

# former TIMES

GLAMORGAN SPRING BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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## FROM OUR SECRETARY

It has been some time since our last issue, time has just flown by, and we do apologise for our laxity. We hope you enjoy this issue of Former Times.

We are pleased to include an article by our North American correspondent Dr John Carter on a political prisoner John Berry and his connection to Van Diemen's Land.

We also mark the recent passing of Life member Grace Freeman, with a tribute from Judie Hastie. And, notice from Amos Family Bi Centenary Committee on the marking of the arrival of Meredith & Amos families in March 1821.

Remember this newsletter is for all, and articles are welcome and gladly accepted. If you do have something of an historical nature, especially to do with our area, the Society is happy to include it in future issues.

We have communicated to Members, as a result of the State & Federal Governments' proclamations about COVID-19, your Committee has taken the decision to close the Society Rooms for the time being. We will monitor the situation and hopefully get back to normal as soon as possible.

Our next General Meeting is not scheduled until 8<sup>th</sup> May, whether this goes ahead or not will depend on the situation and advice we receive closer to the date.

Please every one, respect the situation and stay safe.

### Society Membership

Membership of the Glamorgan Spring Bay Historical Society stands at 94 financial and Life members.

Recent new members include Josephine Fenn-Smith, Michael Meredith, Christine Woods, Vicki Hill, Margaret Evers, Julie Hawkins, Rae Campbell, Lyn Hatton, Jennifer Agius, Francine Targett and Hilary Burden. We welcome you all to the Society.

Late last year the Society recognised the work of former members Craig and Jennifer Johnston, with a morning tea and a Certificate of Appreciation presented to them. As well as being a past President of the Society, Craig was a Glamorgan Spring Bay Councillor for many years and represented the Society on Council.

*Peter Huttemeier*



## THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF A “PATRIOT” POLITICAL PRISONER

BY: JOHN C. CARTER

### INTRODUCTION:

Between December, 1837 and December, 1838, there were at least 14 recorded armed and violent incursions from United States into Upper Canada. These unsanctioned attacks constituted what is referred to as the Patriot War, or the 1838 Upper Canadian Rebellion. For their involvement, a total of more than 1,000 men were arrested for treason and piratical invasion. One of those captured near Prescott at the Battle of the Windmill in November of 1838, was a man named John Berry.

November 2019,\* marked the 181<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Windmill. It was the second last incursion of the Patriot War, and it proved to be the largest military engagement evidenced during the 1838 Upper Canadian Rebellion. Much has been written about events associated with this episode, but very little has been penned about individuals involved in this skirmish. This article will focus on one of these men, namely, John Berry.

### BACKGROUND:

John Berry was born on October 8, 1798 in Chatham Centre, Columbia County, New York. Around 1822, he married Rachel Whissel [Whistle, Weisel].\*\* Her parents were Georg Wissel and Anna Sophia Vreeland. They were involved in the timber cutting business, which necessitated the family to move frequently back and forth from New York State and Upper Canada. Family records indicate that between 1823 and 1836, John and Rachel had six children. There were three boys (Harvey, Asa and Luther), and three were girls (Martha, Lucy and Mary). They were raised in Rutland, Vermont. At some juncture in the 1820s, John Berry sailed with Gideon King on Lake Champlain. In the January 2, 1861 issue of the *Ovid* [N.Y.] Bee, comments in an interview by a man claiming to be John Berry provided further information about his earlier life. Berry claimed that he had fought in the War of 1812 at the Battle of Lundy's Lane. Later he became a resident of Salina, New York, and had run a boat called the *Potter* on the Erie Canal. He continued in the boating business until 1838. Not much more is known about John Berry's early life, and

it is unclear when and why he moved permanently to Upper Canada. He purchased his land in 1836, and by 1837, he was listed as a farmer owning 200 acres on the 6<sup>th</sup> Concession of Elizabethtown, Upper Canada. He was also engaged in the lumbering business there. While in Upper Canada, he lived and worked on his own, while his family remained in Rutland, Vermont. It is probable that John Berry moved back and forth between Upper Canada and Vermont, as in May of 1836, his youngest son Luther was born in Rutland, Vermont.

### BERRY'S REBEL INVOLVEMENT:

Locally, John Berry was regarded as an “ardent Patriot,” and he was known to be a strong supporter of Republican causes. Because of his political stance, Berry was incarcerated in the Brockville Gaol at the outbreak of the 1837 Upper Canadian rebellion. On his release in December of 1837, he fled from Upper Canada, and became a refugee in Columbia County, New York. There he fully connected himself with other disaffected Canadian exiles and their American sympathizers. He also joined the local the Hunter's Lodge, a secret society which supported the principle aim of helping to overthrow what was perceived in some quarters in United States, as being “tyranny” in Upper Canada.

Later he participated in the unsuccessful Patriot Army attack on Prescott, and was captured at the Battle of the Windmill. In his deposition taken upon capture, Berry said that he had been “...engaged by Captain Benedick at 16 dollars a month to assist in fortifying an island between Ogdensburg and Morristown as winter quarters for the Patriots preparatory to their attacking Canada.” Berry claimed that he had boarded a steamboat [the United States] at Oswego, New York, wanting to land at Sackett's Harbor, and then found out that an immediate armed attack was going to be made into Canada. Following his capture, he was incarcerated at Fort Henry. Subsequently a trial/court martial in Kingston was held. There John Berry was charged with “piratical invasion,” and convicted of “high treason and feloniously invading the Province of Upper Canada.”

