

The founder of that family was William Cook, a ship's carpenter and later a shipwright, who had served in the Navy but who in 1823 had been landed sick from an unnamed vessel at the Bay of Islands. Here he settled at the future site of Russell and married a Maori girl named Tira who is alternatively described as a niece or a sister of the Chief Tamati Waka Nene who settled upon the couple some land at Hawenga in Pomare Bay, Kororareka.

In 1825 their first son G. H. (George) was born at the Bay of Islands, but early in 1826 William Cook and his family, together with a small party of sawyer-shipwrights, joined Captain William Stewart of the schooner *Prince of Denmark* in a venture to establish a small ship-building community at Port Pegasus, Stewart Island, on behalf of Stewart's principals, the Asquith brothers of London.

At Port Pegasus, where work was started upon the construction of a small schooner, the small community was abandoned by Stewart who embarked upon a separate ship-building venture at Hokianga. The sealer John Boulton, who visited Port Pegasus late in 1826, reported that they were living in a state of some privation and intended to leave when the schooner was completed. Another son, H. F. (Bert) Cook, was born at Port Pegasus in 1827 and two years later William Cook first ventured into whaling when he joined Peter Williams who established the first southern whaling station at Preservation Inlet in 1829. However, probably in 1833, Cook and his family left the south and after a short sojourn in Sydney they returned to the Bay of Islands.

The fortunes of the Cook family in the period following their return to the Bay of Islands is only uncertainly recorded. It was probably shortly after their return that another son, W. H. (Willie) was born and family papers indicate that he was followed by another son named Joseph, who married Mary, daughter of Robert Day. Day appears to have landed with William Cook in 1823 and is described as his partner, both at the Bay and later as a member of the Port Pegasus community.

William Cook senior appears to have taken up ship-building at the Bay on his return and at least for a period in the later sixties his son George was described as a publican at Russell. This, however, must only have been a temporary occupation, for later in the same decade George Cook is discovered serving in the Auckland built schooner *Sea Breeze* in the trade to the Pacific Islands, and in the seventies had taken to whaling as the Mate of the New Zealand whaling vessels *Crusader*, *Othello* and *Splendid*—the latter vessel deriving some fame as that in which the author Frank Bullen served and which he is said to have used as his model for the *Cachalot* in his *Cruise of the Cachalot*.

This was the family which, towards the end of the nineteenth century, turned to shore whaling in Whangamumu harbour, just below Cape