

*1851*  
**Names and Descriptions of Passengers**

Part of Embarkation	Names of Passengers	Age of Each Adult		Children between 1 & 16	Sex	Initials	Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passenger	Rank		Religion		Nationality		Particulars	
		M	F					M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F

<i>Adams</i>	<i>Miss Adams</i>						<i>Spencer</i>									
	<i>Miss Adams</i>															
	<i>Miss Adams</i>															

# HIGHFLYER

## TO

## PORT

## PHILLIP

A BRIEF HISTORY  
OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF  
SAMUEL AND FRANCES DOBSON  
AND THEIR FAMILY

BY  
WILLIAM T. DOBSON

## DEDICATION

This brief history of a young English couple and their year old baby, who voyaged across the world in a small sailing ship to settle in a new land, has been compiled by their descendants as a fitting memorial, not only of their courage and determination in building a new life together and raising a family in the infant colony of Victoria, but also as an enduring record of the major events of their lives and the lives of their eleven children, so that we who have followed as grand-children and great grand-children may in reading of their lives remember with affection and gratitude the love of those who have passed to us, through the links of family, the God-given and precious gift of life.

May the children who will follow us, in future generations, cherish and remember in their prayers and their memories those whose names and lives are here recorded.

" The moving hand writes -  
and having writ moves on "

The author acknowledges with appreciation the assistance given in the compilation of this brief family history by Jack Dobson and George and Edith Spears without whose constant encouragement and assistance this project would not have been undertaken and completed.

W.T.D.

## THE ORIGINS

The earliest of the family origins so far traced was a Samuel Dobson born in Stepney, London, probably around the year 1780, who followed the occupation of a scapemaker.

England at that time was under the reign of George III who had been on the throne since 1760, and had, a few years before the birth of Samuel, lost the American colonies to the Empire. The last ten years of his long 59 years' reign were to be clouded by insanity.

Samuel married Ann (maiden name unknown), possibly about 1805 when Napoleon was at war with England, Austria and Russia with all Europe at the mercy of the Frenchman. Whilst the number of children to this marriage is not known, a son, William, through whom our family line is descended, was born in Stepney on April 27th, 1809, just two years before the appointment of the Prince Regent (the future George IV) to administer his insane father's throne for the next ten years.

The Regent was far from popular. At 18 he had an intrigue with an actress, Mrs. Robinson, and at 20 went through the ceremony of marriage with a Mrs. Fitzherbert, a Catholic, thus forfeiting his title to the crown. In 1795 he had married Princess Charlotte of Brunswick, parliament agreeing to pay his debts of £650,000. As king he sought to divorce her, but her death in 1821 terminated a struggle and a scandal in which the people sympathised with the Queen. On his death in 1830, he was followed by William IV who reigned for 7 years and in turn was succeeded by his young 18 year old neice, Victoria.

William Dobson, the son of Samuel and Ann, was baptised on July 9th, 1809, at St. Dunstan's, Stepney, the principal Church of England in the eastern end of London, and was a boy of 6 when the Duke of Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815.

At the age of 23 he married, on January 9th, 1833, Mary Ann Kitchen, a 17 year old spinster at St. John's, Hackney, a suburb adjoining Stepney. The witnesses to this marriage were Samuel Kitchen, possibly the father or brother of the bride, and a William Jackson.

The 1800's were a century of great social upheaval in England. The new Industrial Revolution drew millions of people into factory towns, where overcrowding in unsanitary slums bred crime and disease. Poverty was widespread: there was no State insurance against sickness, accident or old age, and no financial relief for the unemployed.

In 1833 was introduced the first effective Factory Act forbidding employment of children under 9 in cotton mills, limiting young peoples' hours of work to 13½ a day.

In the following year, 1834, with the birth of the first child (a son) to William and Ann, the Poor Law Amendment Act was introduced forbidding outdoor relief forcing paupers into the workhouse (which it purposely made repellent) and set up a Poor Law Commission, and in Australia in this same year, John Batman arrived from Tasmania to found Melbourne.

Twelve children were born to the marriage of William and Ann :

WILLIAM	Born 1834	
MARY	1835	
ANGELINA	1839	
MARTHA	September 11, 1840	*(4/10/1840)
CLARI	August 11, 1842	
<u>SAMUEL</u>	October 9, 1844	*(15/12/1844)
ELIZABETH	September 16, 1846	*(1/11/1846)
JOSEPH	October 27, 1848	*(24/12/1848)
HENRY	December 31, 1850	*(2/2/1851)
JOHN	August 9, 1852	*(19/9/1852)
LAURA	1854	
ARTHUR	1857	

\* Baptised at St. Dunstan's on this day.

A census taken on June 6th, 1841, shows the family living at 10 Jubilee Street, Stepney, and the occupants of the house as being William Dobson, 30 years of age, occupation Surveyor. His wife, Mary, 25 years of age, and the children William 7, Mary 6, Angelina 2, Martha 6 months, and a Julia Haley, a 15 year old female servant. All are shown as being born in the County of Middlesex, in which Stepney and much of London is located.

The home which was probably a small cottage was located at the south end of Jubilee Street, a few doors on the western side from busy Commercial Road, on the corner of which, on the eastern side, was a two storey wooden hotel, "The George Tavern", a pub which dated from 1654. The third building on this site, the present day wooden tavern dates from the early 1800's and existed at the time the Dobson family lived a little up the street on the other side.

A Jewish Synagogue built in 1825 still stands around the corner in Commercial Road and backed onto cottages including No. 10, at the end of Jubilee Street. There was from the late 1600's, till recent times, a big Jewish population in that area.

Whilst it is uncertain where William and his wife Mary Ann lived from the time of their marriage in 1833, they resided from 1841 until 1858 in Jubilee Street and moved a mile away in 1859 to 20 Road Side, Mile End (still in Stepney) where they lived till about April 1864.

In May 1865 they shifted to 145 Mile End Road, near the northern end of Jubilee Street. The then 20 year old son, Samuel, (from whom our family is descended) still lived in the parental home. A few doors along Mile End Road was the large Charrington Brewery which is still there today. An earlier resident nearly opposite in Mile End Road, had been Captain James Cook, who lived in Stepney in the mid 1750's between his early world voyages, before the discovery of Eastern Australia.

The entire area of Stepney is only a short distance north of the main Thames dock area, and was the main residential district for naval and merchant service personnel. The historic Tower of London, built in the 10th Century, is only little over a mile away, and this entire district is part of the earliest foundation of London and the kingdom of Britain. Because of the nearby docks, it was the heaviest bombed area in England during World War 2. Number 10 Jubilee Street and surrounding homes were demolished during the war, and is now the site of multi-storey council flats. Number 145 Mile End Road is now the site of a council Bath House and Swimming Pool.

A later census in 1871 taken on April 2nd, shows the residents of 145 Mile End Road as being William Dobson, (Head) Architect and Surveyor, 61, his wife Mary Ann, 55 years of age, Joseph Dobson, unmarried 23, Insurance Office clerk, John, unmarried 19, clerk to Head of family, Laura 17, scholar, and Arthur 14, scholar. Another resident in the house at the time of the Census was a 6 year old grandson, George Thompson, the son of either Mary, Angelina, Martha or Clari.

William died on April 19th, 1875, at the age of 65 of chronic hepatitis and congestion of the lungs. His death was certified by his son, the then 23 year old Joseph who lived at that time at 9 Wetherall Street, about a mile away in South Hackney.

About 3½ years later, his widow, Mary Ann, died at the age of 65 at the home of her son Joseph at 9 Wetherall Road, South Hackney. She had suffered for the last 15 years of her life from a cardiac disease which was complicated by congestion of the lungs a week before her death.

## VICTORIAN ENGLAND

Samuel Dobson was born on October 9th, 1844, at number 10 Jubilee Street, Mile End Old Town, in the Stepney district of London.

Samuel was the second son of William and Mary Ann Dobson. His father was an Architect and Surveyor. Although the second son born, he was in fact the sixth child, being preceded by four elder sisters and one older brother. A further four sons and another daughter were born to the family after Samuel. In all, twelve children were born to William and Mary Ann - 6 girls and 6 boys.

London in 1844 was the increasingly important hub of the growing British Empire. The young Queen Victoria had been on the throne seven years (and would reign for a further 59 years). Some four years previously she had married Prince Albert who was to become her Consort. Military campaigns of conquest were in progress in India and the wealth of the colonies contributed to a high level of prosperity in early Victorian England.

Mr. Charles Dickens was the literary man of the moment. His wonderful stories, reflected Victorian England to itself. The Victorian novel was the great family entertainment and nobody then understood this better than Dickens. He offered his readers a kind of literary hamper, with something for everybody, humour and satire for Father, dark plotting and adventures for the boys, sentiment and pathos for Mother and the girls.

The rich read him, the middle class read him, and working men clubbed together to buy the instalments of his novels. These, and his magazines, were read aloud in hundreds of thousands of homes. They were more a part of the family entertainment than a popular television series is today.

Charles Dickens had achieved fame with his production of "The Pickwick Papers", which he published monthly between 1837 and 1839 - its success was phenomenal. Pickwick became all the rage. In 1838, he published "Oliver Twist", and the following year "Nicholas Nickleby", and in 1840 "Barnaby Rudge".

