

Frederick Bigg-Wither 1852-1934

Contributed by F W Furkert
Sunday, 02 April 2006
Last Updated Monday, 02 April 2007

EARLY NEW ZEALAND ENGINEERS

BIGG-WITHER, Frederick (1852-1934), was born at Richmond on 11th February, 1852, with the name Wither, and educated at Nelson College.

He was temporarily appointed on 8th August, 1873, a cadet in the Public Works Department, stationed in Wellington.

His position was made permanent on 7th March, 1874, and he was transferred on 1st July, 1874, to Canterbury on the transalpine Railway Survey line from Amberley to Brunnerton, and later on the Hurunui-Waitaki Railway, including the Rangitata Bridge.

On 1st July, 1877, he was promoted Assistant Engineer, Canterbury. He had been invalided for approximately one year from January, 1876, to January, 1877, as a result of an accident on Rangitata Bridge. After recovery he was stationed at the Weka Pass on construction of the Hurunui Branch Railway.

On 1st January, 1887, he was transferred to the Survey Department, and on 14th May, 1891, he became Road Surveyor in the Survey Department, Canterbury.

On 16th November, 1892, he was transferred as Road Surveyor in the Survey Department, Southland.

In 1892 it is noted, by E. R. Ussher, that although still paid by the Survey Department, he was assisting the Public Works Department.

His work included the opening up of the Catlins district, then very wild.

In January, 1895, he went to the Survey Department, Westland, and on 1st April, 1901, to the Roads Department, Westland.

In January, 1902, he was transferred to the Roads Department in Canterbury, and on the 1st July, 1903, became District Road Engineer, Roads Department, Canterbury, when he built the Upper Waiau Bridge.

On 1st July, 1909, he was appointed as Resident Road Engineer in the Public Works Department, Auckland, and on 1st October, 1912, became Acting District Engineer in the same Department, until the 1st January, 1913, when he became District Engineer there.

On 1st February, 1917, he retired on superannuation.

From 24th January, 1919, to the 13th May, 1919, he was temporary draftsman in the Public Works Department, Auckland, which was a voluntary effort to help to overcome the manpower shortage.

He died on 20th August, 1934, at Auckland.

Frederick Bigg-Wither is my Grandfather.
Sam Bigg-Wither

Frederick Bigg-Wither is my 2nd Great Grand Uncle.
Blair Rogers