

2.5 EARLY YEARS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

For the early migrants many arrived prior to land surveys being completed and delays occurred in the sale of the land. Accommodation and provisions were also in short supply.. There were more migrants than could be accommodated and consequently their initial lodgings were more in the nature of tents than timber cottages.

As a condition of his free passage Samuel would have been required to work for the company or for one of the early settlers who were developing the land to produce food to ensure the colony's self sufficiency. However, there had been delays in the completion of surveys and the opening up of land to settlers. These early times would have been very difficult.

In 1838 development of the colony continued with establishment of the police force, land sales of about 48,000 acres and the introduction of cattle and sheep brought overland from New South Wales by Eyre and Sturt. At the end of the year there were 480 horses, 2,500 cattle and 28,000 sheep for a population of 6,000 people bolstered by the emigration of 3154 people from England. This was still a very small population for Samuel's family to be a part of.

The building of the settlement continued with the establishment of banks and other businesses and the progressive construction of roads and buildings. The importance of opening up the land both to ensure sufficient production for local consumption and also to ensure a continuing flow of migrants saw land sales reaching almost 300,000 acres by 1840. After four years a new landing place was established by the South Australia Company, at the northern end of what is now Port/Commercial Road. The new port was officially opened by Governor George Gawler on 14 October 1840.

In 1841 the first census of the colony was undertaken which showed that the population had reached 15,485 people. **Samuel and Mary Ann** and their family were recorded as residing in Census District "A" with their children Stephen and Sophia. This district was the Adelaide Plains and defined as being *"north of Bay Road (now Anzac Highway) and Greenhill Road excluding Adelaide (present central business district) but including Port Adelaide and west of Mt Lofty."*¹

However, there is a broader definition of this district which is: seven or eight miles around Adelaide, both sides of the Torrens River, plus Port Adelaide, east to the Hills, west to the Gulf. Suffice it to say Samuel and his family were not living in the town of Adelaide and he was most likely involved working on farms that were providing food for the new settlement.

In the Census, both Samuel and May Ann had their ages recorded in the under 35 category and the two children in the under 14 category. The important point to make here is that this implies that Sophia was at least 7 years of age and not included in the under 7 category.

This was the first recording of Sophia's name that we had located and indeed it has been the only one. This finding also required some searching as the name had been recorded as "**Afford**" This has led Harford researchers to consider a wide number of alternatives with similar misspellings and misrecordings being common. As examples we have **Holford, Halford, Alford, Alfred.**

1841 had seen over 500,000 acres of land surveyed and there had been a shipment of 57,200 vine cuttings from Cape Town. While considerable progress was being made in establishing the colony, there had been difficulties. Economic depression led to the suspension of assisted migration with only 776 migrants arriving in that year and by December 1841 there were nearly 2,000 destitute people on government support. This represented more than 12% of the population. By December 1842, 642 of the 1915 houses in Adelaide were vacant and in a state of disrepair

¹ Adelaide Proformat www.jaunay.com.au

We have no record of where the **Samuel** and his family lived or what kind of the work that Samuel did in Adelaide. However, it would have been in the nature of general farm labouring work. For a few years after their arrival when the very new settlement was experiencing some rapid growth there would have been plenty to do but one cannot be certain how they fared when times became tough as they did by 1842.

In 1844 **Samuel** was one of 622 colonists who signed a petition² to Her Majesty Queen Victoria seeking the establishment of a full elected representative government in the Legislative Council for South Australia.

An earlier petition in 1842 had been presented seeking the same outcome and in 1843 the Legislative Council was extended by four members nominated by the Governor. The petition pointed out that these members were always in a minority where there were differences of opinion with the Governor and the other members. The petition identified the significant growth and development of the Colony.

Progress to representative government was slow and it was not until 1851 that changes were made. It consisted of 24 members, four official (fulfilling what would be today ministerial positions) and four non-official members, both nominated by the governor on behalf of the Crown, and 16 elected members. The right to vote for these positions was not universal being limited to propertied men. However, the reforms meant that the Governor no longer oversaw proceedings, with the role being fulfilled by a Speaker who had been elected by the members. Self government was obtained with new Constitution passed by the British Parliament in 1857.

We know that Samuel, Mary Ann and their family were together in Adelaide in 1841 at the time of the Census three and a half years after they arrived. However, a separation between Samuel and Mary Ann occurred in about 1846.

In February 1865 there was a newspaper report³ about a case in Clare Court on 1 February, 1865 before Mr. M Mac Dermott, S.M., and Dr Davies J.P:

"In the Criminal Jurisdiction, Samuel Halford was charged with unlawfully deserting his wife and refusing to support her.

Mr. Palmer appeared for the prosecution and Mr. Williams for the defence.

The witnesses called to prove the charge were Mrs. Halford and her son Stephen Halford, who gave very lengthy evidence in a prevaricatory manner, and the consequence was contradicted each other.

For the defence only one witness was sworn, viz. Mrs. Elizabeth Maynard who proved that some years ago, since the prosecutrix had been separated from her husband, she (the prosecutrix) had lived with another man as his wife.

Information dismissed.

This day was Full Court-day, but the above was the only case for trial on the criminal side, and on the civil side a solitary case of claim for fee for service of a blood horse was postponed on account of the unavoidable absence of the principal witness".

There is no doubt that despite the misnaming this was a case between Samuel and Mary Ann. This is supported by a further reference to Mary Ann a little over two weeks later on 25 February 1865. The newspaper reported on a meeting of the Destitute Board⁴:

DESTITUTE BOARD

Thursday, February 23.

² South Australian Register 12 June 1844

³ South Australian Register 7 February 1865

⁴ South Australian Advertiser 25 February 1865

Present - Messrs. Mildred, S.M. (in the chair), Moore (Colonial Surgeon), Beddome, S.M., Hawkes, S.M., Holthouse (Superintendent) and Bee (Relieving Officer)

COUNTRY APPLICATIONS

Clare - Board asked to compel Harford to support wife, who had left him and led a disreputable life for 19 years.

Duty of District authorities: but would admit her to Asylum if unable to work.

At this time the Board was not administering relief beyond food.

These reports indicate that Mary Ann had left Samuel in about 1846 when Stephen was 16 and Sophia 12 years of age. It appears that Stephen had gone with his father and he supported him in the Court hearing. Given Sophia's age it is most likely that she stayed with her mother, although we have still never found any trace of her. It also appears that Mary Ann stayed in the area around Clare and they both would have been aware of one another's circumstances.

However, there were occasional references to him in directories and almanacs.

The first of these was in 1847 in the Murray Almanac of Colonial Residents 1839-1848 where Samuel is recorded as a farmer in the Lyndoch Valley. There is also a later reference in the 1853 Electoral Roll for the District of Stanley where his voting qualification is stated as "Household, Leasehold" and his location as Clare Village.⁵

⁵ 1847 Murray Almanac p60 & Supplement p77 & Electoral Roll 1853 GRG24/6/1682 State Records SA