



Emily Honeybone and her husband John Bridgford Go to Howick, New Zealand as Fencible Immigrants

Emily Honeybone married John Bridgford on 15th Jun 1844, in Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Marlborough.

Emily was baptised on the 12th January 1823 at Ramsbury, the daughter of Joseph and Harriet Honeybone. Other children of this marriage were: Isabella, 1819, Cornelius, 1825 and John, 1827.

John Bridgford was a Private in the army with the 41st Foot. There is an army service record for John Bridgford, Earthlong Bury [Erthlingborough], Northamptonshire, dated 1823

The couple left London for New Zealand with Major Gray, 40th Reg, (Commandant RNZ Fencibles) and a party of 78 Fencibles (pensioned soldiers), with 63 women and 114 children, on the ship Sir George Seymour, which arrived 26 November 1847.

Passenger List of the "Sir George Seymour":

Bridgford John, Emily, Harriet, Joseph. (Joseph died at sea)

Source: Passenger list from the War Office File 43-89 and the Royal New Zealand Fencibles 1847-1852

There is a birth registration for Harriet Bridgford in the Kettering Registration District, June Quarter 1845.

Other family sources give:

Bridgford, John	b.1803 Northamptonshire - 1875 Auckland
Bridgford, Emily (Honeybone)	d. 1898 Auckland, (remarried 1882 to John Reardon)
Bridgford, Harriet	b.1845
Bridgford, Joseph	b. May 1847 - 16 Sep 1847, died en route to NZ.

The arrival of the ship was reported in the Daily Southern Cross, 27th November 1847

"The Sir George Seymour" arrived last evening with a fourth division of the New Zealand Fencibles, under the command of Major Gray. The vessel left England on the 12th of August, and had had a fine run of 103 days. – We congratulate the Pensioners on the arrival of their gallant Commander – they will no longer want a friend able and willing to attend to their interest – and who comes with the latest and fullest instructions from Her majesty's Government in all that concerns them – information in which, to all appearances, we have hitherto been very deficient."

Source: National Library of New Zealand



The Sir George Seymour

Emily (nee Honeybone) and John Bridgford had other children in New Zealand:

William, 9 February 1849, born to John and Emelia nee Honeybone, Fencible, Howick.
George Bridgford, 17 April 1851, born to John and Emily nee Honeybone, Fencible, Howick.
Sarah Elizabeth, 7 July 1857, born to John and Amelia nee Honeybone, Fencible, Howick.
Alfred Bridgeford, 1854, Father John, Mother Emily. Ref No. 1626 - **Source: NZ BMD index**

Death, Bridgford - On September 14, at his residence, North Street, Newton, John Bridgford, late of Rettering [Kettering], Northamptonshire, and late of H.M. 41st Regiment, aged 72 years. The funeral will leave his late residence at 3.30 p.m. tomorrow, the 16th instant. Friends, please accept this invitation.

Auckland Star, 15 September 1875

Death of John Bridgeford 1875, age 72 , Reg No: 4240 - **NZ BMD Indexes**
Marriage of Emily Bridgeford to John Reardon, 1882 - **NZ BMD Indexes**
Death of Emily Reardon 1898 aged 78, Ref No: 1864 [i.e. born c1820) - **NZ BMD Indexes**

Who Were The Fencibles

Fencible comes from the word “defencible” meaning “capable of defence”. Howick was founded by Governor Captain George Grey as part of a chain of villages around the southern aspect of Auckland to protect Auckland from possible attack. Grey requested troops, but Earl Grey (later Lord Howick) as Secretary of State for the Colonies (1846-1852) decided to send retired soldiers as members of the Royal New Zealand Fencible Corps.

The Fencibles had served in the wars of Britain in the 1830s and 1840s. To emigrate to NZ under the fencible scheme, retired soldiers were required to be under 48 years of age and of ‘good character and industrious habits’. These soldier-settlers were offered a free passage to New Zealand with their wives and families, a cottage and an acre of land. Providing they performed certain military duties - including compulsory church parade on Sundays - their cottage and acre would be theirs after a seven-year term of service. They received a small pension and were required to find gainful employment in addition to their ‘fencible’ occupation.

The role of the retired soldiers was to protect Auckland from possible attack. Between 1847-1854 eleven ships brought 721 fencibles and their families, (a total of 2, 500) which nearly doubled the population of Auckland at that time.

Source: The Fencible Organization, New Zealand

A Fencible cottage - the Fencibles built these themselves.→