Samuel's parents almost certainly would have eagerly read, like everyone else, each new novel. His next novel "The Old Curiosity Shop" appeared in 1841 and the year before Samuel was born "A Christmas Carol" was published in 1843. Soon after the infant Samuel's second birthday, "Dombey and Son" was released. When he was five years of age, the greatest of all Dickens works - "David Copperfield" first appeared in 20 monthly parts, priced at a shilling, from May 1849 to November 1850.

In 1847 an economic crisis had hit England and resulted in considerable unemployment and hardship. The year before the vital potato crop had failed in Ireland, and in addition a succession of bad harvests had been experienced in England. After nearly four years of depression, prosperity returned in 1851.

That year, the Great Exhibition was held in the Crystal Palace, and we can suppose that the young 7 year old Samuel was taken to see this huge display of the wealth of Britain's growing Empire. As he learnt to read and write, Mr. Dicken's new books "Bleak House" (1853) and "Hard Times" (1854) would probably have been read, chapter by chapter, in the evenings by the older children of the family.

The 13 year old Samuel would have read, with a boys zest for adventure, of the Mutiny of the Indian Army in 1857. Sometime soon after this, his life long interest in cricket would have begun.

At 15 he would have read Mr. Dickens latest book "A Tale of Two Cities" and at 17 it is probable that Charles Dickens 1861 book "Great Expectations" would have had the same impact on him as the rest of London. It is possible that he may have attended some of Mr. Dicken's readings, and witnessed that year the funeral of the Prince Consort.

The American Civil War had ravaged the United States for some years, until its end in April 1865. At 21 years of age, Samuel no doubt read in the newspapers of the assassination of the American President, Abraham Lincoln.

Between 1837 and 1867 over three quarters of a million people left Britain and Ireland for British North America and nearly another million for Australia and New Zealand.

An economic set-back occurred in 1866 when a crisis developed due to the shortage of raw cotton caused by the American Civil War. A banking crisis was followed by a serious slump in railway investments. These allied economic events caused something of a sudden depression. After the panic of 1866, the British banking system learned how to avert or deal with these crises and henceforth business slid down a hill instead of falling over the edge.

One can only conjecture that this recession may have had some influence in the future planning of Samuel and Frances who were to marry the following year, and to leave for Australia 20 months later.

The year of 1867 witnessed the passing of the Second Reform Bill in the British Parliament, giving the full vote to all citizens. The Royal Albert Hall was opened as a memorial to the late Prince Consort. The Irish Home Rule question flared into prominence with the destructive outrages of the Fenians.

At the age of 22 years and 4 months, Samuel married on February 28th, 1867, Miss Frances Alice Bassford, who was then 17½ years of age. Miss Bassford came from Tamworth in Staffordshire, where she was born on August 15th, 1849.

Frances was the first child of Thomas and Sarah Maria Bassford (nee Jones) who had married in the Church of England Parish Church at Tamworth in the midlands of England on September 18th, 1848. Her father, Thomas Bassford was a clerk in the local coal works and was the son of Thomas Bassford, a Toll Gate Keeper. Sarah's father, who had died before her marriage, was Daniel Jones, a butcher and her mother, after whom she had been named, was the former Miss Sarah Ann Thompson.

The marriage took place at St. Philips Church of England, Stepney, and was performed by Rev. C. R. Oliver. The witnesses who signed the register were Thomas Bassford, the father of the bride, Laura Dobson, the younger sister of the bridegroom, and Miss Edith Bassford, a younger sister of the bride, who was later destined to marry the wealthy Bendigo mining magnate, George Lansell. The marriage certificate shows the occupation of Samuel as being that of a Draughtsman.

## AUSTRALIA

The first child of the marriage, a boy, Samuel William, was born at 6.30 p.m. on October 6th, 1867, at 13 Alderney Terrace, Globe Road, East London.

Twelve months after the birth of their first born they were destined to sail for Australia, where an aunt of the young bride has migrated some ten years previously. The aunt - a younger sister of her mother, was Alice Elizabeth Wallis, who had married a John Wallis, and had gone out to Australia about 1856 - 1860. They had taken up residence in the Lockwood district of Victoria near Bendigo, where they lived for 40 years. John Wallis died in April 1896, aged 64 years and 9 months.

Alice Wallis probably wrote of the new land to her sister Sarah, who had married in September 1848, Thomas Bassford. The Bassford family lived at "Glascote", Tamworth, England.

Their home had fields around, suggesting that it was located outside the town. Six children were born to this Bassford marriage, the first being Frances Alice (1849) later to marry Samuel Dobson, Mary Elizabeth (1854) later Mrs. Ellis, Annie (later Mrs. Balfour) Edith Florence (1856) later Mrs. George Lansell, Charlotte Maria (Lottie) later Mrs. John Frew, Laura Adelaide (later Mrs. Harry Abbott) and the only son, Thomas, who later went to Canada.

It is interesting to note that in later years, Australia was to become the home, not only of Frances, but also her sisters, Mary, Edith, Lottie and Laura, and the parents of the family, Thomas and Sarah Bassford.

A few months before Samuel and his bride, Frances, with their infant son, Samuel Junior, left London for Australia, William Booth had founded and commenced the work of the Salvation Army a few streets away in Mile End. Benjamin Disraeli was Prime Minister, although within a few months he would resign in favour of Mr. Gladstone.

A year after the birth of their son, on October 5th, 1868, they departed from London for Port Phillip on the clipper "Highflyer".

## THE CLIPPER SHIPS

Built and owned by R. & H. Green of Blackwall, London, in 1861 for the China Tea Trade, this sleek three masted clipper was one of the 85 fast British ships whose design and performance as "clippers", between the years 1850 to 1870, included the famous "Cutty Sark" and "Thermopylae", the pride of the British Merchant Service and justly considered by most seamen to have been the fastest ship ever launched in the days of sail.

Although their performances were so good, the British tea clippers were by no means big ships. Scarcely any one of the, registered 1,000 tons, "Cutty Sark" herself having a registered tonnage of 921 and a length of 212 feet. When compared with the four mast barques of the early 1900's, some of which were up to 320 feet in length, with a registered tonnage of over 3,000 tons, they were small indeed.

Moreover, they were 'wet' ships, with their low freeboard, especially when compared with their high-sided predecessors, their keen, fine-line bows, and the way they were driven, they took tons of water on board in heavy weather, which must have been anything but comfortable for their passengers and crew. They were designed as cargo carriers, and the few clippers that were converted to passenger work, like the "Highflyer" had rather restricted and cramped accommodation and facilities.

The lines of the tea clippers never failed to please the eye; their sleekness and beauty satisfied that artistic sense in a sailor, which, though always present, can hardly be described in words. Suffice to say that there was not a curve or line or angle in such boats, which did not carry out the idea of perfect proportion and balance. And it is just this balance in design which gives a ship merit in the eyes of sailors. Gracefully curving cutwaters and neatly rounded sterns fitted each other to perfection. And it was this absolute appeal to the eye which gave the clippers a look of delicate, almost fragile, beauty and distinguished them from their rivals.

These British tea clippers with distinctive knife-like bows and graceful lines, carrying 1,000 tons of tea, would race from the China coast with the annual tea crop to London, and great was the competition to be first into the home port.

After "Highflyer" completed her maiden voyage to Shanghai in early 1862 under the command of the famous Clipper Captain, Anthony Enright, she left Shanghai on June 27 and arrived in London with her tea cargo on November 3, 129 days later. Eleven clippers competed in the 1862 tea race, the fastest finishing in 116 days and the last arriving 150 days later.

The performance of "Highflyer" in her first tea race was rather disappointing. In the following year's race in 1863 under the same command of Captain Enright she sailed from Foochow with a full cargo of tea on June 8th, and arrived in London on October 20th, a voyage of 134 days, the longest time of the 15 clippers taking part in the race that year. The fastest time was 104 days.

In the Tea Race of 1864, under a new master, Captain Smith, she sailed from Shanghai on July 11th, and after 128 days arrived in London on November 16th. That year 24 clippers participated, the fastest arriving in 109 days and the last in after 137 days.

Her lack of real success as a tea clipper was put down to the fact that in her design - "she differed very little from the Blackwall frigates of the time. Her stern was heavy, her foremast too much in the bows, and owing to her want of length her main and mizzen masts were much too close together."

After taking part in three Tea Races, she was switched to the Australian run, where she began an 11 year association with the London - Melbourne trade, completing some 14 return voyages between 1866 and 1877. Her voyage to Melbourne in October 1868 with the young Dobson family was her fourth voyage to Australia.

In those days of sail of long ago, days when their hearts were young, the youthful travellers, full of hope for the future, set out with their baby son for the new land.

## THE VOYAGE

Leaving the coast of England on a south-westerly heading into the Atlantic ocean, with all sails hoisted, the full beauty of the clipper was very evident to her passengers. The ship was commanded by Captain William Harrison and carried sufficient provisions for a voyage of 140 days.

The passenger list showed 18 Saloon and 32 Steerage passengers. Samuel and Frances Dobson, with their infant Samuel, who had his first birthday the day before sailing, travelled steerage. They were paying passengers as 'settlers', as distinct from 'migrants', whose fares during those times were paid by one or other of various agencies.

