

Whitmee Ward, Molong Hospital

### *Mary (G3.3) and William Davis of Ingledell*

John and William Davis were two of the sons of John and Eleanor Davis who had moved from the Richmond area to become one of the pioneering families of the Spring Hill-Millthorpe district. As in most areas of closer settlement, the farms considered a living area were quite small in the early days of agriculture at Spring Hill. Thus, there were many families living close together and it was inevitable that there would be many intermarriages between the children of neighbouring families in the horse and buggy days.

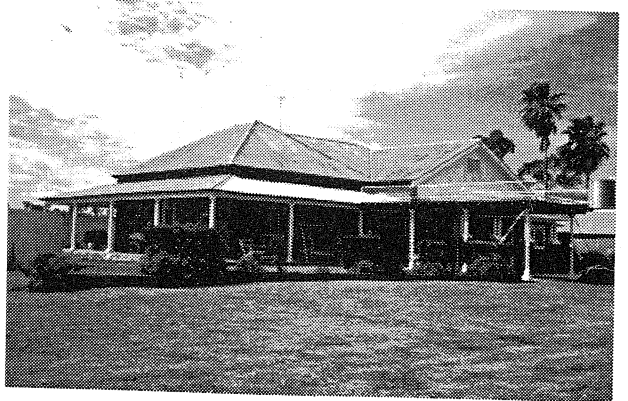
### *Davis Family Background*

The Davis farm at Spring Hill was 'Studleigh' and this remained the home of John Davis junior, who married Annie Whitmee Chapman, daughter of George and Elizabeth (nec Butterfield) Chapman of *Inglewood*, Spring Hill. With such small areas, large families needed to look further westward when sons grew up and needed farms of their own.

William George Davis, as one of the younger sons, moved westward to settle at Avenel, near Cargo, where former large pastoral stations were opening for selection at Cargo after the gold rush period there in the late sixties to the mid seventies. According to Barry Davis,

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grandson of William, two Davis brothers, cousins of William, had come to the Cargo area previously and one of these had selected the property that was to be known as *Ingledell*. He sold it almost the following year in 1876 to his cousin, William Davis, who married Mary Whitmee, of *Hawthorn Dell*, Spring Hill on 19 April 1881. They made their home at *Ingledell* which was associated with the Davis family for the next hundred years. The first dwelling on *Ingledell* was a slab hut on a site near the present house where a fig tree still grows. In 1905, a new house was built in the usual style of the period with four rooms in the front living area and a detached kitchen. The bricks were baked on the property and remnants of bricks can still be seen on the site near a dam. Many modifications to *Ingledell* were made in the years following. In 1917, a neighbouring property, *Laanecoorie*, was bought to add to the area farmed by W. G. Davis and sons.



*Ingledell*, 1970s

### *Mary Davis (nec Whitmee) G3.3*

Born on 11 October 1856 at Mount Pleasant, Mary was the third child of Charles and Eliza Whitmee and the first of the children to be born in Australia. She told her children that was made to feel a little inferior for having been born a colonial, compared with her older sister and brother, born in England. She learned at an early age to be part of the family workforce and as the Whitmee family expanded their farming

operations to Spring Hill, she would travel to Spring Hill when necessary to keep house for her brothers and possibly cook for the team of men working on the steam engines and threshing machines. At the age of 24, she married William Davis, of Cargo and formerly of Spring Hill.



Mary Whitmee

Mary was married in a long blue wedding frock that is now in the museum of the Canowindra and District Historical Society. Museum Curator, Nita Bassett, tells visitors to the museum that women in that era were often married in a coloured frock so that they could use and wear it afterwards. From the size of the frock, Mary had an 18 inch waist at the time of her wedding. Perhaps that is why the frock was not worn by her much afterwards, if at all, for in the years after her marriage until 1900, she bore 11 children at the average rate of one every 18 months. Of these, three died in childhood or infancy, and another son, Keith Whitmee Davis, died of wounds in World War 1. So much grief for the one woman must have developed in her stoical qualities or she could not have survived. Her first home was not the grand homestead that we know as *Ingledeell* today, but the more

primitive slab hut, without power, running water or any of the conveniences taken for granted today. She was obviously a capable, coping woman who did more than most to keep the Whitmee blood line going. A photo of Mary Davis in mature years shows a somewhat thickened waistline. She died in 1928, aged 71, and was buried at Cargo Cemetery.



