

other hand he could have gained something by not having competition for his first twenty years in Sydney.

Whatever his degree of success, he succeeded in bringing up a family of ten children and was able for most of his time, to live in prosperous, middle class localities.

Alexander was unknown to local historians until 1965 when the writer was asked to write a history of chiropody in Australia. He seems to emerge as a modest, humanitarian man; the wording of his advertisements seems to suggest that, but, like so many unknown pioneers he contributed something in a small way, perhaps, to the comfort and well-being of life in Australia.

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Grateful acknowledgements are due to:—

The Geelong Historical Society.

The Latrobe Library, Melbourne.

The Synagogue Officials in many parts of the world who kindly supplied material.

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### BOOK REVIEWS

"BACK TO COOMA CELEBRATIONS" by Felix F. Mitchell, Cooma, 1926, reprinted 1967 through the co-operation of the Cooma Municipal Council, Monaro Shire Council, Snowy River Shire Council.

It stands to the credit of the above-named authorities to have reprinted this small booklet which traces one hundred years of the Cooma District history.

This supplements what is of concern to Australian Jewish History, the not very accurate paper by Dr. M. A. Schalit, "A glimpse into early Jewish history in Monaro", published in Volume II, Part 4 of this Journal, and Mr. Errol Lea-Scarlett's book, "Queanbeyan, District and People", reviewed in Volume VI, Part 6 of this Journal.

The booklet is especially valuable, because it not only relates probably accurate biographies of the early settlers, some of whom were Jews, but supplies us with their photographs also.

We are, therefore, able to reproduce the pictures of two of the most prominent Jewish residents of Cooma. Charles Solomon and I. A. Shannon.

The Jews in the Southern Highlands were not usually pastoral landholders, but merchants and innkeepers. Yet they were highly regarded and occupied official positions in Cooma.

The most prominent Jewish families in the district were the Solomons and the Shannons.

I have not been able to find out when Solomon Solomon, the senior member of the family, arrived in Australia, because so many Solomons came to Sydney in the thirties that it is practically impossible to trace a particular member of the Solomon clan if the exact first name does not appear on the Shipping lists. In addition, many came as steerage passengers, whose names were not listed. It appears that this Solomon seems to have sailed in the early thirties and after having found the country suitable for settlement, let his family come out, too. The Solomons are always mentioned as a "large family", and on 1st February, 1835, Mrs. Rebecca Solomon arrived by *Bretomart* from London with 5 daughters and 3 sons, Saul aged 13, Maurice aged 6 and Charles aged 2. This may well have been the Solomon family of Cooma, because the booklet records that Charles Solomon, the best known member of the family "was brought in 1841, at the age of 10" to "Reid's or Reed's Flats", which later assumed the name of Bunyan, "by his brothers". The place "was then locally spoken as 'Jews' Flats', by reason of the fact that in the thirties members of the Jewish families of Solomon and later those of Shannon resided there". Solomon Solomon built a store and public house at the Flats and carried on until September, 1854, when he transferred the properties to his brother, Maurice.

Abraham Moses, whose activities I mentioned in the review of Mr. Lea-Scarlett's book, established himself in a hotel at Reid's Flats in 1838, but "sold out in 1840 to Solomon Solomon, later of Eden". Although his main activities were then already centred at Sydney, he still had an auctioneer's licence in Cooma in 1858.

Another Jew, also mentioned in the book about Queanbeyan, Abraham Levy, in 1857 also had a store in Cooma as well as a liquor and auctioneer's licence. He was, incidentally a man devoted to Jewish causes and in 1854 had collected money in the district for the poor Jews in Palestine and sent money to the congregation at Goulburn. (*A.J.H.S. Journal and Proceedings*, Vol. II, p. 152/3). In 1858 Levy held auctioneer's licences in Cooma and Queanbeyan.

The township of Cooma came into existence in 1849 and it appears that "the first Annual Licensing Meeting was held on 17th April, 1854, when a certificate was granted to Solomon Solomon of Reid's Flats, for the inn known by the sign of 'The Squatter's Arms'. This inn had previously belonged to another Jew, David Moses". In addition to the hotel, Solomon Solomon conducted a store business in conjunction with his brother, Harry Solomon. It was in these two businesses that young Charles Solomon, who, as the booklet says, is "closely associated with the earliest of Monaro district" assisted, after he had been brought by his brothers to the Flats.

