

## THE BENEFITS OF A CONVICTION

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I am proud to write that my great-great-grandfather Moses Joseph was a convicted thief. He stole from his master and another pedlar. At the assizes of Warwick in March of 1826 he was sentenced to life imprisonment or transportation. I can record this was for a relatively decent sort of crime and not one of those dealing with *shmattas*, high-finance or the currently fashionable offences which relate to sexual misbehaviour or domestic violence. As it was good enough to warrant life imprisonment, it must be distinguished from the more pusillanimous crimes which merely attracted seven or fourteen years' transportation. Had it been a serious theft he would have been topped and I would not be here to write about it.

Perhaps even more extraordinary is the fact that Moses Joseph's father-in-law, Nathan Lyon Nathan, my grandfather three times distant, was also a convict. He was almost certainly the convict who traded under the alias Nathaniel Newton, born in London in 1783 and dying there in 1850; exactly the same life span as that of Rosetta Nathan's father, and more of her later. He was sentenced at the Old Bailey in 1799 to seven years' transportation at the age of fifteen or sixteen, for theft; he had snatched a bag from an old lady in the Cornhill. He received permission to leave New South Wales in 1807 and returned to London and married Sarah Nathan, a first cousin. The most firm evidence that this convict was the father-in-law of Moses is the Bequests Board still attached to the gallery wall in the Hohart Synagogue. It reads that Nathan Lionel Nathan bequeathed five guineas to the *shul* by a Will made in 1843 in London. His wife Sarah (known to be Rosetta's mother) also made a bequest to the same synagogue, a very likely event as one of their sons was the first president, and Nathan Lyon Nathan (with Lionel as yet another alias) was familiar with Australia. His having been a convict also accounts for the alacrity with which he permitted his daughter Rosetta to journey alone to New South Wales in 1830 to join her betrothed, the convict Moses Joseph. It is a great delight to be the progeny of two generations of petty thieves, a family tradition I hope now abandoned.

Even greater good fortune than conviction visited Moses Joseph whilst he was imprisoned awaiting transportation. That was the person of Solomon Levey. Levey was the visionary emancipist who really generated Jewish migration to the colony of New South Wales. We have not done enough to honour him. Levey was transported in 1813 for a mere seven years on account of a commercial theft. Upon obtaining his ticket of leave he went into partnership with Daniel Cooper. So much did their merchandising and warehousing business flourish, that bills drawn on their commercial house carried more credit than those issued by the banks of New South Wales and of Australasia. They had double the asset backing of the banks. In 1826 Solomon Levey returned to England on board a ship chartered for more than 4,000 guineas and loaded with colonial merchandise. His main interest was negotiating the foundation of the Swan River colony but that is another story.

He arrived with much pomp and self-promotion. Many of his former neighbours, the poor East End Jews from Stepney and Whitechapel, flocked to see him. He was shameless in puffing the good life in New South Wales and immensely proud of his transformation from white collar crook to merchant prince (maybe there is little difference). It was a lesson not lost on Moses Joseph and particularly so upon the man who was to become his uncle-in-law, Henry Moses. It is undoubted that Levey spoke

with the relatives of Moses Joseph, but more so with the family of his then fiancée and future wife, Rosetta Nathan. Her family, the Nathans, were already in the middle class. Especially so, her uncle Henry Moses, married to Esther Nathan. He had his own wholesale clothing warehouse in Monkton and Cannon Streets. The role of rich Uncle Henry cannot be understated. He staked most of his nephews and nieces, and later his own sons, £100 each when they set up businesses in the colonies.

Moses Joseph was sent out on the *Albion* and arrived in 1827. He was immediately assigned to the firm of Solomon & Levey. He had one special attribute above most of his other fellow convicts and gaolers. He was literate. This put him into a category of convicts known as "specials". They were sought after by both government departments and rich merchants merely because of that fact. "Specials" were not despatched to the out-stations, or forced onto chain gangs where discipline was maintained by the traditional British trilogy of social control, namely rum, sodomy and the lash. Moses Joseph moved immediately to a good life in a bustling new pioneer settlement, working for the largest outfit in town. A parallel is to imagine a 23 year-old clerk placed on a Community Service Order instead of prison, being directed to work in the senior management section of BHP [Broken Hill Proprietary], as a friend of the Managing Director.

