



IN
MEMORY OF
THOMAS GULLING
BORN KENTON, SUMMERSSET
22 APR 1852
DIED AT BAYVIEW
22 MARCH 1901
ALWAYS WIFE
MARGARET GULLING
DIED AT NEW 1865
AGED 55 YEARS

EDWARD CUTTS
LYDIA CUTTS
LARGE CUTTS

Thomas Culling was born in Kenton, Mandeville, Somerset, the eldest of 10 children. He served his printing apprenticeship in Yeovil, and was sent to London for finishing.

He was a passenger by the ship *Ajax*, which arrived in Port Chalmers on January 8, 1849, and was employed on Henry Graham's *Otago News* till that paper stopped publication through the withdrawal by the late Captain Cargill of the guarantee of a number of copies sufficient to secure the continued existence of the paper, an article written prejudicial to the interests of Cargill's company being the reason given.

Mr Culling then went to Lyttleton, and was employed for three years from 1851 on the *Lyttelton Times*, moving from there to the new *Christchurch Standard*.

He left there again for Otago in 1855 to try farming on the Taieri combined with work for the *Otago Witness and Colonist*.

In 1873 he joined Messrs Coull Bros., under the style of Coulls and Culling Steam Printers

In March 1884 Coulls Culling & Co bought cheaply the loss-making Mataura Paper Mill Co. Later that year Culling shifted to Mataura and took charge of the business to such effect that by the late 1880s the renamed Mataura Falls Paper Mill Co was making a profit. To increase production Culling decided on expensive modernisation, and in 1893 supervised the construction in England of a new 84 inch Fourdrinier paper-making machine.

In 1894 the factory was rebuilt and the Mataura River tamed, despite a severe flood, by a new weir benefitting the mill and the Southland Frozen Meat Co works on the opposite bank. In 1895 Culling became chief shareholder in the mill, leaving only his name in Coulls Culling & Co.

In family life Culling was a good provider if not an especially fortunate husband. In 1852 he married Margaret Torrance from Edinburgh and their one son Thomas Shepherd Culling was born in 1853. After his first wife died in 1863 he married Ann Holmes from Dublin in 1864 and they had two children. Ann died in 1877 and in 1879 Culling married Sarah Ann Walton, a widow with five children. He also brought up a niece after his brother Francis died. Three of Culling's brothers joined him in New Zealand.

In 1899 Culling retired from Mataura to St. Clair, in order to 'secure the best medical advice', as his health was beginning to fail. He showed symptoms of diabetes and suffered a stroke of paralysis, and although hopes were always entertained that his afflictions would pass away, yet the former disease showed in virulent form six weeks ago, and he gradually became weaker till he died on 23 March 1901, and was buried in Dunedin's Southern Cemetery. He bequeathed his mill shares to his son, T. S. Culling, after whom Culling Park is named.

Mr Culling was for many years chairman of the East Taieri Road Board, and was twice a candidate for a seat in the Provincial Council, both attempts being unsuccessful. He once contested the Taieri seat in the General Assembly with Mr Henry Howorth, being defeated by only 11 votes. He also occupied the position of chairman of the Mataura Town Board for four years, and was elected the first mayor of the borough, successfully contesting the position for a second term.

The *Otago Witness* reported in his obituary:

Mr Culling was the oldest practical printer in Otago and Canterbury, and probably the most venerable member of the craft in the South Island.

He was a valuable colonist and a good citizen, and was imbued with an unlimited amount of pluck and determination. Another characteristic was his straightforward dealing: not a few in the province have to thank him to-day for the generous assistance he always gave to those whom he thought deserving of help.

Prepared by the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand from information in *Southern People a Dictionary of Otago Southland Biography*, and the *Otago Witness* on Papers Past website.