

About this essay

This essay about Edward “George” Doodson was written by Jennifer Wall in September 2019, as part of the course “Introduction to Family History” run by the University of Tasmania. (For more information see <https://www.utas.edu.au/courses/cale/units/haa003-introduction-to-family-history>).

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Edward “George” Doodson (1825-1884)

Edward Doodson, baker, labourer and miner, endured many challenges and losses throughout his life, both in his native England and in Australia. He was the eldest child of Robert and Ann Doodson and was baptised in Manchester, Lancashire, England on the 1st January 1826.¹ Between 1828 and 1840 Edward became older brother to 4 sisters and 2 brothers, one his namesake - Edward.² Did the eight-year-old Edward, who was called George by his family, pass on his rarely used first name?³

As a young boy in 1830 Edward may have been part of the 10,000 people listening to the bands and watching Stephenson’s Rocket Steam Train race between Liverpool and Manchester.⁴ Edward and his siblings survived the Manchester cholera pandemic in 1832 which killed many, although sadly young Edward died in 1834.⁵

¹ Baptism of Edward Doodson, baptised 1 January 1826, Manchester Cathedral, Church of England Parish Register, Manchester, Lancashire, England, Page 2, No.11, Archive Roll 759, Ancestry.com, Accessed 11 November 2018.

² Baptism of Margaret Doodson, baptised 1 June 1828, Manchester Cathedral, Church of England Parish Register, Manchester, Lancashire, England, Page 263, No.2104, Dm/2/152, Ancestry.com, Accessed 11 November 2018.; Baptism of Mary Doodson, baptised 3 April 1831, Manchester Cathedral, Church of England Parish Register, Manchester, Lancashire, England, Page 161, No.1288, Dm/2/157, Ancestry.com, Accessed 11 November 2018.; Baptism of Edward Doodson, baptised 21 July 1833, Manchester Cathedral, Church of England Parish Register, Manchester, Lancashire, England, Page 367, No.2933, Archive Roll 761, Ancestry.com, Accessed 11 November 2018.; Baptism of Henry Doodson, baptised 3 January 1836, Manchester Cathedral, Church of England Parish Register, Manchester, Lancashire, England, Page 5, No.33, Archive Roll 762, Ancestry.com, Accessed 11 November 2018.; Birth of Matilda Doodson, birth registered Apr-May-Jun 1838, England and Wales Civil Registration Birth Index 1837-1915, Manchester, Lancashire, England,(Index only; no image currently available) Page 462, Vol.20, Ancestry.com, Accessed 2 August 2019.; Birth of Jane Doodson, birth registered Apr-May-Jun 1840, England and Wales Civil Registration Birth Index 1837-1915, Manchester, Lancashire, England, Page 488, Vol.20, Ancestry.com, Accessed 22 August 2019.

³ Headstone Transcription for Edward George Doodson, Cemetery Headstone Transcriptions, 1837-2003, 10 March 1884, South Head Cemetery, Ancestry.com, Accessed 25 July 2019.

⁴ National Railway Museum, ‘Stephenson’s Rocket, Rainhill and the Rise of the Locomotive’, <https://www.railwaymuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/stephensons-rocket-rainhill-and-rise-locomotive>, Accessed 9 August 2019.

⁵ Findmypast, ‘Lancashire, Manchester, Cholera Victims 1832’ <https://www.findmypast.com.au/articles/world-records/full-list-of-united-kingdom-records/institutions-and-organisations/lancashire-manchester-cholera-victims-1832>, Accessed 9 August 2019.; Burial of Edward Doodson, buried 26 November 1834, Burial Register, Rusholme Road Cemetery, Chorlton Upon Medlock, Lancashire, England, unpaginated, No.18068, Film 2355265, 2355266, Findmypast.com.au, Accessed 3 August 2019.

