

Notes on Francis Hay and Edith née Baker

(Grandparents of Daphne, Laurence, Glenys and Lynette Hay)

Francis Hay born: 28 May 1879, Oamaru, Otago, NZ

Edith Baker born: 21 March 1878, Oamaru

Married: 29 October 1902, Oamaru

Children: Effie, b. 11 March 1904, Oamaru.

Joseph Andrew, b. 20 July 1906, Oamaru.

*Francis William, b. 25 January 1908, Oamaru.

Ivan Thomas, b. 21 January 1917, Nelson, NZ.

Edith Hay née Baker died: 27 October 1943, Timaru, Canterbury, NZ

Francis Hay died: 21 February 1961, Christchurch

*Father of Daphne, Laurence, Glenys and Lynette.

Francis Hay's birth and education

Francis Hay, always known as Frank, was the fifth child of the seven born to David and Jane Hay. He was born in the family home in Tees Street, Oamaru, on 28 May 1879. At this time David Hay was probably still working as a manager for the millers, Anderson & Co.

Frank seems to have begun serious education at Oamaru South School where he was enrolled, as a nine-year-old, in August 1888. However, the transcript of his entry in the school's Admission, Progress and Withdrawal (APW) Register states 'Last School: Maheno'. In 1884 David, Frank's father, had taken over the lease of a flour mill on the Kakanui River, over the bridge from Maheno. The family must have lived there for a time, this accounting for Frank's relatively late age on admission to 'South'.

Frank's educational progress can be traced by means of his official Standard Certificate, which is still extant. He passed the examinations for the first standard in August 1889, a year after admission to 'South', and the second standard in September 1890, then missed or failed a year before gaining the third standard in 1892. His schooling then moved back to Maheno Public where he passed the fourth to sixth standards in successive years from September 1893 to October 1895. Thus, at the age of 16, his seven years of formal education ended.

Frank Hay's occupation

What employment Frank took up on leaving school is not clear but it seems likely that he worked for his father, who owned a grain business in Oamaru and was running the flour mill at Maheno. However, certainly by 1899 Frank was employed as a storeman with the NZ Loan and Mercantile Agency Co. Ltd in Oamaru, after five years becoming head storeman, a post he held until he left the company at the end of November 1915 to move to Nelson, a move made possible by money Edith received from her father's estate.

The *Oamaru Mail* (27 November 1915) carried this – not quite accurate – report:

A presentation was made by the staff of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile to Mr Frank Hay, on his severing his connection with the firm. Mr Hay has for the last fourteen years acted as head storeman for the Company and has always carried out his duties in a very efficient manner. He was also presented with a memento by the men employed under him in the stores. We understand that Mr Hay has decided to take up fruit farming in the Nelson district, and he will carry with him every good wish for success in his new venture.

Testimonials received at this time speak very highly of Frank's service with 'Loan & Merc'. His immediate superior for most of that time wrote:

I may here state that I consider Mr Hay is one of the most competent men in all branches of Store work that I have ever had under me. He has a thorough knowledge of all kinds of grain and seeds, is conscientious, careful and very correct in his stocks, in fact a most reliable man. Anything he takes in hand he will carry out in a thorough manner.

And the branch manager speaks of him as 'quite exemplary in every department of his work', and calls him 'a thoroughly trustworthy man'.

The massive three-storied building where Frank worked stands now in restored glory in Oamaru's Harbour Street heritage precinct. The store was built in 1882 when NZ Loan and Mercantile was the largest stock and station agency in New Zealand, and was designed to hold 100,000 sacks of grain, handled by four grain elevators. At the time of its erection it was claimed to be the largest such structure in the world! Frank's job as head storeman was obviously no sinecure.

It is of interest to read in the *Oamaru Mail* (24 December 1914) a report of a quarterly meeting of the Alfred Lodge, A[ncient] O[rder of] O[dd] F[ellows], at which 'Bro. F. Hay, who is shortly leaving Oamaru, was the recipient of a gold triple link pin. D.D. G.M. Bro. Crichton, in an appropriate speech, made the presentation, and Bro. Hay suitably acknowledged the gift'. The triple link is of the letters F, L and T for the order's motto: Friendship, Love and Truth.

On departure from Oamaru Frank sold his house, two sections and all his furniture and household effects by auction on 25 November 1915. The description of these properties in the *Oamaru Mail* is fascinating and enlightening.

W A L T E R S U M P T E R has been favored with instructions from Mr FRANK HAY (who is leaving Oamaru) to sell by auction, on the Premises—

His VALUABLE FREEHOLD SECTIONS 9 and 14, Block I, Tees and Tyne streets, Oamaru, together with Stone and Wooden Dwelling of six rooms and scullery, washhouse, built-in boiler and tubs, workshop, good fowlhouse and fruit garden.