When Moses Joseph arrived there were about 100 self-identifying Jews in the entire colony. There had been some efforts at religious observance, but the transient and unsettled nature of society, as convicts served their time, and moved on, and as few settlers were free, meant that the Jewish life was a haphazard affair but nevertheless a continuous one. This was to change mightily as I shall go on to tell.

I will now introduce you to his wife, Rosetta Nathan. In 1831 Moses petitioned the Governor for permission to marry her. The arcane prose of the Petition says it all:

That Petitioner was for some time before he left England acquainted with and attached to Your Excellency's other Petitioner Rosetta Nathan a reputable and mature young woman who lately arrived in the Colony by the ship "Margaret" evincing thereby the continuance of her attachment and her determination to share the fate and misfortunes of Petitioner Moses Joseph.

That your Petitioners are of the Jewish persuasion and with Your Excellency's discretion are about to be married according to the laws rights and ceremonies of that religion.

The petition is signed by Moses in a firm strong hand but that of Rosetta is untutored, an indication of their degrees of literacy. Fortunately for me, Rosetta may have been illiterate but she was not innumerate. They were married in 1832 in what was the first Jewish ceremony performed according to the appropriate rites. The civil records read according to the Jewish faith, certification was by Rev. Phillip Cohen under the authority of the "Chief Rabbi of London".

Where did these two unlikely progenitors come from? In fact their backgrounds were similar. Both were the descendants of Hollanders who had migrated across the North Sea from Amsterdam between 1710 and 1730. We know, from the family names that have been handed down through many generations, that they were originally Sephardic and carried on the tradition of Portuguese names. In fact my own middle name seems to derive from the town they lived in prior to the expulsion of the Sephardim in 1492. I have cousins in New Zealand who are still called Josè. We do know that many Spanish and Portuguese Jews obtained refuge in what was then the Spanish Bourbon lowlands of Belgium and Holland when they were expelled by Ferdinand and Isabella. Of course these were relatively congenial locations, because of the similarity in the social codes,

NAME	AGE	Widow, Widow, Bachelor, or Spinster.	Ship arrived by.	Year of Arrival.	Duration.	Prison Bond.	Prison Service.	Character.
Moses Joseph	28	Bachelor	Atkins	1827	4 yrs	Bonds	Cooper & Levey	Good
Rosetta Nathan	22	Spinster	Atkins	1827	—	free	Came free	

*Responsible of the  
 The 2nd of the 1827  
 certificate of the same name  
 J. J. Nathan*

List of Persons applying to be married according to the Jewish Forms

legal systems and commercial arrangements. When Cromwell lifted the prohibition against Jews in England in 1658 a desultory stream of Jews crossed the North Sea, not merely to London but to those other ports which had commercial relationships with Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Antwerp, namely the Tyneside and Hull.

Moving backwards from Moses Joseph and his five brothers and three sisters, I refer to their father who was Joseph Joseph. Joseph's brother Jacob, was the first Minister of the Sunderland Durham congregation between 1790 and 1861. Moses' father Joseph was born in 1769 and died at the age of 92. His grandfather David Joseph had been born in Holland. It is thought that he settled in Hull from which place he operated a toll gate taking payments from travellers.

I cross over now to Rosetta's parents, and their story is less rabbinic and more interesting. Rosetta's father, Nathan Lyon Nathan, was born in London in 1783. In 1850 on his death he was described as a gentleman, and left a reasonable estate of £100. Rosetta's grandfather was a Judah Nathan about whom little is known. But Rosetta's mother Sarah, also a Nathan, was the daughter of Hyam "Footman" Nathan who was a fancy tailor and maker of uniforms. Sarah was born in 1787. The costuming firm which her father founded still exists in London today as "Nathan and Berman", which fell at one stage into the orbit of Holmes a Court. Hyam "Footman" Nathan was a man of some substance, having been born in England in 1743. He was a stall holder in the Great Synagogue and left £800 when he "shuffled off the coil" in 1824. The point of all this is that the Nathans had a little money and the Josephs had a lot of dash.