It is appropriate to quote literally what Mr. Mitchell has to say about Charles Moses, who was a real pioneer:—

"When race meetings were held at the Flats, he rode many a horse to victory. Later he started cattle dealing, being his own drover, and it is recorded that on Xmas Eve, 1849, he at Calantiba Station found a family of five who had been without tea, flour or sugar for five weeks. With these he shared his supply. When he made his first trip to Gippsland there was no track, the only guide being an occasional blazed tree. When he first came to Cooma he states the blacks were very numerous, but not dangerous, but that after 1850 they began to get troublesome. In his early days Mr. Solomon recalled that the only money of utility were notes of 5/- and 10/- each, issued by Ben Boyd.

In 1861, Mr. Solomon took up residence in Cooma, and with William Caulter, who had been his droving partner, started business in a stone building owned by Samuel Shannon at the corner of Sharp and Bombala Streets, and known as the "Big Drum". This business was carried on for twelve months only. Mr. Solomon went to Kiandra during the gold rush. In conjunction with Mr. Moses he had a store and hotel at Jindabyne, run by a storekeeper named Davis. In 1870, Jacob Alexander was running the store for him. In addition to the store at Jindabyne, the subject of this sketch for a number of years owned a store at Buckley's Crossing. This was conducted by John and Isaac Davis. Mr. Solomon had built to his order in 1862 the Cooma Hotel, at the corner of Massie and Vale Streets. After carrying this on for three years, he went across the road to premises built by Amos Crisp for William Foss. There he carried on the business of a general merchant first in partnership with David Moses, as Moses and Solomon, and following that as C. Solomon until his death.

Charles Solomon was one of Monaro's most public-spirited and esteemed citizens. He was the first Mayor of the town, a trustee of the Park, as also of the Hospital, on the Committee of which he sat for 45 years. He was a President and Life Member of the School of Arts, to which institution he gave the block of land in Bombala Street upon which the hall was built, subsequently adding to this by a gift of an additional parcel of land. He was President of the Monaro Jockey Club, a member of the local Land Board, and for forty years a member of the Cooma School Board, as well as a foundation member of the Masonic Lodge. He took a keen interest in all sports, especially cricket, and for many years was the patron of the local club. He died in Cooma on 15th November, 1915, at the age of 84, leaving a widow and a number of children. Two sons,

Lewis Samuel, who carries on the business, founded by his father, and Henry Hyam, a solicitor, who has acted as a Clerk to the Monaro Shire since its inception in 1906, still remain in Cooma. The other members of the family, including his widow, have left the district."

Although the Solomon family left the district, the store which Charles Solomon had founded at Cooma, "Solomons Pty. Ltd.", the "Senior Store" in Cooma still exists, and members of the Solomon family are shareholders of this store.

The other important Jewish settler in the Monaro district was Samuel Shannon who seems to have arrived, probably also as a steerage passenger in the late thirties. The Bridge Street Synagogue marriage register records that on 10th February, 1841, he married Emilia Abrahams, and in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 1st November, 1842, we find that he secured a pasture licence in the Monaro district.

Mitchell writes about Abraham Shannon and his family as follows:—

"Abraham Shannon is associated with the beginning of Monaro history. Before Cooma, even as a run was in existence, he had a store at Reid's Flats. Later he joined in the settlement which was forming in what is now Cooma. In 1854 he was carrying on a general store in premises in Bombala Street, and in October, 1856, opened another store in Lambic Street. In December, 1857, having acquired land, on which Rolfe's Prince of Wales Hotel stands to-day, he erected thereon premises, for which, under the name of the Victoria Hotel he was granted a Publican's General Licence. He carried this on for some time, when it was transferred to Robert Barr who had married his daughter. He owned land at the corner of Sharp and Bombala Streets. He left a number of children, the best known of whom is his third son, Isaac Albert, born in Cooma in 1848, and who, for many years, following 1877, conducted a land agency business in Cooma. Mr. I. A. Shannon was Chairman of Directors of the Cooma Co-operative Flour Mill, when that business was operating, was a member of the first elected Council, and a one-time member of the Hospital Committee. He was for a lengthy term a member of the Cooma Licensing Bench. He sold out his interests and went to Sydney to live. He died a few years ago. Another son, Abraham, died in Queanbeyan in November last, aged about 85 years."

W. F. Morrison's "The Aldine Centennial History of N.S.W." (1888) states that Isaac Albert Shannon became a J.P. for N.S.W. in 1885 and a J.P. for Victoria in 1886 and that he was one of the first aldermen elected on the incorporation of the town of Cooma.

