

The Rev. Samuel Marsden.

1765-1838.

Elizabeth Marsden.

1772-1835.

Episode 5.

That is the story of how my great, great, great grandparents came to Australia. That however is not the end of my story. There is more to tell about Samuel and his journeys to New Zealand. I will tell you about that another day if you like. It looks like I will be writing more tales while we are all couped up in our homes for some time yet.

It keeps me off the streets.

I will finish this story by giving you a few facts about the Marsden family. The first one is what happened to “Mamre”, the Marsden house at St. Mary’s where the Australian Wool Industry was started.

The house “Mamre”, named by Samuel and Elizabeth from “The Plains in Hebron given by God to Abraham”, was built on a property at St. Mary’s, now a suburb of Sydney, as a retreat from life at Parramatta. It is where Samuel bred his Merino Sheep with a view to producing Fine Wool.

It is from there that the first commercial shipment of this Fine Wool was sent to the Mills at Rawden, in England, on the *Admiral Gambier* in 1811.

Samuel and Elizabeth’s only son, Charles, lived on the property and inherited it when his father died in 1838. Charles married Elizabeth Brabyn , the daughter of Captain Brabyn of the NSW Corps. They had a son Charles and daughters Elizabeth and Martha. Elizabeth is where my mother’s family started. There are a lot of Elizabeths in the Family.

Charles was a spendthrift and a gambler and within ten years of his father’s death had sold most of the property to pay his debts. When he died in 1868, only a few

acres and the house remained of what had once been a well managed farm producing Fine Wool and a variety of crops. Elizabeth, however was a strong woman who, despite her husband's failings, was able, with the help of the Marsden daughters, to secure a small property at St. Mary's which enabled her to live comfortably and to see her three children married and secure.

The family lived at "Mamre" until 1934 when it was declared a Natural Trust Property and was leased to several tenants who allowed it to fall into disrepair.

In 1974 my brother and I approached the Federal Minister for the Urban and Regional Affairs, Tom Uren, who referred us to the NSW Shadow Minister for the Environment Paul Landa who said that the house must be saved. When the Wran Government was elected in 1975 the new Minister for Housing, Ron Mullock, was also the local member and I interviewed him and he said that he needed a place where young people who had been in prison could be trained with job skills.

Ron and I became good friends and he rang me to say that his Government would take over "Mamre" and that he had given the task of training the young people to an Order of Nuns who would have several old Railway carriages installed where they would live.

I met and became friends with the Mother and told her about the History of the Property.

Today it has been restored and used as a training place and as a Wedding Reception building.

What an ironic twist that the Rev Samuel Marsden's favourite house should end its days run by a Catholic Order.

It is no longer used much and is still being maintained by the National Trust. You can see it if you are in the St.Marys area and you will find it in Mamre Road.

The next story is an important one for me so please forbear with me if you may find a tear or two on the document.

This is the story of John and Sarah Champion and Samuel Marsden.

In 1813 John Champion, aged 18 years, was arrested in England for theft. He was sentenced to 14 years in NSW and arrived in Sydney Town in 1814. On the same convict ship was a female convict; Sarah Barber aged 16 years who had been sentenced to 7 years for the theft of some linen. John was a Wheelwright by trade and was sent to Penrith to work on a farm and Sarah was assigned to Gregory Blaxland as a Maidservant.

The Penrith farmer and his wife were involved in the Sly Grog Trade and in 1815 they were arrested along with John and duly appeared before Magistrate Rev. Samuel Marsden at Parramatta.

Marsden could have ordered John to be flogged -50 lashes.

However when Marsden discovered that John was a Tradesman and could be useful to the Colony it was suggested that if John would renounce his evil ways and work hard, Marsden would see that he would be placed with a more suitable Master.

John readily agreed that he would give up the grog and go to Church every Sunday and Marsden arranged for him to work for his friend Gregory Blaxland. What luck for John, with no flogging.

He was able to meet once again with Sarah and Gregory Blaxland was a much kinder Master.

It was not long before John and Sarah decide to marry and they approached Samuel Marsden to tie the knot. So, on 11 May 1815 at St John's Church at Parramatta the young couple was married.

We do not know the fate of the farmer and his wife. You don't want to be told this as I am making this a happy tale.

Marsden took an interest in The Young Couple and when they had been given a Ticket of Leave, he helped them to take up a land grant and gave them finance to start their own business.

John prospered and when he came to Marsden and wished to repay the monies lent he was told to put it back into their business.

I said that this was a nice story but there is more.

John and Sarah had 12 children and they all lived good and prosperous lives. They became good Australian citizens and can be found as Judges, Lawyers, and Sports persons, Teachers, Musicians and even a Jockey.

John died in 1887 and had asked that he and Sarah be buried at St. John's Parramatta, near to the grave of the Rev Samuel Marsden.

Their youngest son, Charles, married Mary Ann Palmer, the daughter of an ex-Convict and they started a Timber hauling business, at Faulconbridge, in the Blue Mountains.

They had a neighbor, Henry Parkes who would become The Father of Federation. They were close friends and if you should happen to visit the Historic Cemetery at Faulconbridge, you will find the graves of Charles and Mary Ann, next to the Sir Henry Parkes memorial.

You should do it some-day; it is well worth the visit.

Charles and Mary Ann had 9 children and many grandchildren and eventually a great granddaughter, Valerie Champion of Lane Cove in Sydney.

Valerie and I were married in 1949 and lived happily together for 49 years.

I like to think that The Rev Samuel Marsden, when he married the two ex-convicts John and Sarah back in 1815 would have looked kindly on the marriage of one of his family to the descendant of two convicts.

I hope that you have found the time to read my tales. I hope that I have not bored you with my personal story. If you would like to hear more of Samuel Marsden's story in New Zealand please let me know.

To finish my story I have done a family tree of it all.

I am descended from Charles Marsden and Elizabeth Brabyn and as I have said, Charles was a gambler and was not interested in farming and let the good property of "Mamre" be sold off to pay his debts.

The Rev. Samuel Marsden. m. Elizabeth Fristan.

Ann.	Elizabeth.	Charles.	Mary.	Jane.	Martha.
m.	m.	m.	m.	m.	m.

Thomas Hassall. Henry Bobart. Elizabeth Brabyn. John Betts. Thomas Marsden. Josiah Betts.

Elizabeth.

m.

George Shadlow.

Ann .

m.

Edward Bell.

Elizabeth (Biddy)

m.

Harry Imrie.

John .

m.

Valerie Champion.

We had two sons. Five grand children and four great grandchildren .

