

# Thomas Hansen

Thomas Hansen was born at Hohi in 1818, the third generation in turn to bear the same name. Thomas was baptised on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1819 along with his sister Hannah and other mission children by Rev Samuel Marsden when he visited New Zealand for the second time.

Raised beside Rangihoua Pā, Thomas became a fluent speaker of Māori, as did all his brothers and sisters. As a young man, Thomas left the Bay of Islands in the years prior to the Treaty of Waitangi wanting to seek a better life in Australia.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1839, Thomas married an English girl, Elizabeth Huckstep, who had come out on the *David Scott* in 1834. She had been intending to get married, but was jilted when the man did not turn up to meet her ship. She was advised instead to make a match with Thomas Hansen. The wedding was in Sydney, where Thomas more than likely made contact with his grandfather, Captain Thomas Hansen, and his mother's Tollis family.

The wedding took place in the Presbyterian church of St Andrew. Elizabeth signed the register and Thomas made his mark. In the register, Thomas was described as a boat builder. One of the witnesses was Ann Tollis. This indicated that some contact had been made by Thomas with the Tollis family upon arriving in Sydney.

The young couple returned to the Bay of Islands and settled down, but Thomas and his wife remained childless. Thomas was well known for his hospitality and as a horse breeder, and Elizabeth as a dressmaker. They appear to have lived apart for a number of years though, at one stage, Thomas may have shared a house with Elizabeth on the Russell waterfront next door to Bishop Pompallier's house.

When his father died in 1874, Thomas inherited a small 5 acre block of land at Te Koutu where his youngest brother, John, was farming. Thomas also eventually purchased a huge block of land between Purerua and Whangaroa, which was later acquired by Walter Clapham Mountain.

Thomas managed a large farm at Mimiwhangata for about 20 years on behalf of Hamlyn Greenway. Thomas' reputation for hospitality unfortunately was also cause for his dismissal from his position of manager of the Mimiwhangata farm. Stories about Thomas entertaining people and keeping horses at Hamlyn Greenway's expense finally reached Mr Greenway. He set out one day to the farm without warning anyone. Apparently he was seen, and he passed men and horses fleeing along his private road towards the main road.

Thomas moved to a coastal block at Otaha, south of Matauri Bay. He still owned and lived on this farm when he became ill in 1894, then moved to Russell for medical care.

Thomas died in Russell, aged 76, on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1894. He was buried at the Christ Church cemetery. His grave lies close to his three sisters.

Elizabeth moved in with the Mountain family at Purerua, and died there on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1903. She bequeathed all her estate to her niece, Hannah Elizabeth Mountain.

*Researched by Kath Hansen. Written by Eric Hansen*

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