**Essays on Mount Crosby - George Colledge**

George Colledge is generally regarded as the first settler to take up land at Mount Crosby. When you think of that (well, when I think of that) a question arises - given that he had all the land to choose from, what sort of a choice did George make?

Now, if I was George, I would have got something on the river; something where I could easily get over to Ipswich; somewhere with a little fertile soil (heaven knows that's hard enough to find around here). George selected land on the Karana riverbank just below his namesake crossing, which goes to show he knew what he wanted and how to find it.

George was born in Bedworth, near Coventry, in 1816 and came to Queensland (then Moreton Bay) with his wife Elizabeth on the ship Artemesia in 1848, that being the first ever ship to bring free settlers here. The settlers on the Artemesia had been carefully selected for their skills and sobriety and were headed to Moreton Bay because the government wanted them to commence populating the "interior", having found it near impossible to encourage emigrants to leave Sydney once they were landed there.

After landing in Brisbane in December 1848, George worked at the first coal mine opened in the state and in 1854 selected land at Mount Crosby which he farmed for many years.

He became known as a model pioneer and was respected widely, not only in Mount Crosby. In 1908, when George was nearing 93 years of age, the *Queenslander* (magazine) reported that he was a fine advertisement for Queensland's healthy climate and lifestyle, and noted that George had never left Queensland since the day he arrived.

They were able to repeat that story in 1912 when George died at Wallumbilla at the sterling old age of 96, and it is very likely that George was the last surviving of Moreton Bay's first free settlers.

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