

**·FIDE·  
·ET·  
·FORTITUDINE·**

A HISTORY OF  
MICHAEL FINUCANE AND JULIA CORKERY  
AND THEIR DESCENDANTS  
1821 - 2009

COMPILED BY JENNIFER M FINUCANE

## INTRODUCTION

The descendants of Maurice and Isobel Finucane have held three family reunions, the first in 1985, the second in 1996 and the third in 2009. We have had a lot of fun at these events but concerns were raised about the passing on of our history to the younger generations, and so I have attempted to compile not only factual history but also the memoirs of family members.

I want to dedicate my efforts to Grandpop who was keen on the idea of writing down memories.

Jennifer Finucane

I want to thank the family members who have contributed. They are

Valmai Alison Schultz (nee Finucane)

Nancy Eileen Perry (nee Finucane)

Wrey Finucane

Colin Michael Finucane

Douglas Martin Finucane

Ronald Maxwell Finucane

Fredrick Ewart Finucane

Irene Davis (nee Murray)

Maurice Finucane

Alfred Morris Finucane

(also thanks to Toni and Karen for helping gather the last bits together)

I have put in more effort in tracing the descendants of Michael Martin Finucane and Frances Ellen Morris because it is through their line that I descend. However, where I have managed to trace a family I have included a list of known details such as birth, death and marriage dates.



Fide . Et . Fortitudine

The name Finucane (pronounced Finoocan) is derived from the Gaelic O'Fionnmhacain or Fionnmhacain, which means 'fair little son', and is the clan name of the O'Finucan of County Clare, one of the oldest clans in Ireland founded in the third century AD and forming part of the nobility of North and South Munster.

There is a strong Anglo-military connection among the nineteenth-century Irish clansmen, and this is confirmed by records of the O'Finucan which show it had professional fighting men on the British side: Captain James Finucane, 97<sup>th</sup> Foot; Lieutenant William Finucane, 58<sup>th</sup> Foot; Donatus Finucane, Quartermaster 17<sup>th</sup> Foot; George Finucane, Ensign 88<sup>th</sup> Foot; Lieutenant Andrew Finucane, 10<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons and our very own Michael Finucane, Corporal 65<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

It would appear that the first recorded Finucane to arrive in New Zealand was in the early Nineteenth Century. There is mention of a Lieutenant Finucane of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Regiment who arrived in 1810 into the Bay of Islands. He was the Secretary to Governor Foveaux and had been stationed in Sydney. Foveaux and Finucane were on route back to England but came by the Bay of Islands to learn more about the fate of the Boyd (attacked and sunk in the Whangaroa harbour). Finucane was one of a party of men who went inland by about 10 miles in order to rescue four white men. However, the record states that they discovered the terrain very difficult and so returned to the boat by way of a different route in case they were being followed. Foveaux and Finucane then took their passage to England in the brig named Speke, 1810. There are no records to indicate Finucane returned to NZ or that he is a direct relation of Michael Finucane. I have written this piece simply for interest. Please note this occurred in 1810 and Michael Finucane was born in 1821.

Also please note that the crest with Fide Et Fortitudine was granted to Andrew Finucane of Stamer Park. You can't just claim the crest as your own because you have the same surname. It's a bit like claiming your cousins title! There is another Finucane crest but it can be difficult to find in the books available. If you want to look up Stamer Park and details about Andrew Finucane, refer to the Burke's landed gentry 1843.

## **MICHAEL FINUCANE 1821 - 1868**

Michael Finucane was born in 1821, in Ennis, County Clare, Ireland to a working class Roman Catholic family. There was significant rural poverty in the western regions of Ireland and many families lived a subsistent lifestyle. The 1830s were a decade of particular unrest, and during this time the Royal Irish Constabulary was formed; a highly organised, disciplined and salaried force, but also mainly Protestant. The poverty climaxed in the mid-1840's with the potato famine and many people chose to emigrate both seasonally and permanently. On 23 February 1840, at 19 years of age Michael enlisted in the 65th (2nd Yorkshire North Riding) Regiment as a Private, regimental number 1539. He listed his previous employment as a labourer.

It is possible to follow Michael's travels through the movements of the regiment. The 65th was in England during 1841-3, in Dublin (Ireland) between October 1843-July 1845, then at Chatham (Kent) until they sailed on the JAVA. The JAVA embarked from Woolwich on 18 May 1846 and disembarked in Sydney on 15 October 1846. On 8 November 1846 the JAVA left Sydney and arrived in Auckland on 27 November 1846. (Michael must have received a promotion because the muster rolls from December 1846 begin to list him as a Corporal.) The regiment then went down to Wellington in July 1847, and they were there when he received a free discharge on 31 March 1850. He was given a Good Conduct Record, received 1 pound 10 shillings and 6 pence from the Army Pension Fund, and was described as being steady and sober.

The 65th regiment were known as "The Royal Tigers" from their badge (granted for services in India) and had the longest association with New Zealand; well over eleven hundred of their rank and file took their discharge here. They served all over the North Island and were known by the Maoris as "The Hickety Pips", their version of "65th".

The regiment was used to provide guards for eight convict ships sailing from England; six for Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and two for Norfolk Island. After delivering the convicts the guards went on to Sydney. When disturbances broke out in New Zealand (Hutt Valley) most of the guards were shipped over to Wellington on the LEVANT. The main body of the regiment had meanwhile embarked at Woolwich on the JAVA, which called into Hobart Town on its way to Sydney. About a month after arrival the JAVA was re-chartered to take available troops to New Zealand; two companies (about 200 men) disembarked at the Bay of Islands while the rest continued down to Auckland. The JAVA only carried unmarried officers due to an outbreak in measles amongst the children at Chatham. The married men had followed later on the SIR ROBERT PEEL.

The 65th then moved down to Wellington having been relieved by the 58th regiment.

In 1850 Michael Finucane took up the position of Corporal in the Wellington Provincial Police Force.

(See 'With Confidence and Pride – Policing the Wellington Region 1840 – 1992')

In 1858 Dr Featherston who represented the Provincial Council for the Wellington Police began a long period of 'dictatorship' which caused the men in the police force undue sufferance. This pressure ultimately led to the death of Samuel Styles the Chief of the Wellington Provincial Police in November 1860. He was succeeded temporarily by Corporal Michael Finucane, a policeman of 10 years standing. Organised pressure by Wairarapa workers in response to the depression in that part of the province led to more widespread issues, and Corporal Finucane was faced with an immediate problem in Wellington. In January 1861 nine Wellington constables sought a pay rise from 4s 6d per day to a level comparable with other provincial forces. They also wanted a free uniform and better hours of duty. The response they received was an offer to reinstate a 'Good Conduct' reward fund, by accumulating military and naval payments for catching deserters. Finucane had allowed this combination of his men to try and boost the morale, but he was to be the biggest casualty as a result. Dr Featherston replaced Michael Finucane with someone he considered "more reliable". However, it is stated that at this time the Wellington Provincials were a thoroughly demoralised force.

From the Wellington Gazette 1858-1860 it shows that Michael made an application to purchase 80 acres of land under the "Waste Land Act 1858". This was an act to encourage soldiers, police and those in authority to purchase land at a nominal price of ten shillings (1 dollar) an acre. This could be paid off over a long period because the land was mostly in scrub and needed to be cleared before construction of buildings could take place. Some of the land (in Wellington) was 'split level'; half your acre might be 3 metres up the hill while the rest was on the lower level. The land that Michael purchased was known as 'Government Freehold Land Pahautanui Line Section 338'.

However, it appears he had to either sell it or relinquish as the family shifted to Napier before they could begin to make use of the land.

## MARRIAGE & FAMILY

On 8 February 1853 Michael Finucane married Julia Corkery in the Catholic Chapel of the Nativity of our Saviour, in Wellington. He was registered as a policeman and of full age (he was 32 years old). Julia had no employment listed and her age states that she was a minor (less than 20 years old, (from her death certificate details she was probably 18 years old)). They lived in Tinakori Road, which is now in the middle of Wellington city.

Michael and Julia lived in the Wellington district until at least 1861. During this time they had five sons - Thomas (b 1849), John (b 1854), Michael Martin (b 1857), James (b 1859), and Bryan Robert (b 1860).

Some time between 1861 and 1863 the family moved to Napier. On December 17<sup>th</sup> 1863 a daughter, Mary Ann was born. On Mary's birth certificate, Michael's profession is listed as "Policeman".

On 31 July 1868 Michael Finucane died at Napier hospital from "dropsy".

References for the above are the Muster Roll films and "The New Zealander" 7/11/1846 and 28/11/1846. These are available at the Auckland Public Library. Also Broughton's Memoirs of the 65th Regiment (available in major libraries).

# **Certified Copy of Entry of Marriage in the Registrar-General's Office**

Nº 125259

Number	1	
When married	8 February 1853	
Where married	Catholic Chapel of the Nativity of our Saviour Wellington	
	Bridegroom	Bride
Name and surname	Michael Finucan	Julia Corkery
Age	full	minor
Profession or occupation	Policeman	-
Conjugal status	-	Spinster
Birthplace	-	-
Usual residence (in full)	-	-

Certified to be a true copy of the above particulars included in a marriage entry in the records of the Registrar-General's Office.

Given under the seal of the registrar-General at Lower Hutt, this

1 day of July 19 88



**CAUTION** - Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses it as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution under the Crimes Act 1961.

**Certified Copy of Entry of Death in the Registrar-General's Office**Place of Registration: Napier

1. Name and Surname 2. Profession or Occupation 3. Usual place of residence	Michael Finucane Labourer -
4. Sex. Age. Date of Birth	M 47 -
5. When died 6. Where died	31 July 1868 Napier
7. Where born 8. How long in New Zealand	7 - 19 Not Registered -
9. Name and Surname of Father 10. Name and Surname of Mother 11. Maiden Surname of Mother 12. Profession or Occupation of Father	- - - -
13. Where married 14. At what Age married 15. To whom married 16. Age of Widow/Widower if living 17. If issue living, state Ages of each Sex	- - - - M. - F. -
18. When buried 19. Where buried	- -
20. Causes of Death and Intervals between Onset and Death  21. Medical Attendant by whom certified 22. When he last saw Deceased (i.e., before death).	General Dropsy  - -

Certified to be a true copy of the above particulars included in an entry of death in the records of the Registrar-General's office.

Given under the seal of the Registrar-General at Lower Hutt.

the 2 day of November 19 87.

CAUTION--Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses it as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution under the Crimes Act 1961.



## **JULIA CORKERY**

Julia was born in London 1835 and arrived in NZ on board the Mariner on 12 July 1849. Her registration from the ships records show she was a domestic servant, aged 17 years but if you do the math, she was perhaps 14 or 15 years old. (My personal belief is that she left London because she was pregnant; her son Thomas was born in 1849. However, this is something I am still investigating.) The Mariner disembarked at Wellington. A letter written by John Latimer Parke to the NZ Company office states that Julia Corkery was supposed to have been sent to Nelson (along with 2 other families). However due to a miscommunication she and these other families were allowed to disembark at Wellington.

