

Notes on William (Kissock) Hamilton and Mary Seed née Murphy

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

William Hamilton born: 20 June 1875, Milton, Tokomairiro, Otago.

Mary Seed Murphy born: 24 August 1876, Akatore, Tokomairiro, Otago.

Married: 24 August 1897, Salvation Army Hall, Union Street, Milton.

Children: Esther Emmeline, 1898, Milton.
Ronald Osborne, 1900, Milton.
Ella Rosina, 1902, Milton.
Adela Irene, 1905, Gore, Southland.
Norman Wilfred, 1907, Gore.
*Annie Osborne, 1908, Gore.
Mabel Elizabeth (aka Doreen Sarah), 1910, Gore.
Allan Raymond, 1920, Gore.

Mary Seed Hamilton née Murphy died: 17 May 1937, Gore.

William (Kissock) Hamilton died: 17 August 1939, Gore.

*Mother of Daphne, Laurence, Glenys and Lynette.

William Hamilton's early life

William Hamilton was born on 20 June 1875 in Milton, Otago, the fourth child and first son of William and Janet Hamilton (see separate essay). In adulthood (by 1904) he added 'Kissock' to his name to distinguish himself from another William Hamilton living in the region, and in honour of his mother, whose maiden surname it was.

In its issue of 17 February 1880, the *Bruce Herald* reported that:

A boy aged five years, named William Hamilton, son of Mr Hamilton (of Finch & Hamilton), received an ugly kick from a horse on Friday evening on the right side of his face. Had it come with full force, it must have killed him. As it is, he is getting on favourably under Dr Reid's skilful treatment, but the poor boy will always bear the marks of the wounds inflicted. [*'Finch & Hamilton' was the name of William Snr's brick-making business as first established.*]

Photographs of William Jnr taken at his wedding and later in life show no sign of any such injury. Either Dr Reid was indeed skilful, or possibly the newspaper has misidentified the victim.

William attended the Tokomairiro School, leaving in March 1887 at the age of 11 years and 9 months to work with his father as an apprentice brick-maker.

William Hamilton Jnr first appeared on an electoral roll in 1896, the year his father died; he is listed as 'laborer' with his qualification 'residential' (as against 'freehold') indicating that he owned no land within the electorate.

After his father's death William Jnr took over the brick- and pipe-making enterprise along Table Hill Road. The *Bruce Herald* reported (21 April 1899) that 'Mr W. Hamilton ... is conducting an old established business. He has recently acquired a two-horse-power brick making machine' that 'can turn out first-class bricks, at the rate of 4000 a day'.

Marriage

On 24 August 1897 William married 21-year-old Mary (Polly) Seed Murphy. The event was fully reported both in the local newspaper, the *Bruce Herald*, (27 August 1897, p.2) and in *The War Cry*. The *Herald* reporter wrote as follows:

On Tuesday afternoon the rather unusual occurrence in Milton of a wedding conducted after the rites of the Salvation Army, attracted considerable interest. The ceremony took place in the Salvation Army barracks, where it was witnessed by a large number of all denominations. The contracting parties were Mr William Hamilton, and Miss Mary S. Murphy, second daughter of our respected townsman, Mr W. Murphy. The bride and bridegroom both appeared in the uniform of the Army and were greeted with singing and the waving of handkerchiefs. The meeting then joined in prayer, after which an address was given by Staff-captain Bennett, followed by another from Captain Mackenzie (Lawrence) and a song by Mrs Bennett. Staff-captain Bennett then read the articles of marriage, and repeated volleys were fired (i.e. clapping of hands and cheers) during the ceremony. Captain Johnston also spoke, and Mr Murphy made a few humorous remarks which were received with applause, while the bride and bridegroom were loudly cheered on rising to say a few words. The meeting closed with the singing of 'Here I give my all to Thee', and the newly married couple on leaving the barracks were met with the traditional shower of rice. In the evening a tea meeting was held to celebrate the event.

The War Cry (18 September 1897) adopted a somewhat different tone:

I thought Bro. Hamilton and Sis. Murphy, the bride and groom, were both a trifle nervous, as they stood out before the people who came to see. Capt. Johnson had much pleasure in testifying to the sterling worth of our comrades, who were front-rank fighters. Mrs Bennet soloed sweetly 'I do love thee, Saviour'. The father of the bride welcomed his new son, gave him his fatherly blessing, and reckoned that he would be all the better for a helpmate, he did not forget to add that the daughter who was gone was not his only one, but that he had plenty more. The bridegroom was nervous, he said, in giving his testimony, while the bride was satisfied that God, who had kept her seven years, would keep her to the end. We had a really good meeting at night, but no souls!

