



Southwark, England

## 'A Fine Land for the Hardworking Man'

The Wilson family came from Bermondsey, a major centre of the tanning industry in Southwark, where John Wilson was originally a cordwainer (shoemaker). He migrated as a 'gentleman farmer', and Thomas Grenville Wilson, his son, as 'agriculturalist'.

Unfortunately John Wilson died soon after arrival in 1838, and his widow Mary married widower John Herbert, builder and fellow pioneer who had arrived in Kangaroo Island on the *Lady Emma* in 1837.

Son Thomas Grenville began life in the colony as a sawyer and splitter in the Tiers (Crafers) with his three stepsons from his marriage in England to widow Sophia Marks (née Pullen). One stepson, Thomas Marks, was killed when a loaded timber wagon overturned on him en route to Adelaide in 1838. In 1841, he acquired 160 acres at The Sturt where he established Seaview Farm, which he worked successfully until his death in 1856. He was one of the first five persons appointed on the District Council of Brighton in 1853, and in 1854, in response to the perceived threat of attack by the Russians, he and his sons joined the Brighton and Sturt Yeomanry Cavalry.

Thomas Grenville and Sophie's son Thomas Alfred Wilson emigrated in 1839 on the *Moffatt*, initially working as an apprentice to John Herbert, his grandmother Mary's husband, before going to work for his father at Seaview Farm. By 1844, he had acquired his own property Wardang Farm from which he wrote to a friend in London 'that this is now a land of peace and beauty'. 'This is a fine land for the hardworking man (wages 10/- per week). The soil is fruitful, crops, fruits and vegetables.'

After his marriage in 1850 to Mary Bell, Thomas Alfred taught elocution at Mrs Wilshire's school and gave lectures. He wrote regularly for the *Pastoral Journal*. After his father's death in 1856, he inherited Seaview Farm and continued to work the property as an experimental farm where he invented the side draught to the reaping machine. He also became the first Chairman of the Brighton District Council. He and Mary had 10 children.

In 1860 Thomas Alfred 'went into the wilds of Eyre Peninsula 60 miles north west of Port Lincoln', establishing two sheep stations, Mungarowie and Cooladdie, which were relinquished after severe drought. He then managed a vineyard at South Rhine near Mount Crawford for 5 years.



John  
WILSON [c1779-1838]  
&  
Mary  
CLARK [1779-1851]

Married at St Giles Camberwell, SURREY

Departed 11 May 1837 from Gravesend  
Arrived 20 October 1837 at Pt Adelaide on the

Hartley

Child of John & Mary:

Thomas Grenville (1798-1856)  
m Sophia MARKS (née PULLEN)

Grandson of John & Mary:

Thomas Alfred (1821-1889) m Mary BELL

From information provided by Margaret Lewis  
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