

## **Phenomenal dust storm at Narrandera**

Seldom has such a grand spectacle been witnessed in these parts as that of the approach of a phenomenal dust storm which swept over the town on Monday evening last. About 6 o'clock a large bank of dun coloured clouds was noticed in the western horizon and its identity was recognised as it swiftly drew closer. It wreathed and curled in gigantic coloured columns, from bright gold through heavy purple to inky black, and as it approached it appeared as a blast from some awful inferno. It struck the town with instantaneous darkness but being high in the air, there was not the disagreeable dust which is experienced in the ordinary storm. In about a quarter of an hour it had passed, leaving a silvery sheen in the atmosphere through which the sun could be looked at the whole of the next day. Could an artist have pictured the scene upon the canvas his fame would be world-wide.

*Narrandera Ensign*

Carl T Dugdale, Narrandera NSW

## Christadelphians

### Chambers Dictionary

A small religious sect, holding conditional immortality, denying a personal devil - sometimes called Thomasites from Dr John Thomas of Brooklyn (1805-71.) Literally "Brethren of Christ".

### Collins English Dictionary

A member of a Christian millenarian sect (relating to 1000 years) founded in US about 1848 holding that only the just will enter eternal life, that the wicked will be annihilated & that the ignorant and unconverted and infants will not be raised from the dead.

### Encyclopaedia Britannica

Sometimes called Thomasites:- John Thomas after studying medicine in London migrated in 1830 to Brooklyn NY. There he first joined the followers of Thomas & Alexander Campbell, but afterwards struck out independently, preaching largely upon the application of Hebrew prophecy and of the book of Revelation to current and future events. Both in USA & Britain he gathered a number of adherents. The name Christadelphians was adopted during the Civil War when the denomination had to organize formally in order to justify its objection to military service.

The local organization, called an ecclesia, is congregational in polity, with no distinction of clergy and laity. Ruling or serving brethren are elected and minister without compensation.



Robert Whitten. Uncle Bob 1866-1951

Born at "Lowestoft" in 1866 to Anthony and Charlotte Whitten. During his boyhood, the family must have been struggling to become established. When sheep were introduced I know the elder boys had to do shepherding before there was wire for fencing. Ted was 3 years younger, because Jennie came between and he used to return home dragging his feet. Bob who was strong and energetic could still move with a leap and a bound and balancing something on his head. Once Ted wanted to confide a problem "My thoughts are troubling me" but Bob just laughed and that was the end of that.

Perhaps he had some schooling at Wallaladah, as Jennie did, before they built their own schoolhouse.

The family must have left for Nassau after the railway was completed in 1882. I think Anthony hoped to run a store but he left because of his children's education. During that period Alfred Giles was born. With the thought of yet another mouth to feed, legend has it that Anthony resorted to the bottle (rum I suppose). Bob then 16 yrs old had to hold him down and in later years of ill feeling said that the wickedness of the Father entered the newborn baby!

Later they returned and Bob's selecter was named "Fencliff" after which he was nicknamed "Fenny". A farm tool which was a pin the give the user a nip on the hand was called

Ferry's adder. At some stage of his life because of some misdemeanor, perhaps <sup>or sheep stealing</sup> cattle-rustling, which was not unusual in the early days, it was thought advisable for him to leave the country. He went to NZ and maybe worked as a carpenter for a time.

PAEROA Later he had property in the Rotorua area, according to KK who established contact with Bol's two daughters. He had married Marion (Marian) McGregor 24<sup>th</sup> April 1896 and had two daughters Iris & Eileen both of whom are now dead.

1. Iris m Phil Anderson (no children) but they brought up Jessamine.
2. Eileen married Ken Wheeler & had 3 children
  - (a) Jessamine (single)
  - (b) Aroha m Merwyn Green  
Janice (b 24<sup>th</sup> April 1958)  
Valerie  
Murray & Deane (twins)  
Fiona  
Karen  
Lyndsie  
Stephanie
  - (c) Linden (m Paula?)  
Helen  
Stephen  
David  
Mark  
Bronwyn



I'm not sure when Aunt Minnie died but I remember Uncle Bob visiting us at Castle Hill when I was 9 (1924). He came with <sup>aged</sup> (58) Auntie Hilda's half brother, Chris Dawson who later went as missionary to Sth America and disappeared in the Amazon region. I think Bob may have been attending a course at Hawkesbury College, but I can't tell why. Bee Keeping? When we visited "Lowestoft" for holidays 1925 & again 1928, Bob would be visiting and take his turn with washing dishes and rounding us young ones to pull out horse and in the "calf-paddock". Even as a child, I had a feeling he was somehow "on the outside" and when Grandma died, the rest of the family brought out his share. Maybe that accounted for his bitterness to Dad.

