

Appendix

Family tree of John Thomas North

John Thomas North¹

Born January 30, 1842, at Holbeck near Leeds.
Married Jane Woodhead in 1865.
Died May 5, 1896, in London.

Grandparents:

Grandfather: John North of Huddersfield²
John North was a coal merchant and had four children: James, John, Reuben, Harriet.

Parents:

James North. Also a coal merchant.
Born 1813.
Married Mary Gambles (or Gamble) of Batley in 1838. Mary Gambles born circa 1818.³
James North died in 1867.⁴

Wife:

Married Jane Woodhead in 1865, daughter of John Woodhead, painter, of Park Lane in Leeds.⁵
Jane North died May 15, 1924, aged 81.

Siblings:

Emma North

Born in Holbeck, Leeds, in 1839.⁶
Married (1) John Dickinson in 1861. John Dickinson was a civil engineer. He worked in Chile for a time, and died in 1883 in England of tuberculosis.

3 daughters:

- Mary Emma Dickinson. Born June 29, 1861. Married Arthur William John Beazley. Their children: a daughter, Beatrice, and a son, Mavin John, who was born in 1884 in Iquique. Mary Emma divorced Arthur William in 1891 and took up residence at Avery Hill with her family.

(*Note:* Colonel North's will of 1895 refers to "Mary Emma Beasley [*sic*]" as "my niece," whereas the other daughters are referred to as his sister's "daughters").

- Florence Dickinson. Born 1865. Married George Pratt in 1889, and had four children: George Leslie, Stuart Harvey, Vera, Elaine.
- Louisa Maude Dickinson. Born 1877. Married Francis John (Francis Joseph?) Branthwaite in 1900. No children.

Married (2) Andrew Taylor, a photographer. Colonel North's will of 1895 refers to "my sister Mrs. Emma Taylor."

Harry North

Born in 1845⁷

Married Rebecca Dryden in 1874.

Died in Chile? It is certain that Harry North was already dead by 1895 (see Colonel North's will of that year).

(*Note:* There is a tombstone in Tiliviche cemetery, in the nitrates region of modern-day Chile, which reads: "In memory of Henry North who died in Pisagua South America June 9th. 1883, aged 38 years."⁸ It is possible that this refers to Harry—the age seems to correspond, and the names "Henry" and "Harry" were sometimes used interchangeably in this period. Census information supports this: the 1851 census for the North family in Leeds gives "Henry North aged 5"; the 1861 census gives "Henry North—15—Millwright." Also, certain sources mention a brother of Colonel North's working in South America.

One daughter: Rosa Hannah North, born 1875. (Rosa married Gerald Glascott, a railway engineer. Rosa died in 1964.)⁹

Gamble North

Born in 1854.

Married (1) Sarah Kate Beecroft. (Sarah Kate died April 18, 1889, aged 27).¹⁰

Died June 21, 1941.¹¹

3 children:

- John Tom North (later Major John Tom North OBE), born 1884, married Paula Peterson.
- Victor Beecroft North, married Edelora Monton.
- Ruby Kate North, (or Kate Ruby North), who didn't marry.

Married (2) Leila Emily Hunt: July 1890.

- There may have been a son named Richard.

Gamble North became prominent in the nitrate business.

Colonel North's children:

- **Harry**

Born December 26, 1866.

Married December 5, 1894: Jessie Louisa Evans, second daughter of David Evans, of Grangemouth, Yorkshire¹² "J.P. [Justice of the Peace] for the North Riding of Yorkshire, and also for Monmouthshire."¹³ Jessie was born in 1869; died July 24, 1942, aged 73.

Knighted by King Edward VII in 1905.

Died: Lieutenant Colonel Sir Harry North, November 26, 1920, aged 53.¹⁴

Children:

- Vivian North, died circa 1941.
- Olga Yvonne North, born September 15, 1898, died May 12, 1979 (married Syd John Bowyer in 1925).
- Daughter Barbara North born and died March 1, 1910.
- Diana Isobel North, born 1914, died 1973 (married George De Visdelou-Guimbeau).

When Harry died, "He left a widow, one son, and two daughters."¹⁵

- **Emma**

Born in 1868. (She was 73 years old at her death. She came of age in 1889.)
Married George Alexander Lockett, born 1855, died September 10, 1923, aged 68.¹⁶

Wedding: Church of Holy Trinity in Eltham, on November 3, 1892, followed by a reception at Avery Hill.¹⁷

Died Emma Lockett OBE, December 15, 1941, aged 73.

- **Arthur Jewell**

Born September 30, 1883. (Almost certainly named after North's business Partner, Maurice Jewell.)

Educated at Harrow.

Married Adelaide Louise Garratt on September 26, 1905 (born December 15, 1878; died December 11, 1972), daughter of Job Garratt, sometime mayor of Dudley.

Died September 27, 1918. Killed in action, aged 34. Captain 4th Northumberland Fusiliers.¹⁸

Children:

- Nina Mary North, born 1907, died circa 1932. Married Geoffrey Hugh Mitchell.
- Angela North, born circa 1909, died circa 1927.
- Betty Estelle North, born July 21, 1911, died May 31, 1982. Married Cecil George Hodson.
- John Garratt North, born 1912, died May 19, 1981. Married Corona Leckie Watson in 1965.
- Richard Arthur North, born May 4, 1918, died May 8, 1973. Married Sonia Helen Veronica Taylor in 1947.

**The North Grave in the Cemetery of St John
the Baptist, Eltham**

East facing

IN LOVING MEMORY
OF
JOHN THOMAS NORTH
WHO DIED MAY 5TH 1896
AGED 54 YEARS
"THY WILL BE DONE"
ALSO OF
HIS BELOVED WIFE JANE NORTH
WHO DIED MAY 15TH 1924
AGED 81 YEARS

South facing

IN LOVING MEMORY
OF
JEWELL NORTH MC
CAPT 4TH NORTH^D FUSILIERS

YOUNGEST SON OF
JOHN THOMAS NORTH
KILLED IN ACTION IN FRANCE
SEPTEMBER 27TH 1918
AGED 34 YEARS

West facing

IN LOVING MEMORY
OF
BARBARA INFANT DAUGHTER OF
SIR HARRY & LADY NORTH
BORN & DIED MARCH 1ST 1910
ALSO OF
LIEUT COLONEL SIR HARRY NORTH HML
WHO DIED NOVEMBER 26TH 1920
AGED 53 YEARS
ELDEST SON OF COLONEL J.T. NORTH
AND OF HIS BELOVED WIFE
JESSIE LOUISA NORTH
WHO DIED JULY 24TH 1942
AGED 73 YEARS

North facing

IN LOVING MEMORY
OF
GEORGE ALEXANDER LOCKETT
WHO DIED SEPTEMBER 10TH 1923
AGED 68 YEARS
SON-IN-LAW OF JOHN THOMAS NORTH
ALSO OF HIS BELOVED WIFE
EMMA LOCKETT OBE
WHO DIED DECEMBER 15TH 1941
AGED 73 YEARS

Notes

Preface: John Thomas North, a reappraisal

1. Harold Blakemore, *British Nitrates and Chilean Politics 1886–1896: Balmaceda and North*. University of London Institute of Latin American Studies Monographs 4, London: The Athlone Press, 1974.
2. ‘Jehu Junior,’ ‘Men of the day. No. CCCXLVI. Colonel John Thomas North,’ *Vanity Fair*, November 2, 1889, 293.
3. “As a citizen of Iquique, I recognize his merits for what he meant for the province of Tarapacá.” Pedro Bravo-Elizondo to Juan Ricardo Couyoumdjian, e-mail July 21, 2010.

Introduction

1. See Rippy 1948, 460.
2. See Centner 1942, 81.
3. Not all newspapers in Britain were so prompt—*The Express* of Dartford, for example, published the news more than a week later. “Colonel North presided on Thursday night at the annual dinner of the Leeds Licensed Victuallers’ Association, at the Queen’s Hotel, Leeds. As he was leaving the room he slipped and twisted his ankle. Dr. Robinson attended him at the Hotel, and it was found on Friday that a complete dislocation of the ankle is the result of the accident.” (*The Express*, Dartford local paper, January 17, 1891).

1 We Had Adventures of All Sorts

1. Quoted in *The Leeds Mercury*, “Sudden Death of Colonel North: Sketch of his Career,” May 6, 1896.
2. *Life and Career of the Late Col. North: How He Made His Millions. As Told By Himself*. Leeds: E. A. Tempest, 1896, 2.
3. *Ibid.*
4. One source gives 1863 as the year he completed his apprenticeship and went to the Steam Plough Works, but this seems unlikely; see *Life and Career of the late Col. North: How He Made His Millions. As Told By Himself*.

