

The Rev. Samuel Marsden

1765.-1838

Elizabeth Marsden.

1772-1835.

This is my story of my great, great, great grandparents who came to NSW Australia in 1794 on a salary of £3 a week. Samuel was to be the Assistant Chaplain to Chaplain Johnson and he had a great desire to preach the Gospel to the people of the new Colony.

When Samuel died in 1838 he was the wealthiest man in the Southern Hemisphere and was the owner of twenty seven large properties in NSW.

He was also the father of five daughters and one son who would produce families that would contribute to the new, young Colony in the Arts, Law, Sports, Politics and Medicine.

I must, as I always do, tell you that behind and beside every famous man there is usually a loving and capable woman.

Samuel would trade with New Zealand and introduce the Christian Religion to the people there.

I am getting ahead of myself now, as I often do.

So it is back to the 25 June 1765 in the Hamlet of Bagley in Yorkshire England, Samuel was born to Thomas and Bathsheba Marsden.

Thomas was a farm laborer and butcher who moved from town to town seeking work on farms. He was always welcomed at each farm and helped with the sowing, harvesting and killing of cattle.

The Marsden family settled in the Town of Farsley where Thomas's brother, John, was the Blacksmith.

When he turned 16, Samuel began work as an apprentice to his uncle and was introduced to the hard work in the Smithy. He was a good worker and was also involved in the local Church. He soon had a strong body and loved all aspects of farming.

A customer to the Smithy was the Rev Samuel Stones who had a farm and was a member of the Elland Society. This was a group of North Country Farmers and Clerics who played an important role in the recruitment and training of young men from poor families, to be educated and trained to serve the Evangelistic wing of the Established Church. The Society was part of a network linking Yorkshire, Cambridge and London and it had many important people involved with it, none of which would be more important to Samuel's success than William Wilberforce who became a supporter and benefactor. Wilberforce was a MP and a friend of Prime Minister William Pitt.

Samuel, with his family's blessing, went to live with The Rev Stones and attended the school at Rawden near Leeds.

He was now learning about Religion and was working on the farm owned by the Rev. Stones.

In 1788 Samuel had completed the second stage of his preparation for the Priesthood with the Rev Joseph Milner at Hull Grammar School and was enrolled at the Magdalene College at Cambridge University.

He had come a long way from his family background.

He was given an allowance of 20 Guineas a year and an additional 27 shillings for a riding coat as befitting a gentleman. This generous

allowance enabled the Servant of the Lord to maintain a respectable appearance.

A total of £60 a year was spent on Samuel to cover his University fees and board. It is an interesting insight that he was voluntarily to repay all of the monies spent by the Elland Society on his education.

He was a good student and impressed those who knew him, as a pious man and a conservative thinker.

At the time of his graduation he was a Deacon of the Church and was to be ordained as a Minister.

At this time Samuel was presented with an opportunity that many had rejected.

The Archbishop of Canterbury had been seeking to find an Assistant Chaplain to assist the Rev Johnson in the far off penal colony of NSW.

William Wilberforce suggested to Prime Minister Pitt that should offer the Post to Samuel Marsden and on the 1st. January 1793 the appointment was made.

Marsden was told that he must;

Observe and follow the orders and directions of the Governor or any other superior Officer according to the Rules and Disciplines of War.

He was also appointed by the Archbishop as Agent of Missionary Enterprise in the South Pacific area. This gave him sole rites and commissions on all trade by the Missionaries in this new and very rich area. It would make him a very wealthy man. It was good to have influential friends.

It was six months before Marsden was to leave for NSW and there was much to be done. The Elland Society suggested to him that he would be much more acceptable to his new Post if he were a married man.

He now set off to find a suitable young Lady to assist him in this matter.

Whilst living with the Rev Stones and his family he had met several suitable young Ladies and had been corresponding with a Miss Elizabeth Fristan, the daughter of a wealthy family in Hull.

He wrote to Elizabeth;

God appears to have opened the way for me to carry the Gospel to distant lands and will you go along with me? Will you take up your Cross and share my pleasures and my pains? If upon considering this subject you can answer in the affirmative and say “I am willing” then all my heart and all I have is yours.

No doubt overwhelmed by this proposal, “Dear Betsy” said “Yes” and on the 21 April 1793 the young couple stood before the Rev Thomas Clarke, Vicar of Hull Holy Trinity Church and brother-in-law to William Wilberforce and was married.

In May 1793 Samuel was ordained by the Bishop of Exeter and in June 1793 He and Elizabeth boarded the *William at* Spithead and started the long journey to NSW.

Samuel was 28 years old and had a strong body with powerful shoulders. He never wore a wig and had long straw colored hair that fell to his shoulders.

Elizabeth was aged 21 was small and had long dark hair. She was pretty and intelligent and was prepared for hard work in the new Colony. She

was also pregnant which would add to the many discomforts of the long voyage ahead.

The William was a vessel of 305 tons and was carrying a cargo of salt beef and salt pork. The voyage was to take 8 months.

The Marsden's cabin was small with little privacy and the language of the crew was very colorful. Marsden had a great desire to preach and found that the Captain and crew had no time for religion and refused to attend his Sunday services.

This would be good training for what was to come in NSW.

It was a long, difficult voyage and Elizabeth was often sick and had to spend many days in bed thus making great demands on her husband. This appears to have strengthened their marriage.

However- Sunday 2 March 1794 – proved to be, in Samuels' words;

A day much to be remembered by me and mine.

At 2 am. Elizabeth decided that it was time. Samuel wrote;

We had no assistance on board of any kind and the wind was blowing exceeding hard and also heavy rain. These circumstances taken together made our situation most unpleasant. At 10am Mrs. M. was brought to bed of a fine girl. She had an exceeding good time. The child was no sooner born than a great wave washed over the deck and forced its way into our cabin. It wet the child and our linen. We had no fire. Notwithstanding this Mrs. M hath had a good day. I dressed the child and put our place to rights and knelt down to thank God.

We can only wonder what Elizabeth's account of this would have been.

Do you want more? Watch this space.