He had had property in NZ but when he left it was eaten up for payment of back rates. He had some property in Queensland.

He was perpetually advertising or writing letters to the press. If a fortnight passed without, the other brothers suspect something is wrong. One prize ad was "To let - women and facts need not apply". Another week there was a rather nasty letter about old Bob Whitten having a fall. Uncle Harry was going to complain when he discovered Bob had put it in himself.

To Let - for races, garages, lawns, camping reserves, grazing paddocks, money lent, Bag-snatchers, barred. R. Whitten



When his brother ~~and~~ Fred was a member of the cemetery board, he wasirate because Bob had fenced an land adjacent to the cemetery and offered it for rental.

As time went on, he became more eccentric and neglected himself. The younger cousins, dressed in their best would see him coming with a string of dogs and try to sneak past unnoticed on the other side of the road. Bob who had a very quick eye would call, "Goodday Whitten!" to their great embarrassment. He was known as "Knuts & Bolts".

was remembered one story. When Bob was in A & W's bad looks for some reason, Albert who held his mother in special regard, said, "Alf, remember he's a son of Charlotte Whitten and therefore a prince among men".

After A & W's death, Mother went in 1958 to New Zealand and made a visit to New Plymouth to visit Gus. It was for her a somewhat delicate mission because that branch of the family were converts to Christadelphian sect. Mother had a happy visit, looked from her bedroom window and had a perfect view of Mt Egmont before a curtain of mist closed it off. She found them kindly people, good-living & concerned particularly with the Education of the Deaf (I think)

Nowadays, I imagine some of the tenets of their faith would not seem so bizarre. Years ago when she learned that Christadelphians did not believe in a personal devil, Aunt Beatrice dressed up a whole family of mountain devils with pipe-cleaners, red wool, etc.



When visiting Wallaladeh in 1985, for the family reunion with Maurice & Doris, we were rather sad to learn that Bob was buried beside his parents in the local cemetery in an unmarked grave. At the time his daughters had been approached but whether because no love was lost or because of their beliefs or because money was short, they declined to arrange it. They preferred to use any money available in the service of the living.

He died in 1951 at the age of 85.

Both remembered a saying of Bob's "Mind your eye-brows"

PAH As I first remember Uncle Bob, he was a strong vigorous upstanding man who didn't appear to be almost 60. In some ways he was more like AGW in stature, aquiline nose, moustache and to some extent with sharp eagle eyes.

Harry of Bob.

"It's a queer mixture. If you were sick, he'd sit up and poultice you all night and as soon as you were well, he'd murder you."

Bob was described as a carpenter. He it was who built the old schoolhouse & later Uncle Harry's letter box which always intrigued us, rather like a miniature of the house.

Annual fraternal gatherings are held for fellowship and Bible study. In the USA in 1960 about 500 ecclesias, 350 in Britain, 65-70 in Australia & 2 in Tasmania and several in NZ. They publish 2 magazines

The Bible is the only authoritative creed, and membership of the society requires a profession of faith and baptism by immersion. The group rejects the orthodox views of the Trinity and its theology is strongly millenarian, centring in the hope of a world-wide theocracy with its seat at Jerusalem and involving belief in a conditional immortality of the body.



## ANECDOTES OF WHITTEN UNCLES

1985

HARRY

Before the women arrived, Harry had a shower, under the outside bathroom tap and came in with just a towel wrapped round him. Being large round the girth the towel only went half-way. He tried for a while to see if he could wrangle his curtain to turn the corner, but failed, so he said to Wes, "go 'way, go 'way".

Thinking Beth was in the bathroom, one Sunday I tapped at the door & asked "Can I come in Beth, it's only me?" To my horror and mortification I heard Uncle Harry's voice. No comment was made, only "Mind the Mat!"