View of Harbor, King George's Park, and Town is unsurpassed. The house is in splendid order and being in such a locality will make an ideal home or investment. The Tyne street section is an excellent building site, and this chance of securing the finest vacant section in the town should not be missed. Just inspect and you will buy. For further particulars apply to Messrs Lee, Grave, and Grave.

Also at Same Time and Place —

The Whole of Mr Hay's Valuable Furniture and Effects as follows:

1 Model Piano (Haake, in perfect order), Piano Seat, Overmantel, Fern Stand, Ferns & Handsome Bowls, Brussels Carpet, Wool Hearthrug, Rattan Chairs, Brass Curb, Saddlebag Couch, What-not, Coal Vase, Pictures, Curtains and Poles, Ornaments, Good Hall Lamp, Curtains. Linoleums, Unique Cabinet, Wardrobe (Exhibition Design), Brass-rail Bedstead and Mattresses, Duchesse Chest (bevel mirror, jewel drawers), Marble-top Washstand and Ware, Oilcloth, Pictures, Brass Rail Bedstead and Wire Mattress, Bevel Mirror R.P. Wardrobe, Duchesse Chest (bevel mirror) on Castors, Washstand Ware, Chair, Single Wood and Iron Bedsteads, Chest Drawers, Small Duchesse (bevel mirror), Convertible Bed-Chair and Cushions, Spring Rocker, Dining Table, Cheffonier, Basket and other chairs, 3 Lamps. Graphophone, large and small Records, Preserving Pans, Jams and Preserves, Scales and Weights, Crystal, lot Good Crockery, Meat Safe, lot Firewood, Fowls, Cooking Utensils, pair Steps, Lawn Mower, Garden Tools, Gent's Bicycle (in good order), Grit Mill, Ladder, Screw-top Bottles. 1 E-flat Clarinet and Case.
1 Auto Harp.
Estev ORGAN, in first-class order.

The next day the paper reported that there had been a good attendance at the sale. The Tees Street section and house had sold for £450 and the empty Tyne Street section for £260.

Nelson

Presumably, after the sale of their house Frank and family moved immediately to Nelson, where they joined up with the local Salvation Army corps. Their next move is indicated by a report in the *War Cry* of 4 March 1916: 'We were sorry', said the Nelson Salvationists, 'to bid farewell to Brother and Sister Hay and family, who have laboured in our midst for several months; may God bless them in their new home at Wakefield'. Frank had purchased a small orchard in this well established fruit-growing area.

However, the fruit-farming venture was not a success: within less than three months of its commencement the following advertisement appeared in the *Dominion* of 15 May 1916:

FOR SALE, cheap, at Wakefield, 5
Acres, more or less; good 6-roomed
House, with kitchen, bathroom, and dairy
attached; between 200 and 300 gooseberry
trees, about 1 acre apple trees, 5 years;
ideal place for poultry farm; ten minutes
from township. Apply

F. HAY
Wakefield.

The property did not immediately sell, as in the *Nelson Evening Mail* of 16 June 1916 F. Hay, still of Wakefield, advertised for sale a 'cheap, good quiet cow, September calver', but then in the same issue we find 'Hay, late Gray, Bridge street' advertising a collection of household goods for sale. This refers to the second-hand goods business at 117 Bridge Street, Nelson, that Frank purchased from a Mr Gray, and that the family next moved to, living above the shop. School records for the children indicate a shift from Wakefield to Nelson town by July 1916.

But this venture also did not prove satisfactory, and the *Nelson Evening Mail* of 12 March 1917 carried the following advertisement:

IMPORTANT NOTICE

FOR SALE, as a Going Concern:
SECONDHAND BUSINESS in
Bridge-street, now carried on by F.
HAY. Shop, with Dwelling of 6 rooms [sic]
attached. Capital Value of property
£824. Would take £700. Stock at
cost price. Doing good business. Satis-
factory reason for selling. Apply [sic] F. and
D. EDWARDS, Trafalgar-street.

And so the family returned south, this time to Timaru, living first in Browne Street. A Timaru Corps report in the *War Cry* of 21 April 1917 includes the information that 'we have been pleased to welcome into our midst Brother and Sister Hay and family from Nelson.' This whole costly and frustrating episode must have been deeply humiliating for Frank, and a test of his faith in the God he so devoutly served.

Timaru: John Mill & Co. Ltd

In Timaru Frank was employed by John Mill & Co. Ltd as their head storeman. In that capacity he was, on 18 March 1918, appointed by the official Board of Trade as a government grader

empowered to decide any disputes referred to you as to whether any wheat delivered in fulfilment of any contract of purchase and sale entered into by Government Brokers on account of the Government is in accordance with the contract, in respect to kind, quality or condition. Your decision shall be final and binding on both parties to the dispute.

