



## *The Colony's First Dentist & Founder of Normanville*

Robert Norman, surgeon dentist, travelled to South Australia on board the *Taglioni* in 1844, accompanied by his wife Sarah (née Hayes), infant son Herbert and mother Mrs Sarah Norman senior.

His family were original subscribers to the South Australian Colonization Project in 1834 and Robert purchased his first land, section D1014, in 1839. Further sections were bought and at the time of his death he was reported as "a large land proprietor in the Yankalilla district".

His first home was in Wright Street Adelaide and the nearby Norman Street is named after him. On 5 October 1844 in the South Australian Register, he announced his dental practice in Wright Street, the colony's first. By December 1845 he had also opened a Daguerreotype studio in King William Street, Adelaide with George Heseltine. It is considered to be South Australia's first photographic business.

In 1847 he moved to "Belle Vue Cottage", east of the G & R Wills warehouse on North Terrace, where he lived and practiced dentistry until his death.

Robert and his wife Sarah had six sons and two daughters. Three sons - Herbert Hayes, Roger and Leslie Norman also became dentists.

He was a man of varied interests. He spoke Gaelic, French and Italian; he was a Shakespearian scholar, played several musical instruments and possessed a fine tenor voice. He was an excellent billiard player and fine swordsman.

Robert constructed a mechanical hand from sea-cow bone for John Coles, a veteran retainer of the, then Governor, Sir George Grey. When the Governor heard of the hand he paid Mr Norman a call and was so impressed by the "ingenious invention" he decided to have it charged to "his private purse." The hand is on display at the Royal Adelaide Hospital medical library.

On 2 June 1849 Robert Norman announced in the *Register* newspaper that he intended forming a township to be named "Normanville" on his property on the Bungula River. After his



Norman's Grave Marker in Robert Norman Street, Normanville

death at his home "Belle Vue Cottage" on 31 October 1883, his body was taken by horse-drawn hearse to Normanville to be buried with his wife and son under the vines and olive trees on his property there.

## Robert NORMAN [c1817-1883] & Sarah HAYES [c1820-1867]

Married on 1 September 1842  
in Westminster, St Anne Soho, London

Departed 12 February 1844 from London  
Arrived 18 June 1844 at Port Adelaide on the

## Taglioni

### Children of Robert & Sarah:

Herbert (1843-1926) m Evangeline DEWHIRST

Alice (1845-1896) m William BRADDOCK

Hugh (1848-1912) m Ena HERBERT

Walter (1850-1918) m Henrietta STEPHENS

Roger (1853-1895) m Emma JONES

Amy (c1856-1857)

Leslie (1858-1895) m Alice BURGE

Lionel (1862-c1868)

From information provided by Michael Smith,  
Robert & Sarah's great-great grandson  
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