

Amelia Mills *nee* Wickham (1828-1906)

Mrs Mills, No.4 Bath Street, Dunedin – 23 Jan 1882

Could you kindly inform me the date of birth of Amelia Mercy Jane Darkes registered at Akaroa about the year 1865 or 1866 as I am at a loss to know her age. Also, could I have the name Mills added to her name. I should like her name to read as follows: Amelia Mercy Jane Darkes Mills. If so, would you kindly add it. A speedy answer will oblige.

Archives NZ R15906767 BDM1 1882/80 Inward Letter to the Registrar General

Amelia married her third partner, John Mills, a sailmaker, in Dunedin on 23 August 1875.¹ The marriage certificate indicated that Amelia was a widow.² Her daughter, Amelia Mercy Jane, was born on 29 July 1866³ and she was the seventh child of George Matthias Darkes, Amelia's second partner. At the time the family were living on part of rural section No.359 Okain's Bay, Banks Peninsula.⁴

Before starting a family with Amelia, George had three previous wives and seemingly no children. He married Harriet Kippin in 1837 at Saint James, Paddington.⁵ She died in 1843.⁶ He married Mary Emma Wells at Saint Marylebone in 1845⁷ and Emma Wood at St Matthew's Row, Bethnal Green in 1852.⁸ There is no obvious marriage to Amelia Wickham. Their first child, George James Darkes was born at Bethnal Green in 1853⁹ and died two years later.¹⁰

George Matthias, Amelia and their three daughters arrived in Wellington on the ship *Southern Cross* from London on 21 September 1857.¹¹ They were some of the 59 immigrants brought out under the Provincial Government arrangements being part of a contract with Messrs Stuart Kinross & Co.¹² Under these George held four promissory notes.¹³ As of May 1863 he still owed £56 3s 4d.¹⁴

The Darkes family sailed for Lyttelton on the schooner *Salopian* on 27 November 1858¹⁵ and in early January 1859, George, by trade a brickmaker, began advertising for business¹⁶. In March 1863 George corresponded with the Canterbury Provincial Superintendent about a timber license at Okain's Bay.¹⁷ In early 1867 a dispute with his mate William Day about the sale of posts and rails led to a court case that resulted in George being strongly censured and having to pay costs.¹⁸

¹ NZ RGO Marriage Index – Entry 1875/2814 John Mills to Amelia Wickham 23 Aug 1875

² Ancestry: Koralewski Family Tree (Dianne Koralewski) – Amelia Mercy Wickham

³ NZ RGO Birth Index - Entry 1866/22717 Amelia Mercy Jane Darkes dau of George Matthas & Amelia Darkes

⁴ Lyttelton Times 13 Apr 1861 Claimants to vote for the District of the Town of Akaroa

⁵ Marriage Register Saint James, Paddington, Westminster – George Matthew Darkes to Harriet Kippin

⁶ UK GRO Death Index Sep Qt 1843 Kensington – Harriet Darkes aged 30 years

⁷ Marriage Register Saint Marylebone, Westminster – George Matthias Darkes to Mary Emma Wells

⁸ Marriage Register Saint Matthew's Row, Bethnal Green- George Matthias Darke to Emma Wood

⁹ UK GRO Birth Index Mar Qt 1853 Bethnal Green – George James Darkes

¹⁰ UK GRO Death Index Dec Qt 1855 St Luke – George James Darke aged 2 years

¹¹ Wellington Independent 23 Sep 1857 Shipping Intelligence

¹² Wellington Independent 23 Sep 1857 page 3 – an account of the voyage

¹³ Archives NZ Reference ACFV 8265 IM-W3/4 Register of Promissory – Nos 1641 to 1644

¹⁴ Wellington Independent 5 May 1863 Resident Magistrate's Court – J. Woodward v George M. Darkesd

¹⁵ Wellington Independent 27 Nov 1858 Shipping Intelligence

¹⁶ Lyttelton Times 8 Jan 1859 Advertisement - George Darkes, bricklayer &c., Christchurch

¹⁷ Archives NZ R22191586 ICPS 488/1863 G. Darkes to Provincial Secretary 5 Mar 1863

¹⁸ Lyttelton Times 21 Jan 1867 Town and Country – Magisterial (see Case File at Archives NZ R25343960)

By mid-July 1869 George had moved to Rutherglen south of Greymouth where he worked as a sawyer¹⁹ and in 1874 he was residing in Revell Street, Hokitika.²⁰ In 1875 his twin daughters married in Victoria, Australia – Jemmima Sarah Handley to Frederick Colthrup²¹ and Maria Georgina Handley to John Williams.²²

Both marriages were registered using the surname of Amelia Wickham's first partner, John William Handley, rather than Darkes, by which their births were registered in Camberwell in South London.²³ John William Handley and Amelia were married at St Giles Cripplegate on 1 September 1845²⁴ and two children followed – Mercy Amelia Handley in 1846²⁵ and John Thomas Handley in 1848.²⁶

In the 1851 Census Amelia and her son Thomas were with her parents at Bethnal Green.²⁷ No trace of her husband or daughter was found. In the 1861 Census Mercy Amelia Handley was with her grandfather, John William Handley, a lacker maker, at 242 City Road, St Luke, Middlesex.²⁸ Mercy remained in England, became a confectioner and didn't marry.²⁹

George and Amelia's daughter, Alice, married Richard Wakelin on 3 October 1877 at Port Levy. Alice was described as the third daughter of Thomas Hanley, Lyttelton.³⁰ Her birth in 1862 was recorded as Alice Seline Darkes³¹ and the surname used for the marriage registration was Handley.³²