5. James North may in fact have died earlier. The 1861 census, which gives the North family living at 78 Grape Street, Hunslet, cites Mary North as “head” of the household, and her status as “widow.” Since James North (her husband) appears on the marriage certificate for his daughter Emma on January 17 that year, this suggests he may have died in the period up to the census (probably taken in April or May), or that the fact that he was deceased was not given on the marriage certificate.
6. “The Life and Career of Col. North: From Apprentice Boy to Millionaire,” *The Kentish District Times*, 1896.
7. Michael Monteón 2003, 73.
8. Other sources: “He left Fowler & Co. in 1869 and proceeded to the West Coast of S. America.” (*East London Advertiser*, February 5, 1887); North “went to Peru in 1869 at the age of 27” (Bulmer-Thomas 1989, 8); “in 1869 he was sent out to Peru [by Messrs. John Fowler and Co., Leeds] to superintend the erection and working of machinery” (*Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Proceedings of 1896*, Vol. 50, April 1896); “North travelled to Peru in 1869,” *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 41, 106–7; North was sent in 1867 “to supervise locomotive erection for the Carrizal Railway,” David Burrell, *The Nitrate Boats*, (1995, 16).
9. Many nineteenth and even early twentieth century documents use this spelling for the country, as “Chili.” See, for example, the publication by A. Aldana & A. E. Harris entitled *Chile and the Chilians*, published in London in 1910.
10. *The Express*, “Colonel John Thomas North at Avery Hill, Eltham,” September 1, 1888: “He took service, on his arrival, with the railway company in Carrizal, and afterwards joined his brother (since dead) at the Santa Rita Nitrate of Soda Works in Pisagua.” (Avery Hill archive R. 1.55). Presumably this brother was Harry North. The chronology may have been different, and perhaps John Thomas North was joined by his brother.
11. Oswood Hardy (1948, 171–2) tells of Fowler’s sending North to Tarapacá in 1869, “but something went wrong,” and after arriving in Valparaíso in March 1869, the future “nitrate king” decided to stay at his own expense and “he got a job as mechanic in a machine shop at Caldera and became a locomotive engineer on the Carrizal railroad.” Hardy is not always reliable as a source on the early years; he writes, for example, that North returned to England in 1875 and lived at his Avery Hill mansion until 1880 when, “now a colonel,” he returned to Iquique during the War of the Pacific.
12. Quoted in translation in *The Leeds Mercury* edition of May 6, 1896, the day that John Thomas North died, under the heading “Sudden Death of Colonel North: Sketch of His Career.”
13. Four steam tank locomotives for the “Nitrate Railway, Chile” were manufactured by Fowler’s in late 1884, followed by a further order

for four engines in early 1885. These orders continued in 1887 for North's "Arauco Co. Ltd., Chile" and the "Primitiva Nitrate Co. Ltd., Chile per W. & J. Lockett"; in 1888 for the "Nitrate Railway, Chile" and the "Liverpool Nitrate Co., Chile"; in 1889 for the "Primitiva Nitrate Co., Chile," "Liverpool Nitrate Co. Ltd., Chile," "London Nitrate Co. Ltd., Chile," and "Arauco Co. Ltd, Chile"; in 1890 for "Nitrate Railways, Chile"; in 1892 for the "Liverpool Nitrate Co., Chile" and the "Lagunas Syndicate, Chile"; in 1894 for "Nitrate Railways, Chile" and "Lagunas Syndicate"; and in 1895 for "Lagunas South No. 2, Chile." John Thomas North died in 1896, and it is interesting to see that the next order for Fowler's locomotives for Chile came only in 1907, although Fowler's continued afterwards to export sporadically to Chile's nitrate provinces until 1924. One Fowler's locomotive closer to home was a saddle tank engine called "Emma" (presumably after North's daughter, or his sister) manufactured in 1891 for "North's Navigation Collieries Ltd., South Wales." See Frank Jux 1985.

14. *Life and Career of the Late Col. North: How He Made His Millions. As Told By Himself.* Leeds: E. A. Tempest, 1896.

2 I Was Better Acquainted Than Any Other Foreigner

1. Osgood Hardy (1948, 172) believes that North's reputation as a good engineer had preceded him; that González Vélez had immediately offered him the post of chief engineer on his arrival in Iquique; and that his new employers gave him space to experiment.
2. Harold Blakemore 1974, 25.
3. While not a source that gives one much confidence, there is an interesting account by William Eleroy Curtis (1900) in which he relates a conversation with a friend of North from his early days in Peru and Chile named Mr. Speedie. "One day [North] conceived the idea of buying an old hulk that lay in the harbor and going into the water business... He repaired the vessel with his own hands, divided the hold into tanks, rigged pumps that would fill and empty them rapidly, and when his novel craft was afloat she drove the sailboats out of the business and paid for herself every month. North used to say that in all his speculations he had never known or heard of a business that paid a bigger profit." This text carries a rare mention of North's wife in this period: "Mrs. North was a sort of general manager for the distribution business, and took orders for water and collected the bills... She employed agents who drove tank carts from house to house and filled buckets and bottles as they were brought out to them in the same way and for about the same price that milk is sold in our cities."

4. Reported in *The Leeds Mercury*, May 6, 1896, "Sudden Death of Colonel North: Sketch of his Career."
5. See www.albumdesierto.cl (accessed August 12, 2010), and http://www.memoriachilena.cl/temas/cronologia.asp?id_ut=laimagendechileentheillustratedlondonnews (accessed August 12, 2010). Ramírez Necochea (1958, 76) reports that North sold the Porvenir contract to Henry B. James and George Brooking, who were committed to paying him seventeen centavos of a Peruvian Sol for each quintal of nitrate produced, as well as 10 percent of the net worth of the iodine.
6. The Chilean Census of 1875 shows that 15,000 Chileans lived in Tarapacá (Peruvian) and 4,800 Chileans worked in the *salitreras* of Antofagasta (Bolivian). See Couyoumdjian 2000, 13.
7. The main shareholders were Agustín Edwards (a Chilean of British descent) and Gibbs & Company.
8. One Spanish quintal was equivalent to 4 "arrobas," or 46 kg, or 101.44 lb.
9. In the 1870s, "Not only did (Chileans) serve as laborers and managers for Peruvian (*oficina*) owners, but they were also entrepreneurs in Bolivia's desert territory" (Osgood Hardy 1948, 169).
10. Valparaíso in Chile was the center for commerce in nitrate from the earliest days, from 1842. At the beginning of the 1870s three quarters of nitrate transactions were carried out in this port. See Couyoumdjian, 2000, 13.
11. The Peruvian *Ley de Expropiación* (Expropriation Law) of March 28, 1875 was supplemented by a decree on December 14, 1875, which stated that the owners of the nitrate fields would receive certificates—essentially IOUs—payable within two years with bonds issued at London at the exchange rate of forty-four pennies for each Peruvian Sol. See Ramírez Necochea 1958, 57.
12. Reported in *The Leeds Mercury*, May 6, 1896, "Sudden Death of Colonel North: Sketch of his Career."
13. *The New York Times*, "Death of Col. J. T. North," May 6, 1896: "the guano deposits fetched £160,000, or four times the amount for which they were pledged [by the Chilean government]."
14. Osgood Hardy (1948, 172) cites Patricio Lynch's report of 1882 for the total amount of guano sold to North, *Memoria que el Contra-Almirante presenta al Supremo Gobierno de Chile* (Lima: 1882, 161–74).
15. *Life and Career of the late Col. North: How He Made His Millions, As Told By Himself*, 1896.
16. Ramírez Necochea 1958, 12.
17. Reported in *The Leeds Mercury*, May 6, 1896, "Sudden Death of Colonel North: Sketch of his Career."
18. *Ibid.*

3 Don Juan Tomás North

1. In Arturo Alessandri's *Revolución de 1891* (Santiago: 1950), quoted in Collier and Sater (2004, 144). Domingo Santa María was president of Chile, elected during the War of the Pacific, from September 1881 to September 1886. His successor was José Manuel Balmaceda.
2. Quoted in Hernán Ramírez Necochea 1958, 60 (author's translation).
3. See Ramírez Necochea 1958, 61 (author's translation).
4. "The nitrate establishments of the territory of Tarapacá that were bought by the Government of Peru and in payment for which the latter had issued *certificados de pago no cubiertos* [uncovered payment certificates] will be provisionally returned without prejudice to the rights of third parties to those who will deposit at least three-fourths of the certificates issued for the value of each *salitrera* and who will deposit in a fiscal treasury in money a sum equal to the price of the other fourth part, which part will be returned to the interested party when he shall turn over all the certificates issued for the value of the respective *salitrera*." Decree of June 11, 1881, quoted in Osgood 1948, 169–70.
5. The decree was modified on September 6, 1881, allowing for the provisional return of the *salitreras* to private ownership for those who could submit more than half of the relevant certificates and deposit the rest of the face value of the certificates at the rate of 44 pennies for each Peruvian Sol. In the same month, the Chilean government authorized the renting out of the *salitreras* still in the hands of the treasury.
6. Thomas F. O'Brien 1979, 107.
7. The actual figure was £4,194,263.
8. Thomas F. O'Brien estimates that the British share of Peruvian bonds amounted in 1881 to between £24,000,000 and £25,000,000 (O'Brien 1979, 107).
9. Thomas F. O'Brien (1979, 112) quotes from the third letter of protest sent by Francis Pakenham to the Chilean foreign minister, "I will not attempt to conceal from Y E [Your Excellency] my belief that this enforced alienation of British property by the authorities of Chile will be viewed with profound surprise & concern by the Govt. of the Queen."
10. J. R. Brown argues in his *Nitrates Crises, Combinations, and the Chilean Government in the Nitrate Age* that the "Nitrate Era" which lasted for four decades from 1880 brought prosperity to Chile. The government made most of its revenue from taxes on nitrate exports, and "their rich harvest aroused the awe and envy of the world" (Brown 1963, 230). Brown concludes that "The Chilean government shared with producers responsibility for the course of developments in the Nitrate Age. Although quick to establish a high tax on nitrate exports, the government was slow in taking positive measures