The address provided on her application form for assisted immigration to NZ was No. 8 Newcourt, White Street, London.

After she was widowed to Michael Finucane (1868) she remarried in 1869 to George Taylor. Birth records show they had one child, a daughter Harriet.

George and Julia Taylor moved to Wairoa during the 1880's where they purchased and operated the Ferry Hotel.

A photo dated 1887 which showed the original pub with single storey only hangs in the office of the hotel. In this photo is a crowd of people on the front veranda with the name of the proprietor TAYLOR over the front door.

The Ferry Hotel is a well-known hostelry, situated on the bank of the Wairoa River and is within a few minutes walk of the township. The "Ferry" is probably the oldest hotel in the district. It contains 16 rooms, exclusive of dining, sitting, and drawing rooms, and is comfortably furnished throughout. The house is conveniently situated on the main road to the lake (Waikaremoana) where fine shooting, boating etc may be obtained.

Julia died on 14 August 1890 in Napier. There was an inquest held prior to her internment at the Old Napier Cemetery. She is buried in South, South East, Block 5. There is a headstone with inscription of a verse and family details.

**Certified Copy of Entry of Death in the Registrar-General's Office**Place of Registration: Napier

1. Name and Surname 2. Profession or Occupation 3. Usual place of residence	Julia Taylor - -
4. Sex. Age. Date of Birth	F                      55                      -
5. When died 6. Where died	16 August 1890 Western Spit
7. Where born 8. How long in New Zealand	London 40 years
9. Name and Surname of Father 10. Name and Surname of Mother 11. Maiden Surname of Mother 12. Profession or Occupation of Father	- Corkery Not known Not known Carter
13. Where married 14. At what Age married 15. To whom married 16. Age of Widow/Widower if living 17. If issue living, state Ages of each Sex	Napier 34 George Taylor - M. 4 (Ages Unknown)                      F. 2 (Ages Unknown)
18. When buried 19. Where buried	18 August 1890 Napier
20. Causes of Death and Intervals between Onset and Death	Verdict of Jury Natural Causes
21. Medical Attendant by whom certified 22. When he last saw Deceased (i.e., before death).	- -

Certified to be a true copy of the above particulars included in an entry of death in the records of the Registrar-General's office.

Given under the seal of the Registrar-General at Lower Hutt.

the 20 day of February 19 89



CAUTION—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses it as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution under the Crimes Act 1961.

## THOMAS FINUCANE

As a teenager Tom Finucane moved with his family to the Hawke's Bay. In 1868, Tom was an employee (a cow boy) of Mrs Bloomfield who lived at Matawhero, Gisborne, and whose husband was employed by the army. On the fateful night of 9 November 1868, when Te Kooti and the Hauhaus massacred in the Poverty Bay, Tom played an important role in helping to save the women and children of the Bloomfield household.

From a letter he wrote in November 1914 to the Minister of Defence (to request a war medal for his heroism): "...I was about 19 years of age at the time, and in the employ of Mrs Bloomfield, at Matawhero...About a quarter of a mile from us was Major Biggs' house. About a similar distance away, on the opposite side, was Captain Wilson's. A few chains away, near the Matawhero Church, lived Mr & Mrs Walsh and children, also Mr Padbury. The Cadle family were in the same vicinity, and others I might mention. Nearly all of those above mentioned were killed on that fateful day. The whole of the flats were in a blaze, with guns going off and bullets flying in all directions. The savage yells of the Hauhaus were blood-curdling. The family I was with were roused into a state of terror. We decided to escape the best way possible. I carried one of the children and the adult women managed the rest, and we came through that awful and terrifying night into the safety zone. My first realisation of what had happened was when the glare from the surrounding burning houses reflected through the windows. I immediately woke the women, and it was with considerable difficulty that I induced them to leave the house. I was the only man on the premises, and had to lead the way to avoid danger from the indiscriminate fire from the weaponry. We were fortunate indeed to escape and what favoured us perhaps was the general confusion of killing, burning and pillaging. The next day I formed one of a party of ten to engage in scouting work around the flats and to give help where we could; we had a very anxious time. Some time later I formed one of the escorts in convoying ammunition to Ngatapa."

At the time of writing, Tom was about 65 years of age, and he noted his occupation as a farmer at Makauri.

Another report states that Tom Finucane was the servant boy of the Bloomfield family, and that he had been awoken by Charles James who alone had escaped from the Biggs' property. Charles James had knocked loudly on the door crying "For God's sake run for your lives, the Maoris' are murdering everybody!". Tom Finucane had then advised that they all stay close to the scrub, and to follow the river until they arrived at Gisborne. (Williams: East Coast Historical Records).

Some people think Tom was adopted by Michael and Julia, but I think he was more likely to have been Julia's child with unknown father. He married Mary Jane Byrne in 1876 and they had one child Matilda (Tilly). Mary was the daughter of another local settler Richard John Byrne (b 1812) who arrived in NZ in 1845 with the 58<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Mary had her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in June 1949.

On the 1881 Electoral roll Thomas was living at Makauri, (about 5kms from where Martin Finucane lived), and registered as a settler.

## **JOHN FINUCANE**

John Finucane (b 1854) joined the armed constabulary 18<sup>th</sup> May 1873, regiment number 1964, he was 19 years old. He was distinguished at Wairoa. He never married. He is reported to have had a sallow complexion, grey eyes, and light brown hair. He was 5 foot 7.5 inches tall. He was Roman Catholic.

He owned property.

John died at Frasertown on 10 June 1877, aged 22, and was buried at Te Kapu (Frasertown), Wairoa.

## **JAMES FINUCANE**

Born 20 March 1859. He married Margaret Forten in 1893.

Together they had eight children:

James Richard            b 1893 d 1951 Wairoa; m 1915 to Iris Jane Sutherland Moroney

Edward Martin            b 1895; m 1919 to May Plante

Charles Clarence        b 1896; m 1940 to Emily Haslemore?

Margaret Ellen Susan b 1898; m 1926 Charles Edward Hall

William Herbert Gordon b 1901 d 1952 Wairoa; m 1924 to Ellen Daisy Reay

Timothy Matthew Ring b 1902;

Colin John Michael    b 1904; d Wairoa?

Mary Catherine        b 1908 (also known as Mollie). Mary married Walter Birch and had two sons Robert and Terrence.

## **BRYAN ROBERT FINUCANE**

Born 14 September 1860, died 4 December 1945 aged 79 years. He married Clara Robilliard in 1903. He is buried in the Old Napier Cemetery along side his wife in Northern block 4.

## **MARY ANN FINUCANE**

Born 17 December 1863 in Napier. Mary married Albert George Havill in 1891 (brother to EC Havill).

## **HARRIET TAYLOR**

Born in Napier or Wairoa. Harriet married Edward Charles Havill in 1892.

## **MICHAEL MARTIN FINUCANE**

Martin Finucane was born in Belmont, Lower Hutt on March 5, 1857; and moved with his family to the Hawke's Bay about 1863.

In 1873, when Martin was 16 years, he moved into the Wairoa district, and began working as a mail and stores carrier for the Constabulary camps at Waikaremoana and along the road between Wairoa and the lake. At this time the fear of Maori hostilities was still sufficiently acute to bring all the women and children of the Frasertown neighbourhood into the blockhouses at night. According to Martin's obituary, on one occasion he fell into the hands of a band of Maoris who, though they did him no bodily harm, commandeered his horse and sent him home to the settlement with a warning against continuing his activities in association with the constabulary. However, neither did Martin pay any attention to the warning, nor did any harm come to him at a later date. (Gisborne Herald 18/5/1935)

Martin moved up from Wairoa to Te Arai, and began working stock for a man named Billy Graham. Graham advised Martin to invest his money in a sheep and cattle station which was on the market. This station must have been a reasonable distance from Te Arai, because Martin did not want to leave the district without first marrying Miss Frances Ellen (Nelly) Morris. However, their religious differences caused many arguments, resulting in Martin leaving for Australia (about 1893), and spending all his money. When Martin returned, he forsook his Catholic faith in order that Nelly Morris would marry him.

The 1881 electoral roll tells us that Martin was living at Patutahi, registered as a labourer.

Martin took up a job as a shepherd on the Opua Station. He is remembered as one who was greatly skilled in farm work; a "well respected pioneer who could recall the old constabulary days when the East Coast was threatened by Maori raids". (GH 1935)

John Clark, the grandson of the late John Clark who purchased Opua Station from John Harris, told me "I was only a boy of about five years, but I can still remember Martin Finucane. Even as an old man with white hair, he could still jump the fences. My father told me that Martin was very good with the animals; we named two of our paddocks after him." (Jennifer Finucane)

**CERTIFIED COPY OF ENTRY OF BIRTH** **Nº 127761**

IN THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S OFFICE

Place of Registration: WELLINGTON

1. Surname <i>(Where shown on entry.)</i>	-
2. Christian or first names <i>(If twin, state whether elder or younger; if stillborn, state so.)</i>	Michael Martin
3. Sex	M
4. When born	5 March 1857
5. Where born <i>(Town or locality only.)</i>	Wellington
<b>Father</b>	
6. Name and surname	Michael Finucane
7. Profession or occupation	Corporal Armed Police
8. Age	-
9. Birthplace	-
<b>Mother</b>	
10. Name and Surname	Julia Finucane
11. Maiden Surname	Corkery
12. Age	-
13. Birthplace	-
14. Name and Surname of child if there has been any addition or alteration after registration of birth.	-

Certified to be a true copy of the above particulars included in an entry of birth in the records of the Registrar-General's Office.

Given under the seal of the Registrar-General at Lower Hutt, this

2 day of October 19 89



CAUTION - Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses it as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution under the Crimes Act 1961.

RETURN OF APPLICATIONS TO MARRY IN THE

GISBORNE DISTRICT

DATE OF NOTICE: 13 AUGUST 1895

<u>NAME OF PARTIES:</u>	<u>GROOM</u>	<u>BRIDE</u>
Surname:	FINUCANE	MORRIS
Christian Name:	MARTIN	FRANCIS ELLEN
<u>CONDITIONS:</u>	BACHELOR	SPINSTER
<u>CALLING OR PROFESSION:</u>	SHEPHERD	'NONE'
<u>AGE:</u>	37	24
<u>DWELLING PLACE:</u>	TE ARAI	TE ARAI
<u>LENGTH OF RESIDENCE:</u>	18 years	15 years
<u>PLACE WHERE MARRIAGE TO BE SOLEMNIZED:</u>	RESIDENCE OF GEORGE MORRIS, TARAI	
<u>NAME AND RELATION OF PERSON GIVING CONSENT IN CASE OF A MINOR</u>	-	-
<u>DATE OF CERTIFICATE:</u>	13 AUGUST 1895	
<u>OFFICIATING MINISTER:</u>	REV. J.E. FOX (COE)	

Archives ref: BDM 20/41 pg 37/851

1. Name and Surname.	Michael Martin Finucane
2. Profession or Occupation.	Station Hand
3. Usual place of residence.	-
4. Sex. Age. Date of Birth.	M. 79 -
5. When died.	16 May 1935
6. Where died.	Cook Hospital, Gisborne from Manutuke
7. Where born.	Belmont, Wellington
8. How long in New Zealand.	Life
9. Name and Surname of Father.	Michael Finucane
10. Name and Surname of Mother.	Julia Finucane
11. Maiden Surname of Mother.	Corker
12. Profession or Occupation of Father.	Police Constable
13. Where married.	Manutuke
14. At what Age married.	39
15. To whom married.	Frances Ellen Morris
16. Age of Widow, if living.	63 years
17. If Issue living, state Ages of each Sex.	M. 39,36 F. 33,24
18. When buried.	18 May 1935
19. Where buried.	Taruheru
20. Causes of Death and Intervals between Onset and Death.	Carcinoma of prostate
21. Medical Attendant by whom certified.	R J B Hall
22. When he last saw Deceased (i.e., before death).	16 May 1935





Michael Martin Finucane, on the road to Waikaremoana (pre 1935)



Headstone at Tarahehu cemetery, Gisborne

OBITUARY

MR M. M. FINUCANE

The death occurred at Cook Hospital of Mr Michael Martin Finucane, a well respected Poverty Bay pioneer with memories of the old Constabulary days when the East Coast was threatened by Maori raids. He was 78 years of age.

