

way in which these individuals saw their society and perceived themselves to fit into it (or, equally often, perceived themselves as misfits). Fred's early reminiscences and letters tell us of the attitudes a well-educated young man of the late Victorian era held on the subjects of women and marriage. His wife's letters speak of the purgatory that colonial life was for an educated woman passionately fond of music and the arts. Dissatisfaction with the new land was common enough after emigration, and this kind of predicament must have blighted many marriages. It was not unique to Fred and Amy, but such an intimate account of the relationships that grew out of it is rare indeed. Mary, the only child of Fred and Amy, pursued a career in medicine. Her life too offers information which can be used for more than simple biographical studies. Her struggle to be accepted in a man's profession and the setbacks she encountered must have been the lot of many women attempting to forge careers immediately after the First World War and during the Great Depression. Furthermore, Mary was one of New Zealand's many 'expatriates'. Like other New Zealanders before and since, she chose to pursue a career to heights which were not attainable in New Zealand. A constant tugging between ambition and homesickness is ever present in her letters.

A brief introduction to each of the members of the Barkas family at this stage should help to place the collection correctly in context. Frederick Barkas was born into a middle-class family at Newcastle on Tyne in April 1854. He studied chemistry in the College of Physical Science at Durham University and graduated in 1873. During the next seven years he drifted from one inadequate job to another, and in June 1880 decided to seek better opportunities in the Antipodes. On 5 August 1880 he set out from Gravesend, travelling via Sydney in order to visit his elder brother who was a doctor in Warialda. Fred stayed in Australia until July 1881 when he took up a teaching position at Lincoln College, Canterbury. He kept this job until July 1883 when he resigned because of personal difficulties with another staff member. In November that year he began working for New Zealand Loan and Mercantile. He stayed with that company until his retirement in 1919.

Early in 1887 Fred 'made a pleasant new acquaintance . . . a lady of middle age [36 years], Miss Amy Parker, . . . full of conversation, a considerable traveller, a "Noble Bohemian" . . . , a music teacher, . . . a woman full of common-sense, a lady of much information but little formal conventionalism'.² In September that year Amy and Fred were married. Amy was the only daughter of Dr Edward Parker of Liverpool. Her mother had died when she was ten years old, and she was then brought up by a stepmother 'who could not understand love of freedom on the part of a woman'.³ Amy had