- to alleviate crises or to promote long-range interests connected with the industry” (1963, 246).
11. It is possible that North was buying up certificates in Peru even earlier, perhaps from late 1879. See Blakemore 1974, 26, footnote # 119.
 12. See <http://projects.exeter.ac.uk/cornishlatin/Sirrobertharvey.htm> (accessed August 12, 2010).
 13. The company’s name was Compañía Salitrera del Rimac.
 14. Harold Blakemore (1974, 27) believes that this appointment was “probably on the recommendation of Admiral Patricio Lynch.”
 15. See, for example, Michael Monteón (2003, 75): “He may have known the contents of the Chilean decree before it was announced, but this cannot be proved. [However] he certainly knew which factories were the most valuable.”
 16. See www.albumdesierto.cl (accessed August 12, 2010).
 17. See <http://projects.exeter.ac.uk/cornishlatin/Sirrobertharvey.htm> (accessed August 12, 2010).
 18. A second Chilean bank, the Banco Nacional, was also lending to those who wanted to purchase certificates. Also, some Chilean speculators bought up certificates cheaply, among them Agustín Edwards Ross. “Chilean banks were, then, the source of resources which the English speculators used” (Ramírez Necochea 1958, 60, in translation).
 19. See David Joslin, *A Century of Banking in Latin America*, 1963, 180.
 20. Oliver Wooller, *The Consul and the Colonel* (unpublished), citing census returns for 1891.
 21. I am grateful to Oliver Wooller, Community Archivist, Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre, Bexley Council, for a copy of his paper “The Consul and the Colonel” (unpublished), and copies of the Letters Patent from the Maurice Jewell Collection (PE/JWL/1/1 & PE/JWL/1/2).
 22. I am also grateful to Oliver Wooller of the Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre for pointing out that Whitakers Almanac of 1888 gives Maurice Jewell as British Vice Consul in Iquique, and since there is no vice consul listed for previous years, then he was probably appointed in 1887. *The London Gazette* carried this notice on June 21, 1889: “Foreign Office, June 1, 1889. The Queen has been graciously pleased to appoint Maurice Jewell, Esq., now British Vice Consul at Iquique, to be Her Majesty’s Consul at Iquique.”
 23. The Letters Patent in the name of Queen Victoria reads, in part, “We have thought it necessary for the encouragement of Our Subjects trading to Iquique, to appoint a Consul to reside there to take care of the affairs of Our said Subjects, and to aid and assist them in all their lawful and mercantile concerns.”
 24. Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre, PE/JWL/2/1.
 25. Couyoumdjian (2000, 19) mentions that the Esmeralda *oficina* belonged to “Jewell and Company” after the War of the Pacific, and later came into the properties owned by “North and Jewell.”

26. The Porvenir *oficina* may well have been North's first nitrate investment, in 1878.
27. William Russell met with "Mr. Jewell," the manager of the Esmeralda *oficina*, on his visit in 1889 to Colonel North's nitrate investments in Tarapacá (Russell 1890, 211).
28. Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre, PE/JWL/2/2 & PE/JWL/2/3.
29. Maurice Frederick Stewart Jewell was born in Iquique on September 15, 1885 and became a successful cricketer for the county of Worcestershire.
30. *The London Gazette* on July 26, 1895 carried a notice requesting that any creditors to the estate of Maurice Jewell "who died at Viña del Mar in Chili on the 14th. day of March 1895" should make their claims known.
31. Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre, PE/JWL/2/10.
32. Ibid.
33. Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre, Maurice Jewell's will, PE/JWL/3/5.

4 The Nitrate King

1. Cinderella's father to his creditors in the pantomime "Cinderella" performed at the Prince of Wales Theatre. *The Birmingham Daily Post*, "Boxing Day Amusements," December 26, 1889.
2. See Harold Blakemore (1974, 29). The dates of purchase for these *oficinas* are unknown, but probably date from 1881/1882.
3. William Russell, *A Visit to Chile and the Nitrate Fields of Tarapacá*, 1890, 204.
4. See Jack B. Pfeiffer, *Notes on the Heavy Equipment Industry in Chile, 1800-1910* (1952). The other firms are Lever, Murphy & Company; Balfour, Lyon & Company; Hardie & Company; and Morrison & Company. Pfeiffer's source for information on North, Humphrey & Dickinson is the U. S. Department of State, Bureau of Statistics, Monthly Consular Reports, No. 68, Sept. 1886, p. 610.
5. The "W. and J. Lockett" ("merchants and shipowners") partnership of John Waite, Richard Robertson Lockett, William Jeffrey Lockett, and George Alexander Lockett, with business addresses at 12 King Street, Liverpool, and 93 & 94 Gracechurch Street, London, lasted until March 31, 1894, when "by mutual consent" John Waite withdrew from the partnership (*The London Gazette*, April 3, 1894). The company continued to trade with South America for many years, as "W. & J. Lockett" in Peru, and as "Lockett Brothers & Company" in Chile (in Iquique and Valparaíso).
6. See Rory Miller 1998, 248-9, footnote #52, "in 1895 three members of the Lockett family between them held fourteen directorships

- in North's companies." As an example, two of the three directors of the Colorado Nitrate Company were Richard Cyril Lockett and William Jeffrey Lockett (see the Stock Exchange Year Book, 1908).
7. Aldana and Harris 1910, 30.
 8. See Juan Ricardo Couyoumdjian 2000, 12, for an excellent short history (in Spanish) of the early development of sodium nitrate exploitation.
 9. See Soto Cárdenas 1998, 54.
 10. See also Oscar Bermúdez 1963, 106.
 11. This may have occurred at an earlier date too: William Bollaert (1851) writes that some nitrate was sent to England in 1820 but that on account of the high import tax it was thrown overboard.
 12. George Smith had revolutionized nitrate extraction at his La Noria *oficina* in the early 1850s, and Melbourne Clark joined Smith in 1854 as a partner and manager of operations. This business relationship remained close until Smith died in 1869. According to O'Brien (1982, 15), Smith's relationship with Gibbs started in 1856, with a loan to George Smith & Company, and was consolidated from 1860 when Gibbs's profits from Smith (and other nitrate companies) came to rival their income from the monopoly on Peruvian *guano*.
 13. These percentages are taken from Ramírez Necochea 1958, 65.
 14. See Rippy 1959, 57–9: "It would hardly be an exaggeration to assert that North was mainly responsible for founding all of the British joint-stock companies organized over a period of fourteen years for the purpose of engaging in the production, transportation, and sale of nitrate of soda. Companies which he did not himself establish were founded by his close associates or by men who were swept into the business by the stimulation of his activities and by reports of the profits that he and his associates were harvesting." See Rippy 1948, 460: The total nominal capital (paid-in) of North's companies, and those associated with him, was £7,171,400. The companies founded by North (with the date of founding) were: Nitrate Railways Company Ltd. (1882); Liverpool Nitrate Company Ltd. (1883); Colorado Nitrate Company Ltd. (1885); Primitiva Nitrate Company Ltd. (1886); Tarapacá Waterworks Company Ltd. (1883); Bank of Tarapacá and London Ltd. (1888); Lagunas Syndicate Ltd. (1889); Paccha & Jazpampa Nitrate Company Ltd. (1889); and Lagunas Nitrate Company Ltd. The companies founded together with associates were: San Pablo Nitrate Company Ltd. (1888); San Jorge Nitrate Company Ltd. (1888); Nitrate Provisions Supply Company Ltd. (1889); San Donato Nitrate Company Ltd. (1889); San Sebastian Nitrate Company Ltd. (1889); Santa Elena Nitrate Company Ltd. (1889); New Tamarugal Nitrate Company Ltd. (1890); and the Nitrate Producers' Steamship Company Ltd. (1895). *Note*: the Nitrates Railways Company was not actually founded by North; he purchased a controlling interest in 1887. Rippy's list does not include the Arauco

- Coal and Railway Company Ltd., founded by North in London in 1866, and linked to the nitrates industry in the north of Chile.
15. González Miranda (2001) notes that until 1910 the Jazpampa *oficina* belonged to “The New Paccha and Jaz Nitrate Company,” whose representative was Gamble North (John Thomas’s brother), with an address in Pisagua, from where the nitrate was exported. Both names come from the Quechua language, meaning divided plane (*jaz*) and land or space (*paccha*).
 16. Ramírez Necochea (1958, 66) gives the San Pablo Nitrate Company as founded in 1888 by Robert Harvey and James Inglis.
 17. The figure of £50,000 is given by Osgood Hardy 1948, 173–4, and Harold Blakemore 1962, 469.
 18. J. Fred Rippy (1948, 462) gives £110,000 as the company’s capital.
 19. Some machinery may also have been commissioned in Chile. Pfeiffer (1952, 139) mentions that in 1882 Robert Harvey purchased three nitrate crushing machines from the foundry of North, Humphrey & Dickinson in Tarapacá. It is worth remembering that John Thomas North cited that he was a “partner in the Engineering Works of North, Humphrey and Dickinson” in his application in August 1882 for membership of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.
 20. Alejandro Soto Cárdenas (1998, 50) provides figures by nation for nitrate production prior to 1879, when the War of the Pacific broke out, showing Peru at 58.5 percent, Chile at 19 percent, Britain at 13.5 percent, Germany at 8 percent, and Italy at 1 percent.
 21. Hernán Ramírez Necochea (1958, 66) gives the London Nitrate Company as founded by James Inglis in 1887, together with the Puntunchara *oficina*.
 22. The Agua Santa *oficina* was the first to introduce the revolutionary Shanks system for processing the *caliche*, and the innovator was the British engineer James Humberstone.
 23. James Inglis & Company purchased the San Donato *oficina* for £90,000 and sold it a month later for £150,000 (see Couyoumdjian 2000, 21). Ramírez Necochea (1958, 66) gives the San Donato Nitrate Company as founded by Harvey and Lockett in January 1889, following their joint investment in the San Jorge Nitrate Company in December 1888.
 24. One estimate is that at least three quarters of the nitrate output was used as fertilizer; see Brown 1963, 231.
 25. The export tax on nitrates was imposed on October 1, 1880 (during the War of the Pacific) and remained unchanged throughout the “nitrate age” of 1880–1919 at two shillings and four pence per Spanish quintal, payable in gold (Brown 1963, 230).
 26. Nitrate prices fell by at least 25 percent from 1881, when Chile decided to return the industry to private hands, to 1884; see Brown 1963, 232.

