

Pioneers of the Mid-North



Francis STAKER (1806-1871)

married

Harriet PAIGE (1810-1894)

on 18 January 1834 at Pagham, Sussex

Departed 27 July 1837 from Gravesend, Kent

Arrived 17 October 1837 at Holdfast Bay on the

Katherine Stewart Forbes

Children of Francis & Harriet:

Francis (1834–1869) m Susannah HALLS

William (1840–1917) m Ruth HAINES

Ellen (1842–1927) m Josiah EDWARDS

Edward (1844–1899) m Jessie WYATT

Eliza (1846–1926) m Henry SLOAN

Fanny (1849–1890) m Jesse BRINKWORTH

Jane (1850–1914) m William WYATT

Alfred (1852–1917) m Catherine GIBSON

When Francis and Harriet Staker and their three-year-old son, also named Francis, arrived at the colony, their ship brought news of the death of King William IV, and Queen Victoria's accession to the throne.

It was by all accounts a comfortable journey. In a letter to her mother, Harriet wrote, "We had a very pleasant voyage, and no bad weather. Neither Frank, myself, or the child had one day's sea-sickness all the way out." But although Harriet seemed to be enjoying her new life, her letter also gives us a poignant reminder of the distance from England and loss of family ties, "Little Frank says he will buy a great ship and fetch you and his grandfather ..."

Frank and Harriet not only quickly found work – with Barton and Bridget Hack – but also a two-roomed cottage with a garden, provided by the Hacks rent-free, on Pennington Terrace. Frank was paid £4 a month plus rations for his work, while Harriet received 10/- a week to char in the Hack home.

The family's dream of their own property was realised when they acquired land at Allens Creek near Kapunda. Devout Methodists, they built a small chapel on the property. But on 12 January 1869 tragedy struck when Frank Jnr – now living at Sandy Creek – suddenly took ill. After telling his wife "I am dying", he died in her arms just three minutes later. He was buried at Allens Creek, beside the family chapel. When Frank Snr died on 7 February 1871 he was buried close to his son.

In 1894 the descendants of Francis and Harriet gave the now unused chapel to Lutheran settlers in return for its proper upkeep and maintenance of the two graves on the site. In 1906 a three-quarter acre parcel next to the chapel was purchased from the Staker family, on which was built a larger church. However, the old chapel continued to be used for many years as a school. The second church is still in use, and over 140 years later its congregation still cares for the graves of father and son.

After her husband's death, Harriet moved to Caltowie to live with her daughter Fanny. Harriet died on 31 July 1894, aged 85, and was buried at Caltowie.

From information provided by Cheryl Williss,
Francis and Harriet's great great granddaughter
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