



Middleton Flour Mill [State Library SA B5691]

Thomas MAYFIELD (1795-1878)

Married

Rebecca TOOLEY (1793-1856)

on 4 May 1818 at Swineshead, Lincolnshire

Departed 6 June 1839 from London

Arrived 26 September at Holdfast Bay on the

Prince Regent

Children of Thomas & Rebecca:

Mary Ann (1819-1905) m William GARDNER

Betsy (1821-1839)

Thomas (1822-1870) m Hannah WALTON

George (1824-1887) m Elizabeth McCARTHY

John (1826-1884) m Agnes IVENS

Rebecca (1828-1922) m Richard DENNIS

Fanny (1830-1902) m William CARTER

James (1833-1899) m Jane DENNIS

Robert (1835-1886) m Elizabeth BLISS

A Farmer of Many Districts

Thomas Mayfield and his family arrived in South Australia in 1839. Although registered as a labourer, presumably to get free passage, he had been a landowner of 40 acres of fertile reclaimed fenland in Lincolnshire. Family legend records that the Mayfields emigrated to provide a warmer climate for daughter, Betsy, who suffered from lung problems. However the opportunity to establish his family in rural pursuits must also have been considered. While suffering the extremes of this country: drought and flooding, heat, bushfires and distance, seven of Thomas's children became successful farmers.

In their search for land to establish themselves the Mayfields had a number of moves. First they lived in Payneham, where they stayed until rural areas were surveyed and opened up. By 1841 they had moved to Section 86 on the banks of Currency Creek where their farming pursuits really began. In their first year they grew wheat, barley, maize and potatoes and took out licences to graze unoccupied Crown Lands. In 1846 Thomas took out two Occupational Licences in the south east which proved to be a disaster. The land had poor drainage during winter months, stock suffered from "coast disease" (later shown to be caused by mineral deficiency), wool prices were low and sheep contracted scab, a disease very difficult to eradicate.

Thomas Mayfield became a widely respected member of the communities of Port Elliot, Encounter Bay, Yankalilla and Inman Valley, where he spent most of his life. He worked hard for his community, being elected to the first District Council of Encounter Bay. He was instrumental in establishing the flourmill at Middleton, judged local ploughing competitions, bred fine racehorses and imported the first merino sheep to the Bald Hills near Inman Valley.

Thomas died at his home in Port Elliot in 1878. His success in life can be measured by the decision to emigrate, giving his descendants the chance to live in a young country of great opportunity, peace, freedom and independence.

From information provided by Pat Uppill,
Thomas and Rebecca's great great granddaughter
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