

SUSAN'S ANCESTORS¹

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Susan's Parents

Susan Ann Wise's parents were **Carl Weis** and **Susan Ann Barnard**.

Her father Carl was born in 1837 in Germany. The Germans were early emigrants to South Australia. Many came in 1838 to escape the religious persecution of Lutherans at home. They were adaptable hard working people and it soon became apparent that they would be an invaluable asset to the growing mining and agricultural industries. They built their own homes, churches and schools and their villages were named after places in Germany as can be seen on any map of South Australia today.

It is assumed Carl came to South Australia as a child. We have located only one entry for the arrival of a Weis/Weiss being Johann Carl Friedrich August Weis, and Maria Rosina nee Weinhold, and a son J Carl Gottlieb. They came on the *Wandrahm* from Hamburg which arrived on 8 August 1854. However, we cannot be certain that this is the relevant family. Carl became Carl Wise, anglicizing his name as many German settlers did.

Susan Ann Barnard was born on 14 February 1839 at Pitney Somerset. Susan came to Australia with her parents David and Athalia Barnard and six siblings aboard *the Douglas*. The ship left London on 25 September 1849 and arrived on 11 January 1850.

With a total of 21 deaths on the voyage the ship was called The Death Ship in South Australian newspapers², and there were lengthy complaints published about the officers and surgeon. David & Athalia were not shown on the passenger list in the newspaper and the State Library passenger list (compiled by Diane Cummings)³ records them and a 13 year old son as well as a Barnard child dying on board the ship on 19 October 1849 of Diarrhoea.



The barque Douglas 1850

¹ Written by Marion Argus with input from Peter Harford and Jenny Carollo

² South Australian Register 12 January 1850

³ Bound for South Australia website

Looking for a new life and finding only tragedy and hardship, Athalia died from Typhus Fever only a few days after their arrival. She was only 29 years old. Susan Ann's poor father was left with four children to settle in this new country.

After Athalia died there was a Coroner's Inquest of which there is a detailed report in the newspaper. This shows that conditions were poor and Athalia received little or no treatment for her illness from the doctor on board. The following is an extract of the report⁴:

The poor woman's remains lay in an outhouse; and a more deplorable state of emaciation could not be conceived. George Mayo, Esq., M.D. stated that he was called at 9 o'clock on Tuesday night by Mr. Emery, landlord of the "Joiners Arms", to see the mother of a family whom he had taken in, and who seemed in great distress for want of a sleeping place. On seeing the deceased, he (Dr Mayo) found her in a dying state. He directed warm wine and water to be administered and hot water bottles to be placed to her feet, but that nothing would have any effect. Warm brandy and water, and warm broths were also given, but nothing would excite the pulse in the least. She spoke a few words incoherently. He remained with her for an hour, and directed the landlord to have somebody to be with her during the night. She was laboring under typhus-fever. Death was caused by prostration resulting from fever.

The evidence of her husband David was reported:

David Barnard, husband of the deceased and a passenger by the same ship, who himself looked very ill, was examined and stated that he left the ship on Tuesday morning, sending his wife in a cart to Adelaide, with the children. The ship's doctor had seen them, and said deceased would be alright when she had fresh air. She could not walk unsupported out of the ship and was led by two seamen and lifted into the cart.

Next saw her at the "John Bull" eating-house kept by Mrs. Smith. The landlady would not let the family stop, as deceased was so ill. It was about six o'clock in the evening and she left in half an hour. Had deposited 10/- with the landlady. It had not been returned. Hired a cart, and came to the "Joiners Arms".

Deceased was ill on board for seven or eight days. He found no fault with the ship's doctor, but some of the passengers complained of him. He had sago and arrowroot of his own on board. Got a little wine also. The wine was not allowed by the doctor. Had to buy that on board. Some of the pork was very rough and bad. Sometimes complained to the first mate of it. One was obliged to take it or none. The ship was kept clean, for their own sakes, by the women.

The doctor approved of deceased's removal and said she would be well in a day or two. Deceased was always healthy until she entered the Douglas a bustling, hardworking woman as ever lived. Had no complaint to make of any person on board ship. Never saw any medical comforts given away, on the voyage, but a little sago to himself.

Isaac Emery, landlord of the inn, also provided evidence:

He saw the last witness (David Barnard) with cart load of goods in Currie Street, not knowing where to find a place for his family. He said his wife was ill. A fellow passenger came up and said that his wife and children were turned out of the "John Bull". The husband said, "Oh what will my poor wife do?"

