

# Mussoorie's Three 'Fredericks'

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## Mussoorie

Whenever the history of Mussoorie is talked about, the names of three gentlemen called Frederick must simply find mention. Two of them were related directly to the “discovery” of this popular hill station as it was a hunting trip they undertook in the year 1823 that brought this place into light.

These two were Lt. Frederick Young of East India Company and his friend Frederick John Shore who was the Joint Magistrate of Dehra Dun at that time. This short hunting trip by the two young Fredericks became a giant leap for history. The third Frederick came later. However, not much is known about them by the thousands of tourists who keep visiting this hill town.

Lt. Young, an Irish man, was so enamoured by the beauty of the place that he decided to build a hunting lodge (shooting box) on the Camel's Back Road along with Shore. This can be called the first construction in Mussoorie. Lt. Young then suggested to his superiors in the army and civil establishment to build a convalescent home for the tired and sick army personnel in the salubrious environment of these hills. In 1827, the Company's Government established a convalescent depot for British soldiers at Landour.

After that, Young built his residence in Landour and named it “Mullingar” after the city of this name in his native Ireland. Building after building, roads joining other roads, one civic facility following the other came to be installed. Later on, it came to be called by the name of Mussoorie. Young went on to raise the first Gurkha regiment, made the Doon valley his home, and introduced the potato for the first time in the Himalayas. Frederick Young was born on 30 November 1786, at Green Castle in the north of Ireland.

Under the aegis of the East India Company, Ensign Young arrived in Calcutta in 1802. During the Anglo-Gurkha war in the Doon valley, Young became the captive of the Gurkhas for about a year. He became conversant with their language, studied their religion, manners and customs, gaining their friendship and admiration.

Young's tenure in Dehra ended in 1844, and after serving briefly in Darjeeling and Dimapore, he went home to Ireland as General. Young where he died at the age of 87. Sadly, there are no memorials to Young in Mussoorie but in the Dehra Dun cantonment, there is a "Young Road".

Now we come to the most colourful one ~ Frederick E Wilson. He is better known as "Pahari" Wilson because over the many years he spent in Garhwal Himalayas, he became just like the locals here — a Pahari /Pahadi like the hill folk. The legend of Pahadi Wilson and his wife Gulabi is part of the folklore of this hill region.

He was an adventurer who is believed to have deserted the British Army just after 1857. He escaped into Garhwal and landed in Harsil, a remote idyllic valley on the banks of the Bhagirathi, Wilson married a beautiful Garhwali girl, Gulabi, of Mukhba village. He then made a fortune out of timber. The timber trade had made Wilson so wealthy and powerful that he came to be known as 'Raja Wilson'.

Gulabi and Wilson lived in Wilson Cottage, a huge mansion built by him in the late 1850s. Wilson and his wife lie buried in the Mussoorie cemetery. Wilson built several bridges in the area, the most famous of them being the 350 feet suspension bridge over the Jadh Ganga. Wilson is also remembered for the large, juicy, red apples he introduced to this region. Known as 'Wilson Apples', these are sold by locals to travellers and pilgrims on their way to Gangotri.

Wilson passed through Mussoorie for the first time in the early 1840s. Wilson had two wives, both from Harsil's neighbouring village of Mukhba. The prettier one was Raimatta who was unable to bear children. The other one was Sungrami whose nickname was Gulabi. She bore Wilson three sons -Nathaniel, Charles and Henry.

The people of Harsil and Mukhba still tell tales about them using their local names of Nathhu, Charli Sahib and Indri. Wilson travelled frequently between Mussoorie and Harsil. In Mussoorie, Pahadi Wilson had owned or at least financed the old Charleville Hotel naming it after his middle son Charles who showed no interest in running it.

Charleville later became part of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, known popularly as the IAS Academy. Pahadi Wilson died in 1883. He is a popular ghost among the many which locals claim to meet at night. He rides on his horse and then asks people for a light for his cigar. That's Frederick "Pahari" Wilson for you!