

My name is George and I am a Farmer ...

Well, that's what my gt gt grandfather George Farmer led us to believe and until I did an Ancestry DNA test I had no reason to think that he was anyone other than George Farmer. Why would I? Every document found in New Zealand connected to George said he was George Farmer – his death registration, birth registrations of all his children, his marriage registration, he was even on the Fernglen's passenger list as George Farmer.

Once I received my DNA results I noticed a lot of matches (17 confirmed so far) who had family in the East Meon/Petersfield, Hampshire, England area. George Farmer and his wife Mary Cole said they came from Hampshire – in fact they said they had been married in 1875 in Petersfield, Hampshire. [Find Emily's birth registration and George and Mary's marriage registration here.](#) After doing quite a bit of research I concluded that all of the 17 DNA matches descended from two people – Robert Green and his wife Maria Margaret Deadman who lived at Ramsdean, Hampshire, England. Ramsdean is a small village in the Parish of East Meon.

A search for "George Farmer" on the PapersPast website came up with this result – an advertisement seeking information about George.

The New Zealand Herald.

AUCKLAND, WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 1885.

Personal.

INFORMATION wanted of George Farmer alias George Robert Green, who arrived in Auckland about the year 1875 and was last heard of in July, 1882 it is believed that Mr. Farmer (or Green) occupied the position of bailiff on a farm 20 miles from Auckland. A liberal reward will be given for such information as may lead to the discovery of the whereabouts of Farmer (or Green) if alive, or proof if dead. - Address, T. Nicholson, Esq., F.S.A., South Western Villas, Aldershot, England.

So, it appears our George Farmer was also known as George Robert Green. More investigation revealed that T. Nicholson Esq was an insurance agent. Why was he looking for George Farmer? What had George done that would prompt a "liberal reward" for information leading to his discovery? Did he have a life insurance and they needed proof of his death? In my research I discovered that at least two of George Robert Green's brothers acted as life insurance agents in the Petersfield region so it is quite possible that George would have taken out a life insurance policy.

Further research revealed that Robert Green and Maria Margaret Deadman (the common ancestors of my 17 DNA matches to the Green family) had a son called George Robert Green who was born in 1838 in Ramsdean, East Meon, Hampshire.

Superintendent Registrar's District <i>Peterfield</i>										
Registrar's District <i>Costman</i>										
1838. BIRTHS in the District of <i>Costman</i> in the County of <i>Southampton</i>										
No.	When Born.	Name, if any.	Sex.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.	Baptismal Name, if added after Registration of Birth.
<i>100</i>	<i>23rd Sept 1838</i>	<i>George Robert</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>Robert Green</i>	<i>Margaret Green formerly Neumann</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Robert Green Father of Robert Green Ramsden</i>	<i>at Ramsden</i>	<i>Eleventh William</i>	<i>of Costman 1838 Registrar</i>

Interesting that the date of birth for George Robert Green (23 September 1838) was just one day different to the date of birth of George Farmer that is recorded in the [Farmer Bible](#). When you consider that the Bible entries were recorded 10 years after George Farmer's death it is quite possible that his family could not quite remember George's actual birthdate.

Yet more research led to the discovery that George Robert Green was married to Mary Ann Vokes and was a farmer of 100 acres employing 2 men and 1 boy according to the 1871 England census. He was living with Mary Ann and their three children, Ada, Ernest and Robert, in Steep which is just a few miles east of Ramsden. The fact that George was a farmer of 100 acres gives more weight to the theory that George had a life insurance policy. He would have been considered a man of some means, far wealthier than a farm labourer or servant.