The Salvation Army connection

From her testimony above, it would seem that Mary had been converted at the local Salvation Army corps in 1890 at the age of about 14. Her father, William Murphy, had been the first convert in Milton, becoming a Salvationist in July 1884. No doubt his children began to attend meetings with him as they reached their teenage years. Eventually all five of the Murphy girls joined the corps, a number of them holding local officer positions for many years.

William Hamilton Jnr was only nine years old when the Salvation Army arrived in Milton. At what date he was converted and the date he was enrolled as a Salvationist are not known, but the first mention of William Hamilton in connection with the Army is in a report in the *Bruce Herald* (25 July 1893) of a court case in

which five Salvationists, 18-year-old William amongst them, were charged with 'play[ing] cornets, beating a drum and carrying a lighted torch in Shakespeare Street, Milton, without having obtained permission from the Borough Council of Milton so to do, contrary to Section 60, of bye-law No. 2 of the Borough of Milton' – a bye-law that had been created specifically to target the Salvation Army. The five were convicted, and, as Michael Hay tells it in his essay published in *Building God's Own Country* (2004):

A fine of five shillings plus court costs of thirteen shillings was imposed on each of them with an option of four days in Dunedin Gaol in default of payment. As it was Army policy not to pay fines, the five were set to go to gaol when news arrived that 'a friend' had paid the fines. Thus ended the first episode in what would prove a lengthy saga.

William appears next on record in *The War Cry* of 21 October 1893, where a song is published with its authorship credited to 'Wm. Hamilton, Milton'; another song followed in the 3 March 1894 issue. A taste of William's verse will convey the general quality:

Good News for You

(Tune: I've washed my robes)

Once I was on the mountains cold,
And wandering from the Shepherd's fold;
But Jesus, out of love for me,
Suffered and died on Calvary.

Chorus:

Good news for you, good news for me,
That Jesus died on Calvary!
Good news for you, Good news for me,
That Jesus died to set us free.

Clearly, William would never be a poet.

After their later move to Gore, William and Mary joined the Salvation Army corps there, but in about 1928 or '29 William was struck off the roll after he purchased a hairdressing and tobacconist business, so breaking the Salvationist's promise to have nothing to do with tobacco. Ian Hamilton, Norman's son, tells that as the Depression bit, William bought the shop in an attempt to provide an income more secure than that of a brickworks employee, and to give Norman a job – as a barber. In both respects the move was a success.

Mary continued in the Army, holding for many years the important local officer commission of Recruiting Sergeant. Her *War Cry* obituary records also that 'one of her activities was to visit the hospital regularly each week with her basket of delicacies for the sick. Many still remember her visits to cheer and acts of kindness'.

Settling in Gore

What motivated the young couple, with three children, to move to Gore, the service centre of the wealthy farming district of Matura, is not known – possibly an offer of employment – but in 1903 the shift was made, and by 1905 the Hamiltons were established in their new home built for them at 9 Denton Street where William and Mary were to remain for the rest of their lives. The 1905-06 electoral roll for Matura gives William's occupation as 'brickmaker'.

By this time William had sold the Milton property inherited from his father. The *Bruce Herald* of 6 September 1904 carried the following advertisement:

J.A. DUTHIE AND CO. have received instructions from Mr William Hamilton to sell by auction at their rooms, Milton:

That Property known as the "Brick Fields," and close to the town of Milton, containing 3 acres and 39 poles, being part of section 164, Block XXI, Tokomairiro District; with the whole of the plant and buildings lately used by Mr Hamilton as a brick and pipe factory.

No doubt William's share of the proceeds enabled him to build his Denton Street house.

Gore

The site of Gore had been known since prehistoric times as being prone to flooding – the Maori name for the area is Maruawai ('valley of water') – and three damaging floods were experienced in the first 50 years of the town's existence. But, as Herries Beattie tells it in his centennial history,

the one which came down on unsuspecting Gore on March 29, 1913, far eclipsed the others in height and damage. It came first in a wave from three to four feet [1.00-1.20m] high, followed by another wave two to three feet high. [It] inundated Gore and left a trail of havoc behind it.

A photograph in Beattie's book reveals how widespread the flooding was, however it is likely that 9 Denton Street, being on higher ground, escaped damage. Further big floods swept through the town in 1914 and 1918 before the first sod of the Gore flood protection works was turned in March 1919. Herries comments: 'The floods had a very bad effect on the town and put it back probably about twenty years'.

Gore also saw a spate of serious fires in the decade or so after the Hamilton's arrival, so much so that it was christened 'the city of blazes' by a rival township. However, the only fire to directly affect the family was the burning down of the primary school in 1920.