A testimonial dated September 1925 prepared for Frank by an independent government grader suggests that Frank was not completely happy at John Mill & Co., and this impression is reinforced by the fact that, in March and April 1927, he obtained a number of further testimonials from managers of companies with whom he had dealings – but apparently none from his superiors at John Mill. One of the testimonials describes the responsibilities that Frank carried as head storeman of John Mill & Co., and the qualities he demonstrated in carrying them out:

The above firm acting as Commercial and Shipping Warehousemen, for Wool and Grain Merchants, brings a varied assortment of goods under the supervision of their storeman, together with the handling of labour in connection with same.

Mr. Hay's administration, courtesy and tact has earned the confidence of all firms, with his able control and ability to meet accelerated demands so often required by shipping, in handling wool and grain, while giving the sampling and separating of all descriptions [sic] of produce the required attention.

Mr. Hay carries the writers recommendation for anyone requiring a thoroughly competent, reliable and trustworthy Head Storeman of strict temperate habits.

Stone's Canterbury directory for 1927 (June) lists Francis Hay as grain grader, 119 King Street, Timaru.

Frank Hay and the Salvation Army

Family oral history tells that Frank was converted in an evangelical service in the Presbyterian church, Herbert, though a *War Cry* reference states that his conversion took place in Maheno. He was enrolled as a Salvation Army soldier of the Oamaru Corps on 28 September 1893, when, aged 14, he was still attending primary school in Maheno. How Frank came to join the Salvation Army is not clear. Neither his parents nor any of his brothers or sisters were Salvationists.

An article about the Oamaru band in the 1 October 1903 issue of the Salvation Army periodical *The Local Officer* states:

Frank Hays [*sic*] is the 2nd baritone player, and is also the Secretary of the corps. He is a constant knee-driller [*i.e. attender at the early Sunday morning prayer meeting known as Knee Drill*], a godly, punctual, reliable lad, and a joy to his officers, among whom he has no favourites. He has recently taken unto himself a wife. He was converted nine years ago, and has been playing in the band four years.

The article concludes with the boast that the band is 'entirely the creation of the Salvation Army, nine out of the ten players having been converted through its instrumentality'. Frank, it would seem, was the odd man out.

Marriage and children

So, in 1902 Frank [*took*] unto himself a wife'. He and Edith Baker were married in full Salvation Army uniform in the Army hall, Oamaru, on 29 October of that year. Edith had been enrolled as a soldier of the Oamaru Corps (probably on transfer from Dunedin) on 23 December 1900. The marriage certificate was witnessed by Frank's uncle William Hay Jr, and Edith's older sister Martha, who from about 1905 served some years as a Salvation Army officer. No other members of Edith's family were Salvationists.

The War Cry reported the event as follows:

Hallelujah Wedding at Oamaru

We had a very popular wedding here recently, when two of our local officers, in the persons of Secretary Frank Hay and Trade-Sergeant Edith Baker, were united in holy matrimony for as long as they both shall live. Major Gallant had come specially from Dunedin to perform the ceremony. Wednesday afternoon, October 29th, was the all-important date, and at two o'clock the barracks was gorged; people standing right out to the doors. The Major, who is particularly happy at weddings, kept things going from start to finish. The Captain soloed that ever favourite wedding solo, 'Ever thine, Saviour,' and then the Major went through the beautiful Army wedding service. The responses of both bride and bridegroom were clear and decided, and they were eventually pronounced man and wife.

Mr. Baker, the father of the bride, gave a fine ringing testimony to the love of God, and said that although he was tempted to look on losing his daughter as a calamity, yet he had learned to look on the light side, and see the blessing of gaining another son. So that God was always good, if we only knew how to find the blessing. Brother and Sister Hay left for Invercargill the following morning. May God bless and keep them! – CAPTAIN.

A reporter was there also from the *Oamaru Mail* who, after informing his readers that 'a tea had been given the previous evening in honor of the young couple, who are very highly respected', homed in on his own particular focus of interest:

The decorating of the hall had been left in the hands of Mr James Anderson, and right well did he carry out this portion of the work. Handsome and elaborate hand-painted texts, interspersed with evergreens, adorned the walls, and at the rear of the platform was a large screen artistically draped with curtains. Just above the heads of the bride and bridegroom was "God bless the union" in gold and silver lettering. Many encomiums were passed upon the harmony of the color and beauty of the decorations.

Frank and Edith had four children: **Effie** born 11 March 1904, **Joseph Andrew**, born 20 July 1906, **Francis William**, born 25 January 1908, all in Oamaru, and **Ivan Thomas**, born 21 January 1917 in Nelson. [See separate essay Notes on Children of Francis Hay.]