Edward's father Robert, a handloom silk weaver in a once respected trade, was struggling to earn a living due to the impact of the industrial revolution.⁶ Around 1833 Edward's father came under the patronage of Benjamin Heywood, who used cottage properties in Miles Platting, East Manchester, to house, educate and assist working class people, many of whom were weavers.⁷ Edward's family, dependent on the one working loom, lived at Poplar Street, Miles Platting in 1835.⁸

During this time it is highly likely that Edward assisted his father working the handloom.⁹ Edward and his siblings probably attended Sunday School which not only included religious education but reading, writing and arithmetic. He may also have attended evening school with one or more of his parents as Benjamin Heywood encouraged his tenants to become educated and informed.¹⁰

In April 1841, as a 15-year-old, Edward left England with his family on the *Elizabeth* as one of 350 bounty immigrants, shipped by A.B. Smith and Co, of Liverpool, who were looking to improve their circumstances.¹¹ The voyage proved to be traumatic with severe weather leading to the frightened and seasick immigrants being kept below for days; Edward's father was thrown between decks injuring himself and not recovering for many months; and tragically young Matilda died of inflammation of the chest and was buried at sea.¹² The crew treated the family kindly and presented Edward and his older sisters with bibles and testaments.¹³

The family's bad luck continued as they arrived with unprecedented numbers of bounty immigrants to experience the aftermath of drought, money shortages and high unemployment.¹⁴ Sadly Robert and Ann could not afford to keep the family together, but were lucky when Edward

⁶ Edith and Thomas Kelly, eds., *A Schoolmaster's Notebook, Being an Account of a Nineteenth-Century Experiment in Social Welfare*, by David Winstanley of Manchester, *Schoolmaster*, Printed for the Chetham Society, Manchester University Press, 1957, p.8. <https://books.google.com.au>

⁷ Kelly, *A Schoolmaster's Notebook*, p.12.

⁸ Kelly, *A Schoolmaster's Notebook*, p.124.

⁹ Kelly, *A Schoolmaster's Notebook*, p.10 & 119.

¹⁰ Kelly, *A Schoolmaster's Notebook*, p.14.

¹¹ 'Ship News', *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 24 August 1841, p.2; Assisted Immigrant Passenger List for Edward Doodson and family, New South Wales Assisted Immigrant Passenger Lists, 1828-1896, Arrival Date 23 August 1841 on Elizabeth, Ancestry.com, Accessed 21 July 2019.

¹² Kelly, *A Schoolmaster's Notebook*, p.111-112.

¹³ Kelly, *A Schoolmaster's Notebook*, p.113.

¹⁴ John McDonald and Eric Richards, 'The Great Emigration of 1841: Recruitment for New South Wales in British Emigration Fields', *Population Studies*, Vol. 51, Issue3, 1997, p. 338.

and his eldest sister were employed by businessman Thomas Smart at his Darling Point estate, "Mona", two miles from Sydney, and another sister went to work and live 17 miles away.¹⁵ In December 1841 most of Edward's family were reunited when his parents and younger siblings came to live on the Smart property while his father recovered his health.¹⁶



Figure 1 View of "Mona", Darling Point, ca.1872, State Library New South Wales, digital ID: a089851

Edward gained two more brothers by 1845, however both died by 1846.¹⁷ The family suffered more tragedy with the death of Edward's mother in 1846.¹⁸ Perhaps this traumatic time led to 21-year-old Edward, now a baker, spending seven days labour in Darlinghurst Gaol in November 1846.¹⁹

In 1853 Edward, 28-years-old, commenced a new stage of his life when he married 19-year-old Christina Gardner by Special Licence at St Andrews Scots Presbyterian Church in Sydney.²⁰ In February 1856 Edward and Christina welcomed their first child Ann who was named after Edward's mother, and baptised the same day as her cousin Sydney in March 1856.²¹ Edward, still working as a baker, was living in inner Sydney.²²

¹⁵ Kelly, *A Schoolmaster's Notebook*, p.112.; G. P. Walsh, 'Smart, Thomas Ware (1810–1881)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/smart-thomas-ware-4596/text7555>, Accessed 4 August 2019.

¹⁶ Kelly, *A Schoolmaster's Notebook*, p.113.

¹⁷ Baptism certificate for William Doodson, baptised 6 Nov 1842, Registrar of Birth, Deaths and Marriages, New South Wales, 588 Vol, 26A; Death Index for William Doodson, died 1845, Sydney New South Wales, Australia Death Index, 1787-1985, Vol. V184529530B, Index only; no image currently available, Ancestry.com, Accessed 15 Aug 2019.; Births and Baptisms index for John Doodson, born 25 Jul 1845, Births and Baptisms 1792-1981, New South Wales, Australia, FHL Film No.993955, no image currently available, Ancestry.com, Accessed 15 August 2019.; Death Index for John Doodson, died 1845, Sydney New South Wales, Australia Death Index, 1787-1985, V184634831B, Index only; no image currently available, Ancestry.com, Accessed 15 Aug 2019.

