

Assisted Immigration from New York to Sydney 1877-1878

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On 1 June 1878, Johannes Christian JOHANNSEN arrived in Sydney from New York on the *Ivanhoe*, as an assisted immigrant. He arrived as J.C. JOAHANSSEN, 27 years, gardener, native place, Germany. Under the column *parents names and if alive their residence* was listed Sachre JOHANNSEN, Germany.¹ Further research in Certificates of Naturalization and Colonial Secretary applications for naturalization showed his full name, Johannes Christian JOHANNSEN and his native place as Drelsdorf, Germany. In 1887 Johannes was residing at Parramatta, working as a professional gardener.² He was one of fifty-eight people arriving from New York who gave a country in Europe as their native place. In the course of a study about the above scheme, several descendants of the immigrants have contacted me with stories of their ancestors who arrived on the five ships from the USA to make their home in Australia. The following is a brief tale of this short lived effort by the NSW government to bring assisted immigrants to NSW from the USA.

The scheme brought 934 assisted immigrants to NSW from the United States on the five ships: *N Boyton*, *Sierra Nevada*, *Annie H Smith* and *Star of the West* in 1877 and the *Ivanhoe* in 1878.³ The NSW government assisted the immigrants from New York under the 1876 Immigration Regulations, which had been changed from the 1873 Immigration Regulations. In the new regulations, Item 1 stated that ‘immigrants may be approved from the eastern portion of the United States, by an agent appointed by or with the approval of the Colonial Secretary’.⁴

John ROBERTSON was leading the NSW government and acting as Colonial Secretary when the 1876 Regulations were devised. Henry PARKES was Colonial Secretary when the previous 1873 Regulations were in force. The new regulations allowed persons between the age of 12 years and fifty years who have paid a deposit of £2; of children between 3 years and 12 years coming with their parents, a deposit of £1; and younger children no charge, to immigrate to NSW.⁵ However from the USA the costs were dearer.

Advertisements were placed in the American newspapers to entice emigrants to NSW. The reason given in the *New York Times* was that many visitors to the Centenary Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 in Pennsylvania had seen the display of photographs showing the topography of NSW and exhibits of produce from NSW and as they now knew more about NSW may have had an interest to go there.⁶ Another factor was the crisis in the USA where many people were out of work due to the financial panic of 1873⁷ and unrest in the mining areas of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.⁸ The NSW government was enjoying a more prosperous economy and had a building program.⁹ The government wanted ‘mechanics, domestics, male and female, farm labourers, stockmen, railroad makers and other labourers’.¹⁰

Applications to go to NSW were placed with R W Cameron and Company, a firm of shipbrokers set up in New York in 1852 by Roderick William CAMERON. CAMERON (1825-1899), born in Lochiel, Glengarry, Canada, the son of Duncan CAMERON (1764-1848), the member for Glengarry,¹¹ had associations with Australia from 1852 when he established a firm of packet ships to Australia, the Pioneer Line.¹² His ships travelled from New York via the Cape of Good Hope, firstly to Melbourne carrying passengers and ‘Yankee Notions’ for the miners at the Victorian diggings. The ships returned via Cape Horn to the USA. CAMERON’S

¹ *State Records NSW: CGS 5317, Board’s Immigrants Lists, [4/5007], Reel 2489.*

² *State Records NSW: CGS 1040, Registers of Certificates of Naturalization, 1876-1903, Reel 134, Main Series of Letters Received, [1/2637], 87/3126.*

³ *State Records NSW: CGS 5317, Board’s Immigrant Lists, [4/5003]; [4/5005]; [4/5002] Reel 2488; [4/5007] Reel 2489.*

⁴ Immigration Regulations, Part 1, *Journal of the Legislative Council NSW, 1876-1878, p873.*

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *New York Times*, Emigration to New South Wales, 7 January 1877, p9, col 7.

