

H. J. Gill - Dunedin

From <http://earlyotagophotographers.blogspot.com/2008/09/h-j-gill-dunedin.html>

Henry John Gill

c. 1853 - 1932



Henry John Gill was born in Kent about 1853 and arrived in New Zealand about 1877. He died in Dunedin on 4 February 1932 aged 79 years. His address at the time was 2 Warrender Street, Dunedin. He was buried in the Northern Cemetery on 6 February 1932, block 128, plot 5.

Dunedin City Council - Cemeteries Database.

Wises Directory

1892-95, Hyde Street, Dunedin

1900-03, Frederick Street, Dunedin

1904-10, 11-13 Frederick Street, Dunedin

Messrs Girvan and Gill, photographers, have decided to remain four weeks longer in Lawrence.- Tuapeka Times, Volume XX, Issue 1359, 11 June 1887, Page 2

H. J. GILL.

PHOTOGRAPHER and DIRECT IMPORTER of PLATES, PAPER, MOULDINGS, and Cut Out Mounts, &c, &c. My Bromide Enlargements are the very best, and can be done from any small photo at very low prices, and sent to any address. If you have a card you want enlarged send it to H. J. GILL. Sitters taken for Enlargements. All correspondence replied to by return of post. Trade and amateurs' work done with care.

H. J. GILL,
Hyde street, Bottom of Frederick and Albany streets, Dunedin.
Telephone 680. Telephone 680.

Otago Witness, Issue 2040, 30 March 1893, Page 25



H J. GILL
PHOTOGRAPHER, HYDE STREET, DUNEDIN.
IN ADVANCE OF THE TIMES.
THREE BUSINESSES IN ONE.

1st - I import direct Photographic Goods, Mouldings, Cut-out Mounts, etc, etc.

2nd.— Photography. My Photographic Work is Perfection. 5,000 life-size Bromide Enlargements done in three years by H. J. GILL. Large numbers of unsolicited testimonials. If you wish to make a present or to have a life-size Picture of departed friend, procure one of my Bromide Enlargements.

3rd — Picture-framing and Cut-out Mounts not to be equalled; and for any of Nos, 1, 2, and 3 I am the best and cheapest man in the City.

Any of the above done for the Trade and Amateurs at the lowest rates. Lessons given. Two Dark Rooms on the premises, and one at liberty for customers.

Telephone. 680. - New Zealand Tablet, Volume XXI, Issue 4, 25 May 1894, Page 16

H. J. Gill, photographer, late of Hyde street, notifies his numerous friends and customers he is now occupying his new and commodious premises in Frederick street, near Knox Church. Special attention, given to all country orders. Having more extensive accommodation he is now prepared to execute all orders entrusted to him with less delay, and thanks his patrons for their kind support, in the past. Note new address: Frederick street near Knox Church. - Advt.

Otago Witness, Issue 2275, 7 October 1897, Page 36

Mr. Gill, Photographer, Frederick St., Dunedin, gives one dozen cabinets and an enlargement for the moderate sum of 13/6. Printing, retouching, and enlarging are done at this establishment at lowest prices...

New Zealand Tablet, Volume XXXIII, Issue 16, 20 April 1905, Page 30



Posted by Early Canterbury Photography at [3:05 AM](#)



Henry John Gill was born in Kent about 1853 and arrived in New Zealand about 1877.

Described in Stone's Directory for Dunedin for 1886 as a manufacturer of plaster and cement ornaments, Hyde Street, and "dealer in all kinds of plastering materials of the best brands, mantel-pieces, tiles, fire bricks, centre flowers etc, Gill cannot be regarded as a photographer at that date.

By 1891 he was listed as a photographer and photo stock dealer, and many photographers obtained their materials from him.

What is more to his credit as a photographer is his apparent popularity. His 'cabinet cards' are extremely common in Dunedin family albums.

In the early 1880s Gill was a neighbour of Thomas Girvan who came to Dunedin in the 1870s as a cabinet-maker and soon found a demand for brass-bound cameras, which he so beautifully constructed that many are in existence today and are highly collectible.

By 1887 Girvan was both camera manufacturer and photographer running the "Kapai" Studio and about that time Gill and Girvan formed a brief partnership. Both were self-taught portrait men who turned to photography from the trades under which they emigrated.

Gill's early portraits were taken against a severely plain background with a fur rug occasionally appearing on a chair or on the ground.

Later when he had a larger studio in Frederick Street, he had a background screen with palm leaves and among his studio props a Chinese wooden vase, a bamboo table, an artificial plant, and the fur rug which served him faithfully.

Gill made himself into a versatile photographer and repeatedly stressed in his advertisements that he was "the best and cheapest man in the city".

He catered for both trade and amateurs, with a spare darkroom for the use of customers. He stocked a wide range of imported goods; undertook picture framing and cut-out mounts, and copying and enlarging customers' photographs of "departed friends".

Photographers like Gill are known to most New Zealand cities; they are versatile, resourceful and usually very obliging and easy to get on with. In the photographic profession there is room for variety. Some undertake only portraits, but are masters of the art; others love landscape work, combined with travel and adventure and, if successful, put a manager in the studio while they do the outside work; others adopt the motto; "no job refused".

There are also photographers who specialise in technical, medical, astronomical, or air photography; there are press photographers and photo-journalists, but probably the best-known to the public are those like Henry John Gill.

He died in Dunedin on 4 February 1932 aged 79 years. His address at the time was 2 Warrender Street, Dunedin. He was buried in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery.

Prepared by the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand (www.cemeteries.org.nz) from "New Zealand Photographers a Selection by Hardwicke Knight.

