

**ACTIVITY:** Fell into the water.

**CASE:** [GSAF 1853.00.00.d](#)

**DATE:** 1853?

**LOCATION:** The accident took place in Moreton Bay, 45 km from Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

**NAME:** James Hexton

**DESCRIPTION:** He was a native of Waterford, Ireland, and the first pilot in Moreton Bay.


**NARRATIVE:** In 1825, Amity Point was set up as Moreton Bay's first pilot station. While on duty, Pilot Hexton accidentally fell into the water and was killed by a shark.

**INJURY:** Fatal

**SOURCES:** State Library of Queensland; The Brisbane Courier, Thursday January 28, 1909

### **History Recalled.**

Amongst the pensions approved by the Home Secretary this week was one to James Hexton, 76 years of age, and who has lived all his life in Queensland. Hexton is said to be the first male white child born in Queensland, and he saw the light in the home of Dr. Ballow, whose house stood on the site of the present Supreme Court. Hexton's father was a lieutenant in the Royal Navy; he fought under Nelson, and was the first pilot in Moreton Bay, but while on duty he accidentally fell into the water, and was eaten by a shark. Dr. Ballow lies buried in the cemetery at Dunwich, and on his tombstone is an eloquent epitaph, showing how he met his death in the fearless discharge of his duty while attending an immigrant ship quarantined in Moreton Bay. A fatal outbreak of typhus fever had occurred, and carried off more than 25 passengers, and the ship's surgeon. Dr. Ballow, who was the Government Medical Officer, went to Moreton Bay to take the place of the dead surgeon on the ship, and became a victim of the disease.



## THE OLDEST WHITE NATIVE.

### DEATH OF MR. JAMES HEXTON.



HEXTON, JAMES.—On February 12, 1914, at Brisbane General Hospital, age 81½ years. R.I.P."

Very few who read this simple announcement in Tuesday's "Courier" recalled that the oldest living white native of Queensland had passed away. Mr. James Hexton was born in Brisbane on September 25, 1832, in a little cottage then occupied by his parents on the site of the present General Post Office. Although the first white boy he was not the first white child born in Brisbane, for Sarah M'Cann, whose father was a colour-sergeant in the 17th Regiment, was born a few months before him. This child afterwards became Mrs. Graham.

and has now been dead for some years. The late Mr. Tom Petrie, of Murrumba, North Pine, was born some time after Mr. Hexton, so that the latter was the oldest living native of the State. Mr. Hexton's father was a native of Waterford, Ireland, and his mother was born in Liverpool, England. The former had previously been a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and fought under Nelson, receiving a severe wound in the head at Trafalgar. Part of his skull had to be removed, and replaced by a silver plate, which he wore to the day of his death. After serving with Nelson he was on a British man-o'-war (his son thought the Rattlesnake), which formerly brought convicts to Australia. Finally, getting tired of a seafaring life, he decided to settle down in the colony and was appointed by the New South Wales Government as the first pilot in Moreton Bay, at Amity Point. The pilot's crew consisted of prisoners, who were selected for their good character. The blacks were numerous and hostile, and in order to protect the pilot and his staff a military station was established at Dunwich. The guard was changed every two or three days, but the soldiers had to walk from Dunwich to Amity, and from the latter place to the former. One of the pilot's children was born in England, another in New South Wales, and the third—James—as stated, was born in Brisbane. When the youngster was taken down to Amity he proved his venturesome spirit by being washed out to sea several times on the surf. This so frightened his mother that she decided to send him up to town to the care of Dr. Ballou, who was then Government Health Officer and resident surgeon of the Brisbane Hospital. A very interesting article on Mr. James Hexton's reminiscences of the Moreton Bay settlement was published in the jubilee issue of the "Queenslander" in 1909.

*The Queenslander, February 21, 1914, page 38*

**INTERSTATE ESTATES.**—The half yearly statement of the Curator of Intestate Estates, after detailing the sums received and paid on account of the intestate estates of persons formerly connected with these districts, gives the following as the balances still at the credit of those estates on the 30th of June last; Thomas Monk, killed on the Richmond, by the falling of a tree, £55 16s 6d; W. H. De Renzy, late of Surat, all funds paid out; James O'Neill, late of Gayndah, £110 15s 10d; William Allen, late Surgeon of the *Argyle*, £119 16s; James McColl, late of Moreton Bay, £199 6s 11d; Henry Homes, late chief mate of the *Argyle*, £11 2s 9d; John Sparkes, late of Brisbane, 3s 8d; James Rourke, late of Moreton Bay, £312s 6d; Peter Conroy, murdered by blacks in the Burnett District, £1 13s 1d; James Hexton, late Pilot at Moreton Bay, all funds paid out; Roderick Mitchell, late of Surat, all funds paid out; James S. Simpson, late of Richmond River, £77 9s 10d; George N. Street, murdered by blacks in the Wide Bay district, £73 1s 2d.

*The Moreton Bay Courier, August 13, 1853, page 3*