



Walter

THOMSON [1808-1882]

&

Jean

THOMSON [1819-1885]

(née CRAWFORD)

Married in Bothwell, Lanarkshire, Scotland

Departed 12 September 1838 from Scotland

Arrived 26 December 1838 at Holdfast Bay  
on the

Prince George

Children of Walter & Jean:

Ann (1839-1909) m Andrew MATSON

Janet (1840-1926)

Jane (1842-1881) m Adam RICHARDSON

Mary (1843-1894) m Thomas FREEBAIRN

William (1844-1915)

Walter (1846-1940) m Margaret MORRIS

John (1847-1926) m Margaret HAY

George (1848-1895)

Helen (1850-1858)

Alexander (1851-1905) m Jane NIELSEN

Robert (1852-1907) m Mary LAIDLAW

David (1854-1946) m Elizabeth GALLOWAY

James (1856-1930) m Elizabeth HAY

Andrew (1857-1859)

Andrew (1859-1944) m Eleanor MILLER

Isabella (1862-1936) m Robert SMITH

## *A Successful Contractor with Vice-Regal Appeal*

After arrival from Scotland in 1838, Walter ('Watty') and Jean Thomson settled first at Black Forest, where within a decade, Walter had earned enough to buy his own land. According to a grand-daughter, "he had a lot of land on South Road at one time, but he was a speculator and tho' made much, lost most."

Walter was a contractor for the Overland Telegraph and family rumour has it that he contributed to the deforestation of Black Forest, making use of the local timber to supply the line! It was a profitable venture – the Telegraph Reports of 1856-7 state "Probable cost: Mr Walter Thomson's contract, 300 miles @ £40 per mile = £12,000." In 1858 it was reported, "Mr Walter Thomson, the contractor, has used every diligence and, considering the many great obstacles in his way, the work is as far advanced as could be expected."

He also supplied broken stones for the construction of South Road over Tapley's Hill that conveniently passed near his new home at O'Halloran Hill, whimsically named 'Faery Knowe'. By now, Walter was an experienced farmer with an interest in the latest farming machinery and he was a chief witness at a government enquiry into cereal diseases in 1868. He was, however, "known to be more resolute in [his] determination to resist payment of rates than any other individual in the district."

'Watty' was a well-known raconteur and the Thomson home was a popular meeting place. Governor Sir James Fergusson even invited him to join a vice-regal tour after visiting 'Faery Knowe'.

Walter and Jean's large family provided them with happiness and prosperity. The couple were buried in the old Happy Valley cemetery that, within fifteen years, was submerged by the new Reservoir. It's ironic that Walter's resistance to sharing the local water supply in the 1860s should be reflected in his 'removal' after death to make way for a growing city's water supply.

From information provided by Lois Watson,  
Walter & Jean's great great great granddaughter  
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