So now I can return to the colony of New South Wales and 1831. Rosetta arrived free. Joseph was still assigned to Solomon Levey and was granted his ticket of leave on 7 April 1832. This enabled him to go into business on his own account, which he did, opening a tobacconist shop in George Street, Sydney (and almost certainly staked by rich Uncle Henry and "Cooper & Levey"). I hope this was his only connection with the drug trade but from then on in he embarked on four courses of action: (1) bringing out his own and Rosetta's *mishpocha*; (2) producing their own; (3) enriching Jewish life; and (4) making money. All these things the two of them did with great verve and fecundity and I shall deal with them in turn.

The most important aspect was bringing out the relatives. In this context, one has to note the social circumstances of the place from which they came, and that to which they were going. In the 1820s there were about 15,000 Jews in London, certainly less than half the number in present day Melbourne. The overwhelming majority were poor and

propertyless. Jews suffered many civic disabilities; for example, they could not be admitted to universities or sit on a jury. But in the great tradition of our people many were literate and at least had some Jewish learning. The discriminations against them, particularly the vocational ones, making it difficult for them to join guilds and trade associations, and the immense social discrimination practised by the Anglo-Protestant establishment, were barriers to wealth generation and encouragements to migrate (later most were to go but that was 30 years later). "Trade" was the only way up, but that was almost universally in clothing and small chattels. Any escape route looked a relatively good one. But the journey to Australia was the equivalent of going to the ends of the earth, in fact it was the end of the earth. The fare here was about £12 but to North America it was less than 30 shillings. It took four months to come to Australia but less than three weeks to go to America. Of course, this pre-dated the huge Jewish surge from Eastern Europe to America. America in the early nineteenth century did not welcome British subjects. The last war between them occurred in 1812. I want to concentrate on the Anglo-Australian experience.

Some London Jews had made it into the commercial middle class by 1820 but the proportion was far less than that with which we are familiar. But even those in it could not see their way out of the social, often invisible, but nevertheless enveloping, constraints of Georgian society. The Anglo establishment was, at the time, hereditary and exclusive. A limited form of parliamentary democracy did not really arrive until after the two great reform Acts of 1832 and 1838. The monarchical establishment was fearful of its position having lost the American colonies in 1776, and thereby its receptacle for unwanted convicts. The French Revolution had caused every monarch in Europe to quiver, not least the Hanoverian one. That was followed by the Napoleonic wars, which carried with them the ideas of the French Revolution, with its notions of equality and democracy. The Enlightenment was about to happen. But it was a mere glimmer to the Jews of 1820s England and even less to the Hanoverians. In this context the Jews found themselves oppressed by a xenophobic society but nevertheless an expansionist and mercantilist one. The French and the British were fighting out their imperialist ambitions in India, the West Indies, and to a lesser extent, in the Pacific. Undoubtedly one of the reasons which attracted the British government towards settling New Holland, or New South Wales as it became, was the prospect of thwarting the French who were at that time looking for convict colonies of their own. New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land were ideal places.

The greater opportunities offered here, proved by the commercial success of Solomon Levey, showed to the London Jews that the Australian colonies offered a useful prospect. Most then saw themselves as moving from one part of England to another distant part of it. It was simply not as "foreign" as going to the Americas and then much easier. There was at that time no notion of going to a new country, or unlike Solomon Levey, founding one. Rather they saw that work would bring its own commercial rewards, unfettered by social or religious constraints.

The letters home to England from Moses and Rosetta, to their brothers and sisters, really incited and then produced a coherent Jewish society in the Australasian colonies. Of Moses' five brothers, only Tobias remained in England, but all of his children came to Australia. Another brother David went to America. Israel married Rosetta Braham, came to New South Wales, and very shortly transferred to New Zealand where he went into partnership with his brother-in-law David Nathan. Together they established the merchant trading house in Auckland which still carries the family name. Nathan married Sarah Moses, a daughter of rich Uncle Henry, and settled in Maitland, New South Wales. All of his four sisters married men who were in, or came to, Australia. Sarah, to

Hyam Elias, Rosetta to Kaufman Samuel, Rachel to Asher Hyman Hart and Miriam to Melbourne Jonas Hart.

