**Essays on Mount Crosby - George Holt of Chuwar**

It's notable that a lot of our district's pioneers lived until the 1920s, and within that decade the local populace (reflected in the newspapers of the day) began to realise their link with the very beginnings was slowly but surely being lost. When a pioneer died, the papers regularly presented an article about that venerated man or woman, who often could claim to have commenced the civilisation of some parcel of land or other. If a pioneer was lucky enough to grow old, he or she inevitably led an incredible life of adventure and hardship; quite impossible to replicate, because no-one else can ever be the first.

George Holt of Blackwall, Chuwar, was such a person; a pioneer of the district in the truest sense of the word. George was born at Poole, Dorsetshire (England) in 1828. When he was 21, after serving several years as an apprentice baker to his uncle, Robert Cribb, who had a large confectionery business at Covent Garden, he set sail for Queensland in the sailing ship *Fortitude*. For most historians that alone would be enough to secure the pioneering credentials of George, because that famous ship sailed after a pivotal lecturing campaign conducted by Reverend John Dunmore Lang, throughout England, on the prospects of settling in Queensland.

George and his uncle sailed with the first group of Dr Lang immigrants and arrived in Moreton Bay on 20 January, 1849. These were very early days indeed. George became one of the pioneers of the river trade, being skipper of John Petrie's punt *Jenny Lind* carrying goods between Ipswich and Brisbane. The punt *Jenny Lind* was 50 tons burthen, named after a sweet singer of the day, and carried neither sail nor steam. She made her way to Ipswich and back reliant entirely on the tide.

Later George secured his bay and river navigator's certificate and invested in the Bremer Steam Navigation Company, for whom he captained the steamers *Bremer* and *Hawke*, which explains why he was known to many as "Captain". Later he went back to the baking trade for a few years (assisting his uncle in Ipswich) before taking up a piece of land near Blackwall, Chuwar, to go farming. He remained there for the rest of his life, some 70 additional years.

At the time of his death, the very Christian centenarian, Mr Holt, who enjoyed a 'boast' that he could recite all words and tunes in "Hymns Ancient and Modern", had 132 descendents of whom 117 were living. He was in every way a great pioneer - and they aren't making any more of them, you know.

Col Hester