

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ERA





Mum 1979



This photo was also taken in 1915 during a performance of "San Toy". Her Brother Leon & his wife Phyllis are the other 2 people in the photo.



My Dad, also about 1915.



Dad, 1st world war, after receiving his D.C.M.

Dad, 2nd world war.



Dad, C 1923 ready for the roads with his big bike.



another view of "The Bike."

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ERA

by Margaret Wilton nee Speakman.

To our Grandchildren that they may get a glimpse of life as it was in our lifetime.

As you know me, my name is Margaret Joan Wilton, before I married your Grandy, my name was Margaret Joan Speakman, so I will tell you something of my Parents Life as well.

My Mother was Mildred Joan Speakman, formerly Fail, she was generally known as Mick, probably because she was the last of her Family, (she was actually a twin, twins ran in the Family, she had twin brothers, unfortunately her twin, Grace Helen, died in an epidemic of Diphtheria in 1895) With 4 brothers before her, Mick was, what we would call a bit of a Tomboy. However, she also liked to sing and dance and play the piano. Their Family were all musical, all of the Family either played a musical instrument or had a good singing voice. They all participated in some way in the various musical presentations that were performed in Hastings from time to time. Her older Brother Leon produced "Marama" an early presentation in the Hastings Municipal Theatre. Mick attended the Hastings Central School for her education, then attended the Convent for instruction in shorthand and book-keeping, however, I don't think she made use of these subjects as I think most of her working life was spent at "Westermans" shop. This shop has long since gone but the building situated on the corner of Russell St. and Heretaunga Streets is now in use as an information bureau. I can remember Westermans being a fascinating place to shop, where you could buy all sorts of pretty things that you couldn't get elsewhere and when you paid, your money was put into a machine with the docket and it zoomed away across the ceiling to the office, there, the change was put into the container and it would then zoom back to your counter. I think working in Westermans then, must have been like working in Japan today. If you worked well you had a job for life, I know many years later the staff that were there when Mum worked there were still working there, even though some were really old and in one case, one man had only one arm, so, how about that.

I will now tell a little about my Father, he too was the youngest in his Family, he was educated at Auckland Boys Grammar. Shortly after he finished his education, the first world war was declared and he put his age forward and went to do his bit for King and Country. He spent 3 years overseas, during this period and was one of the fortunate men who came through the Battle of Passchendale, in fact he was one of only 17 survivors of one Auckland company and his Captain was one day to become Prime Minister of New Zealand. Dad said to him after the battle that he, Gordon Coates could be the Godfather of one of his sons after his marriage. Thus 18 years later the Right Honourable J.G.Coates attended the Christening Service for John Gordon Lawrence Speakman and became his Godfather. This is your Great Uncle John Speakman.

While Dad was overseas he obviously did his job well as he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and the Military Medal. He was eventually wounded in France and was for a time fairly ill, but with the help of a steel plate in his head he recovered and was able to live a fairly normal life.

I'm not sure when my Parents met each other, I think it was after the war, but in any case meet they did, they did some courting for awhile before marrying in 1924. My Father did a lot of both cycle racing and motor-bike racing and a cousin of mine has told me, how, he bought a big black motor bike, leather helmet, gloves and a long leather coat down to his heels, quite a dashing hero home from the war.

He took off to Napier after that so I guess that is when he met Mum and eventually settled down. He worked a lot on the formation of both the Napier Taupo and the Napier Wairoa-Gisborne Roads and there are some early photos of these roads that you may find interesting.

Pictures of the Napier - Wairoa - Gisborne roads
in the early days of motorised Transport.
about 1924 - 25.



"The Road" when first formed.



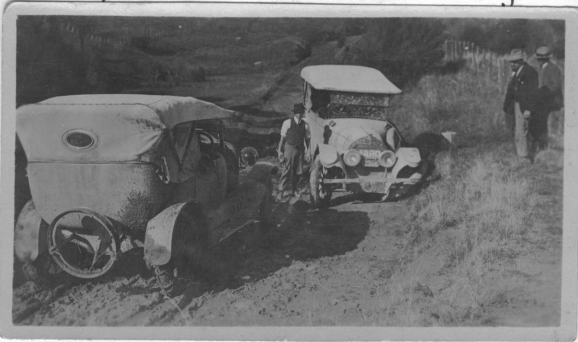
Crossing a dangerous section.
Dad at wheel of
his "Page".



Having a rest after a heavy climb.
Dad leaning on the 2nd car.
The "AARD" was the name of the
Transport Co. like Newmans today.



Foraging a creek.



The Page + J. B. (Dad) to the rescue
when the Cadillac broke a
wheel.



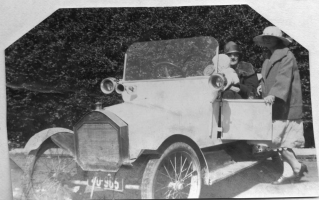
Digging the tracks!



To Wairoa by boat.
This is a group from
the Hastings Operatic
Society going to
perform at Wairoa.



Mum,
Dad & I.



Mum & I.

I have included
photos of pram &
pushchair for
comparison with
present day
models.

This is probably
the age when
I went walking
with the sheep!

Our Humber Car with Nan.
(Mum's Mother) Mum & myself.





Don't you like our bathing costumes? Dad is standing & I'm the first one in front.



Our model A with the dicky seat. Dad, my Godmother Edda Ford, Mum & I.



1932.



My Birthday party 7 or 8?

All of these photos taken prior to the 1931 earthquake.



Our Home in Kennedy Road at the time of the earthquake.