During the voyage one of the Saloon passengers Joseph Milner, 44 years of age, died and was buried at sea. The burial service was probably conducted by a 29 year old clergyman, the Rev. William Cother, who was also travelling steerage.

The 32 steerage passengers shown on the ship's manifest as being 13 single men settlers, 5 married couple settlers, 3 female servants, 1 clergyman and 2 infants, one of whom was the baby Samuel Dobson, who learned to walk during the long voyage (according to Frances Dobson as told to family members in later years).

The Suez Canal, Benjamin Disraeli's great achievement in obtaining for England a shorter route to India and the Far East, was at that time under construction and would not be completed until November the following year (1869), so that all voyages to Australia were via the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa. In any event, ships of sail would not be able to use the canal.

The usual three and even four month voyage dragged on as the sailing ships on the Australia run headed south-west of England into the Atlantic passing the Azores Islands and then due south into the South Atlantic Ocean rolling down to St. Helena with staysail laced outside the mainsails in the favourable trade winds, passing close to Natal in South America weeks later.

## MELBOURNE ARRIVAL

Then tacking south-east into the cold roaring 40's, the heading was changed once again, this final time to a due east course for Australia, passing some 700 miles south of the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, into the southern regions of the Indian Ocean.

The ship's passenger list showed Samuel as 22 years of age, although he was actually 24 at the time. His wife, Frances Alice was correctly shown as being 19 years of age. Samuel was described as a 'settler'.

After a voyage of 83 days the "Highflyer" arrived at Williamstown on December 28th, 1868 - a reasonably fast passage. On its next voyage the "Highflyer", with the same Captain, took 130 days, forty seven days longer.

Overseas sailing vessels coming up the Bay with the latest English letters, newspapers and periodicals caused intense excitement amongst the settlers, and even in the 35 year old town of Melbourne the receipt of news from home served as an important topic of conversation.

Twelve days after "Highflyers" arrival at Port Phillip, the famous "Thermopylae" arrived in Melbourne on her maiden voyage, completing the same voyage from London in the record time of 63 days, (60 days from pilot to pilot). She had left London some 33 days after the "Highflyer" on November 7th, 1868 and arrived on January 9th, 1869 - the fastest passage ever between England and Australia.

This beautiful ship which in every condition of wind was a wonder, was destined to sail into maritime history as the greatest of all the clippers - as time was to show the only vessel that could beat her in strong favouring winds was her great rival, the "Cutty Sark".

The great contest between these two clippers in the Tea Race of 1872 is regarded as being the high point in the entire history of sail.

It would seem likely that the newly arrived Dobson family went down to Williamstown, like so many other Melbourne citizens to see this new wonder ship - the fastest in the world.

From Melbourne "Thermopylae" went up to Newcastle, New South Wales, where she loaded for Shanghai, and then made passage to the Far East, creating another record time of 28 days from pilot to pilot. From Shanghai she went down to Foochow to load tea. In the Tea Race of 1869, with 23 clippers competing for honours, she left Foochow on July 3rd, and arrived in London on October 2nd, leading the field in a passage of 91 days.

The "Highflyer" after completing her final journey to Melbourne in 1877 was sold to German owners and was abandoned at sea about 1898.

## GOLDEN BENDIGO

After a few months in Melbourne the Dobson family departed, about March 1869, for Bendigo, where their second child, Thomas Joseph was born at 1.15 a.m. on September 16th, 1869. Their address was then Iron Bark, a small district of Bendigo joining Bendigo with Eaglehawk. The Bendigo Directory of 1872 - 1873 shows Samuel Dobson as then living in Lucan Street, in the central area of Bendigo and following the occupation of a draughtsman. A later directory of 1875 - 1876 shows Samuel Dobson of Iron Bark as being a miner, although this could very well mean that he was in fact working for a mining company possibly still as a draughtsman.

The Ratepayers Roll of October 1883, Barkly Ward, City of Sandhurst, shows Samuel Dobson as a ratepayer and living then at Mt. Korong Road, Bendigo.

When the Dobsons arrived in Bendigo in 1869 they found that the gold rushes were over, and in their wake a famous colony had been established. Gold production was still the backbone of Bendigo, although there were few opportunities for 'new chums' as the new arrivals were known in 1869. Their letters of the time indicate that they had difficulties in establishing themselves. However, by the end of the year, Bendigo was about to begin the biggest boom in mining that it had ever seen.

Investment capital always flowed to gold mines when the economy was depressed or just recovering. New money found new reefs and fired the speculators. In 1870 Melbourne money poured into Bendigo. A reef found at 400 feet in a mine known as the Great Extended Hustlers was like a treasure house, and the mining journalist, Macartney, visited it after much of the gold had gone, saw a vaulted chamber as large as a chapel and "sparkling with glittering particles of gold". The speculative capital increased the gold output, and in August 1871, Bendigo paid half the total dividends paid by Victorian mines.

Money for share speculation was easily borrowed from banks; wool prices were rising; and the Bendigo bubble grew larger and larger, wild speculation in mining shares grew as 1871 developed into the year of great mining revival. Saturday, October 7th, 1871, snapped all records for fortunes won on Bendigo share exchange. The mid-day train from Melbourne was crowded with cigar-smoking gamblers. The speculation and jobbing at the jammed pavements and cafes was so exciting that many Melbourne men refused to return home on the evening train, hiring their own special train late in the evening and investors reached their mansions at St. Kilda and Toorak about 3 a.m.

In one week, the value of shares on two of Bendigo's many lines of reefs - Hustlers and Stafford - soared by one million pounds. The Golden Fleece was the most fancied mine. A Bendigo mine owner, J. B. Watson had paid a miner £2.10.0 in October 1867 for a share, and now, four years later, the share was worth £10,000.

One can imagine after their difficult start in Bendigo, that the young Dobson couple felt part of the excitement of those times. The prosperity of the boom created a good demand for the services of the newly arrived draughtsman with new mining companies. Mining poppet-heads and mulloch heaps of glistening white quartz became very familiar to the young Englishman from London.

In October 1871 most share-buyers thought they could buy shares at high prices and sell for a quick profit before the boom collapsed. Even lame and blind men caught the fever, and one man who had long sung for alms in Bendigo's streets was now seen daily pencilling his own share transactions. On dusty pavements and beneath shop verandahs the share selling sometimes continued until 2 a.m. "Wild was the excitement universally prevailing, whilst Hallas' excellent city band nightly animated the gay, festive and glittering scene" wrote W. B. Wildey, "and all the hotel bars were brilliantly illuminated".

Anthony Trollope, the popular English novelist, visited Victoria when the share mania touched insanity and he was told that if he walked the length of Collins Street he could hardly meet a man who had not owned a mining share or part of a share. He likened the mania for gold shares to the English railway mania of the 1840's.

More than a thousand companies owned mines at Bendigo at the close of 1871, and their names were so confusing that investors who heard a tip in the noisy bar rooms must have bought shares in the wrong mine. There were three companies named Royal Standard, two New Chums, a Walter Scott and a Sir Walter Scott. Hundreds of companies had the word "Tribute" in their title.

Bendigo annual gold output averaged 330,000 ounces from 1872 to 1874, an increase of 100,000 ounces on the good years of the late 1860's. Small companies with only a few acres of ground had no alternative but to sink their shafts rather than extend their drives, and the succession of saddle reefs, one on top of the other, lured them deeper. There was little water in the deep shafts to deter them and Bendigo's great Cornish managers and miners, with their skills developed in the Tin Mines of Cornwall easily mastered the problems of deep-sinking.

On the New Chum line of reef the shafts probed down 2,000 feet often passing ten saddle reefs on the way. The tiny North Old Chum syndicate with its two acres sank its shaft over 2,3000 feet by 1890, the visitor could go down about 2,000 feet in a cage and then walk underground at the same depth for nearly two miles through a succession of mines, all of which had their deep shafts.

In the 1860's every miner used a heavy hammer and tap to drive a sharpened rod of steel into the rock, turning the steel with his hand as the hammer struck. By sheer strength he made the holes deep enough to ram in the explosive that shattered the rock. By the 1870's Bendigo miners were fracturing the rock more easily by using, instead of black blasting powder, the dynamite invented by Alfred Nobel. At the same time the first mechanical rock drills were boring holes that miners had always bored by muscle.

Anthony Trollope noted that Bendigo's vice was not drunkenness, but share speculation. Ballarat and Bendigo had busier stock exchanges than Melbourne, during mining booms. The evangelical Methodist chapels so strong in most gold towns preached against gambling but tolerated gambling in mining shares because it was vital to their towns.

Investors ignorance of mining was preyed on by directors. Men fired gold from a shotgun into barren reefs to inflate shares. Directors erected crushing machinery on poor reefs to persuade investors that the reef was rich. Managers for months hoarded rich stone in dark corners and then extracted all the gold in one week and sent shares roaring.

Directors of rich mines sometimes spread gloomy reports, made bear raids on shares, and then bought them cheaply from the shareholders they had deceived.

