

TRYPHENA¹ 1855 to 1899

Tryphena was born at Armagh in 13 February 1855, the fourth child of Samuel and Maria. She was christened at Sevenhill on 13 February 1870 at the age of fifteen. Her sponsor was Mary Ann Curtis.

As with the other children we have no details of Tryphena's early life. The first record found was that of a death in the S.A. Death Registrations, 1842-1915, for a Joseph Halford, a misspelling we have encountered elsewhere, born February 1879, died 11 November, 1879 at Yarcowie, aged 9 months Mother: Triphena Halford. We are in no doubt that this is an illegitimate child of Tryphena. The cause of death was "Teething and Pulmonary Disease of the Lungs" The Informant was a Thomas Morris of Terowie, who signed with an "X" which was witnessed by the Assistant Registrar.²

We are not surprised that Tryphena was at Yarcowie, because at that time most of the family has been identified as being there and this included Samuel and Maria.

On 20 July 1880, Tryphena married George Clarke at the District Registry Office, Redruth, at Burra. This marriage so soon after the death of her son Joseph leads us to believe that George Clarke could well have been the father of Joseph.

At the time of their marriage, George was an Ostler (stable hand) at Terowie. Tryphena was 25 and also living at Terowie, and George was 32. George was the son of William Clarke and had come to South Australia from England on the ship Hyderabad arriving on 15 February 1878. George signed with an "x" and Tryphena signed her name. The witnesses were James and Mary Harford, her elder brother and sister.

George and Tryphena's first child was born at Yarcowie on 9 March 1881 a son named William James (James). They had another child the next year, John Joseph, on 28 May 1882, at Lancelot. It appears that Tryphena had moved closer to her sister Mary Ann who had married at Terowie in February of that year and she and her husband John James were on a farm quite close to Lancelot.

In Bishop Norton's 1884 Census list, he notes George Clarke, labourer, Protestant and Mrs. Clarke, William 3 and John 1 as being in the Hundred of Gumbowie. This was about the time that they moved with their young family to Silverton. Valuable silver deposits had been discovered in the early 1880's around Umberumberka. The silver lodes were phenomenally rich and their very high grades overcame the crippling cost of export by bullock wagon to South Australia. Men flocked to the isolated mines. The majority came from South Australia's depressed copper towns and Victoria's declining goldfields. A strong Cornish presence was established in the area.

Umberumberka was a tent camp of 250 people in 1883, but two years later its population had passed 3,000 and the town was renamed Silverton. It was the Barrier's first significant settlement. Streets were laid out, two storey stone banks built, hotels opened and ambitious plans made for the town's future.

At Silverton, George and Tryphena had a third child, born in 1885. He was named Thomas and was also known as "Poddy". Another son, named Samuel, was born at Silverton in 1887 but he did not survive.

¹ Many of the details of this story provided by Jenny Carollo and assistance also from George Acres

² Records State Library of South Australia. Like many records the Microfiche was difficult to read.

The majority of Silverton's people lived in the present. Few envisaged spending their lives in the area. Silverton was a place to get rich in and leave. The town's euphoria lasted only a few years and the bonanzas gradually declined and developments nearby at Broken Hill overshadowed the Silverton deposits.

In 1883 Charles Rasp, a boundary rider on the Mount Gipps Station, and his syndicate of seven station workers pegged out virtually the entire formation of a hump backed ridge which had aroused his curiosity. He believed it contained a mass of tin oxide. The group financed exploratory shafts but results were discouraging and a number of syndicate members tired of calls on their limited funds traded their share for pittances. Experienced miners scorned the deposits.

However, the situation changed dramatically in late 1884 when rich silver chlorides were found by the syndicate and wealthy local pastoralists began buying shares. In August 1885 a public company, the Broken Hill Proprietary Company was floated to raise capital to develop and expand the mine. BHP began to develop the richest section of the world's largest known silver-lead-zinc orebody.