Canvas Town, where we lived for a little 'til we went to Wellington. Nan & I sitting in the middle.



An earthquake photo.

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If one wanted to go to Wairoa from Napier in those days you went by boat and I have a photo of some of the folk on one of those boats too.

Eventually I guess all this toing and froing between Napier and Wairoa got a bit much so they agreed to get married and this is when I came into the picture.

I am the eldest of our Family having 2 brothers and a sister, I was born in Napier and for eight and a half years was an only child. This part of my life is fairly dim, but some things stand out quite well. We lived in Greenmeadows for a time and when I was quite small they lost me, a mob of sheep had gone along the road and I was fascinated and went too, because I was so small they couldn't see me above the sheep, I was quite O.K. and I guess they made sure the gate was shut after that.

Mum's only living sister lived in Wellington and I can remember quite well the many times we made the journey there for Christmas. I was very lucky I had several Christmas's, my Uncle Leon and his wife Auntie Phil had no children, Mum's sister and her husband had no children so I ended up with 3 Christmas's. Father Christmas used to arrive whilst we were travelling down to Wellington. We had a model A car with a dicky seat and the pillowslip for Father Christmas was always left in there and sure enough, he always found it.....one night I even saw him fill it! I also one day saw the prettiest fairy ever, she flew out of our sitting room window when I entered the room, she was dressed all in blue.

We used to have to have some lovely musical evenings together, there were several families all with youngsters, and the Mum's would prepare a plate for supper and they would arrive at someone's home for a surprise party, mostly these were held on a Saturday night, (because of course there was no 40 hour a week then) when the children got too tired they were all bedded down wherever there was room and went to sleep while the adults continued to enjoy themselves, I might add, we all had the time of our lives too.

This was in the days before radio. I can't quite remember when we got our first radio but we did have one quite early in the piece, Dad had built what was called a crystal set, in those days it was quite amazing, it enabled us to hear people singing and talking.

In those early days, we shifted around Napier, quite a bit, by the time I was to start school, we lived in, what, now-a-days would be called a flat above a garage and clothing factory, in Dalton Street. While we lived there, there were two fires, 12 months apart, quite exciting with the fire engine being present in all its glory, we were O.K. with only smoke damage done.

I first started school at Hastings Street School in Hastings Street Napier, this school no longer exists. We didn't have school uniforms in those days but we all wore an apron with a big pocket in it so we had a place to put our things.

We did not have writing books as you do today but we had slates and slate pencils and OH the horrible scratchy noise we got on occasions, agh. It really set ones teeth on edge.

We then moved from Dalton Street and went to live in Kennedy Road where we were living at the time of the 1931 earthquake. I was attending the Nelson Park School at this time and I remember my Grandmother, (my Mothers Mother) who was going into town on the Red Cheque Bus (for obvious reasons, it was painted all over in red chesks) to collect her pension, when the earthquake struck, the bus was near the school and she jumped off the bus and came running over to reach me, I can remember her jumping over the low stone fence we had there, and running across to where we were playing in the yard, she took my hand and took me home. I can remember sleeping in tents in McLean Park that night with lots of other people while the ground continued to shake and shake,

7.
An
extract
from
the
publication
"Before
&
After."

X Amongst them, and one of the best, was that of some 200 men organised by Mr. J. B. Speakman. They have been busy all day getting the injured to places of succour. Dressing stations, with the assistance of the doctors and the Red Cross, have been established at Nelson Park, Civic Square, Melton Park, Fox's House at Awatoto, and Napier Park racecourse, where hundreds of injured people are receiving attention, though deaths hourly occur. An operating station has been installed at the racecourse. There is a first-aid station at the Botanical Gardens. Dozens of people have placed garages and other comparatively safe buildings at the disposal of the helpers.

The women of Napier are wonderful. "It's no use being any other way, times like these," said one of them, and this seems the general motto; but to see it carried out so thoroughly is amazing. Death is a commonplace in every street, but people are anxious to wear the customary gloom in such cases, working for others taking its place. Concerted action is yet impossible but a great deal is being done.



At Auntie
Annes in
Wellington
Nan, Mum,
A. Anne me
& my beloved
doll Peggy.
1931



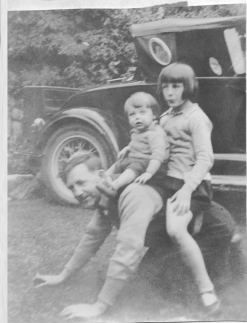
beloved Brother
Leon.



a typical baby
bath of this era.



Grandfather Speakman,
(Dads Father)



Uncle Charles (Dads Brother) with his
wife Carrie & I think my brother John.
Both these photos taken at Munro St. Napier.

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very scary, however, eventually people got used to the shaking and started going back to their homes to get necessary items.

My Dad during this time was very busy helping in the cleaning up of the city, we didn't see him for a few days. When things settled down a bit, those who had relatives away from Napier who could accommodate them were transferred to wherever. Because my Mother had a Sister who lived in Wellington we went down there to her for a few months I think, I know I attended St. Mark's school at Karori for a time because it was close by.

