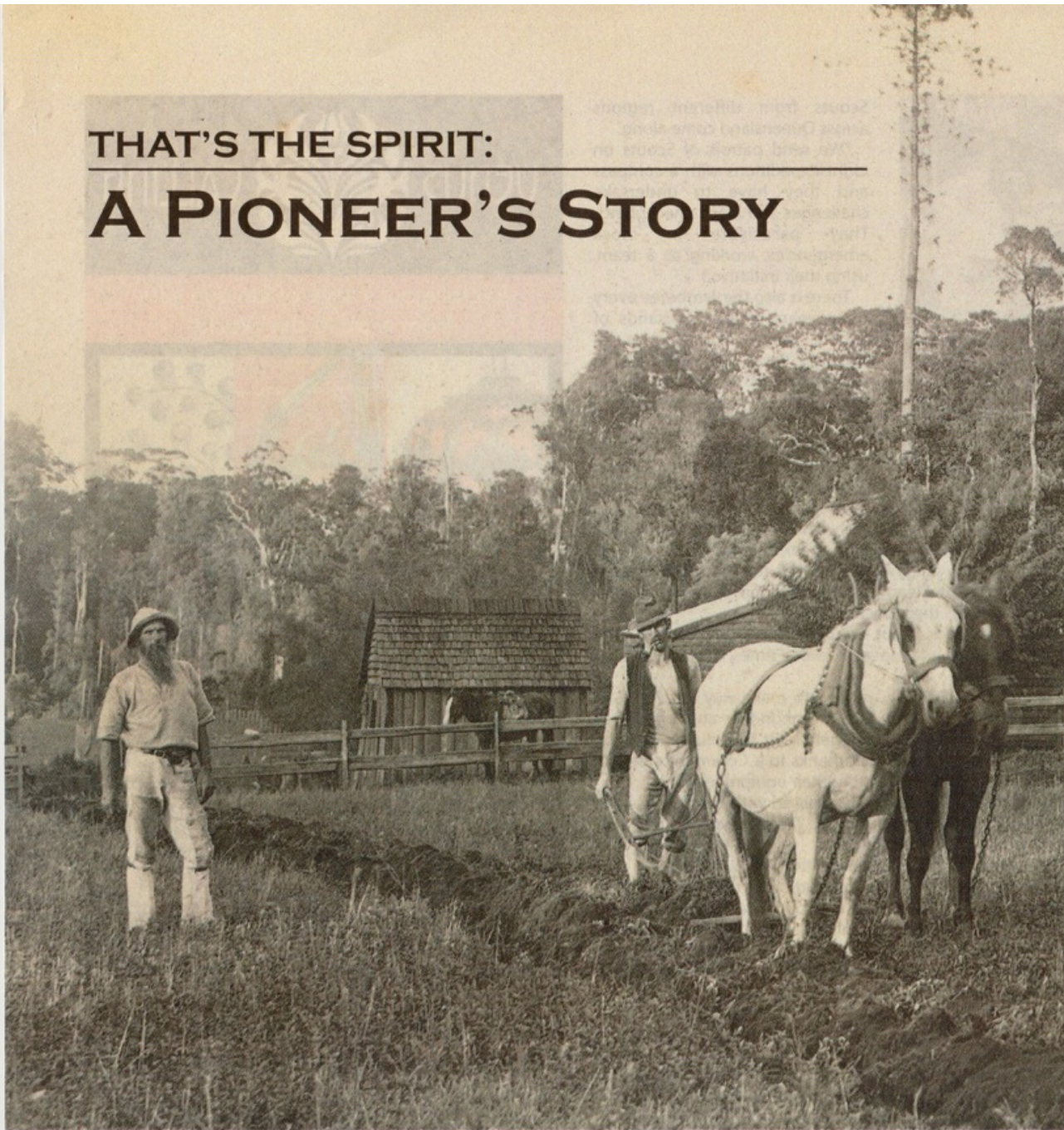


THAT'S THE SPIRIT:

A PIONEER'S STORY



Ploughing for late crop of corn: Fred Warne with his plough and horses, and a typical wooden shingle-roofed rustic building common at that time

History tells us many people born in the 1800's experienced incredible hardships and tragedies, and yet they endured. They rose above the struggle and survived, sometimes in completely alien surroundings or new countries. This pioneering spirit is admirable and fascinating, and one such family can be traced to Witta, where their story lives on.

by Steve Chaddock and Mel Bell

EARLY PIONEER SETTLERS Frederick Charles Warne and his wife Charlotte Alma sailed from London on the steamship Waroonga, arriving in 1887 in Brisbane.

The Warnes were from Aylsham in Norfolk, England, and were one of the first British families to settle in Teutoberg, now Witta, on 160 acres. They built a homestead called Holly Bush, on a high point overlooking the Conondale Valley and Curramore.

The Warnes had endured hardship before they reached Australia, as they had buried twins before they left London. Perhaps they were trying to leave this behind them but more heartbreak ensued with the loss of another set of twins born in 1887.

Their only surviving child William died tragically in 1896 aged just ten after being dragged home by his horse which had possibly been spooked by a thunderstorm.

Now it seems almost intolerable to lose so many children, but it was much more a part of life back then. The Warne's strength of character prevailed and life began to improve, and they went on to play a key role in the establishment of Witta.

Frederick had served in the Grenadier Guards in the British Army, and had worked as a surveyor. He cleared the new land for farming, and registered the cattle brand F2X. He was putting his mark on Witta.



Frederick Charles Warne

The Warne's played an important role for the German settlers in the local area, by helping them to understand the conditions of land selections, and also by accompanying them all the way to Brisbane to assist them with the paperwork required.

Frederick's wife, Charlotte, may have been instrumental in this as she had been a teacher in England. She wished to be considered as the first teacher at the new Teutoburg school in 1892 but was not employed by the State Department of Educational Instruction.

The family went on to thrive in the area, having a daughter Sarah Daisy in 1889, and another son Frank Henry in 1893. Sarah married an Englishman and went on to have three sons who were all born at Witt.

Frank Henry (known as Harry) enlisted in 1915 at 22 and went off to the Great War. He went on to marry a girl from his father's village, Aylsham in Norfolk.



Harry Warne as a boy

Susannah Hester Warne had the same surname as Harry as her father George was Frederick's brother. This made them cousins.

It was not uncommon in itself to marry a first cousin, but the fact that Harry had returned with his bride to his family village on the other side of the world to find this out was a bit more unusual.

The two younger Warnes then returned to Holly Bush Farm in Witt where they raised their family. The name Holly Bush still hangs at the home in the area today, although on a much smaller property as the original farm has been subdivided.

The Warne family became so locally renowned that the area on maps from the 1920s shows their land as Warnes and was on par with other place names such as Maleny and Witt.

A descendant of the Warne family is well known local



Harry, Susannah, Alma and Hilda Warne

Lynda Burgess, who many may remember from the Maleny Post Office and as a key member of the Maleny Show Society for many years.

She is carrying on the community spirit first shown by the Warne family, as President of the Maleny Senior Citizens Group, and as a valuable part of Wittafest this year. She may even be seen during a themed cemetery tour at this year's event.

Harry died in 1963 at 69 and his wife Susannah survived him by 14 years and lived to 90. Both are buried in the churchyard at Witt.

At Wittafest 2016, the people of Witt and surrounds are discovering 'Teutoburg to Witt' the first generation of the 20th Century, 1900 up to 1929. Held September 17, they invite you to come enjoy stories, crafts, music, food and drink all wrapped in history!

<http://wittafest.com/>

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