In 1886 two local smelters were built to reduce transport costs and increase profits. Between 1885 and 1890 the ore mined at Broken Hill, mostly by BHP, was very high grade. It was easy to mine and the oxidized ore smelted well. Profits soared!

Despite the vast wealth of BHP's mine, its remote and arid situation made developing it costly and difficult. Water and fuel were both very scarce and other supplies had to be brought overland from South Australia by bullock wagon. However, the mine's profitability was never in question after 1888. In January that year Broken Hill was connected by a private railway to South Australia cutting costs dramatically. Other smaller mines were also operating along the line of lode. However, the smelters were a mixed blessing. Their lead dust polluted the town and the incidence of lead poisoning increased.

Broken Hill's population grew rapidly. In 1886 it was a tent and shanty town of 3,000 people. Silverton was becoming rapidly depopulated as men moved to Broken Hill. After the 1888 opening of the railway line, by the Silverton Tramway Company, migration was made far easier and the population was 11,000 by 1888. However this doubled to 21,000 by 1891 making it the third largest population centre in New South Wales after Sydney and Newcastle. The proportion of women also gradually increased.

The reality was that life at Broken Hill in those very early days was harsh. Vegetation around the town was taken as firewood and this increased the severity of naturally occurring dust storms. Domestic life was Spartan. The luckier families lived in small iron cottages that became furnaces during the hot summers. Single men stayed in poorly ventilated and overcrowded lodging houses. Those on night shifts found it hard to sleep during the day because of the heat. Domestic water was costly and impure.

The generally trying conditions and shortage of fresh food decreased resistance to sickness. There was drought, contaminated water and an absence of reticulated sewerage increased the likelihood of disease. A typhoid epidemic occurred in 1888 causing 123 deaths. Water supply was always the town's greatest worry and threatened community health and the operation of the mines. The New South Wales Government was indifferent to the remote community and little of the vast royalties received were ever spent in the town. It was 1890 before the government allowed a private company to build a large reservoir.

The serious water and health problems led to the establishment of the municipal council in September 1888. A sanitary inspector was appointed who immediately addressed the health situation. A system of night soil collection was introduced.

It was against this background that George and Tryphena moved to Broken Hill from Silverton. We cannot be precise about the timing but it was after the birth of Samuel George in 1887. Samuel (George) died in March 1889 and was buried at Broken Hill Cametery in Old Catholic Section Row 4 Grave 11 on 5 March 1889. Despite this tragic loss, Tryphena faced an even greater tragedy with the death of her husband George on 5 December 1889.

George was working at the mines in Broken Hill and died of a disease of the lungs. His Death Certificate noted that he had the disease for several years. This would seem to indicate that he acquired it working at Silverton. He was only 41 years of age at the time of his untimely death. George was buried in Broken Hill Cemetery in the same grave as his son Samuel George (George). It is of interest that despite their Registry Office marriage, the celebrant at the funeral was a Catholic priest Fr. P Carroll. At the time of his death they were living at Picton Street Broken Hill.

At the time George died Tryphena was pregnant their fifth child Stephen who was born in Broken Hill on 22 July 1890. Again, quite tragically Stephen only survived 13 days and Tryphena lost her youngest son, on 3 August 1890. Stephen was buried at Broken Hill Cemetery with his father George and brother Samuel George.

Tryphena was left with her three young boys aged 8, 7 and 5 respectively. They were far too young to leave if she had to work and she needed to get some support to help her live. This was also before others of her brothers James and Stephen came in Broken Hill. However, her eldest brother William would have been there as would her half brother Stephen. So some family support may have been available.



Tryphena

However, Tryphena married James Michael Shelley in about 1891 at Silverton. We do not have a record of the marriage as the records were destroyed in a fire. James was known as Jim and he was born on 12 April 1862 in Adelaide. He was the youngest son of William Shelley and Elizabeth Mary Hamilton who with their family arrived in South Australia on 28 April 1857 on the ship "Carnatic" which left Plymouth on 24 January 1857. The family included William, Elizabeth and the eldest John and a daughter Elizabeth. The family name

was originally "Sheehy" and that is the name that was recorded on the ship's passenger list. They came from County Cork in Ireland.