After we returned to Napier we had another shift this time to 7 Kinross White St. I then attended Te Awa School, where I also had a cousin Noela Speakman attending there, we had a lot of fun there and then a big event took place in our Home. A baby Brother was born, he was very important to me, so much so, that I had been saving my pennies towards paying for him. I can remember going with my Father to Nurse Skittrup's Nursing home in Carlyle Street and handing over my savings to pay for him, so, as you can imagine I regarded him as mine, he was very precious to me, still is. Before he arrived on the scene I used to have terrible nightmares and when Leon arrived he was moved into my bedroom and - the nightmares stopped - so he was special!. During these years they used to have special matinees at the Picture Theatres, these were sixpence, and one belonged to the Mickey Mouse Club and had a badge and a card to prove it. There were always serials that were continued next week and of course one couldn't possibly miss it. I guess that was one way of making sure we behaved ourselves, if you didn't - no pictures. I can't really recall anything like that though. Very soon Shirley Temple became a Star and there were plenty of her films to watch, then came Deanna Durbin, lovely musicals which I really enjoyed.

At this time I was learning dancing and piano and thoroughly enjoyed them too, especially the performance part, must have got that from my Mum. However I got a bit tired of practising the piano and played Hookey from some of my lessons till Dad found out and that was the end of that, pity, because later when I wanted to play I had to pay for my own lessons, plus I had wasted a few years. It was during this period that I received a lovely Dutch Teaset (a child's one) from our Landlady, this was for my 8th birthday, this is now in the possession of my Granddaughter Katrina.

We now had another shift and went to live in Munro Street and I once again attended Hastings Street School. Here too we had another addition to our Family in the birth of a Sister and 13 months later another Brother. I think I can find some photos to put in with these words which illustrate the various places where we lived.

I can remember Grandfather Speakman visiting us there, he was pretty tall with a BIG moustache that tickled, he used to say, how would you like to have a fly on your nose and not be able to knock it off, eh, He also used to recite poems to us, one of which was about 6 times 9, I've studied my tables over and over and backwards and forward too, but I can't remember 6 times 9 no matter what I do...I can't remember the rest of it but I know the answer was the name of a doll Mary Lou!

I can also remember here, Mum had an attack of Blight (an eye infection) and she had to stay in bed in a darkened room and a neighbour came in to feed us youngsters and she gave us bread & milk.... I can still taste the horrible taste, she was really put out when we didn't eat her perfectly good food, she had no children and thought we should be grateful for what we received.....It wasn't as if we were used to fancy food, we weren't but....

We then had another move, this time to Carlyle Street, we had previously lived almost next door in a little cottage, up a lane behind Bernie Goldings shoe repair shop, this time we were along side his shop and we had a bit more room in the house. A lot of appliances that we take for granted now-a-days were not around then, NO electric stoves only black wood stoves that used to be



My Dad.



Me, Anne + My Bike.



My Mum.



Leon, Anne + I.



1940

Family Photos during this Era.



Dad + his Babies!



John

Leon

Anne

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polished with zebra cleaner until they shone, these stoves were used for everything, cooking, heating, boiling up water for a warm wash as there was no hot water in the taps, on bath nights,

which were about once a week, the copper in the wash house had to be boiled to give enough water for everyone, meanwhile the little ones were often bathed in the kitchen sink which was nice and big many is the time I bathed the littlies in this manner.

At this time Dad made me a cart which I used to take to Robert Holt's timber yard on a Saturday morning and load it up with lighting wood for our fire, if I was lucky I would get two loads in, it was a real meeting place on Saturday mornings when hordes of kids and their carts would arrive for a free load. Robert Holt's staff would put a big pile of wood in a certain place and it was free for the taking, and only available on Saturday mornings. After this of course we would go off to our Mickey Mouse Club. About this time one of my friends who lived nearby, and was regarded as my double, got a shock, we were playing hopscotch on the pavement outside, when my Mum called me to do something, I went off and Dad had heard Mum calling and thought I was still outside playing, he came out and grabbed her and said can't you hear your Mother calling? only to discover I had gone and it was Jill to whom he was talking, she ran off like a scalded cat.....It was while we were living here that I received my first bike, it was brand new, and came from the Farmers Trading Co. in Auckland, this was a wonderful company, they used to send out coloured catalogues of all the goods available, huge big volumes, not like the pamphlets we receive today, they had every possible thing in them and one could spend hours reading and dreaming through their pages.

It was from this house that I started Napier Intermediate School. Napier Intermediate was one of the very early Intermediate schools and it was a sort of trial I think, my Dad was on the School Committee there and did a lot of work in many ways for the school. This was a really new concept and I loved it there. These were the times of the depression and money was pretty tight. Dad was an insurance agent for the T&G during this time and I know he paid people's insurance for them so they wouldn't lose their money. I don't know how long he kept that up, but I do know we did not go hungry, although there wasn't much money around.

Shoes then, always seemed to be expensive and I can still recall the joy of putting on new sandals for the summer, the thrill of jumping in these new sandals was great.

At the Intermediate school our Headmaster was Mr. W.Langford, he had an arty bent and he decided that we should put on an Operetta, all the art classes did the scenery, back drops etc. the sewing classes could make the costumes and of course the music classes could do the entertaining. It was great and something I really enjoyed. Unfortunately Dad decided it was time for another shift and we moved out to Pakowhai in the middle of the country, well sort of! I even had a cow to milk before I went to school, that really was a challenge but one I mastered all right. We weren't there very long and we moved to Westshore, where the moving around stopped and that is where the family remained from then on. (My Brothers and Sister only had to cope with 1 school!.)

Well it was a new ay of life over there, we had a big tin bath with a gas caliphont over it and just by pushing in the pilot light, you got an explosion and then HOT water on tap.....Mum also had a gas stove as well as the coal range in the kitchen. We used to go for long walks along the beach picking up lighting wood and pieces of coal that had come from the coal boats out in the Bay. There was always a lovely warm house to come home to and a big black kettle always on the boil.