Sharebrokers employed spies in mines to glean first news of new discoveries, and on a day when a mine was expected to cut a new reef a messenger on horseback might be hiding in the scrub near the mouth of the shaft, waiting for a pre-arranged signal that would send him galloping to his master at the stock exchange.

Bendigo had more quartz mines and miners than any other Australian town. It was festooned almost daily with gay flags companies flew when they paid a dividend. A score or more companies paid a dividend each fortnight and a bracket of private mines paid untold profits to owners who lived in stately houses with clipped gardens and ornamental ponds. Bendigo was independent, largely financed its own mines and kept the profits. A score of German mine magnates could be seen in the Lutheran church on Sunday mornings, seated as they sang, their thoughts straying from God to Gold. Outside thirty Methodist chapels on the same morning, abstemious miners chatted of shares and speculations and hidden reefs.

California Gully and Sheepshead, Golden Square, Windmill Hill, Long Gully and Job's Gully, Eaglehawk, Hustler's Reef, The Unfortunate Bolle's Reef, Iron Bark, and hundreds of other reefs and suburbs formed a vigorous straggling metropolis that was Victoria's third largest city.

Bendigo was a dusty democracy in which the wealthy capitalists sometimes worked underground and humble miners owned mining shares. Hundreds of miners had no boss, working instead in the small teams known as tribute parties and sending their ore in drays to steam crushers owned by Ballerstedt and Koch and Lansell. When the tributers found a new reef or crushed a rich load of ore they would decorate the mine buildings with bunting and the flags of all nations, and celebrate in a tent with laden tables and fiddling German bands.

The reefs were more widespread on Bendigo than on any other fields in the eastern half of Australia. A strip of land five miles long and one mile wide was dissected by about thirty parallel lines of reef. These reefs had shed the gold that had made Bendigo probably the richest shallow alluvial field in Australia, and possibly in the world. But for all the gold that had eroded from the surface reefs during millions of years, even more lay trapped in the rock below.

The rocks of Bendigo resembled a neat stack of corrugated iron. The slates and sandstones had once been flat like a stack of sheet iron, but then strong pressures from the sides had created folds and undulations.

Many of the quartz reefs sat on these folds or anticlines like white saddles on a horse of barren rock. They were known as saddle reefs and were so rhythmic and unusual that the American, T. A. Rickard, described them in 1890 as "this most beautiful type of ore-deposit". To miners the most beautiful thing about the saddle reefs was the gold, and the ugliest thing was the fact that the sides of the "legs" of most saddle reefs were often short and sometimes barren.

Many companies found the top of the quartz saddles, mined the rich gold, followed the legs down 50, 100 or 300 feet and were dismayed to see them taper from stout thighs into thin ankles. Many then sank the main shaft deeper and found a new saddle. But too often they had paid all their profits in fortnightly dividends so that when they were compelled to sink for new reefs they had to call on shareholders for capital. Given the nature of Bendigo's reefs and given the practice of dispensing the profits as soon as they were earned, Bendigo's prosperity fluctuated.

## NEWS FROM HOME

On July 1st, 1871, the third child, a girl, Frances Alice, was born. At this time Samuel Jnr., was nearly 4 and Thomas Joseph was just 2. News of the baby girl's birth was of course written to England, and in reply we have in existence a letter written by the young bride's mother, Sarah Bassford -

Glascote October 25th, 1871.

My Very Dear Children,

I was much pleased to receive a few lines, as I began to think I was quite forgotten. I am thankful my dear Fanny that you are safe over your trouble (the birth of the baby girl), it is a great tie to have 3 so young. I hope you will be patient with them and think of the time when you were young and helpless as they are now. How is my dear little Sam? I keep that likeness in my bedroom and look at you every day. I should like to hear all the particulars of all if you can spare the time to write. I received the Paper for which I thank you very much. Anne has written a short note which I will enclose. She is at Burton where she likes being very much, and they are very fond of her. She is not very strong, but she is a very good girl to her sisters and also to myself. I think she will be over in a few weeks. I shall have the pig killed and if you were nearer you should have a nice pie. The pig will weigh about 18 score by the time we kill her. We are still at the same house and doing as comfortably as we may expect. One great blessing is that we never want and how thankful we ought to feel that God is so merciful. Indeed, I do. The girls have gone to practice. They dearly love singing and would like it better if they could play.

Poor Tom had a misfortune and hurt his eye, but I am thankful it is better. He could not do anything for a month, so it has made him rather unsettled.

I do not know what to say of Father. I am afraid he still indulges in the Fatal Poison (drink?). He seldom writes. Your Uncle Charles is very busy pig killing. Fanny has left and Sarah Anne is housekeeper now. Mary Jane is with my dear Mother. Alice Clara and Ada go to Miss Gilman's Boarding School. Little Ellen gets a dear little creature, she begins to talk so nicely. They all seem very comfortable. ----- is quite a man now and has the chief management of the shop. Daniel has finished School and assists him. My dear Mother is often so poorly you would think she would not live long and another time she seems so much better. I tell her I hope she will be with us for a long time yet. She desired me to give her very best love to you both, also to the dear children. She is always so pleased to hear from you all. How is Alice and the children (Alice Wallis of Lockwood, sister to Sarah Bassford)? Mary is now at home. She will be very useful for I can find more to do than I can do myself. She has not grown so much as Edith. She is a very good girl. Edith will have to write a few lines to you. As regards Grandfather's Will I cannot tell you any particulars for I never heard the Will read and I suppose it is a very queer one all on one side that is, for James. There is a Codicil that leaves them nearly all. They had him there and did as they thought proper. I will try to get to know the particulars and send you word. I believe Mr. I.+Hill is one of the Executors and Mr. Toon, Mrs. I. Bassford's Father is the other. Mary, Edith, Lottie, Herbert and Sam send their best love to their dear little children. They are often talking of them. Please give my love and kisses to those dear ones, also to yourselves and with the lasting love of your

Mother

(Excuse all, as I am in haste. God bless you all)

Sometime during 1871 or 1872 it would seem that Samuel Dobson extended his abilities and experience as a draughtsman, which was no doubt well suited to the rapidly developing mechanisation of the mines, into a foundry business. A letter of December 1873 from Sarah Bassford in England to her son-in-law says "I often look at the cart (photo). I think them very nicely taken and the Foundry too is very well done, I could of told you from your figure amongst a hundred. I hope you will have every blessing you so richly deserve - you were severely tried at your first arrival".

Two letters written by Mrs. Sarah Bassford to her daughter and son-in-law during 1873 are still in existence. Another letter, a portion of which still survives was also probably written in 1873. Apart from the earlier 1871 letter, there is also a brief letter from Annie to Frances, probably written also in 1873, and the only other letter to survive is one written by Edith from Clare, South Australia to Frances in 1878.

In 1873, letters show that Tom, the brother of Frances has emigrated to Canada.



BENDIGO 1872 THE YOUNG FAMILY - SAMUEL AND FRANCES  
WITH THOMAS 2½, SAMUEL 4, AND BABY FRANCES ALICE

Glascote July 8th, 1873

My Dearest Children,

It is so very long since I have received a letter from you that I begin to fear there is something amiss. I hope you and the dear children are well. I am pleased to say Grandma is as well as usual and sends her best love to you each and all. Uncle Charles and his wife and children are all pretty well. Did I tell you Daniel has a nice situation in Coventry, and Mary is living with an old lady in Coventry and is very comfortable, so I will have to send for Edith to come home as Annie has so much work she assists her all I can spare her. I am pleased to say Annie is much better only she sits too much. Edith, Lottie and Laura are quite well and send their best love to you and those dear children. We often talk of you.

I had a letter from Tom the other day. He is quite well and in a comfortable situation. Father, he says, is going on well and looks better than he has done since he went out. Annie has made up her mind to go either to America or Australia; now which do you think would be best? I shall not care to part, but still if it is for their good I would not wish to say no, as there is the same God to keep and protect us wherever we go. Now my dear Fanny I hope you are friendly with Aunt Alice and cousins and I was quite please to hear from Aunt Mary when she was sent for to Alice, she called to see you and she told me she was quite pleased to see you and your house and children so nice and clean. I know you used to be very clean and I am so pleased you still continue so. One thing you have no Business in the house, and that makes a difference. Oh, how dearly I should love to call in and see all those so dear.

Annie, Edith, Lottie and Laura call in to see - on Sunday evening, they are quite well and getting on so well. They are nice girls, none married yet. Mrs. Kerley and the Wilsons and Mrs. Clarke desire to be remembered to you, also Mrs. Dennis. We are all going on about the same in the old place. I often wish I was away, but I might do worse than being here. Still, I want to do better.

(Although dated July 8th, this letter was not completed and the following written on September 24th is in effect a continuation)

September 24th, 1873.

My Dear Children,

I am pleased to say I received dear Sam's letter and you cannot tell how very sorry I was to hear of poor Fanny's illness. I trust she is by this quite regained her former health, and the dear children are quite well. Had Mr. and Mrs. Baiter from Tamworth to see you. I sent a small parcel for you. It was scarcely worth sending but I could not send down to Tamworth to get anything as the time was so short. If you do not care for Sam to wear the clothes you can give them away. But you will see Herbert only had them on a few hours. The book Edith sent for Sam, and the print you can do what you like with. I have sent you my cart. Do you think it better than the other?