⁷ Richard C Wade, Howard B Wilder, Louise C Wade, *A History of the United States*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1972, pp405-406.

⁸ George Brown Tindall, *America: A Narrative History, Volume 11*, W W Norton & Company, New York, 1984, p767.

⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 May 1877, p4, col 4.

¹⁰ *New York Times*, 7 January 1877.

¹¹ Frederick Boase, *Modern English Biography*, Truro, 1908, p586.

¹² *ibid.*

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ships were well set up for the trip to Australia providing comforts for the passengers.¹³ In 1855 it was negotiated with the NSW government to send two ships *Tropic* and *Georges* to Sydney, NSW with assisted passengers. Problems with the provisioning for the voyages and the absconding of many of the immigrants without paying the balance of the fare forced the cessation of this scheme.¹⁴ Although passenger lists exist for these two ships no details other than the passenger names can be found in the inward passenger lists.¹⁵ CAMERON also acted as the New York Agent for Towns & Co, a company set up by Robert TOWNS in Sydney in 1842 and in control of Alexander STUART (1824-1886) from 1873 when Robert TOWNS died.¹⁶ STUART and CAMERON were thus experienced in business dealings together. Roderick William CAMERON, who had been a Representative Commissioner for NSW at the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876, was appointed the Immigration Agent for the Eastern Portion of the United States in October 1876 with a salary of £300.¹⁷ Alexander STUART, at this time, was the Treasurer of NSW and was able to give advice to CAMERON on how to proceed with the emigration from the eastern part of America to NSW.¹⁸

The advertisements placed in the *New York Times* appeared as news items giving the rates of pay for various occupations and cost of renting houses in Sydney.¹⁹

The five ships that were to carry the immigrants to Sydney from New York were ships built in the USA.²⁰ The ships were adapted to carry immigrants having partitions erected to make living quarters for the families, single women and single men. The toilets or water closets for women were placed on deck.²¹ Some of the ships were to return to the USA carrying cargoes of coal so perhaps the partitions were removed before the ships left Sydney on their return journey.²²

The first ship, the *N Boynton* (*Nicholas Boynton*) was to depart from New York on the 3rd February 1877.²³ It carried 95 passengers: 67 single men, 3 single women, 9 married couples and 7 children.²⁴ One death occurred on the trip when James H DEARBORN, an American from Philadelphia, drowned while fishing for porpoise on 18th May, a few days before the ship arrived in Sydney on 22 May.²⁵ The immigrants had been charged £7.10.0 for the trip and the NSW government paid £12.0.0 towards each immigrant's fare. Gratuities for the Master, Surgeon Superintendent and passengers who acted as constables increased the cost from £12.0.0 to £13.11.0 for each statute adult (a child was regarded as half a statute adult), so the ship was said to carry 91 statute adults and the cost was £1,231.15.0. By the time the four ships arrived in 1877 the cost to the NSW government for bringing out the immigrants was said to be £8,470.15.0.²⁶ The amount of £1,200.0.0 (one quarter) had been allowed for the immigration from America out of the £50,000 said by the NSW government to cover Immigration into NSW in 1877.²⁷

¹³ *New York Herald*, 14 September 1852.

¹⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 November 1855; 27 November 1855. E Daniel Potts and Annette Potts explore the early immigration to Australia from the USA in *Young America and Australian Gold: Americans and the Gold Rush of the 1850s*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1974.

¹⁵ *State Records NSW: CGS 13278, Inward Passenger's List, [X92, X93], Reels 401, 402.*

¹⁶ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol 6: 1851-1890, (1876), pp211-212.

¹⁷ *State Records NSW: CGS906, Colonial Secretary, Special Bundles, 1826-1982, R W Cameron [4/811.1], 76/7804 Letter re CAMERON's appointment.*

¹⁸ *ADB*, p212.

¹⁹ *New York Times*, 7 January 1877.

