



A fatal accident occurred on the 11th April 1875, at Broad Bay, near Portobello. A calf belonging to Mr. Gwyn, a settler there, had tumbled into a long unused well, about twenty feet deep, and a number of the neighbours assembled to help to rescue the animal. Amongst them was a fine young man, named William Styles, elder son of Mr. Styles, one of the earliest settlers of the Province. The young man was born at or near Portobello, and was held in very high esteem for his many good qualities. He was a ready helper in time of trouble, which was proved to his cost yesterday.

With a view to, if possible, save the life of the calf, young Styles volunteered to descend the well, and make the rope fast to the animal. A sort of windlass had been rigged, and by this he was lowered down, but had not descended far from the surface when it became apparent to those on the surface that something was the matter with him. They at once commenced to pull him up again, but just as he was almost within reach of the hands stretched out to grasp him, he let go his hold of the rope and fell to the bottom. Then it was ascertained that the well was nearly full of foul air. Efforts were made to recover the body, and after a couple of hours' work it was caught with a grappling iron and hauled to the surface — life of course being quite extinct. Styles made no sign nor uttered a cry after he entered the well, and in all probability was dead before he reached the bottom, the action of carbonic acid gas being exceedingly rapid. The sad event cast a deep gloom over the Portobello and Broad Bay communities. Information of what had occurred was communicated to the Port Chalmers Police in the afternoon.

At the Inquest a verdict of " Accidental death" was returned. The funeral took place on the following Saturday afternoon at Yellow Bluff Cemetery, Broad Bay. The funeral cortege numbered between 70 and 80 persons, friends and relatives of the deceased. The Rev. Mr. Greig officiated at the grave.

William's father, John Styles, was the first resident in Broad Bay. He was a native of Croydon, England, and came out here in the ship Ajax from London In 1849 or 1850. Immediately after arrival he agreed to go to work in the Clutha district, making the trip from Port Chalmers there with several others in a whaleboat. The voyage occupied a week, as they kept pretty close to the shore, and at night, or if the weather was bad, they managed to land somewhere. Shortly afterwards he returned to Dunedin overland to - fetch down some valuable cattle, a feat which he accomplished under

difficulties such as only those acquainted with, pioneering can imagine. Returning to Port Chalmers soon afterwards, he worked with the late Mr D. Carey in discharging and supplying ships for a time. Afterwards marrying, he went to the North Taieri to a sheep and cattle station belonging to a Mr Hopkinson, where wild pork formed the staple article of diet. After a time he again returned to Port Chalmers, and shortly afterwards, in 1851, took up land and his residence at the Bay.

Prepared for the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand ([www.cemeteries.org.nz](http://www.cemeteries.org.nz)) by Trish Wilson, genealogist, of Broad Bay, from Paperspast website.