



## Thomas COWLEY (1826-1916)

Married

## Rebecca BEVIS (1829-1926)

on 12 February 1847 in Adelaide

Departed in 1840 from Graves End

Arrived 17 June 1840 at Port Adelaide on the

## Charles Kerr

### Children of Thomas & Rebecca:

Sarah (1847-1926) m John WILLIAMS

Margaret (1851-1945) m Robert CORRELL

Robert (1852-1936) m Marion CHITTLEBOROUGH

Joseph (1855-1942) m Emily BEARE

Thomas (1856-1939) m Mary PARKER

William (1858-1941) m Elizabeth BEARE

Edwin (1860-1953) m Ada HILLIER

Jessie (1862-1958) m Fred I'ANSON

Mary (1864-1938) m Robert CHITTLEBOROUGH

Rebecca Morgan (1866-1867)

Rebecca Francis (1867-1961)

Alfred (1869-1959) m Lily RODGER

Caroline (1871-1957)

Ellen (1872-1873)

Ethel (1875-1974)

## A True Pioneering Couple

Thomas Cowley came to South Australia with his Congregationalist/Non-Conformist parents Robert and Sarah in 1840.

Following his first job at the age of 14 at the Sir John Barleycorn Hotel, he tended cattle for Mr Nieass, six miles up the River Torrens. After two years, he worked for his father at Mount Barker, then for Mr Loud at Willunga. While there, he honed his bullock driving skills by carting the first steam boiler to be used at the flourmill at Noarlunga. All went well until he reached Tapley's Hill when Mr Tapley had to assist with an extra bullock team.

In 1847, Thomas married Rebecca Bevis and began married life at Edwardstown where he worked for 'Watty' Thompson, and drove one of the first Ridley strippers. They then rented a property on South Road near the 'Heart & Hand' and later at Reynella in 1850.

In 1852 Thomas and three others went to the Bendigo gold diggings for sixteen weeks, after which he sold his bullocks, bought a horse named "Billy" and rode home with five pounds of gold wrapped in a scarf over his shoulder. This was enough for him to buy 160 acres on Pimpala Road, Reynella, and to rent another 235 acres nearby.

Thomas and Rebecca became foundation members of the Happy Valley Congregational Church, where four of the family became church organists.

As land became more expensive, they moved to Willamulka three miles from Kadina and set up a farm called *Alabama* and helped to form another church and community. The couple retired and bought a home in Kadina in 1907 where they settled into community life and entertained their family until their death.

Both Thomas and Rebecca were true pioneers, raising a large family, toiling hard to make a go of it in their new land, forming communities that looked after each other and maintaining devotion to South Australia that never wavered.

From information provided by Raymond Cowley,  
Thomas and Rebecca's great great grandson  
March 2016