Some times were not so happy there to begin with. Because I had started at Intermediate I wanted to continue there and I used to ride my bike for this purpose and the local children took exception to me not going to their school and they would turn their pig dogs on to me as I rode past, so I had to go the long way over the embankment bridge to school, however that didn't hurt me. It was about this time that I became interested in the Girl Guides and I used to bike into school (about 4 miles each way) after school I would stay the night with friends, go to Guides, then go home after school the next day. There were no buses from Westshore at this time. This was the Era we learnt to surf, we had an old board that we used, we had a lot of fun and some scares too, there were no life-guards then either.



I loved reading
anywhere!



2nd world war.

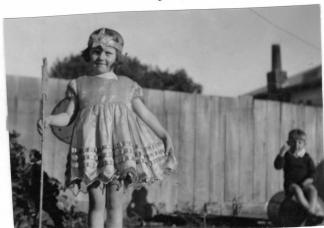


Trinity Methodist Guide Co.

↓ Ready for the School Ball
one small brother obviously not
old enough!



Growing Up
11.8.1942



Me and my Sister. 1941



9.3. 1943



We all love to entertain
with music, story or song
Dress up, laugh, ease the
strain
Make life happy as you
go along.

1942

1937



Mum →
as she so often
was—
at the piano.





State Advances
Basketball team.

Marching girl



19

43.



Area 7 Corp of Signals

Swimming
costumes
had
improved
a little by
this time.



Our first Westshore
Brownie Pack
already for their 1st
concert.



at Alex's SISTER STELLAS wedding.

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We used to have 6 penny learn to dance nights in the Westshore Hall on a Saturday night Dad would teach us to dance and very often Mum would play the piano although sometimes we would have an orchestra, this was the day of school balls, days or rather nights when the children would all dress up in all manner of costumes and lead off with the Grand March which the children had been practising for weeks.....very impressive.

By this time, Leon, Anne & John were probably all at school or nearly anyway. War the 2nd world war was looming and Dad, with soldiering in his blood, was one of the first to volunteer for service and away he went for the second time. Also just prior to this I had left school and gone out to work. I didn't feel, at the time that I was to go to High School that the family could afford this expense, so I had gone back to Intermediate for a third year, in those days this could be done and at the end of this year I was old enough to go out to work. Jobs in those days were very difficult to find, as they are today, what's new? however. I took a job doing housework for a lady on the hill until such time as I could find something better. Eventually I got a job in Arnold's clothing factory which was good for me because I was interested in sewing and if I kept my eyes open I could pick up all sorts of tips and hints on sewing, this I did. I was working in the factory when war broke out and we immediately received an order for thousands of glengarries, (army caps) and it was through first making these caps that I contacted sinusitis, (this came through all the dust in the khaki material) and I have suffered from it ever since. It became so bad that I had to give up the job and our old family doctor suggested I go into the army, it would do me good!

Well I applied and was accepted and away I went to the W.A.A.C camp at Mirimar in Wellington. Well I thoroughly enjoyed this and got on really well, the physical part of the training was great and this was something we had done quite a lot of at school, (at Intermediate we used to practice every morning before school started and frequently we gave massed drill displays finishing up with all sorts of tableaux etc. some involving a good many pupils.) In the Army we used to have route marches all around Mirimar and everyone would sing their hearts out, it kept one's mind off how far we had to go....

My Girl Guide Captain had enlisted in the Army early on and she was in charge of the Signal Corps stationed at Napier and knowing that my Father was away overseas and that Mum had three young children to look after she applied for a transfer for me to go back to Napier as I was proficient at Signalling, for in those days at Guides we trained for morse on a morse key and of course this was the way messages were transmitted in those times, the transfer was approved and so I moved back to Napier and lived at home and simply biked to work at the Army Camp each day, this was variously stationed at McLean Park Napier, and at the home of Lady McLean up on the hospital hill. Those WERE the days. As always there were good times as well as not so good times. I served in the Army for 2½ years, our daily rate of pay was 5 shillings & sixpence, our fortnightly pay about 6 pound (\$12) after the signal corps was disbanded I was transferred to the Army Area Office where I worked until discharge in September 1945

I then received a transfer to the State Advances Corporation (now-a-days the housing corporation) I continued there until I married in 1948.

During these days I was able to take up my basketball again (it is now called netball) State Advances had a team and we all enjoyed it very much.

As well as this I took up marching and I used to bike over from westshore to Napier by 6am 3 mornings a week where we were drilled by a member of the Legion of Frontiersmen, we performed most Saturdays as well, there again those days were great.

By now I had organised a small group of girls into a Brownie Pack at Westshore, they were all very keen and we used to go on hikes out to the "watchman" (an island between westshore and Bay



my sister
Anne as
Junior
Bridesmaid.



My
Wedding
Gown
made of
curtain net!



Our Wedding Day.

7th February 1948.

We had a guard of Honour
of Sea Scouts & Brownies.



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View) we would cook sausages and dampers etc. etc. we used to hold concerts to raise money for funds or to send parcels to our Boys Overseas.

As each group of young men were called up to go to war, the community would hold a farewell concert for them and everyone would turn up and the boys were presented with a gift and all our best wishes etc.

These were the days or ration books, you had to have a coupon if you wanted to buy the necessary commodities, such as tea, sugar, butter, pretty well everything you wanted in fact, clothing was the same, furnishing fabric if you could find it wasn't couponed so we found we could make all sorts of things from this fabric, in fact my wedding dress was made from cream marquisette, a curtain net, but there were a lot of things you simply could not have and that was all there was to it.

Well everyone made the best of things and eventually the war ended and the Boys returned home and started to take up their lives again.

