

Charles Burton Hoare (1833-c1879), a Mancunian in Paradise¹
Keith Giles

For many 19th century residents of the English cotton-manufacturing town of Manchester, America proved an irresistible lure, but despite the proximity of the port of Liverpool, not all emigrants were fated to travel there by the most direct route. The Hoare family of Hulme (a Manchester suburb), for example, took over 40 years and travelled three-quarters of the way around the world to reach their destination.

In 1861 Charles Burton Hoare was a 28 year-old packer living at 15 Camden Street, Hulme, with his family – his wife Sophia (nee Johnson)², and their daughters Elizabeth (aged 7), Louisa (5), and Octavia (3).³ They shared the house with Charles's mother Elizabeth, and his two younger brothers Walter and William.⁴ Quite what triggered their decision to emigrate may never be known – perhaps it was their cramped living conditions, or more likely the Cotton Famine – an economic slump in the north of England exacerbated by the blockade of raw cotton exports from the Confederate States during the American Civil War. At any rate, in March 1863, Charles, Sophia, and their young family boarded the ship *Telegraph* at London Docks, and after an eventful journey of 96 days disembarked at Auckland, New Zealand.⁵

¹ I am grateful to M Thierry Chauvet, and Mlle Viviane Fayaud, both of French Polynesia, for their assistance and for additional information.

² The marriage of Charles Burton Hoare to Sophia Johnson was registered in the June quarter of 1853 at Manchester, vol. 8d, p179.

³ 1861 census RG9/2897/fo.49r. Octavia's age should probably read 3 months - her birth was registered at Chorlton (Manchester) in the March quarter of 1861, and she was baptised at Manchester Cathedral on 21 December 1862 (*International Genealogical Index* [IGI]).

⁴ The 1851 census for 15 Camden Street, Salford (HO107/2221/fo.353v) shows Charles's father as Deane Hoare (b. Ireland c1796), in all likelihood the Deane Wallace Hoare who married Elizabeth Dalzell at St Peter's Church, Liverpool, on 12 April 1830 (IGI), and who died in Manchester in 1857. Charles was probably named for his uncle, Dr Charles Burton Hoare, an army surgeon who died in Calcutta on 22 March 1833 (*Ancestral File* T16L-M9), the same year as Charles's birth. The family were living in Bank Street, Salford in 1841 where, confusingly, Charles appears as Charles Henry Hoare (HO107/586/10/fo30v).

⁵ *Southern Cross*, 7 July 1863, p2. The journey was eventful in that one of the passengers made repeated attempts to commit suicide.

At some point over the next couple of years Charles Hoare established a photographic partnership under the name of Hoare & Wooster. The partners' studio - the Royal Photographic Rooms - was at the corner of Vulcan Lane, but fronted onto Queen Street, Auckland's main thoroughfare, above Somerville's boot shop and the Misses Thick, dressmakers.⁶ Hoare's partner has yet to be positively identified, but could have been Thomas Wooster an arrival from Sydney on the *Kate* in September 1863, or perhaps Thomas's brother Charles, who landed at Auckland in November 1863, having voyaged out from England on the *Helvellyn*.⁷ The partnership had dissolved by June 1866 when Hoare opened a studio in his own name in Vulcan Lane, from where he offered coloured cartes-de-visite at 12 shillings a dozen, and views at "equally moderate" prices, although "For a short time only".⁸

By February 1868, Hoare was in Tahiti, where he advertised his studio in the weekly 4-page *le Messager de Tahiti*:

"The Cabinet Portrait.

As patronised by the Crowned Heads of Europe –

Never before introduced in Tahiti –

Cartes de visite 4 dollars for 6 –

A choice selection of views always on hand; price half a dollar each copy -

Charles BURTON HOARE, photographer

College Street, Papeete.

⁶ *Southern Cross*, 1 January 1866, p1 & 18 June 1866, p1; negatives 4-406, 7-A9260 Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries. 4-406 is dated to 1865.

⁷ See *Alexander Turnbull Library New Zealand Biographies*, 1983, vol. 1, p67, and Auckland City Libraries, *Obituary Scrapbook*, vol. 35, p10.

⁸ *Southern Cross*, 18 June 1866, p1, and 21 July 1866, p1. *Mitchell & Seffern's Directory of the City and Suburbs of Auckland for 1866-7* (published in November 1866), pp5,23, incorrectly lists Hoare & Wooster in Vulcan Lane, but substitutes Charles Hoare under "Photographic Artists" in the "Trade and Professional" section on p51.