*H.M.S. Buffalo (above)*



His fate was sealed when Sir John Colborne sent a despatch to the Marquis of Normanby, the then British Home Secretary, on September 27, 1839. Writing from Montreal, Colborne noted that; "The convicts from Kingston, in Upper Canada, arrived early this morning, and have been forwarded to Quebec to be embarked on board the *Buffalo*." The *Quebec Transcript & General Advertiser* of September 30, confirmed the prisoners' movements to Quebec, and reflected upon their demeanour; "The arrival and departure of the convicts, occasioned but little sensation. They in general, we understand, kept up their spirits until they were actually on board the *Buffalo*, when, on seeing the preparations for their security and on the convict dresses being put on them and their hair cut off, they became alive to the degraded state in which they had reduced themselves." The newspaper concluded that these men "...are now on their way to Van Diemen's Land, the *Buffalo* having sailed this morning." At age 40, Berry would be one of the oldest men to suffer this fate, as a consequence directly related to his active participation and direct involvement in the Battle of the Windmill.

### TO VAN DIEMEN'S LAND:

Berry and his comrades were sent to the British penal colony of Van Diemen's Land. He and a total of 91 other English speaking colleagues, were transported there as political prisoners, aboard *H.M.S. Buffalo*. The journey took 137 days, and the *Buffalo* sailed over 16,000 miles. It anchored off of Hobart Town on February 12, 1840, and the prisoners were unloaded on February 15. An unnamed officer on board noted that; "We have had one of the most delightful passages that could be made, as to the weather-a fair wind all the way; and, with the exception of a few squalls, with rain near the line [equator], not more than a strong breeze. The prisoners, on the whole, have behaved remarkably well." Perhaps not a description that the prisoners would support or agree with!

Labourer and ploughman John Gilman from Jefferson County, New York, sent a letter home on his arrival in Van Diemen's Land. He wrote that; "We have arrived safe at the place of our destination, and were landed on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of this month, and conveyed to one of the convict stations called Sandy Bay, about two miles from Hobart Town. Our employment is working on the roads from half past six in the morning until near sun down.

Our fare is of the hardest. We have  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a pound of beef or mutton, 1 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  pounds of bread, one pint of water gruel for breakfast, and the same for supper, and our flour and bread is of the poorest quality. Our labor is of the hardest-mending roads. We have no teams of any kind, and have to do all the carting ourselves." Gilman's description is what he, John Berry, and the other recently arrived political prisoners would have all experienced at the Sandy Bay Probation Station, on the outskirts of Hobart Town.

Their arrival there immediately brought mixed and varied reactions, all which were recorded in local newspapers.

The *Hobart Town Advertiser* of February 21 was not complimentary. It said; "These men are a body of Americans of the lowest order, many of whom have been convicted of offences against the laws of their own country, and are now under conviction, not merely of a political offence, but also of the most atrocious acts of wanton robbery, arson and murder."

The February 21 [Hobart Town] *True Colonist* concurred, saying that; "They are not true patriots fighting for their liberty, nor are they even Canadians. They are Borderers from the States-Bushmen like our sawyers, splitters and fencers-who being attracted by the troubles in Canada, took arms not to support the cause of liberty, but to gratify their love for rapine and plunder."

The exiles were portrayed in a February 20<sup>th</sup> editorial published in the *Launceston Advertiser*, in a more positive manner. The editor wrote that; "It will be an exceedingly hard case if the Canadian prisoners, who have recently arrived in Hobart Town by the *Buffalo*, are treated like common felons... We look upon them as mere prisoners of war, and have a *right* to be free from all restraint which is not absolutely necessary to prevent their escape."

### LIFE IN A PRISON COLONY:

These prisoners were collectively employed at building roads and working on other government sponsored projects. They were considered as political prisoners, and as a result of a direct order from Sir John Franklin which had been communicated directly from England, these men were not mixed with common felons, who had also been transported to Van Diemen's Land from other British colonies. They were not to be shackled, nor flogged, nor whipped. Berry and his fellow convicts laboured at the Sandy Bay, Lovely Banks, Green Ponds, Bridgewater, and Salt Water Creek/River Probation Stations. During this period (1840-1842), his prison record showed several minor transgressions. On November 16, 1840 while at Lovely Banks, he was charged with being absent without leave. When at Green Ponds, on January 5, 1841 he left that station without permission. He returned with flour in his possession which he could not account for. For these violations, he was given three days' solitary confinement on bread and water. By July 1841, he was at Salt Water Creek/River Probation Station on the Tasman Peninsula, where he was issued his ticket of leave (a form of probation). He received this indulgence on February 10, 1842. On July 5, 1842, he was reprimanded for exposing himself. Soon after, Berry was hired out as a shepherd. He was sent to a remote part of northwestern Van Diemen's Land to work on his own. An Absolute Pardon was issued to Berry, along with eleven other Patriot colleagues, on June 27, 1845. With this official verification of his status, he finally became a free man. Berry sought permission to marry Elizabeth Donahoo on February 7, 1854, but if the marriage ever took place, it was never registered. Little did Berry realize that because he was a

free man, he did not require any government permission nor sanction for him to marry!