The late Mr Finucane was born at Belmont, Lower Hutt, and arrived in the Wairoa district as a youth of 16 years. For some time he was engaged in carrying mails and stores to the Constabulary camps at Waikaremoana and along the road between Wairoa and the lake. At that time the fear of Maori hostilities was still sufficiently acute to bring all the women and children of the Frasertown neighbourhood into the blockhouses at night. On one occasion young Finucane fell into the hands of a band of Maoris who, though they did him no bodily harm, commandeered his horse and sent him home to the settlement with a warning against continuing his activities in association with the constabulary. Needless to say, the young Irish colonial did not heed the warning but he was not molested thereafter.

The countryside had become calm again before he left the neighbourhood, and his later years were spent in the peaceful occupations of farm work, in which he was skilled to an unusual degree.

Surviving him are Mrs Finucane, two sons, Messrs Alfred and Maurice Finucane, the later being resident in Whakatane, and two daughters: Mrs A. Hitchman, Gisborne and Mrs W. Acland, of New Plymouth. They will be accorded the deep sympathy of a wide circle of friends.



Top photo (left) : Martin and Nellie Finucane

Top photo (right): Martin Finucane

Lower photo: Martin Finucane (at rear) with Morris Family (the child in front is Alfred George Finucane). Photo is about 1898. Nelly is standing, second from left.

## OPUA STATION

Te Arai is dominated by the Opuia Station, established by the Harris family in 1835. It is a large agricultural and pastoral holding, which was used mainly as a trading station, and had a loading bank constructed on the bank of the Te Arai River. There was a very large homestead (which is no longer standing), houses for station hands, and usual farm buildings built on the station. Some years later (1868), Opuia was the scene of one of the most shocking massacres committed by Te Kooti and his Hauhau supporters. In 1890 Opuia was purchased from John Harris by the late John Clark, and is presently farmed by his great grandson.

Each of the paddocks on the 850 acres (all flat land) is named, and charted. Two of these paddocks have been named after Michael Martin Finucane, and are known as Martins Field and Back Martins. Martins Field is rectangular with the longer side bordering the main highway (on the right hand side if one is travelling south), and is almost directly across the road from the main buildings. In the rear left hand corner of this paddock stood a house where Martin and Nelly Finucane lived and raised their family. The paddock behind their house was called Back Martins.

On 12 May 1927, There was a Jubilee procession of pioneers and their families which marched up Gladstone road in Gisborne to mark 50 years of farming and life in the district. A luncheon was held in the Garrison Hall for these pioneers; both Martin and Nellie attended these celebrations.



Morris Family: Back: Jessie & Polly  
Middle: Anne, George, Francis Ellen



Morris Family: Back: George & Martin  
Middle: Polly, Jessie and Francis Ellen



Front: Albert Victor

Front: Albert V, Anne, George with Alfred



Top photo: the old homestead at Opuia Station – it is to the right as you travel south. There is a plan/map of the farm in this house that shows where Martins Field and Back Martins paddocks are.

Bottom photo: the workers sheds and houses – it is to the left as you travel south

## **FRANCES ELLEN MORRIS & FAMILY**

Frances Ellen Morris was born on 26 October 1870 in England, and sailed out to New Zealand with her parents George and Anne, and younger sister Lucy, on the RENFREWSHIRE. This ship embarked at Plymouth, England on 29 March 1877 and eventually arrived at Napier on 4 January 1878, after having spent considerable time in quarantine due to an outbreak of scarlet fever. This journey claimed the life of Lucy Morris who died from scarlet fever on 4 July 1877, aged 2 years.

According to the ships papers and many letters this voyage was a traumatic experience for the passengers, and several children died. The ship's doctor (Dr Dale) was often drunk, frequented the single girls' quarters, and was incompetent. The captain had no control over the crew, who were described as being disorderly. Reports of this voyage can be found in White Wings Vol II and at The National Archives, Wellington.

The Morris family settled at Te Arai, a settlement close to Manutuke, 11 kms south of Gisborne, where the family grew by four more children with the births of Jessie, Sarah, George and Albert Victor. At least three of the children had nick-names: Frances Ellen was "Nelly, (and sometimes, Nuki)", Sarah was "Polly", and Albert Victor was "Charlie".

George Morris was employed by the old Te Arai Station as a fencer, and Anne Morris was a midwife.

The 1881 Electoral roll lists George Morris as a station hand, living at Te Arai. The 1893 Electoral roll lists George Morris as a sheep farmer, and it also includes for the first time Annie Morris a married woman, and Frances Ellen Morris, a spinster; all living at Te Arai.

Albert Victor fought in WWI. He was registered as number 9/1587, a Trooper for the Otago Mounted Rifles. He was single, and gave his mothers name as next of kin. He returned from war but died in 1920. He is buried in the Manutuke cemetery. I understand George and Anne are buried in the Maori cemetery at Manutuke, but haven't yet verified that.

Most of what we know about the Morris family has been gleaned from Nelly's memories.

Nelly Morris enjoyed telling stories about her childhood; some stories were printed in the Gisborne Herald, some in school reunion books, and others are remembered by her descendants.

Here are some stories that I have gathered:

"When there was a scare about Te Kooti, mother and father took our family into the little shack in the middle of the maize paddock. We would sleep there every night in case Te Kooti came back". FEF (Manutuke School: The First One Hundred Years)

“I remember our people shifting home from Te Arai to Matawhero around about 1893. John Clark did the job. He used a sledge and a team of 24 bullocks. They could only take half the house at once and each half took all day on the journey”. FEF (Manutuke School: The First One Hundred Years)

“During the World War II, Nelly traded her clothing coupons with tea coupons sent from two of her grandsons who lived in Whakatane.” (Colin Finucane)

“Nuki taught me the delicate art of drinking ones tea out of a saucer”  
(Valmai Schultz)



Frances Ellen (Nellie) Finucane

“Nuki (as everyone called her) lived in Peel Street, Gisborne. She lived in a huge room (everyone called it her flat) above a block of shops. From memory there were at least twenty such rooms on the same floor all leading off a long dark corridor. The only “mod-con” in this room was a freestanding gas stove with a meter that had to be constantly fed with shilling pieces. Every morning a bucket of fresh water had to be carried to Nuki’s room, then back down the corridor at night with the slop bucket. There was a communal kitchen and laundry as well as communal toilets and bath.

Nuki’s room was divided up with three big folding screens to give her a bedroom area. The rest of the room was dominated by two very large red velvet over stuffed chairs, a large dining table, her treadle sewing machine, various dressers and a very uncomfortable wooden backed kitchen couch. She also had a big radio with a “green eye”. The best thing about this room was the view, because one could look down onto the shops and pub across the street. The view of the pub proved to be great entertainment at closing time - traditionally 6 p.m.

Downstairs, on the street was a bicycle repair shop; the attraction there being a pair of moth eater mechanical sparrows in a bird cage, which tweeted in unison when you put a penny in the slot. Whenever family or friends came to visit Nuki, and a conversation “not for children’s ears” was about to begin, I would be given several pennies to go and hear the birds sing. So I’d clump off down the corridor then creep back and listen at the door  
( there was a window above the door, always open) so eaves dropping was no effort.

In this magical room Nuki also kept several budgies. One bird was called Paddy, he could talk and was often given free range to fly around the room. So with the “mind the bird! keep the door shut! keep the windows shut!” the bird was released.

To stay overnight at Nuki’s was the ultimate highlight although the kitchen couch was dreadful to sleep on even for a child, and the “insomnia” clock chimed on the hour every hour!

Fridays were doubly exciting. She would be up at 6.30 a.m and by 7.30 a.m we would already be down the street to do the weekend shopping even though the shops did not open until 9 a.m. No stopping Nuki! She banged on doors to get served and we would be home again by 8.30 a.m. Being a Friday, the country relations usually came to visit and out would come the carraway seed madiera cake. I still hate that cake! Once the relations had all gone, we would turn our attention to watching the closing of the pub across the road. Friday was the traditional “payday”, and this meant greater excitement as 6 p.m came around.

Nuki was a smoker, and would roll her cigarettes with a gadget. To watch her smoking in the evening was an unbelievable experience! She would sink down into her big chair, light up, then put a folded newspaper over her head - and you would see great clouds of smoke billowing out from under the newspaper.



In winter she wore mens “pink combinations” to keep warm. A right embarrassment dangling on the clothes line when she came to visit! (Valmai Schultz)

“Gran Finucane from Gisborne stayed the odd time and sometimes we would visit her at her flat upstairs in a big building in the heart of Gisborne city. She was a real character, loved a joke, read cowboy books flat out, rolled her own smokes, and loved a sherry right up until she died at the grand old age of 96.” (Ron Finucane)

“Nuki never discarded her old carpet squares. She just put the new one on top. I can remember four layers!” (Valmai Schultz)

### **CHANGES DOWN THE YEARS: A PIONEER LOOKS BACK**

Gisborne Herald 5/11/1963

Memories of conditions in England in the 1870's and the growth of Gisborne were recalled by a daughter of an early pioneer, Mrs F. E. Finucane, who celebrated her ninety-third birthday recently.

Tiny, very alive and with a remarkable sense of her surroundings and current events, Mrs Finucane told a Herald reporter of many interesting events of the days when Gisborne was a growing settlement.

Then six years old, Mrs Finucane travelled from England on the immigrant ship with her parents, Mr and Mrs G. Morris and 22 month old sister. The voyage took three months.

“Poverty, unemployment and general conditions in England in the 1870's were appalling” said Mrs Finucane, and because of these conditions her parents decided to emigrate, with half a sovereign as their entire capital. “Work in Britain during those times was hard and difficult to obtain” she said, recalling that her father used to leave their home in Herefordshire each day to walk 10 miles to his job as a harvester and return the same distance at night, for a very small wage.

