

## The Stephens Family

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Inquiries into grandmother's family had been inhibited because of limited evidence and only lately has there been a break-through. Grandmother's name was Susannah Stephens. On her death certificate her Father's name was given as Richard Stephens, <sup>or farm steward</sup> formerly in Cornwall and her birthplace Launceston in Cornwall. Her Mother's name was Chaiity Coombe. Mother was under the impression that her Mother had died when they were young. When their Father re-married, she and her sister Ann left home and "went into service." As yet that hasn't been verified. Ann. Susannah arrived in Australia in 1860 and 3 years later Ann was witness at her wedding. In her later years Mother spoke often of her Mother being away in Bathurst visiting her sister Ann whose husband Billy Tressize had a peg-leg and kept a shop. As a child Mother had handed out sweets and first associated the smell of train smoke with Bathurst.

Cousin Edith remembered grandmother's brother Uncle Joe Stephens, a policeman who lived in Warren and whose son was a Salvation Army Officer. "He used to visit us, riding on horse-back. I used to love those visits because he used to bring a bag of sweets for me. The bag I carefully returned when empty, for a refill. I always listened in to conversation on a return trip from Queensland, he told "of days a week long". I still remember how I longed for a day that long in which to run and play with Henry (her brother). (Joe was born in 1830

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so he'd have been well in his 60s if Edith were 50  
so] Grandma also had two sisters, Ann Freyze  
whose husband had a business in Bathurst."  
At one time Aunt Fel went to Bathurst to cook for  
as Grandma had other daughters to help her.



Much later, another sister came out from Cornwall and gave a fluffy toy dog to Uncle Sid (born 1857) He has it in his arms in a family group photo at Uncle Ted's wedding. (Edith's Father) Sid must have been 3 or 4 and grandmother travelled on the old ~~old~~ zig-zag railway <sup>(completed 1869)</sup> over the mountains, to meet her in Sydney. I would think about 1890, so they would not have met for 30 yrs. I don't know if she were a widow or single. She was always known as Auntie Pip and for one time lived with the family at Wellington. Uncle Sid said "she is only the size of a bear pip". Imagine their joy at reunion.

In 1981, a phone call out of the blue, brought me in touch with Pat Lay and her mother who have also been researching the Stephens Family. The mother, Mrs M<sup>c</sup>Coosey was Beryl Ethel Crothers (aged 75.) She was descended from Mary Stephens an older sister of grandmothers who had married Jonathan Mullis in the Wesleyan Chapel in Launceston 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1850, travelling to Australia on the "Lord Stanley", arriving on 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1850 and settled at Eme Plains. I had never heard of the Mullis family but on reading our grandparents marriage certificate discovered that it was ~~from~~ <sup>at</sup> the Mullis home they were married.

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Mrs McHosey remembered visiting  
Bathurst with her grandmother in the 1920s and  
staying with her great Aunts. Ann married



Billy Treenze, a widower with 2 daughters and had a business in Bathurst on the corner of Bendick & Piper Sts. She photographed it as late as 1996. "Uncle Billy" had a peg leg and seemed to be selling supplies to the goldminers in the district. Bushrangers gave him a fair deal because he supplied them with tea. He may have been involved in grandfathers trip to Sydney with the bullock team, when they camped on the block later built on by Anthony Hardens. Maybe these trips happened regularly.

It seemed an El Dorado for the small girl with a colourful garden with wisteria & roses, a pet rabbit & a parrot. She had a child's envelope addressed to her grandmother in Bathurst — with 1<sup>d</sup> stamp. She said the two little dumpty Aunts were like Tweedle Dum & Tweedle Dee.

I was able to tell them about Uncle Joe of whom they'd never heard. Pat visited Warren during the August vacation and found a great deal of information. She established contact with a grandson of Joe's who had photographs. Joe it appears came to Australia in 1846 as a lad of 16 and married and had his family at Emu Plains. So grandma would have had a brother and two sisters in the neighbourhood.

By pursuing records in the Mormon Genealogical Library Pat has been able to trace the Stephens <sup>Coombe families</sup> back several generations. Richard Stephens m Charity Coombe  
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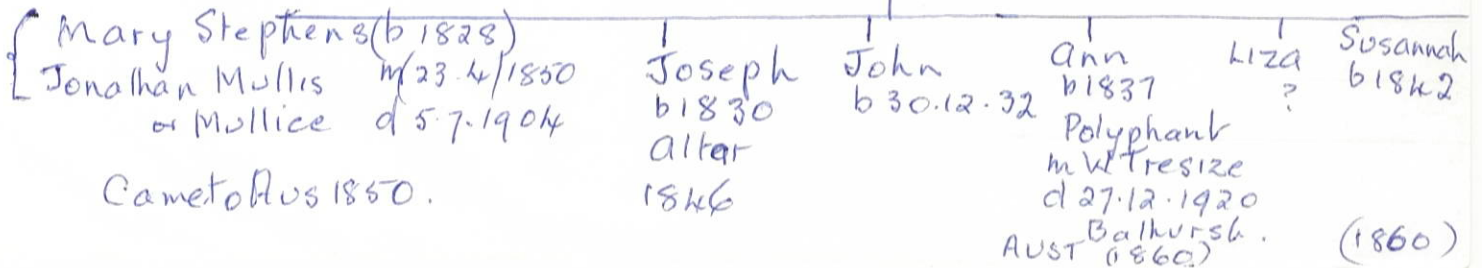
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We never knew Grandmother Cook but cousin Eva Devenish stayed with them in Wellington when she was attending school and quite young. Uncle Jack hoped that heaven would mean "seeing dear old Mum again". Mother remembered her as being always happy. She loved her nine boys and was more than ready to join in a romp rather than disciplining them. Although excessively overweight, 16 stone at one time and not very tall, Grandfather described her as a "lovely bunch of cuddle". She enjoyed gardening and as she couldn't bend much, she used a ditch hoe. Mother remembered the scent of the fenks, mignonette and a musk rose with a beautiful perfume. The children were encouraged to have a little plot of their own.

