

The Rev. Samuel Marsden.

1765-1838.

Elizabeth Marsden.

1772-1835.

Episode 4.

Elizabeth could have kept the lands and villages in Hull and the Marsden family would have lived a life of wealth there. The family considered the matter and decided that life in NSW was what they wanted. They divided the property amongst relatives who had their homes on the lands and sailed back to Australia. They thought that they would have a better life in the new Country. They would have no further ties in England.

They had now become Australians.

Samuel would now continue his work as Magistrate, Farmer and Minister. He now had the assistance of three new Ministers and could turn his attention to breeding Merino sheep at *Mamre* at St. Marys. A very competitive man, he was determined to produce the first shipment of fine wool to England ahead of John Macarthur, He was successful and on 2nd. December 1811 he sent 5,000 lb. of fine Merino wool aboard *The Admiral Gambier* to England. The importance of this was to demonstrate the potential value of the commodity which had been ignored by all but a few NSW sheep farmers.

This was the Colony's first shipment and no other grower had shared in this consignment. John Macarthur would claim that he had shared in this but it was not until 19 months later in July 1813 that the next commercial shipment was sent on *The Mistral*. Macarthur sent 36 bales and Marsden sent 8,000 lbs. Macarthur received 20 pence per lb. and Marsden received 60 pence per lb. When in England, Marsden had discussions with J@W Thompson Mills at Rawden, near Leeds.

Marsden had known these Mills as he had once lived in the area and had known how important they were in contributing to wealth and employment.

Samuel Marsden wrote in 1811:

By the Admiral Gambier I have sent to England, 5,000 lb. of fine wool. This is the beginning of the Commerce of the New World. Many think nothing of this now. They cannot see any advantage to their children or this Colony by improving the fleece of their flocks. I anticipate immense National wealth to spring from this Commerce in time. Everything must have a beginning. The foundations must be laid before the house can be built.

The Rawden Mills produced two suit lengths of fine Merino wool and sent them to King George, as promised.

In NSW, Governor Macquarie ordered that a loom be built at Parramatta and by 1812 there were nine in operation employing 50 women and 20 men. Wool for these looms was provided from farms owned by Marsden, Macarthur, Cox, Bell and Lutteral. By 1813 fine wool was also being grown by Simeon Lord and Gregory Blaxland.

Marsden had been given funds by the London Missionary Society to purchase a ship to develop trade with New Zealand. Marsden would make seven voyages to this new land and would be away from NSW for long periods. For this he would receive criticism and praise but that is another story which I may tell you another day.

The Marsden family's life was interrupted in 1811 when Elizabeth suffered a severe stroke when giving birth to a daughter Martha, and she became crippled on her left side. This would mean an end to all those activities that meant so much to her. She would never again ride the fine horse given to her by Samuel whom he described as "fit for any Noblewoman". She was cared for by Mrs. Bishop and later by daughters Ann and Elizabeth. Samuel was devastated and purchased a

special carriage in which she regularly drove to visit her friends. Elizabeth wrote many letters during their remaining time together and always mentioned “a loving and caring relationship with her dear husband.”

The Marsden’s took little part in the fashionable world of Sydney Town. The Dinner Parties and Balls were not graced by the four highly eligible daughters of The Parsonage. It was said that the girls were allowed, by their father, to dance at home with young men. Elizabeth and the girls would visit Governor Darling and his fragile wife and the vice regal couple would often visit the Marsdens as they were known to have a superb table with meat and produce from their own farms and there were imported wines and spirits.

It should be noted that Elizabeth and Samuel only ever drank water.

In 1824 the Marsden household was upset when Mrs. Bishop died. Without the assistance of her friend, Elizabeth was forced to do more for herself. The girls spent more time at *Mamre* with brother, Charles. They said that it was to escape the task of having to copy their father’s many letters. Mary wrote; *I only return to Parramatta very reluctantly having only obtained a week’s leave of absence from Headquarters.*

Samuel and Elizabeth had the task of guiding five attractive daughters’ into respectability and God Fearing adulthood in the midst of a Convict Society. In 1818 Mary, Jane and Martha were in the background of this circle but Ann and Elizabeth had entered Public Life in Parramatta. At St. John’s Church they started a school that had 100 white pupils and 50 Aborigine children. All were treated equally and it should be noted that one Aboriginal girl was Dux of the school several times. The school did not believe in punishment by using the cane and this caused some of the white population to refuse to send their children there, because they believed that punishment was good for children. Some did not like their children sitting with Aboriginal

children. The school was very successful and produced some fine scholars.