#### Put Into Quarantine

On the trip from England scarlet fever broke out, causing the death of her sister, Mrs Finucane said. Upon their arrival at Napier the passengers were forced to live for a fortnight in quarantine in a secluded building while their clothes were baked and similar precautions taken.

After a week billeted in the soldiers barracks, which stood on the present site of the Napier Hospital, the family travelled to Gisborne by coastal vessel.

“The trip was extremely rough” Mrs Finucane remembers, “and on arrival at Gisborne as the bar of the river was so shallow that even a row boat couldn't cross it, the women and children were carried ashore on the backs of the men.”

### Girlhood Spent At Manutuke

Mrs Finucane spent her girlhood at Manutuke, where her father worked as a fencer on the Te Arai station. She attended the Manutuke School's centenary celebrations last year.

Memories of her life in Manutuke include the evacuation of the settlement as a result of a Te Kooti scare. Te Kooti, who caused much bloodshed and fighting in the 1860's was reported to be planning a raid on Gisborne and the outlying districts.

All the women and children from the surrounding settlements were taken into Gisborne, where troops had been sent to guard the town. The family stayed with other evacuees in a house in Grey Street and at night patrols kept guard.

### Many Changes

Other memories include the Boer War period, the two world wars, the transition from oil and kerosene lamps to electric lighting, the development of aeroplanes and the transformation of Gladstone Road from a sand track with bullock wagon wheel marks to its present state.

After her marriage to Mr M. Finucane, Mrs Finucane lived for 39 years on Opua station, where her husband worked. She came to live in Gisborne 20 years ago.

Mrs Finucane spoke of the long sweeping skirted gowns of her youth which have been replaced by the knee-length dress of today. She finds many of the short-skirted dresses attractive, but confesses she still cannot reconcile herself to the idea of a woman wearing slacks.

(Gisborne Herald 5/11/1963)

### **OBITUARY**

A member of an early pioneer family in Gisborne Mrs Frances Ellen Finucane died in Gisborne on Tuesday shortly before her 96<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Born in Herefordshire in 1870, she was the daughter of Mr and Mrs G. Morris. She came to New Zealand with her parents when she was seven.

On their arrival at Napier, her father began work at the old Te Arai Station and the then Miss Morris lived there with her parents until her father's death.

In 1894, she was married in Gisborne to Mr Michael Martin Finucane, a brother of Tom Finucane who helped the recently widowed Mrs Bloomfield, her children and woman companion, to escape from the Te Kooti rebels at the time of the Matawhero Massacre in 1868.

At that time, Mr Finucane, worked for a Wairoa contractor, carrying supplies to British troops in the Urewera.

Mrs Finucane lived at Manutuke for many years. Her husband was employed by Mr J. Clark of Opuia Station, as a teamster.

After her husband's death in 1935, Mrs Finucane remained at Manutuke and then lived for some time at New Plymouth with a daughter.

She later returned to Gisborne and for the past 24 years lived in a flat at Albert Buildings, in Peel Street.

Mrs Finucane is survived by four children, 12 grandchildren and 36 great-grandchildren.

A service was held in Holy Trinity Church, Derby Street, prior to interment in the Tareheru Cemetery.



Albert Victor Morris, 1915.

## **ALFRED GEORGE FINUCANE**

Alf Finucane was born on 14 July 1896 at Te Arai, the eldest child of Martin and Nellie FINUCANE. He attended the Manutuke School, and later enlisted in the WWI registered 30193 as a Private in the army. He gave his father as being next of kin, and wrote that prior to registration he was a labourer from Manutuke. He was badly wounded in Third Battle of Ypres in October 1917 at Passchendaele (where almost 700 NZer's died) and was sent to England to recuperate. His injuries included permanent damage to one leg and he wore a calliper to assist walking.

In 1920 he married Miss Rosetta GASON (b 21 December 1899) in Wellington. His mother Nelly, and brother Maurice were in attendance, having travelled from Manutuke & Awakeri.

Alf was adept at basket wares and he made baskets of all sizes and sold them to assist with his income (war pension). See above for photos that show him with the Morris family.

Alf and Rosetta had 3 children: Eric John Martin, Annette and Barbara.  
Eric m 1944 to Marjorie Plier and m 1954 to Ellen Shirley Dennis

Alf died 14 August 1979, cremated Palmerston North

Rosetta died 1986 Palmerston North Hospital

Refer [www.pncc.govt.nz/servicesandfacilities/cemeteryandcremation/](http://www.pncc.govt.nz/servicesandfacilities/cemeteryandcremation/) for headstone



Maurice and Alfred Finucane – photo likely to have been taken just prior to Alf going to war 1915/16.

## **MAURICE FINUCANE**

Maurice Finucane was born on 12 September 1899 at Te Arai, the second child and second son of Martin and Nellie FINUCANE. He had blonde hair and green eyes. His education was poorly, and he resented the teacher's harshness so he left school and home, still a young teenager, to work on a farm in the district. Maurice's mother bought a piano, and Maurice paid for lessons, a term in advance. He would cycle home from the neighbouring farm for lessons, and had been learning for about 6 to 9 months when the piano teacher stopped coming. It was believed that the teacher had "done a runner" with his pupils money.

Maurice travelled through to the Bay of Plenty about 1920. In some of his writings he tells us that he was working for the Whakatane Freezing Works - now the site of the Whakatane Board Mills. There was talk of a strike, so Maurice quickly found alternative employment working for a contractor who was building the Hillcrest Road. He enjoyed the change, and the view was magnificent. However, a while later he got word that the strike was over and that his job was waiting; needless to say, the contractor wasn't too happy. Maurice stayed working for the freezing works until it eventually closed down.

Maurice had purchased a mare in Gisborne, and named her Katy. She was a tall black sleek horse, which had been bred to race. However, "I had managed to buy her cheap because she had a blemish on one of her hind legs, down near the hoof. I had broken Katy to harness soon after buying her, and found her to be very useful when working at White Pine Bush", (situated between Awakeri and Taneatua). Katy was stolen by a work mate, and Maurice had to attend the magistrate court in Whakatane in order to retrieve her. Much later, when Maurice was working at a quarry pit at Awakeri for the Whakatane County Council, he sold Katy "fairly cheap" because he didn't need her any more.

It was on his first trip to the Bay of Plenty that he met Isobel Evelyn MURRAY. Maurice was obviously quite taken with her, and when he returned to Gisborne to work for Finday's Bakery, Isobel went with him. It seems highly likely that he had met her while working at White Pine Bush, because she lived in Opouriao and worked as a tayloress in Taneatua. They were also both interested in music, and obviously enjoyed playing their instruments together at social gatherings.

Maurice and Isobel purchased a small holding in James Street Whakatane, where they had cows, pigs and grew vegetables. The land was about 7 acres and went from James Street across to the Whakatane river. The property was sub-divided in 1948 and each of their sons were able to purchase a section for minimal cost. Fred and Colin developed their sections while the others sold theirs to purchase elsewhere.

While living in Whakatane, Maurice had several jobs which were Local Council related. He was the sextant for the old Whakatane cemetery (in Kopeopeo), and he worked for the council destroying noxious weeds. On one occasion there was an explosion and fire on a truck which carried poisons to kill the weeds (wild ginger etc) and Maurice had to attend court to relate the events. See attached notes. During the early 1950's Maurice turned a large part of the unsold property (5 sections) in to a market garden. The veges grown (parsley, potatoes, pumpkin etc) were sold to the hospital to feed the patients.

### The Man in the Sack

“During the war when petrol was strictly rationed, even for essential services, our father was working building a groyne at the Whakatane river mouth for the council. One time when he was building a large wave came in and washed right over him. He was cold and shivering, and the other men took him to go back to the council depot so that he could cycle home 3 miles for a change of clothing. Of course he would have to cycle back another 3 miles to continue work. However, once he arrived at the council depot, he found a large sack. He cut three holes in it for his head and arms, and then put it on; and left his clothing hung up to dry. What courage it must have taken to cycle through the town barefoot and wearing a sack. Even more courage to walk into the Whakatane Hotel public bar and order a double whiskey. The barman served him without question; Dad downed the whiskey and was soon on his way.” (Nancy Perry)

### Our Father the Butcher

“A fine Saturday in late autumn was usually pig killing time, and the whole family were involved with the various jobs each of us were required to do. Naturally I kept well out of the way, but still remember hearing the pig squeal. My job was to scour the tin bath in the wash house, which the older boys removed out and put under the large willow tree. The copper was filled and the water boiled so that it was ready to be bucketed out once the pig was killed and put in the tin bath. Once the pig was immersed in the boiling water, we all set to work with old knives to scrape of the bristles from the carcass. When finished, Dad would put a block and tackle high up in the willow tree and then would winch the pig up. I never stayed around to see the pig get gutted. My job was to scour the bath again so that it was ready for me to bath my younger brothers. In the morning the pig would be high up in the willow tree, draped in a sheet, waiting for dad to butcher it. Then we would make up the brine solution to cure the meat; this process was carried out in old wooden tubs. My father worked hard to feed his family, but I hated that salty bacon.” (Nancy Perry)

“When I was about 5 years old there was talk in the home of moving house. We already lived in James Street (renting), and Dad intended to purchase a house further up the road. The house was smaller than the house we were renting but there was a large outside room which would be a bedroom for the four boys, with Nancy and the baby (Douglas) in the house. Dad didn't quite have enough for a deposit, but an agreement was drawn up to allow us to move in and rent until he had the full amount to put down a deposit. We no sooner moved in when my parents were informed the

property had been sold to another prospector. Both Dad and Mum were very upset about what had happened but there was nothing they could do about it.” (Colin Finucane)

## **ISABELL EVELYN MURRAY**

Isabell Evelyn MURRAY affectionately known as Belle was born at Whakatane, on 4 November 1900, the second child of Alexander and Mary Murray. The family was living at Opouriao, Taneatua on a small farm which Alexander (Alec) Murray had won in a ballot. She had dark frizzy hair, with different coloured eyes; one grey, one brown. She (and her brother Fred) was privately taught the violin, could read music, and later in life played in the Whakatane Orchestra as a second violinist. She was named after her grandmother Isabella Taylor (a travelling midwife) who married Thomas Ewart.

Her marriage to Maurice FINUCANE (4 May 1933) was her second, having previously been married to a man named ROBERTSON. However, the marriage certificate states that Robertson died in April 1924.

“I can remember that during the war years, my mother would make up food parcels of tinned foods, cheese, raisins etc, wrapping them up in sacking and sending them to the Red Cross to be distributed to needy countries.” (Doug Finucane)

“If one of us boys was naughty and ran away, mum would always say “I’m not chasing after you, you’ll be home in time for the next meal”” (Colin Finucane)



Maurice and Isabell Finucane

## **DORIS FINUCANE**

Doris Finucane was born on 28 May 1901 at Te Arai, the third child and first daughter of Martin and Nellie FINUCANE.

Doris married Arthur Ernest Hitchman in 1930; he was a travelling salesman. One time when he was away on work he had a car accident and wasn't discovered for several days. Being exposed to the elements caused him to develop pneumonia, which led to his death.

Doris then married Phil Stapp in February 1937; his mother just happened to be great friends with Nellie Finucane. They did not have children but rather raised Valmai Finucane as their child.

