

## THE KILCUSNIN & CASTLEISLAND ALL BLACK

### History Comes Alive!



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Another brilliant sportsman **Timmy Behane O'Connor** was born a short distance from Castleisland in Kilcushin on Jan 1st 1860. Timmy was a 'mighty' rugby player but he was also an incredible athlete. Timmy played on the World Stage too.

Timmy's father Daniel ('Daniel Paddy') was born in Farrandoctor in Currans circa 1815. He was a first cousin to Bryan O'Connor who started the business O'Connor Moffatt & Co - The precursor to the famous Macy's San Francisco. Circa 1852, Daniel married Mary Behane from Listowel. His brother Maurice married another Behane sister Catherine.

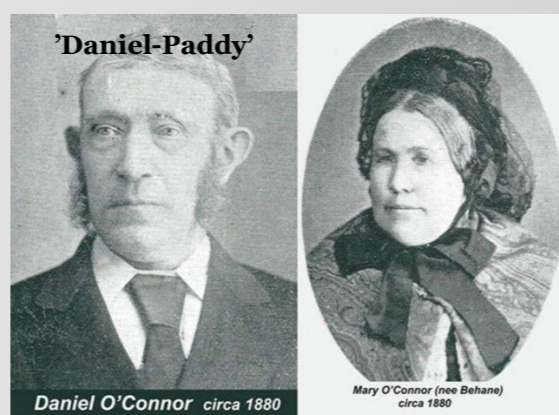


Back Row:—Dan O'Connor, J. D. O'Connor, T. B. O'Connor. Front Row:—Maurice O'Connor, Patrick O'Connor, John O'Connor.

Both Daniel and Maurice moved to Kilcushin and farmed their father's land there. Daniel and Mary Behane reared 13 children. Circa 1875 Daniel and Mary and the entire young family left Kilcushin and Ireland by ship for pastures greener in New Zealand. The industrious O'Connor DNA and ambitious nature prevailed and the Clan went on to own successful hotel, construction, farming and property businesses Daniel is first recorded in NZ in September 1876, where he was managing the Eagle Hotel, which had previously been in the hands of his son-in-law, Maurice O'Sullivan. The O'Connor Clan did exceptionally well in New Zealand while Timmy-Behane also excelled in many sports. The rest as they say is History!

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"The O'Connor Clan" In The NZ Observer, Saturday March 6, 1909.



Daniel O'Connor circa 1888. Mary O'Connor (nee Behane).



Auckland Rugby Team 1883

The 1883 Auckland representative team. Back row: R. Whiteside, J. Sims, J. Mearns, T.B. O'Connor, F. Moginie, C.H. Croxton, A.H. Cotter (Umpire). Middle row: G. Carter, J.C. Webster, T. Henderson (Capt.), W. Ring, T. Ryan, P. Spencer, R.O. Biggs. Seated: J.H. Clayton, J. Arneil, J.H. Warbrick, J. Lecky.

Another great star on Timmy's Auckland side was **Joe Warbrick**. Originally from the small Bay of Plenty settlement of Matatā, Warbrick came to the attention of the Auckland selectors in 1877 when as a 15-year-old playing for **Ponsonby** he regularly potted dropped goals from halfway - in bare feet. He remains New Zealand's youngest first-class rugby player. Warbrick was selected for the first New Zealand representative team in 1884 and made his debut against Cumberland County at Parramatta, New South Wales, in May. He is officially acknowledged as the 17th All Black (although this name was not applied to New Zealand representatives until 1905). In 1888-89 Warbrick was the captain and undisputed leader of the New Zealand Natives team which toured Britain. This was the first New Zealand representative rugby team to tour beyond Australia. Warbrick later became a tour guide in the geyser fields of Rotorua. Geyser tourism had been given a major boost in 1900 when the Waimangu ('black water') geyser burst into life. It was the largest known geyser in the world between 1900 and 1904. In August 1903 it exploded unexpectedly, killing Warbrick and three tourists. Joe married Harriet Burt and had one daughter, Orini Rosa Warbrick (married name Anderson). He later became a tour guide in the geyser fields of Rotorua. Geyser tourism had been given a major boost in 1900 when the Waimangu ('black water') geyser burst into life. It was the largest geyser recorded anywhere in the world between 1900 and 1904. In August 1903 it exploded unexpectedly, killing Warbrick and a party of three tourists. After his tragic death his wife Harriet married William Lees and had three sons Sydney (Toss), Ronald and Maurice (Mo), all of them fine athletes. William Lees was the nephew of another member of the 1884 international rugby team, Timothy Behane O'Connor.

