



Readers' Story

THE DUNKLEY FAMILY

Henry DUNKLEY married Emma Mott Hill in September 1839 at Bradford, Yorkshire, England. The British census of 1851 shows Henry as the head of the household living with not only his wife and 4 of their children but with his widowed father, John and two of his brothers, James and John, also widowed with his son Cornelius. I wonder how big the house was!!

Henry, with his wife and children, emigrated to Australia aboard the *Theodore*, leaving Liverpool on 23rd August 1852 arriving in Melbourne 8th December 1852

Henry and Emma were both aged 34 and could read and write. Henry was listed as a woolcomber (as was his father in the census), religion Church of England, both natives of Yorkshire. The children were Martha 12, Charles 10, Thomas four and Benjamin aged one.

In fact Henry was a staunch Methodist and took classes for Methodists in Moorabbin.

James, now married with children, also emigrated to Australia aboard the *Escort* arriving in 1857.

The below extract tells of Henry's early years in Australia.

"DUNKLEY Henry - South Brighton

Is a native of Warwickshire England who landed at Melbourne in 1852 and worked at Goldsborough's wool store for three months. Leaving this and going to South Brighton in March 1853 he purchased 2 ½ acres of land at 133 ponds per acre and commenced work as a foreman at a brickyard opposite his present holding. In 1854 he went to the Maldon diggings where he endured great hardships and at Easter when in miner's parlance he was nearly on the bed rock his mate found a three ounce nugget. He then got into a good claim on the Avoca and after rambling about for 10 months returned to South Brighton pretty much the same in pocket as he had left it. After a time he again went to Avoca with his son, and thence proceeded to Glenpatrick and was successful as they were also at the Adelaide Lead where they got 1,000ozs., and to which place they brought up the family from South Brighton. After visiting other diggings they again tried Adelaide Lead this time making 4000 pounds. Altogether, Mr Dunkley spent eight years in a gold seeker's life. In 1861 he settled down on his present holding, which he had increased by purchase to 5 acres, now all in cultivation under fruit and vegetables. Mr Dunkley is married and has a family of three sons and one daughter living." (Source: Victoria & It's Metropolis Volume 2 by Sutherland pg 702-703)

Victorian Electoral Rolls 1856

Dunkley Henry, laborer, Freehold South Brighton.

Henry signed the Moorabbin petition in 1861 which lists him as owning 7 acres in Moorabbin.

Henry and Emma had other children that had died in infancy, four in England and three more in Australia, Henry, Henry William and Arthur.

Henry settled into the profession of Market gardening in the Moorabbin area as did his son Thomas after him.

Henry died in 1906 aged 88 of Broncho pneumonia, cerebral haemorrhage and senility. Emma the year before, 1905, age 86 with asthenia (weakness) and senility. Both were buried at the Cheltenham Pioneer

Cemetery Methodist section "E" 129. A plaque was erected on the grave by descendants and notes the Dunkley's as one of the district pioneers.

I don't know where the children who died in Australia are buried. Two boys named Henry died c1853 and 1855 (deaths registered at Moorabbin) and Arthur died 1862.

Their children that lived beyond infancy were:

Martha Ann married name Presnell, second marriage to Dobson.

Charles married Sarah Jane, second marriage to Annie Sophia. Charles is buried at the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery Methodist "33" 1.

Thomas married Ellen Harbrow and had two children. They didn't ever divorce but Thomas began a relationship with his housekeeper, Mary "Polly" Price and had a further 11 children with her. He died of asphyxia and double pneumonia and is buried at the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery Methodist "E" 85, with Mary and one of their children that died in infancy.

Thomas's eldest son, Arthur Henry DUNKLEY was killed at Gallipoli in World War 1.

Benjamin married Sarah and moved to Western Australia.

There are three generations of DUNKLEYS buried very near to each other as Henry's grandson, Thomas's son is also buried in Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery Methodist "E" 234 – James Albert Dunkley. He died with senility, arteriosclerosis, femoral occlusion and gangrene of the leg.

Author: Rhonda Underwood

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