Moller to James Duncan, 22 May 1953, Moller file, DGHA.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Peter Moller to James Duncan, 26 April 1956, Moller file, DGHA.
- 54 George Gammie to James Purdie, 29 July 1931, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Gavin Gammie to James Purdie, 31 October 1933, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 57 Gavin Gammie to James Purdie, 30 December 1934, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 58 Gavin Gammie to James Purdie, 4 June 1936, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 59 Gavin Gammie to James Purdie, 30 December 1934, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 60 Gavin Gammie to James Purdie, 4 June 1936, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 61 Gavin Gammie to James Purdie, 10 January 1938, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Gavin Gammie to John Graham, 15 January 1939, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 64 Miranda Wissham to James Purdie, 7 January 1938, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 65 See Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 177–9.
- 66 Mabel Barnes to John Graham, c. August 1936 [date concealed], Gammie file, DGHA.
- 67 A. E. C. Barnes to John Graham, 6 August 1938, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 68 John Graham to A. E. C. Barnes, 10 August 1938, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 69 Betty Gammie to James Purdie, 20 September 1938; Fergus Gammie to James Purdie, 27 September 1937, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 70 John Graham to A. E. C. Barnes, 8 November 1938, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 71 A. E. C. Barnes to John Graham, 4 February 1939, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 72 H. W. Bacon to John Graham, 10 March 1939, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 73 H. W. Bacon to John Graham, 4 April 1939, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 74 Alexa Gammie to James Purdie, c. April 1939 [undated], Gammie file, DGHA.
- 75 Betty Hall (nee Gammie) to James Purdie, 10 September 1940, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 76 Jinny Joyce to James Purdie, 16 April 1941, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 77 Alexa Bibby (nee Gammie) to James Purdie, 20 July 1943, Gammie file, DGHA.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Personal communication with the Gammie family, 13 November 2011.
- 80 Dorothy McMenamin has published a wonderful collection of interviews with Anglo-Indians who emigrated to southern New Zealand in the 1940s, including

- one Homes graduate. McMenemy, *Raj Days to Downunder: Voices from Anglo-India to New Zealand* (Christchurch: Dorothy McMenemy, 2010).
- 81 'Immigration of Eurasians', Memorandum, 23 July 1947, General Papers: Anglo-Indians, Customs Personal File, R18786833, Archives New Zealand, Wellington office (ANZ-W).
  - 82 Margaret Olsen to James Purdie, 1 January 1950, Purdie Letters 1950, 6039:14:1, NLS.
  - 83 Ibid.
  - 84 Ibid.
  - 85 Ella Horgan to James Purdie, 30 June 1952, Purdie Letters 1951–2, 6039:14:2, NLS.
  - 86 Kate Wilson to James Purdie, 1 June 1952, Purdie Letters 1951–2, 6039:14:2, NLS.
  - 87 Ella Horgan to James Purdie, 30 June 1952, Purdie Letters 1951–2, 6039:14:2, NLS.
  - 88 Though Fergusson served in India during the Second World War, his specific connection to the Kalimpong community is not known.
  - 89 Thuten Kesang, the New Zealand committee representative from 1975 and still at the time of writing, was one of these later emigrants.
  - 90 In Kesang Tseten's documentary film *We Homes Chaps* (Nepal: Filmmakers Library, 2001) a Homes graduate of the 1970s tells a familiar story of a 'tea planter, getting involved with a local girl' and sending his two children separately to the Homes, each remaining unaware that they had a sibling until many years later. The interviewee eventually traced her mother's whereabouts, only to discover that she had died several months earlier.
  - 91 Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, 100–5.
  - 92 Mainwaring, *A Century of Children*, 124.
  - 93 Isabella Gammie (nee Leith) to James Purdie, 22 August 1951, Purdie Letters 1951–2, 6039:14:2, Kalimpong Papers, NLS.
  - 94 Alexa Bibby (nee Gammie) to Mrs Duncan, 13 December 1951. Gammie file, DGHA.

## Chapter 8

- 1 Interview with Gilbert Hawkins, Wellsford, Northland, November 2011.
- 2 Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Living with Shame from the Victorians to the Present Day* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), *passim*. Barbara Brookes has been a key contributor to this field in New Zealand historiography. See Brookes, 'Shame and Its Histories in the Twentieth Century', *Journal of New Zealand Studies* 9 (2010): 37–42.
- 3 I have written permission to use all of the informal communications cited below.
- 4 Tanya Evans, 'Secrets and Lies: The Radical Potential of Family History', *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011): 56.