(remainder of letter missing)

It would seem that Thomas Bassford, the father of Frances, was possibly in Canada with his son, Tom, at the time the July 1873 letter was written. Family legend has it that he was something of a wanderer. Certainly he came to Australia soon after, although Sarah his wife remained in England, until later when she came to live with her daughter, Mrs. Edith Lansell.

A portion of a letter probably written in 1873 refers to some goods being sent to Australia -

... and some diapers and a coat for Baby, also a white frock and many other little things that would have been very useful for the children, but Mrs. Long says the parcel was too large, so I hope God will give you strength to get plenty more. Your Grandma sent Alice and Mary Anne a dress each. You must not think it unkind I did not send you one, as I thought the other things would be more useful, but was disappointed. Your Uncle Charles and Aunt are very poorly and also 3 of the children, but I hope they will soon be better. Your Grandma is often very poorly. Tom has written a few lines to you and I hope you will try to let me know how you are getting on and every particular about the children. Give them a kiss for me and one for yourself, and with the lasting love of your ever affectionate,

Mother, Sarah

Attached to this same portion of a letter is a brief note to Frances from her sister Annie -

My Dear Sister,

I wished to write a few lines in our Mother's letter to let you see that I am alive and well, but you must not expect too much as I am busy of late sewing so I have as little to do now. Going out on Sunday 23 to Polesworth Hall to Mr. Clarkes. Mr. H. Clarke came to tea on Sunday 16 on my birthday, and I am going on Sunday to their house. Dear Fanny, you must not be surprised to hear of me going to America next summer some time. I will write and tell you lots of news when you have written to me. Write as soon as you can.

There is evidence to suggest that he was followed by his four daughters coming to Australia for a visit, only Annie, previously mentioned as wanting to go either to America or Australia, remaining in England to marry and stay there.

Certainly, Mary and Edith were in Australia in August 1878. A letter written to her sister Frances dated August 11th, from Clare, South Australia, says that Mary had a daughter born a week previously. This letter was written by Edith who sometime later returned to England, and in 1882 married George Lansell in London.

Clare, August 11th, 1878.

My Darling Sister,

Just a few lines to wish you Many Happy Returns of the day, and also to let you know that I have not forgotten you.

I have written and told Mama all the news so I hope you will excuse this very short one. Mary had a daughter born August 3rd. I had a letter from her yesterday.

And now my dear Sister, I cannot possibly think of anything more to say, so will say Adieu.

With fondest love to Sam and all the dear children. Believe me to remain, your loving Sister,

Edith

I wish I could see you all. I shall never come to Australia now, dear Fanny. Strive hard and don't be dependent on anyone. The children all send their very best love to you all, dear Sister. Please send me yours and Sam's cards (photos) and I will send you mine. I want all yours for myself. I wish Mrs. Long could have taken the things for you, but never mind, I hope there is a better time coming. I hope we shall all meet again.

I remain, your ever loving Sister,

Annie

P.S. Give my love to dear Sam and the children.

Samuel Dobson played cricket in Bendigo with the Bendigo United Cricket Club and achieved the distinction of playing against the English eleven on two occasions. He also played against the Victorian eleven. His Bendigo cricket seems to be around 1880 to 1882. He was then 37 years of age. The "Bendigo Advertiser" shows him as playing against the Australian 2nd Team on January 8th and 9th, 1880, and as playing for Bendigo against Eaglehawk on November 4th, 1882.

Before coming to Australia he played cricket with and also against the famed Teddy Pooley, who is reputed to have been the best wicket-keeper England has ever produced. A few months before the Dobson departure for Australia, Teddy Pooley in a match at the Oval, between Surrey and Sussex, caught 12 wickets in one match. This is the highest number of wickets ever caught in county or international cricket, and the record stands to this day.

Glascote December 16th, 1873

My Dear Sam,

I cannot let this mail go without a line to you. I must thank you for your kind attention to my dear Fanny. It would give me more pleasure to thank you personally which I hope to do some day. We do not know what is in store for us, but I hope I shall come over some time. We are now busy preparing for Christmas. I wish I had all my dear children together to spend the day with us. I expect your sister Laura down after Christmas. For a time she has been ill. I think if she comes down in time she will perhaps go to the Bachelor Ball with Annie. It is a very nice one. Annie went last year. Annie is going to sing and play at the Penny Readings tomorrow. Mr. Charles Fisher came up yesterday and wants her to join them at the Town Hall Penny Readings. She has partly promised.

I am very pleased to hear that Father has been very good latterly. Tom thinks of coming over about August '74 unless some things prevent it. But I shall write again before then. I often look at the cart (photo) I think them very nicely taken and the Foundry too is very well done. I could have told you from your figure amongst a hundred. I am pleased you are getting on so nicely. I hope you will have every blessing you so richly deserve as you were severely tried at your first arrival. I hope it will make all the blessings you now enjoy the sweeter, and may the dear children grow in grace and fond love. I do not know how I should be without my dear children. They are all dear good girls. I do not think any Mother is more beloved than I, and it makes me very proud.

Glascote is altered since you were here. They have bought the Gardens near the canal for a cemetery and they talk of building a house and chapel upon it, and they are to have a road across the top of the field near Mr. Boneham's building.

I suppose you know we have the gas here, it is 5/6 per thousand. Coal is very dear - I paid 13/- per ton. Butter is 2/- per pound, Eggs 1½ and 2d. each. Beef and mutton from 9d to 1/- per pound. Bacon 9d, good cheese 10d, so you see things are not very cheap here.

Now my dear, please give my own darling pets a kiss for me and believe me your ever loving,

Mother, Sarah

## THE FAMILY

The Dobson family resided in Bendigo for about 15 years and during this time seven children were born, and three infants were delivered stillborn :

THOMAS JOSEPH	Born 1.15 a.m., September 16, 1869 at Iron Bark.
FRANCES ALICE	Born 1.20 p.m., July 1, 1871 at Lucan St.
BOY (stillborn)	Born 11.00 a.m., June 26, 1873.
FLORENCE EDITH MAUD	Born December 26, 1874 (Mrs. Breeze).
LAURA ANNIE LOTTY	Born June 11, 1877 (Mrs. Russell).
BOY (stillborn)	Born March 14, 1879.
GEORGE HERBERT JOHN	Born July 7, 1881 at Iron Bark.
BOY (stillborn)	Born April 21, 1883.
CHARLES JAMES ) CORAGNES )	Twins Born February 18, 1884. (Mrs. Morris)

Great Britain - Great Uncle - James

Water in Bendigo

Lansell 21 Town

at the time

see in 1870

per the 1870

Family legend has it that the famous George Lansell first met Edith Bassford during her visit to Australia when she was staying with the Dobson's at Bendigo. Lansell called one night to the Dobson home on business to speak with Samuel Dobson, and there he was introduced to Miss Edith Bassford. Their subsequent meeting in London some four or five years later was to lead to marriage, and her return to Australia a further five years later in December 1887.

George Lansell was Australia's quartz king. He financed feats of mining which companies of a thousand shareholders would have been reluctant to try, and he won rewards which companies of a thousand shareholders would have been proud to share. He did not descend his deepest shafts, preferring to imagine the reefs his miners found. Square beard, balding head, stoney eyes and tight mouth, his appearance suggested pessimism, but he had optimism and the money to give it play.

Before the gold rushes, Lansell worked as a grocer and maker of tallow candles at Margate, Kent. On the voyage to Australia he shot an Albatross, and passengers said his luck was cursed. In Bendigo he made money from tallow and candles, hay and corn, lost money at the start in mining, then engaged experienced Cornishmen as consultants and won. He returned his large gains from the Cinderella Garden Gully mine in the early 1870's and spent 30,000 of that fortune in buying a rich mine he renamed Lansell's 180. The previous owner, Theodore Ballerstedt, retired to Germany and it was said that before he reached his homeland the mine had yielded the purchase price to the new owner.

From one reef alone, Lansell won over a ton of gold. Exhausting that rich reef, he sank the shaft deeper. At a depth of 1,548 feet they found a dazzling reef, then probed still deeper. Each day he would arrive at the mouth of the shaft in a buggy drawn by two piebald horses and peer down. And the day came when he was shown gold-laced stone hauled up from one of the deepest reefs in the world.

The Victorian goldfields yielded more than half of the metallic wealth won in Australia in the 19th Century, but Lansell and Watson were probably their only millionaires. Whereas most magnates retired with their first fortune to European or Australian cities, Lansell spent only seven years in London before he returned to Bendigo to live.

He insisted that Bendigo should control its mines, and in addition to the mines he owned, he sat on thirty or forty boards. When shareholders grew impatient of paying miners to sink barren shafts, Lansell rallied them, urging them to sink another hundred feet, then another, teasing them downwards with his optimism. He was one of the few Australian mining chiefs of his day who had a sense of obligation to an industry and the towns and cities that lived on it. Thousands of Bendigo families owed their livelihood to this man who, though often cunning, lifted mining above the level of piracy.

George Lansell's first wife, Bedelia, died in 1880 after 8 years of an unhappy marriage. At the time of his second marriage to Edith Bassford he was 59 and she was 26. Their first child, George Victor, (date SIR GEORGE) was born on October 3rd, 1883, a daughter, Edith Fortuna was born 2 years later. Two further children, boys, were born later.