Unfortunately, according to most accounts, Berry remained ignorant of his freedom until 1857. On eventually being informed of his pardon and then being “discharged from further servitude,” he immediately began to make arrangements for his departure from Van Diemen’s Land, and his eventual return home. Tasmanian shipping records indicate that a John Berry embarked from the port of Launceston, in November of 1857. In the interview with the *Ovid* [N.Y.] *Bee*, Berry claimed to have worked for Elisha Hathaway Jr., the American Consul in Hobart Town for six years, until finding an American whaler to return home on.

### HIS RETURN HOME:

However, it is uncertain exactly when John Berry left Van Diemen’s Land and returned to the United States. Various printed accounts contain different dates and often conflicting information. It is therefore confusing to confirm the actual details of his journey home. One of the first accounts was contained in an article entitled “A Returned Patriot,” which was published in the *Burlington* [Vt.] *Courier* of July 22, 1852. It suggested that Berry was in Rutland, Vermont on July 21, 1852, after landing in Boston six weeks previously. The voyage had taken 17 months. A story in the *Oswego* [N.Y.] *Daily Journal’s* February 8, 1855 edition, and also re-printed in the February 9, 1855 issue of the *Skaneateles* [N.Y.] *Democrat*, offered a slightly different story. It suggested that Berry had received assistance in 1841 from President William Henry Harrison’s administration for his liberation. On obtaining his freedom, the article claimed that Berry had worked his way back aboard the whaling ship *Herald*, commanded by Captain Lewis. This voyage took place over a period of 43 months, in return for a free passage back to the United States. It is alleged that at the end of this trip, John Berry landed in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Another account had Berry sailing home aboard a whaler commanded by Captain Luce of New Bedford, Massachusetts. On the voyage, the vessel went to New Zealand, the Society and Sandwich Islands, and subsequently obtained a cargo of whale oil in the Bering Straits, before also returning to New Bedford. This trip took 2 years and 4 months, and Berry landed there in mid December of 1860. He then travelled on to Syracuse, New York.

In standard published interpretations of these events,<sup>\*\*\*</sup> it is believed and has been suggested that Berry worked his passage back to his home aboard an unnamed, New York based, south-seas whaling vessel. Commentators and authors have written that he finally reached New York City early in June, 1860. There Berry disembarked, and then commenced his return to Canada. From New York City, the freed prisoner journeyed to Cape Vincent, New York, and crossed over the St. Lawrence River to Kingston. He then took a ferry to Brockville, arriving there after a long absence of 22 years! His amazing story was recorded in



Original plan of the Saltwater Creek Probation Station, located on the Tasman Peninsula, Van Diemen’s Land.

[Credit: Graham Ryrie, Colebrook, Tasmania]

the *Brockville Monitor* of June 19, 1860, and it was repeated in the *Stratford Beacon* of June 29, 1860. These details included the fact that Judge William H. Draper, the former Solicitor-General of Upper Canada, was also aboard the steamboat. The irony of this was that Draper had been the Crown Prosecutor at Berry’s trial at Fort Henry, and was in part responsible for his conviction! According to the article, the judge recalled Berry and “...shook hands with him and generously helped him onward.” It is probable that Berry shared his circumstances with the editor of the newspaper, as the article ended by noting that; “In conclusion we would say that this brief narrative is published with Mr. Berry’s permission.” This connection with the media and the public would become a focus of John Berry’s next chapter in his life story.

Many of the people John Berry had previously known had died, including his wife Rachel, on April 23, 1850. In addition, his children had grown up to become adults and to have families. Because of his brief residency in Upper Canada and a

long intervening period in Van Diemen's Land, he met strange and unfamiliar faces at every turn. He also no longer owned property there, as all his capital assets had been seized and sold by the government of Upper Canada, this as a consequence of his rebellious actions and for being charged and convicted of piratical invasion and treason. With really no reasons to stay, Berry would subsequently leave Canada, and move to live in Oswego, New York. This would be the beginning of a very transient life for John Berry. In an April 14, 1861 letter written by Ezra Conant to his daughter Ann Conant Berry, Conant noted that; "Mr. Berry was here the other day. He thinks they will come back soon." Ann was married to John Berry's youngest son Luther, and at the time the couple were living in Rochester, New York. Her father had written to them from St. Johnsbury, Vermont, and what he said, indicated that John Berry had visited there in the spring of 1861. It was reported that he was looking for his long lost children.

### THE STRANGE END TO JOHN BERRY'S LIFE

For over the next decade, John Berry roamed the states of Vermont and New York. He looked for his various family relatives, told his story of incarceration to anyone who would listen, gave public lectures for which he received food, shelter and money, and provided interviews to many newspapers. An example appeared in the [Rochester, N.Y.] *Democrat & Chronicle* of July 21, 1873. In it, a reporter commented on this aspect of his life; "This is the man who imposed upon the papers of Watertown, Troy, Saratoga, Schenectady and other places, with a story as to his sufferings in Van Dieman's Land." The article added that; "He has several times been shown an imposter; but has managed to recover his reputation for veracity in each instance, and, taking new routes, has gathered to himself money, sympathy, newspaper notices, etc."