⁴ South Australian Register 24 January 1850.

Witness took his own cart to the eating house and ascertained that she had been put into another spring cart and driven up to the other end of Currie Street, to seek a cottage to live in. Went in pursuit of the cart and found deceased in it with the children. The woman looked very ill. The cart conveyed them to his inn. A bed was made and the large room given up to them. Fetched Dr Mayo, who promptly attended. She died about five o'clock, on Tuesday morning. Witness and another sat up with her alternatively all night.

Edmond Arnold, another passenger described the conditions on the voyage:
"He was a friend of the deceased and the family.....Knew that deceased was ill on board ship for at least one week. The general treatment of the passengers on board was curious. Witness complained numberless times and had the captain's fist in his face, who threatened to bring five of his men down and thrash all the passengers.

The passengers were kept short of the agreed supply of water and preserved meat and several other articles on board. The doctor was very inattentive during the early part of the voyage. Indeed he was seldom seen. He was sent for but did not show. On one occasion, when two or three were dying daily, the doctor was told to come, He replied "Let them die and be damned." Two bottles of medicine, marked No. 1 and No. 2 appeared to be all he had to give and were ordered apparently indiscriminately.

The witness was ill of cholera but recovered. He received no attention whatever. Others were similarly served. The officers of the ship conducted themselves so indecently that no respectable female could be comfortable. There could be no question that there was sickness to a great extent when the ship arrived in Port notwithstanding Dr Duncan's report. Several passengers could not walk. Throughout the voyage he never saw any medical comforts whatever given away. Had to pay two shillings per 1lb for sago. The Captain was habitually drunk and seldom seen."

The Coroner summed up, expressing his opinion that an enquiry into the general state of the Douglas would be made by Government. The Jury agreed to its importance and returned a verdict of "*Died by the visitation of God, from Typhus Fever.*"

The Douglas was an example of a "*Cheap Ship.*" These were described in the newspaper in the following way:⁵

"The cheap system as we understand it, is that for 15 or 20 pounds each adult passages to Australia, are secured with food on a certain scale, but no liquors are allowed. At the same time it is understood that the captain will supply in moderate quantities to the passengers at reasonable cost; and the owners or characters accordingly lay in a quantity for sale to the passengers. But it is not odious that the Captains also lay in private stores for sale and generally make a handsome profit, while, probably the stores of their owners are not touched.

The consequences of this system are inconceivably demoralizing and abominable. The Captain, perhaps previously a steady and respectable man, finds it for his interest to encourage drinking and sets an example. This is quickly followed by the surgeon and the officers.

The passengers on board The Cheap Ships are frequently men reduced by misconduct from a previous good position or by "ne'er do well's", young blackguards shipped off as nuisances. These gladly join in the general debauchery and we have heard instances of some of them selling half a dozen suits of clothes, presents from friends and other valuables, at most ridiculous prices, in order to be enabled to

⁵ South Australian Register 15 January 1850

indulge in their vicious propensities. Nor were their orgies confined to drinking; gambling was equally prevalent and licentiousness of the worst description.

According to a statement, unblushingly made by one of the officers of the Douglas, in a public conveyance, the Captain was drunken, the surgeon was drunken and the mates were little better; and as for the latter, he boasted that they had nothing to do but make the married men drunk in order to have their will of the wives.

From all we have heard indeed, it appears that no species of debauchery remains unperpetrated in these cheap ocean hells! It is very disgusting to write in these terms, but as the statements are all too true, we consider it a stern duty to expose such foul doings, in order that all interested may be enabled to take measures to prevent their recurrence."

On 11 February 1850, the Captain of the ship Lewis Tobias Douglas appeared in the Magistrate's Court and was convicted on a charge of selling spirits on board the ship contrary to the Passenger Act. The Act provided a maximum penalty of 20 Pounds but he received the minimum of 5 Pounds. A trivial cost for killing over 20 people.

Athalia was buried in West Terrace Cemetery Adelaide leaving a bereaved and bewildered family to cope with their new life. Susan was 11 years old. She had lost at least one two younger sibling at sea before they arrived in this strange new land and now her mother as well.