27. Figures taken from Ramírez Necochea (1958, 56). 1 quintal is the equivalent of 100 pounds.
28. James Humberstone, an English chemist, introduced the “Shanks” process into the nitrate industry in around 1878. This grew out of a system developed by James Shanks in Lancashire for the production of carbonate of soda. See Monteón 1975, 120.
29. Eighteen nitrate companies were founded in Britain in 1888 (seven) and 1889 (eleven); see Rippy 1959, 59.
30. In 1894, the Permanent Nitrate Committee expanded its activities by setting up the Asociación Salitrera de Propaganda (the Nitrate Propaganda Association) based on Iquique. Couyomdjian (1987, 435) notes that the committee comprised representatives of the British nitrate companies until 1911, when Chilean and other foreign company representatives joined the board.
31. *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, Bristol, August 4, 1894.
32. See Brown 1963, 235–7. North’s “nitrate ring” controlled the “Triple Syndicate,” made up of the Second Combination, the Nitrate Railways Company, and the Bank of Tarapacá and London.
33. The Chilean government took the initiative to form a third combination, which lasted from March 1896 to October 1897, but this was a complete failure. There was a fourth combination in 1901, which lasted for five years and was much more successful, and a fifth combination from 1906 to 1909, both supported by the government.
34. Hernán Ramírez Necochea (1958, 55) writes that North acquired the nitrate *salitrera* of Lagunas for £110,000 and invested £140,000 on installation costs, giving a total investment of £250,000. This was the basis for setting up his two Lagunas companies, which, together, came to have a capital of £2,122,000—a ninefold increase on the original investment. J. Fred Rippy (1948, 462) gives “£210,000 or less” as the price paid by North.
35. See, for example, *The Glasgow Herald* edition of June 21, 1894.
36. These shares were later sold by the Lagunas Syndicate at a profit of £24,000.
37. *The Economist*, June 23, 1894.
38. John Thomas North was appointed honorary colonel of the 2nd Tower Hamlets (East London) Volunteer Corps in March 1885, a title of which he was inordinately proud. See *The London Gazette*, March 24, 1885.
39. Court of Appeal, *Lagunas Nitrate Company v. Lagunas Syndicate*: 1896 L. 1196, *Law Reports Citation* 1899, 2 Ch. 392.
40. *The Times*, July 3, 1896.
41. *The Times*, February 10, 1898, report on proceedings in the High Court of Justice.
42. *The Times*, July 14, 1898, report on the judgment given in the case.
43. *The Economist*, June 23, 1894.

44. Rippy (1959, 63) writes that the Primitiva company was exceptional; “most of the enterprises founded by North and his close associates yielded high—sometimes enormous—dividends on their inflated securities.” From 1888 to 1896, the Liverpool Nitrate Company returned dividends amounting to 306 percent; the Colorado Nitrate Company, 72 percent; the Nitrate Railways Company, 174 percent, and the Lagunas Syndicate 100 percent (to 1895). Other companies in Colonel North’s portfolio did not do so well: the Bank of Tarapacá and London averaged less than 5 percent annually; the Tarapacá Waterworks Company between 6 and 10 percent annually; and the Nitrates Provisions Supply Company only ever paid one dividend, of 5 percent.
45. *The Express*, September 28, 1889, “Colonel North’s Views” (Avery Hill archive, R. 1.55). This piece actually quotes from an interview with North published in *The New York Herald*.
46. “The Nitrate Trade” published in *The Times*, December 6, 1890.
47. “Nitrate Companies” published in *The Times*, November 9, 1894.
48. “Nitrate Company Finance: Tomorrow’s Primitiva Meeting” published in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, November 27, 1895.
49. *The Economist*, November 2, 1895.
50. *The Economist*, November 9, 1895.
51. *The Economist*, November 30, 1895.
52. *The London Gazette*, December 24, 1895.
53. *The Economist*, November 30, 1895.
54. *The New York Times*, August 16, 1896.
55. Conditions for miners and factory workers in Britain during the North’s lifetime were probably not a great deal better, although there was some legislation to improve their lot. The 1874 Factory Act reduced working hours to ten per day, and forbade the employment of children under the age of ten, with full time work allowed only from the age of fourteen. The Factory and Workshops (Consolidation) Act of 1891 raised the minimum age at which a child could be set to work, from ten to eleven.

5 The Grand Promotion Army

1. *The Star*, New Zealand, “A Dangerous Enemy,” April 6, 1889.
2. *The London Gazette*, March 24, 1885.
3. Centner (1942, 77) gives 1885 as the year that the Arauco Company Limited was founded, and this may have been an earlier company before the railway interest was added.
4. Russell 1890, 48–58.
5. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, “The Arauco Collapse,” March 31, 1897 (Letter to the editor).
6. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, “City Notes: The Arauco Collapse,” March 29, 1897.

7. J. Fred Rippy (1948, 458) believes that North organized the first Nitrate Railways Company in August 1882, and that this was “the first of his joint-stock promotions.” This seems doubtful.
8. See, for example, *The Life and Career of Col. North*, 1896, 10.
9. *The Leeds Mercury*, “Sudden Death of Colonel North: Sketch of his Career,” May 6, 1896, quoting from an interview with Gastón Calmette (Editor of *Le Figaro*) on April 23, 1895.
10. Michael Monteón 2003, 77.
11. The Agua Santa concession was one of the largest *oficinas* in Tarapacá, dating from 1874, and completed in March 1878, while the territory was still Peruvian. This was the first *oficina* to introduce (in 1878) the revolutionary Shanks process developed by the English engineer James Humberstone for the more efficient refining of nitrates. The state acquired the company in 1915, and the railway line continued to function until 1931 (see Couyoumdjian 2000, 17).
12. “Nitrate Railways Company,” *The Times*, June 3, 1896.
13. Quoted in Zeitlin 1984, 99, and Binns 2007, 37.
14. Robert Harvey commented in his review of the annual report for 1895 that for about three years “a great commercial firm [which must be Gibbs] had been using its best influence to obtain permission from the Chilian Congress to construct a line from the Alianza grounds to the Caleta, or small port of Chucumata,” and that while this had been fought off for the moment, “with the cooperation of many Iquique commercial firms,” this development plus the reduction in nitrate production meant that there would be no interim dividend paid in July 1896 (“Nitrate Railways Company,” *The Times*, June 3, 1896).
15. “Nitrate Railways Company,” *The Times*, June 3, 1896. Notwithstanding these setbacks, the dividend paid for 1895 was 12½ percent; “a good return” according to Robert Harvey.
16. Quoted in Binns 2007, 13.
17. North held 16,000 shares in the Nitrate Railways Company in 1888, reduced to fewer than 400 by 1896. See Blakemore 1962, 472–3.
18. See, for example, the prospectus published in *The Liverpool Mercury* on March 19, 1888.
19. William Howard Russell, *A visit to Chile and the Nitrate Fields of Tarapacá*, 1890, 150.
20. Harold Blakemore calls him “Carlos Wüth’ (1974, 59).
21. The Tarapacá Waterworks Company lasted for many years after North’s death, as a company registered in London. A liquidator was appointed on February 22, 1956. See *The London Gazette*, February 28, 1956.
22. The Nitrate and General Investment Trust Company seems to have been removed from the register of joint stock companies in 1893. See *The London Gazette*, January 17, 1893.

23. David Burrell's source for the story is John Latta's account of what happened, published in the magazine *Syren and Shipping* in 1935.
24. The actual colors chosen for the steamer funnels were certainly inspired by North's racing colors—a five-pointed yellow star superimposed on two bands of light blue and red. There is also a similarity with the national flag of Chile, which presumably was no coincidence.
25. John Masefield, "Ships," first printed in *The English Review* in July 1912, and included in Heinemann's *Collected Poems* published in 1923.
26. *The Glasgow Herald*, "Commercial News," June 7, 1895.
27. The fourth steamer built for the Nitrate Producers' Steamship Company was named the *George Fleming*; all the subsequent ships had the Anglo prefix.

6 Colonel North

1. See *The 2008 Avery Hill Management Plan*, Appendix IV "Site Heritage & History," p. 27. <http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C68719B8-FF89-451E-9DE6-212C19B846CE/0/AveryHillPark.pdf> (accessed August 12, 2010). Other sources give twenty-three acres (see David Shorney 1990, 2).
2. Frances Consett (1949, 22) believes that the title deeds date back to the early seventeenth century.
3. *The London Gazette*, March 24, 1885.
4. The Corps had the secondary designation of "The East London Engineer Volunteer Corps," and consisted of six companies. This secondary title became the sole name of the corps in 1900, and then changed to the 1st London Divisional Engineers in 1908 when the Territorial Army was formed. See Walter Richards 1911, 37–8.
5. *The Express* (local newspaper in Dartford), "Volunteer Camp at Eltham," August 7, 1886. Avery Hill Archive: R. 1.55.
6. *The Express*, "Colonel John Thomas North at Avery Hill, Eltham," September 1, 1888. Avery Hill archive R. 1.55. See also "Chat of the gossips" published in *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, London, August 25, 1888.
7. David Shorney (1990, 3) writes that price paid was £17,500.
8. *The Leeds Mercury*, April 30, 1888, "The Italian Exhibition in London." *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times* of July 7, 1888 also reports that Colonel North was "the courteous President of the Reception Committee" for the Italian Exhibition.
9. *The British Architect* for June 26, 1891 carries a lengthy summary of the trial under the heading "Colonel North and his new house" (Avery Hill archive R. 1.42 [xii]). This was not the only litigation arising out of the renovation work; *The Times* of May 30, 1891 reported on the case brought by the builder in *Chappell v. North*, which claimed that he was owed £5,453. Colonel North characteristically