In the July 18, 1873 issue of the [Hudson, N.Y.] *Evening Register*, a similar message was echoed. The editor wrote; "The story, was a good one and the woe-be gone appearance and almost inaudible voice of sadness of the old man always brought him promptly the money he needed." The article concluded by saying that; "We do not know whether to doubt entirely the story he told or not. We do know that he varied it suspiciously at different places."

To complicate matters further, newspaper accounts of the return of a man from captivity in Van Diemen's Land, named Samuel Washburn, first appeared in newspapers in Vermont and New York State in March and April of 1870. This individual claimed to have arrived directly from the penal colony after being "...exiled by British cruelty for 32 years," as a result of being "a member of that small band of heroes who, in 1838, lent themselves to the assistance of the rebellion in Canada." The March 26, 1870 article in the *New York Times* concluded that; "...it might be well for our Government to make this inquiry: Are there any more Americans, survivors of the Patriot War, yet in compulsory exile?" The *St. Johnsbury [Vt.] Times* of

April 1, also included a short article about Washburn, noting that; "At the age of 68 years he returns with the hope of finding some of his kindred above the sod." In the March 31, 1870 edition of the *Rutland [Vt.] Herald*, the Washburn story was also told. It was noted that on his arrival, that; "Notice of his return was spread through the place, and he was not long in collecting a considerable sum of money from those that were not acquainted with men and things about there thirty years ago." This article ended with a shocking revelation. It claimed that the newly returned exile was not Samuel Washburn, but a convicted counterfeiter named Henry A. Ballard (sometimes Bullard), who was "playing the part of an imposter."

Newspaper stories about Ballard continued to be published. In the February 20, 1873 [Saratoga Springs, N.Y.] *Saratogian*, the following was printed; "Henry A. Bullard, the 'Van Diemen's Land exile,' is a *fraud*...he is sort of a harmless rummy." The editor of the *Troy [N.Y.] Daily Times*, added in the February 21 issue that; "His story about being an exile in Van Diemen's Land...is all a fabrication." In the April 5 edition of the *Saratogian*, Ballard was characterized as "...one of the greatest imposters that travel the country." Yet in another story, published in the [Jamestown, N.Y.] *Daily Journal* of April 22, 1872, and which was entitled "An Episode of the Canadian Rebellion-An American's Experience in a British Penal Colony," an unnamed reporter interviewed an individual that he identified as being Samuel Washburn. This man said that he had been chopping wood in Canada, just across the St. Lawrence River from Clayton, New York. In November of 1838, he claimed to be walking along a road in the vicinity of Prescott when the Battle of the Windmill broke out, and was arrested by British authorities. After being charged and sentenced, he was transported; "...with some two hundred others. They were crowded like sheep into the hold of a prison-ship. After a tedious and stormy voyage they were landed at Sydney." A strange account if true, as the English speaking North American political prisoners, including Washburn, were landed at Hobart Town,<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> not Sydney. The real Samuel Washburn would have been well aware of that and would not have made such an error in his interview.

### CAN A CONNECTION BE MADE?

How did this information relate to the John Berry story? Another account of a man named [Samuel] Washburn,<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> was printed in the July 21, 1873 edition of the *Buffalo Commercial*. It noted that this person had appeared in cities in that part of the country, and told who ever would listen, "...a most pitiful story" of his life as a convict in Van Diemen's Land. The article claimed that; "His statements had a smack of the pitiful about them, and whether true or false, were always listened to with interest." The piece added that on his return from the penal colony that; "...he found it profitable to tell the story of his sufferings. It paid so well that he traveled and every where told about the same tale. The result was he lived an easy sort of life, many being willing to give him a pittance

when they learned the trial he had undergone.” The story also concluded with a shocking revelation that this man’s real name was John Berry! This information was also confirmed in the [Ogdensburgh, N.Y.] *Daily Journal* of July 22, 1873, with the statement that the man calling himself Samuel Washburn was an imposter, and was really John Berry. In addition, an obituary published in the July 23, 1873 issue of the *Syracuse* [N.Y.] *Daily Journal*, alleged that; “John Berry, alias Samuel Washburn, the Van Diemen’s Land imposter, who has gulled the people of this city several times, by his plausible story, died at Burlington recently.”

These details seemed to replicate several earlier accounts circulated in newspapers published in the fall of 1860 in New York, New Hampshire and California. They all related similar stories about a political prisoner’s life. These stories mirrored details of narratives and accounts provided by Samuel Washburn/John Berry/John Bateman. However, there are no existing records of a John Bateman being held at Fort Henry in Kingston, his name is not in the manifest of *H.M.S. Buffalo*, nor was John Bateman listed in Van Diemen’s Land/ Tasmanian Convict Records, which were connected with prisoners transported there as a result of their involvement in the 1838 Upper Canadian Rebellion. What could be the possible connection? John Berry’s wife Rachel was first married to a man named John Bateman Jr. Is it possible that John Berry on his return from Van Diemen’s Land, first passed himself off using the pseudonym of John Bateman, and then later spun his tales under the alias of Samuel Washburn? No definitive conclusions about these matters have yet been arrived at, nor conclusive proof uncovered to adequately answer these questions.

