

THE GENESIS OF THE PIONEERS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Compiled by
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October 12th, 1946.

Your Executive Committee decided at its last meeting that a record in convenient form should be prepared of the genesis of our Association, because so often matters of this kind are left, until in the natural course of events, the persons who took a leading part in forming an Association such as ours have all passed away, and the compilation is eventually done from scrappy notes by persons quite unfamiliar with the events which they have to describe.

In the case of the Pioneers' Association of South Australia the position is happily different, as there are a sufficient number of the original executive still with us to ensure that a correct record can be made for future reference.

HOW THE ASSOCIATION CAME INTO BEING.

The first letter on our file is dated November 8th, 1934, and was written by the Hon. Secretary of the Australasian Pioneers' Club, Sydney, addressed to T. C. Borrow, 68 Sheffield Street, Malvern, South Australia. "I enclose a copy of a letter received from M. Marryat who, I am inclined to think, is a lady. At any rate I would appreciate it if you could find time to ascertain the position and advise me.

"In the interim I am posting you, under separate cover a copy of our memorandum, and articles of association."

The letter to which reference was made reads: "223 Childers Street, North Adelaide—There are several descendants of pioneer families here who are interested in the formation of a Pioneer Club, and having received your address I am writing to ask if it is possible for you to give us any information with regard to starting one, such as its objects, rules, etc.; any help in this direction would be very useful, which is my excuse for troubling you. (Signed) M. Marryat."

The next letter is dated December 1st, 1934, and was addressed to Sir Henry Simpson Newland (extract only): "As the outcome of a letter forwarded by Miss Mabel Marryat to the Australasian Pioneers' Club, Sydney, I have been asked to ascertain whether, in your opinion, it would be advantageous to advertise through the public press for the names of descendants of pioneer families in this State. The information thus obtained to be used in an endeavour to form a Women's Pioneer Club, which is Miss Marryat's object, but also to be available to our Club (The Australasian Pioneers' Club) as a means of canvassing for new members, which as you know, are urgently needed. . . . It might be possible to form a Pioneers' Association in this State (on payment of a small entrance fee) of arrivals before the end of the year 1845 as provided in our club rules, instead of attempting the more ambitious idea of forming a local branch of the

Australasian Pioneers' Club.

“This would provide a means of keeping in touch with the pioneers so that at a future date a club could be started If you consider that the interests of our club can be served in the manner indicated in the first portion of this letter, I shall be very glad to assist in any way you care to suggest, but any public announcement should be signed by the President. (Signed) T C. Borrow.”

The mention in these letters of the Australasian Pioneers' Club, Sydney, is accounted for by the fact that both Sir Henry Newland and T. C. Borrow were the official representatives in South Australia of that Club.

On December 12th a letter was addressed to Sir Henry Newland: “On December 1st I wrote to you as the local Vice-President of the Australasian Pioneers' Club for an expression of opinion in regard to a campaign on behalf of the Club.

“As several correspondents are pressing me for replies, may I respectfully ask that the matter receive early attention. (Signed) T. C. Borrow. ”

On December 13th Miss Marryat stated in a letter addressed to T. C. Borrow “with regard to my name being mentioned, that should only be in connection with the formation of a Women's Branch when there is a chance of starting one. I agree with you that a list of pioneer descendants should be first collected before any suggestion is made of a Club, etc.”

On December 14th Sir Henry Newland wrote stating: “I certainly agree with the suggestion that it would be advantageous to advertise through the press for the names of descendants of pioneer families in this State.

“The present time is, as you say, very opportune to make an effort to secure new members for our Club. The information we obtain could be placed at Miss Marryat's disposal. I think it would be advisable to make a complete card index of the names as they come in. I will ask Miss Marryat whether she would be willing to act in this direction.

There should be no difficulty in forming a Pioneers' Association though I see no reason why we should not use the term 'Pioneers' Club' even though we lack club accommodation . . . I have little doubt that one day our Club will be as famous as, 'The Pilgrim' in the United States of America.”

On December 17th Miss Marryat wrote to T C. Borrow: “I do hope you will be able to get the movement in train before the 28th as you hoped, as it will make all the difference you can rely on me to do whatever you want with regard to the names of the women. I am sure once it is started we shall find many keen to join, whatever kind of association, or society is formed.”

On December 23rd an advertisement duly appeared in the Advertiser: “In view of the coming centenary the Australasian Pioneers' Club desire to ascertain whether the time is opportune for establishing a branch in South Australia.”

“Under the rules, descendants of Pioneers who arrived in South Australia before the end of the year 1845 are eligible for membership. It need hardly be said that membership of this Club is greatly prized in the older States.”

“Persons having the required qualification are asked to forward to one of the undersigned addresses, the name of their ancestor, the date (or ship) of arrival, and whether on the paternal or maternal side.

In this letter is a slight reference to an article which had appeared in this column. Signed for the Australasian Pioneers’ Club, (Sir) Henry Newland, 163 North Terrace, and Travers C. Borrow, 68 Sheffield Street, Malvern.”

On December 28th a copy of this advertisement was forwarded to the Australasian Pioneers’ Club, Sydney, with an intimation that “when the expense entailed in launching a club is realised something less ambitious will probably be decided upon... but at least we will have the satisfaction of knowing that at last something definite has been attempted.

In this letter is a slight reference to an article which appeared in the South Australian “News” regarding a suggestion which seems to have been made, it is understood, by Mr. J. S. Rees, for forming a Pioneers’ Club, but there is nothing on the file bearing on this.

