

CHRISTOPHER PICKERING – A RAGS-TO-RICHES STORY



He has given his name to a substantial area of the west of Hull, and was the archetypal Victorian self-made man. Christopher Godmond Pickering was born in 1842, the son of Christopher Pickering, a tailor, and his wife Jane Gibson. On the 1861 census the family were living at Hales Entry; young Christopher was a fish curer. Ten years later he was married to Rachael Blakestone and lived at 3 Marlborough Terrace, Hessle Road. He was then a fish merchant. In the next ten years he became a ship owner and, in 1881, the family lived at 114 Coltman St (west side). In 1889 he moved out to Hornsea.

Pickering made a fortune very quickly. During the 1880s he owned a fleet of sailing smacks in partnership with a man named Haldane. They were quick to recognise that the future was in steam, and sold the sailing ships in Europe in order to acquire steam trawlers. By 1914 he headed Pickering & Haldane's Steam Trawling Co. and Pickering, Haldane & Co. (fish and ice merchants), as well as being Chair of several fishing and allied firms.

Pickering invested in land. In 1914 he built a “model village” in the Hessle Road area which included a church, a vicarage, almshouses, a park, a recreation ground and a children's home. The park and almshouses remain, and the Pickering name is remembered in Pickering council ward, Pickering Park, and Christopher Pickering Lodge (an old people's home).

In 1918 he offered the council 75 acres of land for housing at a price of £493 an acre. It was pointed out that he had bought the land at the turn of the century for only £120 an acre, and would realise a profit of around £17, 000 – but the deal went ahead.

He died in 1920.