HARRY

His build was rotund, his complexion ruddy. He always wore a beard. One time it was rather long. As he passed a little boy the child sidled over & said "Good-night Santa Claus."

Harry had his elbow lumpy.

"It wasn't very hard, but I could have got on very well without it."

Looking at Saturn through Ted's telescope "He hopped away like a big bull frog or a white possum."

Ted's snoring "like a saw on an old board"

1934

HARRY

The men were working, and ACW was rousing away. "I say Jim (his nickname) I suppose you'd rook just as much if you skinned your dimble finger, as you would for a long one."

Dad had a couple of shots at a flying fox and when he came in Harry said, "You should have kept at pigeon-shooting when you were a boy - you'd have made a great name for yourself. I suppose the old flying fox thought he was on the edge of an earthquake or something."



HARRY.

"Certain people were cut out to be toffs but then weren't wanted."

Speaking of my brothers, I said they were not bad kids."

Ted: There are a lot worse than them

HARRY: "If you could find 'em?"

Sometimes Harry's phone will ring and he'll pick it up

"Hullo dearie, how are you?"

"I'm not too clever myself dearie."

One day Auntie Hilda rang. He didn't recognise his own code, "I was a bit phone-shy

1935

HARRY

Early one morning two flies were worrying Harry in bed. "They'll go away when it gets a bit lighter", he thought. But when I looked up and there they were peeping over the top of the blankets at me, trying to make out if I was alive or dead. As though they had nib the whole world, but must come hawtherring me"

One day the boys were down at Spring Park branding steers. For dinner they had quite a number of oranges. Harry said, "I don't think orange juice is much good for chaps hanging on to the end of a bull."

## HARRY - Bachelor

Very thoughtful of others. - Great stickler for the truth. - Always knelt to say his prayers. - Hearty laugh & ringing voice.  
Sent Auntie Jennie spring flowers in a letter.

He told me of my younger days. Lucy said my parents were scared of me!  
"You don't mind a person getting wild once in a while, but they needn't pull the house down."

Describing an asbestos mine on Flat Top Mt.  
"It was so steep, you'd have to put a bricker on a wallaby."

## TED

1934. A young chestnut horse had been out to grass for some time and as a result was somewhat flighty. Uncle Ted said he wouldn't let Wes ride him until there was a coroner on the spot. Nothing would stop Dad when he wanted to ride.  
"Which horse is he going on?" Asked Ted  
"Oh, the Coroner," said Wes.

When Wes arrived first Ted wanted to know if he'd been using tongs on his hair which at that time was fuzzy curly. For a week Wes kidded him that he had and Uncle Ted was disgusted.



Jan 1935.

TED.

Talking of the different scientists Newton, Pasteur, Darwin etc., Ted mentioned the wonder of co-creation. "If you'd seen two balls of fire spinning round each other in the air and I'd said that one would grow human beings, lilies & violets, roses, what would you think? You'd think I had a rat!"

He thought that the red cactus flower which grew in the schoolhouse garden, was the most beautiful thing he ever saw.

TED

Referring to someone

"Oh he's got a rat, and a pretty leg one"  
FRED "Why, he's got a wallaby!"

Ted said he was surprised to find me so motherly. My face was really softer than the photo he has. "I'm a bit hard naturally, but I've imbibed a little of Mac's gentleness." "How's poor old Mac getting on?"

"You'll try to get Mac wild and all she'll do is to grin at you with those big shark's teeth of hers."

HENRY (SON OF HENRY WHITTEN I) 91 in 1969

Letter Glad - Henry is blind from glaucoma  
30.7.'69. but very bright, marvellous memory.  
His wife Maude says she has never heard him  
sweat or say a nasty thing about him in  
his life - A most placid man.

Everything has to him seemed beautiful  
in his life. He never grumbles about his  
blindness. A hernia gives him a lot of  
trouble and he sleeps sitting up in the  
daytime.

"He doesn't seem to have the Whitten arthritis  
or impatience or temper from nerves.

1934

Ted

Ted to Wes = looking at Dad's pencil sketch  
of a stag, "Do you see anything wrong  
with that picture?" "No" said Wes.