### Plaque to be erected to 'The All Black from Castleisland'



Thanks to Maurice Walsh for sending the details and pictures regarding Tim O'Connor - Castleisland's All Black to The Kerryman May 9 2015

**Research & Report by Maurice Walsh** No doubt, because of their knowledge of the game of Caid in Ireland and its similarity to rugby the young O'Connors were attracted to the local game in New Zealand and Timothy excelled at it. The following description of Timothy and his career are from the All Blacks history:

**Tim O'Connor was a large, heavy Irishman who was a member of the first New Zealand team ever selected in 1884.** He had been prominent in Auckland rugby for some years before the New Zealand team was chosen and was virtually an automatic selection, even though nomination rather than any trial form chose the team. Rejoicing in the good Irish name of Timothy Beehane O'Connor and born at Kilcushin Castleisland in the Emerald Isle.

For certain, by the time Timmy was in his early 20s, there were few better rugby players anywhere in Auckland.

**Notable Firsts** O'Connor had a number of notable firsts in his career. He was a member of the Auckland Combined Clubs side that met New South Wales in 1882, the first match ever played in this country by a touring team, and since Auckland won 7-0 it represented the first win by a New Zealand side over a touring team. He was also part of the Auckland side that later administered an 18-4 defeat to the tourists, scoring a try. In 1883, he was a member of the first Auckland Union representative team and scored the province's first try against Canterbury, thus gaining Auckland's first point (tries were only worth one point in those days).

**Invaluable Tourist** A year later he was a member of the first New Zealand side ever fielded, against the Combined XV in Wellington before heading off to Australia. On tour he was busy playing six of the eight matches. His bulk (at 14st, or 89kg, he and James Allen were the heaviest forwards in the side) and pace, surprising for such a big man, made him an invaluable tourist. He later led Auckland to victory over the 1888 British team, the first local skipper to enjoy success against these formidable tourists, having taken over the captaincy from the injured Bob Whiteside. Before the Auckland union was formed, O'Connor represented the province's Combined Clubs side in 1881 and 1882 from North Shore. By 1883 he was playing for the old Auckland club, where he was a stalwart until the end of the decade. However, Auckland folded in 1891 through lack of numbers, prompting the introduction of the District Scheme, and O'Connor played out his last few seasons in Ponsonby colours.

