



A Resilient Pioneer Loses Her Husband and Son

**Mary Ann
CALNAN** (née BOW) (1804-1883)

Married

Jeremiah CALNAN (1797-1837)
on 24 September 1820 in Bethnal Green, London

Departed 30 June 1836 from Gravesend

Arrived 4 November 1836 at Nepean Bay on the

Africaine

Children of Mary Ann & Jeremiah:

Dennis (1822–1822)

John (1823–1853) m Eliza YOUNG

Mary Ann (1825–1825)

Charles (1826–1898) m Mary Ann WILLIAMS

Michael (1827–1910) m Louisa REEVES

Mary Ann (1833–1890) m Gilbert CLARK

Mary Ann Calnan and her husband, Jeremiah, were pioneers in the truest sense. Looking for a better life for his family, Jeremiah signed on with the SA Company as a Master Cooper and the family departed England on board the *Africaine* on 30 June 1836.

From the outset, it was clear that life was not going to be easy. Mary Ann spent the first night ashore sitting on the beach, holding an umbrella over her sleeping children because no tents could be unloaded. She coped with a lack of shelter and limited fresh water and food supplies while Jeremiah worked at providing barrels and casks for the SA Co's whaling operation.

In 1837, Jeremiah travelled to Encounter Bay with a SA Co Manager but fell ill within a few hours of arriving and died less than 48 hours later. Sir John Jeffcott acted as Coroner at the inquest into his death, and later as the parson when Jeremiah was buried.

Mary Ann and her children had little choice but to remain on Kangaroo Island after Jeremiah's death. When the Company moved their operations to the mainland at the end of 1839, they employed her son John to care for their livestock. The family was one of a handful who stayed on the Island, and somehow, Mary Ann and her children carved out a life for themselves.

Tragedy struck again when John drowned in 1853, barely a year after his wedding and only a few months after his only child was born. As before, the family dealt with the heartbreak. Charles and Michael travelled to the Victorian goldfields and returned with sufficient gold dust to build three houses at Kingscote for the three families. These homes became known as Faith, Hope and Charity - Hope Cottage now houses the National Trust museum.

Charles eventually established a sheep farm at Brownlow, KI. Michael and his family left Kangaroo Island and set up a farm at Edithburgh. It was at this property that Mary Ann died in 1883, aged 79. Her resilience and tenacity in the face of overwhelming tragedy was truly exceptional.

From information provided by Anthea Taylor,
Mary Ann's great great granddaughter
March 2016