N.B: lessons given in the art on moderate terms."⁹

In June 1868 he began a tour of the neighbouring islands, visiting the îles Sous-le-Vent (Leeward Islands), and probably taking some of the first ever photographs of Makatea atoll in the Tuamotu archipelago.¹⁰ At the beginning of September he was back in Papeete, urging patrons to take advantage of his studio as his stay on the island was to be short. It was not until May 1869, however, that he finally advertised his intention to leave Tahiti, inserting a list of discounted prices in *le Messager*. But if he did depart, it must have been only a temporary absence, as in February 1870 he was again in Papeete, at the rue de la Petite-Pologne, opposite l'école des Soeurs, in a house that had once belonged to a Mr Manson.¹¹

In January 1872 *le Messager* reported that Hoare was leaving for San Francisco on the brig *Wanderer*. Rather surprisingly, his name did not appear on the passenger list, and we are left to speculate if he actually made the trip or changed his mind at the very last minute. Whether he did or not seems academic: periodic references to him appeared in the Tahitian press between 1872 and 1876, and his photographs of Queen Pomare IV and her son (the future Pomare V) probably also date to this period.¹² What became of him after 1876 is unknown. His death is not recorded in Tahiti, and in 1879 the "veuve [widow] Hoare" received a wooden packing case of photographic material from San Francisco via the *Percy Edward*.¹³ Sophia was now running her husband's studio in Papeete, and this may simply have been photographic requisites imported in the course of her business. It is

⁹ Patrick O'Reilly, *Les photographes à Tahiti et leurs oeuvres, 1842-1962* (Paris, 1969), p24; Jean-Yves Tréhin, *Tahiti: l'Éden à l'épreuve de la photographie: une histoire de la photographie à Tahiti et dans les îles, 1859-1940* (Paris, 2003), p75.

¹⁰ Tréhin, p75.

¹¹ O'Reilly, p24; Tréhin, p75.

¹² O'Reilly, pp24-5; Tréhin, pp75, 203, M Thierry Chauvet, personal communication.

¹³ O'Reilly, p25; Tréhin, p75.

tempting to infer, however, that the box contained Charles's effects, and that he died some time between 1876 and 1879, probably in the USA.

Sophia operated the *Atelier Hoare* for almost 30 years, acquiring an excellent reputation and a large clientele. As "official photographer to the [Royal] Court", she produced in 1885 a montage of 25 small photographs of members of the Tahitian royal family, and in 1886 the French governor Isidore Chessé offered one of her photographs of Pomare V to the Geographical Society of Paris.¹⁴ Chessé's successor, Theodore Lacasade, sent his 5 children to Mrs Hoare's studio for their portraits to be taken, and 80 years later his daughter Elsie could still vividly recall Madame Hoare exclaiming, "Mademoiselle, ne bougez donc pas! [Don't move!]"¹⁵

In 1889 Sophia was awarded a bronze medal at the Exposition Universelle de Paris (famed for its remarkable entrance arch – the specially constructed Eiffel Tower). Prior to the exhibition her photographs carried the legend "Mrs S Hoare"; afterwards "Madame" was substituted for "Mrs" and a representation of her award printed below. The change helps to date her photographs, but it also indicates that after 20 years in Tahiti Sophia had finally accepted that hers was a francophone world.¹⁶

Jean-Yves Tréhin suggests that the French artist Paul Gauguin probably viewed Sophia Hoare's photographs at the Paris exposition,¹⁷ and it certainly seems possible that her work may have proved one more influence on his decision to travel to Tahiti. It also seems

¹⁴ O'Reilly, p25; Tréhin, pp79-83.

¹⁵ O'Reilly, p25.

¹⁶ O'Reilly, p25; Tréhin, p83. Tréhin consistently refers to *Susan* Hoare in his text, but gives no reference for this extrapolation of her initial. He also, correctly, makes the point (on p203), that there is no connection between Charles Burton Hoare (and his wife) and Alfred Burton, of the photographic partnership Burton Brothers, who made a photographic tour of the 'Coral Islands' in 1884 (on whom see Hardwicke Knight, *Burton Brothers Photographers* (Dunedin, 1980), pp28-30).

