

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

GEORGE SIDDELLS

Logbook, 1855-56

Reel M834

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Note: The images appear from right to left on the film, with the title page at the end.

Logbook of the *Southern Cross*, kept by the mate George Siddells, on the voyage from London to Auckland and while sailing in New Zealand coastal waters, 6 January 1855 – 24 May 1856. (184pp)

The log was kept in a printed logbook, with columns for direction, wind, latitude and longitude. When the ship was at sea, a daily entry usually fills a page, whereas in port the entries generally take up a few lines, or there are no entries at all. The details in the remarks column are mainly limited to the weather, sail settings, tasks performed by crew members, and sightings of landmarks. There are also references to misdemeanours of crew members, illnesses and deaths, food allowances, sightings of other ships, and the loading and unloading of cargoes. Very occasionally, passengers are mentioned, such as the governor Thomas Gore Brown and the chief justice Sir William Martin. There is a list of the eleven crew members at the beginning of the log.

The *Southern Cross* left London on 6 January 1855 and departed from Southampton on 29 March 1855. St Paul's Island was sighted on 11 June 1855 and Cape Otway lighthouse on 3 July 1855, before the ship reached Auckland on 20 July 1855. It subsequently visited Nelson (2 Oct. 1855), Port Chalmers (19 Nov. 1855), Bluff (1 Dec. 1855), Wellington (16 Dec. 1855), Auckland (18 Jan. 1856), Wellington (25 Feb. 1856), Auckland (6 March 1856) and the Bay of Islands (14 May 1856). The log ends with the *Southern Cross* setting off for Norfolk Island.

HISTORICAL NOTE

George Siddells (c. 1825-1907) came to New Zealand in 1855 as the mate on the mission schooner *Southern Cross*. Following his marriage, he decided to settle in New Zealand. Based in Nelson, Captain Siddells was for many years active in the schooner trade between Wellington, Nelson and the Sounds.

The *Southern Cross* was the first in a series of vessels with that name owned by the Melanesian Mission. A 100 ton topsail schooner, it was built in 1855 by Wigram and Sons of Blackwall Yard. It was purchased by Bishop G.A. Selwyn, the Bishop of New Zealand, who visited England in 1853-55 and organised an appeal for funds for the Melanesian Mission. On the voyage to New Zealand it was commanded by Captain George Sustins (1820-1862). Selwyn sailed on the *Southern Cross* on its annual cruises in 1856 and was accompanied by his missionary chaplain, John C. Patteson, later the first Bishop of Melanesia. The ship was wrecked on 18 June 1860 at the mouth of the Ngunguru River in Northland, New Zealand.