

William (Bill) John Wright

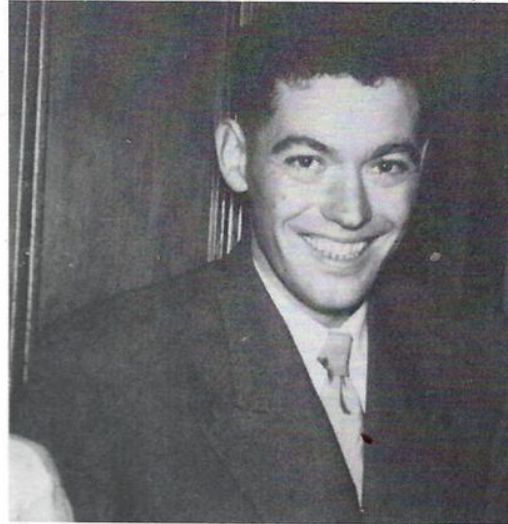
Bill was born in Carterton on 9 May 1926. Bill's father - Ernest John (Jack) Wright - was born and raised at Akitio and his mother -Dorothy (Dot) Davies was born at Kaitoki, Dannevirke. When Bill was a baby, his parents returned to Akitio to live on the old Wright homestead by the Akitio river mouth.

Bill attended Akitio School when it opened in 1933. When the school closed approximately 2 years later, Bills education continued via a correspondence course under the supervision of his mother- something he wasn't thrilled about! When his mother got sick of teaching him, Bill and his brother Peter went to Waione School on the mail bus 3 days a week for the next 2 years. Bill then went to Terehunga School for 18 months and finally Dannevirke High School for a year.

Bill had many fond (and not so fond) memories of his time living at Akitio. He spoke fondly of Wattie Kingston and his team of bullocks in the early years. He gave a hand in droving the last of the bullocks to their "last holding paddock". Having known the bullocks all his life, he cried when he had to say a final goodbye to them. This is quite a big admission for Bill as he wasn't a man to shed tears easily!



Jack Wright's house, Akitio River North.



Young Bill Wright.

During the war years Bill worked wherever he was needed - he ended up running a shearing gang for Bill Meech at Pongaroa before eventually moving into Pahiatua and becoming a shearing contractor. He worked hard and expected his co-workers to do the same. He didn't have time for those who didn't pull their weight and he certainly let them know! Undoubtedly, he was not a man to mince his words – he definitely called a spade a spade!

Bill married Zela Hart from Tiraumea in 1951. They had 4 children – Linda Mary, Robyn Anne, Stephen John and Paul William. They raised their children at Scarborough Road, Mangamutu before moving into their own home in Pahiatua in the early/mid 80s.

In later years, Bill was involved in many different Māori committees including the Pahiatua Marae committee and the Access scheme that ran in the late 80s, Taiwhenua ki Tamaki-Nui-A-Rua, and the Management committee for Owahanga in earlier years. He was staunchly Kahungunu.

Leisure wise, Bill and Zela were both actively involved with Probus in Pahiatua and enjoyed indoor bowls well into their later years. They both adored all of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren that followed. All of their mokopuna have nothing but fond memories of both their grandparents. Sadly, Zela passed away in Arohanui Hospice in 2010.

Bill walked every day rain, hail or sunshine right up until he became ill in 2013. He said "it kept the old bones going".

Bill's health took a turn for the worse at the beginning of 2013. His memory started to fade and his "old bones" became frail. He spent his last days at Rahiri retirement home in Dannevirke where he assumed the role of being in charge of the other residents there (whether they liked it or not). It was during this time that he also reverted to talking about his days on the Coast such as the big sheep stations he worked at, rabbiting, the old mail service, his days shearing for Bill Meech and his life on the Coast in general.



Bill as we have known him.

Bill passed away peacefully in his sleep on 3 September 2013 in the presence of family members. He was 87 years old. He is buried with his beloved wife Zela at the Pahiatua cemetery. He is survived by 4 children, 8 grandchildren (including one deceased) and 15 great-grandchildren.