

## Copy of a hand-written letter to Arthur and Mary Chamberlain by Mary's father Thomas Wilton.

Thomas Wilton left Montacute, Somerset, and sailing from Plymouth with his parents, Robert and Elizabeth (Denman) Wilton, came to Wellington as a nine-year-old aboard the sailing ship 'Oriental' in 1841. This was one of the first five ships sent by the colonising visionary William Wakefield through the newly organised New Zealand Company. Thomas earned his living as a drover, farmer, storekeeper and carrier. In 1855 he married Mary Bird who had emigrated aboard the 'Clifton' with her parents as a four-year-old from Brigstock, Northamptonshire, arriving in Wellington about four months after Thomas. Daughter Mary who married Arthur Chamberlain was number six of ten children born to Thomas & Mary. Mary died in 1895 and Thomas now aged 75 writes from his home 16kms. north of Masterton...

**Rangitumau**\* 13<sup>th</sup>.January 1907

My Dear Son and Daughter and grands sons and daughters

I hope these few Lines May find you all Well I am Midling at Present thanks Be unto the Lord for all his goodness and Mercy unto me the Chief of sinners. Dear Mary I thought you Would of Been Down to Masterton about Christmas time I Was in Wellington 2 Weeks Mrs Curtis has taken very Bad a few days ago. Anney? (daughter-in-law Anna (Annie) Evans married to eldest son Thomas Wilton) Came up With Me and Was going to stay a week or so and I Was Down to Masterton Last Tuesday With her and family and Anney got a Wire that her father Was taken verry Bad and She Went off to Wellington at once. I just had time to catch the Napier train for her to go We went throw (thru) the Lupeline to Anneys and staid there to Dinner and then about half Past 2 We hucked up (harnessed horse & gig) and Went Down to Masterton and Met with anneys husband With his bike And a telegram Just going to start to the Bush With it so it was 3 o clock I just had time to get her to the train he is very poorly yet they Don't know how it Will go With him yet I had a Letter from them Last night. Your uncle Nun (Wilton) has been a(i)ling some time laterly he Will Be 85 next May and your aunt the same. Well now Dear Mary I hope this finds you all Well I haven't herd from you for some time now I should like to here from you or the Dear girls I hope Arth(ur) (Chamberlain) is Doing all Right the Last I herd from Ruth (daughter married to Thomas Bacon) they Were Midling and ...and them on Pretty Well. Well she Was over here Last Saturday Week Jim (possible reference to James Parsons married to daughter Elizabeth) Was over With her and they Went back on Monday I haven't herd from Sarah (daughter married to Earnest Eaton) for a good Bit they are all midling about here they have had Colds But are Better now there is a Lot of People With Colds about now. Dear Mary O May the Lord Be Gracious and Merciful to you and Bless you and Lead you to seek his mercy and grace in and throw Jesus Christ Gods only Begotten and Well Beloved Son Whom God the father in Love gave that Whosoever Believeth in should nor Perish But have Everlasting Life & May the Lord's Blessing Be apon you to Lead you to seek his Blessing above all things now Dear Mary Remember me to Arth(ur) and the Dear girls and Tom & Jack (Chamberlain) I hope he has got all well. Dear Mary I Will put a note in this for you With Love to all I remain your Loving father Thomas Wilton.

Let Me Know if you get this all Right.

\***Rangitumau**: is situated some 16kms north of Masterton where Thomas senior had a selection and may have been living alone (his wife Mary having died 1895) or living with his eldest son Thomas married to Anna (Annie) Evans and who bought a farm here in about 1895 after unsuccessfully trying the Australian Goldfields. Thomas senior died in 1914 and his son Thomas just three years later in 1917.