While doing all the things normal young folk do I met one such young man, who like me, was involved in youth work, namely Scouts. We used to have combined socials amongst the Guide and Scout Fraternity and from that first meeting a lifetime of comradeship etc. has continued to grow. Alex Wilton became a regular visitor to my home in Charles St. Westshore and in time we set the date to be married and start a new life together, so, on the 7th of February 1948 at St. Augustines Church Napier, our new life began.

We like our families also lived on Westshore for a time, before moving to Waipukurau and buying a small mail run. Life had moved up a cog and we decided to build us a home, the section in Francis Drake St, Waipukurau was procured, then we had to find a builder - well after the war some building materials were hard to come by even yet, but we did eventually get a builder signed up to do the job. Yes, he said I can get straight on to it - famous last words - in the end we decided to build the garage and live in it until the house was ready.....We lived in that little house for about 18 months! Neroli was born whilst we were living there and she used to lie in her pram watching the clothes blowing on the clothesline, there was nowhere else for her to go. One night we woke, admittedly after a period of wet weather, I went to get up to Neroli and my feet went into water - the Tukituki river had broken its banks and spread out over the adjoining farmlands. It was quite a way from us - but it found our little home, quite a miserable experience at 1am in the morning! Dad got the truck out and we shifted our immediate needs into it and took off up the road to a neighbours who were a bit higher up than us. Eventually the builder returned and did a little more and a little more until at last it was ready for us to move in and do the finishing on the inside, well as Grandy was working 6 days a week and driving 100 miles each day we only had evenings and Sunday to do the necessary work, however, we coped and eventually moved into our new home. We had a Rayburn stove this was a really modern type coal range, it was what we called a poorman's Aga, (that was a very expensive type range that burnt special fuel and could burn forever.) It didn't go out just burned and burned, our Rayburn was similar and it was wonderful, it warmed the whole house, the kettle was always on the boil and if you had visitors and wanted to make a batch of scones you just pulled the damper out and the oven was hot enough to bake the scones, you stood the porridge on the top at night and it was already for breakfast when you woke up. While we were living there, Grandy used to milk a cow for the neighbour at night, because he was a stock buyer and often not home in the evenings, so this kept us in milk, cream and butter. By making the spare cream into butter I was able to sell some to the merchant in town and this enabled me to purchase some of the necessary appliances for my kitchen, these being an egg beater, a mincer and other such gadgets. In those days we used to have a grocery boy come around once a week for our grocery order and then they would deliver it the next day. I used to take Brownies here and Grandy took Scouts, these provided a change of scenery for both of us, when possible Grandy would take his scouts away for a week-end or so and eventually I did



Our
Home
in



WAIPUKURAU.



The garage where we lived
whilst waiting for the house.



Our 1st mail truck.



Neroli Margaret. 1950
(Note the change of
style in the pram.)



Grandy, been round the
mail run & ready for
Cricket.



1951



Produce from Grandy
or Pop Garden.

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the same with my Brownies. Brownies weren't allowed to camp they had to go into a building, so quite frequently we would find suitable shearers quarters out in the country and the Farmers were

very good and showed the children life on the farm. I was only the second person in New Zealand to obtain a Pack Holiday Permit which allowed me to take the Brownies away on a holiday.

During one of these holidays Neroli went to Westshore to stay with her Grandparents and she had them really puzzled because she kept asking for a geordie drip and they didn't know what she was talking about, (it was her name for a drink, goodness knows where she got it from!) anyway they had a lovely time getting to know their granddaughter and her Grandfather used to call her nearly a boy, I guess he must have wanted a Grandson but in the end it didn't matter as the photo shows.....

In a little while Neroli was to have a little brother, Alexander John was born in the Waipukurau Maternity Annexe as his Sister had been. Our little Family was growing, during these years we had the pleasure of finishing our home in Francis Drake Street and Grandy had a lovely vegetable garden. I should be able to find a photo of some of the results of his labours. However, Grandy was beginning to get itchy feet as the saying goes and wanting to move on to further pastures green, so he sold the mail delivery run and went off up to Auckland to look at a carrying business up there, he liked what he saw, so we took baby John in our little Bradford van and little Gran & Granddad took Neroli and away we went to see if we could find somewhere to live. We did, an old house at Howick, lots of room for a big truck, plenty of garden with fruit trees, especially citrus and feijoas plus the normal peaches etc. there was also room for some fowls with plenty of room for children to play. So we clinched the deal. signed on the dotted line for the house and the business and headed back to Hawkes Bay to sell our nice home. In the end I had to stay in the house until such time as we made a sale while Grandy took off back to Auckland to take over the Pakuranga Transport Co. In time we sold our home and the children and I joined Grandy in Howick at 68 Ridge Rd. Howick.

We lived there for about 5 years and during this time our family increased once more with the arrival of Andrew Leon. Unfortunately Granddad never saw Andrew because he was killed in an accident when the post and telegraph pole he was working on snapped and fell to the ground, but he had seen the rest of us the week-end before Andrew was born, as he and Little Gran had come up to Howick for Labour Week-end.



Neroli



1 Year old



Neroli with her
"Little Gran"
(My Mother.)



My
Dad
&
I
with
A. John.

Alexander John 1953



Johns Christening with his Parents, Sister, "Little Gran's" Uncle Leon.
(his Godfather.)



The last photos of my Dad taken with Mum, Neroli & John 1955.



1955.



Andrew joins the Family

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ERA

by Margaret Wilton nee Speakman.