As for William Hamilton's employment and community involvement in the town, his obituary published in the *Bruce Herald* summarises his commitments as follows:

Here [i.e. in Gore] he followed his occupation until 1928, when he purchased the business of a tobacconist and hairdresser in Main Street. Eight years later he disposed of the business to return to his trade, and until a month ago he was employed as a brickmaker by the Gore Brick and Tile Company, Ltd., having to retire owing to failing health.

The late Mr Hamilton took a keen interest in local affairs, and for 20 years he gave excellent service as a borough councillor.... He was a member of the Gore School Committee for many years, and he was one of the borough representatives on the Coronation Library Committee. He was also a member of the Gore Poultry Club... and for many years he was a prominent bird fancier and exhibitor. For a number of years he was a bandsman, being a member of the Gore institution in its early days, and he always retained a keen interest in its activities.

Mr Hamilton was also a keen horticulturist, it being said that literally he lived for his garden. Various branches of sport held his interest, and he was always keen for a chat on athletics or Rugby football....

.... He was a man who was held in the highest respect by the community....
His cheery disposition and quiet, unassuming nature were a wonderful
asset....

Children

William and Mary produced a family of eight:

- **Esther (Essie) Emmeline**, born 1898, Milton; admitted to Gore Main School in 1904; married Alick Leonard, 1924; lived in Balclutha, son James; Esther died 1947 and is buried with Alick in Balclutha Old Cemetery.
- **Ronald Osborne**, born 31 July 1900, Milton; married Lillian Denese Wilson, 1934; lived in Dunedin; children Jennifer and Barry; Ronald died 12 October 1968, Denese died 1983. *[For fuller biography see end note 1.]*
- **Ella Rosina**, born 25 March 1902, Milton; married George Ernest Raphael Thompson, 1930; Salvation Army officers (George chaplain to the forces in the Pacific during WWII), George became a Methodist minister; children Elaine (Peat) and Lois (Officer); Ella died on 19 December 1967 and is buried in Karori Cemetery, Wellington, Plot 342 Z.
- **Adela (Ada) Irene**, born 24 February 1905, Gore, Southland; after leaving school worked in Gore Public Library; married Stanley John Robertson Officer, 1928 (he was working in H&J Smith's, Gore); soon moved to High Street, Rosedale, Invercargill; active in the North Invercargill Presbyterian Church; children Audrey, Shirley (died 10 May 1965), John and Mervyn; Stan died, aged 46, on 29 October 1949, Ada died 6 May 1987; they are buried together in the Eastern Cemetery, Invercargill, Block 33, Plot 419.
- **Norman Wilfred**, born 18 September 1907, Gore; married Pearl Florence Allott, 1929; lived at 27A Virgil Street, Oamaru; active in the Salvation Army; children Ian, Norman, Colin, Russell and Mervyn; Norman died 14 June 1978.
- **Annie (Anne) Osborne**, born 29 October 1908, Gore; married Francis William Hay, 2 January 1935; Salvation Army officers, children Daphne, Laurence, Murray (died at 9 months, 18 September 1946, buried in Anderson's Bay Cemetery, Dunedin, Block 30, Plot 66), Glenys, Lynette; Anne died 13 August 2002, Frank died 14 December 2002, their ashes are in the plinth in the Salvation Army section of Karori Cemetery, Wellington. *[For fuller biography see separate Notes on Annie Osborne Hamilton.]*
- **Mabel Elizabeth (aka Doreen Sarah)**, born 2 June 1910, Gore; married Allan McKenzie Jackman, hardware merchant, 1937; lived in Gore; children Pamela (Gilmour), Diane (Hood) and Peter John (suicide 1984, buried in Charlton Park Cemetery, Gore, Block 23, Plot 7); Doreen died 13 December 1981, and is buried in Charlton Park Cemetery, Gore, Block 21, Plot 13. *[For discussion of her names see end note 2.]*
- **Allan Raymond**, born 28 September 1920, Gore; corporal in 3rd Division, 2nd NZEF during WWII (service no. 271430); married Sylvia Mason; lived in Gore where he managed a sporting goods shop; no children; active in pigeon racing, golfing, fishing and rifle shooting; died 17 September 1978, Gore, by a self-inflicted gunshot, probably accidental, and is buried with his parents in the Gore Cemetery, Block 35, Plot 32.

Mary's death

Mary Hamilton suffered her first cerebral thrombosis at the age of 55, and was seriously disabled; her youngest daughter, Doreen, nursed and cared for her. Mary died in her home five years later, on 17 May 1937, of a second stroke, and was buried by the Salvation Army officer, Capt. George Sawyer, in the Gore Cemetery, Block 35, Plot 32.