Edith Baker

Edith Baker had been born in the family home, Till Street, Oamaru, on 21 March 1878, the seventh and last child of Joseph and Harriet Baker.

Edith received all her formal education at the Oamaru South School where, at the age of five, she was admitted on 7 March 1883. South's APW Register gives the date of her last day at school as 9 February 1892, 'Destination: Work'. She was almost 14 years old, and had passed the examinations for the fifth standard.

Edith and her older sister Martha regularly attended the Emmanuel Congregational Church Sunday school in Wansbeck Street, being awarded attendance prizes for a number of years up to 1892. Edith, we are told, was in Miss Searle's class.

Despite the undoubted admonitions and prayers of Miss Searle, Edith, at this crucial time in her development, suffered a fall from grace which led on to what would seem to be a heavy-handed and unnecessary consequence. The *Oamaru Mail* of 23 November 1891 carried the following report from the Resident Magistrate's court:

STEALING FLOWERS FROM THE CEMETERY

Edith Baker was charged with stealing a bunch of flowers from a grave in the cemetery.

Accused pleaded guilty.

.... Mr Baker, father of the girl, stated the girl had been left at home alone doing her lessons, and when done she had gone out to play with some playmates. They had all gone into the cemetery, and some of the children had asked her for flowers. Knowing that he (witness) attended to the flowers and trees, the girl had picked some, under the impression that she had a right to. He intimated his willingness to defray the expenses (£2 2s reward, and 5s Court costs).

His Worship administered a caution to the girl and dismissed the case without conviction.

What the effect was of this maltreatment of the 13-year-old girl is, at this distance, impossible to discern, but it could hardly have achieved the intended result of making Edith a 'better' child.

According to her marriage certificate, Edith was working as a 'domestic' in October 1902, and probably had been for the ten years since leaving school, at least part of that time in Dunedin, where she became a Salvationist.

The obituary published in *The War Cry* of 18 December 1943 (p.10) states:

Enrolled as a Soldier of the Dunedin Corps in 1897 our Comrade continued as a faithful Salvationist to the end.

Sister Hay was a fighting Soldier, who delighted in “pub.” booming and hospital visitation. Although of a quiet retiring disposition our Sister missed no opportunities to serve her Master and speak a word for Him.

According to Stanley Hay (in his tribute given at Effie’s funeral), when Edith became unwell ‘there was a shift to Leclens Terrace above the cliff on Caroline Bay, [Timaru]. Effie reduced her working hours to care for Grandma, who was often found... in a pleasant glass observation room overlooking the bay.’ As Edith’s health deteriorated further the family moved again, this time to Grey Road. Stanley records that Edith’s ‘memory failed to a point where Effie was accused of being the enemy. I recall these sad periods as reducing Effie to tears’. Edith Hay née Baker died in her home, 82 Grey Road, Timaru, on 27 October 1943 at the age of 65, and is buried in the Timaru Cemetery, Row 130, plot 372.

Francis Hay’s retirement and death

After Edith’s death Frank worked at John Mill & Co. for only another seven months, until he reached 65. In retirement he continued living in the Grey Road house with his daughter Effie until the end of 1944, when Effie married her widowed cousin Herbert Baker and, with her father, moved to the farm Herb managed at Willowbridge outside Waimate. For some years, Frank spent time living in turn with his children tending their vegetable gardens and producing prodigious crops of potatoes, cabbages, etc.

When he stayed with his son Frank’s family in Napier he would take me, his grandson, on the bar of his bike and ride out to the wharves for fishing. He enjoyed working with his hands doing maintenance jobs around the house. He also made me a trolley, a whistle from bamboo, kites, etc.

Frank’s favourite Salvation Army song, which he often sang as he went about the house, was ‘Jesus keep me near the cross’ with its chorus:

*In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever;
Till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.*

As well as his devotion to God and the Salvation Army, Grandad Hay believed totally in the virtues of Vicks VapoRub, which he applied to all sores and cuts and swallowed for any internal complaints!

After Herb Baker’s death in 1953, Effie moved with her father to Christchurch where his sons Joseph and Frank jnr were living, Joseph running his well-established furniture factory (Hay and Pizzey), and Frank managing the large Salvation Army Men’s Social Service Centre in Addington. Frank senior and Effie lived first for some years in a small house on the corner of Lancaster Street and Moorhouse Avenue, where, Glenys remembers, he charged sporting fans going to nearby Lancaster Park 6 pence to leave their bicycles in stands he erected on his front lawn.

Francis Hay died in the Princess Margaret Hospital, Christchurch, on 21 February 1961, aged 81 years, and is buried alongside his wife in the Timaru Cemetery, Row 130, plot 372. (Note that 373 is also a ‘Hay’ plot – but apparently unoccupied.)