It is interesting to note that the mother of Michael Hyam, the third Jewish free settler who came to N.S.W. in December, 1828, was Sarah Shannon, of London, and it is not impossible that the success of Hyam in securing a large land grant in the Kiama district induced other members of the Shannon family to migrate to Australia.

Another of the Jewish publicans in the district mentioned by Mitchell was John Levy, of the Robert Burns Hotel in Nimmitabel.

About fifty-two miles to the S.W. of Cooma is Kiandra, a small settlement, now visited only in winter-time by the enthusiasts of ski-ing, but from 1859 to about 1863 it was a booming gold-mining town, which attracted many Jewish merchants.

D. G. Moye's "Historic Kiandra", published by the Cooma-Monaro Historical Society in 1959, contains a plan of Kiandra of 1862 with the following Jewish stores:—

D. MEYERS—Lambing Flat  
 J. M. EMANUEL—Tumut  
 B. BENJAMIN, Kiandra Hotel—Sydney  
 GREEN & JACOBSON, jewellers—Kiandra  
 JOSEPH JOSEPHS—Lambing Flat  
 JOHN COHEN, jeweller—Lambing Flat  
 DAVIES, ALEXANDER & CO., store—Kiandra  
 S. MOSES—Lambing Flat.

In April, 1860, the Surveyor General of South Australia, Lt.-Colonel A. H. Freeling, made an official visit to Kiandra to report on the richness of the diggings, in which he wrote about the Goulburn Jews who played an important part in the development of the Monaro district.

"From an early stage in its development, Goulburn was the centre of a particularly strong and active group of Jewish storekeepers and businessmen, who played a large part in the development of the town, and provided it with many of its Mayors and Members of Parliament. They were also an important factor in financing the development of the surrounding districts of N.S.W., so that, at one time, the phrase 'As solid as a Goulburn Jew' was almost proverbial, and, at a later period, their financial interest extended as far as the Kimberley District in Western Australia. Several of the names on the Lands Department Plan of 1862, Emanuel, Benjamin and Moses, are names found in the Group, but the initials do not correspond to those who were active in Goulburn and it is not certain if these individuals belong to the Goulburn families or not. Davies, Alexander & Company, who also appear on the plan as Shopkeeper, were among the most prominent of these Goulburn firms. Maurice Alexander was M.L.A. for Goulburn from 1861 to 1872. His partner, William Davies, who was not Jewish, was six times Mayor of Goulburn".

From 1861 onwards the diggings at Kiandra steadily declined and by the end of 1861 a number of businesses had closed down. By 1863, Kiandra was practically a "ghost town" . . .

It might, in this connection, be mentioned that Cooma, too, had a short "gold-rush" in 1897, when a party, led by Mr. Perkins and Charles Solomon, found payable gold at Bushy Hill, about two miles from Cooma. Charles Solomon and his party secured a mining lease, and so did many others, but two years later the work was at a standstill.

Needless to say that new life began for sleepy Cooma and its district in the forties of this century with the creation of the Snowy Mountains Authority, but there was no influx this time of Jewish settlers and merchants.

—G.F.J.B.

"THEY CAME TO A VALLEY", by D. I. McDonald, Wellington, N.S.W., 1968.

This history of the Wellington Valley, written by Mr. D. I. McDonald, the former Research Officer of the Royal Australian Historical Society was sponsored by the Wellington Historical Society on the occasion of the sesquicentenary of the discovery of the Valley by the explorer, John Oxley, in 1817.

It gives a comprehensive history of the Valley from the beginning of settlement to the present times and although the reviewer in the *Journal of the R.A.H.S.* found some errors,<sup>1</sup> the well-illustrated book constitutes a valuable addition to the works on local N.S.W. history.

The book is of special interest to Australian Jewish history, because among the first settlers in the Valley, although he never lived there permanently, was a very prominent Sydney Jewish merchant, Joseph Barrow Montefiore.

It seems to me to be unnecessary to deal here with J. B. Montefiore's life in Australia, because his life story has been fully recorded by Professor Israel Getzler in Volume I of the *Dictionary of Australian Biography*.<sup>2</sup>

Montefiore, on his arrival in 1828, received a grant of 2,560 acres in Wellington Valley, to which in 1834 he added 1,064 acres at Burran Burran. Within four years he increased his holdings by 7,000 acres, whilst having at the same time a considerable area of Crown land under leasehold. His property was then called Myami, but this was changed later to Nanima (the other side of the Macquarie River). Here he built a village which still commemorates his name in N.S.W., Montefiores.