## CONCLUSION:

On his return from Van Diemen’s Land and after his brief visit to Upper Canada, John Berry remained in the United States. There for the most part, he lived out the rest of his life in the states of New York and Vermont. He was often described as being a pauper who lived in abject poverty. In his obituary, the *Plattsburg* [N.Y.] *Sentinel* of July 18, 1873, and also in the July 21, 1873 edition of the *Essex County* [N.Y.] *Republican*, noted his return to the United States, “...where he has since led a wandering life.” John Berry died at the Burlington City, Vermont, Poor House/Farm, on July 15, 1873, at the age of 82. The only tangible remnant that remains of him today appears to be his personal family bible. On the fly leaf, the following is inscribed; John Berry’s Book Steel not this book for the fear of Shame for here you see the owner’s name. John Berry, Rutland. A somewhat ironic comment considering his life experiences!

John Berry was one of the few Canadian based Patriots who actually participated on the rebel side during the 1838 Upper Canadian Rebellion. In addition, he was one of a handful of men who had lived in Upper Canada, who was captured, tried, convicted, and then transported to Van Diemen’s Land. He was one of the last North American political

prisoners to leave Van Diemen’s Land, and one of the last of the members of the Patriot Army, most of whom, who would eventually die in complete obscurity in United States. While John Berry contributed a small part to Canadian, American and Tasmanian/Australian histories, he remains a mysterious figure to the end, and was a man who had lived an unfortunate, sad, and strange life!

***DR. JOHN C. CARTER is a Research Associate, History and Classics Programme, School of Humanities, University of Tasmania. Please contact him at drjohncarter@bell.net, if you are related to John Berry or have any further information about this fascinating yet mysterious man.***



## ENDNOTES:

\*2020 marks the 180 anniversary of *H.M.S. Buffalo* taking the North American political prisoners to Van Diemen’s Land and New South Wales, and its last voyage before its destruction and sinking by a typhoon in New Zealand. This year, is also the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original Sandy Bay Cairn being erected in Hobart by the Canadian government. A celebration of this event will be held on September 30, 2020, at the re-located and re-furbished cairn in Hobart.

\*\*Rachel Berry was married first to John Bateman Jr. in 1812. They had two children before John’s death on September 27, 1820. In 1822, she married John Berry.

\*\*\*The author and several of John Berry’s and Samuel Washburn’s family relatives, continue to research the apparent discrepancies in the various versions of this chapter in John Berry’s story.

\*\*\*\*After courts martial and trials, a total of 92 English speaking rebels were sent to Van Diemen’s Land aboard 3 ships. The *Marquis of Hastings* took 9 men, and landed in Hobart Town on July 18, 1839. The *Canton* delivered 4 more there on January 12, 1840. The remaining 79 prisoners were transported aboard *H.M.S. Buffalo*, and it arrived on February 12, 1840. Subsequently, 58 French speaking Lower Canadian rebels travelled on to Sydney aboard the *Buffalo*. There they were unloaded and sent to the Longbottom Stockade at Parametta.

\*\*\*\*\*Both Washburn and Berry were acquainted with each other. At one time they each lived in Oswego, New York. Both were captured at the Battle of the Windmill, and were sent to Van Diemen’s Land as political prisoners. They would have worked together at the same probation stations, until receiving their tickets of leave. Washburn and his wife former convict Ann Scott both left Van Diemen’s Land for Port Albert, Gippsland, on August 3, 1846. There is no mention of his return to the United States in family records, but articles in American newspapers of July, 1868, indicate that a man of that name arrived alone in New York City, and began making his way back to Buffalo to search for relatives who lived nearby in Wales, New York. However, family records do indicate that Ann (Scott) Washburn had eventually returned to United States, where she died in San Francisco on December 1, 1850, and was buried there, in the Yerba Buena Cemetery.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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**20TH & 21ST MARCH, 2021  
 –A COMMEMORATIVE WEEKEND IN THE SWANSEA AREA**

**T**he weekend of the 20/21 March 2021 will mark the 200th Anniversary of the arrival in Hobart Town of the ship “Emerald”

Aboard this ship, chartered by George Meredith and Joseph Archer, were the Amos brothers Adam and John and their families. On arrival George, Adam and John chartered a whaling boat and set off to explore the unsettled East Coast of Van Diemens Land in hope to find suitable land to settle. Land was allocated according to the amount of capital a prospective settler had.

George Meredith named his grants (as we know them today) *Cambria, Riversdale* and *Springvale*, whereas the Amos brothers chose to settle at Cranbrook. Between them their original grants totalled 1,700 acres. Within Ten years their holdings had increased to 6,400 acres which encompassed *Cranbrook House, Glen Gala, Gala Mill, Glen Heriot* and *Melrose*.

*Cranbrook House, Glen Gala* and *Gala* are still occupied by the descendants of these early settlers.

