

William Spearman Young (1842 – 1913)

William Spearman Young was born in Auckland on 22 July 1842, a descendent of the Youngs of Galloway, Scotland. His grandfather's career in the East India Company was cut short by his early death from cholera in 1820. His father William, a clerk in the Treasury, was posted to New South Wales in 1830, and in 1838–39 was a commissariat clerk on the *Planter*, transporting female convicts and their children to the colony. In April 1840 he arrived at the Bay of Islands, New Zealand, on the *Buffalo*, as commissariat officer with a contingent of the 80th Regiment sent from Sydney to support the new governor, Captain Hobson. When Auckland was made the capital William was transferred there, and after resigning his commission, he rose to become controller of customs and navigation at the port and a leader of Auckland's social life.

On 22 July 1841 at Government House William married Eliza Hargreaves, the orphaned daughter of a well-to-do Lancaster brewer, and exactly one year later their first child William Spearman Young was born. He was still a toddler when Eliza died in 1845, and he was brought up mainly in the families of friends. Unhappy after his little brother's death in 1848 and his father's remarriage in 1851, young William boarded at Frank Gould's school in Russell, and then went to Wesley College in Auckland.

When he was 14 he persuaded his father to let him begin surveying with George Clarke in Russell, and the following year, 1857, he went south as a cadet with a letter of introduction to the chief surveyor in Canterbury, Thomas Cass, who had also surveyed in Russell. Cass recommended him to Edward Jollie, and together, Jollie and Young took part in three expeditions from 1857 to 1859, surveying the

Canterbury-Otago boundary area and searching for a pass to the West Coast. During 1862 and 1863 Young accompanied Haast and others on further inland exploration and surveying journeys. The Aoraki/Mt Cook area was visited, and a probe north from Lake Wanaka resulted in the discovery of a pass through to the West Coast – Haast Pass. Back in Christchurch Haast wrote to J D Hooker at Kew: "I should be thankful to you if you would name among the novelties of this year's season one after my young friend Mr William Young, assistant surveyor, who was my faithful and energetic companion during my last West Coast journey and assisted me very much collecting."

Young surveyed in Canterbury for a few more years, and in 1866 returned to Auckland where he married 19 year-old Elizabeth (Eliza) Horne, whose parents, with their family, had recently arrived from Glasgow. William and Eliza farmed at Kaipara for thirteen years (the first nine of their twelve children were born there) and then took up land at Otakeho, in South Taranaki. In 1893, for health reasons, William moved with Eliza and one son to Hicks Bay near East Cape, where they leased and farmed Māori land, returning to their Otakeho farm, which had been managed by other sons, in 1904. He died there in 1913 and at his request was buried in the city of his birth and early childhood. Eliza died at Otakeho in 1925.

William Spearman Young's enthusiasm and assistance in the field is acknowledged in the names of a mountain range, a river and several South Island plant species, including an alpine mat daisy, *Raoulia youngii*, collected by Haast in the mountains above Lake Hawea.

Raoulia youngii

Species of the genus *Raoulia* are mat and cushion-forming herbaceous and shrubby daisies with short overlapping leaves. The flower heads, without rays or stalks, nestle among the leaves. Tough and hardy, they grow in exposed, dry, stony or rocky places, where there are extremes of day and night temperatures, especially in summer. *Raoulia youngii* is widespread on the higher South Island mountains from about central Canterbury southwards. It forms soft, white mats of closely overlapping and spreading leaves, which are smothered in fine hairs. Persistent dead leaves are grey. Inner scales enclosing the large flower heads (8–15 mm across) are white and petal-like, but the outer ones are light brown and smaller.