Marsden's son, Charles was sent to England in 1819, intended for the Church or Medicine and studied at the Lampeter College in Wales. Charles, however, had ideas about becoming a Gentleman and would return to NSW with no qualifications, leaving a mountain of debt in England and Scotland. This was paid, in full, by his father who found it "too painful to dwell upon." He now settled Charles at *Mamre* which was a fine property, much loved by all the Marsden family.

John Macarthur had been ill for many years and was declared to be a lunatic by his family and was confined to his estate at Camden Park. He was tormented by delusions of treachery and fraud. The only person to visit him was Samuel Marsden, who came every week and walked with his old enemy and friend and gave him news of happenings in the Colony. John Macarthur died in 1834 and his death passed almost unnoticed by the Colony that had benefited so much from his activities and vision.

The Marsden daughters managed their properties well and they all married and lived very comfortable lives..

When Samuel set out in his gig on the 8th. May 1838, to visit his friend Rev. Henry Styles at Windsor, his labours as a father and provider had been completed.

Daughter Ann was married to Rev Thomas Hassall and had settled on a property at Bathurst, Elizabeth had married Rev Henry Bobart and he had taken Samuels role as Rector at St John's, the other daughters would marry well and settle on their new properties.

Elizabeth (Dear Betsy) died on the 3rd. October 1835 and Samuel wrote;

Her Death is the greatest affliction that I have ever known and I draw strength from our Unity and Love. She was a warm and loving friend.

Samuel's thoughts now turned to his family and how to see them settled. He now owned 29 properties totaling 11,724 acres. He also had £30,000 in money. In England it was the custom that he must leave all of his wealth to his only son but in the Colony of Australia this was not the case. The young women in his family met and decided how the wealth was to be distributed. They gave Charles the property of *Mamre* and he did not manage it well and soon gambled it away and became a bankrupt. He had to sell off most of the land to pay his debts and had only the house and a few acres to exist on.

When Samuel arrived at Windsor, in his gig, on the 8th May 1838 to visit his friend Rev. Styles, he had caught a chill and was put to bed. It was much more than a chill and on the 11th May, he died with all of his family at his bedside.

Samuel Marsden's funeral on the 15th May 1838 was very impressive. There were many mourners and over 60 carriages. The Gazette said that it was the biggest ever seen in the Colony, with many Judges, Officers and Officials present.

To the many mourners who watched his Burial at St. John's at Parramatta, it represented the closure of the first half century of NSW History. He alone, remained from the party of Civil and Military Officers who had been granted land by Major Grose, in what marked the beginning of what is now Australia.

In 1838 Samuel Marsden had written;

I have now been appointed Chaplain to NSW for forty five years and have gone through many Toils and Hardships and have often to contend with unreasonable and wicked men in power. I have gone through many dangers by Land and Water and amongst the Heathens and amongst my own Countrymen in NSW and have suffered Shipwreck and Robbery but the Lord in all His Mercy, at all times, Delivered me.

When the Rev, Thomas Hassall wished to marry Ann Marsden , he wrote to her father;

Permit me then, dear Sir, to hope for the future that you will allow us to encourage that attachment which, I trust, has been founded upon the purest principles. I am well aware of the many obstacles that appear to stand in the way. I feel my own unworthiness and that I might not aspire to an alliance with your family.

Samuel, with Yorkshire bluntness, replied;

Dear Thomas, I have to thank you for your letter in which you solicit my permission to pay your address to my daughter Ann. I need to only say that you have my approbation to do so as she is at full liberty to please herself in a matter in which her own future happiness is really interested.

Within three months Ann and Thomas were married. *The Sydney Gazette* reported.

The happy pair were united by the Reverend parent.

Bibliography. The Mitchell Library, Hassall Family papers. Marsden letters and papers. Portrait Gallery. Journal of voyage from England to Port Jackson 1794. Sydney Gazette 1803-1838. Prof A. T. Yarwood.

(John Imrie- 9/5/2020)