Mother couldn't remember her mother doing much of the house work as such that was left to the girls, but she was a good cook. Grandfather made a brick oven similar to the one at Blundell's cottage and Mother remembered the scent of the round loaves of fresh bread when they were turned out to cool. She used to make their clothes on a little chainstitch machine, which Mother had when I was young. It made a very neat stitch with a chain at the back and ran so silently. Once when a Singer Agent called he scoffed: "You don't call that a machine!" It was made by Wilcox & Gibb.

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They were very hospitable and there were always lots of men round the table because grandmother always encouraged the boys to bring their friends home and clergymen seemed to visit. \* Insert paragraph. P.T.O

East Lynne a farm on the road to Wellington Caves was a later home and



\*Neighbours often consulted her in cases of illness as she seemed to have knowledge of curative qualities of local plants. One little pink flowered weed with a bitter taste was known as the dysentery herb.

Mother remembered the names of the two midwives who were in attendance when her brother Sid was born in 1887. (She'd have been 4) One came to care for the baby and the other to help with younger children. For Grandma these regular accouchements were welcomed as the only holiday she knew! Apart from the 13 children, she had at least 3 miscarriages.



I don't know when they moved into Wellington. I fancy I remember the names Maughan & where I think she probably ran a boarding house with the help of her girls. Boarders were railway men, very often, with the board incredibly cheap with mending done as well. Maybe that was when my mother did her apprenticeship as a neat darning & patcher.

Later again Uncle Frank bought a house in Montefiore St. Wellington, His mother's <sup>practical</sup> comment was that the path was too narrow to carry a coffin with two lots of bearers. Maybe she had a premonition as she was the first to go, not long afterwards.

From the Methodist archives, I received her obituary which I think must have been written by the Rev Herbert Bellhouse as the initials are H. E. B. and which I read with pride. From the "Methodist" church paper dated 17<sup>th</sup> August, 1912 & headed "The Church Triumphant".

#### The Late Mrs Edwen Cock

Susannah Cock was born in Cornwall, England in 1842 and died at Wellington N. S. W. on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1912. She was the child of Methodist parents and in her early teens manifested her desire to live a Christian life. At the age of 19, accompanied by one of her sisters, she left the old country for Australia and in 1863 was married at Emu Plains, by the late Richard Amos, to Mr Edwen Cock who survives her. Residing successively in ~~Be~~ Penrith, Bathurst, Blayney and Wellington Circuits, her home was always open to the ministers, who were not slow to appreciate her gracious hospitality.



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Her best work was accomplished in her own  
home.

She was the mother of 13 children, of whom 10 remain to mourn ~~the~~ the loss of one who was an embodiment of all that is signified in that sweet and homely word - "Mother." By her lovable disposition, her devotion to her family, her spirituality of mind, she was ever an example of quiet, unobtrusive womanly goodness. For some time, physical infirmity had rendered attendance at public worship impossible. A loyal and true Methodist, she loved her church and its services. She appreciated the more, the visits of her minister.

On Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July, she was suddenly seized with a paralytic stroke, lapsed into unconsciousness and passed away quietly at 9.30 a.m. on the Saturday following, to receive as did many of old, the Minister's commendation in the words "She hath done what she could." Her death was a peaceful ending of a noble story, the quiet amen to a life's long prayer.

The funeral took place on Saturday afternoon, the large attendance at the graveside indicating the respect and esteem in which Mrs Cock was held by all sections of the community.

Eva Devenish: "Aunt Lil then took charge of grandfather and took him to a house in Montefiore just outside of Wellington, where she was caring for another ~~elderly~~ gentleman, and it was there that grandfather died on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 1920. Grandfather lost his sight 8 yrs before he died. Cousin Ted could remember him walking around the paddock holding onto a wire. Mother could remember him telling the time by the position of the sun on the



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His obituary in the "Methodist"  
appeared August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1920.

Edwin Cook was born in Cornwall on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1833. A disciple of Christ from his youth up, he delighted in the fellowship and work of the church. At Nevill, Mr Cook filled with faithfulness and efficiency, the position of church steward and choir leader for many years and on coming to Wellington, took up with unabated interest, similar work there. The simple sincerity of his Christian life was an example to many and when in life's eventide he was deprived of sight and afflicted with deafness, he bore severe trials with exemplary Christian fortitude and cheerfulness.

Mr Cook passed away at Montefiores Wellington on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1920 in his 88<sup>th</sup> year. God who had taught him from his youth, forsook him not when he was old and grey-headed and his strength failed. In peace and confidence he passed to be with the saviour, whom he trusted and loved. The large assemblage at the graveside was eloquent tribute to the esteem in which the deceased gentleman was held."

The next generation will have to be another section.