¹⁸ Burial Certificate for Ann Doodson, buried 20 February 1846, Registrar of Birth, Deaths and Marriages, New South Wales, No. 349 Vol.31B.

¹⁹ Gaol Description and Entrance for Edward Doodson, admitted 12 November 1846, Gaol Description and Entrance Books 1818-1930, Darlinghurst, New South Wales, Australia, 1846, No.1151, unpaginated, Ancestry.com, Accessed 21 July 2019.

²⁰ Marriage of Edward Doodson and Christina Gardiner, 24 August 1853, Australian Marriages 1788-1935, no image currently available, Findmypast.com, Accessed 16 August 2019.; Marriage of Edward Doodson and Christina Gardiner, 24 August 1853, Original Marriage Certificate, New South Wales, in possession of Jennifer Wall.

²¹ Baptism of Ann Doodson, baptised 2 March 1856, Anglican Parish Registers, Sydney, Australia, 1814-2011, page 90, No.233, Ancestry.com, Accessed 15 August 2019.

²² Baptism of Ann Doodson, baptised 2 March 1856, Anglican Parish Registers, Sydney, Australia, 1814-2011, page 90, No.233, Ancestry.com, Accessed 15 August 2019.

However by January 1857 Edward was a labourer, and had moved his family to Beechworth, Victoria, probably following the lure of gold which was discovered there in 1852.²³ Edward would have seen Beechworth's stone buildings being erected and perhaps even worked on the site of the hospital.²⁴ Sadly in 1857 baby Ann died.²⁵ Later that year Jane Christina was born at Two Mile Creek just out of Beechworth.²⁶ Edward, now a miner, most likely was panning or using a cradle to search for small flecks of gold found in alluvial deposits.²⁷

During 1859 when Edward and family were living at Chinaman's Flat, another gold mining area near Beechworth, Jane died and their first son, Edward was born.²⁸ Edward's brother Henry, his wife Jane (Christina's sister) and their young family were also living in the area.²⁹ By April 1861 Edward and family, which included new daughter Laura, had moved to the nearby mining area of Woolshed where miners had cut through rock to divert the water and get better access to the alluvial soil.³⁰

Edward did not appear to have success as a miner as by May 1863 he was back in Sydney.³¹ Another son Robert Henry was born in 1863 but only lived until 1868, while Louisa 1867, Margaret 1869, Christina 1872 and John 1873 survived to adulthood.³² During the 1860s journeyman bakers,

²³ Public Record Office Victoria, 'Historical maps, Geographic Information Systems (GIS)' and complex mining landscapes on the Victorian goldfields', <http://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/provenance-journal/provenance-2015/historical-maps-geographic-information>, Accessed 18 August 2019.

²⁴ Beechworth.com Victoria Australia, Historic Buildings and Places in Beechworth, www.beechworth.com/visitor_information/historic_buildings_places.html, Accessed 19 August 2019.

²⁵ Death Index for Ann Doodson, died 7 January 1857, Beechworth, Victoria, Australia Death Index 1787-1985, p.185 No.354, Ancestry.com, Accessed 16 August 2019.

²⁶ Birth certificate for Jane Christina Doodson, born 7 July 1857, Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, No. 12563/1857.

²⁷ 'Historical maps, Geographic Information Systems (GIS)' and complex mining landscapes on the Victorian goldfields'.

²⁸ Death certificate for Jane Christina Doodson, died 12 January 1859, Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, No. 2817/1859.; Birth certificate for Edward Doodson, born 19 June 1859, Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, No. 10138/1859.

²⁹ Death certificate for Jane Christina Doodson.; Birth certificates for Charlotte Doodson 1857, Robert Lomas Doodson 1859, and Emma Louisa Doodson 1861, Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Nos. 3945/1857 4956/1859 4877/1861.

³⁰ Birth certificate for Laura Doodson, born 17 April 1861, Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, No. 10590/1861.; Beechworth.com Victoria Australia, nearby towns, Visiting Woolshed Falls, www.beechworth.com/nearby_towns/woolshed_falls.html, Accessed 23 August 2019.

