

The Cooper Family

*This information has been compiled from a multitude of sources by Margaret Peacocke, a great-great-great grand-daughter of Elizabeth Cooper. **COPYRIGHT** 2007 in its entirety.*

Elizabeth Cooper (Bert Le Roy's great-grandmother) is the common ancestor of the Cooper, Paddison and Le Roy families, all of whom were early settlers of Great Barrier Island.

Her mother, Elizabeth (nee Wittington) was a pipe-smoking gypsy. Her daughter told stories of how her mother, as a child living in England, was sent out, with the other children, to the Common (parks) to collect sheep's wool that had caught on the blackberry bushes. This was then spun into yarn and woven into simple items that were hawked from house to house.

Elizabeth Cooper was born in Shropshire in 1822. In 1841, she married a man with the same surname, Joseph Cooper. They had many children, most of whom were stillborn or died in infancy. In fact, they had so many children that Elizabeth could not remember the total number.

From studying passenger lists, it would appear that Joseph travelled to New Zealand with Elizabeth's brother, William (and his wife, two sons – George & William – and a daughter) arriving in Auckland in March 1860 on the 'Blue Jacket'. Elizabeth and her three surviving children are recorded as making an 'assisted' passage on the 'Ballarat' departing from London on 20 September 1865, arriving in Auckland on 6 January 1866. Elizabeth is listed as 'wife of Joseph' and the children are recorded – Ann Maria 19, Samuel 13 and Sarah Jane 9.

The 'Blue Jacket' passenger list records the names Joseph, William and George Cooper amongst other Coopers. We know that William emigrated with his wife, two sons and a daughter and we know that Joseph Cooper did not travel on the same boat as his wife & children. As we do not know the Christian names of William's wife and daughter, we can not verify the 'Blue Jacket' passengers are members of this family. It may just be a coincidence that the names match some of those that we know arrived in New Zealand during that decade.

The Coopers initially lived in Kawakawa before moving to Auckland. We know that they were living in Parnell in 1867 because it was in December of that year that the eldest child, Annie Marie was married at their Parnell home to Edward Paddison.

Auckland Weekly News 21 December 1867

On December 14 at the residence of the bride's father by the Rev J Wallis. Mr Edward Paddison, Farmer, Gt. Barrier, to Anne Maria Cooper, eldest daughter of Mr Joseph Cooper of Parnell.

Edward Paddison lived on Great Barrier Island, (about 75km from Auckland) and it was to Karaka Bay on the western side of the island that he took his young bride.

Edward was born in 1838 in Lincolnshire, the eighth child (of twelve) of Joseph and Ann. In England, he was a railway worker before emigrating to New Zealand.

He made the journey on the 'Mataoka'. in 1859 with brothers, Alfred and William Edlington and George Stark, a journey that took 103 days. These men came to work in the copper mine

at Miners Head on the north-western corner of Great Barrier. They lived at a village nearby of about fifty houses (possibly nikau whare) built on a narrow strip of land between the beach and the bush.

In 1867, the mining company went into liquidation. The Company did not have the money to pay the men's wages but it did own about one third of Great Barrier Island. Many of the miners and tenant farmers left the island to look for work elsewhere, but Edward Paddison, George Stark and the Edlington brothers remained. There are two conflicting stories about what happened next. One is that these miners accepted land in lieu of wages owing, while the other suggests that the men purchased their pieces of land. I suspect that there is an element of truth in both and the money owing became the deposit for the land purchases.

Whatever the detail, we know that Edward Paddison became the owner of 1,000 acres at Karaka Bay (stretching from the Moor's at Mohunga to the north all the way to Port FitzRoy). George Stark spent several days searching before choosing his 100 acres at Whangapoua and the Edlingsons' land was at the northern end of Whangapoua Beach in the area known as Tapuwai.



The Moor's were tenant farmers of the mining company supplying food to the mining village. They acquired the piece of land they had been farming and remained on it until 1906.

The Moor family in 1906 soon after moving from Great Barrier.

Back row from left: Sue & Sarah

Front row from left: Annie, John, Susan & Minnie

Let's return now to Elizabeth Cooper. Sadly, her husband Joseph was killed in 1869 in a logging accident. She remarried. Her husband, Mr Gilberd was older and did not live long. In 1874, when she was 55, she married for a third time. Her husband, George Stark has already been mentioned as coming to New Zealand on the same immigrant ship as Edward Paddison and working in the mine on Great Barrier. So, Elizabeth moved into George's house at Whangapoua on the island's east coast.

In 1879, Elizabeth's younger daughter, Sarah Jane (known as Jenny) married Emilius George Le Roy whose family lived in the same street as the Coopers in Parnell. The newly-weds settled on Emilius' father's land at Port FitzRoy living initially in a nikau whare.

Emilius senior (Emilius Pierre) purchased this land at Rarohara Bay from the mining company. He offered his son the choice of 50 acres that he owned in Grey Lynn, a suburb of Auckland, or 313 acres on Great Barrier. Emilius George chose the latter because the clay soil at Grey Lynn made farming difficult there.

A Deed dated December 1880 records the sale of this land from the Trustees of the Mining Company. An account written by Frances Cooper indicates that the Le Roys were already living on this land when her family arrived in 1880. Family anecdotes suggest that the Le Roys moved here after their marriage – July 1879.

Elizabeth's only son, Samuel also moved to the Barrier, initially living in Port FitzRoy on a piece of land adjacent to the Paddison's farm. It is not clear when he made the move, but he is

recorded as being a "settler of Port FitzRoy" in the 1881 electoral roll. If women had been enfranchised at that time, Elizabeth and all three of her children would have featured on the roll as residents of Great Barrier.

So the Paddisons, Coopers and Le Roys are all descendants of Elizabeth Cooper who lived on the island as Mrs Stark until her death in 1902. Her husband, George was much loved by all of Elizabeth's grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

1881 Electoral Roll

Name	Property	Occupation	Electorate
Le Roy, Emilius	Freehold	Sailmaker	Parnell
Sanderson, Benjamin	Freehold Blind Bay, Lot 148	Farmer	Rodney
Sanderson, William	Freehold Blind Bay, Lot 149	Farmer	Rodney
Cooper, William	Residential Port FitzRoy	Settler	Rodney
Cooper, George	Residential Port FitzRoy	Settler	Rodney
Cooper, Samuel	Residential Port FitzRoy	Settler	Rodney
Stark, George	Freehold Great Barrier, Lot 123	Farmer	Rodney
Paddison, Edward	No Record		

Comments from readers on the Cooper Family.

I am currently researching some of the Barrier families, and found "The Cooper Family" history on your site to have some incorrect conclusions in it.

I agree that Elizabeth and her three children came on "Ballarat" in 1866, but also found that Joseph was in England with them all at the time of the 1861 census (I can send a copy if required), therefore probably did not come to NZ on the "Blue Jacket" with some other Coopers in 1860 and return to England virtually straight away.

I note that someone has said that Elizabeth's brother came on a different boat to the "Blue Jacket", and that they did not know when Joseph Cooper came. My guess would be that Joseph Cooper came by himself on the "Surat" in 1864, but this is only a guess.