- 5 Written communication from Lou Holder, 26 February 2013.
- 6 Personal communication with Gavin Mortimore, 15 October 2011.
- 7 Jeanette was Rend's sister in Wellington, referred to as Jean in earlier chapters.
- 8 Personal communication with Patsy Cowen, 1 February 2013.
- 9 Personal communication with Barbara Cox, 1 February 2013.
- 10 Written communication from Emma Punter, 28 April 2013.
- 11 Written communication from Matthew Sturge, 26 July 2013.
- 12 Interview with Yvonne Gale, Wanaka, February 2013.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Personal communication with Yvonne Gale, February 2013.
- 15 Personal communication with Lou Holder, 17 March 2013.
- 16 Written communication from Brian Hepenstall, 13 February 2013.
- 17 Personal communication with Niall Allcock, 26 July 2013.
- 18 Personal communication with Judy Wivell, Dunedin, 23 April 2013.
- 19 Written communication from Maryellen Chandler, 3 April 2014.
- 20 Personal communication with Joan Cudby-Leith and Martin Leith, 15 November 2011.
- 21 Personal communication with Mary Milne, 11 March 2012.
- 22 Interview with Mary Milne, Wellington, November 2012.
- 23 Interview with Ian Spalding and Margaret Matterson, Auckland, November 2011.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Personal communication with Vic Williams, 2 February 2013.
- 26 Personal communication with Sylvia Slater, 13 November 2011.
- 27 Cohen, *Family Secrets*, xii–xv.
- 28 Anne Beckett, Gammie group interview, Wellington, November 2012.
- 29 Personal communication with Leslie Gammie, Hamilton, November 2011.
- 30 Personal communication with the Gammie family and Sylvia Slater, 13 November 2011.
- 31 Gammie group interview, Wellington, November 2012.
- 32 Mary Milne interview, Wellington, November 2012.
- 33 Anne Beckett, Gammie group interview, Wellington, November 2012.
- 34 Personal communication with Maryellen Chandler, 27 January 2013.
- 35 Jim is referring to Sylvia's home.
- 36 Gammie group interview, Wellington, November 2012.
- 37 Written communication from Ruth O'Connor, February 2013.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Personal communication with Clyde Stewart, 25 January 2013.
- 40 Personal communication with Andrea Stewart, 24 January 2013.
- 41 Personal communication with Gaynor Cullinan, 20 October 2011.
- 42 Ibid.

- 43 Interview with Don McCabe, Dunedin, April 2009.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Interview with Mary Milne, Wellington, November 2012.
- 46 Angela Wanhalla, *In/visible Sight: The Mixed-Descent Families of Southern New Zealand* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2009); Angela Wanhalla, *Matters of the Heart: A History of Interracial Marriage in New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2013); Damon Salesa, *Racial Crossings: Race, Inter-marriage and the Victorian British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Manying Ip, *Being Māori-Chinese: Mixed Identities* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008); Senka Bozic-Vrbancic, *Tarara: Croats and Māori in New Zealand: Memory, Belonging, Identity* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2008).
- 47 Wanhalla, *In/visible Sight*, 2.
- 48 James Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1974), 75.
- 49 Personal communication with Maryellen Chandler, 27 January 2013.
- 50 About 90 per cent of the Māori population lives in the North Island; there has been a slight trend southwards of late. <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-maori-english.aspx>.
- 51 Jacqueline Leckie, 'In Defence of Race and Empire: The White New Zealand League at Pukekohe', *New Zealand Journal of History* 19, no. 2 (1985): 103–29. Personal communication with Judy Wivell, Dunedin, 23 April 2013.
- 52 Interview with Pam Gardiner, Auckland, November 2011. Leckie found that certain establishments in Pukekohe continued to refuse to provide services to Indians, Chinese and Māori into the 1950s: Leckie, 'In Defence of Race and Empire', 123.
- 53 Interview with Ian Spalding and Margaret Matterson, Auckland, November 2011.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 This community is the focus of Bozic-Vrbancic's *Tarara*. See also Adrienne Puckey, *Trading Cultures: A History of the Far North* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2011), 154–5.
- 56 Interview with Ian Spalding and Margaret Matterson, Auckland, November 2011.
- 57 Wanhalla discusses the use of 'half-caste' or 'quarter-caste' terminology in official definitions of Māori identity in *In/visible Sight*, 110. Wanhalla has also shown there was no established 'mixed' identity among interracial Māori communities in southern New Zealand, but does refer to a mixed-race 'subculture' in the North Island. See *ibid.*, 45, and Judith Binney "'In-Between Lives": Studies from within a Colonial Society', in *Disputed Histories: Imagining New Zealand's Pasts*, ed. Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2006), 93–118.

