**Essays on Mount Crosby - E.S. Grew Cricketer 1893**

Ernest Sadler Grew, cricketer, had a fine story to tell and probably dined out on it many times, but it has been lost a while and awaits our renewed interest. Since Ernest can't speak for himself, I'll work with the many clues his admirers left in the papers of his time.

Ernest was 24 when he emigrated from Birmingham and made his way more or less directly to Mount Crosby where he was appointed timekeeper (pay office) during construction of our pumping station. One afternoon in the summer of '91, Ernest made his way to the North Ipswich Reserve and asked the Southern Stars if he could practice with them. The Stars were immediately impressed and wasted no time in making him a playing member, after which he became prominent in the success of the Stars for a season or so and no-one could think of a finer all-rounder in local cricket.

Though a fine cricketer, Ernest only played one first class game; but "oh" it was such a game that one might give up a long career just to be part of it. Ernest represented Queensland against New South Wales at the Exhibition Ground in 1893 when, for the first time, the inter-colonial match was played on equal terms (eleven each side) and the excitement of its finish warranted 2000 words in the Brisbane Courier.

Owing to bad weather, the first day's play was washed out and the pitch took on a dangerous character. Queensland won the toss and batted; which seemed a mistake after they were dismissed for 100 - Grew making a modest contribution of 3. However, as many old cricketers will tell you, those runs were on the scoreboard and New South Wales had yet to get theirs. When got, the southerners' only numbered 64. Queensland put together a second innings score of 78 (Grew not out 0), thereby setting New South Wales 115 to win.

Given the sticky wicket, the crowd sensed this was too many for the favourites and when, at a quarter to twelve on the final day, the visiting openers strode to the middle, some wags began ill-advised banter suggesting as much. All was much quieter just one hour later when lunch was taken and New South Wales already had 43 runs (though at a cost of four wickets).

After lunch the visitors scored too freely to 65 and noisy spectators, sensing bad things at this rate, roared to the Queensland captain "Try Grew!" and when he was called upon, Ernest Sadler Grew made the difference. On his second ball he had a catch dropped at slips and shortly afterwards he removed in-form batsman Yuill for 27; and things started to go the home side's way. At 9 for 87 the visitors' captain and last batsman, Ikey Wales, cheerfully wended his way to the crease amid much raucous behaviour and soon had the score at 100 and the visitors believing they could win. That was until bowler Ramsey, having spent an inordinate amount of time setting an unnecessary field, clean bowled Ikey, causing thunderous applause and hats and umbrellas to be thrown in all directions. When they landed, Queensland had at last won an inter-colonial match against New South Wales, and Ernest's short but wonderful first class career was over.

Footnote: Ernest Grew played local cricket for at least 17 years after the great match; his first class averages were: Batting 3; Bowling 8.5 (2 for 17 off 48 memorable balls).

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