- counterclaimed for £1,200 “for delay and inferior work.” The counterclaim was dismissed.
10. See *The Pall Mall Gazette*, “The Nitrate King’s Castle at Eltham: Action by the Architect,” London, June 22, 1891. *The Times* on June 23 also gave ample coverage to the trial.
 11. In this context, by a public school, North was referring to his state school education.
 12. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, “The Nitrate King and His Architect: Verdict for Plaintiff for Full Amount,” June 23, 1891. *The Times* of June 24 also gave extensive coverage to the resumption of the trial and the verdict.
 13. *The Express*, “Colonel North’s Views,” September 28, 1889. (Avery Hill archive, R. 1.55).
 14. *The Express* on August 9, 1890 reported that “Colonel North’s new residence, which might well be described as New Eltham Palace, is now quite complete. The Colonel has been holding high festivities there. Every Sunday he receives an army of guests . . . I may mention that he has a succession of his carriages kept waiting at the station for all and sundry who are bound for his residence.”
 15. *The British Architect*, “Avery Hill: Rambling Sketches No. 710,” January 3, 1890 (Avery Hill archive R. 1.42 [ii]).
 16. For example, Joyce Wood, “Avery Hill College—The Original Building” (Avery Hill archive, R. 1.45). Other sources mention that the doors may have been stolen, or that when they were made they proved to be the wrong size. Harold Blakemore (1963, 470) writes that “At the entrance to the main hall stood two large gates of decorative ironwork, reputedly seized from the Cathedral of Lima by Chilean troops in the War of the Pacific.”
 17. *The British Architect*, “Avery Hill for Colonel North. The Lavatory,” March 14, 1890.
 18. Faïence (or faience) is earthenware decorated with colorful opaque glazes.
 19. *The Yorkshire Post*, “The Late Colonel North,” May 11, 1896 (Avery Hill archive: ref. R.1.14).
 20. *The Times*, “The Italian Exhibition,” June 11, 1888.
 21. Giuseppe Sciuti, Italian artist, 1834–1911.
 22. More recent times have been kinder to this painting. In 1998, the United States Postal Service issued a set of twenty commemorative stamps entitled “Four Centuries of American Art,” one of which featured Albert Bierstadt’s *The Last of the Buffalo*.
 23. *The Art Amateur*, “The London Letter: Curious prices at auction for pictures by Mr. Frith and M. Bierstadt,” May 1898, p. 129.
 24. John Adrien Raemaekers, according to Gerald L. Carr, *Bierstadt’s West*, 1997.
 25. *The New York Times*, November 10, 1895.

26. *The Illustrated Buffalo Express*. "A talk with one of the richest men in the world." December 27, 1892.
27. John Bennion Booth, *Palmy Days*, 1957, 179. See Chapter XV, "The Nitrate King."
28. *The Leeds Mercury*, "Sudden Death of Colonel North: Sketch of his Career," May 6, 1896.
29. *The New York Times*, "Turf Luck of Last Year: Englishmen Who Have Made Large Winnings," February 2, 1891.
30. *The Leeds Mercury*, "Sudden Death of Colonel North: Sketch of His Career," May 6, 1896. Also: *The Life and Career of Col. North*, "His Winnings on the Turf," 1896, 16; *The Times*, "Obituary: Colonel J. T. North," May 6, 1896.
31. *The Times*, "Sale of Colonel North's Stud," June 11, 1894.
32. John Bennion Booth, *Palmy Days*, 1957, 185–6. See Chapter XV, "The Nitrate King."
33. Graham Rock (*The Times*, February 28, 1989) estimates that 850 guineas would be equivalent to £50,000 (in 1989).
34. *The Express* (Dartford local newspaper), January 18, 1890. (Avery Hill archive R. 1.55).
35. See *The Times*, "The Colonel North Sale," March 17, 1898.
36. *The Express*, "Stag Hunt at Farningham," December 29, 1888. (Avery Hill archive R. 1.55). Colonel North participated in this "Kentish Stag Hunt." It seems that a deer was "uncarted" at a nearby farm, and then the pursuit began. On this occasion, "The rain... which came on later in the day spoiled the pleasure somewhat."
37. See "The North Scratch Medal" (Avery Hill archive R. 1.46).
38. This would be Albion's centre-half Higgins, who returned to the game with his head heavily bandaged from a cut, although his side lost in the end 1-0.
39. *The Times*, "The Late Colonel North's Mansion," July 28, 1896.
40. See "Opening of Avery Hill, Eltham," London County Council, 1903, page 5. (Avery Hill archive R. 1.26).
41. Southwood House is now the University of Greenwich administrative centre. It seems that Colonel North also stayed at the Hotel Métropole during renovation work: see *The Express*, "Odds and Ends," August 3, 1889. (Avery Hill archive R. 1.55).
42. See <http://www.gre.ac.uk/pr/articles/latest/a1772-listed-ladies-loo-open-to-visitors-on-february-6> (accessed August 12, 2010).
43. The Winter Garden and Avery Hill Park were used as locations in the 1978 film "The Big Sleep" directed by Michael Winner, and starring Robert Mitchum, James Stewart and Sarah Miles.
44. See "New Life for Avery Hill Winter Garden: An Oasis of Tropical Tranquillity," *The Bexley Chronicle*, September 2009.
45. *Life and Career of the Late Col. North: How He Made His Millions, As Told By Himself*, 1896, 12.

46. I am indebted to Eveleigh and Michael Bradford for having shared with me their excellent history, "Notes on Kirkstall Abbey: Purchase and gift to Leeds" (unpublished).
47. *Life and Career of the Late Col. North: How He Made His Millions, As Told By Himself*, 1896, 9.
48. See *The Leeds Mercury*, "Sudden Death of Colonel North: Sketch of His Career," May 6, 1896.
49. The actual check for £10,000 bearing North's signature is in the archives of the Thoresby Society in Leeds.
50. *The Leeds Mercury*, "The Gift of Kirkstall Abbey to Leeds," January 26, 1889. (Avery Hill archive R. 1.12).
51. *The Leeds Mercury*, "The Gift of Kirkstall Abbey to Leeds," January 26, 1889. *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times* of February 2, 1889 also gives the same figure of £900.
52. *The Derby Mercury*, "Colonel North at Leeds," January 30, 1889. *The Illustrated London News*, "Leeds Honours to Colonel North," February 2, 1889.
53. Abbey House was sold to Leeds City Council in 1925 for £6,000, and in 1927 became the Kirkstall Abbey House Museum, designed to display and preserve the history of people in Leeds, and which can be visited today.
54. Figures vary in sources. *The Glasgow Herald* of December 22, 1888, for example, gives £3,000 as North's donation toward the Leeds Infirmary extension.
55. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, "The Nitrate King's Latest Gift," September 20, 1889. *The British Architect* edition of January 3, 1890, "Avery Hill: Rambling Sketches No. 710," also mentions that North "endeavoured to purchase Holbeck Moor (his birthplace) as a recreation-ground for his townsmen."
56. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, "The Nitrate King and the Carlton Club," January 10, 1889.
57. *The Leeds Mercury*, July 8, 1895.
58. *The Leeds Mercury* on May 6, 1896, the day that North died, recalled in its obituary, "Sudden Death of Colonel North," that "In the strict sense of the word he was no politician, and was not ashamed to admit the fact... [On the political platform] he alluded to any subject under the sun except politics."
59. *The Times*, "Obituary: Colonel J. T. North," May 6, 1896.
60. *The Leeds Mercury*, "Sudden Death of Colonel North: Sketch of his Career," May 6, 1896. The actual numbers were 6,314 votes for Herbert Gladstone, and 6,218 for Colonel North.

7 The Sensation of the Hour

1. "Where did you get that hat?" was a popular music hall song by Joseph J. Sullivan (1888) and James Rolmaz (1901), originally

- sung by J. C. Heffron, and later performed and recorded by Stanley Holloway. "Colonel South" in the lyrics clearly refers to John Thomas North, and the song was allegedly written at the time that the Prince of Wales visited Colonel North's mansion, Avery Hill. See http://thealthamsociety.org.uk/articles/The_Road_to_South_America.pdf (accessed August 12, 2010).
2. This may in fact have been in Antwerp. *The Yorkshire Post* on May 11, 1896 includes "the North Portland Cement Works at Antwerp" among the wreaths received at North's funeral. *The New York Times* of the same day ("Death of Col. J. T. North") says that North bought land near Antwerp "and organized model cement works."
 3. The Maravillas (British) Silver Mining Syndicate Ltd.
 4. Debenture: A long-term debt instrument that is not secured by a specific asset. In the event of default, the holder does not have a claim against any specific asset(s) of the issuing firm. In this case, the Llynvi Company had issued two sets of debentures secured on different parts of the company's property, but there was a portion of the property not included in either set.
 5. See "The Colliery Disaster in South Wales: The Inquest," *The Times*, August 30, 1892. The company secretary, Mr. Briggs, told the coroner that "anything that the company could do to relieve the distress [of the relatives of those who had died] should be done," adding that Colonel North "was on the Continent, but they had received a telegram from Ostend from him, and he would be down in a few days."
 6. *The Times*, October 30, 1889.
 7. In 2001, the Bridgend County Borough Council gave listed building status under the 1990 conservation act to the Colonel North Memorial Hall, as part of the Maesteg Town Centre Conservation project, "an area of special architectural or historic interest." *The London Gazette*, April 30, 2001.
 8. *Western Mail* (Cardiff, Wales), May 4, 1897.
 9. *The Times*, January 10, 1895.
 10. Annexation came in 1908, when the Belgian Congo was created.
 11. *The West Australian*, October 6, 1894.
 12. *The Economist*, "Business Notes: The Londonderry Mine," December 14, 1895.
 13. *The Glasgow Herald*, "Our London Correspondence," November 7, 1894.
 14. Ibid.
 15. See, for example, *The Thames Star*, New Zealand, April 10, 1895, "The Londonderry Mine: Gold Said To Have Been Stolen."
 16. *The Leeds Mercury*, "Londonderry Gold Mine Limited: Reports from Experts," April 11, 1895.
 17. Nevertheless, *The Economist* (April 13, 1895) congratulated North and his partners for placing their profits in the hands of trustees "to