"I remember Uncle Phil and Aunty Doris visiting us when we lived in James Street. They had a car which had what we called a Dickey seat. It was a two seater canvas hood coupe and the boot lid opened downward (hinged from the bottom); when it was opened the inside of the lid became the back of the seat. There were two steps to step up into the back of the car, and this addition of seating gave a total of 5 seats. Our Uncle and Aunt stayed the night with us and the next morning we all had a ride in the Dickey seat with Uncle Phil driving up and down the road." (Colin Finucane)



“I think I was about 10 or 11 years of age when Uncle Phil and Aunty Doris called in home as they were travelling home to Karapiro. I was invited to go with them to stay for about 2 weeks. Valmai had already been living with them for several years. Uncle and Aunt were managers of the Post Office and Shop in the Ministry of Works camp during the construction of the Karapiro hydro dam. Uncle Phil was also the operator at the picture theatre when there were pictures shown twice a week. It was through Valmai that I got to know many of the local children in the village, and through the work of the YMCA who had a social worker who collected up the children as often as they could to get them away from the noise and dust of the construction site. It was great going out hiking and swimming, and catching fresh water crayfish in the streams. It was a real boys own (or girls own) stories.” (Colin Finucane)

#### **GWENDA KATHLEEN FINUCANE**

Gwenda Finucane was born on 30 August 1910 at Te Arai, the forth child and second daughter of Martin and Nellie FINUCANE. She married William Henry Ackland in 1934. She died in Tauranga in December 2005 aged 95 years. Gwenda had 2 sons, William (Billy) and Robert (Bob). Billy died aged 3 after his illness was misdiagnosed.



Finucane Family: Back row: Alf, Doris, Gwenda,  
Seated: Nellie and Maurice

Photo taken at Manutuke School 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee 1960

### **THE CHILDREN OF MAURICE AND ISABELL FINUCANE**

For this family, two complications arise in regards to birth certificates. Firstly, the Manutuke Courthouse burn down in the second half of the 1920's, destroying all copies of deeds and certificates; Secondly, Maurice and Isabell did not marry until 1933. A new law introduced in 1959 or 1960 required that all children born prior to this date to unwed parents had to be re-registered. This is evident on the micro fiche records for births, (held in public libraries), because the registrations of Alf, Fred, Nancy, and Wrey, have all been added after the archiving of these records (hand written amendments).

### Whakatane Citizens Brass Band

“All my brothers including myself were told by Dad to join the local brass band. Well that was ok until I was caught playing by ear. This was a real No No!!! by the band master. After having argued with the band master, I was told to go home without my Cornet; boy! was I in trouble with my father. However years later I joined up with a local dance band where I played both the trumpet and the drums.” (Doug Finucane)

“Most of the Whakatane Brass Band members went overseas during the Second World War. Some of the business men in the town decided on the idea of training school children to play so that the town could still have a band. The children were divided into two groups: those under 8 years were in the junior band, those 8 and over were in the senior band. Alf, Fred, and Wrey first joined and were playing quite well; Alf on Eb Bass, Fred on Tenor Horn, and Wrey on Eb Soprano Cornet. Other boys in the neighbourhood also learned to play; Allan Moor on Bb Bass, Phil and Colin Moor both on Tenor Trombones, Jeff Moor on Bass Drum, and Colin Tilby on Euphonium. They would all gather out in the paddock and form as a band and march around causing a great disturbance to the grazing cows in the area. At this time, I had begun to learn to play the Bb Cornet, but was still in the junior band. My father heard me trying to play the senior music, and helped me to master it. So when I was at the band room I began playing, and impressed the band master; he allowed me to join the senior band even though I was still 7 years old. At the end of 1940, those in the senior band had their photo taken; Alf, Fred, Wrey, and myself are featured. When the war ended in 1945, our conductor Bill Jarrett, gathered us all together and we paraded through the town, shops, and pubs all afternoon. That night we played at a Celebration Dance in the old Winter Show Building, now the Army Hall down by the wharf. The next morning we played at the civic service held on the lawn at the Rock in the middle of the town; in the afternoon we played in Taneatua, and in the evening at Waimana. Soon after these events, Alf and Fred left the brass band; Wrey continued until he left school to work on a farm at Manawahe; I stayed until I was 35 years. I was made a Life Member, having played for 28 years.” (Colin Finucane)

“Colin lost his mouth piece for his Tenor Horn down the outside carsie loo, and he had to climb down and get it out. Poor guy, I guess he didn’t think it was as funny as we did.” (Doug Finucane)

I joined the Whakatane Citizens Brass Band with my brothers, and I played a ‘C’ Flat Bass. We used to have to go to band practice each week and march through the town on special occasions. (Alf Finucane)

I understand that both Wrey and Colin won medals – I’m not sure if Alf and Fred did, their families would need to confirm this. (Jeni Finucane)

Photos on next page:

Top Photo: Finucane children: Alfred, Frederick and Nancy

Bottom Photo: Finucane Children 1935

Back: Alfred

Middle: Nancy, Frederick

Sitting: Colin & Wrey





Finucane children circa 1940/1

Back row: Frederick and Alfred

Middle row: Colin, Nancy & Wrey

Front row: Valmai & Douglas

Note 4 eldest boys are wearing their brass band uniform

## **ALFRED MORRIS FINUCANE**

I was born at Manutuke on 27 July 1926 and started school there. This was the same school my father had attended.

When I was about 6 or 7 years old we shifted to Opouriau Valley near Taneatua, and lived with mum's family. We stayed there for about 3 years. During that time I walked to school in Taneatua.

Dad became a 'teamster' for Mr Maunder at Awakeri and so we shifted there; I rode a horse to school. We then shifted from Awakeri to Ohope to live, while Dad carried on working at Awakeri. He only came home at the weekends.

During the shift from Awakeri to Ohope, I rode our horse Neddy. The horse was then used to carry me to school in Whakatane each day. I can remember that one day the horse bucked me off on the way home from school and a lady by the name of Mrs Dunstan (who had a car) picked me up and took me home. Apparently they thought I was really injured but what I had was concussion.

When I was about 11 or 12, Dad had a mate at Te Teko called Mr Bright. All of his boys had gone off to war and he had no one to help him work the farm. Dad thought I could be of help to him so sent me to Mr Bright's farm to assist with milking and other farm jobs. I lived there for about 3 years and went to the local school. The Te Teko school children only spoke Maori and so I had to learn quickly to make friends.

I started work at about 14 years of age for Armstrong Motors in Whakatane. They were a big company and their garage was at the bottom of the Hillcrest road. While in their employment I had an Indian Scout motorcycle (Fred also had a bike) which we used to race from Edgecumbe to Whakatane and in a paddock at Awakeri.

I also took on Fireman duties during my time working at Armstrong Motors as all the men had gone off to war and there were no firemen left. I moved in to the lodgings at the Whakatane Fire Station and performed all the duties as well as being the engine driver for the Ford V8 fire truck. We had fire fighting training a couple of times a week and I remember we had to jump off the fire tower into sheets that were being held by other firemen so that we were well practiced at jumping out of 2 storey windows. It looked very high from where I was standing waiting to jump, no time for being too nervous!!

I was keen to join the army, but because I was not 16 I had to get my fathers permission to do so. However, I knew Dad wouldn't give it so I forged his signature. Unfortunately the man in charge of the recruitment for Whakatane knew my dad, and knew that wasn't his signature, I got into some trouble for that.

I also restored an old homebuilt tiger moth. This was a float plane and it would zip across Lake Rotorua at speed but never flew whilst I had it. When I tried to fly it, the propeller hit a wave and caused it to just about flip over.

When I finished my apprenticeship I moved to Rotorua and worked for Gough Gough and Hamer as a diesel mechanic. From there I started my own contracting business repairing bush / forestry tractors. This meant that I would be living away from home in bush huts for the entire week.

While I was living in Rotorua I married Avis Burr (who was the 6<sup>th</sup> child of Jack and Lucy Burr living at Ngongataha, Rotorua) and my first son was born there also. Contracting out in the bush was hard on the family and so when I heard about a job putting in water supplies for the Lands and Survey Department I applied to contract for that and got the job. This meant was wasn't away from home very much.

During that time the lands and survey department told me that due to my skills, if I went farming I could go into a ballot for a farm, but I needed to be working on a farm to be in the 'draw'. So I took a job at Kuterere on a dairy farm and moved the family there. (by then we had 3 children). We stayed there a year and then moved to Waiohau Beach onto the Reeves dairy farm where we stayed for the next 16 years. I never did win a ballot farm!

From the farm I bought a weed spraying business, having the contract for roadside weed spraying in the Opotiki District. I was poisoned by Paraquat during that time and gave up the business. I then started a 'mini bin' business – picking up commercial rubbish and wastes. This was the first of its type in Opotiki.

In later years I built two home units in Opotiki and renovated an old kauri cottage. Avis and I enjoyed travelling around the country side in a camper van and visiting most parts of NZ. When Avis passed away on Feb 10, 1995, I continued to travel on my own initially around the country but then joined the Whakatane Travel club. I continued to travel at least 2-3 times per year with them and had just returned from a trip to the bottom of the South Island when I became ill last year (2006). (Alf Finucane)

"Alf went to live at the Fire Station. He was a mechanic and usually only came home to have us on, or so it seemed." (Ron Finucane)

"Directly opposite our drive was the entrance into the neighbours. Alf was living at home again, and I think he had a 37 Ford V8. He would be sometimes late going to work, so he would reverse flat out onto the roadway and take off with a hiss and a roar. The new neighbour, Sel Caves (Caves Buses) had a 34 V8 and used to do exactly the same. One morning the inevitable happened and they crashed into each other; abuse going in both directions. Alf was most annoyed as he had just finished doing a repaint." (Ron Finucane)

Alf served his mechanics apprenticeship at Armstrong's garage. During WWII Alf went to live at the fire station as a live in duty fireman, whilst working at Armstrong's during the day. He would tell us about catching rats in traps in the station, rats that were as big as cats. Then he shifted to Rotorua to work as a diesel mechanic for Goff Goff and Hamer. It was in Rotorua that he met Avis Burr. (Colin Finucane)



When Alf was small he would say to me “Yeah Aunty Yeah” and I would be saying to him it’s “Yes Aunty Yes” and he would reply “Yeah Aunty I know”. (Irene Davis)

“ One evening June and I had friends for dinner, the phone went and it was the local sergeant saying to pick up Alf as he had drunk a little too much to drive home; my friend Eric and I went down to get him and one of us drove his flat deck truck home. Alf was on the back on one side and on the other was a big drum of petrol. Coming into Hinemoa Street from Landing Rd, Alf went one way and the drum went the other! We picked him up and brought him home and put him in the bath to sleep for the night!” (Fred Finucane)



Alf Finucane riding his Indian motorbike up the Hillcrest road (Whakatane) in a time trial. Circa 1940's. Fred also had an Indian bike which he rode in time trials – there is a photo of him which looks very similar to this one.

