

George Black – Wattle and Daub Cottage (1871) - pastoralist, 58

"Aye... don't expect many smiles. I save those for very special occasions."

Name's George Black. Born in Scotland.

My father wanted me to become a lawyer.

So naturally, the moment he was gone, I boarded a ship for Australia instead.

I've never regretted it.

I've managed cattle stations, crossed country few Europeans had travelled through, survived bushrangers and more than a few close calls.

Then I bought this cattle run.

When I first arrived, this little cottage already stood. The roof was still thatched, so I replaced it with timber shingles. Much more practical. A dry roof makes life considerably more comfortable.

The district was very different then. For thousands of years, the only way to travel through this country has been on foot as much of the land was covered in dense scrub and swamp.

Over the years I've acquired neighbouring land and now I manage nearly 76,000 acres. We've improved pastures, bred quality cattle and horses, and built a successful enterprise here at Tarwin Meadows.

Not bad for a fellow who was supposed to spend his life reading law books.

Now I've reached the age of fifty-eight and find myself preparing for a new chapter.

I'm soon to be married, and I'm building a proper homestead using timber salvaged from the wreck of the Duke of Wellington along the coast.

After all, good timber is hard to come by. And a man who has spent his life chasing opportunity would be foolish to ignore one now.