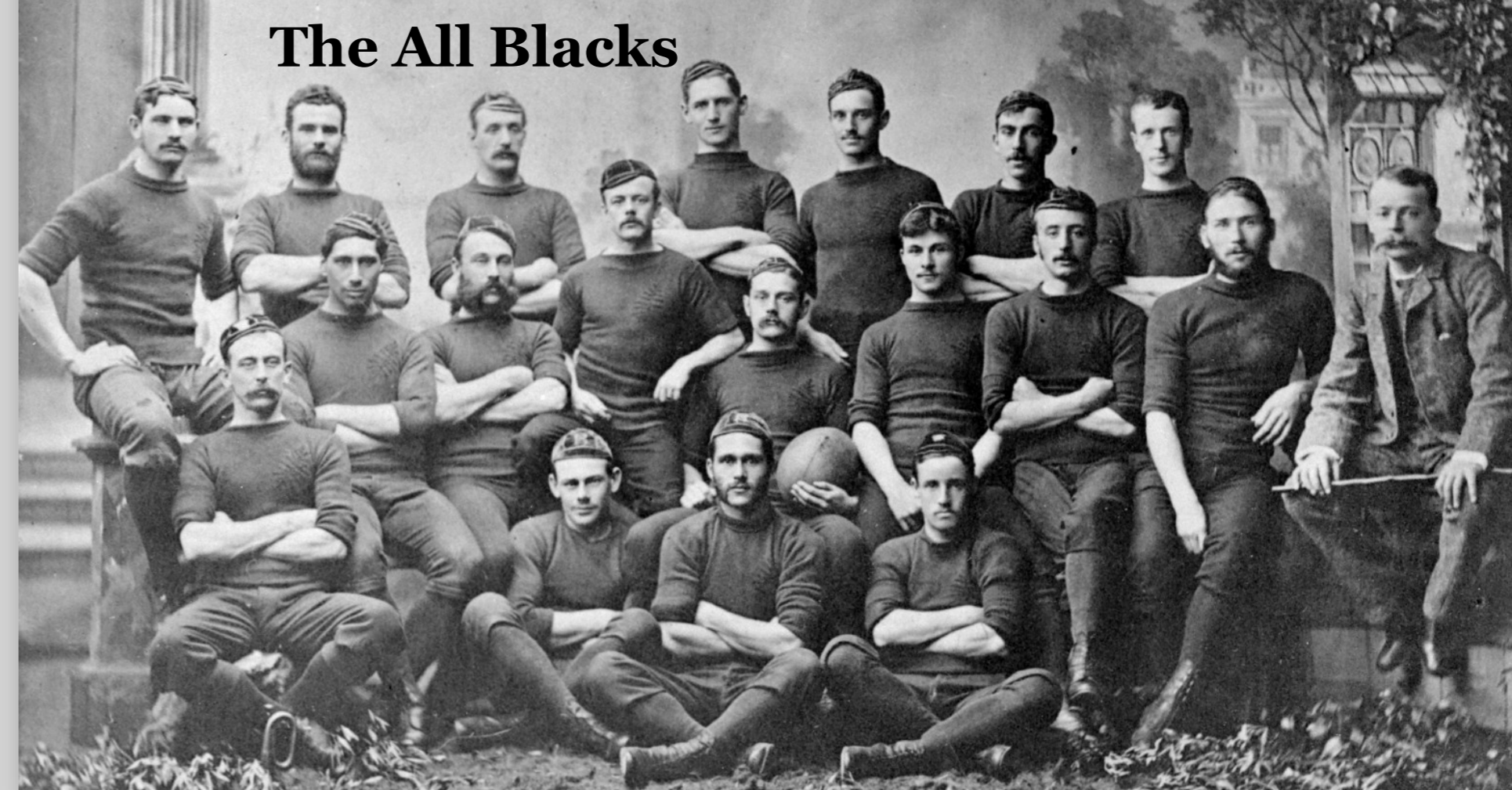


Timmy's grt grandnephew, Professor Peter O'Connor NZ (left) pictured with historian and Castleisland RFC & Munster official, Maurice Walsh in Castleisland 2015

**Noted Field Athlete** He made the last of his 19 Auckland appearances in 1892, giving him a record few early players could match. Six of his appearances had been against touring teams; Auckland had won three and drawn one of these games. O'Connor served for a few years on the Ponsonby committee before turning his attention to the now defunct City club (which had basically taken over the Auckland club's area) and served as auditor to that body for many years. O'Connor's strength made him a noted field athlete in his day, as he won the 1893 Australasian shot put title and three at national level (1891, 1892 and 1897), adding another Australasian title in the hammer throw in 1893. A publican at Auckland's Victoria and Waverley Hotels who used his name to advertise his hotel in some of the early rugby publications "T B O'Connor - Proprietor - Captain Auckland Team that defeated England 1888; member first New Zealand team to tour Australia 1884". Tim O'Connor died at Auckland on 5 February 1936. Main Valley Post - Posted on April 29th, 2015

After the 1884 tour he came back to resume his club rugby for the Auckland club. He stuck with Auckland up until he played his last year of rugby for Ponsonby. After one season for Ponsonby O'Connor then served for a few years on the Ponsonby committee before turning his attention to the now defunct City club (which had basically taken over the Auckland club's area) and served as auditor to that body for many years. O'Connor's talents were not just in rugby, as stated above, he was also a notable field athlete as he won the 1893 Australasian shot put title and three titles at national level (1891, 1892 and 1897), adding another Australasian title in the hammer throw in 1893.