## **FREDRICK EWART FINUCANE**

I was born at Manutuke on 21 June 1928, the 2<sup>nd</sup> son of Maurice and Isabell Finucane. I had blonde curly hair.

My 1<sup>st</sup> school was at Awakeri where we lived in Maunders Rd and Dad worked for the Maunders. I remember I was bowled off the side of the road by a motorbike when I was walking to school at about 6 years old; I spent quite a while in hospital.

Then we moved to Ohope, our house was just at the bottom of the Ohope hill to the right. Alf and I used to walk to the infant school in Whakatane from our home in Ohope each day, we would walk with the Goodwin boys who lived on Goodwin Island (it's nickname) in the Ohiwa Harbour, they would row their boat over the channel to Ohope then walk down to the foot of the hill and up and over with Alf and I to the school each day and back again afterwards.

We moved from Ohope to James Street.

I remember being a messenger boy during the war years taking messages to the Fire Station on my pushbike.

When I left school I completed a painting apprenticeship in Whakatane and I worked in this trade right through to my retirement.

I remember learning to drive, it went like this – Alf had a car he had bought home from his job at Ford Motors. I needed to go somewhere but didn't have a license or even know how to drive so I asked Alf to take me, he told me to take the car and drive myself – so I did and that's how I learnt!

In 1947 I met June Lesley Ellis as we both used to go with our friends on Joe Higgins bus to the local dances each weekend in Awakeri, Thornton etc. We married in 1949 and transported a house from PoriPori onto our section at 158 James Street; we lived in a caravan at Mum and Dad's whilst I rebuilt and remodelled the house. Our section was the furthest one from the homestead at 148 James Street when our parents first subdivided.

This first subdivide was just on the James Street side from the homestead to the corner at 158 James St.

We lived there for 54 years until 2004 and raised our 3 children, Gary, Margaret and Fredrick. (Fred Finucane)

“One pumpkin harvest we were all helping and on the last load we started throwing them to one another as you would a basketball, until Fred got his head in the road and was knocked out. I thought he was dead. However, he came around after several minutes, and when he was on his feet again he told us we were all stupid. Spoil sport! It was good fun until that happened.” (Ron Finucane)

## **NANCY EILEEN FINUCANE**

I was born in Gisborne on 23 December 1929; the first daughter and third child of Maurice and Isabell FINUCANE. The first house that I remember living in was Grandmother Murray's at Opouriao, Taneatua about 1933. Our parents had a house built up the hill on our grandparent's property. However, a few months later, labour problems amongst the Murray family caused a rift and consequently we moved to Awakeri. My father worked as a general farm labourer and my brothers went to school at Awakeri.

Times were hard during the depression, so we were rather hard up for clothing. After ripping my last dress, I was told to spend next day in bed; but I rose very early in the morning, stole my brothers clothes, a hunk of bread, and the grey pony I named Donkey (the others called it Neddy) and headed off for the bush where later on my father found me.

Donkey (or Neddy) was used to take the boy's to school, however, Fred refused to ride this pony - preferring to run behind it whilst Alf rode. One day on the road to school Fred was knocked over by a motor cyclist and had his leg broken. Later, the motor cyclist paid my father forty pounds, with which he bought a radio. This was to come in most useful in 1936 as we could listen for the arrival of Jean Batten at Mangere.

In 1934, we moved house again - just a few miles down the road to another old mansion at Awakeri, where the piles had sunk on one side of the house. In one enormous bedroom where the floor was badly sunken, we used to ride our beds from the high side to the low, or alternatively sit on quilts and push one another down the bare boards.

On this property there was also an old barn full of junk from a bygone era, and part of this junk included two large umbrellas. My two eldest brothers would climb on to the barn roof, open the umbrellas and waft down like Mary Poppins. However, they would never allow me to have a turn, and being naive, I thought that I could fly without the umbrellas. So I went to the bridge, climbed up the side of the stone bridge, flapped my arms and jumped. My father who was ploughing across the paddock, had seen me do this; so he was there to pull me out of the dirty stinking drain water. He laid me face down and pumped the dirty water from my lungs, and then bathed me. Possibly because of this incident and other hazards on the farm, Mother and the five of us children moved to Ohope Beach in 1935. We took Donkey as well because he was needed to take the boys to school in Whakatane. Father was left behind at Awakeri to earn a living, but would walk from Awakeri to Ohope each Friday night - arriving at midnight to see us.

Fortune smiled on us in 1936 when Father obtained a job on the Whakatane County Council. We were able to rent a cottage in James Street, Whakatane, and this is when I started school at aged 6 years. After a year or so, we moved further up the street to a property of seven acres. Father bought seven cows, and supplied cream to the Awakeri Dairy Factory. This property is now James Street School.

In 1942 we moved to 148 James Street, which Father purchased. This property was seven acres and of course we took our seven cows. Our family now consisted of Father, Mother and eight children. Our property backed on to the Whakatane river, and Father rowed across the river to work at the Mill.

I was very determined and strong willed, and I wanted to learn how to row the boat across the river. Fred kindly offered to instruct me; he said "There's the oars - get going". I thought rowing was very hard work, until I arrived at the other side of the river to find that I had dragged the anchor all the way. Needless to say rowing back was so much easier, with the anchor in the boat.

The family was gradually growing up and leaving home; I left home at the age of 17 having been accepted to train as a nurse at Greenlane Hospital. I married William James Perry in 1949, and went to live at Papatoetoe. We had three children.  
(Nancy Perry)



Photo taken at Nancy's wedding 1949

Back row: Fred and Maurice

Front row: Wrey, Isabell, Nancy, Valmai and Alf

## **WREY FINUCANE**

I was born in Gisborne on 21 August 1932; the third son and fourth child of Maurice and Isabell FINUCANE. My father was employed to drive a bread delivery van for Findlay's Bakery, who were bakers in Gisborne for many years.

When I was about four or five years old, my family moved from Gisborne to Whakatane; my parents rented a house at Ohope beach. My father had the idea that he and mum might be able to take over mum's parent's farm at Opouriau, near Taneatua. Judging by some of the things dad said in later years it appears that there was a bit of a family feud about this, and subsequently none of the family got the farm. We did however, go to the farm about twice a year and as we had no car, one had to be borrowed for these odd visits.

I enjoyed these visits, and most likely they helped determine my future. My grandfather Alec Murray had been a shepherd and drover before he drew his ballot farm; he owned two border collie dogs, and he would demonstrate with them while we were on the farm. I was wrapt; it became my dream to own some of these wonderful dogs, and a horse or two.

I did not enjoy school, it was too restricted and there were too many hills out there that I had not climbed, or seen over. In my young days, big mobs of sheep and cattle were being driven from the Gisborne East Coast district to the Waikato on a regular basis. Whenever I could, I would play the wag from school and spend the day with the drovers. The life they led and the stories they told of the big sheep stations had me spell bound. So I left school when I was 14 years old, and after some terrible rows with both parents, I took off to work on a farm.

My parents wanted me to learn a trade. They talked about me becoming a butcher or joining the navy (like my uncle); I had to learn a trade and I tried to point out that farming was a trade, but to no avail. I suppose I was a bit of a rebel, but my mind was made up and away I went. I worked on various farms and drove a team of horses for a while, but the call of the sheep station was still there, so I rode my horses to Gisborne where I gained employment on the Waipaoa Station as a shepherd. Thirty two thousand acres - this was the life! Horses, dogs, sheep and cattle filled my days. I worked my way up the East Coast to a station near Ruatoria.

Horehore Station was the last place in New Zealand to cart wool out on packhorses. There was no road into this place and this to me added spice to life. It was while I was at that station that I ran into a chap that I had met while working on Waipaoa. Henry Boyce took me to his home where I met his sister Ann, who later became my wife. After we married I took a job in Havelock North for a few years, and while there Ann's dad died. We worked our way north again and settled in Wairoa where we stayed about eleven years.

I was manager on a station just south of Wairoa, when my parents came to stay. I once more took my argument about farming being a trade, but mum and dad refused to be drawn in, saying that things had changed. While I was working on this station, I discovered my real name. I had been told that my name was Stanley Wrey, but that I was normally called Wrey. I had been to school, joined the army, got married etc. as Stanley Wrey; however, when I had to get a birth certificate I was told that there was no such person! - it was just Wrey. I have never discovered where my parents found the spelling either.

Ann and I sent our eldest child away to boarding school to gain her High School education, but it soon became obvious that we could not afford to send all of our six children. So we left the farm and bought a house in Wairoa. I did casual work for a while until I gained employment with the East Coast Pest Destruction Board. This meant being away from home for four nights a week. I was then sent to the Gisborne district and this involved ten day stretches, so we moved to Gisborne so that I could be home every night. While we were there the four eldest children completed their education and went out to work.

Due to a policy change I left the Pest Destruction Board, and found employment as a Hydatids Officer in Opotiki. We stayed there until our youngest child left school. I then got some dogs together again, and Ann and I returned to the life of the sheep station - this time at Hicks Bay. While we were there we bought a house at Lake Rotoehu as a holiday home, but after a few years we decided we would go and live there. I did casual farm work for local farmers, and then we started a contract fencing business.

In 1986, I required some surgery, which put an end to my working full time. So now I have retired, and when I can find time I like to go fishing. (Wrey Finucane)

“Wrey some how acquired a wind up gramophone with one record by Slim Dusty, and would hire it out to us for one shilling (private enterprise or what?)” (Doug Finucane)

“We boys all used to share a room together. After Wrey left home, he would visit the odd weekend (not very often, but when he did) he would play his windup gramophone at nights under the blankets. I think he only had one record. One side was The Martin’s and McCoys, flip side Move along Baldy; and Yes I still know the words today.” (Ron Finucane)

“Wrey liked to give people nasty surprises. One time he got a matchbox and cut the end off it. He then put his finger through the gap at the end and put tomato sauce on his finger so that it looked like blood. The next person who came along would get asked if they wanted to see what he had in the box. Once the box was opened and the person got the fright they would say to Wrey “oh you horrible little boy!”, but it made us all laugh”. (Colin Finucane)

## **COLIN MICHAEL FINUCANE**

I was the first Finucane born in Whakatane, on 24 September 1933; the fifth child and fourth son of Maurice and Isabell FINUCANE. Like my father, I had blonde hair and green eyes.

I will always remember my boyhood days (living in James Street) and being able to run around in wide open spaces of farmland and countryside. This was great when we look back now and realise we didn't have to worry about neighbours, when learning to play our band instruments and our sometimes very noisy play. Whether it was rounders or hide and seek, we were always very vocal. And even louder still if other kids from the neighbourhood were with us. These times would be brought to an abrupt end when either mum or dad would call out and say it was time for the cows or firewood to be chopped. Chores were part of our normal routine. I first learned to feed the chooks and collect the eggs; then to cut kindling wood; and later to cut the main supply wood. Once Alf and Fred went to work, I then helped out with the milking, feeding the calves and pigs. These jobs saw me getting up at 6 a.m so I could be finished before school started. We walked to and from school, about 1 and a half miles each way. And then the morning's chores were repeated. It was no wonder I could eat a very hearty meal at the end of each day.