- be held until the company has earned profits equal to the amount of issued capital.”
18. *The Feilding Star*, New Zealand (August 22, 1895), quoting a Press Association report.
 19. *The Times*, December 11, 1895.
 20. See *Daily News*, “Colonel North and the Londonderry Gold Mine: His Intentions Do Not Bind His Executors,” August 11, 1898.
 21. N.L. stands for a No Liability company in Australia and is employed only with companies involved in mining operations.
 22. See Williams K.L. and R. A. Both, Mineralogy of the mines and prospects of the Zeehan field, *Geological Survey of Tasmania*. Records 11, 1971.
 23. *The Evening Post*, “Mining News: The Nitrate King invests in New Zealand,” March 2, 1895, p. 2.
 24. See David Burrell, *The Nitrate Boats* (1995, 17).
 25. See Harold Blakemore, 1974, 232.
 26. This may have been an investment in the Société des Tramways du Caire (Cairo Tramway Company) established in 1894 by the Belgian engineer and entrepreneur Baron Empain to build and operate the Cairo tramways system.
 27. *The Times*, “Law Report,” February 14, 1893.
 28. *The Daily Mail and Empire* (Canada) quoted *The New York Tribune* on October 24, 1895 in reference to the Ostend Project: “Colonel North has agreed to invest \$4,000,000 in converting [Ostend] into the sporting capital of Europe.” The newspaper reported that \$1,500,000 was the cost of the concession from the Belgian government and that “King Leopold has added to the beach section a portion of his own estate,” adding that North was committed to spending \$2,500,000 on the hotel and facilities. “This scheme has received the approval of the King of the Belgians and is to be carried out in detail over the next eighteen months with the capital supplied by the Nitrate King.”

8 A Visit to the Nitrate Kingdom

1. Pablo Neruda won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1971. “Pablo Neruda” was the pen (and later, legal) name of the Chilean writer and politician Nefalí Ricardo Reyes Bosoalto. Neruda’s *Canto General* was first published in Mexico in 1950. The 35th song entitled “Balmaceda de Chile (1891)” from the 4th Section (“Los Libertadores”) of this monumental work in Spanish contains the sentence—in English—“You are very clever, Mr. North” at lines 12, 56, and 74. The song begins “Mr. North ha llegado de Londres” (Mr. North has arrived from London), and refers to Colonel North’s return to Chile in 1889 with “two little Arab horses/ and a small locomotive/ all of gold,” which are “presents for the President,” José Manuel Balmaceda. In Neruda’s version, Balmaceda rejects the gifts without seeing them,

and says to North that “This land, this richness/ will be Chile’s, this white material/ I shall convert into schools, into pathways/ into bread for my people,” adding that “I cannot/ give you these concessions,/ I cannot lash my country/ to the mysteries of the City.” Still according to this poem, North retires to drink whisky at his Club, and “pounds sterling” begin to weave a web of corruption that embraces lawyers and politicians, leading to civil war and Balmaceda’s suicide. (All translations into English are by the author.)

2. *The New York Times*, “The Nitrate King’s Folly,” January 5, 1889. The reference to “Wales” is to the Prince of Wales.
3. Lord Randolph Henry Spencer Churchill, the father of Winston Churchill, became a friend of the Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VII) in the early 1870s. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, Randolph Churchill took an active interest in horse-racing, at the time that Colonel North was investing heavily in this sport.
4. *The New York Times*, “The Nitrate King’s Folly,” January 5, 1889. The “List of Guests, with Characters Represented” has survived and can be consulted at the Avery Hill archive: ref. Proctor 15.
5. This was not Colonel North’s first sumptuous ball. On January 21, 1887 he had taken over the Marlborough Rooms on Regent Street in London to offer the first Jubilee celebration for Queen Victoria. *The East London Advertiser and Tower Hamlets Independent* reported on February 5 that “The Marlborough Rooms were rather too full, that is all that can be said against the ball, but it was a fault on the right side; and when it came to the supper—well, there descriptive powers fail, for it was simply the best supper we ever sat down to.” Nor was this the first fancy dress ball he had organized; *The Express* on January 31, 1891 described a fancy dress ball for children held that month for children at Avery Hill at which “Little Master Arthur North, the nominal host, was attired in a handsome white satin costume as Edward VI,” and accompanied by his sister Emma, “the belle of West Kent.”
6. *The World*, January 9, 1889, Avery Hill archive, ref. Proctor 15A.
7. *The Star*, New Zealand, “A Dangerous Enemy,” April 6, 1889.
8. William Howard Russell’s reports for *The Times* on the Crimean War were very influential with the British public and politicians, and contributed to improved conditions for the soldiers and to Florence Nightingale and her nurses being sent out. (See Roger T. Stearn, *Russell, Sir William Howard (1820–1907)*, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography). Russell was knighted in 1895.
9. Osgood Hardy (1948, 176) comments that Russell “was persuaded to cancel Mediterranean cruise plans by an honorarium of £15,000,” but provides no source for this information. Roger T. Stearn believes that Colonel North paid Russell £1,000 to accompany him (*Russell, Sir William Howard (1820–1907)*, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography).
10. Melton Prior (1845–1910) published his sketches of Chile in *The Illustrated London News*, starting in August 1889, and these were

seen by readers all over the world. Most of the sketches were drawn on site, including those of the nitrate works, but others were copied from photographs by Luis Boudat, a photographer born in Iquique who in 1888 began to put together a collection of photos with the title *Album de las Salitreras*. See De la Taille et al. (1992).

11. This relic was, and still is, of great importance to Chile. On May 21, 1879 in the War of the Pacific the *Esmeralda* took on the much superior Peruvian ironclad *Huáscar* in the naval battle of Iquique and was sunk with Captain Arturo Prat dying heroically on the deck of the *Huáscar*. North's gift is now at the Escuela Naval Arturo Prat in Valparaíso. William Russell saw the trophy and describes how the capstan had been taken out of the wreck of the *Esmeralda* and mounted "by Messrs. Elkington as a shield, with reliefs of great artistic excellence representing the incidents of the combat. It was arranged that the President should receive this shield in the name of the State and deposit it in the Hall of the National Assembly at Santiago. The brass top of the capstan is surrounded by a silver border decorated with raised stars, inside which are small discs bearing the names of those who perished in the action of the 21st May, 1879, which date is inscribed at the top of the shield. Four allegorical figures in relief surround the capstan, the centre of which bears the Chilean star, and the words, 'Esmeralda—Chile'" (Russell, 1890: 83). The Santiago newspaper *El Mercurio* reported on May 17, 2000 ("Las Reliquias de la Esmeralda") that North commissioned a Mexican diver named Teófilo Clemas in 1883 to retrieve items from the wreck of the *Esmeralda* and that the clock from the officers' cabin was found and given to the Chilean President Domingo Santa María, and that his descendants gave this clock to the Chilean Navy in 1974. The clock can now be seen in the Museo Naval y Marítimo in Valparaíso.
12. See Bravo Elizondo and Guerrero Jiménez (2000).
13. Michael Monteón (2003, 83) also writes that Balmaceda refused to accept North's gifts. However, writing not long after the event, in 1900, Pedro Pablo Figueroa says in his *Diccionario Biográfico de Estranjeros en Chile* that North gave the capstan of the *Esmeralda* to the president and makes no mention of any controversy.
14. William Russell mentions the "thorough-bred stallion and a very fine sire of the Cleveland type... which were later on handed over to the Government at Santiago," and he too makes no mention of any controversy (Russell 1890, 84). Harold Blakemore (1974, 96) describes this as "another myth"—a "complete fabrication."
15. Ramírez Nechochea (1958, 92) quotes the newspaper *El Ferrocarril* of June 11, 1889 that the engine bore a plaque with the name "Balmaceda." Information from the 7th Company of Firemen in Iquique states that the engine (manufactured by Merryweather & Sons) never in fact used the name "Balmaceda," and that there was a debate over whether to call it "John Thomas North" or "Tarapacá";

- the final decision was in favor of the latter name. This was not Iquique's first fire engine: the firm of North & Jewell had sent a fire engine named "Iberia" for the Primera Compañía de Bomberos Española "Iberia," which arrived on the steamship *Pizarro* in December 1885 (Source: *Historia de las Compañías de Bomberos de Iquique*, Dimas Figueroa, Editorial Bini, 1888, Iquique). Harold Blakemore (1974, 96) writes that the fire engine brought by North in 1889 was to replace the one he had earlier imported but had been lost in a shipwreck.
16. See Ramírez Nechochea (1958, 92). The same newspaper account also mentions that North gave checks of \$1,000 to the Sociedad de Beneficiencia de Iquique, and to the English Club and the Chilean Club in Iquique.
 17. William Howard Russell 1890, 43.
 18. See Harold Blakemore 1974, 104.
 19. An allusion to *The Count of Monte Cristo*, the mysterious and fabulously rich aristocrat of Alexandre Dumas' novel, first published in English in 1846.
 20. *The New York Times*, July 3, 1889. The "new concession" is a reference to the Lagunas *salitrera*.
 21. *The Daily News*, "The Nitrate King," August 23, 1890.
 22. *The Times*, "The Chilean Revolution: From Our Special Correspondent," April 1, 1891.
 23. *The Times*, "The War in Chile: Latest intelligence. The Congressists Victorious." August 31, 1891.
 24. Michael Monteón (2003, 72) has the same opinion: the accusation that the opposition to President Balmaceda was "serving foreign interests and selling out Chile's future" can be put aside, "although it is the centerpiece of most of the literature about North and the civil war"—"Virtually no one who looks at the range of Balmaceda's enemies believes in such simple causality." Rory Miller (1993, 171) has similar views; while there is no doubt that British merchants supported the rebels, "whether the British companies conspired to initiate the revolution is a different question."
 25. "Nitrate Railways Company," *The Times*, June 3, 1896.
 26. Maurice Jewell resigned as vice-consul in 1892, and was succeeded by a career diplomat named Herbert Hervey. See *The Consul and the Colonel*, Oliver Wooller, Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre (unpublished).
 27. Hernán Ramírez Necochea (1917–1979) joined the Communist Party in 1934; became the dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Education of the Universidad de Chile in 1968; was exiled to France following Pinochet's coup of 1973, and never returned to Chile.
 28. Michael Monteón notes that "when Balmaceda turned on the working class in the crucial labor confrontation of 1890, he lost the only possible allies he would have had in the north" (Monteón 2003, 82).

