



John Bentham Neales c1840
[Source: State Library of South Australia B15386]

The First Member for Adelaide Makes his Mark

John Bentham Neales was born in Plymouth in 1806 and sailed to Adelaide on the *Eden* in 1838. He quickly established himself as an auctioneer and agent and became associated with the Adelaide Auction Company. He subdivided land at Plympton (with Henry Boswarva, 1838), Port Lincoln (1839), where he became first editor of the *Port Lincoln Herald*, Centenary Estate, North Adelaide (1842), Glenelg (1850) and later at New Hamburg near Strathalbyn (1853).

In 1841, he floated Australia's first mining company, the South Australian Mining Association, to work the Wheal Gawler silver and lead mine at Glen Osmond. Then in 1842, he was appointed Government Auctioneer.

Among his many activities, Neales was a prime mover and part financier of John Charles Darke's expedition 1844 to Eyre Peninsula, which departed from Neales' Auction rooms for Port Lincoln.

In 1845 Neales was made an original director of a revived South Australian Mining Association, which acquired copper mines at Montacute and Burra. As an original shareholder in The Monster Mine at Burra, he became very rich. In 1846 he found gold at Montacute. In 1856, he advocated that iron ore be mined and smelted, leading him to be called the Father of Mining in South Australia. Meanwhile he continued to work successfully as Adelaide's leading auctioneer and sold shares on commission in his Auction Mart, keeping registers of available shares. This was reported as the first Stock Exchange in Adelaide, with the largest exchange hall in Australia.

1850 was a notable year for him. He resigned as Government Auctioneer and became Commissioner of the Board of the City, secretary of the Cornwall/Devon Society and a member of the inaugural Chamber of Commerce. In 1851, he became one of the three Trustees of the Savings Bank and was elected to the Legislative Council as the first Member for Adelaide, the beginning of an active political career.

He helped frame the Constitution of 1853, which established responsible government in the colony, and subsequently was elected to the House of Assembly representing Adelaide in 1857-60, Stanley in 1862 and Burra in 1862 - 70, and finally to the Legislative Council. His portfolios included Commissioner of Crown Lands and Immigration.



Home built by J B Neales - Blanche Villa, 34 The Broadway, Glenelg

From information provided by John Neales'
great-great grandson Tom Chapman and
great-great-great granddaughter Sally Grundy
March 2014



John Bentham NEALES [1806-1873]

Married Margaret WILLIAMS
11 July 1843 in Adelaide

Departed 26 February 1838 from Portsmouth
Arrived 24 June 1838 on the

Eden

Children of John & Margaret:

Elizabeth (1844-1933) m Reverend Thomas FIELD

William (1845-1914) m Emma PALMER

Caroline (1848-1873) m John Lyon FIELD

Margaret (1849-1925) m Robert BUNBURY

John (1852-1906)