

Frederick Nelson Jones Jr., Saddler, Photographer. 1881 - 1962

THE YOUNGEST OLD MAN IN NELSON



The son of Frederick and Emeline Jones, born in 1881 Frederick Nelson Jones Jr. was schooled at a private school at Port Nelson. He then joined his father who owned a livery stable. His father and grandfather were both saddlers but after 11 years of this

work Frederick Jr. took up his hobby of photography, by this stage he owned a half-plate camera with tripod that cost £2/12/6.

On 7 Dec. 1904 the Nelson Boys College caught fire "pompy" as he was nicknamed by his father, set out on his bike with his camera and three photo plates, he took the first photo just as the flagpole was falling. His father predicted he would make money out of the photos and in a few weeks 1,500 sets had been sold.

An interesting sideline of these photos was that two of them were used in Court litigation against the painter, who was working in the building at the time and was alleged to have started the fire. The photos cleared the painter and the proprietor of the painting business who was saved £8,000 and boosted the sale of photos!

This set Frederick Jr. up as a postcard photographer specializing in the social side of life in Nelson. He became a familiar figure at public gatherings, galas, football matches, processions, fetes, juggling with plate-holders, camera and black cloth while balanced precariously atop his tall wooden ladder.

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CONEY PARK

He loved children and in 1921 set up Coney Park solely for the enjoyment of the younger generation with merry-go-rounds, swing boats, the merry-wave and a miniature train "The Flying Scotsman" driven by Mr. Amos Taylor who worked for the City Council driving the steam roller.

This fun fair was closed by Mr. Jones after he became bitterly disappointed when on arriving to open up one Saturday morning he found some children had broken in and created about £10 worth of damage. Then a week later he found the whistle from the new train had been stolen.

PIXIETOWN

After his retirement he began making pixies, this led to the creation of Pixietown. One of the complicated assemblies in Pixietown was the set in which *Professor Bumblebee* plays the organ to an appreciative audience. Underneath a system of rods, strings and wheels ensured correct timing.

One Pixie caused real trouble! this was the welder, he upset residents, for when at work the arc from his welding torch would black out radio reception for about two to three blocks around. Mr. Jones staged his first *Magic Cave* in Nelson in 1933, it was later staged throughout New Zealand as well as overseas. (the author remembers going to see the *Cave* setup inside James Smiths in Wellington) The first *Magic Cave* staged for Farmers' Auckland almost stopped business in the huge store when more than 6,000 persons went through it in one day!. Other entertainment organized by Mr. Jones, Punch and Judy shows, Barnum and Bailey's Amateur Circus, he had a collection of Monkeys - Mutt, Jeff, Fit and Starts as well as a donkey he imported, to be an attraction at many a Nelson gala.

Frederick Nelson Jones died aged 81, August 29 1962 survived by his second wife Nina. His postcards live on.