

Trading the Continent: The Aberdeen White Star Line



Aberdeen and Commonwealth Line

One of the pioneers of trade doing business in the American Colonies was George Thompson of the Aberdeen Clipper Line.

The history of this celebrated firm dates back to the year 1825, when its first representative, a clipper brig of 116 tons named the Childe Harold, was sent afloat. It may safely be said that from that hour the Aberdeen White Star Line has never looked back. From the first it earned a reputation for enterprise and good management.

Amongst its fleet were numbered some of the earliest clipper ships built in the United Kingdom, ships whose records were worthy to rank with those of the celebrated Black Ball and White Star Lines; and which their maintenance and upkeep had little to learn from such aristocrats of the sea

as the Blackwall frigates. Until the discovery of gold in Melbourne, Australia, the green clippers ran regularly to Sydney, but when all the world began to head for the gold region, it was only natural that some of the Aberdeen White Star ships should be put on the Melbourne run, and from that date the little flyers from Aberdeen were as well known in the bay of Hobson as Sydney Cove. All of the ships were built in the yard of Walter Hood of Aberdeen, in whose business Messrs. Thompson held a large interest, and were all designed by Walter Hood with the exception of the celebrated Thermopylae.

The founder of the line, George Thompson, was joined in 1850 by his son-in-law, the late Sir William Henderson. Later on, the sons of Mr. Thompson, Stephen, George and Cornelius, all came by turns into the partnership. Notice of flyers became common in the Sydney Harbor or Bay of Hudson.

" There is a jaunty White Star Liner, and her decks are scrubbed and clean

And her tall white spars are spotless, and her hull is painted green.

Do you smell the smoky stingo? Ech! ye will ken the Gaelic lingo

Of the porridge-eating person who was shipped in Aberdeen.