³¹ List of Unclaimed Letters for the Month of April, 1863, *Supplement to the New South Wales Government Gazette*, 21 May 1863, No.92, p.1170.

³² Birth Index for Robert Henry Doodson, born 1865, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, Australia Birth Index 1788-1922, No.357, Ancestry.com, Accessed 18 August 2019.; Death certificate for Robert Henry Doodson, died 15 April 1868, Births, Deaths and Marriages New South Wales, No. 472/1868.; Birth Index for Louisa J Doodson, born 1867, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, Australia Birth Index 1788-1922, No.2480, Ancestry.com, Accessed 24 August 2019.; Birth Index for Margaret Doodson, born 1869, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, Australia Birth Index 1788-1922, No.2009, Ancestry.com, Accessed 24 August 2019.; Birth Index for Christina Doodson, born 1872, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, Australia Birth Index 1788-1922, No.75, Ancestry.com, Accessed 19 August 2019.; Birth Index for John Doodson, born 1873, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, Australia Birth Index 1788-1922, No.1938, Ancestry.com, Accessed 24 August 2019.



Figure 3 N.S.W Operative Bakers' Association certificate of membership, Australian National University Archives, Exhibitions, Forgotten Trades, Bakers, T13-39

aged between 24 and 10-years-old.³⁹ He was buried at the nearby South Head Cemetery.⁴⁰

Edward died intestate so Christina had to go through the process of probate to be granted his estate and effects.⁴¹ The family kept the bakery running for at least another six years with sons Edward and John both continuing in the baking trade.⁴² Edward “George” Doodson, a family man, by being adaptable and flexible through changing and difficult times, built a successful life for his family in Australia.

who worked for other bakers, created the Operative Bakers’ Association to fight for better working conditions instead of working unlimited hours seven days a week.³³ Around 1880 Edward settled in Surry Hills, Sydney, as a baker and confectioner.³⁴

In 1882 Edward’s father Robert died with the funeral leaving from Edward’s residence.³⁵ By 1884 Edward and his family had moved to Watson’s Bay on the South Head of Sydney and ran the Pioneer Bakery on Military Road.³⁶ They owned a horse and baker’s cart and would have delivered bread nearby.³⁷

Just as the family became established Edward, aged 58, died unexpectedly of Cholera Morbus, a severe gastroenteritis often caused by food poisoning.³⁸ Edward was survived by his wife Christina and six living children

³³ Norman Jeffrey, *Pan Pacific Worker* 1.3.1931, cited in Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, ‘The Early History of the N.S.W Operative Bakers Society 1863-1912’, www.labourhistory.org.au/hummer/no-3/bakers-society/, Accessed 20 August 2019.

³⁴ Residence and occupation in Sands Street Index, Sydney and New South Wales, Australia 1858-1933, 1880, Sydney, P.56, Ancestry.com, Accessed 20 August 2019.

³⁵ ‘Funerals’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 March 1882, p.10.

³⁶ Residence and occupation in Sands Directories, Sydney and New South Wales, Australia 1858-1933, 1884, Bay, p.558, Ancestry.com, Accessed 20 August 2019.; ‘Family Notices - Deaths’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 May 1885, p.1

³⁷ Deceased Estate affidavit for Edward Doodson, NSW State Archives, Deceased Estates Index, No.15, Reel 3026, Item No. 19/10196.

³⁸ Death Certificate for Edward Doodson, died 30 March 1884, Births, Deaths and Marriages New South Wales, No. 4620/1884.; Helen V. Smith, *Death Certificates and Archaic Medical Terms*, 2nd edn, South Australia, Unlock the Past, 2015, p.32.

³⁹ Death Certificate for Edward Doodson.

⁴⁰ Headstone Transcription for Edward George Doodson.

⁴¹ Deceased Estate affidavit for Edward Doodson.

⁴² Residence and occupation in Sands Directories, Sydney and New South Wales, Australia 1858-1933, 1890, Watson’s Bay, P.596, Ancestry.com, Accessed 20 August 2019.; Electoral Roll for John Doodson, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980, 1932, New South Wales, Cowper, Grafton South, p.11, No.605, Ancestry.com, Accessed 24 August 2019.

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