

Hill, Harry

(Sept. 29, 1883 - Jan. 20, 1910)

Email exchange between
Brian Hill (grandson) and
Berte Berry

Harry Hill - Member of the Happyland Boys

Harry arrived in Naramata in 1907 and died in a logging accident in 1910. He is buried in Naramata Cemetery.

Email from Roberta 'Berte' Berry (nee Salting) to Brian Hill dated April 2, 2003:

Dear Brian,

Thank you so much for the picture of Harry Hill. Was he a grandfather or great-grandfather? I wasn't aware that you had been to Naramata last Sept and had a tour of the museum with Lorna and Phil Rounds. That was a pretty long way to come. Hope you had a good time and were able to find the gravesite. I walked down this morning and found the grave and couldn't believe what shape it was in after so many years. We don't know who erected the stone but we do know that he was a very popular young man in this town. My Dad [Don Salting] has written a book called Smile of Manitou. In it he talks about the Happyland Boys and what an important role they played in the making of the town. Also, just yesterday I was transcribing a tape of one of the older ladies in the town and she fondly remembered "the boys". She talked about the work they did and also how Harry died. She said that he was helping log the cemetery site and that he was killed by a falling log. The lady in question was 92 at the time of the interview so I'm not sure how accurate that information is. Do you have any knowledge of his death? Looking on the cemetery map I see a "reserved" spot for Squire Hill but after a lot of searching I have come away empty handed. Can you put any light on where he was buried or should I retrace my steps and as my husband says: "You have to get down on your knees and really look!" Please let me know whether you would like a book. We would be delighted to send one to a descendent of a very popular, and handsome I might add, young man. I know that my dad and grandfather would have known him.

Yours truly, Berte Berry.

Email from Brian Hill to Berte Berry dated April 3, 2003:

Thank you very much for your email. It was a bit scrambled with letters and numbers but I was able to read it. It is always good to hear additional information on our family. Squire is my great-grandfather and Harry is one of his sons. My wife, my parents and sister visited BC last September for two reasons: to attend my other sister's wedding in Squamish and for a vacation and celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary. We spent our honeymoon in Vancouver. We had a great time. Of course, researching our family tree and being so close, I had to pay a visit to Naramata. Lorna and Phil Rounds

were very generous with their time and opened the museum for us even though Phil had a minor operation that morning. Are they still working at the museum? Do you work at the museum?

While at the museum, I purchased your Dad's book - Smile of Manitou. Actually, I bought two and gave one to my cousin who is also researching the family. We share our research information. We also visited the grave site. Jack Dawson of the Penticton Genealogy Society gave us written instruction of how to find the gravestone. We spent two days in Penticton/Summerland/Naramata researching Harry, Squire and Harry's niece Ruby Dean (Harry's sister's daughter). As far as we know, all three are buried in Naramata but Harry's grave site is the only one that we found. We visited the genealogy society, which was open that day, city hall, funeral houses but no one had any burial record for Squire or Ruby.

The following notes from my family tree software will provide some of the information that we presently have about Squire and Harry:

Squire was born on November 10, 1855 in Golden Bank, Horsforth Yorkshire, England. Squire was a quarryman and may have worked in the Golden Bank Quarries. He also raised and bred canaries and Airedales. Family stories handed down say that Squire came to Canada with his son Harry and began logging in British Columbia. We do not know exactly when Squire came to Canada, but a newspaper clipping from the Penticton Press, June 4, 1910, states the following: 'Mr. S Hill, father of the late lamented Harry Hill, from Accrington, England, accompanied by his daughter and son-in-law, Mrs and Mr. J Dean, arrived on Friday evening last. They expressed themselves as being most favourably impressed with the climatic conditions in the Okanagan and will probably make Naramata their future home.'[this suggests that Squire arrived in the area after the death of son, Harry]

Another family story states that a bear killed Squire on his sixtieth birthday. Although there is no proof that he died by a bear attack, he did die on his 60th birthday. He was in hospital for a week (Nov 4-10, 1915) before he died. Final cause of death was Septic Pneumonia. The death information was given by George Wolstencroft (a friend?).

From the Penticton Herald dated November 11, 1915:

Died at 6 pm Wednesday morning in the Summerland Hospital, Squire Hill. After a short and sudden illness, Squire Hill, one of Naramata's pioneer settlers passed away on Wednesday morning in the hospital in Summerland. The deceased had been in poor health for some time past and was seized with a sudden attack one morning last week which necessitated a sudden call to the doctor, who ordered him to the hospital. His death, however, came as a sudden shock to his many friends and acquaintances here.