Life at Howick was an interesting time, looking back on happenings there, we had a lot of good times and of course a few not so good times. Our Pakuranga Transport was the type of business where we carted anything that needed to be carted, whether it be stock (horses, cattle, sheep or pigs) or hay, manure, whatever. A lot of the work was done in and around the westfield works a concern that is no longer in existence. and many is the time we have, the children and I, made a stew or some such meal in the pressure cooker, wrapped the cooker in a sleeping bag surrounded by hot water bottles, and taken the meal over to Grandy who was working till midnight or whatever, shifting stock. He used to meet a scow at Panmure quite frequently, the scow would come over from Waiheke Island or any of the other small islands dotted around the Auckland area. This was done at any hour of the day or night, because the scow had to come in on the right tide, so sometimes we would end up taking a meal to him there.

Neroli and John both started school during this era and Andrew of course kept a growing.... Neroli started to dance at this time trying both National and ballet, she preferred ballet to National but I had the pleasure of making her both a kilt and a tutu. John was a very shy little boy who liked nothing better than to go with his Father in the truck. Andrew loved to climb and the big crate on the back of the truck was a very good climbing frame.

We bought our first refrigerator and washing machine whilst at Howick, up till then clothes had been boiled in the copper in the wash house and we had a hand wringer to put them through to get some of the water out of them. I thought I was absolutely made when we installed the agitator washing machine and wringer. Other than those items the material things of like hadn't changed too much. We did have an electric stove by then, but these were the days before T.V. or video. The radio was very much in vogue as was the radiogram. We still have a very good selection of records bought during this period and what is more they are still very good.

During these times we both kept on with our Guiding and Scouting and Grandy in fact did some really big bicycle rides with his boys, one such, included a bus trip to Rotorua then by bike right down through Taupo to Napier then to Waipukurau where they caught a train back to Auckland. Grandy had been ill prior to leaving on this trip, but of course Grandy being Grandy or of course Pop, had to continue with their plan.

He did eventually after returning home found that he had actually had Poliomyelitis, and one of the muscles in his leg had wasted away, the medical people at Greenlane Hospital said had he not gone on the bike trip he would have finished up with callipers on his leg and may even have lost the use of his leg. so.....the trip had saved the leg because the other muscles had been forced to take over and work overtime.....While he was away we had a map on the wall where the children could keep an eye on where Daddy was and we were of course glad to see him home again. There were many such trips with the Scouts over the years including trips when John and Andrew were old enough to go with him.

Life from then on hasn't changed so very much. We eventually moved back to Hawkes Bay and worked on a farm for 18 months or so before moving to Porangahau to take up the challenge of a country dairy, this was the biggest shock to the system that we had so far. On the very first morning (a Sunday) having brought the furniture etc out on the farm truck Grandy took off to return the truck, and I had opened the windows in the shop and I was just having a look around as it were when a Maori chappie put his head in the window and said, "Oh come on Missy open up, it's very hot out here, what about an ice-cream,

well.....I did just that, and by the time Grandy came back we had sold out of pretty well everything in the shop and we had to go into Waipukurau the next day to re-order, we had a marvellous introduction in to the world of shop-keeping, one which I for one will never forget;

Days of growing up at Howick 1955-1960



Our school girl
in her uniform



Our "ballerina"



Having fun.



Buckland's Beach



Going to Town



I'm 5



John off to school with
big sister



We, Us & Co



Going to meet Lord
Baden Powell



It didn't need
a very big box!



My Brownie daughter



RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ERA

by Margaret Wilton nee Speakman.

There were some wonderful people there and we still meet the occasional one up town, who, like us, remember that era.

Neroli, John and Andrew were all of course at school there and did well at whatever, they were able to learn swimming there at the school baths. However, the time came when Neroli had to go to High School and we felt it wasn't fair to expect her to do well at studies and have to travel to and from Waipukurau each day, she very cleverly won a scholarship towards the cost of boarding at school, and she went off to board with some neighbours of Little Gran's so she could make the most of her possibility. however, we were not so happy not having our daughter with us so we decided on another move, this time to a dairy in Hastings and so Neroli could come home again. A transfer was arranged from Napier Girls' High to Hastings Girls' High and in Hastings we have remained ever since.

This time has seen the children develop into fine young people, doing their own thing very well. We have tried to give them the advantages we were not able to have, at the same time supporting them in whatever way was needed.

Because we were working a seven day a week situation we tried to go away together in the May Holidays each year, each time to a different area of New Zealand, this resulted in all our horizons being widened a little as well as being most enjoyable.

At various times the children tried athletics, gymnastics, rugby, cricket, basketball (I think it was still called basketball then but it may have been netball) swimming and life-saving, whilst Grandy and I tried our hand at golf. Grandy had quite a lot of success at this sport winning the H.B. Junior Golf one year, (I might add that junior in this instance was not in age only ability)

We both continued with our interest in Scouting and Guiding this enabled us to have an interest outside the shop which was good for us.

Neroli grew up and took herself a husband and went off down the South Island where they continued with their careers and eventually set about raising a family of their own.

John followed suit did his thing and went exploring over-seas where he met another Kiwi doing the same kind of thing and so John Married and settled in Australia where they set about raising a family too.

Andrew had watched all this going on and did his thing, including going exploring over-seas and then settled down in Gisborne, at the time of writing he hasn't taken a partner but he enjoys doing his own thing.

In the meantime Grandy and I have slowed up considerably, we still enjoy doing our thing, which may be golfing or bowling or reading or in Pops case making things, we enjoy hearing of the activities and achievements of our dear Grandchildren, Neroli and Davids marriage producing Ray, Katrina, Kieron and Anthony.....John and Kathryns marriage producing Courtney, Shannon and our first Wilton Grandson Todd.