It is probable that Sarah Bassford came to Australia in December 1887 with her daughter, son-in-law and their children. Thomas Bassford, her husband, by that time had been in Australia for quite some time. His death certificate would tend to indicate that at the time of his death (1909) he had lived 33 years in the "Australian colonies", 19 in Victoria, and 14 in South Australia. Estimating an arrival in Australia about 1876, he could have lived in South Australia until about 1890, and then moved to Victoria about that time.

The Dobson family in the meantime moved from Bendigo after 15 years residence there. In about 1884 or 1885 they came to the metropolitan area and resided at three addresses in South Melbourne - Albert Park area, at 4 Ferras Street, 13 Faussett Street and 51 Victoria Avenue.

Two further children who survived childhood were born in South Melbourne :

Ruby Victoria Marie	Born Sept. 7, 1886
Percy Algernon Clive	" June 13th, 1888
Twins (stillborn)	" June 30th, 1889
Boy (stillborn)	" April 24th, 1890
Sybil Vivienne	" Sept. 8th, 1895 Died Sept. 25th, 1895

In 1893 the family moved to 330 Ascot Vale Road, Ascot Vale. Later in 1895 they moved again to 9 Thomas Street, Moonee Ponds. In 1898 they moved again, this time to 2 Hutchinson Street, Moonee Ponds, on the corner of the Strand. Here in 1899 a family photograph was taken on the verandah of the two storey brick residence, and shows Thomas Bassford with a long white beard in the centre of the group.

The last move was in 1900, when the Dobson residence was moved to 20 Bent Street, Moonee Ponds.

Thomas Bassford lived at Bent Street with his daughter Frances and son-in-law, Samuel, 1907, when he took up residence with his newly widowed grand-daughter, Laura Annie Lottie (Annie), at 97 South Street, Ascot Vale. She had been left with two young children when her husband, James Scrimgeour had died a premature death at 41. Thomas Bassford passed from this life at South Street after a long illness on November 20th, 1909. He was buried at Fawkner Cemetery - Church of England, Section A, Grave 154, beside the large double grave which now contains the mortal remains of Samuel and Frances. Later in 1919 the 12 year old daughter of Cora (Mrs. Harry Morris) was buried in the same grave as Thomas Bassford.

His wife, Sarah Bassford, beloved mother of Frances, who had lived since coming to Australia with Edith and George Lansell in their mansion "Fortuna" at Bendigo, passed away on November 10th, 1918, the day before the end of World War 1.

The "Bendigo Advertiser" of November 11th, 1918, reported, "Bassford - On the 10th November, at "Fortuna" Bendigo, Sarah Maria Bassford, widow of the late Thomas Bassford, in her 92nd year". The obituary written in the following edition said, "The deceased enjoyed good health until about three weeks ago, when she took to her bed, and, gradually became weaker, passing peacefully away at 10 p.m. on Sunday. The deceased was a native of Tamworth, England, and had resided in Victoria for about 40 years. For the greater portion of this time she had live at "Fortuna" The late Mrs. Bassford was of a kind and genial disposition, and the news of her death will be learned with regret by a wide circle of friends. The daughters are Mrs. George Lansell of "Fortuna", Mrs. Frew and Mrs. J. H. Abbott of Bendigo, Mrs. Dobson and Mrs. Ellis of Melbourne.

The Funeral will be private, and will take place today at the Bendigo Cemetery". She was buried at the Lansell family grave after a service conducted by the Bishop of Bendigo, Dr. Langley. Six employees of "Fortuna" were the coffin bearers.

Samuel Dobson after coming to Melbourne seems to have followed the occupation of Accountant, and was employed in this capacity for many years, until his retirement by the firm of Buchanan and Brock Pty. Ltd., Boilermakers and Ships' Engineers on the south bank of the Yarra River.

His son, George Herbert Dobson, followed him as Accountant with the firm and it is interesting to note that his son, John Samuel Thos. was employed as an apprentice with the firm. Another apprentice was Thomas Joseph Dobson and later his son, Charles Patrick Donovan Dobson.

Others who were employed by this firm were Harry Morris, the husband of Cora Dobson and Thomas Jnr., the son of Thomas Joseph, who was employed for some nine years in a clerical appointment.

Several of the children married during the 1890's and more family weddings took place in the first decade of the new century. By the time of the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the family home in Bent Street, Moonee Ponds, was the happy meeting place every Sunday evening with the sons of the family bringing their wives and the daughters their husbands. The men would play billiards after dinner whilst the women would gather in the smoke room to play cards with Grandma.

These weekly family occasions continued for many years through the 1920's and probably up until the time of the Grandfather's death in 1933.

Two stories told by Grandma to her grand-daughter Edith (Spears) have now become part of the family legend. Whether they have any basis in fact is not known.

Frances told her grand-daughter that as a young girl she was originally to marry William Dobson the older brother of Samuel, but for some unexplained reason, she later married Samuel.

Sometime before her marriage in England, a gypsy told her fortune and the fortune of her younger sister Edith. She foretold that of the two young sisters, one would in the future know great wealth. Edith was destined to later marry the Bendigo mining millionaire, George Lansell.

Another of the legends passed to Edith, her grand-daughter, was that the family was related to Sir Robert Peel, one time Prime Minister of England whose electorate was that of Tamworth, Staffordshire, where she was born and was raised.

The Diamond Jubilee of the marriage of Samuel and Frances was celebrated at a large function at the Moonee Ponds Town Hall on February 24th, 1927. Present at this function was Mrs. Edith Lansell, the sister of the bride, who had been a widow since the death of George Lansell some twenty years before in 1906.

Six years after the Diamond Wedding celebration, Samuel fell ill with a diagnosed acute biliary obstruction. After some three weeks, he gradually failed and passed from this life at his residence in Bent Street, on October 16th, 1933, aged 89 years.

Frances, after 16 years of widowhood, celebrated her 100th birthday on August 15th, 1949. The "Essendon Gazette" of August 11th, 1949 recorded that she had living two sons and five daughters, together with 28 grand-children, 30 great grand-children and 8 great great grand-children.

A photograph in the "Sun" on August 15th was captioned : "100 TODAY - Mrs. Frances Alice Dobson who once shook hands with Queen Victoria and who still sings, 'God Save Our Gracious Queen', when she plays the national anthem on the piano, is celebrating her 100th birthday at her home in Brent Street, Moonee Ponds, today. She came to Australia from London in 1869 and has 39 great grand children and eight great great grand children. Mrs. Dobson is shown here with the cake which has been made for her party.

A little over twelve months later she suffered a fall which in one so aged is always of a serious nature, and so it proved to be.

Over the following weeks she gradually lost her strength and it became increasingly obvious that her condition was approaching the critical.

It was the early Spring of 1950, and she was so anxious to see once again the blooms in her beloved garden - she felt very tired and a great weariness slowly and softly descended - she remembered in the days of long ago .... herself as a young girl in the green fields outside her childhood home in Tamworth - Sarah, her mother as a young wife standing at the door and later, the courting days with the much loved Samuel .... the dark green waves of the sea and the billowing sails of the clipper ship taking the young couple with the first baby to the other side of the world .... the dusty streets of the gold town .... the hardships and the trials of those early days .... the miners, the excitement, the flags, the bands, and the friends at Iron Bark so long ago .... and the children .... Oh! the children .... the small, bright and shining faces of those dear, dear young ones - those men and women, parents with their own children now - and those of them who had passed, like their father, to the next life - "Oh! my dead dears" .... all those children to whom she had given birth, the grand children and the great grand children that she nursed and loved so much .... a long life of a hundred years that had seen so much .... England as a girl, London and the sailing ship - it all seemed such a long time ago .... and slowly and gently the great weariness descended with the shadows and the brave dear heart faltered once, then again .. and stopped forever .... and her gentle spirit passed into the great beyond.

CENTENARIAN DIES AT MOONEE PONDS

Mrs. Frances Alice Dobson, grand daughter of a centenarian, died at her home in Bent Street, Moonee Ponds yesterday, aged 101.

Mrs. Dobson's grandmother was 104 when she died in England. Until a few years before her death Mrs. Dobson had been remarkably active and at 97 was still doing fine needlework.

Her death was hastened by a fall a few weeks ago.

Born in Tamworth, England, on August 15th, 1849, Mrs. Dobson came to Melbourne in 1868. She had lived in Moonee Ponds for 61 years. Her husband, an accountant, died in 1933 aged 89.

In Moonee Ponds Mrs. Dobson was noted for the beautiful flowers of her gard. She won many prizes at flower shows.

Seven of Mrs. Dobson's 16 children are living. The eldest is Mrs. Alice Ellis 79, of Gardenvale, and the youngest, Miss Ruby Dobson, 64, of Moonee Ponds.

Mr. George Dobson, with whom Mrs. Dobson had been living for several years, said last night that he had never known his mother to have a serious illness.

