

## A Short History of the barque *Dunedin*, also known as the *S. W. Nash*

She was built in 1851 at Harrington, Maine, a small village near the Canadian border, her construction overseen by the appropriately named master carpenter James Sawyer. These bare details, along with her dimensions, are recorded in the *Ship Registers and Enrollments of Machias, Maine 1780 - 1930*<sup>1</sup>.

Her movements over the next few years are unclear, although she seems to have traded under the command of Capt Ellis Wass until at least 1853. In May 1854, when owned by Mr O K Ware of New York, she was “*detained on the African coast because of the large number of empty casks carried, although the ship’s owners declared positively that the casks were for palm oil, not for water for slaves.*”<sup>2</sup> This event occurred at the port of Bathurst on the River Gambia and resulted in a Congressional claim against Great Britain on behalf of R Brown to the tune of US\$20,000 for “*damage by seizure ... for detention of the vessel and subsequent loss.*”<sup>3</sup>

In 1855, when Arthur William Morris and his brother James bought her she was re-named *Dunedin*, (possibly unofficially), a name Arthur used from then on throughout his Journal.<sup>4</sup> Both brothers came from a sea-faring family in Irvine, Scotland, their father and brother Alexander being captains, as was James. Arthur had started a different career, having worked from July 1840 as a shipping clerk at the offices of Thomas Hamlin & Co of Greenock. The three Morris brothers and their sister inherited most of the sum of £964/14/2 from their father’s estate, he having died in February 1854, and we presume this provided much of the capital to acquire the *Dunedin*.

The *Dunedin* was specifically bought with the purpose of providing the two brothers and a small band of acquaintances the means to journey to what was literally the 'ends of the earth' - the colony of Dunedin, New Zealand. As the journal *White Wings* records: “*Another smart vessel bearing the same name traded to New Zealand in the fifties. She was a small barque of 208 tons. She made her first voyage to Port Chalmers in 1856, under the command of Captain McNeur. The vessel arrived on January 23 after a remarkable passage for so small a vessel, of 84 days, port to port, bringing 25 passengers and a general cargo. This was the fastest passage made by any ship from England at that date. The following year the Dunedin arrived at Dunedin on April 18, the passage occupying 97 days.*”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ship Registers and Enrollments of Machias, Maine 1780 - 1930. Prepared by the National Archives Project, Division of Community Service Programs, Work Projects Administration, Rockland, Maine 1942.* Entry number 1064 (page 494): *L.W. Nash (sic)* bark, of Harrington. Built at Harrington, 1851, by James H. Sawyer, master carpenter. 275 7/95 tons; 104ft x 25ft 8in x 11ft 6in. One deck, three masts, square stern, a billethead. Enrolled No. 42, Nov 19, 1851 at Machias. Owners: Ellis Wass 4/32, William H. Wass 4/32, Addison; Stillman W. Nash, 15/32, Moses Nash 2/32, Luther P. Wass 2/32, Alonzo Nash 1/32, C. E. Nash 1/32, Charles W. Ray 3/32, Harrington. Master: Ellis Wass.

**Note:** this entry records the vessel's name as the *L. W. Nash*, which must be suspect, given that the owner holding the greatest number of shares was *S. W. Nash*. This appears to be a transcription error. In all other respects this record matches the vessel we know as the *Dunedin*.

<sup>2</sup> *The United States and Africa: A History* - footnote #35 to pages 37-39, also *The Works of James Buchanan, Vol 10*, pages 17, 69, 70

<sup>3</sup> *Congressional Edition, Volume 981*, p11

<sup>4</sup> *Journal Of Arthur William Morris* (unpublished), pages 474ff.

<sup>5</sup> *White Wings, Vol 1, page 149*: Note that the above arrival date should be 21 January, but this may be a discrepancy between the arrival at Otago Heads vs. arrival in the port itself.

Her first voyage brought to the new town of Dunedin a group of passengers who would truly make their mark on the colony. The following letter by Mr T. S. Hardy was written in 1897 to one of the Otago newspapers, which was co-ordinating a variety of re-unions and celebrations of the establishment of the city of Dunedin. It justifiably notes the many achievements of this small group of travellers.