Jim and Tryphena had two children. The first was Elizabeth Mary, known as "Lovey." was born on 8 February 1892 at Broken Hill. At the time of her birth Jim was 30 and Tryphena was 37. The second child was a boy named Frank who was also known as "Duke" and he was born in 1894.

Jim and Tryphena were together only a short time of seven years before she died on 27 December 1899 only four days before the turn of the century. She was 44 years of age and died from Enterocolitis (Inflammation of the intestines) which she had for several weeks. She was buried in the Old Catholic Section of the Broken Hill Cemetery Row 4 Grave 11 with George Clarke and her two boys. The Cemetery Records show the name as "Sheely" rather than Shelley. The celebrant at the funeral was Fr. Hughes J Wright. Tryphena and Jim had lived at 21 Thomas St. Broken Hill.

Twelve months later Jim published an In Memoriam Notice in the Barrier Miner:

In Memoriam

Shelley In Loving but sad remembrance of my dear wife Tryphena who departed this life on December 27th 1899.

Inserted by her loving husband and children

James Shelley

Residence Thomas Street

Buried Catholic Cemetery

Jim was left the two young children of about 9 and 5 years of age. Tryphena's children from her marriage to George were also relatively young with Tom (Poddy) about 14 and the others about 18 and 19 but at least the latter two were probably working.

Jim died of Pneumonia on 10 October 1929 at the age of 67. He was buried the following day at Broken Hill Cemetery in the same grave as his wife Tryphena.

The Funeral Notice in the Barrier Daily Truth read:

Shelley J Funeral 11/10/1929 BDT FRIDAY.

James Michael Age 67

M/M Frank Shelley, M/M D McGowan, M/M Clarke, M/m JJ Clarke, M/M T. Clarke

Funeral of their father- g father- leaving from Frank Shelley's residence 94 Ryan St

Catholic Cemetery

Brother of late JAM Shelley

Born in Adelaide. Came here 38 years ago. Worked on the mine for a few years then went to Forbes. His wife died 30 years ago.

Shelley Factory Line

TRYPHENA'S CHILDREN

Marriage to George Clarke

William James (AKA James)

Born: 9 March 1881 at Yarcowie

Married:

Died:

Buried:

John Joseph

Born: 28 May 1882 Lancelot, South Australia

Married: Ellen Hoare (Born Cir.1882. Died 14 January 1918 Broken Hill. Buried Catholic Section L Grave 47 Broken Hill Cemetery) 1906 at Broken Hill.

Died: 15 April 1949, at Broken Hill

Buried: Catholic Section L Grave 47 Broken Hill Cemetery.

Children: Francis Joseph. Born 1922. Died 31 March 1947 at Broken Hill, Buried 1 April 1947 in the same grave as his parents

Keith R. Born 1916. Died 1922 at Broken Hill. Buried 28 February 1922 in the same grave as his parents.

Thomas (AKA Poddy)

Born: 1885 Silverton NSW

Married:

Died: 2 November 1938 at Broken Hill

Buried: 3 November 1938, Catholic Section S Row 39 Grave 2

Children: Harold Francis Born 1908. Died 30 September 1961 at Broken Hill. Buried in the same grave as his father.

Marriage to Jim Shelley

Elizabeth Mary (AKA Lovey)

Born : 8 February 1892 Broken Hill, NSW.

Married: Daniel Charles McGowan (Born 1881 at Red Hill South Australia. Died 3 February 1958 at Broken Hill) 1928 at Broken Hill.

Died: 30 October 1982 at Broken Hill Hospital

Buried: Broken Hill Cemetery NSW

Children: They had one child, Frank known as Frankie born 1921 died 29 June 1980 as a result of an accident. He was a bachelor.

Francis (AKA Frank)

Born: 1894 at Broken Hill.

Married: Elizabeth Margaret Hudswell (Born Died 28 April 1978)

Died: 23 December 1961

Buried: Cheltenham Cemetery Victoria. Catholic Section.