¹⁷ Tréhin, p83.

likely that Gauguin would have met Sophia when he arrived in Papeete in 1891. The town boasted only 3000 inhabitants, of which only a proportion were European, and when Gauguin came to write his manuscript *Noa Noa*, after his return to France in 1893, he incorporated one of Sophia's photographs of King Pomare.¹⁸ Gauguin was at least the second artist to have crossed Sophia's path: in 1877 she had photographed a number of watercolours by the Scottish artist and travel-writer Constance Gordon-Cumming who was then in Papeete.¹⁹

At the end of the century Sophia was still working, and still in Tahiti, at her studio in the rue de la Petite-Pologne. She was among the first to produce postcards of the island, and in 1900 advertised her "large assortment of cheap photographs" (*grand assortiment de photographies à bon marché*) in the campaigning journal "les Guêpes" [The Wasps],²⁰ edited by the penniless Gauguin, who had returned to Tahiti in 1895.²¹ But she was now in her sixties, and although her daughter Elizabeth had stayed with her, her two other daughters had drifted away. Louisa had left Tahiti around 1899, if not before.²² As for Octavia, she had given birth to a son, Berkeley Charles Flockton in 1878 (his father was named as Alfred Cox Flockton, the Flocktons being guano dealers on the island²³). There is no record of Octavia in Tahiti after this date, but in 1910 her son gave the year of his

¹⁸ Tréhin, pp82-83.

¹⁹ O'Reilly, p25; Tréhin, p83.

²⁰ O'Reilly, p26; Tréhin, p87.

²¹ David Sweetman, *Paul Gauguin: a complete life* (London, 1995), pp413, 420.

²² The 1910 US census for San Francisco (Assembly District 37, Roll T624-99, Page 4A, Enumeration District 177), gives 1899 as the date of Louisa's entry into the United States.

²³ An internet posting by Michel Boyard notes the birth of Berkeley [Berkeley] Charles Flockton, the son of Alfred Cox Flockton (aged 27) and Octavia Hoare (aged 17), at 8 o'clock on 26 October 1878 at Papeete (a date confirmed by his WW1 Draft Registration Card - San Francisco County, California; Roll: 1544254, Draft Board 7). This suggests Octavia's age at the time of the 1861 census was in fact 3 months and not 3 years, see n.3, above. The identification of the Flocktons as guano dealers is given by Sweetman, p290.

immigration into the United States as 1896,²⁴ suggesting she may have left Tahiti about the same time.

Sophia's advancing age, and the remoteness and vulnerability of her situation were no doubt brought home by the massive storm of January 1903 that swept away 517 people in the Tuamotu Islands,²⁵ some 200 kilometres to the north east of Tahiti, and had a tremendous physical and psychological effect on Tahiti itself. Just over a year later, in May 1904, Sophia and Elizabeth left Papeete on the *SS Mariposa* bound for San Francisco.²⁶ They moved in with Louisa, now a widow known as Louisa Dominic, and took in lodgers.²⁷ Sophia died some time between 1910 and 1920; Louisa was still alive in 1930, whilst Elizabeth died in San Francisco on 8 April 1952, aged 94.²⁸

The route followed by the various members of the Hoare family to the New World was hardly the most common, but it was definitely one of the most adventurous. Moreover, in the course of their journey, whether intentionally or not, Charles and Sophia Hoare made a significant contribution to the recording and preservation of Tahiti's culture and social history – a most unexpected achievement for a packer and his wife from Manchester.

²⁴ 1910 US census for San Francisco (Assembly District 39, Roll T624-100, Page: 5B, Enumeration District 242). He was living with his wife Ethel A Flockton. The 1920 census gives an immigration year of 1892 (Assembly District 27, Roll: T625-142, Page 5B Enumeration District 334). Berkeley was dead by 1930, and his wife had married a veterinary surgeon, Oscar J Kron (1930 US census for San Francisco, Roll 205, Page 13A, Enumeration District 289). Octavia was dead by 1910, see n.26 below.

²⁵ Sweetman, pp525-6.

²⁶ *San Francisco Passenger Lists, 1893-1953* [database on-line].

²⁷ 1910 US census for San Francisco (Assembly District 37, Roll T624-99, Page 4A, Enumeration District 177), and 1920 census for San Francisco (Assembly District 27, Roll T625-142, Page 3A, Enumeration District 388). In 1910, Sophia was recorded as having had 3 children, only two of whom were then alive,

²⁸ 1930 census for San Francisco (Roll 200, Page 17A, Enumeration District 170); California Death Index, 1940-1997.