



[State Library of South Australia, B23349]

John
TENNANT [c1800-1867]

&

Jessie
AITKEN [c1812-1896]

Married at Ashkirk, Scotland
[date unknown]

Departed 6 August 1839 from London
Arrived 19 December 1839 on the

Duchess of
Northumberland

Children of John & Jessie:

Elizabeth (1830-1915) m [1] John HAIGH
[2] Charles STEVENSON

Margaret (1832-1891) m William MORTLOCK

Andrew (1836-1913) m Rachel FERGUSON

Jessie (1842-1935) m John LOVE

Shepherd Leads his Flock Overland to Success

John Tennant was a poor relation of the Tennants of the Glen, Peebles, Scotland. He worked as a shepherd at Easter Essenside Farm, in the border districts where he met and married Jessie Aitken. The couple had three children before gaining an assisted passage to South Australia in 1839.

He quickly found work as a shepherd for fellow Scots, the Messrs Malcolm, tending their flocks first at Dry Creek and then further north on the South Para near Williamstown. In 1844 he was in charge of moving the Malcolm's sheep into new lands beyond Robe, which gained him valuable experience in working in remote and unsettled regions. Under their employ he was able to own stock, registering his cattle brand TE on March 10 1841. By 1845 he was ready to strike out on his own and sold enough of his rams to raise the money to buy Tallala Station at Port Lincoln.

To claim the property he led a party of 14 men and 8,000 sheep in what was the first successful attempt to overland sheep around Spencer's Gulf. Tennant's group set off from 'The Glen' near Williamstown on November 3 1845 and was halted in the heat of the summer at Depot Creek near Mt Arden by a lack of water beyond Port Augusta. It was not until the beginning of July the following year, that conditions were suitable to move the flocks down to Port Lincoln. They did this part of the trip with the loss of only five sheep despite experiencing very trying conditions until reaching Cowell. It was on approaching the hills behind Lipson Cove that the transition into greener pasture was greatest. The journey ended when they got to Tallala on the Tod River near Louth Bay on the August 8 1846.

His lands included an outstation further up the Tod at White Flat, and there was an abandoned station further on again at the Tod Reservoir. He wanted still more land and immediately took out an occupation licence on the select country he had just passed through to create Lipson Cove Station. In surveying this



Map of Lipson Cove Station drawn by John McDouall Stuart 1848

new station, he engaged the services of a skilled draughtsman also new to the area, John McDouall Stuart. They became friends, and on 20 April 1860, during his fourth expedition into the north of Australia, Stuart named his discovery of Tennant Creek in John Tennant's honour.

From information provided by Simon Gore,
John's great-great-great grandson
March 2014