On January 4th. 1935, the Australasian Pioneers’ Club wrote to Mr Borrow stating that “unless you receive substantial support, it would be inadvisable for the present to launch a local club with all its attendant expenses, as its failure to progress would reflect upon the parent club,” and on January 14th, in a further letter, it was pointed out that their articles of association, registered under the Companies Act of N.S.W. makes no provision for a Branch. They also considered that the year 1845 should be adhered to “as any extension would be likely to impair the standing as a pioneer club.”

On January 31st Sir Henry Newland wrote: “I am quite in accord with Mr. Walton’s view that it would be impolitic to attempt the formation of a Branch Club in this State. I am sure it would be a failure. I think we ought to aim at getting all those who are eligible to join the club in Sydney. This is the real issue I favour adhesion to 1845. This is not unduly exclusive.”

On April 9th Sir Henry Newland again wrote to T. C. Borrow: “I have been very busy since my return and so have not been able to again discuss with you what action we are to take in regard to those persons who have supplied us with details of their pioneer ancestry. Miss Marryat is very anxious to do something. I certainly think, however, that it would be a very good plan to form a Pioneers’ Association or Society. I suppose that before long we should issue an invitation to all those who are interested.”

On April 15th Mr. Borrow wrote to Sir Henry Newland, in which he states: “I saw Miss Marryat on Saturday. She is most anxious that an early start should be made to get a small committee together to bring the proposed Association of descendants of the pioneers into being. The names suggested for this committee are Mr. C. R. Cudmore, K. C. Wilson, a representative

of the Melrose family, Miss M. Marryat, Miss Lucy Ayers, T. C. Borrow, and yourself as (provisional) President.”

To this Sir Henry Newland replied on April 15th: “I think the names for the initial small committee are quite suitable,” and on May 23rd, Sir Henry Newland wrote: “If we can found an Association or Society on the lines you have indicated we shall be doing a real service to colonial history.”

On May 27th a meeting was held at the residence of Miss M. Marryat, Childers Street, North Adelaide, at 8 o'clock. These present were Sir Henry Newland, Messrs. Alex Melrose, K. C. Wilson, T. C. Borrow, Mrs. Arthur Waterhouse and Miss M. Marryat. An apology was read from Mr. C. R. Cudmore.

At this meeting it was decided:—

1. Sir Henry Newland, being representative in Adelaide of the Australasian Pioneers' Club, Sydney, should be asked to assume the position of provisional President - Sir Henry, upon taking the chair, remarked: “that the formation of some such body was long overdue.”
2. Three possible titles were considered, viz.; The Pioneers' Association of South Australia, Pioneers' Descendants' Association of South Australia, Founders' Association of South Australia. The first mentioned title was decided upon.
3. That a general committee be appointed to consist of a president, a vice-president, and honorary secretary, honorary treasurer and eight committeemen, Sir Henry Simpson Newland to be the first President, and Mr. Alex Melrose, Vice-President; T.C. Borrow to pro tem honorary secretary; and Mr. Gerald Hack, honorary treasurer.
4. That the committee should be Messrs. C.R. Cudmore, Dr. A Grenfell Price, K.C. Wilson, T.C. Borrow, Mrs. Arthur Waterhouse, Miss M Marryat and Miss K. Kyffin Thomas.
5. The objects of the Association were decided upon:—
 - a) To perpetuate the memory of those persons who faced the dangers and endured the trials of early settlement, and laid the foundation of the State of South Australia.
 - b) To keep alive the sentiments of reverence and admiration of their deeds.
 - c) To preserve an accurate record of the founders and pioneers of the State, and to collect and take care of portrait, relics and historical material associated with them, and the early days of the settlement.
 - d) To establish fraternal and cordial relationship between all those united by this common bond. The qualification for membership was to include all persons whose ancestors arrived in South Australia before 31st December, 1845.

That the subscription should be fixed for ordinary members at 5/- per annum.

That His Excellency the Governor be asked to be patron of the Association.

That the drafting of constitution be left in the hands of Messrs. Alex Melrose and K. C. Wilson.

That a suitable form of application for membership be left in the hands of the honorary

secretary for printing.

The question of life membership was deferred for further consideration.

A second meeting of the provisional committee was held at the Piccadilly Restaurant, Rundle Street, Adelaide, on the evening of June 12th, 1935. Those present were. Sir Henry Simpson Newland (in the chair), Mr. Alex Melrose, Mr K. C. Wilson, Miss M. Marryat, Miss K. Kyffin Thomas and T. C Borrow (provisional honorary secretary).

At this meeting Mr. Alex Melrose handed in a draft constitution prepared by himself which, with slight additions, was (temporarily) accepted.

The honorary secretary was instructed to confer with Mr. K. C. Wilson with regard to the drafting of an explanatory circular to accompany the application form for membership of the association. Mr. Alex Melrose reported that the following gentlemen had agreed to act as vice-presidents: Mr. John C. Morphett, Mr. Edward Hawker and Sir John Melrose.

The honorary secretary reported, amongst other things, that an application form and circular letter had been duly printed and that a bank account had been opened in the Savings Bank of South Australia and that a request had been made to the Association for assistance in the making of a moving picture featuring the early history of South Australia.

On July 29th a third (and final meeting of the provisional committee) was held at the residence of Miss M. Marryat, Childers Street, North Adelaide, at 8 p.m.

At this meeting it was decided that a semi-public meeting should be held in the Town Hall, Adelaide, on September 19th, 1935, the Lord Mayor having kindly placed the banquetting hall at the disposal of the provisional committee.

The work of the provisional committee came to an end, when at the Town Hall on the evening of September 19th, 1935, Sir Henry Simpson Newland, in the presence of a crowded meeting, formally proposed "That it is desirable to form a Pioneers' Association in South Australia," which on being seconded by Mr. Stewart Duff, was carried unanimously.

The notes of this meeting were supplied by Miss Kyffin Thomas and were subsequently embodied in the records of the first meeting of the newly formed Association.