"Look Again!" "Are you quite sure?" "Yes"

Ted: "Well you'd never make an artist. Did  
you ever in your life see a female reindeer  
with a bucks head?" "Yes, Once!" said Wes

"Where?"

"Up there!"

He talks of the "history and mystery!"  
He just did it for a bit of home-made  
mischief!



## Lowestoft - Shearing

A chap at the shearing was stung in the eye by a wasp. Next morning when asked how he was, he replied "I have an eye on me like a half-opened oyster".

During shearing one year, the girl friend of one of the shearsmen visited and asked Uncle Ted to show her where the lavatory was. He misheard and thought she'd said "lemon tree". He took her to the orchard and showed her the lemon tree, the mandarin, orange, quince, apricot etc until in desperation she had to ask again. He was covered with confusion as he was very shy.

Glad's letter 20.10.'83

MAUD (wife of HENRY II) 97 (11<sup>th</sup> / 1983)

Attended Gouere Church 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.  
150 people there, mainly to see her.

She made a speech over microphone -  
thrilled to the tonsils! Wonderful brain  
and memory - amazes people - Cheerful  
disposition

Wonderful at "Scrabble"  
Lived alone in a lug house.

Died 97½ 27.4.'85

5 Children - Audrey, Edna, Mervyn, Stella  
• Lexie (Alexa)

GLADYS

Letter 23.10.73

I received my money \$9,311-99c - an equal share  
High price for last wool clip.  
"I never thought in my life I'd ever see it"  
Only \$50 in the bank.

1934

FRED

While staying at "Lowestoft" Mother asked  
someone to keep the flies away from the  
big meatsafe, while she opened the door to  
take some meat out. Uncle Fred sprang to  
his feet and started waving a tea-towel &  
every little while giving Mother's rear  
a slash of it. "There's one bald chap here,  
as terrible troublesome."

Uncle Ted was suggesting a rabbit drive to  
get rid of rabbits. Drive them into a corner and  
then put dogs onto them & shoot them down.  
FRED: And when you'd finished you'd have  
enough rabbit to make a stew for a sick gen'.



1934

HARRY.

An old lizard ran up the wall in the kitchen. Thinking he might be a death adder Dad landed him a pitch of boiling water. Uncle Harry was sitting up having his meal. "I suppose he'll go home and Mrs Lizard will ask "well, how did you get on today?" Oh' he'd say "I met some very insulting folk, who threw hot water in my face".

Talking of lambs dying in the drought. "I used to take it to the last once, but now I look at it this way. "If he lives, he lives — if he dies, get the skin off him".

TONY - (always spoke with a poker face and a drawl)

His butcher failed him.

"The Cows! I could run that shop better on my head, than those three cows."

HARRY.

When I go down to the trough to give my horse a drink and I see a fly or a destructive insect in the water, I usually kill it, but if it's a harmless little beetle or something like that, I usually put in a straw or piece of grass to help him out [rheumatic knees & all]

He was once in his sulky when a little bird attacked the horse to pull out a hair. Harry waited for a while & then said "well, I can't wait all day for you little chap, I have my work to do!"

HARRY

To the dogs when mustering:  
"Sit down you old fool"  
"Here you son of a gun"  
"Come here you son of a blue bitch."

When Dad shouted at Harry's dogs he said, "Here, don't you go insulting them dogs."

When branding, he'd put a loop around the neck of a steer "Good morning in most affable tones. A victim would be roped "Waa poor fellah, didn't you know you were one of my pets?" PTO



Landing a steer a red-hot brand on  
the hip. "Oh I beg your pardon".  
As they branded a very young one  
"Oh it's the baby boy."

Inquiring if Uncle Tony had a  
temper, Harry said, "Do you think  
they are all like me?"

TED

Holding forth about girls being made  
bolder by having their hair cut.  
Beth said "Uncle Ted, you must have  
been bitten by the same insect as Dad."

In a letter to Edith, Owen wrote  
'we are having quite a jolly time with  
the fruit, the animals and the Uncles.'

Ted was warning Wes not to be too  
susceptible to flattery. 'You'll take a  
city and then you'll be captured by a  
young clowness with a head as big as a  
sunder ball with about as much in it.'

except for a little grey matter above  
the ears that's upside down?