



An Industrious Wesleyan Farming Couple

**John
WILKINSON** (1811-1871)

Married

Rebecca MAYNARD
(1809-1890)

on 25 July 1833 at St Marys, Enniscorthy, Ireland

Departed 3 December 1837 from London

Arrived 15 May 1838 at Port Adelaide on the

Trusty

Children of John & Rebecca:

William (1834-1894) m [1] Ann WILKINSON
[2] Margaret WILLIAMS

Thomas (1836-1838)

John (1837-1899) m [1] Elizabeth JONES
[2] Mary Jane COWAN

Elizabeth (1839-1916) m [1] Anthony DENT
[2] James FOOTE

Rebecca (1841-1927) m Samuel DAWKINS

Sarah Ann (1843/4-1905) m H J MATHER

Mary Ann (1844-1849)

Alice (1846-1928) m Nicolaus HEDSTROM

Thomas (1848-1931) m Amy HEARN

James (1851-1938) m [1] Mercy JONES
[2] Fanny ROACH

Frances (1854-1896) m John CLOSE

John and Rebecca Wilkinson left for South Australia from Enniscorthy, County Wexford, Ireland with sons William, Thomas and John. After arrival, the family occupied one of three houses John built in North Street off Hindley Street.

In April 1839 John was contracted to extend the Wesleyan Chapel with £600 for timber. Around 1842, he was employed as wheelwright at Ridley's Mill, Hindmarsh and in December 1843 he wrote,

"...he [Ridley] has lately invented a reaping machine which I made for him and assisted a good deal in the invention. I am foreman and have 10 men under my charge."

Wilkinson attended the stripper's first trial and Rebecca baked bread from the grain.

Hindmarsh Chapel, built 1845, had John's support after he bought Lot 63 Milner Street Hindmarsh. In December 1847, John leased [and later bought] 80 acres, Section 94 Mudla Wirra, on the Gawler River and built a mud brick home, 'Woodburn', where the first Wesleyan services in the area were held. Crops were first planted in 1848 and later harvested with a stripper he helped rebuild. As a councillor, John attended the first meeting of Mudla Wirra District Council in 1854, the same year Gawler River Wesleyan chapel opened.

However, John had over-extended himself and to clear debts he sold over 700 acres in April 1860. He opened a school in Willaston and, when a community school was built in 1865, was appointed as the teacher and resided in an attached residence. A trustee, Wilkinson laid the foundation stone for the Willaston Wesleyan Church.

When John died his obituary in The Bunyip read:

"he took an active part in all matters affecting the colony – especially religious and political affairs. ..he was a free thinker, and always advocated civil and religious liberty. He was much respected as an intelligent man and a good neighbour."

Rebecca died at Moonta Bay in 1890 and was buried in Moonta Cemetery.

From information provided by Elizabeth Harris,
John and Rebecca's great great granddaughter
March 2016

