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Exploring Spirit Helps to Uncover a Colony's Assets

The Cock family were Bible Christians from the Kirkcaldy/Dysart area of Fife, Scotland. The first of the Cocks to leave Britain were Robert and Catherine (his second wife) who sailed on the *Buffalo* with six children.

Less than two weeks after the *Buffalo's* arrival Hindmarsh and Cock challenged (unsuccessfully) the site selected by Light & Kingston for the new settlement.

Robert formed a partnership with fellow passenger William Ferguson as a carrier and merchant. He bought three town acres in Adelaide and part of a fourth. By June 1837, just six months after his arrival, Robert acquired new premises in Hindley Street and advertised his services as a salesman, auctioneer and appraiser as well as offering merchandise from arriving ships.

In 1838, he did minor exploration south of Adelaide with a small party, which was "the first to reach the Murray directly from Adelaide, and to determine the northern boundaries of the lake."

When finding the route to the northern shores of Lake Alexandrina, Robert followed the Onkaparinga River. This exploration later led to a land division including Balhannah where he established a property called Mount Annan. In a creek near the present town of Bridgewater, Cock's packhorse got bogged. The creek became known as Cox's Creek.

In 1838 at the Governor's instigation, he went exploring on Eyre Peninsula and entered the lagoon, which Governor Gawler later named Franklin Harbour.

However, things did not go well at Mount Annan and Robert was caught in the economic and financial turmoil of the 1840s and declared insolvent. He held on until 1852 when he went to the Victorian gold fields, then Portland, and finally to Mount Gambier where he established a brewery.

Robert must have reported favourably about his Adelaide adventures to his family in Fife, because within a few years of



his arrival, his father and siblings all came to Adelaide: his father Robert Snr, Alexander, James, John and Christina in 1838 and William in 1840.

From information provided by Peter Mussared
Robert's great-great grandson
March 2014

Robert COCK [1801-1871]

Married

[1] Betty WISHART in 1823
at Kilmany, Fife, SCOTLAND
&

[2] Catherine CHRISTIE in 1832
at Abdie, Fife, SCOTLAND

Departed in 1836 from Portsmouth
Arrived 28 December 1836 on the

Buffalo

Children of Robert:

Elizabeth (1824-1852) m James BENNY

Christian (1825-1867) m Henry CHAMBERS

Nancy (Agnes) (1828-1848) m Mr KELLY

Robert (1828-1884)

James (1833-1901) m Magdalene WILLIAMS

Catherine (1835-1880) m William WARREN

Jane (1838-1862) m Edward SQUIRE

John (1841-1914)

William (1844-?)

Annie (1847-1861)