Commemorations will include a Church Service and the unveiling of a Cairn by our present Governor followed by an amble around Cranbrook.

On the Cairn there will be two plaques, one to acknowledge the first people of the district and a

second to remember the Amos brothers and their families.

The weekend will be a time for families to see where their descendants settled and meet up with other family members with many people travelling from interstate and overseas.

Amos Family Bi-Centenary Committee.

For more information go to our website: [amos200.org.au](http://amos200.org.au)



*Cranbrook House*



*Circle marking Cranbrook area*



*Delivery of items to a Swansea Beach c.1900s*

**MACKIE EXHIBITION SWANSEA OPENING**

**2 MARCH 2020**

*Frederick Mackie - Quaker Plantsman and Friends*

This is part of a speech given by Ann Cripps at the opening of the Frederick Mackie exhibition at the East Coast Heritage Museum on Monday 2nd March 2020:

Quaker plantsman Frederick Mackie is a significant figure in the history of Swanport as Swansea was known and the east coast of Tasmania when he visited his friends between 1852 and 1854.

His journals record the colonial, social and economic life of the time, and also the flora and fauna of the areas he visited, all enriched by his own sketches.

Frederick Mackie was born at Norwich February 1812. His father ran the family nursery, known as the Norwich Nursery, which covered an area of 100 acres.

Frederick was invited to accompany Robert Lindsey on a mission journey to the Australasian colonies. As Travellers Under Concern they would visit fellow Quakers in the colonies and check on the condition of the convicts.

Robert Lindsey and Frederick Mackie left England in July 1852 arriving in Hobart Town on 11 November where they were warmly received by Quaker George Washington Walker and his family. During the two years that Frederick and Robert were touring the colonies, they stayed with the Walker family at Narryna in Battery Point on two occasions.

On two occasions Frederick Mackie and Robert Lindsey visited the Quakers on the East Coast of Tasmania staying at Kelvedon with Francis Cotton and Dr. George Fordyce Story. Frederick Mackie found the vegetation of the east coast was quite different to what they had experienced in other parts of the Colony.

He writes in his journal entry of 7<sup>th</sup> October 1854:

*I greatly admire the bold and varied character of this rocky coast. The rocks are mostly huge upright square masses of basalt, red and grey with lichens just above high water mark, below this they are black.*

*The pink Mesembryanthemum is often seen depending from their summits and a variety of other plants find a lodgement in their crevices. The picturesque Casaurina quadrivalvis with its broad rounded head crowns their summits. Fifteen miles from the shore rises in bold relief Schouten island, and still further off Maria Island, both of them of considerable elevation. The blue and violet tints which they assume blend in pleasing harmony with the blue of the sea and sky though very distinct from either.*

During their visits to the East Coast they enjoyed visiting their Quaker friends and meeting other settlers.

His journal of 16<sup>th</sup> December 1852 records:

*Yesterday F.C. took us to see some of the adjoining farms belonging to 4 brothers of the name Amos. Here is the highest cultivation and the best land we have met with. 75 bushels of wheat per acre has been raised off a plot of 4 acres.*



Frederick Mackie

*They were now cutting their hay which as in other parts of the colony is corn of some sort, cut green as grass does not usually produce the quantity as it does in England. The clipped sweet briar fences which are now in blossom perfectly straight and enclosing 25 acre fields have a beautiful appearance but they are beginning to prefer the white thorn (hawthorn) of which we saw one fine fence.*

*An excellent orchard is a common appendage to a farm: apples, plums, cherries and peaches thrive and the produce is often great, they make a good deal of cider.*





*FC's sons are complete sons of the forest; they delight in the bush, fell timber, split shingles, mow, reap, shear and plough, indeed their varied accomplishments would surprise our English farmers.*

The 4<sup>th</sup> October 1854 Frederick's journal records:

*We stopped at George Meredith's and here to our surprise and pleasure met with Dr. Story...*

*Went with our friend Dr. Story to his neighbour's Edwd Car Shaw who with his wife very hospitably entertained and lodged us which was most acceptable after a long journey. Notwithstanding my fatigue the loud and incessant croaking and chirping of frogs in a creek very near my lodging place almost prevented my sleeping; as day dawned their noise gradually ceased.*

Frederick Mackie's own intense love of nature made natural science an important subject in his education programme and nature walks the main method of teaching botany. Gardening and drawing from nature were also taught and the elder boys learnt latin and land surveying.

I hope you enjoy this Exhibition with Botaniko's paintings and drawings inspired by the Journals of Frederick Mackie when he visited his Friends in Van Diemen's Land.



*Beautiful watercolours by Botaniko being enjoyed by patrons*



*Curator Maureen Martin Ferris introducing the exhibit (above) and Chris Tassell (Heritage Consultant) opening the Exhibition (below)*



## VALE GRACE

Grace Freeman (nee Castle), a life member of the Glamorgan Spring Bay Historical Society and my friend, has died at the age of 91. It is time to record the valuable contribution she made to the Society and to the compiling of local and family history.

Her early life was spent on the family farm “Rosedale” at Little Swanport. She wrote,

“Life for me was simple and uncomplicated...in a peaceful, safe environment with my parents, brothers and sister.”

