

His worship the Mayor, councillors, family members, citizens of Hastings and members of the Maori community who may well be descendants of people William Nelson knew well - ~~his neighbour~~ at Waipatu.

My name is Margaret Walmsley and I am one of the many great grand children of William Nelson. My ^{great} grandfather ~~my~~ died before I was born, but he was a very real presence in my ~~life~~ childhood. My Mother frequently spoke of him with affection and also of the wonderful times she had at Waikoko. The History board at the park entrance tells of his achievements and I trust it will be read, so I would like to ~~talk~~ ^{speak} a little of the man I have heard so much about.

In his diary, William Nelson, at the age of 11 wrote that he spent much time in the family glass houses. Home was THE LAWN - Warwick - England. Nearby, were the premises of the family business - Nelson, Dale & Co, who were manufacturers of gelatine and oddly - cement. William ~~had~~ began work there aged 15.

2.

The youngest of six children he was born in 1843 - Thus when he ~~came~~^{left for} ~~to~~ N.Z. with his brother Fred ~~he~~ in 1862, he was 19 yrs old. Many months were spent travelling around N.Z. walking long distances and covering both Islands. It was while in Christchurch that he met up with his cousin James Nelson Williams, later to ~~become~~ his brother in law and founder of the fruit canning plant at Frimley. James invited William to come back to Hawke's Bay where he stayed and settled. The diary of that time records 'journeys from Kereru to Napier, via Te Aute and Havelock Mts.

It is so easy to overlook the fact that Hastings was still little more than a swamp.

This of course meant that everything ~~&~~ I mean everything had to be developed. Farms orchards, industry of all kinds & then

markets for produce and a port from which the outside world could be accessed. Schools and churches were also needed. Over time William was to involve himself in many of these enterprises, but before that he ~~left~~ ^{returned to} England, there to marry a young woman he had obviously marked as ^{his} future bride. She was Sarah Bicknell and she became the mother of nine of his children.

At the time of his 80th birthday the local newspaper tribute said & I quote:- not only in connection with business affairs but also in every walk of life & among every section of the community, Mr Nelson had the faculty of forming strong and enduring friendships. His nature, simple, direct, strong and always fair minded, attracted all who were in any way connected with him, be it in private life, business or public

affairs. He held tenaciously to his own opinion on any subject, but respected those who held differing opinions, and amongst his warmest friends were those who did differ from him on some points. End of quote.

After his first wife Sarah died & with a family of nine children, William married his cousin Emma Caroline Williams. and they set up house at Waikoko. There were two more children. It was a wonderfully happy home where the whole family and many friends often gathered. The creation of the beautiful gardens was a passion for William, and trees were planted and photographs show a profusion of flowers. Shingle was removed for the streets of Hastings and a beautiful lake was formed and stocked with perch. William & E. Caroline were frequently pictured together enjoying

5

these lovely surroundings. William was always accompanied by his little fox terrier - Tiddles. I'm not sure how many little dogs Tiddles there were or if it was one exceptionally long lived little animal. William, pipe in hand, Tiddles by his side, would walk each day to his office at Tomoana. Varying comments from grandchildren picture a man adored by some, held in awe by at least one and always respected. He played with them & he teased them and I understand his word was law. He is said to have told a gardener "if I tell you to plant the lettuces upside down - that's what ^{I want you to} ~~you~~ do."

William Nelson was a very generous man in every way and visitors never left Waikoko without a large share in the bounty of the prolific vegetable gardens.

(6) With a twinkle in her eye - eldest granddaughter
Constance told me this story:-

After Sunday lunch a local vicar turned
to his wife as their ^{produce laden} ~~vehicle~~ ^{buggy} was moving
off, and passed the remark - well my dear
- the day has not been Entirely wasted.

As I said, William gave generously to
many people and causes. I grew up knowing
that he gave the land to the council of
the day for Nelson Park. There was some
confusion when we - the family - were told
that he sold the land for a nominal sum. We
wondered if the brothers might have been
involved but discounted the idea as they were
out of the picture by then. With shared
recollections I believe that the money the
council paid was in fact the stamp duty
required by the law at that time, and that
William felt that having donated the land -
the council should pay that - he was after all
a business man. That is over and

7.

done with and we have moved on with an assurance that this development will be bound by law and cannot be changed.

Personally I do not believe that Nelson Park as it was, had ever truly fulfilled the dream of a lung for the city, that William Nelson was ^{coming from industrialised England he knew the value of open spaces.} sure Hastings would become. It is my belief that as the Father of 11 children William Nelson would be glad to see this facility for the younger generation, but he would also appreciate the calmer garden area too. I hope that parents who accompany their children to the play area will enjoy it and teach their young children to enjoy & respect the garden so it may grow & increase in beauty. It is also my wish that those who use the skate board area ~~will~~ not only enjoy it but will also protect it and ^{so} allow others to enjoy the whole area

8.

In this way, and after all these years -
the vision of William Nelson's park may
in fact, be realised - not just as a
skate park but a park for all to enjoy.
On behalf of the descendants of Wm Nelson
I thank all involved in this very special
commemorative park, especially Rachel
Stuart who has so kindly kept me
informed but a big thank you too - to
Lawrence - ~~I believe~~ ^{Though I worried at times - -} You have kept
your word & I thank you.

Wait for the wasata?

Not part of speech.

Re sale of Nelson Park - I clearly remember my
Mother saying Wm Nelson gave the land but didn't see why
he should pay the TAX. As I was only about 8 at the
time I didn't understand the relevance & it was
til a chance remark that was made that
I understood.

M. J. Walseley.