Rosetta née Nathan was one of nine, born in London in 1810. She died in 1857 after or because of giving birth to 11 children. All of her siblings came to Australasia between 1835 and 1845.

I shall deal with Rosetta's eight brothers and sisters. The first to arrive was Louis Nathan with his wife Harriette, daughter of rich Uncle Henry. They departed England in 1834, stayed for a short time with Moses and Rosetta in Sydney and then moved on to Hobart town. Their £100 worth of stock was enough to immediately set Louis up as a warehouseman and entrepreneur in Hobart and very shortly they were followed by Samuel Moses, that is Harriette's brother. He arrived, too, with his £100 worth of stock and business flourished under the title "Nathan and Moses". Those were steps in what was to become a huge inter-colonial trading arrangement and it subsequently brought prosperity to them all. For example, Louis' estate in 1886 was over £80,000. It must be recalled that communication overland was not possible at this time and each of the colonial outposts, as they were founded, were served by sea. This gave rise to an inter-colonial merchant marine in which the Joseph/Nathan/Moses families were very active. The next Nathan to arrive in Australia was Arthur Isaac who was dispatched with Uncle Henry's £100 to set up in Launceston. He added another piece to the colonial network. The next to arrive were two sisters, Rachel and Miriam. They, too, stayed with Rosetta and Moses in Sydney. Rachel was very shortly married off to Samuel Cohen of Sydney and Miriam dispatched into the arms of Solomon Benjamin of Melbourne.

What I want to contemplate for a moment is the fortitude of these young women being sent to the ends of the earth, into a small colony with not much of a Jewish community and unknown prospects. They were poorly educated. They had no idea of climate, terrain, geography, fauna or flora. Every single aspect of their lives was turned upside down. Yet such was the level of frustration and discontent in early Victorian England, they were quite anxious to leave. The next sister to arrive was Esther. She married Moses Moss, who was a brother of Samuel Moss, and they first lived in Launceston and later in Sydney. So much for the Nathan sisters.

I return to Rosetta's brothers. David, having served his apprenticeship with the effervescent Henry Moses joined his brothers and sisters in Australia, arriving on the ship *Orient*. He had intended to settle in Adelaide but that colony was depressed at the time so he moved over to New Zealand. This was in 1840. He set up firstly at Russell on the shores of the Bay of Islands, and then, as the capital moved to Auckland, he came with the Government to that site. David and indeed "Cooper & Levey" became purchasers of land at the first land sales of what was to become that country. The Nathans did not give up on South Australia entirely because the youngest son Burnett, also known as Baruch, was dispatched there in 1842, where he arrived with his wife Maryanne.

Rosetta's older brother was Jacob Nathan, blinded by a childish prank when aged about 10. He followed David to New Zealand, but set up in Wellington. He married first cousins twice.

I shall not go through any more cousinage or concubinage, as the begetting becomes more confusing than the Book of Numbers. So it is time for some generalisations. The success of Moses Joseph the convict in entering into business on his own account less than five years after his arrival in the colony, and while he was still a ticket-of-leaver, together with the previous encouraging reports he sent home, enticed out into Australia and New Zealand three of his brothers, all his sisters and all eight of Rosetta's siblings.

Not only that, but there also followed a chain of first cousins. For example, two of rich Uncle Henry's sons had come to Australia.

Between 1831 and 1841 the self-identifying Jewish population of the Australian colonies increased from 100 (in actuality about 200) to over 1200. It is not possible to state the actual number but probably about one-third more. No other decade in Australian history has ever seen a percentage increase of this order. Subtracting the native-born during that period and accounting for those who died, it is probable that about 500 to 600 Jews came to Australia during that decade. Most of that number were related to Moses or Rosetta. During this decade the self-confessing Jewish proportion of the Australian population increased from 0.4% to 0.6%. That is a fifty per cent proportional increase. The Jewish proportion of the population has never reached such a high figure since, and even these figures must be understated compared with the present time when there is some, but comparatively little, reluctance to declare one's identity. In the next decade to 1851 the Jewish population increased by only 700 and most of that was probably due to natural increase. I do not have similar figures for New Zealand.