It was a close knit, fun-loving and hard-working family of six children, Grace, her younger sister and her four brothers. They had to walk two miles through bush and across paddocks to attend Ravensdale State School. Grace had not quite finished grade six when her mother’s ill health meant she was needed at home and her formal education ended.

In 1952 she married George Freeman, another ex-Ravensdale pupil, and they lived wherever George’s work took them before settling at his family home at Rocky Hills. There they raised their own close-knit, fun-loving and hard-working family of eight. When her children were grown and doing well Grace was able to indulge her interest in history. She loved researching – she said it was like a jigsaw puzzle, collecting lots of little pieces until they all came together and made a pattern. When I moved back to the East Coast she heard I had the same interests and came to visit me. We were able to help each other, and Grace and George were both early members of the Historical Society. Together we three organised the Ravensdale School reunion on 1999 and put together the subsequent book, “Ravensdale Remembered”. This was not first experience of publishing; she wrote two pieces for the Castle family history “Castle Daydreams” and in fact suggested the title of that book. She and George wrote the Freeman family history in 2000 and in

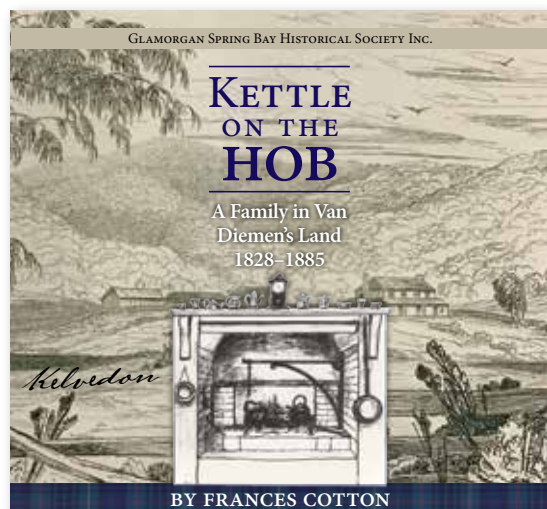


GRACE FREEMAN

2002 she finished her own memoir “Silver Tales & Golden Memories”. George wrote his own ‘lifetime of memories’ in 2002 as well.

Both Grace and George were regular volunteers at GSBHS our various locations over those early years. Whether in mounting exhibitions, answering research queries or cataloging, their willingness to help and their local knowledge was a great resource. The table we gather round for our meetings was restored by George. The quiet patience and steadiness of purpose honed on those eight kids was a help in stressful moments, and that dry Castle/Freeman sense of humour didn’t go amiss either.

After George died Grace continued volunteering as long as she was able, and always took an interest in our doings. They are both sorely missed. May the memories long remain.



## KELVEDON KETTLE UPDATE

The working group for “Kettle on the Hob” reprint have amassed an enormous amount of material to enhance and add to the hopefully upcoming reprint of this much loved little book written by Frances Cotton. If any members have any material relating to the Cotton Family, Kelvedon and East Coast Quakers the group would gladly accept any material you think could be included. The very real danger is that there is so much material that the reprint could become a very different book so a severe selection and culling process has to occur when we can all safely meet to finalise the new content.

Plus a note from the desktop publisher... since the lockdown due to Covid-19, projects like this have had more focus, we hope to get the artwork finished this year.

## ONE FROM THE ARCHIVES?

A small yellowed piece of writing paper was left on my desk, for those of you who are familiar with my desk, it is a wonder I found it all. I am not aware of the provenance or the source of the paper. Perhaps I was under the weather and some kind soul felt that I had suffered for too long with Bronchial Asthma and could do with a cure for such a condition, which I thankfully do not suffer from or that my non drinking was testing their patience. I have transcribed the recipe as shown below.

*Mrs W.R. Hodgson West Hobart*

*Cure for Bronchial Asthma.*

*Get a bottle of Gilbey's Gin, then fill a Mason Screw top bottle with seeded Raisins, tight & pour Gin over & leave for a fortnight- put in frig or bury, then take 3 raisins and a little gin after each meal.*



*Mrs Hodgson said she took it for about 6 years, but it cured her and now she always keeps Gin Handy & takes it if she gets a cold. She says Bronchial Asthma is really caused by nerves she had it bad for several years and couldn't get her breath, says it will take about a month to take effect(sic) stops you getting a cold too.*

It is no wonder the dear lady did not catch a cold or was even aware of the Bronchial Asthma, I am not sure as to where we should file this gem, if anyone does suffer from such a condition perhaps they can try this and advise us of its efficacy.