BASSFORD - On November 20th, at the residence of his granddaughter, Mrs. Scrimgeour, South Street, Ascot Vale, Thomas Bassford, late of 'Glascote', Tamworth, England in his 86th year and loving father of Mrs. S. Dobson, Thomas Bassford, Canada and the late James Balfour, Mrs. William Ellis, Pakenham, Mrs. George Lansell, Mrs. John Frew, Bendigo, late of Mt. Gambier, Mrs. Harry Abbott, Bendigo.

- "The Age", November 22, 1909

BASSFORD - The friends of the late Mr. Thomas Bassford are respectfully invited to follow his remains to the place of internment in the New Melbourne General Cemetery, Fawkner. The funeral will leave the residence of his granddaughter, Mrs. Annie Scrimgeour, 96 South Street, Ascot Vale, this day (Monday) 22nd instant at 1.30 o'clock p.m.

BASSFORD - In loving memory of my dear father, Thomas Bassford who passed to a higher life at the residence of his granddaughter Mrs. Scrimgeour, Ascot Vale on November 19th, 1909, after a long illness, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection of eternal life.

Nothing in the hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy Cross I cling.

(Inserted by his loving daughter Fannie)

- "The Argus" November 21, 1910

DOBSON - On August 5 at Austin Hospital, Heidelberg, Alice Mary, dearly beloved wife of Thomas Dobson, 68 Bloomfield Road, Ascot Vale, and loving Mother of Alice (Mrs. Bingham) Thomas, William, Charles and Francis (deceased). Aged 66 years. Privately interred August 6th. Requiescat in Peace. (Funeral went from St. Mary's, Ascot Vale).

- "The Age" August 7th, 1941

DOBSON - On March 10th at Alfred Hospital, Thomas Joseph, beloved son of Mrs. Dobson and the late Samuel Dobson and brother of Sam, Alice (Mrs. Ellis) Edith (Mrs. Breese) Annie (Mrs. Russell) George, Charles, Cora (Mrs. Morris) Ruby and Percy (deceased). A great pal sadly missed R.I.P. - Inserted by brother George.

- "The Age" March 13th, 1944

DOBSON - On March 10th. Thomas Joseph, loved Father of Alice (Mrs. Bingham) Thomas, Margaret (deceased), William George, Charles Patrick, George (deceased). Aged 75 years. R.I.P. Funeral from Allisons, 488 William Street, West Melbourne on Monday March 13th, 1944, at 2.00 p.m.

DOBSON - On August 8th. Samuel William, husband of Edie, Father of Jean (Mrs. Turnbull), Jessie (Mrs. Scrivenger) and grandfather of Norma (Mrs. Irvine). At rest.

- "The Age" August 13th, 1946

GRAVES Samuel & Frances Dobson, Fawkner, C. of E.  
Section A153  
Samuel William Dobson, Fawkner, C. of E.  
Section A152  
Thomas Joseph & Alice Mary Dobson, Fawkner,  
R.C. Section C 1478  
Percy Algernon Dobson, Fawkner, C. of E.  
Section F472  
Charles James Dobson (died 24/8/1965)  
Cremated



Frances Alice Josephine Dobson  
1st July 1871 - 25th Dec. 1961

Alice, the third child and first daughter of Samuel and Frances was born at Ironbark, Bendigo on July 1st 1871.

When the family moved to Melbourne she received music lessons and became an accomplished pianist. Her younger sister Edith became equally proficient at the piano and they would delight family evenings by playing duets.

They attended many balls in the South Melbourne Town Hall and whilst the orchestra rested and supped, the dancers would call on Alice to play for them. Sundays were days at home when only Hymns and Choir music was permitted by their father. The family later moved to Ascot Vale, then Moonee Ponds, and among her new friends she met George Ellis, son of George Ellis, Superintendent of Police. They married on 2nd July 1892.

George Ellis had been educated by the Christian Brothers and worked for a time until the Bank Crashes of the 1890's. He then joined the staff of Paterson, Laing and Bruce, a Flinders Street wholesaler. He rose from bookkeeper to Accountant, a position he held till his death at 76 in 1947. In 1910 they left Ascot Vale to live in Middle Park where he took an active part in local sporting and civic affairs. Later in 1924 they moved to St. Kilda.

Alice later lived with her daughter Millie at Gardenvale where she spent the remaining 14 years of her life in the loving care and attention of her daughter. All her life she was of a gentle and generous nature, and was held in love and respect by all. She died on 25th December 1961, aged 90 years, leaving a son, three daughters, six grandchildren, and fourteen great grand-children to mourn her passing.

Rev. Father George Edward Lawrence Dobson O.F.M.  
1916 - 1971

Father Laurie Dobson, son of George Herbert Dobson, as a young man joined the religious order of St. Francis and was ordained a priest in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne on July 23rd 1939. He served his first Mass in his own parish church of St. Monica's Moonee Ponds. One of the alter servers at this first Mass was his second cousin Bill (W.T.) Dobson.

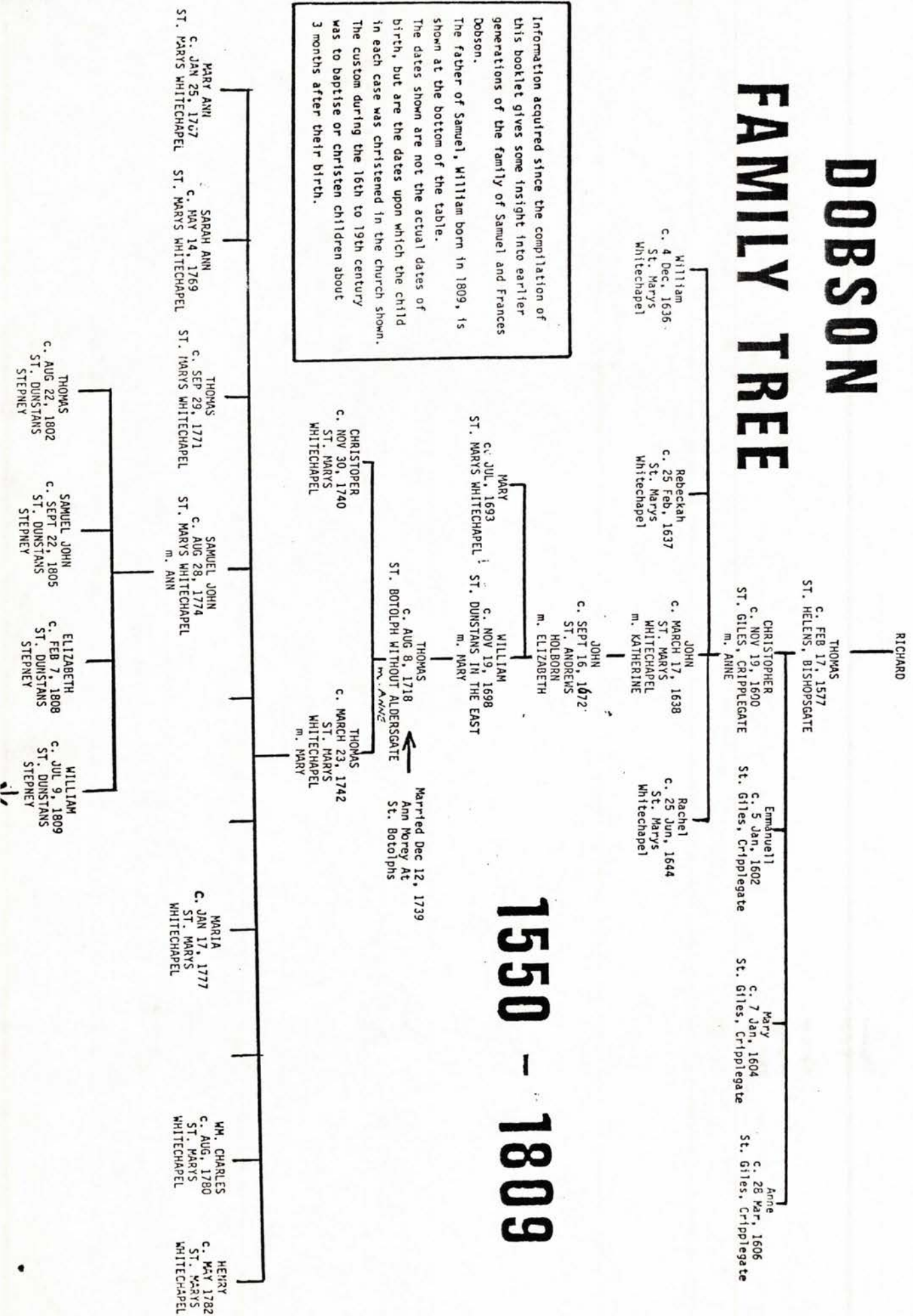
He served for nearly 20 years as a missionary priest in the Aitape area of New Guinea and pioneered many previously unexplored regions in that part of New Guinea.

Thomas Samuel Dobson  
1900 - 1976

The first born son of Thomas Joseph and Alice Dobson attained considerable distinction as a young swimmer, footballer and boxer. Whilst at school (C.B.A. St. Joseph's, North Melbourne) he was the Victorian Schoolboy Champion 100, 200 and 300 yards and played in the school's premiership team in 1916 and 1917. Later, he was the Essendon Swimming Club's champion for 200 and 300 yards in 1921 and 1922.