From the Penticton Herald, Thursday November 18, 1915:

Naramata News: The funeral of Squire Hill who passed away in the Summerland Hospital last week took place on Friday November 12. Many beautiful wreaths and flowers were sent by the different societies in town as well as from private individuals and large number of friends (who) followed the deceased to his last resting place in the Naramata graveyard.

The information on Squire's vital statistics form states that he was in the Naramata area from about 1911 until his death in 1915.

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Harry was born 29 September 1883 in Accrington, Lancaster, England. It is believed that he came to Canada around 1905 and made his way west logging with other loggers. The article below from 'The Smile of Manitou' by Don Salting gives us some idea of the work that Harry was doing in the Naramata community. (Family stories say that Harry came to Canada with his father, Squire, and started a logging company in BC. Harry was killed in a logging accident).

The Happyland Boys

The Happyland Boys were four young English adventurers from Lancashire country who arrived in Canada in 1905. They worked their way west and eventually found themselves in Naramata in the spring of 1907. Will Nut-

tal and Harry Hill were on their way to a job at Smith's Sawmill at Mill Creek Point when they were met by Mr. Wellband, one of Mr. Robinson's Foremen. Mr Wellband asked them to come and work for the company making roads and clearing orchard lots. Will convinced Tom Kenyon and Walter Land to join them and they all moved into a small tent house and went to work.

These young men took up a very important place in the making of the Village. It was they who met each new land owner and his family, got them settled and began the task of clearing the land. They would then construct the access roads and the irrigation system. They were an unofficial welcoming committee and are fondly remembered as the Happyland Boys.

Harry died January 20, 1910 in Naramata BC. He was killed by a falling tree while clearing some land. He is buried in Naramata. His death announcement and wedding engagement are said to have appeared in the same day's newspaper according to Alice Sorley (we have not been able to find his death/wedding announcement). From the newspaper notice of Squire's death, we believe that he is buried in Naramata cemetery. We do not know who erected Harry's gravestone. It is possible that Squire did after he arrived in Naramata or maybe someone/society in the community did it.

I hope the above answers your questions. If you have any others, please let me know. If you come across any additional information or pictures of Squire or Harry in the future, I would appreciate a copy. I have one picture of Squire if you are interested. There is also a picture of about 5 men sitting in front of a cabin. Family story says that one of the men might be Harry. Don't know for sure but it could be of the Happyland boys.

Brian Hill

Email from Brian Hill to Berte Berry April 4, 2003:

Thanks for the information. If I could ask two questions:

What do you mean when you say that 'Squire had reserved his spot in the cemetery?' Does this mean that he purchased a plot? We know that Harry is buried in Plot 71D. Do you know the name Louisa Davison Hill? We came across her death while searching for Harry. She died in 1909 in South Okanagan at age 67. The death information was supplied by a Harry Hill of Kelowna. Might be just a coincidence.

Harry's death/engagement announcement is a family story handed down from Alice Sorley (Harry's niece). My sister, the one in Squamish, says that Alice showed her the newspaper article years ago. I have been in contact with Alice's son about the article but he has not come across it in her possessions.

Thanks again.

Brian and Marilyn

Berte Berry wrote:

Dear Brian and Marilyn. Received your information and we are delighted! Thanks so much. We really knew nothing about your great-grandfather except that he had reserved his spot in the cemetery, so it's wonderful to include him in our history. I looked up Harry's niece, Ruby Dean and there is no mention of her in the cemetery records. I did find one other bit of information about Harry and I will quote. "A community Sunday School began in 1907. Mr. Bartlett (our postmaster) was elected superintendent to start with but then Harry Hill became the superintendent. Harry was Roman Catholic but ours was a true Community Sunday School and all shared the work. Harry was accidentally killed in a logging accident in the spring of 1910. The tragedy was deeply felt by all in the village which was like one large family."

Again, we thank you for the background on your family. I wish I had been there at the time to know them. Your wife asks who I might be - (by the way, we loved her comments even though she may not have known that they were sent). I'm 70 years old, gray-haired lady who has lived here all her life except for the time I was away at school. I have a husband, four kids and 6 grandchildren - most of them living and working here in Naramata. My grandfather came with his family in the early years so our roots are deep (well, at least as deep as the town goes). I have just taken over the chair of the museum which in effect means very little as the whole committee works hard and no one harder than Phil and Lorna Rounds. They are 'IT' now because there isn't anyone else with their knowledge. I'm not sure we will ever find any more information for you, but I know the rest of the group will look forward to reading what you have sent. Come visit us if you are ever this way again. ps. Harry's engagement came as a surprise. How come, I wonder, that this was not mentioned in any of his Naramata history? Take care. Thanks from all of us.

Berte Berry