*Noel Stanley*

## WE NOW KNOW BETTER!



*Black Flag DDT advertisement from 1960 (!)*

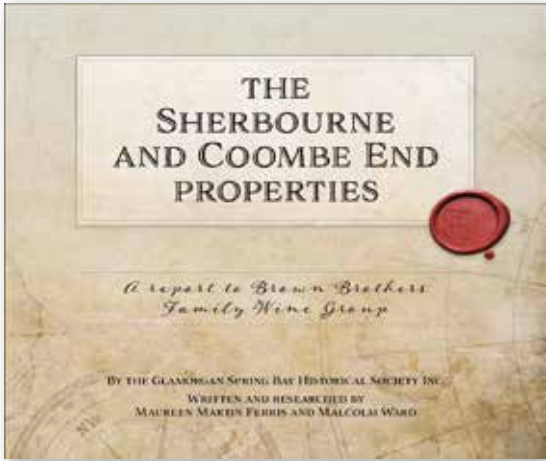
## KEEP A LOOKOUT FOR THIS BOOK

One Hundred Years of the May Shaw, published by Craig Johnston, is a book to look out for in late 2020 to mark the centenary of the May Shaw Health Centre. The fascinating 104-page historic and social account of bush nursing and healthcare on the east coast begins with details of Nurse May Shaw's life, including early photographs. Through letters, journals and articles of the day, the history and soul of May Shaw comes alive in a real way. Accounts from local people and fantastic imagery come together in a well-designed and highly readable book that will make a great present for local families, as well as visitors keen to meet some of the distinctive personalities of the East Coast. Special commemorative editions are expected to be printed, so keep an eye peeled for expressions of interest to secure your copy.

Written and edited by author Hilary Burden (a new resident of Swansea), designed and desktop published by Diane Bricknell, hopefully available in time for Christmas 2020.



**"THOSE WHO DO NOT REMEMBER THE PAST ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT."**  
 GEORGE SANTAYANA, 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER



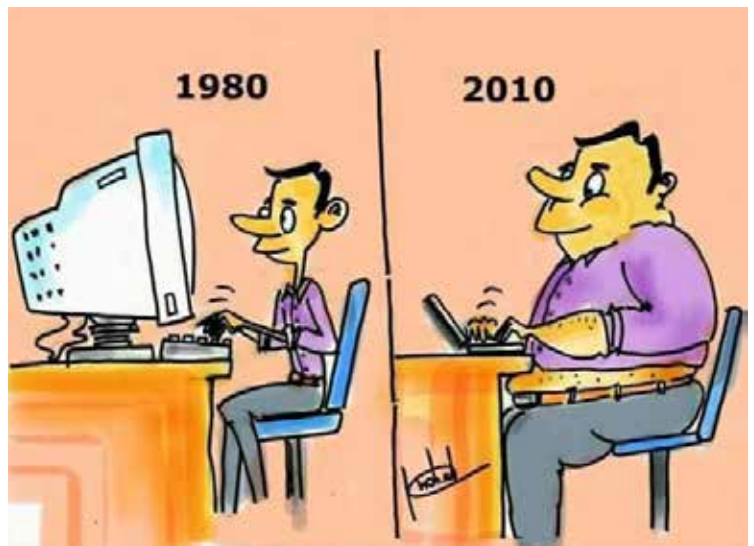
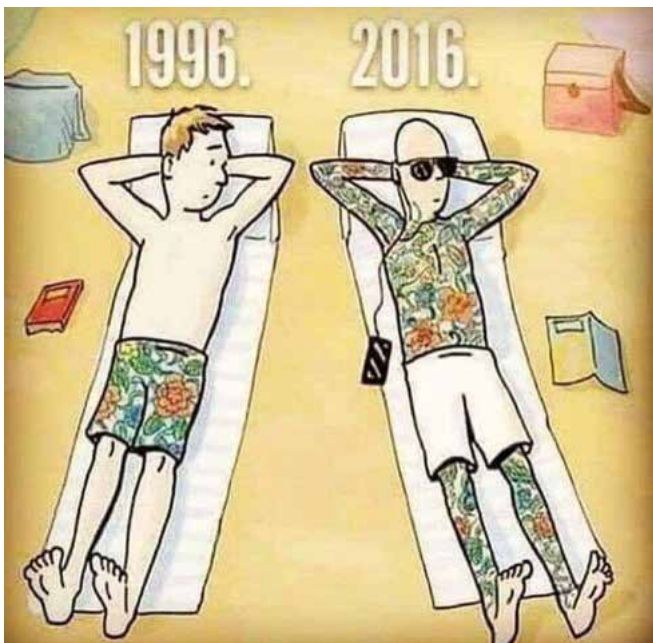
The Society has handed preliminary published copies of the report commissioned by Mr Ross Brown of Brown Brothers Family Wine Group into the history of the properties Coombe Ende and Sherbourne Lodge to Brown Bros.

This report was compiled by Maureen Martin Ferris and Malcolm Ward after extensive research and delving into the many sources and resources of TAHO, Lands Department, GSBHS, Glamorgan Spring Bay Council, and some sources that only they can access !!!!

It was many hours of detective work and sleuthing and it is hoped that if Brown Bros want to publish an enhanced volume of better print quality, that the Society can be involved in the production of this interesting read.



POSTSCRIPT FROM THE PRESIDENT, please take care to distance yourself from fellow earthlings, wash your hands more than usual and stay safe. The Glamorgan Spring Bay Historical Society has lost too many valued members due to natural causes in 2020 and we really don't want to add to that number due to Covid-19. So please stay safe, we value your membership and involvement. *Diane Bricknell.*



FOR A LAUGH! THESE COMPARISONS ARE SO TRUE!

