



Romance Found on Board Ship?

When my cousin Clive Ireson gave me a hint about Rebecca Sabina Pinchin who married my great grandfather Henry Smith in Wiltshire in 1853, I did not expect to find a series of love stories leading to Australia.

Henry and Rebecca had, according to a family story, gone to Australia as a result of a gold rush but that might not be so. Initially I found that Rebecca's grandparents James King and his wife Ann had sailed for Australia before them in 1848, but once I started looking deeper and I found a whole family had left England for a new life.

First to go was their oldest son William born in North Newnton, Wiltshire on 18th March 1818 who married Elizabeth Looker (1823 - 1900) in Preshute, near Marlborough, Wiltshire on 8th July 1841.

Shortly after the wedding, they set sail on the ship "William Jardine" but by then Elizabeth was already pregnant as on December 21st 1841, two days before they arrived in Australia she gave birth to a daughter Mary Ann. I could find no details of the ship or voyage online, but it is likely they accepted one of the Assisted Passages being offered by Australian states to try to boost their populations. The family settled in the town of Smithfield quite close to Sydney, and went on to have a further ten children - more of them a bit later.

Next to sail, and maybe encouraged by William, were his parents James King and his wife Ann. On 24th November 1848, they set off from Deptford on the barque "Steadfast" and the ship's manifest showed that travelling with them were their four unmarried daughters Jane aged 27, Mary Ann 25, Eliza Augusta 19 and Emma 16 - all born in Wiltshire.

It seems too that romance blossomed on the ship "Steadfast" as in addition to James and Ann and their four daughters, there was another single young man George Morehouse, who was born in Stepney in London in 1829. Within two months of their arrival in Sydney in April 1849, George had got married in Sydney on 12th June 1849 to Mary Ann the second daughter who was born in North Newnton on 30th March 1823.

Their first child George Alfred Morehouse was born in Sydney on 27th June 1851 and Mary Ann and George went on to have a further eight children between 1852 and 1866.

But the romance doesn't stop there because also on the "Steadfast" were James and Ann's son Thomas and his relatively new wife Harriet Allison (1820 - 1895). Thomas had been born in North Newnton on 2nd January 1825 and married Harriet in Shoreditch on 20th July 1847. Their first son also Thomas was born in Woolangong, New South Wales where they settled in August 1851 and they went on to have a further seven children there.

Also sailing on the "Steadfast" was another single young man aged 22 Samuel Sydney Smith who had been born in Sussex in 1827 and he obviously took a fancy on the voyage to another of James and Ann's daughters as, at the Garrison church in Sydney on 4th August 1849 - just four months after arriving - he

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married Eliza Augusta King who had been born in North Newnton on 18th July 1829. They seem to have settled in Liverpool, New South Wales and had just three children between 1853 and 1857 before Samuel died at the early age of 34 in 1861 - at the time of his death he was described as a schoolteacher. Eliza died in Liverpool, New South Wales in 1873.

We are not yet finished with the "Steadfast" and the family of James and Ann. Emma born in North Newnton on 29th January 1832 was the youngest of the daughters travelling with them. On the 30th July 1849 and shortly after arriving in New South Wales she married John Doran at Parramatta. He was born in Londonderry, Northern Ireland in 1819 and had been in New South Wales for a few years having travelled out on the ship "Lord Weston" arriving in New South Wales in 1840. He was described as a labourer and they settled down and had eight children between 1850 and 1869.

Finally, from the passengers on the "Steadfast" is Jane who was James and Ann's oldest daughter born in North Newnton on 16th September 1821. On 30th June 1850 she was married in Prospect, New South Wales to George Maskelyne who had been born in Marlborough in Wiltshire on 29th June 1823.

I have not found the ship on which George sailed to Australia, but he does not appear on the manifest of the ship "Steadfast", so one assumes he and Jane must have met up in New South Wales. They went on to have six children.

That though is not the end of the King children arriving in Australia. James and Ann's second son Job had been born in North Newnton on 28th November 1819 and in Chelmsford, Essex on 15th November 1844 he had married Elizabeth Tiilbury who had been born in Uxbridge, Middlesex on 23rd July 1823. Job was still in Wiltshire in 1841 so it is unclear how they met up, but they had two daughters Anna Augusta born in 1845 and Eliza born in 1847 and they all sailed together on the ship "Duke of Roxborough" arriving in New South Wales on 14th August 1849 - only four months after Job's parents. They had a further six children after arriving in Australia.

Finally, their middle daughter Edith who was born in North Newnton on Christmas Day 1825 was also travelling on the "Duke of Roxborough" and by then she was a widow having married John Spratt (1795 - 1848) in Preshute on 29th October 1846. John was also a widower having married Sarah Hoskins in 1818, but Sarah had died in Brimslade, Wiltshire on 20th March 1845. They had a son Edwin born in Wiltshire in 1847 before John died apparently in a tragic accident at work as an agricultural labourer. It seems he got his arm caught in a chaff cutting machine - the arm was amputated and he died of shock or loss of blood. So, baby son Edwin aged not yet two travelled to Australia with his mother. She then married a second time to William Coleman who was born in Richmond, New South Wales in 1816 and they went on to have seven children.

I mentioned George Alfred Morehouse earlier who was born in 1851 to George and Mary Ann. He features again in the story of this family as on 22nd January 1872 in Smithfield, New South Wales he married Louise Rebecca King born in Smithfield, New South Wales on 17th March 1850 who was one of the eleven children of the William King above who was the first of the family to arrive in Australia. William was the older brother of the mother of Mary Ann. George Alfred and Louise themselves then had seven children between 1873 and 1893 .

So that is the tale of the King family and eight children from Wiltshire and their travels to settle for a new life in Australia where they seem to have all happily settled, and many had large families of their own so any family get togethers must have required a very substantial property to accommodate them all.

As for my great grandfather Henry Smith and his wife Rebecca, did they go out to Australia in pursuit of a gold rush, or on the recommendation of one or more of the King family; well, we will never know, but Henry did return to England to marry twice more after Rebecca died.

OPC Note:-

The writer of this article would like to connect with anyone else researching this line of research. If you wish to contact him you may do so by using the Contact tab on the Wiltshire OPC Website and search for Richard Smith