# DOBSON FAMILY TREE

Information acquired since the compilation of this booklet gives some insight into earlier generations of the family of Samuel and Frances Dobson.  
The father of Samuel, William born in 1809, is shown at the bottom of the table.  
The dates shown are not the actual dates of birth, but are the dates upon which the child in each case was christened in the church shown. The custom during the 16th to 19th century was to baptise or christen children about 3 months after their birth.



FAMILY GROUP FEB. 1899 - THE STRAND, MOONEE PONDS.

BACK ROW: SAMUEL, ALICE, GEORGE ELLIS, EDITH, THOMAS WITH INFANT ALICE, ANNIE, CORA, GEORGE.

MIDDLE ROW: SAM'S WIFE WITH INFANT JEAN, PERCY, GRANDMOTHER (FRANCES), GREAT-GRANDFATHER (THOMAS BASSFORD) WITH BEARD, GRANDFATHER SAMUEL, CHARLES.

FRONT ROW: FLORENCE MILDRED ELLIS, GEORGE ELLIS, RUBY (WITH CAT).





THOMAS BASSFORD  
PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN ABOUT 1910.



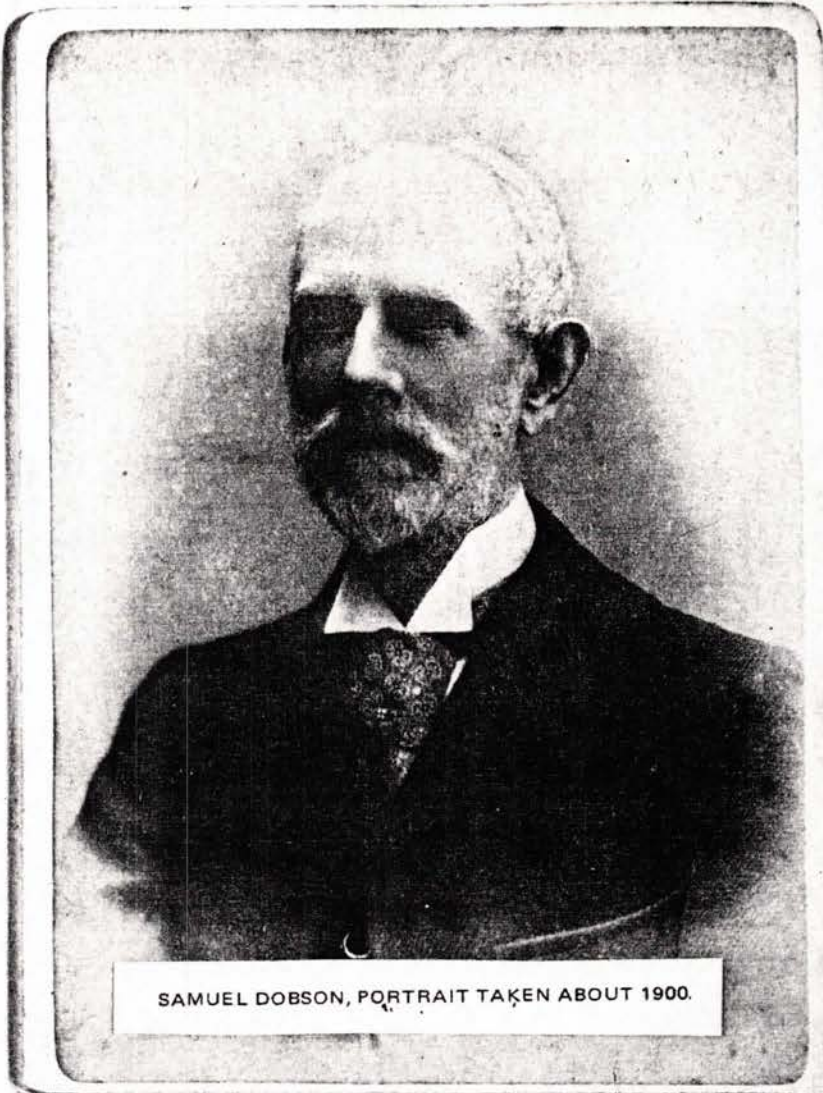
MRS. SARAH BASSFORD (MOTHER OF FRANCES DOBSON)  
PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT MELBOURNE MARCH 13TH 1886.



MRS. SARAH BASSFORD WITH HER LANSELL  
GRANDCHILDREN AT "FORTUNA", BENDIGO, VTC.



THOMAS DOBSON AND DAUGHTER ALICE  
SEPTEMBER 1914



SAMUEL DOBSON, PORTRAIT TAKEN ABOUT 1900.



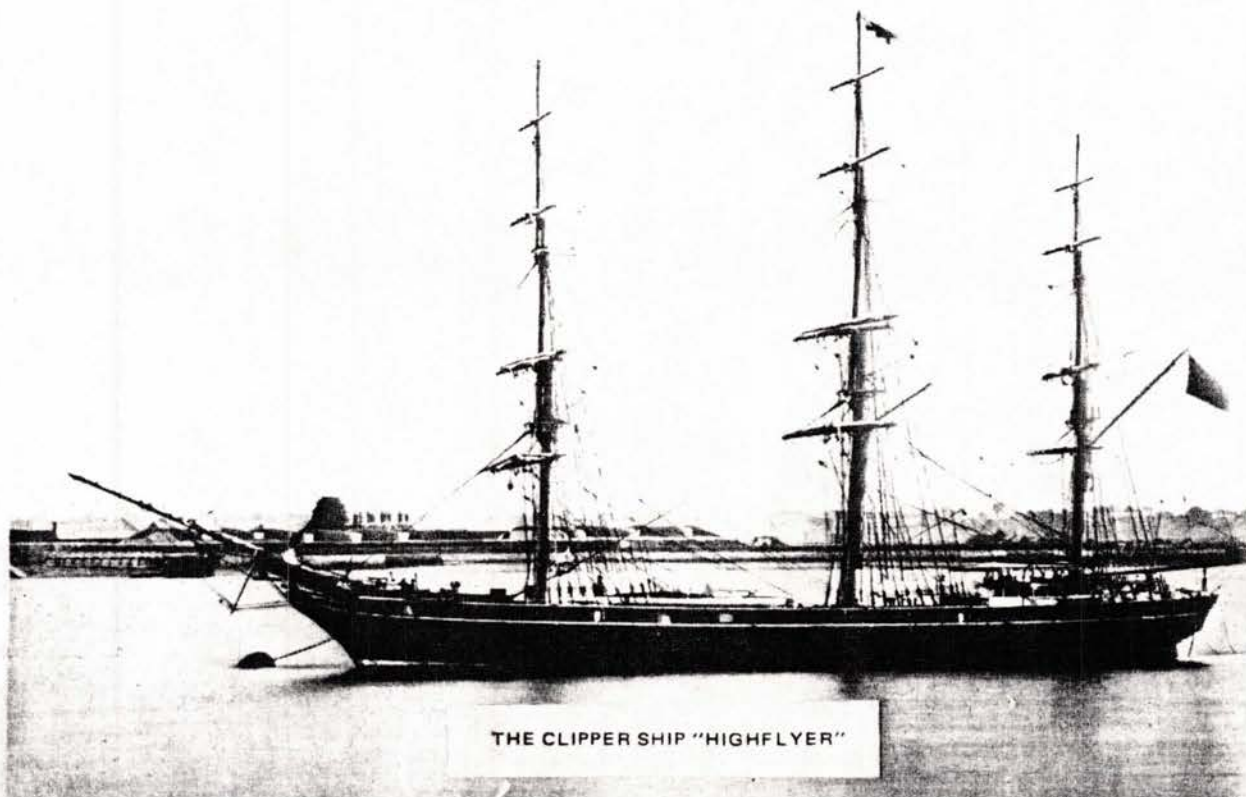
DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY — 60 YEARS MARRIED. MOONEE PONDS FEB. 28TH 1927.  
FRANCES ALICE AGED 77, SAMUEL AGED 82.



ALICE MAUD (MARY) DOBSON, WIFE OF THOMAS JOSEPH DOBSON,  
DAUGHTER OF PATRICK AND ELIZABETH DONOVAN (NEE RYAN).  
PORTRAIT TAKEN AT ABOUT THE TIME OF HER MARRIAGE,  
AGE: ABOUT 21.



THOMAS DOBSON, PORTRAIT TAKEN ABOUT 1886 - 1887.  
AGED ABOUT 17 YEARS OF AGE.



THE CLIPPER SHIP "HIGHFLYER"



FRANCES AND HER DAUGHTERS - SEPT. 10TH 1914.

STANDING: ANNIE, CORA. SEATED: FRANCES ALICE, RUBY, GRANDMOTHER FRANCES, EDITH.



SAMUEL AND HIS SONS - SEPT. 10TH 1914.

BACK ROW: CHARLES, GEORGE, PERCY. FRONT: SAMUEL JNR., GRANDFATHER SAMUEL,  
THOMAS.



FAMILY GROUP — SEPT. 10th 1914.

STANDING: SAMUEL, CHARLES, CORA, THOMAS, ANNIE, GEORGE, PERCY.  
SEATED: EDITH, GRANDMOTHER FRANCES, GRANDFATHER SAMUEL, RUBY, FRANCES ALICE.