I wonder what life will hold for you all? I'm sure that what ever you do, you will cope very well and succeed as your Parents have done before you.

I hope these few anecdotes will show you a little, what life was like earlier in the century and as we approach the year 2000 you will have a great deal of modern technology to help you assess what to do for a career, Good Luck, and God Bless you ALL.

Nerolis Confirmation in company with her Mum & both little Gran & Gran



Inside & Outside the Porangahau Dairy



The Porangahau Pianoforte School after their annual recital.



BIRTHDAY PARTY



Porangahau Netball Team.



Our High School Daughter



High School Days.

A straight bat.



Our Austin stuck in the mud.



My new bike



Trying their luck 1969



What a view



memories !!

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ERA

by Margaret Wilton nee Speakman.

Some recollections from Grandy or Pop.

He was born Bert Alexander Wilton, one of four children born to his Parents Ethel Elizabeth LeQuerne and Bert Alan Wilton.

Of his Parents Grandy says his Mother was a much travelled lady, for in those days most travel was done by horse and coach and they had to have changing stages where people maybe had to stay the night or at least have a rest while the horses were changed.

Big Gran as the children knew her worked from quite an early age at some of these places and many are the stories she told of how the horses knew their way home after a dance, they only had to climb aboard and say home to the horse and this is where they would end up.

Big Gran's Father was a Drover, (a man who drives stock, cattle or sheep,) from one area to another, in those days it was nothing to drive stock from Gisborne to Napier or wherever (by road not by truck)

It was while Big Gran was on a visit to Wellington that she met this nice gentleman who was working as a draper. Anyway then, as now, it must have been love at first sight because once she had returned to Hawkes Bay, he gave up his job and came to Hawkes Bay to join her. They had a double wedding on an Uncle's property (Rosebank) at Puketapu and then went to live in a tent away out the back of Wairoa. When Grandy was born he was taken out to their bush home, about 2 hours ride on horseback from Wairoa. They moved from there to a house at Awamati station. His Father had a contract for splitting posts and later fencing and while this was going on the young Alex as he was known, was also learning to use an axe and when Father cut the big posts the little Alex helped trim the slivers etc. The art of using the axe learnt at such a young age has stayed with him to this day.

Grandy started school at a little school called Turiroa out of Wairoa in 1924. They were taken by the station car from Awamati Station. His Sister Bertha also started school there. They moved into Wairoa and lived with their Grandparents for a time. While at Turiroa Grandy was entered into school running race and he cleared out, left everyone behind then stopped at the tape and waited for everyone to catch up and of course he did not break the tape, so of course he didn't win the race. His other Sister Stella was born about this time 1924 and the family moved down to Hastings for a time before moving to Puketapu. By this time Grandy's Father was not very well and he had to go into hospital. Big Gran leased a little property in the area and they milked a few cows, made butter, had fowls, sold eggs etc. because in those times there was no social security benefits, you had to make your own way or starve. Brother Barry arrived about this time and this was followed very smartly by the 1931 Hawkes Bay Earthquake. Grandy was sent over to Taranaki for a time, his Mother and Barry went to Wellington to relations and the girls were put in a home for a time. His Father died shortly after this, so life was pretty difficult and his Mother had quite a job trying to bring up the 4 children on her own, however, this she did, and they all made their mark O.K. showing what determination can do when you want something bad enough.

Grandy finished his schooling at Puketapu and he was DUX of the school. On leaving school he worked for a time on Rissington Station, but was never a farmer at heart, he moved to Wairoa to live with an Uncle & Aunt who wanted him to work on the farm, but he really wanted to be an engineer, but of course they couldn't afford the cost of going to High School so.....he he took a job in a garage in Wairoa where he was going to learn to be a mechanic, this work he enjoyed but the second world war broke out and he joined the Royal New Zealand Airforce to do his bit for King and Country, this eventually took him all around the world until he finally came home in 1943.

Bert Alexander Wilton



Ethel + Bertie Wilton.

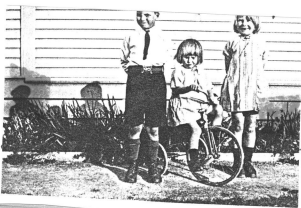


Grandy
or
Pop



Buster our
dog who rode
on the mudguard
of the car above
then jumped off
to chase cats!

Grandy with his sisters
Bertha + Stella. He finished
his schooling at Puketapu School
where he was Dux.



Alex his Mother + Sister Bertha.



Grandy's Mum.



Flaxmere Champion!



Opp to Cricket at Howick.



Our first Granddaughter "Katrina."



1980 Hawkes Bay Junior Champ.



Speaks for itself.



A Family Xmas Day at the Guide home "Ornatua."



The mail van came in handy.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ERA

by Margaret Wilton nee Speakman.

His Mother was working at this time on Moteo Station in Hawkes Bay and he went and stayed there for a time. His Sister Bertha had married a farmer who had a contracting business and Alex gave him a hand for some time while settling down, but in the end it was too dusty for him and he bought a little cottage at Westshore and took a job with the Carrying firm of F.G.Smith Ltd. and tried to settle down as best he could. He took up Rugby again, he had had good successes in the Airforce with this and looked forward to playing for Napier Technical Old Boys. He also took up his Scouts again, the Westshore Scouts were sadly in need of a Leader so Grandy took them on and the more Scouting he did the less rugby he played which was a pity, however, all things being equal, that is how he met his future wife, at the Scout and Guide Socials that were held in those days.