### New Zealand Rugby Team 1884



NEW ZEALAND TEAM IN AUSTRALIA, 1884  
Back row: J. O'Donnell, H. Udy, G. S. Robertson, Jas. Allan, E. B. Millson, T. Ryan, R. J. Wilson. Middle row: J. G. Taitoro, G. Carter, J. T. Dumbell, W. V. Millson (Captain), H. Y. Bradlow, G. H. Helmore, P. P. Webb, Mr. S. E. Sleight (Manager). Front row: E. Davy, J. Lecky, J. A. Warbrick, H. Roberts. Absent: T. B. O'Connor.

### Extracts in reports capturing Timmy at play!

'...Mr T. O Connor was once again elected captain for the Auckland team'

'...O'Connor taking the ball from the line-out, made a dashing run and fine combined passing took the ball to England's twenty-five'

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T.B.O'Connor and family 1911

### Waikumete Cemetery in West Auckland New Zealand.

Pictures & Information courtesy of Paddy Franklin, Auckland, New Zealand.

(Left) Rests the great Timothy 'Timmy' Behane O'Connor, Kerryman and All Black Rugby Player. That is some accolade Timmy!

(Right) Descendant of 'Daniel-Paddy' Paddy Franklin (Auckland) at the Graveside of Daniel & Mary Behane O'Connor & Son Maurice. Daniel died 1898 Age 84.

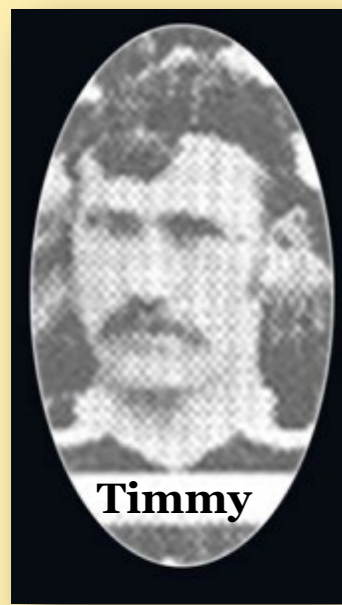
Four O'Connor brothers, Charles, Jeremiah-Daniel, Timothy 'Timmy' Behane and Maurice are buried in the same family area at Waikumete Cemetery, West Auckland along with their parents, Daniel and Mary Behane O'Connor. Also, Jeremiah and Timothy's wives, Mary Jane and Helena Agnes, along with Timothy and Helena's daughter, Margaret Mary Alacoque, and Jeremiah and Mary Jane's son (only child), Maurice David (died aged 5 yrs.). Also buried in this plot is a Timothy O'Connor (c.1894-1933), who was a grandson of Daniel snr and Maurice snr's brother Charles Patrick O'Connor; who came out to NZ in the mid-1920s. Not far from this grave is that of Patrick and Maurice O'Connor; sons of Maurice O'Connor and Catherine Behane, and members of their families.

Thanks to Paddy Franklin for all the Ancestral Jig-Saw pieces & much more. She is a 'wizard-of-knowledge on the NZ O'Connors'. Thanks also to Brian 'Maurice-Bryan' O'Connor Gortloss, Joanie Brosnan Cluin and Professor Peter O'Connor NZ. Thanks



