

## George Albert Chapman



George Albert Chapman and family. Photo courtesy of Marilyn Boyd

George Albert Chapman was born in Raymond Terrace and for unknown reasons he left the family home in 1880, aged 23, after the death of his father Charles and walked up the beach to the Wallamba looking for a place to settle. Originally, he set up a business as a butcher in Failford, delivering meat by boat to customers on the Wallamba as far up as Coolongolook and on to Wallis Lake and its tributaries. In 1882 he acquired a 40 acre parcel of land on the banks of the river near Tuncurry, opposite what is generally now known as Chapman Island which he later also acquired. His brother John thinking to move from Raymond Terrace purchased 40 acres adjoining George's holding and built a family home.

However, John's wife was disillusioned with living so remotely, and they subsequently left the district, selling their home and property to George. Methodically George proceeded to dismantle the home brother John had built and piece by piece conveyed it across the river and reconstructed it on Chapman Island (then known as Gowick).

He met and married Caroline Croker of Wingham and continued his butcher business, killing and dressing his cattle on his 40 acre lot which became known as "Cutting Point." He was a strong rower and possessed a red cedar boat which moved swiftly in the water enabling him to deliver fresh meat for the folk who lived on the islands or river banks on the way to Nahiack. His second trip each week meant he had to row back towards Tuncurry before branching off to Coolongolook as the river was not able to be navigated beyond Nahiack. After 100 miles of rowing he would wash out the light red cedar boat and winch it up to dry.

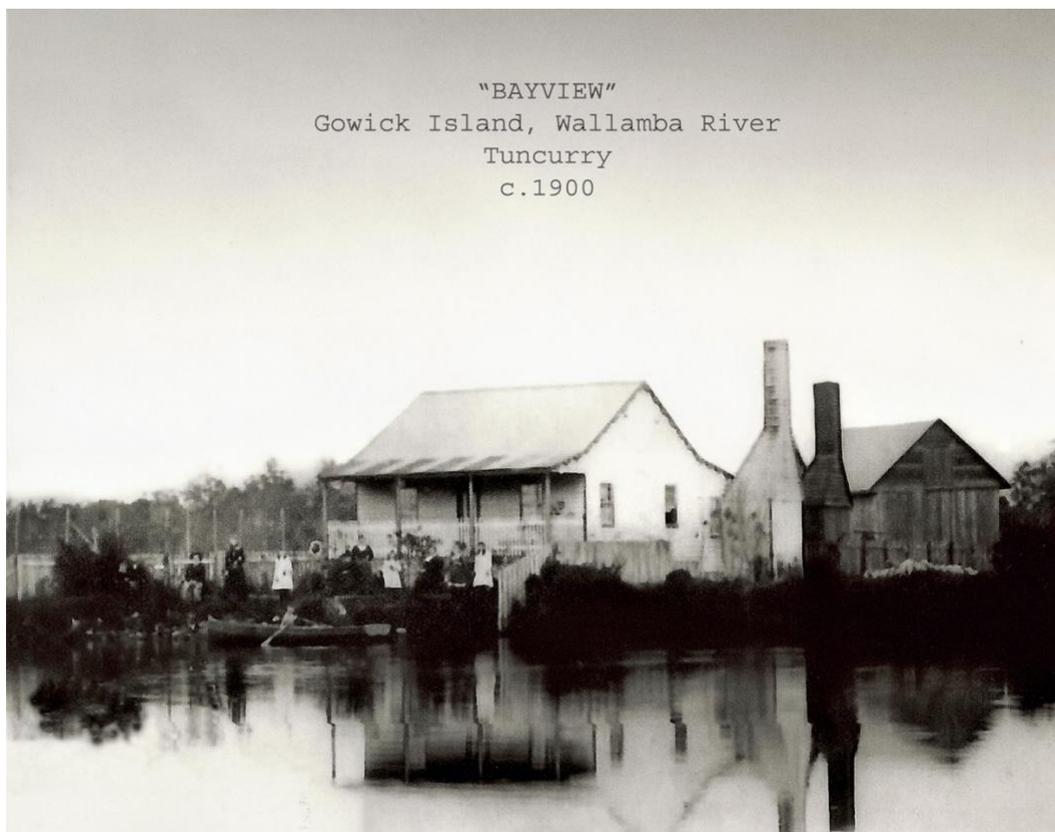
After rowing to Coolongolook one Saturday morning George needed to deliver an order and collect provisions from Forster for his family of four girls, Maud, Margaret, Ethel, Mary and his only son Albert George. While there, he learned of a rowing race to be held at Forster in the afternoon, so he hastily rowed back to Chapman Island for lunch and returned to Forster to win the race off scratch.

Meanwhile George's son Albert, although only 10 years old was winning rowing races at the Cape Hawke Regatta, where on one occasion he faced disqualification when he was charged with using a sliding seat. It was in fact the polished seat of his father's red cedar boat. Albert at this time was working at the Mill in Failford rowing the distance twice a day 6 days a week.

Unfortunately, George's wife Caroline passed away in 1915 and it was about this time that Albert approached his father about selling his two 40 acre blocks and Chapman Island to him as he wished to increase the dairy herd, this was negotiated at £5 per month. George then purchased another property known as Shalimar and remarried Lilly Young in 1924. Once again George sold his property of 188 acres now known as Scribbly Gum Estate to his son Albert who in turn sold it to his son Mervyn prior to his return from the city with his family after WWII manufacturing work. George passed away in 1942. I am George's great granddaughter and am honoured to tell his story.

Author: Marilyn Boyd

Based on information from the "Rowing Chapmans" story from Great Lakes Museum.



George rebuilt his brother John's House on Chapman Island (once called Gowick Island). Photo courtesy of Marilyn Boyd.



"Bayview House" circa 1979. Photo courtesy of Marilyn Boyd.