"Dear Sir,

Waimate 2 Aug '97

*I see in your paper that you are advertising for names of the early settlers in Otago. I wish to state that my father John Hardy, with wife and 6 children of which I am the eldest 'T.S. Hardy' arrived from London by the Barque 'Dunedin' at Port Chalmers on the 21st January 1856, 28 first class passengers all told was the total list. The ship being only 280 (sic) tons and did the voyage in 84 days the record trip at the time. James Green late M.H.R. Waikouaiti (sic) is a cousin of mine and came out with us. You could get all information from him. Arthur and James Morris late of Dunedin owned the ship. The Hardys settled in Tokomairiro. My father was in 1863 Provincial Secretary for Dunedin and member for Toko for some years. 'Gabriel Reid' the discoverer of Gabriel's Gully lived with us and was directed to that locality by my father to prospect for gold which turned out to be the best in N.Z. I drove his 3 months provisions to the gully, with a 6 bullock team, my brother and a man named Brookes joining him. They took out 900 pounds of gold from Reid's claim in 6 weeks. In 1867 the Hardys left Toko for Dunedin and in 1872 left Dunedin for Oamaru. My father died in 1882 and left 13 in family. If I can give you more information shall be happy to do so. Yours truly,*

*T.S. Hardy*

*Passengers by Barque 'Dunedin' Capt James McNeur, from London; arrived 21st January 1856. 84 days out.*

*'Dunedin' owned by Messrs A.W. & James Morris*

*Passengers:*

*Messrs A. W. Morris*

*James Morris*

*David Mason*

*Mrs Mason sister to John Blair*

*John Hardy*

*Mrs Hardy & six children w. eldest being T.S. Hardy*

*Isaac Green*

*Mrs Green*

*Isaac Green Sr*

*Henry Green*

*Mrs Blair & her son John*

*of that limited number Four were returned as Members of the Provincial Council, Messrs A.W. Morris, John Hardy, John Blair, and James Green, the latter also having a seat in the House of Representatives."*<sup>6</sup>

After her second voyage to New Zealand it seems that Arthur may have bought out his brother's share, as by late 1857 he was offering her for sale, while she continued to trade between Australia and New Zealand ports.

Her eventual sale to a Mr James Hemphill of Melbourne on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1858 is recorded with

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<sup>6</sup> Document in the Otago Early Settlers Museum, written at time of various ship reunions in Dunedin, 1897.

her registration in Melbourne as Entry 29 for 1858 in the Port Melbourne *Register of British Ships*.<sup>7</sup> Due to the diligence of the Registrar of the time, a note was made at the top of the Register which gives us a great insight into her history: "*The barque 'Dunedin', formerly of London, registered anew in consequence of a sale dated the 25<sup>th</sup> day of Augt 1858. Made by Theodore Hancock, attorney for Arthur Wm Morris, owner under a certificate of sale dated the 15<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1857*".

This is followed by the official Name of Ship: "*Dunedin, and her foreign name was S. W. Nash*". However, she is also recorded in 1861 in the British registry under the name *Dunedin* (#26373<sup>8</sup>) but it is unclear when this was issued – it may be that this entry pre-dated her 1858 sale and was never cancelled.

Between 1858 and 1863 she worked as an inter-colonial trader and passed through a succession of Melbourne owners, the final transfer occurring early in December 1863. Shipping notes of the time announce her last arrival from New Zealand: "*Arrivals Dec 9: Dunedin, barque, 208 tons, W. Cleland from Bluff Harbour 6th ult. Five passengers. CJ Jenner, agent.*"<sup>9</sup> and a front page advertisement proclaims:<sup>10</sup>

<p>Horses for Bluff Harbour The clipper barque DUNEDIN</p> <p>Having just made a most successful run of eight days from the Heads, landing her stock in excellent condition, will be dispatched again from the Sandridge Town Pier about the 17th inst.</p> <p>Room for about 100 fat sheep on deck. WL Hall &amp; Co, 100 Collins St west. Thomas Jenner and Co, 81 Flinders St west.</p>
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However, by the 17<sup>th</sup> of December, plans have changed. The front page of the *Argus* announces a different departure date<sup>11</sup>, while the inside pages are devoted to coverage of the Great Storm of Melbourne. Here we find the *Dunedin* blown ashore, but there is great optimism for her future: "*When light broke in yesterday, it was seen that the gale had not been victimless in the bay. The barque Dunedin, which was moored on the lee side of the town pier, at Sandridge, had broken from her moorings, and lay broadside on the beach, near the*