Athalia was the daughter of John and Ann Wheller of Pitney Somerset. She married David Barnard at Somerton, Somerset on 4 May 1837. David was the second eldest child of **Thomas and Amelia Barnard**. David was one of nine boys and he had only one sister named after her mother, Amelia.

We have been able to trace six of David and Athalia's children although we believe two had died before they left for Australia and we may have missed some. The details are:

David Bernard Christened 16 July 1837

Susan Ann Christened 3 March 1839

Mary Ellen Christened 14 February 1841

James Christened 5 Mar 1843. A burial was located for 24 April 1843 for a James Barnard but we are not certain it is this James.

Justina Christened 28 Apr 1844. Buried 18 May 1846. Given it is an uncommon name, we assume this is for David and Athalia's child.

Martha Jane Christened 18 Jan 1847

Susan Barnard was 11 years old when she lost her mother and was the eldest daughter in the family. Her older brother David was 13 years when he gave evidence at his mother's inquest. Susan would have had to assume a lot of responsibility at a very young age. However by the age of 16 years, Susan had married Thomas Symes who was an older man and widower with a 13 year old daughter.

Eight days after the marriage Susan gave birth to their first child. The marriage to Thomas couldn't have been a happy one for by the age of 25 and four children later Susan went to live with Charles Wise.

Much searching of records failed to uncover a marriage certificate for these two, perhaps because she had not legally separated from her first husband. Charles was 26 years old and they had four children⁶:

⁶ Details courtesy of Jenny Carollo

Charles, born 31 March 1864 at McBeans Pound, near Blanchetown. Charles never married and died 9 December 1912 at Parkside Mental Hospital from Pulmonary congestion which he had for one month, and exhaustion three days. Late of Morgan, SA. Occupation: Labourer. Buried: West Terrace Cemetery.

Susan Ann, Born 2 November 1865. Married David Harford 4 January 1884 at Adelaide. Died 22 March 1946 at Magill SA Buried Cheltenham Cemetery.

Cecilia Ellen : Born 1 August 1867 at Blanchetown, SA (Birth registered as "Cicil"). Died 14 May 1956. Buried at West Terrace Cemetery.

Married: 7 May 1898 at New Church, Hutt Street, Adelaide, to John James McPharlin, bachelor, labourer, son of Daniel McPharlin. Cecilia was 31 at the time of her marriage, but gave her age as 26, probably as John was only 23! Cecilia's occupation listed as "Cook".

Cecilia and John had four girls and three boys.

According to Cecilia's daughter-in-law, Jean McPharlin, Cecilia never talked much about her early childhood. However, it is of interest that as a small child Cecilia had to round up cows; never had any boots/shoes to wear; worked on stations 'up north', in particular Kidman's property 'Buckland Park', Port Gawler Road. She only ever spoke about her brother 'Dave Wise' and no other family members. Cecilia and Dave were born sixteen months apart.

David Born 20 December 1868 at McBeans Pound, near Blanchetown.

David entered service with SA Railways on 10 March, 1882, aged 14 years. He held various positions as porter, signalman and goods guard.

Married: 26 May, 1896 Elizabeth Ann Ellery Edwards, 32 year old widow (nee Collins) at Wesleyan Parsonage, North Adelaide.

David was selected, among, others, for duties requiring trained and efficient men on the Western Australian Railways at the request of the Authorities. Salary ranged from 7/- per day (Ten pounds per annum) to 8/- per day. David is recorded in the Directories as being in W.A. from 1901 to 1910.

Elizabeth subsequently took divorce action against David with the decree absolute being granted on 5 March 1906. We are not sure what happened to David but he may have remarried in 1921 in Adelaide. There is a death for a David Wise in 1948 in Adelaide, but still has not been confirmed as this David.

In 1871 at the young age of 34, Charles died of a heart attack while rescuing a sheep from a river, leaving Susan with eight children. Susan remarried in 1877 to Samuel Runholm. The Runholm and Harford descendants tend Charles' gravesite at Roonka Station near Blanchetown, South Australia and often hold family reunions there. Charles and two of Susan's grandchildren are also in this grave.

Susan had three separate families which makes research very complicated and not all the details of these have been included.

Acknowledgment:

Faye Driver of Adelaide, from the Runholm branch of the family has provided a lot of valuable information in this research. Faye shares with us a common great, great, grandmother in Susan Ann.



Seated: Susan Ann Runholm formally, Wise, Symes, nee Barnard.