

Information Sheet No. 23



Heritage Services

Geraldton Regional Library

FRANK GREEN – “From 1s 6d to Big Store Proprietor”

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| 1875, Aug 9 | - Born in Yoxhall, Staffordshire, England. |
| 1891, May 15 | - Arrived in Albany, Western Australia. |
| 1891-1895 | - Worked on a variety of jobs around the Victoria District and on the Goldfields. |
| 1895, Sep 16 | - Commenced business as a carrier at Geraldton. |
| 1898 | - Returned to England to marry Ellen Cooper of Tamworth, Staffordshire. |
| 1904 | - Shop assistant at Geraldton for Robert Darling. |
| 1907-1947 | - Owner of The Big Store, Geraldton. |
| 1917-1919 | - Mayor of Geraldton. |
| 1923-1925 | - Mayor of Geraldton. |
| 1924 | - Purchased Narra Tarra, Chapman Valley. |
| 1946 | - Appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire. |
| 1960, Jun 9 | - Died in Geraldton, WA. |



Frank Green. Photograph courtesy of Geraldton Regional Library, P 248.

Family legend tells that the young Frank Green arrived in Albany with only one shilling and sixpence in his pocket. Full of confidence for his future in this new land, the money was spent on a meal, enabling him to search for work on a full stomach. Frank gained much experience working in a variety of jobs around the State, before moving to Geraldton in 1895 to commence a carrier business with his brother Tom. In 1898, Frank returned to England to marry his sweetheart. He easily found work in the “Old Country”, but the lure of the “New Country” was too strong, and Frank accepted a position with the WA Railway Department at Cue. In 1904 he was offered a position as an assistant in R Darling’s Store in Durlacher

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Street. Frank quickly rose to the position of manager, and then in February 1907 became the part-proprietor, with Douglas Darling, and not long after, sole proprietor. The store prospered and was moved to larger premises in central Marine Terrace purchased from JG Smith. The double-fronted, one-storey structure contained one of the largest businesses of its kind north of Perth, selling groceries, fresh produce, wine and spirits, ironmongery, glassware, crockery, drapery, footwear, etc.

Frank Green was an advocate of local products, a supporter of the Geraldton Agricultural Society, served as Chairman of the Directors of the Victoria District Flour Milling Company for many years and, whilst Mayor of Geraldton, was one of the first to encourage tomato growers to the area, by allowing a Japanese farmer to rent council land at Glenfield.

He also assisted in the establishment of the Geraldton Maternity Hospital, and was patron of the Geraldton Sub-Centre of the St John Ambulance Association for twenty-six years.

A Warden and Treasurer of the Anglican Church, Frank provided the coloured stone for St George's Church, Bluff Point, from his property, Narra Tarra.

As patron, and one of the founding members of the Geraldton Bowling Club, Frank Green was asked to present a speech at the Club's Jubilee Carnival on 9 June 1960. Before commencing, he called for a half-minute silence as a tribute to the many bowlers who had passed on. Only minutes after completing his speech Frank Green himself passed away on the site.

References

*Text taken from **Geraldton: 150 Years, 150 Lives**, Local Studies Department, Geraldton Regional Library, 2001, p. 79.*

Copies are available from the Library, 37 Marine Terrace, Geraldton (PO Box 101, Geraldton, WA, 6531) for \$27.50 (plus \$6.50 postage and handling).