29. See Loveman and Lira 1999, 227 for further details.
30. See Zeitlin 1984, 98–101.
31. Michael Monteón 2003, 69. Monteón argues for a reevaluation of North's impact on Chile.
32. *El Padre Padilla*, April 18, 1889.
33. Salinas Campos et al. (2005, 171), citing the newspaper *El Recluta*, April 28, 1891.

9 A Millionaire Stripped Bare

1. Quoted in John Black Adams, *The Life of Sir William Howard Russell*, 1911. Boreas was the god of the north wind in Greek mythology.
2. This may in fact have been the annual dinner of the Midland Railway Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Life Assurance Society held in Birmingham on May 1, 1896. See *Life and Career of Col. North*, 1896, 15.
3. *The Sidcup and District Times*, "Death of Colonel North: Special Memoir," May 8, 1896.
4. *The New York Times* on May 6, 1896 reported that "The shells of the oysters are to be analyzed, though the general supposition is that Col. North died from heart trouble."
5. The Buena Ventura company was previously named The Buena Ventura Nitrate Grounds Syndicate and had been voluntarily wound up in March 1896, with the liquidators, Harry North and George Alexander Lockett, authorized to register a new company as The Buena Ventura Nitrate Company Limited. See *The London Gazette*, March 27, 1896.
6. *The Sidcup and District Times*, "Death of Colonel North: Special Memoir," May 8, 1896. See also *The Leeds Mercury*, "Sudden Death of Colonel North," May 6, 1896; *The Times*, "Inquest on Colonel North," May 7, 1896.
7. *The Times*, "Inquest on Colonel North," May 7, 1896.
8. Ibid.
9. *The Sidcup and District Times*, "Death of Colonel North: Special Memoir," May 8, 1896.
10. *The Yorkshire Post*, "The Late Colonel North: Funeral at Eltham," May 11, 1896. Avery Hill archive: ref. R.1.14.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. North's Typewriter Manufacturing Company. While Colonel North may have had shares in this company, it was actually founded in 1892 by Lord North and manufactured the last of four typewriters which had typebars that overlooked the carriage *from behind*, unlike the downstroke machines we are accustomed to, which send the keys

from the front. The North's Typewriter is now a much sought-after collector's item.

14. *The Leeds Mercury*, "The Week," May 9, 1896.
15. Ibid.
16. *The Yorkshire Owl*, May 13, 1896.
17. *The Kentish Independent*, "The Death of Colonel North," May 9, 1896. Avery Hill archive: ref. R.1.13A.
18. *The Times*, "Obituary: Colonel J. T. North," May 6, 1896.
19. *The Economist*, "Millionaires in Business," May 9, 1896, p. 580.
20. *The Spectator*, "American Millionaires," reported in *The New York Times* on February 23, 1890.
21. Avery Hill archive ref. R. 1.15. See also the summary in *The Times*, "Colonel North's Will," July 6, 1896.
22. John Mayo 1981, 101.
23. William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, [IV, 3, 66 ff.]. First Lord to Second Lord.
24. *Harper's Weekly*, February 6, 1892, p. 142.
25. A bizarre example of how North was parodied—perhaps plagiarized is a better word—is the novel entitled *Romance of the Nitrate King; or Henry Cartwright of Leeds*, by Thomas Loomes, published in London by John Heywood. *The Glasgow Herald* reviewed the book in its Literature section on September 12, 1889.

"This has nothing to do, as might at first sight be thought, with Colonel North. It is an amazing story of a young Leeds' mechanic, who is sent out to Chili by his employers to manage a branch of the business there, who embarks in speculations on his own account with the aid of a wealthy and seductive widow, makes an enormous fortune, returns home, and is rewarded with a wife and a peerage. It is not very clear what he has done to deserve his honors, except in resisting the advances of the amorous widow, but he succeeded in his speculations, and gave the most expensive ball ever given in London. All this, however, is not attained without a variety of adventures and a long series of plots and villainies, for everyone seems to conspire to wreck Henry Cartwright and to run away with his wife... We have not been able to evolve the moral and have some hesitation in acknowledging the interest."

Appendix: Family tree of John Thomas North

1. I am very grateful to Karen Lawrence (whose husband is the great-grandson of Colonel North's niece Mary Emma Dickinson) for correspondence which contributed much to the information in this appendix. I am grateful too to Gwendoline Seabrook Smith of the Avery Hill archive for information relating to Colonel North's siblings and children.

2. Tony Scott. *Genforum*, “North,” January 15, 2002.
3. The 1861 census gives Mary’s age as forty-three. She was the inn-keeper of The British Queen Ann public house in 1861, and of The New Peacock Inn in 1871.
4. *The Express* (Dartford local newspaper), September 1, 1888. Also Tony Scott, *Genforum*, “North,” January 15, 2002. However, the 1861 census which gives the North family living at 78 Grape Street, Hunslet, cites Mary North as “head” of the household, and her status as “widow.” Since James North (her husband) appears on the marriage certificate for his daughter Emma on January 17 that year, this suggests he may have died in the period up to the census (probably taken in April or May), or that the fact that he was deceased was not given on the marriage certificate.
5. *The Leeds Mercury*, “Sudden Death of Colonel North: Sketch of his Career,” May 6, 1896.
6. Karen Lawrence: *Genforum*, “North,” June 8, 2002.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Text on tombstone text copied by Charlotte Hursey. See also: G. W. Wright, “English Graves at Tiliviche.” *Notes and Queries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 183 (1942), 216–7.
9. *Genforum*: “North Family,” March 16, 2002.
10. *Daily News*, April 23, 1889.
11. David Burrell, *The Nitrate Boats*.
12. Life and Career of the Late Col. North, *The Leeds Mercury*.
13. *The Leeds Mercury*, December 6, 1894. “The bridegroom presented [each of the six bridesmaids] with a diamond, sapphire, and ruby bangle.” There were over 600 presents, which included, for the bride, a diamond tiara and diamond necklace from her father; and a diamond and turquoise pendant from the bridegroom.
14. Until 1905, Harry was a captain and honorary major in the 4th Battalion (Militia) of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, and also honorary lieutenant-colonel of the City of London Royal Engineer Cadet Training Corps. Like his father, and his grandfather, he died young—at a very similar age in fact.
15. *The Times*: November 29, 1920.
16. See obituary in *The Times* on September 11, 1923: George Lockett came to head the firms of William & John Lockett (Liverpool, Lima, Callao), and of Messrs. Lockett Brothers & Company (Iquique and Valparaíso). When he died, he was a director of the Liverpool Nitrate Company, the Lagunas Syndicate Limited, and the Tarapacá Water Works Company.
17. *The New York Times*, November 4, 1892: “A special train conveyed the London guests to Eltham.” *The Glasgow Herald*, November 4, 1892: “The church was profusely decorated, and the men of the Royal Tower Hamlets Engineers . . . lined the aisle. Nine bridesmaids

made an imposing *cortege* in white bengaline dresses, with folded empire sashes and narrow neck frills of pink *crepe de chine*.”

18. During the First World War, Arthur Jewell received a commission as a lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery and then as a temporary Captain in the Northumberland Fusiliers and was awarded the Military Cross for valour. He was killed in action on September 27, 1918—a month and a half before the armistice. After his death, the estate was administered by a trust for the benefit of his widow and children. The *London Gazette* [supplement] of January 11, 1919 gives the Military Cross citation: “Capt. Arthur Jewell North, 4th. Bn. North’d Fus. (T.F.) attd. 12th/13th Bn. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. This officer led his company in the attack, only fours days after he had taken it over, capturing 70 prisoners and four machine guns. His leading contributed greatly to the successful issue.”

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Index

- ABIR, Anglo-Belgian India Rubber Company, 99–101
- Allende, Juan Rafael, 126
- Antofagasta, 17, 18, 19, 30, 41, 45, 71, 152 n. 6
- Antofagasta Nitrate and Railroad Company, 18, 41
- Arauco Coal and Railway Company, 43, 60–3, 112
- Arauco Company, 35, 159 n. 3
- Australia, 101–3
- Avery Hill College, 82, 88, 162 n. 16
- Avery Hill House in Eltham, 1, 72, 75–83, 84, 85, 86, 87–9, 97, 125, 129, 130–1, 133, 134, 139, 162 n. 16, 167 n. 5
- Balmaceda, José Manuel, President of Chile, xiii, xvi, 4, 33, 47, 64, 66, 69, 71, 107, 111, 112–14, 116–26, 166 n. 1, 168 n. 15, 169 n. 24
- Bank of Tarapacá and London, xvii, 32, 43, 48, 70–1, 118, 159 n. 44
- Bierstadt, Albert, 81, 162 n. 22
- Blakemore, Harold, Dr., xiii, 5, 8, 10, 11, 20, 21, 30, 33, 69, 114, 118, 120, 125, 137, 168 n. 14
- Bolivia and the War of the Pacific, 17–19
- Campbell, Outram and Company, 44, 65–6, 115
- Carrizal railway (Ferrocarril de Carrizal), 11, 12–13, 45, 61, 150 nn. 8, 10, 11
- Churchill, Lord Randolph, 4, 93, 108, 110, 167 n. 3
- City of London Exploration Syndicate of Western Australia, 101
- Civil War, Chilean, 4, 47, 64, 66, 71, 117–22, 123–5
- Colonel North, *see under* North, John Thomas
- combinations, *see* nitrate combinations
- coursing, sport of, *see* greyhound racing cricket, 87
- Cutler, Thomas William, 78–80, 82, 161 n. 9
- Darwin, Charles, 41
- Dawson, John, xiv, 22, 32, 34, 70, 113, 114
- Economist, The*, opinions on North's business activities, 46, 49, 51, 53–4, 65, 101–3, 117, 132–3, 165 n. 17
- election, general, *see under* North, John Thomas
- Esmeralda*, 111, 168 n. 11
- fichas* (tokens), 39, 54–5
- Financial News, The*, opinions on North's business activities, 56–7, 59–60, 110