On 1 October 1879 George Darkes applied to Waimate County Council for charitable aid for Mrs Webb³³ for her care. George was buried at Waimate Cemetery on 27 January 1880³⁴ and his death was registered under the name of John Darkes, aged 61 years.³⁵

In 1880 another daughter, Harriet Louisa, married Frank Carter in Victoria and the surname used for registration was Handley.³⁶

Amelia Mercy Jane's marriage to John Henry Jones on 1 March 1882 was registered under the name Amelia Mills.³⁷ The marriage took place at the residence of John Mills of Bath Street, Dunedin.³⁸ John Henry Jones was employed as a clerk in the Customs and Marine Department in Dunedin earning £120 per annum.³⁹ In October 1882 he was adjudged bankrupt⁴⁰, described as "an absconding debtor"⁴¹ then "beyond seas".⁴² Amelia Mercy Jane Jones raised a family of four children in Victoria, Australia and died at Timaru in 1927.⁴³

¹⁹ Grey River Argus 13 Jul 1869 Resident Magistrate's Court

²⁰ Hokitika Electoral Roll 1874-1875

²¹ Births Deaths and Marriages Victoria - Marriage Entry 4917/1875

²² Births Deaths and Marriages Victoria - Marriage Entry 2406/1875

²³ GRO UK Birth Index March Quarter 1857 Camberwell – mother's maiden name Wickham

²⁴ Marriage Register St Giles Cripplegate, London

²⁵ GRO UK Birth Index September Quarter 1846 St James Clerkenwell – mother's maiden name Wickham

²⁶ GRO UK Birth Index September Quarter 1848 Bethnal Green – mother's maiden name Wickham

²⁷ 1851 Census Bethnal Green - Class: HO107; Piece: 1540; Folio: 133; Page: 45

²⁸ 1861 Census 242 City Road, St Luke, Middlesex - Class: Rg 9; Piece: 202; Folio: 106; Page: 20

²⁹ 1911 Census 3 Bevenden St, Hoxton, London

³⁰ Lyttelton Times 5 Oct 1877 Marriage Notice

³¹ Ancestry New Zealand Birth Index 1862 folio 407 (not found in NZ BDMs online)

³² NZ RGO Marriage Index – Entry 1877/2703 Alice Handley to Richard Waklin 3 Oct 1877

³³ At the time Dr Charles Louis Webb, M.R.C.S (1852-1896) was in residence at Waimate. In 1875 he married Caroline Mouat at Marylebone, London

³⁴ New Zealand Cemetery Records

³⁵ NZ RGO Death Index – Entry 1880/5455 John Darkes

³⁶ Births Deaths and Marriages Victoria - Marriage Entry 2187/1880

³⁷ NZ RGO Marriage Index - Entry 1882/1017 John Henry Jones to Amelia Mills 1 Mar 1882

³⁸ Ancestry: Koralewski Family Tree (Dianne Koralewski) – Amelia Mercy Jane Mills

³⁹ Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives (AJHR) 1881 H2 p29 Government Employees

⁴⁰ Evening Star 20 Oct 1882 New Insolvents

⁴¹ Evening Star 23 Oct 1882 In Bankruptcy - An Absconding Debtor

⁴² Evening Star 1 Nov 1882 Bankruptcy Notice

⁴³ Timaru Herald 16 Jul 1927 Death Notice and The Age (Melbourne) 23 Jul 1927 Death Notice

Blanche Grace, the last of George Darkes' daughters, married William Mounser in Victoria in 1885. She too used the surname Handley for registration.⁴⁴

Amelia Mills died at her residence in Newport, Melbourne on 29 October 1906 aged 79 years and was buried at Williamstown General Cemetery. "To live in hearts that know her worth is not to die."⁴⁵

Amelia Wickham
M1 1845 John William Handley at St Giles Cripplegate

|----- Mercy Amelia Handley 1846-1923
|----- John Thomas Handley 1848-

Amelia Wickham
Partner George Matthias Darkes 1819-1880

|----- George James Darkes 1853-1855
|----- Grace Amelia Darkes 1855-1864
|----- Jemima Sarah Darkes 1857-1930
| m 1875 Frederick Colthrup 1855-1938
|----- Maria Georgiana Darkes 1857-1891
| m 1875 John Williams 1841-1912
|----- Harriet Louisa Darkes 1859-1945
| m1 1880 Frank Carter 1852-1914
| m2 1918 William Robbins
|----- Alice Seline Darkes 1862-1939
| m 1877 Richard Wakelin 1856-1943
|----- Blanche Grace Darkes 1864-1940
| m1 1885 William Mounser 1861-
| m2 1891 Arthur Disney Joseph Daly 1845-1904
| m3 1907 William Robert Hamilton 1857-1925
|----- Amelia Mercy Jane Darkes 1866-1927
| m 1882 John Henry Jones 1858-1928

Amelia Wickham
M2 1875 John Mills 1832-1910 at Dunedin

George Matthias Darkes
M1 1837 Harriet Kippen 1813-1843 at Kensington
M2 1845 Mary Emma Wells at Marylebone
M3 1852 Emma Wood at Bethnal Green

⁴⁴ Births Deaths and Marriages Victoria - Marriage Entry 4939/1885

⁴⁵ The Age (Melbourne) 30 Oct 1906 Death and Funeral Notices