Scouting always played a big part in Grandy's life from a small boy who used to ride his bike from Rissington to Puketapu so he could attend their meetings, he helped build the original Puketapu Scout Den with Little John. (this den is still used as a Sunday School) Cycling has always been a pastime for him, for it was the only way he could get around, he even used to bike from Rissington to Eskdale to practise and play rugby, he always got on well with his Scouts because he took them on adventurous trips, and they did different sorts of things to a lot, some of these we will cover in a later story.

Grandy has just been reading some of the entries out of his Airforce log book, he had his first flight in a Norsemen 2471 in Winnipeg in 1941, during his term he flew in the following craft: a moth, a fairy battle, a dehaviland, Miles Proctor, Oxford, Anson, Hudson, Ventura, Vincent, Douglas c 47, Lodestar C60, Ventura PV1. I wonder if you can find any pictures of any of these craft.?

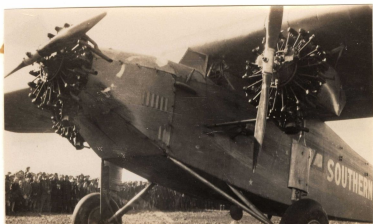
He served in two Theatres of the war, the European and Pacific.

After the war when he was working for F.G.Smith, (driving trucks) he found there was such a lot of stealing etc. going on and if you didn't participate you got the rough end of the stick. The Unions were getting a very strong hold over workers and telling people what they could do and what they could not do and this didn't please him very much. He was used to doing an honest days work and did not like being put upon by other people who thought they could tell him what to do, the upshot of all that was once married the decision was made to go in to business on our own and to the day when we officially retired that is exactly what we did do. No doubt had we taken a job and stayed put all our married lives we could maybe have been better off BUT on the other hand we have a lot of different experiences to put in our memory banks and we have had a much more shared life by working together towards our various goals than we would have had in the afore mentioned way of life.

"Scouting for Boys"



*The big bike trip AUCKLAND -
Napier - Auckland.*



1928 the first flight
to N.Z. by
Kingsford-Smith.



1989
the modern Southern Cross.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ERA

by Margaret Wilton nee Speakman.

Having read through this effort, there are one or two things missed out. Before the Napier Earthquake in 1931 there used to be trams in Napier by which we used to travel and well I remember picking up and collecting the discarded tram tickets so I could play Tram Conductors with my dolls.

Also the Bakers van used to call daily and one could buy buns for a penny, and buy whatever sort of bread you wanted, there used to be one loaf called a twist which had a big plait of dough baked on top of the loaf and one could pull it off and eat it.....lovely. The Bakers van had all sorts of bread and cakes available.

Another thing one could buy was a pennyworth of broken biscuits from the Grocers. All biscuits in those days were bought by the pennyworth and they were weighed out as they were wanted. There was no such thing as packaged goods in those days, the Grocers shop was a great place to go in to because it had all these good smells. Those broken biscuits were a real treat, you got iced bits and all sorts. At one stage I worked in a Grocers shop, (Mr. & Mrs. Kemsley) on a Saturday afternoon it was just across the road in Kinross White Street and I used to weigh up all sorts of everything I loved it. When we moved up to Howick we used to come through to see my Parents or Grand's Mother and by that time we had a big old Austin 18, the engine had gone so Grandy put a commer engine into it, it was great. There was a lot of room between the back of the Front seat and the back seat we could put the pram in quite comfortably. Anyway we would put a mattress down between the seats and bed the children down for the night and after Grandy had a sleep we would take off travelling through the night because the children tended to get car sick. One night we were marooned between Rotorua and Taupo, stuck in a slip and we had to wait until daylight when the Graders came along to clear the road. Andrew was a baby and we had to heat him a bottle on the engine.

Another little piece of history was going to see the original Southern Cross Aircraft piloted by Kingsford Smith touch down at the Napier airport. I can remember the noise of the wind in the propellers etc. I had to cover my ears it hurt - then recently seeing the replica land over at the Beacons Airport - the ears had become used to the noises.

In those early days at Westshore, where we had gas for cooking etc. we had a shilling in the slot meter to enable us to receive the flow of gas. If the shilling ran out - no gas! and one had to resort to the coal range. The meter man came round once a month to empty the meters and we always tried to have some spare money available to buy back some shillings so we had a supply.

Toilets are another thing taken for granted these days but way back then, we had a can in a seat arrangement and there was a night cart man who came around I think every night and emptied it and of course there was no running water near by.....at least at Westshore we had a septic tank and a water cistern with a chain attached for one to pull and thus flush the water through.

There were all sorts of food vendors that travelled door to door, butcher, fishmonger, draper as well as the Baker, Milkman, and these were talking points in the neighbourhood because when the vendor came into the street everyone who wanted anything would congregate around the van and have a chat, (A real time-waster I should think).

Well I think I had really close this off, because, no doubt, I'll keep on remembering things, and this could go on and on and we can't have that, so I will finish the book with a photograph of each family as recent as possible and the story will then rest with the present generation to carry on at a later date for their children or grandchildren.

Nanna, (Gran) + Grandy (Pop) 1990



Uncle Andrew





Raymond, Uncle David, Auntie Neroli,
Katrina, Kieron & Anthony. 3rd June 1990

Aunt Kathy, Todd, Uncle John
with Courtney & Shannon & Gran. (1989)





Girl Guide Presentation
after 40 years service.



MY 21st Party.



Lookout I'm
raring to go! 1980

Our 1st Grandson in his Nannas jacket.



A lovely Family Group at John + Kathys
wedding.



A group outside the Church
after our wedding.!