

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

GEORGE PEARSON

Diary, 1880-81

Reel M979

**Mr Nelson V. Pearson
24 Lightwoods Hill
Warley Woods
Smethwick, Birmingham**

**National Library of Australia
State Library of New South Wales**

Filmed: 1978

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

George Robert Pearson (1858-1908) was born in Bristol, where he lived most of his life. After leaving school, he worked as an accountant in a tobacco factory, W.O. Bigg & Co., at Lewins Mead in the centre of the city. (The company was taken over by the Imperial Tobacco Company in 1901.) Pearson suffered from severe bronchitis and in 1880 he was advised to go to a warmer climate to escape the coming winter. His employers paid his expenses. Pearson sailed to New Zealand on the *Lady Jocelyn* as a second class passenger, arriving in Auckland in January 1881. He stayed in Auckland for five months before travelling to Sydney. He returned to England as a third class passenger on the *Chimborazo*, reaching London in July 1881. In 1885 Pearson married (Amy) Clara Osborne (who is mentioned in the diary).

GEORGE PEARSON

Reel M979

1. Diary kept by George Pearson on a voyage from London to Auckland on the *Lady Jocelyn*, 22 September 1880 – 7 January 1881, and on the return voyage from Sydney to London on the *Chimborazo*, 11 June – 31 July 1881. (430pp)

This exceptionally detailed diary begins in Bristol with Pearson's departure from his home and family, his journey to London, and his impressions of the sailing ship *Lady Jocelyn* (captain: George Jenkins). He includes a list of the clothes, utensils and books that he took aboard. The diary refers to the departure from London (27 September 1880), fellow-passengers, Pearson's sea-sickness, chores, shipboard entertainment such as concerts, plays, music and dances, church services, sunrises and sunsets, meals, the quantity of provisions given to each passenger, sightings of dolphins, albatrosses and other sea birds, the slow progress of the ship in the Doldrums, crossing the Equator ceremonies, the sightings of other ships, the first sighting of the Southern Cross, climbing the riggings, Christmas celebrations, rough seas in the Southern Ocean, the first sighting of New Zealand (31 December 1880), landing at Tauranga, encounters with Maoris, disembarkation at Auckland (7 January 1881) and the search for lodgings. At the end, Pearson gives details of the ship, her crew and the passengers and a summary of the voyage, showing their daily position, the distance covered, and remarks.

The second part of the diary begins with the embarkation on the steamship *Chimborazo* at Sydney (11 June 1881), brief visits to Melbourne and Adelaide, reading, church services, the deaths of passengers, Pearson's work in the galley, sighting of the Arabian coastline, the Suez Canal, impressions of Port Said and Naples, and the arrival at Plymouth (29 July 1881). The diary ends when the ship was at the Downs, near the entrance to the River Thames. Pearson again gives details of the ship and the crew and a summary of the voyage.

The writing is faint, but generally legible.

2. Typescript copy of the diary of George Pearson by Nelson V. Pearson, the son of George Pearson. (134pp)

The transcript has been slightly edited, with short breaks in the text, especially in the first half of the diary. Very occasionally, there are explanatory notes.