



Keith Ramsay established a shipping agency in Dunedin from 1865. He acted as agent for many of the small coastal ketches and sailing vessels trading from Riverton to Akaroa, and also for ships bringing in cargo from overseas, such as the Colonial Union Line, which in 1887 sent out some of the first steamers to be fully insulated for frozen meat. He was a shareholder in 26 vessels and from 1885 managing owner for the little steamer *Invercargill* which ran a regular service from Invercargill to Dunedin. In 1898 she was joined by the larger vessel *Rimu*. By 1900 there were several small steamers under his control and he worked in partnership for a period with Captain Charles F. Sundstrum. Goods from overseas ships were the main cargo south and timber was the principal northbound commodity.

Ramsay was highly respected for his shipping knowledge and took an active role in maritime and community organisations. He was a member of the Otago Harbour Board 1874-5, 1877-83, being chairman 1880-83. It was during his term as chairman that the Victoria Channel from Port Chalmers

to Dunedin was opened on 30 December 1881. A Dunedin City Councillor in 1872, he was elected Mayor in 1874, aged 30, and remains the youngest person to hold this position in the history of the city. He was closely involved with First Church, and was a director of several companies, including National Insurance Co, Perpetual Trustees Estate & Agency Co, Westport Coal Co, Dunedin Savings Bank and the Dunedin Stock Exchange. As the carriage of timber was the backbone of his shipping agency business, he had a wealth of business connections with sawmills and timber merchants.

Born at Alyth, Perthshire, the youngest son of Rev William Ramsay, he had come to Otago in the ship *Jura* in 1862 and worked initially for Cargill & Co before establishing his agency business. In 1871 he married Janet Torrey-Douglas and they had a family of three sons and six daughters. Following his death in 1906, his eldest son Keith Stuart Ramsay took over the management of the company until it subsequently became a public company in 1931, still under Ramsay family ownership. The company invested in a number of coastal shipping ventures, some sawmills and a ladder factory. In 1936 it joined with a number of Dunedin business interest to form the Dunedin-Wanganui Shipping Co and ran the vessel *Holmdale* between the two ports from 1922 to 1956. Keith Ramsay Ltd remained one of the principal shipping agents and stevedores in Dunedin until 1977 when it finally ceased business. Keith Ramsay is buried with his wife and one daughter in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery with an imposing memorial.