²⁰ *Bureau Veritas*, Register 49, 1877, Reel 56; Register 50, 1878, Reel 57.

²¹ *New York Times*, 4 February 1877; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 May 1877.

²² *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miner's Advocate*, 23 July 1877.

²³ *State Records NSW: CGS 5316: [4/4800], Reel 2140.* The ship was known as *N. Boynton* in the shipping records.

²⁴ *State Records NSW: CGS 5255: [4/4625], Reel 2853.*

²⁵ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 23 June 1877, p10, col 2.

²⁶ *State Records NSW: CGS 906: Colonial Secretary, Special Bundles, [4/488.1], 77/6007.*

²⁷ *Ibid.* 77/6845.

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When the *N Boyton* arrived in Sydney the *Illustrated Sydney News* printed an etching of the ship showing groups of passengers standing on the deck of the ship. It also printed a not too flattering article on how the 'Yankee Emigrants' would fare in NSW.²⁸

The second ship to arrive was the *Sierra Nevada* which departed New York on the 10th March 1877²⁹ carrying 24 married couples, 81 single men, 8 single women and 16 children.³⁰ Only one death occurred and that was the Master's son, Willard KOERNER, 22 months, who died on 2 June 1877 of dysentery and pneumonia. His parents buried him at Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney.³¹ The ship arrived in Sydney on 25 June 1877.³²

The *Annie H Smith* departed New York on the 14th April 1877.³³ It was to carry the largest complement of passengers, 352 immigrants: 53 married couples, 176 single men, 7 single women and 63 children.³⁴ The ship arrived in Sydney on 12 July flying the yellow flag, and was to be quarantined until 21 July.³⁵ An outbreak of scarlet fever on board led to three children's deaths and another two children died of lung infections. A Mrs Catherine McDONALD, 33 years, from Co Galway, Ireland, was to die at the Quarantine Station. This ship was examined for several days by the Immigration Board on its arrival in Sydney as many complaints were made about the treatment of the immigrants en route to NSW.³⁶

The *Star of the West* followed on 31 May 1877 and was to arrive on 11 September 1877.³⁷ This ship carried 162 emigrants: 26 married couples, 74 single men, 10 single women and 26 children. There were 4 deaths on board including 2 from the same family: 3 children died of diphtheria and one adult of chronic Bright's disease.³⁸ Henry TECHNOR, 38 years and his daughter, Dora, 5 years, died leaving English-born Mrs TECHNOR, 27 years, and her two American-born children, Elizabeth, 11 years and Hendrich, 9 years to perhaps join her mother living in Victoria.³⁹ The ship anchored off Garden Island and was visited by a reporter from the *Sydney Morning Herald* who recorded the arrangements for the landing of passengers and the way in which the men were advised on where to go in the country to seek employment by Frank B TREATT, an Immigration Officer.⁴⁰

Before the last ship to make up the five departed from New York and before the remaining amount of government expenditure could be used up on the Immigration from America, problems with this Immigration Scheme were to be raised in the NSW Parliament. The Working Men's Organization led by another CAMERON, Angus CAMERON, the member for West Sydney, protested against immigrants coming to NSW with skills unsuitable for the positions available.⁴¹ Angus debated in Parliament about the costs charged to the immigrants by R W Cameron & Co in New York and as a result R W CAMERON was informed that he should not keep the sum of money paid by the immigrant (£7.10.0) but should count it as part of the amount to assist the immigrant to NSW.⁴² This problem was resolved in the Canadian's favour but the immigration scheme was put in abeyance for several months.⁴³ By November CAMERON was informed by Sir John ROBERTSON

²⁸ *Illustrated Sydney News*, 26 May 1877, p3.

²⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 July 1877, p4, col 1.

³⁰ *State Records NSW: CGS 5255*.

³¹ *NSW Death Transcription: Willard KOERNER, 1877 501962*.

³² *State Records NSW: CGS 5317, [4/5005], Reel 2488*.

