



First To Be Christened in South Australia

James Africaine Parsell was born on board the *Africaine* on 5 September 1836 somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean between 2 and 4 o'clock in the morning. His parents were George and Mary Parsell, who with their son John, were travelling to South Australia where George was engaged as a labourer for Dr Charles Everard.

Records show that James Africaine Parsell was born in both South Australia and in Stepney, London. Surely there could not be two persons with the same unusual name! As it turned out both were correct, for he was baptised in South Australia, and in accordance with the Law, a ship's Captain was required to register births at sea on return to England at a Church in Stepney. In her account of the voyage of the *Africaine* and the early years of the colony, diarist Mary Thomas mentioned that the first christening in South Australia took place on New Year's Day 1837. Penelope Hope in a footnote in her book *The Voyage of the Africaine* portrays this baby to be James Africaine Parsell.

James and his brother John were soon part of an extended family with three sisters and two brothers being born between 1839 and 1846 around Adelaide. George left the employment of Dr Everard, but what he did to support his family is not known. Given that the subsequent children were each born in a different environ of Adelaide, he was obviously itinerant.

We know about George's remuneration from a letter Dr Everard wrote to his sister in England in May of 1837 wherein he wrote "*I have lost our labourer—he would not work for me longer although I had agreed to give him 13/- [thirteen shillings] a week, but he could earn more, he said, and if I did not choose to advance him he would leave, and accordingly he did.*"

After spending some years in the colony of South Australia, George and his sons moved to Victoria and were known around Lauriston and Malmsbury in 1859. These are among the locations where the "Gold Rush" was enacted. During this time, Mary and the Australian-born children remained in South Australia, but they came together as a family again in Victoria around 1864. Later they moved to Redesdale near Bendigo. From there, eldest son John and his clan went to the Goulbourn Valley district, whilst James Africaine and his offspring settled down at Langley in Central Victoria on 250 acres.



From information provided by Michael Halley
March 2014

James PARSELL [1836-1924]

Married

[1] Mary BARRY on 30 April 1859

&

[2] Christina SHARPE in 1876

Born on board ship
Arrived 1836 on the

Africaine

Children of James & Mary:

Mary (1861-1935) m James GUTHRIE

John (1866-?) m Edith SLATER

Children of James & Christina:

Ada (1895-?)

Andrew (1896-?)

George (1898-?)

William (1898-?)