- fire engine, gift of, 111, 168–9 n. 15
 Fleming, George, 34, 35, 48, 161 n. 27
 Fowler & Company (Leeds), 8, 9, 10, 11, 12–13, 37, 63, 150 nn. 8, 11, 13
 Freeman of Borough of Leeds, *see under* North, John Thomas
 Frith, William Powell, 80–1
 Fullerton, *see* greyhound racing
- Gibbs, Antony, & Sons, xv, 17, 25, 28–9, 41–2, 44–5, 66, 114, 118, 125, 135, 156 n. 12, 160 n. 14
 gold mining, 101–4
 golf, 87
 Greenwich, University of, 1, 82, 88, 89, 139, 163 n. 41
 greyhound racing, 85–7
- Harvey, Robert, Sir, xiv, 21–2, 29–32, 40, 42, 43, 45, 48, 66–7, 70, 71, 109, 115, 120, 157 nn. 19, 23, 160 n. 14
 Hervey, Maurice, 111, 119
 Holbeck, 7, 92, 164 n. 55
 horseracing, 83–5, 86, 87
 Hotel Métropole, 91, 107–10, 131
 Humberstone, James, xv, 115, 157 n. 22, 158 n. 28
 Hunslet, 8
- Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 8, 9, 11, 37
 Iquique, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 48, 52, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 111, 112, 115, 118, 120, 122
- Jewell, Maurice, xv, xvii, xix, 32–5, 48, 110, 120–1, 156, 154 nn. 22, 25, 155 n. 30, 169 n. 26
- Kirkstall Abbey, xx, 73, 89–92, 93, 132, 137, 164 n. 53
 Kitson & Company, 8–9
- Leeds, Freeman of, *see under* North, John Thomas
 Leeds, University of, 92
 Leopold II, King, 4, 100, 104, 130, 131, 166 n. 28
 Lockett, George Alexander, xvii, 35, 40, 133–4, 145, 147, 172 n. 16
 Lockett, William & Jno. (John), xiii, 39–40, 48, 51, 72, 155 nn. 5, 6
 Londonderry Gold Mine, 101–3
- Maesteg, 97, 98, 99, 165 n. 7
 Melbourne Clark & Company, 17, 40–1, 42, 156 n. 12
 mining ‘kings,’ 3
 Montt Álvarez, Jorge, President, 47–8
- Navigation Collieries Limited, 97–9, 131
 Neruda, Pablo, 3–4, 107, 166 n. 1
 New Zealand, 103–4
 nitrate (sodium nitrate), early history of exploitation, 40–1
 nitrate combinations, xv, 46–8, 158 n. 33
 nitrate companies & *oficinas*, 156 n. 14; *see also individual companies*
 Antofagasta Nitrate & Railway Company, 18, 41
 Colorado Nitrate Company, 40, 42, 115, 131
 Lagunas Nitrate Company, 4, 35, 48–51, 114, 115, 158 n. 34
 Lagunas Syndicate Limited, 48–51, 129
 Liverpool Nitrate Company, xv, 31, 39, 40, 42, 43, 75, 115, 131

- Paccha and Jazpampa Nitrate Company, 35, 37, 42, 45, 115, 157 n. 15
- Peruana *oficina*, 31, 37, 42, 115
- Porvenir *oficina*, 16, 17, 33, 152 n. 5, 155 n. 26
- Primitiva Nitrate Company, 37, 42, 51–4, 115, 131
- Ramírez *oficina*, 37, 39, 42–3, 115, 124
- San Pablo Nitrate Company, 42, 77, 115, 157 n. 16
- Tarapacá Nitrates Company, 42
- Nitrate & General Investment Trust Company, 43, 71, 160 n. 22
- Nitrate King, The, *see* North, John Thomas
- Nitrate Producers' Steamship Company, 4, 71–3
- Nitrate Provisions Supply Company, 43, 71
- Nitrate Railways Company, xvi, 43, 48, 63–7, 68, 110, 113, 115, 117, 118, 120, 122, 125
- nitrate workers, treatment of, 54–5
- North, Arthur Jewell, (son), 10, 76, 146–7, 173 n. 18
- North, Emma, (daughter), 10, 40, 82, 92, 109, 115, 134, 145, 147
- North, Gamble, (brother), 8, 72, 92, 130, 134, 139, 144–5, 157 n. 15
- North, Harry, Sir, (son), 10, 35, 87, 92, 99, 109, 111, 129, 130, 134, 145, 147, 172 n. 14
- North, Harry/Henry, (brother), 8, 134, 144, 150 n. 10
- North, James, (father), 7–8, 10, 143, 150 n. 5, 172 n. 4
- North, Jane, née Jane Woodhead, (wife), 10, 35, 81–2, 87, 92, 95, 99, 109, 133–4, 143
- North, John Thomas
- Balmaceda, President José Manuel, meetings with, 112–14
- banking investment, *see* Bank of Tarapacá and London
- business associates, *see* Dawson, John; Harvey, Robert; Jewell, Maurice; Lockett, William & Jno. (John); Waite, John
- coal investments
- in Chile (Arauco), 43, 60–3; *see also* Arauco Coal and Railway Company; Arauco Company
- in Wales, *see* Navigation Collieries Limited
- colonel (honorary) of 2nd Tower Hamlets (East London) Engineer Volunteer Corps, 1, 60, 76–7, 87, 107, 131, 161 n. 4
- death, 54, 125, 129–30
- decorations bestowed upon, 4
- early years in Chile/Peru to 1871, 11–13
- early years in England, 7–11
- early years in Iquique to start of War of the Pacific (1879), 15–16, 18
- Freeman of Borough of Leeds, 91–2
- funeral, 130–1
- general election, candidate in (1895), 92–5
- Gibbs and Company, relationship with, 41, 45, 114
- gold mining investments, *see* gold mining
- home in Eltham, *see* Avery Hill House; paintings and sculptures
- horses, *see* horseracing
- nitrate certificates, purchase of Peruvian, xiv, 4, 20, 21–2, 25, 29, 31, 153 nn. 4, 5

- North, John Thomas—*Continued*
 nitrate company investments, *see*
under nitrate companies
 nitrate railways, *see* Nitrate
 Railways Company
 obituaries, 94, 95, 131–3
 personality and appearance, xiv,
 xxxi, 6, 7, 13–14, 22–3,
 35–6, 45, 64, 73–4, 75,
 83–5, 91, 92, 104–5, 110,
 115, 116, 127, 136–9, 141–2
 as philanthropist, 136–7
 rubber investments, *see* ABIR
 steamship company, *see* Nitrate
 Producers' Steamship
 Company
 during War of the Pacific, 20–1
 water, investments in provision
 of, *see* Tarapacá Waterworks
 company
 will, 133–4
- North, Mary, née Mary Gamble[s],
 (mother), 8, 143, 150 n. 5,
 172 nn. 3, 4
- Ostend tourism project, 104, 166 n. 28
- paintings and sculptures,
 acquisition of, 80–2
- Pall Mall Gazette*, *The*, opinions on
 North's business activities,
 52–3, 62, 63, 78–9
- Permanent Nitrate Committee, 47,
 71, 158 n. 30
- Peru and the War of the Pacific,
 18–19
- Pisagua, 13, 16, 39, 64, 66, 67, 70,
 108
- Prince of Wales, 1, 4, 97, 107–8,
 130, 137, 164 n. 1, 167 n. 3
- Prior, Melton, 38, 81, 108, 110,
 111, 113, 167–8 n. 10
- railways, *see* Antofagasta Nitrate and
 Railroad Company; Arauco
 Coal and Railway Company;
 Carrizal Railway; Nitrate
 Railways Company
- Ramírez Necochea, Hernán, 10, 20,
 27, 30–1, 33, 43, 44, 68–9,
 95, 111, 121–2, 123,
 158 n. 34, 169 n. 27
- robber barons, 3
- Russell, William Howard, Sir, 12, 39,
 61–2, 67, 69, 110–11, 112–15,
 116, 129, 167 nn. 8, 9
- Sciuti, Giuseppe, 80–1
- Shanks refining process, 46, 55,
 115, 157 n. 22, 158 n. 28
- Steam Plough Works, *see* Fowler &
 Company (Leeds)
- Tarapacá and London, Bank of,
see Bank of Tarapacá and
 London
- Tarapacá Waterworks Company,
 xvi–xvii, 15–16, 20, 43,
 67–9, 160 n. 21
- Tower Hamlets (East London)
 Engineer Volunteer Corps,
see under North, John
 Thomas
- Valparaíso, 12, 17, 19, 22, 32, 34,
 44, 46, 51, 60, 68, 70, 112,
 113, 114, 115, 118, 135, 150
 n. 11, 152 n. 10, 168 n. 11
- Waite, John, 39, 155 n. 5
- War of the Pacific
 Chile's decision to honor nitrate
 certificates, 25–9
 effect on the Nitrate Railways
 Company, 64
 origins, *see* Bolivia and the War of
 the Pacific; Peru and the War
 of the Pacific
- Waterworks Company, *see* Tarapacá
 Waterworks Company
- Zegers, Julio, 122, 126