³³ *New York Times*, 14 April 1877, p2, col 6.

³⁴ *State Records NSW: CGS 5255*.

³⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July 1877, p4, col 1; 21 July 1877, p8, col 3.

³⁶ *LA NSW, 1877-78, Immigration*, pp783-785. Alexander McDONALD, the husband of Catherine, was one of those who had a specific charge against the Surgeon Superintendent Dr MASTERS investigated by the Board.

³⁷ *New York Times*, 3 June 1877, p5, col 7; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 September 1877, p4, col 1.

³⁸ *LA NSW, 1877-78*, pp789-790.

³⁹ *State Records NSW: CGS 5317*.

⁴⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 September 1877, p5, col 3-4.

⁴¹ *ibid*, 23 May 1877.

⁴² *State Records NSW: CGS 906, 77/6007*.

⁴³ *ibid*, 78/3374.

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that the immigration from New York could continue so another ship, the *Ivanhoe*, was chartered⁴⁴ and advertisements placed in many of the American and Canadian newspapers for assisted immigrants to apply for passage from R W Cameron.⁴⁵ A change of government for NSW meant that the scheme was cancelled and CAMERON's position as Agent was discontinued on 7 January 1878.⁴⁶ However, CAMERON insisted that the immigrants who had already sold their possessions in readiness to travel to NSW could not be disappointed. He was ready to finance the trip himself and claim his costs from the NSW government only after the ship had arrived.⁴⁷

The ship finally left New York on 24 February 1878⁴⁸ carrying 173 passengers: 20 married couples, 86 single men, 8 single women and 39 children.⁴⁹ The *Ivanhoe* was to land in Sydney on 1 June 1878, the last of the ships to bring assisted immigrants to NSW from New York. Three deaths were recorded and registered in Sydney by Dr PIERCY, the surgeon: Michael McCUE, 36 years, died of heart disease; Joseph MAHONEY, 5 days, of convulsions and Mary CAMPBELL, 3 days.⁵⁰ Michael's wife Anne McCUE, from Westmeath, Ireland and four children all born in New York, were also on the ship.⁵¹

The five ships carried passengers from many countries other than the USA. Many were already immigrants to the USA. The largest group was from Ireland (327), then England and Wales (225), Scotland (47) and Europe (58).⁵² Of the 58 Europeans on board the ships, their native places were: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Italy, France, Malta, Poland and Russia. Of the 276 American and Canadian born immigrants 114 were children whose parents were born in Scotland, Germany, England, Ireland, USA, Sweden and Wales.⁵³ The ships also carried a small number of full fare paying passengers.⁵⁴

On arrival the immigrants were offered free travel by rail or steamship to the country areas. The places recorded as destinations for the immigrants were: Parramatta, Orange, Bathurst, Goulburn, Yass, Murrumburrah and Murrurundi.⁵⁵ Although this scheme was only a small part of Immigration to NSW, many interesting records have survived.

⁴⁴ *ibid*, 78/2342.

⁴⁵ *ibid*, 78/4429.

⁴⁶ *ibid*,. 78/2342.

⁴⁷ *ibid*.

⁴⁸ *State Records NSW: CGS 5255, [4/4625], Reel 2853.*

⁴⁹ *ibid*.

⁵⁰ *ibid*.

⁵¹ *ibid*, CGS 5317, Reel 2489.

⁵² *ibid*, CGS 5255, Reel 2853.

⁵³ *ibid*, CGS 5317, Reels 2488, 2489.

⁵⁴ *ibid*, CGS 13278, *Unassisted Passengers Arriving in Sydney, Reels 435, 436, 437.*

⁵⁵ Immigration (reports from Immigration Agent and Others), ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 30 January 1878, *LA NSW 1877-78*. This covered the first four ships. *State Records NSW: CGS 5255, Ivanhoe, [4/4626], Reel 2853.*