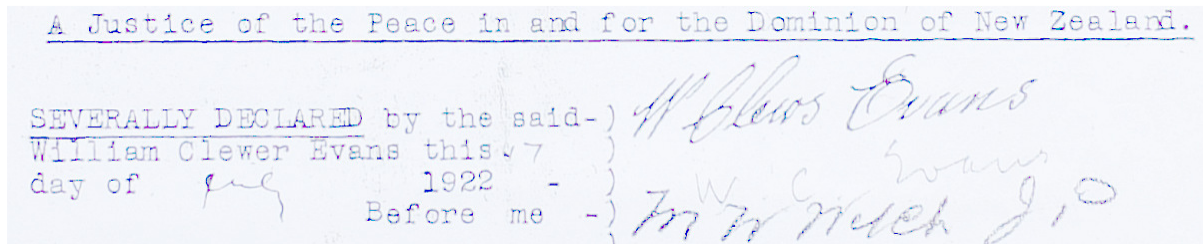


## Mr Evans of Taita Public Hall – what became of him?

The minutes recording those present at the first informal meeting on 7th June 1922 to discuss building the Taita Public, recorded just “Evans”. When ‘Evans’ was elected to the inaugural committee on 19th June no further clue was recorded about him. ‘Evans’ and Edgar Hall (1886-1953) were partnered to canvass the Nai Nai Road and Back roads for subscriptions and moved that the Hall be used on Sundays for sacred purposes only.

At the committee meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1922, Evans resignation was accepted with regret. Fortunately, he’d signed his full name on a legal document filed by the solicitors on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1922.



This was a declaration re purposes and conditions for the Taita Public Hall Society (Inc) required under “The Libraries and Mechanics’ Institutes Act 1908.” The signature was witnessed by Maurice Whitewood Welch JP (1870-1950).

William Clewes Evans took up poultry farming at Petone about 1918 and lived with his wife, Mary, at 54 Adelaide Street.<sup>1</sup> In July 1919 William was charged with assaulting Walter Benjamin Gough (1869-1954), the Borough Inspector at Petone, who was taking William’s horse to the Borough pound. William was remanded for seven days with bail being allowed.

When the birth of William’s six-year-old adopted son<sup>2</sup>, Stanley Walter Evans, was registered on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1920, the family was still living at 54 Adelaide Street. By August 1920, William and Mary had moved their poultry farming operation to Rimu Street, Nai Nai and Stanley was admitted to Taita School on 21 May 1921.<sup>3</sup>

The family, then, left the district, moving to Camp Number 2 for workers at the Arapuni Hydroelectric Works on the Waikato River.<sup>4</sup> On 16<sup>th</sup> December 1924, William was tried for assault at Tauranga and ordered to pay costs. The standard police description recorded that William was born in 1873 and was a native of England. He was 5’ 6” tall, had a fresh complexion, fair hair, blue eyes, a long broken nose and was of strong build. On 24<sup>th</sup> December 1924, their two-roomed cottage, with flower garden in Rimu Street, was advertised for let.

William worked as a foreman at Arapuni for three years, then the family returned to live at 5 Evelyn Place in Wellington in 1928. This is the family’s last known address, and no further trace of William and Mary has been found.

On 21<sup>st</sup> July 1928, a warrant was issued for William’s detention at Wellington Prison for one month in default of paying arrears due on a maintenance order for the support of his wife. He was described as a 50-year-old labourer of medium build, fair complexion, fair hair going bald, blue eyes, crooked nose and a scar on his left palm. He was also described again as a native of England.

<sup>1</sup> Heritage New Zealand Historic Building Classification 2 Section 2 Block VIII Heretaunga Settlement DP 5172 <https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/3593> and Heretaunga Settlement Workers’ Dwellings Historic Area <https://www.heritage.org.nz/the-list/details/7028>

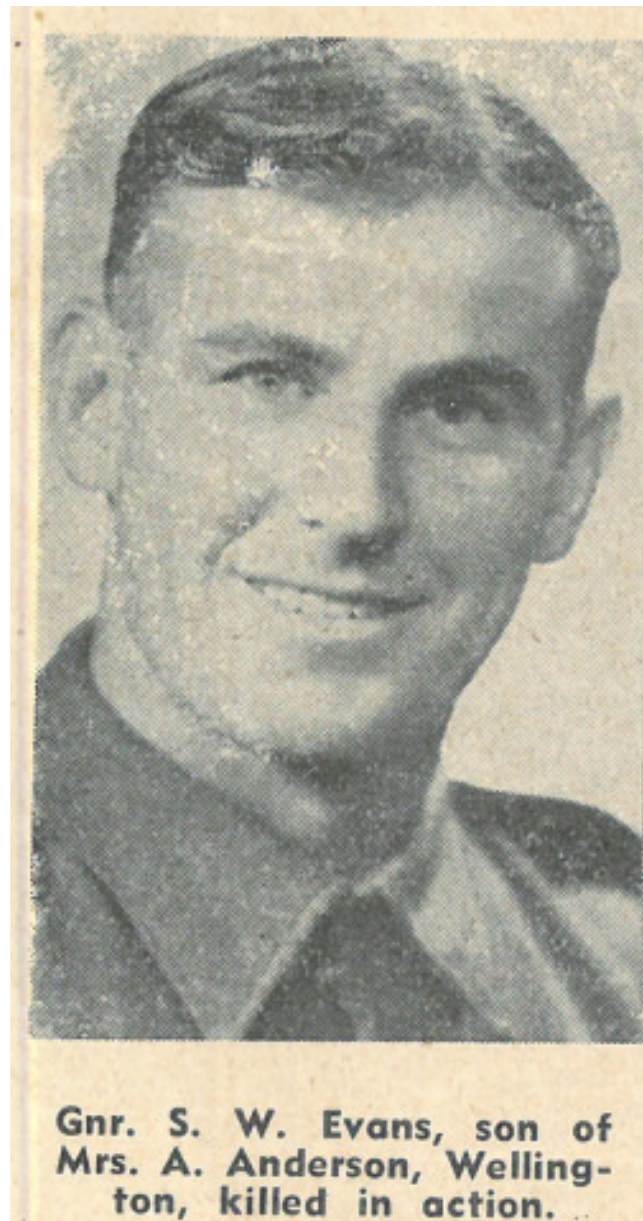
<sup>2</sup> The Birth was registered under Section 8 of the Births and Deaths Registration Amendment Act 1915 – Special provisions as to registration of adopted children. Stanley was born on 28 February 1914 at Russell Street, Arch Hill, Auckland (BDM Printout 1920/1178).

<sup>3</sup> New Zealand Society of Genealogists Kiwi Index – Transcript of Taita South School Admission Register No.338/1921 for Stanley Evans – admitted 2 May 1921. Parent W. C. Evans, NaeNae. Stanley had previously attended Epuni School. His last day at Taita School South was 12 May 1922 and his destination was “Convent.”

<sup>4</sup> Photograph Supplement to Auckland Weekly News 11 June 1925 p47 Comprehensive view of the settlement at Arapuni.

In 1938, his adopted son, Stanley, was a cartage contractor living at Main Road, Days Bay, with James and Jeannie Stuart. He served as a gunner in the 14<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment and was killed in action on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1942. His name was recorded on the Alamein Memorial at the El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt.

Interestingly, the Grave Registration entry in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission archives records that Stanley was the son of Ada Theresa Anderson nee Pratt (1885-1970) of Lower Hutt. She married John Hamer Roberts Anderson (1876-1948) on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1919 and the couple settled in Wellington.



Seeking birth, marriage and death details for William Clewes Evans and his wife Mary.