- 58 Emma Jinhua Teng discusses of the implications of 'looking Chinese' and related claims of authenticity. *Eurasian: Mixed Identities in the United States, China and Hong Kong, 1842–1943* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 17–18.
- 59 Māori were prohibited from drinking in public bars until the Licensing Amendment Act was passed in 1948. Marten Hutt, *Māori and Alcohol: A History* (Wellington: Health Services Research Centre, 1999), 72.
- 60 Personal communication with Sylvia Slater, 13 November 2011.
- 61 Interview with Mary Milne, Wellington, November 2012.
- 62 Personal communication with Richard Cone, Christchurch, 8 November 2011.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Interview with Pam Gardiner, Auckland, November 2011.
- 65 Gammie group interview, Wellington, November 2012. A local Nepali speaker, Rajni Wilson (who grew up in Kalimpong but now lives in Dunedin), confirmed that *lhata* is a derogatory Nepali term. *Lhata* appears in Simon Mainwaring's appendix 'Homes slang' as meaning 'dim-witted'. Mainwaring, *A Century of Children* (Kalimpong: Dr Graham's Homes, 2000), 196. Rajni could not understand the other phrases repeated by the Gammies. They are possibly from the Khasi language, Isabella Gammie's mother's community.
- 66 Personal communication with Anne Beckett, 22 October 2011.
- 67 Personal communication with Mary Milne, 11 March 2012.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Personal communication with Judy Wivell, Dunedin, 23 April 2013.
- 70 Gammie group interview, Wellington, November 2012.
- 71 Interview with Gilbert Hawkins, Wellsford, Northland, November 2011.
- 72 Personal communication with Brian Hepenstall, 13 February 2013.
- 73 Personal communication with Vic Williams, 2 February 2013.
- 74 Interview with Pam Gardiner, Auckland, November 2011.
- 75 Interview with Ian Spalding and Margaret Matterson, Auckland, November 2011.
- 76 Interview with Mary Milne, Wellington, November 2012.
- 77 Personal communication with Judy Wivell, Dunedin, 23 April 2013.
- 78 Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- 79 Jessie Twist (nee Kennedy) to James Purdie, 28 March 1950, Purdie Letters 1950, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:14:1, NLS; Isabella Gammie (nee Leith) to James Purdie, 22 August 1951, Purdie Letters 1951–, Kalimpong Papers, 6039:14:2, NLS.
- 80 Death notice, Eva Masson, 19 February 1998, Nelson Provincial Museum, Nelson.
- 81 Interview with Gilbert Hawkins, Wellsford, Northland, November 2011.

- 82 In the course of the study I have been in contact with descendants of 72 of the 130 Kalimpong emigrants. Copies of Homes personal files have been retrieved by at least 40 of those families.
- 83 Written communication from Carole Duffield, 9 June 2013.
- 84 Interview with Gilbert Hawkins, Wellsford, Northland, November 2011.
- 85 Interview with Pam Gardiner, Auckland, November 2011.
- 86 Interview with Ron Gammie, Wellington, November 2012.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Interview with Margaret Matterson and Ian Spalding, Auckland, November 2011.
- 89 Interview with Yvonne Gale, Wanaka, February 2013.
- 90 Note that Mary asks *what* she is after some fellow emigrants questioning of her racial status. Mavis Haslett to John Graham, 10 January 1922, Haslett file, Dr Graham's Homes Archive (DGHA), Kalimpong.
- 91 Personal communication with Lou Holder, 17 March 2013.
- 92 Interview with Ian Spalding and Margaret Matterson, Auckland, November 2011.
- 93 Interview with Yvonne Gale, Wanaka, February 2013.
- 94 Cohen, *Family Secrets*, xii.
- 95 Interview with Gilbert Hawkins, Wellsford, Northland, November 2012.
- 96 Written communication from Lou Holder, 17 March 2013.
- 97 Written communication from Anne Beckett, 4 April 2012.

## Conclusion

- 1 Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (London: Duke University Press, 2006).
- 2 Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonisation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 17.

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                   John Graham, 'The Call of India', Wellington broadcast, 4 July 1937  
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                   Purdie  
                   John Graham, 'Kalimpong, India', Auckland broadcast, 9 August 1937  
 6039:13:2     Letters to James Purdie, 1947–9  
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