

MARY ANN¹ 1852 to 1926

Mary Ann Harford was born at Armagh on 4 February 1852, the second child of Samuel and Maria. Her birth was recorded on 9 April 1864, along with a number of others including William, James, George and Samuel Stephen, when she was about 12 years of age. It appears that when John Joseph was born in February 1864, Samuel and Maria realized that none of their children had had their births registered and so they were all registered on the same day with the exception of Tryphena who appears to have been overlooked.

Mary Ann was baptized on 23 January 1870 at 18 Years of age by the Jesuits at Sevenhill. Her sponsor was Bridget Eiffe. We are unsure of why this baptism took place. We don't believe any pressure would have come from Samuel and Maria, both not being Catholics. One explanation could be that she was influenced by Margaret Bryan (Stephen's wife) or one of her children, say David. At this point none of her brothers had married so there were no more Irish Catholic in laws. Perhaps the largest influence might have been Stephen because of his baptism in May of 1869. In any event Mary Ann and her brother George were baptized on the same day followed shortly after by Margaret Tryphena on 13 February 1870 and William; later that year on 8 November.

We have no record of her early life, but with Maria having a number of children and Mary being the eldest girl would have been expected to play a major role in helping with housework and the younger children.

On 11 February 1882, Mary Ann married John James in Terowie at the Baptist Manse. The witnesses were Mary Ann Jenkins of Kapunda and James Harford, farmer of Yacowie, her younger brother. Terowie was half way between the Harford's of Gumbowie and those of Whyte Yarcowie. At the time of their marriage, John was a widower and would have been about 38 and Mary Ann had just turned thirty. Their wedding was a matter of weeks before Samuel and Maria finally married on 26 March 1882 at Jamestown. It is of interest that this is some years after Samuel and Maria had left Armagh so it seems she had moved north with them.

Five years earlier, on 20 November 1877, John James had purchased Section 125M, Hundred of Gumbowie, County of Kimberley. He was aged thirty four at the time.

The land purchased was rather small in area being only 191 acres and he paid 539 pounds 11 shillings and six pence. This was a very high price and represented 2 pounds 6 shillings and sixpence per acre. It is higher than any other paid by Harfords. John was issued Credit Agreement 9425 over Section 125M (Sec.125 was cut-up into 3 pieces East, West and Middle). The land is located immediately south of the Lancelot town planned allotments. Today the land is numbered Section 334 with the three Sections 125 now merged with others to form a much larger section.

This land was surrendered and a new Credit Agreement (CA 16833) was issued to John 4 January 1884. This was immediately after the 1883 drought which had a disastrous

¹ Much of the detail of this story has been researched and provided by Jenny Carollo

impact in the district. Under this new agreement John was to pay 291 pounds 5 shillings and sixpence or 1 pound 10 shillings and sixpence per acre. This was still a fairly high price.

John had worked the land from 1877 and would have had only two reasonably good seasons before the drought of 1880 to 1883. These would have been very difficult years for him and his new wife. The first of their children Mary was born on 23 September 1882 and the second, Margaret Ann on 30 August 1884. Margaret was baptized on 8 September, 1885 at the home of John O'Loughlin "in special circumstances".

John had died a couple of months previously on 23 June 1885 of Pneumonia, leaving Mary Ann with their two baby children. The 'special circumstances' of Margaret's baptism are not explained anywhere, but we believe the fact that Mary Ann had been baptized a Catholic (but seems to have thought of herself as a Wesleyan and her husband was a Protestant) was enough to want to "save" the child by having her baptized and raised a Catholic. In fact, Margaret subsequently married a Catholic, Charles Thomas McMahon at Peterborough. We have noted that there were two churches in Lancelot, one was Wesleyan and the other Catholic. It seems that after her marriage to John, in the Baptist Church, Mary Ann may have attended the Wesleyan church.

John's death was noted on the Lease Book (docket reference Surveyor Generals Office 145/1886). In Memorial 62 Book 405, John's executors, John Andrew Walker and George Jenkins, (both of Lancelot) transferred the Agreement to James Edward O'Loughlin on 13 August 1889. J.E. O'Loughlin paid the executors 191 pounds with 203 pounds 16 shillings owing to the Government. This amount would be payable by the new owners. George Jenkins is believed to be the husband of Mary Ann Jenkins a witness at Mary Ann and John's wedding. He was a very prominent person in the town of Lancelot. He was a Storekeeper and Postmaster and in 1900 was also a Storekeeper in Peterborough.

The terms of John's land payments were 10% deposit of 29 pounds 3 shillings, paid on 4 January 1884, and a further 10% was paid on 4 January 1887. Another payment of 10 % was made on 14 February 1888. This payment seems to have been made earlier than required. The three payments leave a residual of 203 pounds 16 shillings. The last two payments were made after his death and would have been made by his estate.

It seems, therefore, that up to the time of the sale Mary Ann was running the property. Because of its location very close to Young Steve's property he could have provided some assistance. There was also the single John Joseph who was in the area and would have been able to help out, not having a commitment to a property of his own.

John James was buried in peaceful Lancelot Cemetery, the fourth burial there, along with a number of other pioneers of the area including of course Samuel and Maria Harford. Sadly, their eldest child Mary also died on 18 April 1887 at age 4 Years and 6 months, and is also buried in Lancelot Cemetery with her father. The cause death was given as "Brain Fever".

After John's death, it is most likely that Samuel and Maria moved to live with Mary Ann and her two children at Lancelot. While Samuel would have been in his late 70's and died in August 1886, Maria was about 15 years younger and would have been of great

assistance to Mary Ann. With the sale of the property in 1889, they would have had to move on.

On 12 June 1891, Mary Ann was admitted to the Destitute Asylum in Adelaide aged 38 and pregnant. Her mother is recorded as "Maria Alford, widow, Lancelot" and caring for her 5 1/2 year old granddaughter. Mary Ann's religion is recorded as "Wesleyan".

The Admission report states: *"Enciente, putative father Alfred Barkley, piano tuner, said to be in Adelaide at present. She has not the slightest proof of the paternity. This woman states she is a widow, her late husband being dead 5 or 6 years. She appears to be totally destitute, and without a proper supply of clothing."*

She left the Destitute Asylum on January 5, 1892 – *"gone with child to her mother, Mrs. Harford, Dawsons Corner, Lancelot."* We believe this child to be Hannah Elizabeth James, born July 1891 and who died on 14 December 1893 at Lancelot, aged 2 years 5 months. There is also a view that Mary Ann had another child, Rose Blanch Durbridge James, born 23 April 1893 at Hackney, who died on 29 May 1893 at Glanville. However, there is no evidence supporting this. No father is recorded for either of these children.

Maria died on 8 April 1896. The cause of death was shown on her death certificate as "Paralytic stroke. Her son John Joseph was the Informant. She was buried in Lancelot Cemetery along with Samuel.

We know nothing of Mary Ann's life from this point. However, it appears she remained in difficult circumstances her whole life. She died on 27 April 1926 at age 74 years of Senile decay in Adelaide. At that time she was at the Little Sisters of the Poor.