

Information Sheet 1

ARRIVAL OF SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Arrival of the Don Juan in 1863
- Arrival of South Sea Islanders in Ipswich
- What did Ipswich really look like when the South Sea Islanders arrived

SCHOONER - DON JUAN

The Courier, Tuesday 18 August 1863, page 5

The schooner Don Juan, the arrival of which was noted in our issue of yesterday, is from the group of islands in the Pacific named the New Hebrides. She brings a number of the natives of those islands to be employed as laborers by Captain Towns on his cotton plantation, on the Logan River, at the remuneration of 10s. per month, with rations, as is currently reported. We understand that there are sixty-seven natives on board, and that one man died on the passage.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 August 1863 BRISBANE, ARRIVAL.

August 15. - Don Juan, from South Sea Islands. The schooner Don Juan, Captain Grueber, left Erromanga on the 4th instant, sighted Moreton light at 3 o'clock on Friday morning, rounded Moreton Island at 8 a.m., and anchored off the lightship at 9 p.m. During the passage she experienced a fine S.E. breeze and fine weather until the 12th

instant, when the wind changed and blew a heavy gale from the N.E. The Don Juan has on board in all seventy-three South Sea Islanders for Captain Towns' cotton plantation. One of the islanders died on Saturday last from exhaustion caused by sea sickness. He was buried on Mud Island. The agreement made with these men is, that they shall receive ten shillings a month, and have their food, clothes, and shelter provided for them.



Source: State Library of Victoria website



ARRIVAL OF SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS IN IPSWICH

It is not known when South Sea Islanders first arrived in Ipswich but it is known that a number were working in Ipswich from 1867 onwards.

The Brisbane Courier of 5 September 1868 reported

that fifty-three Polynesians were working for nine employers in the Ipswich District, seven were employed in pastoral work and forty-six in agricultural work.

IPSWICH IN THE 1860S



Source: Picture Ipswich—Whitehead Studios. This painting was photographed by F.A. Whitehead Studios. The painting was commissioned in 1860 by G.H. Wilson.

WHAT DID IPSWICH LOOK LIKE WHEN THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS ARRIVED

When you look at the city area today, it is hard to imagine that in the 1860s, Ipswich must have been like a country village. If you could go back in time, a number of things would strike you as different or unusual.

The inner city is now strictly a place for shopping and business but back in the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s, many people lived there. Transport was difficult and slow so it made sense to live close to where you worked. Some

people had a small house attached to the side or back of their shop while others had two-storey buildings with the shop on the ground floor and a residence above it.

Many animals could be seen in the streets of Ipswich. Horses were probably the most common, either being ridden or pulling carts and sulkies. There were also many teams of bullocks which were used to pull heavy loads, usually on two-wheel

wagons. The business area would have been very lively. In the mid 1860s, for example, you could have watched blacksmiths, tailors, carpenters, candlemakers, tinsmiths, Photographers and apothecaries (pharmacists) at work.

At night, the town area was very dark. The first street lights were installed in the early 1860s and used kerosene.

Source: Expanded Ipswich Heritage Study, 1997.