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The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the												
Civil Parish (or Township) of <i>Steep</i>		City or Municipal Borough of		Municipal Ward of		Parliamentary Borough of <i>Peterfield</i>		Town of		Village or Hamlet, etc., of	Local Board, or (Improvement Commissioners District) of	School
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, etc. and No. of NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES		NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION	AGE of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN			
		Inhabited (1.)	Uninhabited (2.)							Male	Female	
<i>24</i>	<i>Lele Farms</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>George R. Green</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>Farmer of 100 acres employing 2 Labourers & 1 Boy</i>	<i>Ramsden</i>			
				<i>Mary Ann do</i>	<i>Wife</i>		<i>35</i>	<i>Housewife</i>				
				<i>Ada M. do</i>	<i>Daughter</i>		<i>6</i>		<i>Steep</i>			
				<i>Ernest G. do</i>	<i>Son</i>		<i>4</i>					
				<i>Robert G. do</i>	<i>Son</i>		<i>1</i>					
				<i>Charlotte F. do</i>	<i>Daughter</i>		<i>1 1/2</i>	<i>Domestic servant</i>	<i>Steep</i>			

Interestingly, I have not been able to find any more records relating to George Robert Green – he doesn't appear in the 1881 census with Mary Ann and her three youngest children, John, Ella and Sarah, and at the time of the 1891 census she states that she is a widow. I have not found a death record for George Robert Green in England. It is also interesting that I can find no record of George Farmer existing before he appears on the Fernglen passenger list in 1879, nor can I find a record of his supposed parents – Robert Farmer and Margaret Denham. It is looking more and more likely that George Farmer is George Robert Green.

My investigations led me to searching The London Gazette where I came across a bankruptcy notice in September 1879.

Numb. 24759.



The London Gazette.

Published by Authority.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1879.

THE LONDON GAZETTE, SEPTEMBER 5, 1879. 5387

The Bankruptcy Act, 1869.

In the County Court of Hampshire, holden at Southampton.
To George Robert Green, of the Home Farm, Westmeon,
in the county of Southampton, Farmer.

TAKE notice, that a Bankruptcy Petition has been presented against you to this Court by Henry Vokes, of Ramsdean, near Petersfield, in the county of Southampton, Machinist, Corn, Seed, and Manure Merchant, and the Court has ordered that the publication of this notice in the London Gazette shall be deemed to be service of the petition upon you; and further take notice, that the said petition will be heard at this Court on the 22nd day of September, 1879, at twelve o'clock at noon, on which day you are required to appear, and if you do not appear the Court may adjudge you bankrupt in your absence. The petition may be inspected by you on application at this Court.—Dated this 1st day of September, 1879.

Henry Vokes was George Robert Green's father-in-law. I'm quite sure George Robert Green didn't appear before the Court on 22 September 1879 as by then he was on the high seas heading to New Zealand with his "wife" Mary Farmer. I wonder what the purpose was in Henry serving a bankruptcy petition on George? Had he discovered that George had abandoned his daughter Mary Ann and six grandchildren and run away with a servant? Was this his way of showing support for his daughter? I guess we will never know.

The final bit of evidence to prove my theory was found last night. While searching Ancestry I came across this interesting document from the National Probate Calendar, England & Wales. Dated 3 April 1890, it states that the administration of the personal estate of George Robert Green, late of Warkworth in the District of Mahurangi, who died 9 February 1888 at Warkworth (which just so happens to be the exact date that our George Farmer died) was granted to his wife Mary Ann Green of Ramsdean, East Meon.

I will do some further investigating to see whether the actual probate documents are available in England as I believe they could make very interesting reading. How did Mary Ann prove to the courts that George Farmer was her husband George Robert Green?

So that is the tale of George Farmer AKA George Robert Green. Now I just need to find out exactly who his "wife" Mary Farmer nee Cole was. It wouldn't surprise me at all if it turns out that she is not actually Mary Cole. I am fairly convinced she is a child of Kesiah Dennis though as I have some DNA matches to the Dennis family in East Meon, Hampshire. I can't find a record of Kesiah giving birth to a child called Mary though. She did however have a child called Edith Cole ... to be continued

1890.

GREEN George Robert.

Personal Estate £139 0s. 10d.

3 April. Administration of the Personal Estate of George Robert Green late of Warkworth in the District of Mahurangi in the Province of Auckland New Zealand Groom and Gardener who died 9 February 1888 at Warkworth was granted at the **Principal Registry** to Mary Ann Green of Ramsdean in the Parish of Eastmeon in the County of Southampton Widow the Relict.

Source Information

Ancestry.com. England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

Original data: Principal Probate Registry. Calendar of the Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries of the High Court of Justice in England. London, England © Crown copyright.

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