As a family we were fairly self sufficient; being able to provide our own fruit and vegetables and general dairy products. However, my parents struggled to provide good clothing and shoes for all of us children. So during World War II when all necessities were rationed, my mother swapped our butter, meat, tea and sugar coupons with our relatives for their clothing coupons. I remember my school pants were lined with linen flour bags; I had Champion Flour written on mine.

During the depression years it was forbidden to keep back any cream from the dairy factories. However, my mother would keep back 1 pint every day, (keeping it cool), and once she had collected a gallon I would be called upon to churn it in order to make butter.

When I was about 7 years old Horsens farm was sold and the purchaser a Mr Gordon Kent made the farm into a nursery. On my way home from school I would walk passed the nursery and want to see what the workers were doing. I became quite interested to see them grafting, using machinery, hoeing, weeding, pruning; and I decided that this was what I wanted to do when I left school. During this time I managed to get myself a little job at the nursery and I worked there in the school holidays. However, when I left school I discovered that there were no apprenticeships in horticulture and therefore no qualification. My older brother Fred was (by that time) finished with his apprenticeship in the painting trade, and Mr Needham came to see Dad about the possibility of me taking up an apprenticeship with him. Dad, Fred and Mr Needham all told me that gardening was a good hobby, but that painting was a good trade to have.

Medical records show that when I was 8 years old, I took ill. I just remember being wrapped up with extra clothes on, and still feeling cold. I was put to bed and I lost my appetite but I was forced to eat. Then one evening Wrey brought in my evening meal to me, it was some nice thick gravy from beef stew. He told me I was to eat it or else dad would deal to me (this was a severe warning). At the time I was barely conscious of what was going on about me, but I took notice of Wrey because he was making a noisy ruckus of it all. Dad came in to see what all the noise was about, and must have seen how poorly I was. He got me to sip some medicine and called for the doctor, who arrived in the morning. I was diagnosed with pneumonia and promptly taken to hospital, and isolated (had my own room). My stay in hospital was enjoyable, the nurses were so kind to me; they washed me every day and gave me lots of lemon drinks and medicine. When my appetite started to return, the nurses would sit with me and assist me to eat – I wasn't allowed to feed myself. Once I was able to sit up and amuse myself, the brass band came and played outside my window one Sunday afternoon; and I was shifted into a ward that had both men and boys.

After about 3 weeks stay, one day Dr Dawson came about the ward doing his usual rounds, and pronounced I was well enough to go home. Matron asked if we had a telephone, I said No. She asked me where I lived, and agreed with me that James Street, "just down from the cross roads" wasn't too far; and said that if I felt able to, I would be allowed to walk home. So after I had had my lunch, I got dressed and gathered up my few belongings and began walking home. I didn't realise that after 3 weeks of lying in bed, my legs would give out on me. So I fell over a few times, grazing my elbows and knees. When I arrived home, Mum threw her arms up in horror and said "Oh so you've run away from hospital- and look at you – you're a mess!" Then she told me I was to go straight back, and despite my protesting that Matron had released me she just wouldn't believe me. So I was accused and teased for years that I had run away from hospital. I didn't go to school for a while as I didn't have the strength to walk from home to the junior school in Domain road; but once I did start back, Alf used to double me on his bike until I could walk the distance.

Now looking back I realise that I was eager to leave school because when I was in standard 2 we had a teacher who was an elderly English man (from the Grenada Guards). This man told us he wanted to leave England because of the war, and that the only way he could obtain passage to Australasia was to apply for work out here. He applied for the position of a school teacher in New Zealand, and duly got the job. He was my teacher for 2 years and he never taught us a thing. By the time I was in standard 4 our new teacher would often cane us for "being lazy" when in fact we simply couldn't understand the lessons. So it was no wonder I couldn't leave school quick enough.

I started my apprenticeship with Ken Needham in January 1949, and enjoyed the work because we were never in the same place for very long. I travelled all over the Bay of Plenty, sometimes travelling to the jobs other times living on the site. One job in particular I enjoyed was working on the Matahina Village, 12 miles inland from Te Teko. The village was set up by the Whakatane Board Mills to provide housing for the timber workers. We would spend up to 6 weeks living in the single mens huts whilst we painted the houses.



About this time I had my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and was required to complete my military training. I spent 14 weeks at Papakura Military Camp and learnt to handle firearms. So once I had finished my military training and was back working at Matahina, I would spend my day off (Sunday) going out with one of the bushmen for a day's deerstalking. I really loved hunting and continued to hunt in the bush for many years.

On Boxing Day 1956, I ventured off on a tour of the South Island. There had been heavy rain right across the North Island, Whakatane had been cut off by flood water, and many of us had spent Christmas Eve pushing stranded cars out of the waters. By Boxing Day it had receded enough for me to leave. As I drove towards Wellington I could see the destruction left behind; and I have a lasting impression of the water level of Lake Taupo, which was up to the road level or higher. At Turangi the road was under water for several miles and the only way I knew I was still on the road was by staying between the white markers on the side of the road. At Wellington I had to leave the car in order that the Ferry crew could load it. When we arrived in Picton, again I had to wait for the car to be unloaded. I watched in horror as cars were unloaded in a rope sling and lifted off by a crane; some of them belting the side of the ship as they came down. It was a frightening experience to stand and wait – wait for my car to be delivered to me.

I drove off to stay with friends of mine who were working in Christchurch, but holidaying in Nelson for the New Year. During this holiday I met Margaret Frame from Dunedin, and had about a 10 day romance with her. We had to continue our courtship by writing to each other once our holidays ended.

I left Nelson with 3 friends in tow headed for the West Coast, and we drove right down to Fox Glacier. The only accommodation we could find available was the Tourist Hotel, so we booked in. We started off with a few drinks at the bar and then proceeded to the Dining Room. However, we were told we couldn't enter for dinner without wearing a tie. So we enquired about the shirt. The reply was the shirt style was our choice, as long as we wore a tie. As it was a warm summer evening, we went to our rooms and re-dressed ourselves and arrived for dinner wearing grey trousers, singlet and tie; and the head waitress had to accept our dress.

I travelled back home via Christchurch.

After this trip, I made several more, but this time to Dunedin where I spent time getting to know Margaret Frame and her mother. We were later married in Dunedin at the Knox Church in George Street on 30 May 1959.

Margaret and I lived at 53 Henderson Street Whakatane, and raised 4 children there.  
(Colin Finucane)

“Colin had a Model A Ford station wagon wooden bodied, he bought it off Fred”  
(Ron Finucane)

## **DOUGLAS MARTIN FINUCANE**

I was born in Whakatane on 10 April 1936, the fifth son and sixth child of Maurice and Isabell FINUCANE. When I was just a little fellow, my younger brother Ron and I had a small wooden framework out by the wood heap. Inside it there were blocks for pedals; a gear lever that went up, down and across, and a steering wheel that turned. Ron and I drove it all over the world.

When I was about 9, and Colin about 12 years old, we travelled down to Gisborne on a NZ Road Services Bus, to see Grandma Finucane (Nellie). We stayed in a boarding house straight across the road from Grandma's flat in Peel Street for four days.

Dad and Mum would not let any of us children leave school with out first having secured either a government job or an apprenticeship in a trade; I gained employment as a Junior Linesman with the Post & Telegraph. As far as I recall, the only good thing about this job was that I learnt to drive a 5 ton Chev 36 truck which the P & T owned. Twelve months later, I was offered an panel beating apprenticeship at Armstrong's garage. My brother Alf also worked there, and the Workshop Foreman told me that if I was as good as my brother, the job was mine.

### Meeting Janet Marilyne Read

I already knew of Jan because my brother Colin and Jan's brother Dave were very good mates. I would often see her cycling past where I worked, and I wondered how I could get to know this nice girl; then Hello! my big chance came! As I was going home from work one night, I met her - looking all forlorn - holding a pedal from her bicycle in her hand, not knowing exactly how she was to get home. So I came to the rescue.

After this chance meeting, we often used to stop and talk, but I suppose it all really began when I played in a Dance Band that was playing at a wedding reception, where Jan was a bridesmaid. We started going out, and Jan would attend all the dances I played at. We became engaged, and were married at the Holy Trinity Church in Otahuhu, Auckland (where her parents now lived) at 4 o'clock on 5 October 1957.

The Holy Trinity Church was a High Church of England, and we were asked whether or not we had been baptised as children. I thought I hadn't been, and was told I had to be; I wasn't exactly thrilled. However, as it turned out, my parents told me that I was the only one out of the whole family that had been baptised, due to problems surrounding the births of the other children.

When we were first married, we lived in an old bus which was parked on my parent's property, until I finished my apprenticeship. When I completed my training, we moved to Reporoa where I worked for Alf doing drainage work etc on farms. After a while, I went back to my trade, working in Rotorua, Whakatane, Rotoma, and finally to Kawerau, where I ran my own panel beating business for approximately 14 years. I then built up and operated my own furniture removal business.

So after 24 years of life in Kawerau, raising our family of five children, we moved to Matata. We lived there for 6 years, and I was employed doing driving jobs. I discovered operating and driving cranes to be a special enjoyment. Lastly, we moved to Tauranga in 1985.

Up until about 10 years ago, our whole family was involved in power boat racing; we had a great amount of fun in camping and racing our hydroplanes for over 20 years. Now days Jan and I have reverted back to yachting, the passion of my youth.

I bought my first car home when the folks were away and Fred told me to plug it in a hole in the hedge so Dad wouldn't see it when he came home. Cheeky beggar! I was so proud of it even though it didn't go. (Doug Finucane)

"Doug's first car was a 1936? Hillman. He cut it into a pickup, though he had been in partnership in a Vauxhall that mum wasn't too pleased about." (Ron Finucane)



Finucane boys with their grandma Mary Jean Murray (approx 1955)

Back row: Wrey, Fred, Maurice (Pop) and Alf

Front row: Doug, Ron and Colin

## **VALMAI ALISON FINUCANE**

I was born in Whakatane??? on 28 April 1938, the seventh child and second daughter of Maurice and Iabell FINUCANE. However, there is very little I recall about life at Whakatane, as I went to live with Aunty Doris (Maurice's sister) when I was two years old; after which I made the occasional trip back, but always returning to my Aunt's house. One thing I do remember about 148 James Street was the wonderful sack hammocks in the pepper trees up the driveway.

For most of my childhood, my holidays were spent in Gisborne. I would be there at Easter, or Queen's Birthday Weekend and Christmas. I always found those hot Christmas summer holidays were magical. (see FRANCES ELLEN MORRIS)

## RONALD MAXWELL FINUCANE

As a young fellow I always found I was at a disadvantage because Mum always used to remind me with her favourite quote “Don’t think you can get away with anything young man, you’re the youngest of six boys, and I’ve seen all the tricks going so just remember that!”. Well even so I still think I put the odd one across but I won’t go into those things.

The property as you know went from James Street through to the river on which we used to spend a lot of time on or in. We used to cross the river to play or scrounge around in the area of the Whakatane Board Mills dump. I always used to like going down the river when the tide was right, to the sandbar that was exposed at low tide where the bridge crosses now.