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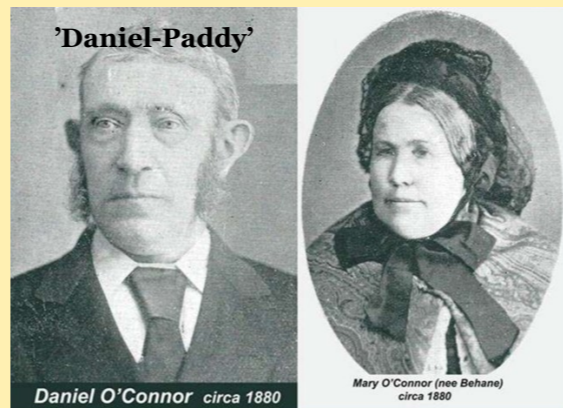


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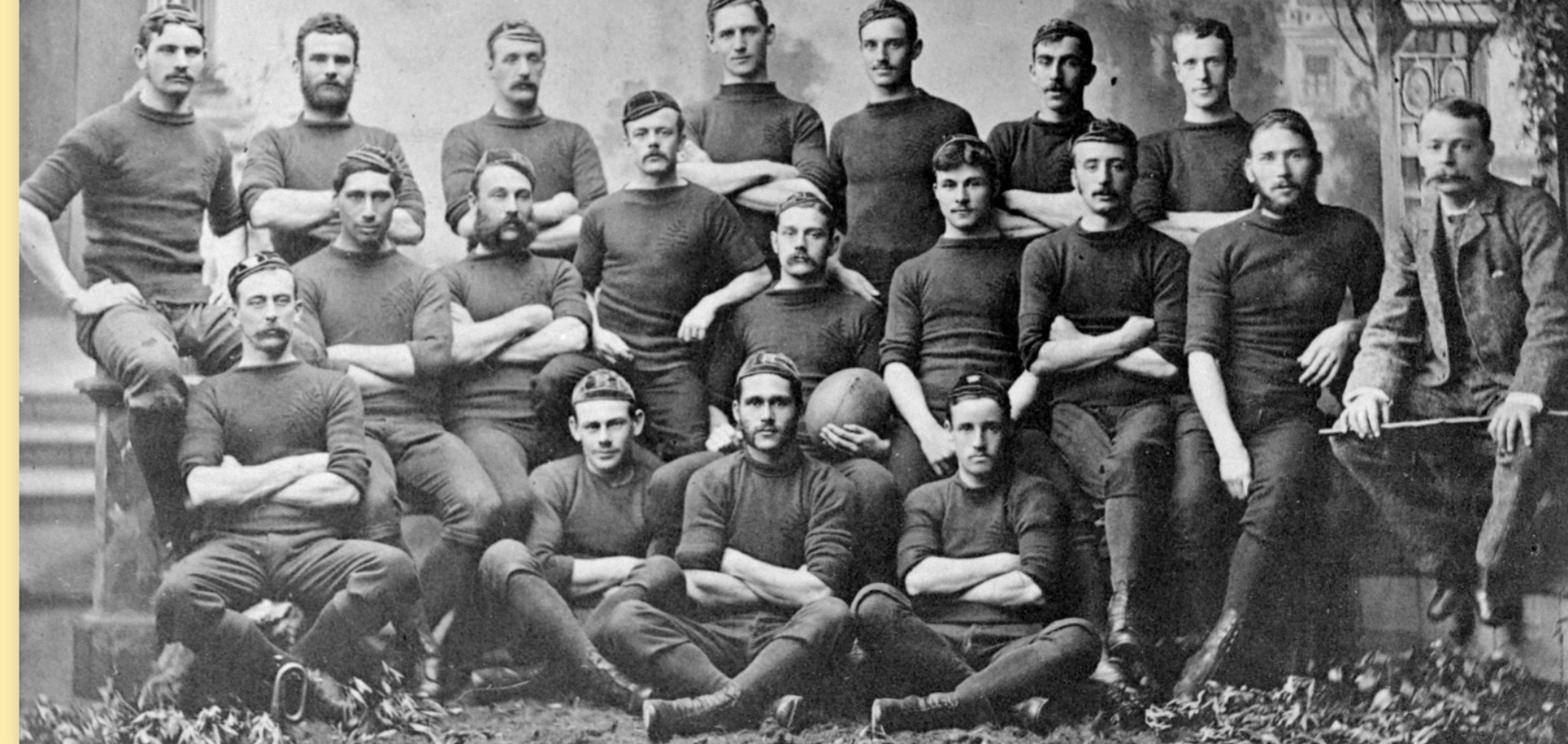
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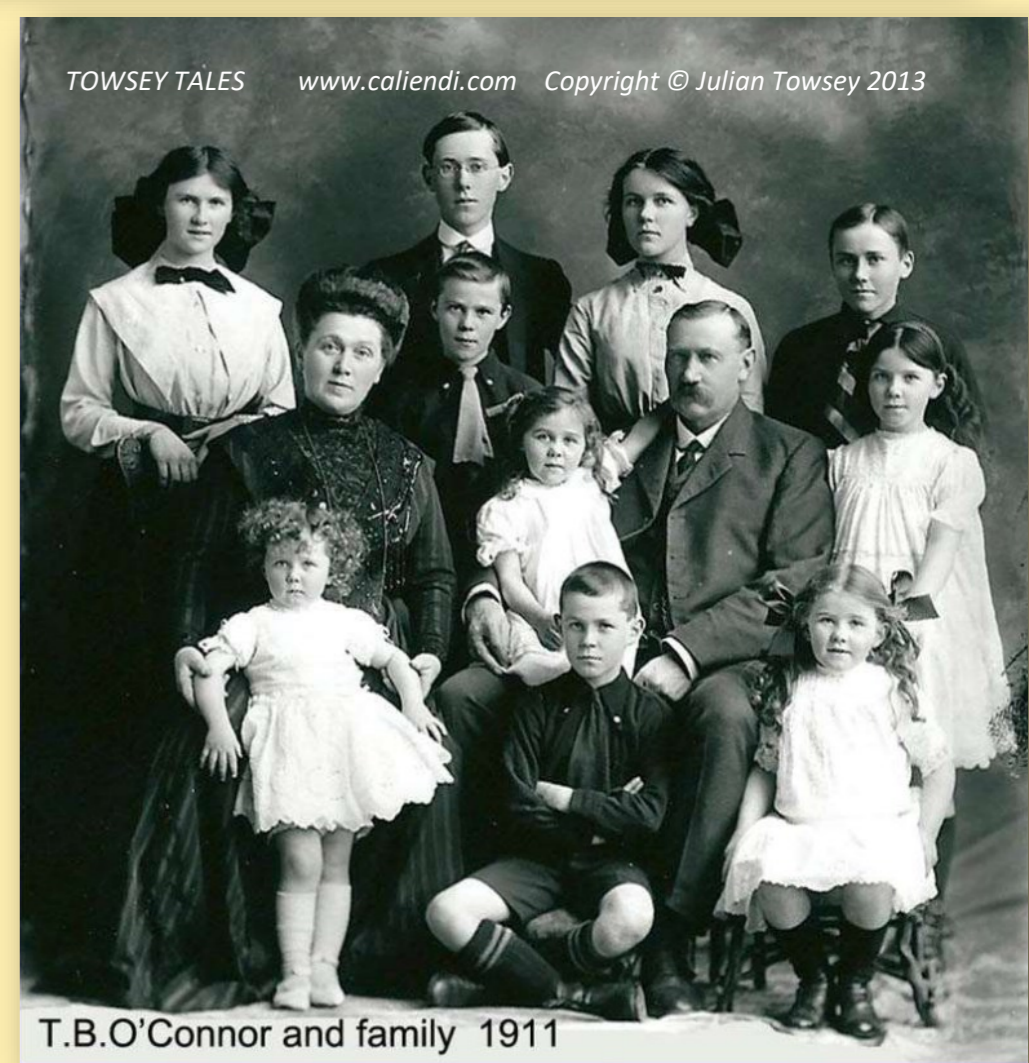
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### Waikumete Cemetery in West Auckland New Zealand.

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(Right) Descendant of 'Daniel-Paddy' Paddy Franklin (Auckland) at the Graveside of Daniel & Mary Behane O'Connor & Son Maurice. Daniel died 1898 Age 84.

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