Mary and William Davis

### *Ernest William Davis G4.1*

(Source: Barry Davis and John and Veronica Davis)

Ern, born 8 February 1882 at *Ingledeell*, was the eldest child of William and Mary Davis. Though he lived until the age of 75, he suffered from ill health as a chronic asthmatic for most of his life, a condition that was to appear in subsequent generations of the Davis family

Avenel Public School, about a mile from *Ingledeell*, was established on 2 January 1885 and officially closed on 21 November 1913, though an official closure was generally not

made until several months after the actual closure in case enrolments reappeared. Presuming that Ern started school at the age of five or six, in 1887 or 88, there would have been one or more Davis children attending Avenel School in all but the first two or three of its twenty-eight years of existence. So much depended on the individual teachers when children spent all of their school years in a one-teacher school. Most farm children left at the age of 13 or 14 to become part of the home or farm workforce.

This was the case with Ern, who left school to work on the family farm, *Ingledeell*. As younger brothers, Charles, Keith (Barney), Sid and Frank left school, they too joined the workforce on *Ingledeell* and later *Laanecoorie*. Following the death of his parents, Mary on 6.9.1928 and William on 4.12.1930, and the marriage of Frank and Rene on 3 August 1932, Ern moved to Orange to live with his sister, Jess who had bought a house at 17 March Street. Because of his ill health, some of the winter months were spent at *Laanecoorie* in order to escape the coldest period in Orange. Jess sold the house in 1941 and went to live with Ada and Harry Nash in Canowindra. Ern then boarded with Elsie Nash next door at 15 March Street, Orange. Some of his final years were spent *Hilltop*, with his brother, Charles and wife, Gladys, nee Nash. Elsie Nash and Gladys were sisters. After Charles Davis died in 1951, Ern lived on at *Hilltop* for two or three years but still spent time in Orange where he died in 1955 at Elsie Nash's.

As the bachelor, Ern was always a very eccentric person and a difficult man in many respects. He is buried in the Cargo Cemetery.

## *Charles George Davis G4.4*

22 April 1888 - 19 July 1951

(Source: John and Veronica Davis)

Charles George Davis, J.P. was the fourth of the eleven children born to Mary Davis, nee Whitmee, and William George Davis of *Ingledeell*, Cargo. He attended school at the nearby Avenel school and then became part of the farm work force along with his father and brothers. Like many of the young men of the district, he spent much of his time on the road, sleeping under a wagon, carting wheat and chaff to the railway at Canowindra. It was not possible to do a return trip with a horse drawn wagon in a day and he regularly camped at Cargo Reserve to cart three trips a week.

On 6 September 1924, he married Gladys Ruth Nash, daughter of Joshua and Lila Nash (nee Balcomb), of *Mountain View*, Toogong, at Orange Methodist Church. They first lived at *Laanecoorie* until Charles bought *Hilltop*, a 960 acre farm at Lockwood from Bob Smith in 1928. The house on *Hilltop* was already there, though Charles and Gladys added to it later. They had five children, Beth, Fay, who died in infancy, aged 7 months, Keith, John and Leonie.

Charles was a very progressive farmer and produced prime lambs with which he won many trophies. The competition between Cranbury Agricultural Bureau members was fierce and he often won wheat crop competitions. *Hilltop* was also used by the Department of Agriculture for trials of newly released varieties of wheat. He had a good home orchard and grew many of his own vegetables. Charles continued the Whitmee tradition of actively supporting community organisations and church at Cranbury. He was active on the Lockwood school bus committee which aimed to give children from the area access to secondary education in Canowindra.