William's death

William also passed away at home – from a coronary thrombosis following myocarditis over a period of years; he died on 17 August 1939. William's obituary notes: 'An unfortunate aspect of his sudden passing is that only three weeks ago he married Miss Sarah Murphy, a sister of his late wife, and they had not long returned from a trip north....'

William was buried alongside his beloved wife by the local Salvation Army officer, Captain Ernest Elliot.

Surprisingly, William died intestate. With the agreement of the other children, Norman was appointed by the court as sole administrator. The estate was initially valued at £653, but out of this a number of expenses, including the BNZ mortgage on the Denton Street property (Lots 10 and 11, Plan 582, part of Section 72, Block 16, Town of Gore), had to be paid, leaving a surplus for distribution of a little more than £325.

End note 1: Ronald Osborne Hamilton

Ronald Osborne Hamilton, the second child of William Hamilton and Mary née Murphy, was born in Milton on 31 July 1900. In 1903 the Hamilton family moved to Gore. Ronald began his formal education in the Gore Main School early in 1906, but by 17 July of that year was living with his maternal grandparents, the Murphys, in Milton and was enrolled in the Tokomairiro School, where he remained until the end of 1907. The reason for the departure from his family is not known but his return to Gore was probably precipitated by the death of his Murphy grandfather in October 1907. Ronald re-enrolled in Gore Main in 1908.

Ron married Lil(l)ian Denese (known as 'Den') Wilson in 1934. Denese was born on 14 December 1900 to Lillie Margarethe and David Porter Wilson. She attended primary schools in Dunedin (Albany Street and Union Street) and in Clive, before enrolling in 'Dunedin Technical Classes' in February 1915.

Ron and Den's first child was stillborn in 1936, but later children were Jennifer and Barry.

A brief outline of Ron's biography was published in the *Otago Daily Times* on 29 June 1963 when he retired from his position as manager of the grain and seed department of Murray Roberts and Co., Dunedin.

City Seed Expert Ends Long Service

Mr R.O. Hamilton, well known to many Otago farmers, retired yesterday after 43 years' service with Murray Roberts and Co., Ltd....

'I have no plans for the future but to live quietly and enjoy my bowls and gardening,' Mr Hamilton said yesterday.

He will be 63 next month.

After leaving school, Mr Hamilton joined the Post Office at Gore in 1915. After two years and a half he went to Flemings Mill.

Joining Murray Roberts's Gore branch as a junior in 1920, he was paid £2 a week—'enough to get by on.'

'One of the oldest seed merchants in New Zealand, Mr Hamilton is regarded as an authority in his field,' the manager of Murray Roberts, Mr G.E. Bichan, said yesterday.

His active support of the Grain and Seed Merchants' Association has included two terms as president.

A keen bowler, he is a past president of the Kaituna Bowling Club.

Ronald Osborn(e) Hamilton died in the Public Hospital, Dunedin, on 12 October 1968 at the age of 68. His body was cremated three days later and the ashes given to the family. At the time of his death he was living at 20 Cochrane Street, Mornington, the family home for many years.

End note 2: Doreen Sarah or Mabel Elizabeth?

William and Mary Hamilton's last daughter, born 2 June 1910, was registered at birth with the personal names Mabel Elizabeth, but was known to everyone, throughout her life, as Doreen Sarah. However, when she made out her will in October 1955 she did so styling herself 'Mabel Elizabeth Jackman [her married surname] commonly known as Doreen Sarah Jackman'. Why this change of name?

In the will, Doreen made her husband Allan her sole executor and left all her estate to him. When seeking probate after his wife's death in December 1981, Allan was required to swear in an affidavit: '.... (4) That the correct name of the said deceased is Mabel Elizabeth Jackman. (5) That all the assets of the estate of the said deceased are in the name Doreen Sarah Jackman.' 'The said deceased' was buried under the name Doreen Sarah, this being inscribed on her headstone in the Charlton Park Cemetery, Gore, but the cemetery burial record names her only as Mabel Elizabeth.

While Doreen had a maternal grandmother and a paternal aunt called Elizabeth, the names 'Mabel' and 'Doreen' do not occur in either her mother's or her father's lineage.

Daphne recalls that our mother Annie, Doreen's sister, had recounted on one occasion that the father, William, registered his new daughter as 'Mabel Elizabeth' without consulting his wife, and that when he reported this to 'Polly' she was furious, having already decided on 'Doreen Sarah' – so Doreen Sarah she became.