



George Green the well known boatbuilder of Sydney & Dunedin NZ, left his family in London and arrived in Sydney as a 13 year old on *Eliza* on 22nd November 1822. Why did so young a lad make such a voyage?

Life in London was very harsh at the time. Younger siblings arrived and the family struggled. His aunt Charlotte, his father's sister, had been transported to Sydney as a convict, was freed and married a former convict, Thomas Hyndes. News of the better life in the colony reached his father Amaziah and he petitioned the British Secretary of State to allow son George to migrate and live with his relatives. That petition provides the reason.

*'To the Right Honourable Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State &c &c.*

*The Humble Petition of Amaziah Green of 12 Foxes Lane Shadwell in the County of Middlesex, Sheweth: That your petitioner has a Brother in Law who resides in Castlereagh Street Sydney Port Jackson in New South Wales a Timber Merchant that has no family and repeatedly sent to your petitioner to send his Family to him where he says he can well provide for them that your petitioner has an opportunity of sending his son George Green*

*and a Brother named James Green aged 37 years who has been at sea in His Majesty's Service for 13 years and who wish to settle in Sydney with the uncle and Brother in Law Thomas Hyndes Mrs Hyndes being his own sister. ....'*

Thomas and Charlotte were George's foster parents and guardians and arranged for him to be apprenticed to Thomas Day, a boatbuilder in Kent Street, Sydney. Soon after George completed his apprenticeship he married Maria Bates, on 19th April 1830 at St Phillip's Church, Sydney.

Their first child, George Amaziah was born in 1830, then Mary Ann in 1832. George began to develop his boatbuilding business and acquire land - requesting grants in 1833, 1836 and 1837, by which time Henry 1834 and Richard 1836 had been born. More children followed until the 11th was born in 1851.

However our emphasis must be on his commercial activities. George received two large grants namely '*at Lane Cove ... off Kirk's Farm*' and '*on the Parramatta River, bounded on one side by that river, ... by Ball's Head Bay .. and Lane Cove River*'. In 1836, construction was begun on Greenwich House on the latter grant. It was a Georgian style residence of sandstone with an elaborate tiled entrance hall and with small cottages for tenants, and well kept gardens. George intended it to be an inn but was unable to obtain a licence.

George and Nathaniel Bates (Maria's brother) went to South Island, New Zealand in 1838 where George bought several parcels of land from the Maori chiefs and more in 1840 - thus began his New Zealand interests.

In *The Australian* newspaper of February 18, 1841 George announced that he had found coal on his Greenwich, Sydney, lands but permission to mine was refused because, '*as it was a modern grant, and coal was especially reserved for the Crown ...the strata, we have heard, is upwards of two feet in thickness*'. Land leases, purchases and sales feature in the early 1840s. He leased the Artarmon Estate, and then became part owner of the Gore Estate - the area which was later resumed by the government and on which St Leonard's Station and the Royal North Shore Hospital stand.

Financially stretched George auctioned Greenwich House and then subdivided the surrounding land into 80 allotments for sale in 1840. The advertisements for the blocks state that Mr. George Green was soon to go to New Zealand.

He leased a house and land from Robert Campbell at Milson's Point where the family lived and had his boatbuilding business. The area is now Milson's Point west of the northern pylon of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. This became the main site for his Sydney boatbuilding activity.

Other commercial interests in Sydney included land on the corner of Erskine and Kent Streets, a hotel and liquor licence for premises on the corner of King and Sussex Streets, and another hotel bought in 1844.

George had over stretched his resources and applied for Voluntary Insolvency in 1844.

Family life continued, as did boatbuilding and various deals. Maria bore more children: Agnes had been born in 1842, Sarah in 1844, followed by Charlotte 1847, William 1849 and Charles in 1852. Eleven children in all.

George focused more and more on the Southland, New Zealand lands he purchased from the Maoris in 1838 and 1840. Whether he paid the Maori chiefs in trinkets, tomahawks or some other goods is unknown but between 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October 1838 George had acquired 20 000 acres Stewart Island, 109 acres at Bluff, 2000 acres at Centre Island Bluff Harbour, 20 000 acres at Kowokapito Bay and 1,024,000 acres at Mistaken Bay on the West Coast. He returned in February to April in 1840 and added 145 acres of Native Reserve, Otago, as well as an area at Catlin's River and Amataroa Island in Otago Harbour. He spent most of the rest of his life defending his right to these purchases.

New Zealand land dispute negotiations continued again in 1858 and throughout the 1860s. George did not receive satisfaction. At one stage he returned to Sydney to place an appeal with Governor Gipps as the nearest British Governor, only to find a committee was being set up to process claims in New Zealand so his appeal was sent back to NZ. He was frustrated that the Commissioners would not travel to the southern areas of South Island but they gave priority to claims in more accessible areas.

In 1864 sent a petition to Sir George Grey stating he had been separated from *'his wife and family, who reside in Sydney, for nearly five years'* although circumstantial evidence implies he had returned within that time period. He was no longer listed as *'George Green, North Shore Sydney'* as he had been on earlier occasions, thus recognized as a New Zealand resident.

At some time in this period son Henry Thomas had joined him and was working in George's Dunedin boatyard. The Green boatyard became known for its quality workmanship, and was recently featured in New Zealand boating. It has been suggested that son Henry may have been responsible for much of the work.

George Green had received grants of 60 and 200 acres at Bluff Harbour and Stewart Island respectively, and it was decided that he was owed another 187 acres. This was far less than the acreage he claimed to have purchased, and whether or not he was satisfied is open to question. Earlier George had stated that as an old man he was unwilling to undertake the expense and anxiety of an appeal to Her Majesty's Privy Council as recommended by his legal advisors.

His friend, confidant and advisor Dr. Hocken wrote *'Green's Land Claims were finally allowed but the poor man will not long enjoy his life. I amputated his arm at the shoulder joint and the operation gave him great relief.'*

George died on 30th August 1872 at Dunedin and is buried in, what had been until a recent family reunion, an unmarked grave in Dunedin's Southern Cemetery.

In George's will is the first mention he made of the gold dredge he patented. Maria was not mentioned in his will, to be administered by sons George Amaziah Green of Sydney, Henry

Thomas Green of Dunedin, son-in-law Godfrey Bentley Robins as well as Henry Driver of Dunedin. The choice implies that he had kept close contact with the Sydney children, even if not with Maria who survived him by over 23 years.

Prepared for the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand ([www.cemeteries.org.nz](http://www.cemeteries.org.nz)) by family historian Michael Broad of Dunedin.

Research on George's lands in New Zealand was done by Joan Edwards and Ann Dodd c. 2004-2008