

**AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT**

**EDMUND PETERS**

**Diary, 1852-53**

**Reel M830**

**Dr J.E.C. Peters  
17 Lind Street  
Ryde, Isle of Wight**

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

**Filmed: 1972**

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Edmund Henry Peters (1820-1904) was the son of the Reverend John Peters (1791-1861), the rector of Quenington, Gloucestershire. In 1834 John Peters resigned the living for doctrinal reasons and moved to Cirencester, Gloucestershire. His wife died in 1846 and in 1852, in a Plymouth Brethren service, he married Mary Bowly, who was a well-known hymn writer. Edmund Peters was a graduate in medicine from the University of Edinburgh. In 1852 he sailed to Australia on the *Windsor* and joined his brother John on the journey to the gold diggings. Edmund spent only a few weeks on the Victorian goldfields and he returned to England in 1853. He later settled in Ryde on the Isle of Wight, where he lived for the rest of his life.

The National Library of Australia holds a journal (MS 7130) of the 1852 voyage of the *Windsor* from England to Australia, kept by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate, Alexander Weynton. Weynton lists Peters as one of the second class passengers on the ship. His fellow-passengers included the Pre-Raphaelite artists Thomas Woolner, Edward La Trobe Bateman and Bernhard Smith.

## EDMUND PETERS

### Reel M830

Diary of Edmund Peters kept on the Victorian goldfields, at Melbourne, and on his return voyage from Melbourne to London, 25 October 1852 – 30 December 1853.

The diary, which is partly written in ink and partly in pencil, begins with Peters's disembarkation from the *Windsor* and arrival in Melbourne. It gives his unfavourable impressions of Melbourne and its residents and describes his departure for the diggings (21 November 1852), life on the Fryers Creek goldfields (near Castlemaine), encounters with diggers, purchases of stores, reports of gold discoveries, his return to Melbourne (7 January 1853) leaving his brother working on the goldfields, his prolonged poor health, the effects of opium treatment, rents and prices in Melbourne, the weather, his detestation of Melbourne, his move to Sandridge (Port Melbourne), lodging houses, his efforts to return to England as a ship's doctor, and the arrangements for his departure. The last part of the diary describes Peters's voyage back to England via Cape Horn on the and mostly deals with his ailments, the kindness of fellow-passengers, and the seas and weather. The diary ends with the ship's arrival at the Downs, near the entrance to the Thames Estuary. In addition to the diary, there is a miner's licence issued to Peters on 7 December 1852.

There are a number of gaps in the diary. For instance, there are no entries between 8 February and 13 March 1853. Dating can be difficult, as Peters usually just gave the day of the week, rather than the precise dates. Part of the first section of the diary (November – December 1852) is written on the blank facing pages, while there are three loose pages at the end of the volume also dating from the same period.