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<sup>7</sup> **Register of British Ships: Main register subsequent to Merchant Shipping Act 1854, Port Melbourne.** (National Archives record CRS A7609, Roll 1, entries for 1855-1863); Entry # 29. Also **Register of British Ships: Continuation Register, Port Melbourne** (National Archives record CRS A7610, Roll 1, entries for 1855-1873). Note: the dimensions recorded vary only by odd inches from the US records, although her tonnage is recorded as 208.42, rather than the American 275 7/95, due to the different measurement methods

<sup>8</sup> **The Mercantile Navy List And Annual Appendage To The Commercial Code Of Signals For All Nations. 1861, published by Oxford University** lists her as #26373, signal letters PKVD, 'Dunedin' of Melbourne, 208 tons

<sup>9</sup> *Melbourne Argus*, 10 Dec 1863, Shipping Intelligence (page 4)

<sup>10</sup> *Melbourne Argus*, 10 Dec 1863, Shipping Advertisements, (page 1)

<sup>11</sup> *Melbourne Argus*, 17 Dec 1863, Shipping Advertisements, (page 1). The same advertisement as for the 10<sup>th</sup> Dec, with a line added stating the *Dunedin* would 'follow the *Indiana*', and the date of departure changed to the 19<sup>th</sup> of December.

*Sugar Company's Works. She was light, having only arrived from Otago a few days before, and will be got off without much difficulty.*"<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately the writer's hopes were not realised, and by late December she was a total wreck.

The last related entry in the *Argus* announces her sale:<sup>13</sup>

This Day On Account of Whom it may Concern  
Lukey and Rimmer have received instructions to Sell  
by Auction on Wednesday 30th inst., at two o'clock, on  
the beach, Sandridge, where she now lies, without  
reserve, The barque *Dunedin* with all her masts, yards,  
sails, rigging, anchors, chains, &c.  
The above will be sold in lots.  
Terms - cash.  
For further particulars apply at the rooms of the  
auctioneers, LUKEY and RIMMER, Hall of  
Commerce.

Her end is also recorded in two of the reference works on wrecks in Port Phillip Bay, although they appear to have misinterpreted the entry in the *Register of Ships*.

From *Wrecks of Port Phillip*<sup>14</sup>: the entry for *Dunedin*, states: "Totally wrecked at Sandridge 16 Dec 1863. The *Dunedin*, anchored in Hobson's Bay in ballast, parted her chains in a SW gale, force 7, at 3pm and drifted ashore onto the Sandridge beach. She became a total wreck as all efforts by tugs and salvage gangs failed to move her. The *Dunedin* had formerly been the American vessel *S. W. Nash* and was built in 1851. Purchased for use as an inter-colonial trader, she was registered in Melbourne in 1858.

Particulars: official No. 26373. Built at Harrington, Maine, USA, 1851. 104.3 x 25.7 x 11.3ft, 208.42 tons. Renamed *Dunedin* in 1858 (sic). Owned by Thos. Jenner and Reuben T. Adams."

A later publication *Australian Shipwrecks Vol 2, 1851 - 1871*<sup>15</sup> states: "1863, Hobson's Bay, 16 Dec - barque *Dunedin* had arrived from Otago, NZ 9 days earlier and was preparing to sail in ballast when her chains parted and she drifted ashore near the Sandridge Sugar Works. Tugs and salvage gangs failed to move her and she eventually became a total wreck. Built at Harrington, Maine, USA in 1851 she was registered in Melbourne in 1858 for use in the inter-colonial trade. Dimensions (LxBxD) 104.3 x 25.7 x 11.3. Capt. W Cleland.

Sources: *Wrecks of Port Phillip* p18, Peter J Williams and Roderick Serle, 1964; *Melbourne Argus*, 7/12/1863."

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<sup>12</sup> *Melbourne Argus*, 17 Dec 1863, article headed THE GREAT STORM AND FLOOD (page 5)

<sup>13</sup> *Melbourne Argus*, 30 Dec 1863, 'Sales by Auction' (page 2)

<sup>14</sup> *Wrecks of Port Phillip*, Peter J Williams and Roderick Serle, 1964, pub. Maritime Historical Publications, Melbourne

<sup>15</sup> *Australian Shipwrecks Vol 2, 1851 - 1871*, Jack Loney, 1980, pub. A.H. & A.W. Reed