The coastal scows used to come up the river on high tide to load up at the wharf beside the Board Mills. The Port Whakatane often used to escort them but I remember one night one of the scows went the wrong side of the beacon on the groin behind our place and of course went aground and I wasn’t allowed to go for a look, but everybody else was and I most annoyed about this unfairness.

When I started going to school James Street was a gravel road, pretty well all the way to Kopeopeo, with a footpath as far as the bridge. I never had my own bike so I had to walk – and it was a long road for youngsters to get into trouble on. Sometimes we would catch a ride on the back of Tiny Hunt’s tractor while he was out and about (he was the farmer at the end of the road) or it was a big deal when the local council grader had been down the road and a driver would let us hop on.

One day the council roller was coming along while I was walking home. The driver stopped beside me (he was a big Maori man, and I was about primer 3 (aged about 6 or 7)) and he poked out his false teeth at me; scared my wits out and I ran all the way home. After that I always kept well away from him, and he would just laugh at me.

The new cow shed must have been built in the late 40’s or early 50’s as I can remember it being built and helping to work the separator. After Dad went into the market garden, Doug worked for him for a short while before getting his Post & Telegraph job, and I was at high school.

Haymaking was also a pretty big job. I suppose I was more of a nuisance than anything but we all had our jobs to do, and it was always hot thirsty work. Tiny Hunt was always there with his sweeps and stacker etc. I remember Tiny’s International truck and Farmal A tractor, complete with Fox Terrier.

The maize crib (which the red shed was built next to) was of course always a rat haven. Occasionally a rat raid was held. The Furze family from up the road would bring their fox terriers along and put them in the maize crib and shut the door. The dogs would go crazy killing rats until they were all dead. That was a big event and a lot of fun.

I know the bigger kids at home always used to tease the tripe out of me. I knew my middle name started with an M; and try as I might I couldn't find out what it was. They would tell me it was Moses, and chant "Moses Moses born in the bulrushes" lousy lot.

Dad used to spend a lot of time working on the house. When he did the major change and we got a big lounge, he wallpapered the ceiling and then painted it. Once it was finished Mum wouldn't let us it in. Couldn't figure out either of those things.

When I started high school, I was occasionally allowed to go to the pictures on a Friday night with friends. By the time was working the farm had been subdivided, but we kept the big wooden road gate although we didn't have any animals. Mum and Dad would make sure the gate was shut at night, right on dark. So when I went out I would chock it open and then close it when I came home. One night I was out pretty late, without a light on my bike. I turned into the gateway to find instant impact with a closed gate. One of them had closed it after I had gone out, so here I was with a smashed bike, broken watch, bloody face and getting a telling off!

Nancy left home to go nursing when I was still pretty young, and Valmai never lived at home (that I remember) but she would visit with Uncle Phil and Auntie Doris. Uncle Phil drove a big 1938 25 H.P Vauxhall car.

The first car that I remember the family having was a ragtop tourer (a Whippet so I am told). I remember it being used for a special occasion – perhaps Grandad Murray's funeral, and I wasn't allowed to go. I sat up on the front gate balling my eyes out watching the car disappear up the road. (Ron Finucane)



Finucane family at Alf's wedding

Back row: Fred, Nancy, Isabell, Maurice, Alf

Front row: Doug, Ron and Colin

## OTHER MEMORIES

“I remember my first Guy Fawkes. We had a large Bonfire on the orchard behind the house. Dad lit a great heap of tree branches and logs, the fire lit up the whole backyard. He began lighting sparklers and wanted each of us to hold one. Mum gave one to Wrey, who promptly began waving it about at arms length and right close to my face. I got a hell of a fright and ran inside the house and continued to watch proceedings from the back door.” (Colin Finucane)

My first remembrance of Santa Claus was being awoken in the middle of the night by the rustle of paper and tooting and rattling of toys. Alf, Fred and Wrey all had something and I remember asking where they got all these things from. They told me to look in the bag beside my pillow. But before I could look, Mum came into the room and told us to get back into bed and turn the lights off and go to sleep. I spent the rest of the night clutching my bag wondering what was in it. My memory of that first present was a big racing car about 12 inches long and about 4 or 5 inches wide which I could push with both hands.” (Colin Finucane)

Alf and Fred always had different cars and motorbikes. When one of them got a sidecar on his bike they needed a lot of practice learning to handle the animal. I watched a lot of this practice with turns in and out of our driveway entrance with plenty of ‘ending up in the grass or drain on the side of the road’. (Ron Finucane)

My first recollections of going to the neighbours was when mum took Wrey and I over the road to the Horsen farm. Mrs Horsen ran the approx 8 acre block which comprised of a few dairy cows and a lot of vegetable crop. We had gone over to get some vegetables and to pick cape gooseberries. The Horsen’s had 3 bird aviaries, which were round in shape, about 7 or 8 foot high, painted cream. They had canaries and budgies, and I stood there for what seemed an eternity looking at all these pretty coloured birds.” (Colin Finucane)

“When Mum and Dad decided to buy a radio, we had 4 or 5 radios placed about the kitchen/dining area for 2 or 3 weeks so that we could decide on the best one to buy. Mum and Dad finally bought the gold Bronson and American make which we had for years. It was still in the house when mum died (1973).” (Colin Finucane)

“It was decided that Whakatane would hold a sports meeting on the river. It was a great day to remember; I have never seen anything like it, before or since. There were a number of racing boats or sculls, belonging to the Whakatane Rowing Club with from one to eight rowers in each scull. Three or four boats were racing “flat out” down the river with four men in each boat. The cox couldn’t have been watching where he was steering, not watching the other boats because suddenly there was a hell of a crash and the rowers were “all over the place” and the pointed bow of the scull was about halfway through a small launch that was moored in the middle of the river....” (Maurice Finucane)

“I remember sitting at the table in James Street as a young fella and hearing the clanking of the clansman (boat) coming up the river to the boardmills” (Fred Finucane)



Photo taken at Ron's wedding July 1963.

Finucane family:

Back row: June, Jan, Nancy, Margie, Isabell, Margaret, Maurice

Front row: Fred, Ron, Doug, Colin, Jim Perry.





In order of age: Alf, Fred, Nancy, Wrey, Colin, Doug, Valmai and Ron. Oct 1977



148 James Street, Whakatane.

The statement written by Maurice Finucane to read to the court, 1945, regarding a fire on the back of the council truck.

①  
James J.  
Whakatane  
Statement by  
Maurice Finucane (age 46)  
I am employed by the Whakatane County Council as a Truck Driver.  
Since the Beginning of Oct Last, I have been engaged in the transport of men, and materials for Ragwort eradication work.  
My duties consisted of taking the Whakatane Gang to and from the fields of operation, Carting Sodium Chlorate and Sand to Teteko mixing shed,  
Carting mixed Sodium & Sand, to Teteko and Whakatane Gangs.  
Returning empty Bags to Teteko shed.  
On the 7<sup>th</sup> of Nov Last I took the Whakatane Gang to Rene's Property at Dekabai and distributed over the property the Bags of <sup>sodium</sup> mixture. I had brought out the previous day. I then went to the Teteko mixing shed and picked up a load for the

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Teteko Gang, after distributing this, picked up empty Bags and Returned to the Shed.

I then Took two men from the mixing Shed and went to the Public works Pit at Awakevi and loaded the truck with pumice sand. Returned to Teteko and Dumped the Load.

I Loaded 5 bags of the mixture (the last of the Sodium in stock.)

with two picks, 2 Bars, and some Hoes, and an old tent.

I Proceeded back to Pekatahi arriving about twenty minutes Past three.

The five Bags were Taken off the truck and applied by four men, the fifth man coming with me to the Back of the property to pick up the empty Bags.

Friday got was a hot sunny day, the empty <sup>bags</sup> had become hot and dry.

The Bags were stacked on the truck in four tiers. On coming back to the Front end of the Property the Gang



(5)

stacked the Rest of the Bags in the Truck.

There was 110 to 120 empty Bags on the Truck.  
It was now 15 minutes to four o'clock.

Hi Kopae Foreman of the Gang said it was a bit early to go home.

I advised that it was better to proceed Home slowly than to have the men standing about.  
Rene, Hen Hei and Takotahiwi climbed on the back.  
Kopae, Kotua, and myself in the cab.

It was ten minutes to four, ~~when~~ I left Pakathei heading towards Whakatane, via Railway Rd. East travelling at about 20 miles an hour, sometimes slower.

On Reaching Station Rd. I changed down to third Gear, taking the corner ~~at a speed~~ that would not upset the men in the back.  
I then **accelerated** to over twenty miles per hour and was gaining speed in top Gear.  
I glanced across the cab speaking to Hi Kopae when I noticed a glance showing through the back window.

I warned my companions in the cab that

④

The truck was on fire.

I applied the foot brakes hard.

The foot brakes were in excellent condition working smoothly and quickly, (not in a grabbing manner,) but would throw one off balance if in a stooping or standing position in the back of the trucks.

As I applied the brakes the flame swept forward with a swishing crackling roar.

The flames sweeping over and around the sides of the cab, and darting in at the side windows ~~and~~

Kofee opened the cab door and jumped, followed by Kotus.

I now had room to apply the hand brake. The intense heat, smoke and fumes of burning steel, and paint, were suffocating me, but were now receding. ~~from~~

I pushed the gear to neutral position opened the cab door, changed feet on the brake pedal (the truck was just rolling) put right foot out on running board. swung my self forward and outward with left hand on the wheel, the truck stopped.

(5)

I stepped out and looked into the fire,  
was relieved to know that <sup>Rose</sup> had managed to get out.  
(Rose was a big man, having great difficulty in)  
getting in and out of the truck.

Saw Strell family on the Road, one member  
running towards the house.

guessed, (later confirmed) was going to Phone for  
ambulance.

Saw Takahara practically naked, with <sup>burning</sup> clothes  
around him, told him ambulance was on the way.

Further back Heihei with injuries to his feet.  
Wondered where Rose was, found him on the  
other side of the Road under over hanging hedge  
near burning truck, helped to rip off burning  
clothes.

Another County Truck had arrived with  
St. Wiggins and J. Butterworth,  
asked if some one would Ring County office  
and inform Mr J Miles of the fire  
Bags in the truck still burning,  
tried to start the truck, it was too close



①  
to Rose, and Benzene tank might explode and  
kill some one,  
Truck <sup>engine</sup> would not start, towed it away with  
other country truck.  
still no ambulance,  
I had expected the ambulance would arrive  
with the promptness of the Whakatane fire-  
engine  
in 10 miles and Mr. Shead arrive and take  
charge of situation.

The above document was found folded up inside a tin on a shelf in the old red shed at 148 James St.

IN MEMORY

*A Celebration of the Life of*



DOUG FINUCANE

*10 April 1936 - 13 May 2006*



*Wrey Finucane*



*21<sup>st</sup> August 1932 – 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2008*

*Alfred Morris Finucane*



*27<sup>th</sup> July 1926 - 29<sup>th</sup> August 2008*

*Frederick Ewart  
Finucane*



*21<sup>st</sup> June 1928 – 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008*