

A GLIMPSE OF EARLY BAY FARM LIFE

BY PAUL CAMPBELL



'I was born and bred a country boy in 1942, the youngest of four children. Our parents owned a 530-acre sheep and beef farm south of Dannevirke, at a little place called Waiaruhe. In those days, it was home to a school and a dairy factory, both now since gone.'

These are the opening words from a true Kiwi son of the soil, Bruce Galloway, give a fascinating insight into the pioneer days of Hawke's Bay farming, of a time before chainsaws and tractors and quad bikes, not to mention electricity connection and more, now mundane, additions to today's rural experience.

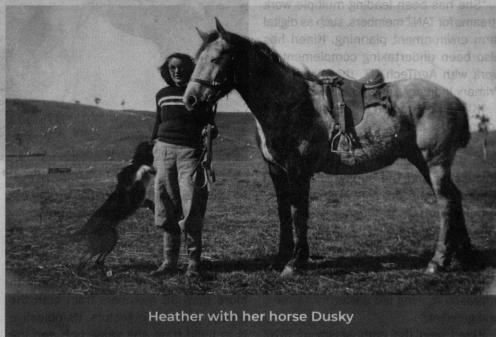
Bruce has recaptured the atmosphere of yesteryear in his book *The Flying Farmer*, which goes on to recount a life owning 12 farming properties, and also a myriad adventures as a 'bush pilot in the days before aviation authorities got some teeth'.

However, here Bruce begins his comprehensive tale of with an account of his first years on the land

'Dad Albine (Wattie — a nickname given to him due to deafness and his tendency to say 'what' a lot) Galloway (1896–1968) was of Scottish descent. Dad was a big man in more ways than one. He stood at 6ft 4", and had a wonderful nature.

'Mum, Mavis Kathleen Galloway (nee: Olsen) (1909–2003) was of Norwegian descent. Mum was a great gardener, not flowers, just vegetables. She used to say you could not eat flowers. She had a large commercial garden and supplied a local shop in Dannevirke (Mr David Patel).

'She also milked cows, cut mānuka and raised a family. Mum was also a great cook and used only a coal range. There was no fridge, and all the washing was done by hand, and water heated by a wood-fired copper.



Heather with her horse Dusky

'When a mutton was killed, there was only a short window to eat it before it went off. Mum used to preserve eggs in a four-gallon tin, and they would last up to a year. Some vegetables were preserved in stone crocks.



Bruce (back left) at Waiaruru School, now long gone



Bruce Galloway today

'Dad used to cure his own bacon, and it would hang up on the back porch for months. Mum would chop some off and cook it. The bacon used to turn green but was still OK to eat. There was always plenty of bottled fruit. Mum would always have plenty of baking in tins, so we never went hungry.

'Mum and Dad used to tell us stories of what it was like starting off in 1932. A track had to be cut through the manuka to get to the only building on the farm, a one-room bach.

'Clearing the mānuka was the top priority, with both of them cutting it with hand slashers. Dad put a tin shelter up over a bath, and the water was heated over a fire. Mum did all the cooking

and baking on an outside fireplace in camp ovens.

'The water was carried up from the stream in four-gallon kerosene tins. They also told us about having to take the house cows down to the neighbour's bull to get them in calf. Mum and Dad lived like this for many months.

'We never had a flush toilet, just a long drop that had to be cleared of large two or three-inch long weta at night before sitting down.

'As kids, one of our pastimes was to harness a horse up, drag a couple of big wooden dray wheels up to the top of a big hill, then let them go. Those things would travel at colossal speed, sometimes jumping 15 feet off the ground and

end up in the swamp. They occasionally changed direction and took out a fence or two. Once at the bottom, we would ride down and start all over again.

'Summertime was spent swimming in the Raparapawai river or the old farm dams.

'Ice cream was something we did not get a lot of. We used to put some cochineal, mixed with milk, in a billy and hang it on the clothesline on a frosty night. It turned out more like ice, but it was good.

The Flying Farmer goes on to tell of Bruce Galloway's remarkable life on the land and adventures in the air. It is available by calling 09 439 5495 to obtain a copy.