



George Lyman Sise was an enterprising American who made his life in Dunedin. Born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, he was the fourth of five children of Joseph Gage Sise, importer of West Indian goods, and Abby Francis, nee Lyman. At 16 George went to sea on the *Atmosphere*, and later served on the China Tea clippers *Bald Eagle* and *Darling*. In 1860 he was employed by the American firm of H.A. Pearce to establish a fur-trading post on the eastern coast of Siberia, but ended up 'holding it as a fort' against convict employees. The Pearce company then chartered the barque *Pacific*, loaded it with mining gear and sent Sise to sell it to miners in Otago. He arrived in Dunedin in 1863 and remained there the rest of his life.

In July 1865 he leased a section fronting Bond Street and Crawford Street and in 1866 formed a partnership with another American, John Caruthers Bates, to trade in American merchandise. In October 1867 George Sise married Prussian-born Louise Rosenberg, and they had four daughters and three sons. In 1865 he bought 300 acres (1200 hectares) near Moeraki, imported pure Spanish merino sheep from a well-known breeder in Vermont, USA, and over the next 12 years built up a stud flock. By 1878 his rams were selling for as much as 100 pounds each.

Sise continued to trade in Dunedin as Bates, Sise & Co, although his partner returned to America in 1868. He imported such diverse items as coaches, buggies, axle grease, farm implements, provisions, cradles, pitch, stoves and patent medicines. The firm eventually became agents for the eastern and Australian Steamship Co whose steamers traded between Sydney, China and Japan, and

for W.H.Peabody & Co whose sailing ships traded between New York, Boston and New Zealand. During the 1870s Sise sent large quantities of wool to Boston and New York.

From 1869 he purchased a number of sections along Bond Street and Crawford Street and in 1889 built a warehouse there. (This was rebuilt in 1911-12 and still stands at 15 Bond Street) In 1891-2 Sise was appointed agent for the Colonial Oil Co a subsidiary of Standard Oil Co of New Jersey, selling their oil, benzene and kerosene for eight years. He also became agent for the New York Glucose Co (later the Corn Products Refining Co), and agency he held for the rest of his life. Family legend has it that George Sise imported Dunedin's first car for Thomas Kempthorne in February 1901. A few months later his firm imported another American steam car, a 'Pope Toledo', in which his eldest son made the first trip by car from Dunedin to Christchurch – reversing up the Mt Cargill Road when the car would not go up in forward gear!

After his death on 22 August 1930, aged 91 years, his three sons, George Parker, Reginald Gage, and Albert Justin carried on his business under the same name. George is buried in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery.