

A19 Captain Eber Bunker

Whaler, trader, farmer

Title/rank: Sea Captain, whaler and farmer
'Father of Australian Whaling'

Born – date/year: 7 March 1761

Place of origin: Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Marital status & children: Married Margaret Thompson on 16 November 1786. She bore him six children, but died in 1808 while giving birth to the seventh. Bunker remarried to Margaret MacFarlane (whose late husband was an Indian Army Officer) in 1810. Unfortunately, she also died c. 1821. Bunker married again to a Mrs Minchin, the Relict of the late William Minchin and the couple went to live at her residence at Minchinbury. However, she later absconded and he announced he would no longer be responsible for her debts.



Eber Bunker (1761-1836), by unknown artist, c1810
State Library of New South Wales, Original MH 58

Place where lived Lived in Middlesex, England for 20 years, then came to live in Pitt's Row, Sydney c. 1805. Then, c. 1811 they moved to Bunker's Farm, now renamed *Collingwood*. After living there for about 12 years, he moved to Minchinbury with his third wife, but returned to *Collingwood*, where he died, leaving the property to his daughter Charlotte, who married George Blackett. He moved in and ran the property.

Role/job: At age 30, Bunker was put in command of the *William and Ann* (of the Third Fleet). He joined up with Thomas Melville (also a ship's captain) and undertook whaling activities. During a whaling voyage from England on the ship 'Albion' he discovered the Bunker Islands off the Queensland Coast, which is now in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. He also spent two winters whaling in Australian and New Zealand waters and chartered the South Island of New Zealand. In 1803, Bunker, as captain of the 'Albion' transported Lieutenant Bowen, and new settlers, convicts, stores and livestock to Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania). In return he was given a town lease and a grant of 400 acres (162 ha), which he named *Collingwood*, on the Georges River immediately south of the future town site of Liverpool. Margrett Bunker's mother, Isabella Collingwood was reportedly first cousin to Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood.

On 1 January 1808, he signed the dutiful address to Governor William Bligh, but joined those arresting him later in the month. He received eighteen head of cattle from the new administration, made a survey of the government stores and sat as a member of the Vice-Admiralty Court.

On his return from various sailing expeditions on behalf of the

Government and further whaling activities, he took up a grant of 500 acres (202 ha) at Cabramatta Creek, adjoining his Banks Town land in 1808-09. This he called *Collingwood Dale*. (Further details on his many sailing and whaling expeditions are contained in the entry of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* - see reference below.)

Contribution to Liverpool:	Bunker, in association with Charles Throsby and H. Cowper, on behalf of the people of Liverpool, signed a Proclamation of Loyalty to George, Prince of Wales (Geo IV) in July 1820.
Died/age:	27 September 1836 - aged 74. Bunker was one of the oldest inhabitants of the Colony'. He was also known as 'the Father of Whaling' for the Colony.
Religion	Church of England Grave No. A19
Source of info.	Laurel McMiles MLDFHS, and by John S. Cumpston in <i>Australian Dictionary of Biography</i> , Volume 1, (MUP), 1966 http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bunker-eber-1849