

1

Harriet Oats (née Cock) 1828-1901

Harriet Oats was the eldest child of Robert Cock and Catherine Phillips, and the eldest sister of my grandfather Edwin Cock. As I have gathered snippets of information, I have become greatly impressed that she was a person of courage, endurance and fortitude. I have been led quite a merry dance following false trails.

During a short visit to Neudle, my mother's birthplace, a visit to the cemetery provided me with dates of birth and death of various members of her family, enabling me to procure birth and death certificates. To begin with Harriet's death certificate quoted erroneously that she had been married at COPPERHOUSE N.S.W. when she was 20. That gave me a false clue about the date of the Cock family's arrival in Australia. Copperhouse could not be located but eventually I discovered it in Cornwall near Redruth.

Harriett Cock (20) married Richard Oats (Coach-maker) (24), 27th July 1848 in the Wesleyan Chapel Copperhouse. Their home address being given as Church St Camborne. This must have been after her family had left ^{Leznoague} St Reverne. Their names cease to be listed after the 1848 harvest. The young couple then seem to have migrated to South Australia with Richard's father, John Semmens Oats also a coach builder and wheelwright. He lived until he was over 100 & is interred at Neudle. Father & son must have worked in partnership [He joined them in NSW for the last five years of his life]. Documents indicate that they worked for 4 yrs

at Gawler where two children were born

(1) Richard Cock Oats (1849)

(2) Harriet Catherine (1851)

They then moved to the Bendigo region at one time known as Sandhurst. At some stage while in Melbourne Harriet had her photograph taken - a pleasant round face framed in soft fair wavy hair. Could she have gone to meet the ship which brought the rest of her family from Cornwall? After all the years of separation could she have persuaded her sister Catherine to stay with her.

My next evidence is in a letter from the Hon. John Smith to Robert Cock, lamenting that while they were passing through times of hardship, his eldest son Robert was absent in Victoria. It appears that Robert Peter & Hugh Phillips, his youngest brother spent 7 months in Victoria. Recently I learned that Catherine Cock (b 1835) was married in 1855 ~~from~~^{at} her sister's home Sandhurst, Kangaroo Flat to Henry Oats, Richard's 22 yr old brother who is described as a miner.

In 1855 John Semmens Oats was born at Bendigo. Perhaps Catherine stayed nearby to help her ^{sister} with the new baby.

It was 10 yrs before another birth is recorded Francis Martin 1865. Emma Louisa 1867, though Harriet Oats death certificates record that two males and one female child were deceased. Were ~~they~~ infant deaths which had occurred during those 10 yrs?

One of Harriet's granddaughters

son of Richard (Lack Oats)

"I only know of Robert Oats

dying at Gaffney's Creek. He was in his teens and was working at the mines with Richard his father and brothers which was about 20 miles from Gaffney's Creek and where Harriet & the small children lived. Robert caught pneumonia and died. Their other young children may have died here. "Grandma Harriet told Grandpa to make a little coffin while he was at home in case Catherine died as she thought she would not rear her." She lived until she was 84 while at Gaffney's Creek. Richard's father worked with metal & timber. ^{Place names -} hand was thrown open from Orange to Neville & the Oats settled in Neville after coming across country from Victoria in drags & on horseback. Richard Sr bought a farm for his son Richard 4 miles from Neville on the Trunkley Rd and 40 acres for himself and family. He first built a wattle & daub house for a while until his permanent house was built. Trunkley Creek was a mining town in those days. Francis Oats had a house on a rise across the creek over which they built a bridge. The houses were less than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile apart. Grandfather Scott built a lovely orchard at the back of the house.

On arrival in Neville, Richard built a wheelwright shop at Neville as soon as possible after he came to Neville and his brother Francis worked with him and Robert Edge, their nephew did blacksmithing when he left school. Harriet in 1873 would have been 45 and one can imagine her joy at having her Cornish clansmen about her - not that days of easy living were due yet. By this time her

By this time her parents were advancing in years & in 1880 Robert died at the age of 84, his death certificate giving 'senility and burns' as the cause of death. One wonders what happened. Did Robert have a heart attack or stroke & fallen onto the fireplace or stove? Four years later Catherine died at the age of 81. I've not been able to discover the location of their graves.

Her elder daughter Harriet Catherine known in the family as Kitty married R Edge, probably some time after 1871 when she'd have been 20 yrs old. Three members of an Edge family are mentioned in my book about Gaffneys Creek. John Henry, Joseph & William Her husband may have been a member of that family. They appear to have moved to Charters' Towers Queensland where they had several young children. When Robert died, Kitty must have had great difficulties & needed to earn some money as well as caring for her family. The two eldest ones were sent to their grandparents in Neville to complete their education. Emily was about 13 & Bob 12. I estimate that must have been in the years after about 1895 or so. Harriet then ~~was~~ would have been in her 60s.

Em Edge as we knew in middle age lived at Millloughly where I think she cared for ~~two~~^{two} young nephews, children of her sister. She was short in stature, brown-eyed and smiling. Her teeth were white & even & she had a pleasing expression of mouth. My mother often joked about the difference in their gait. Em's light tread sounded like "titt toot", Mother's was a slower, heavier plod. She very often accompanied Uncle Jack to his musical feasts when he visited Sydney. Some thought they could have made a happy partnership.

Her brother Bob we knew only as a name. The schoolmaster Mr Blackler was said to be bad-tempered & severe. Bob wagged school as often as he could.

He had a good tenor voice
• sang in the choir • the many concerts held
in those days. All the Oats • Cock families were
fond of music • most were able to perform in
some way, although mostly self taught. Bob
Edge was noted for comic songs. Francis Oats
sang duets with him • played the violin.
Emily played the Organ. Emma Scott had a
piccolo • she bought a zither harp. Jack Cock
my mother's brother played the flute. I think his
first flute came from Uncle Joe but much later
he had a silver flute but in the early days a
group of the lads played tin whistles.