WILLIAM PINKERTON

William Pinkerton was one of the founding fathers of the Tapanui District.

He was born in 1809 in Cheviot, England. He had been the owner of a run in the Cheviot Hills. In 1838 William emigrated from English to Australia. After ten years on a run near Adelaide and six years at Port Lincoln, William and Eleanor Pinkerton, plus six children, decided to try their luck in the Land of the Long White Cloud.

William Pinkerton bought a brig the *Amherst* and in 1854 shipped just about everything he had to Port Chalmers where they set up a home in Caversham.

William Pinkerton then made several trading trips to Australia bringing back sheep for many of the southern runs. On his last trip he bought back with him a wagon, stores, implements and sheep for himself and landed at Bluff. William Pinkerton then sold his trusty brig the *Amherst* to some whalers and returned overland to Dunedin.

On his way to Dunedin, from the ridges near Otaraia, William Pinkerton could see a valley to the west of the Tapanui Ranges and decided this was the place for him.

In Dunedin William Pinkerton applied for the run. William and his eldest son, who was 12 years old, set out to fix boundaries of their run bringing with them a pack horse and two bullocks. After four days they spent an evening at the Popotuna Run where they acquired directions so they could avoid the swamps. William Pinkerton, son and animals travelled through Waipahi, worked their way around Conical Hill, followed the ridge and crossed the Waikoikoi River just where it comes out of the hills. Pinkerton and son slept there in the open for the night before crossing the Pomahaka River at Tweedies Ford. They travelled further up the valley and decided on where they would have the homestead, in present day Crookston.

After a fortnight William Pinkerton, son and animals returned to Bluff to herd their sheep and cart belongings to their new home, Brooksdale. Before that they spent a week in Bluff where they purchased another two bullocks to go with the two they already had. After several weeks they got the sheep to the run. William Pinkerton and Jack, the person they had hired to help drive the sheep to Brooksdale, left for Dunedin leaving William Pinkerton Junior to look after the sheep. After sixteen days William Pinkerton Senior returned to Brooksdale.

They built a small hut which they lived in for a year while they built the homestead so Mrs Pinkerton and the remaining children could join them. Mrs Pinkerton gave the Homestead the name Brooksdale after a place in Northumberland.

In 1866 Mr Pinkerton and family moved to New Mexico after taking up a huge land grant. He died in 1881 at the grand old age of 84.

William Pinkerton had been one of the founding fathers of West Otago. He opened up land and began farming an area which is still successfully farmed today.