I now want to turn to Moses and Rosetta's second attribute, that is their own fecundity. They had 11 children. I shall not trace their lines but only that of my great grandfather Hyam Moses Joseph, known as H.M., a rather appropriate pun considering my own republican bias. I need only observe that of the other siblings all went on to produce numerous offspring. So of the original 16 there were probably over 150 fertile offspring. It is difficult to trace because many married twice, some not at all, and I suspect there are a few unacknowledged progeny. I can recall being approached by a person who said his name was Gary Edwards, a surname I was unfamiliar with, but he was able to establish a direct linkage via a patriarch whom I thought had been childless.

The third attribute of Moses and Joseph was their devotion to Jewish life. Moses gave the land for the York Street synagogue and became its President between 1840 and 1848. £1000 was the purchase price. This was a considerable sum for a recently emancipated convict. He had obtained a conditional pardon in 1838 and later obtained (purchased?) an absolute one in 1848. However, he was not the only member of the family religiously committed. All the congregations in the following colonies were founded, or at least initially supported by, the Nathan/Joseph family: Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hobart, Launceston, Melbourne, Sydney, Maitland and Adelaide. Particularly generous in this respect was Henry Moses, the merchant clothier, and his son Edward. Solomon Benjamin, who had married Miriam Nathan, was closely associated with the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation and as its second President, whether because of that fact or in spite of it, he went on to sire 17 children. As an example of their religious commitment I tell you of the son born to David Nathan and his wife Rosetta in 1846 in Auckland. There was no one there qualified to perform the *brit*, so she took the child to Sydney where the circumcision was performed by Samuel Moses who had come up from Hobart town to do so.

Upon this ritual observance I want to make another observation and that takes me to the fourth attribute, namely wealth generation. And that is to stress the co-operative commercial relationships between the members of the family located around the Tasman Sea. Very shortly after arrival these poor Jews, some admittedly well staked by Uncle Henry and others by the emerging wealth of Moses Joseph himself, were translated into the commercial upper middle class of Australasian society. This is to be distinguished from the latter experience in America and even in Australia. Within five to ten years these Jewish emigrants, who had been peddlers and small time jewellers and shopkeepers around Stepney and Whitechapel, had become in many instances merchant

princes and, in almost every instance, a landowner of some kind. Whereas it took our post-war migrants often 20 years or even a generation to move into the *bourgeoisie*, this generation did it in less than a decade.

Of course I am generalising and there are many exceptions. However I want to stress the congenial climate Australia offered to its Jewish voluntary and involuntary immigrants.

I continue with Moses and Rosetta's capacity to generate wealth. The small tobacco shop soon gave way to larger houses and then the move into large tracts of land. Keeping the intercolonial merchant marine going resulted in warehousing at the various sites and, as I have said, the provision of ships. For example, in 1848–49 Moses lost two international trade ships the *Elenor* and the *Rebecca Nathan*. All of this was mightily profitable. But then came the double blessing, the discovery of gold, firstly in New South Wales and then prodigiously so in Victoria. The initial discoveries around Goulburn and Kiandra brought prosperity to these towns and also the Monaro district generally where Moses Joseph had purchased an enormous run which he named "Mahratta". But it was from gold buying and selling that Moses made most of his wealth. A comment true of many other Jewish dealers.

I can now give you some measure of this wealth. In 1853 Moses was the largest licensed gold buyer in New South Wales, transferring more than 1000 ounces to London in that year alone. Rosetta died in 1859 and Moses returned to live in Bedford Square, Paddington, in circa 1863 or 1864. This was the first of a series of returns by Jewish colonial nabobs to England. They wanted to flaunt their wealth and display their prosperity in the country which had ejected them, and this they certainly did. Surprising behaviour, more so when most of their children did not follow.

Moses Joseph had extracted from Australia huge amounts of wealth, so much so that he was able to invest £250,000 in bonds of the confederate states in 1865. This has a present-day value of about \$50 million and I am glad to say he lost it all, although at the time of his death in 1889 the executor still put a face value on these bonds of £50. He left behind in Australia about 100,000 acres of freehold in the New England district, near Maitland where his brother had settled. He had further extensive land holdings along the Eden Monaro high plains and especially the station "Mahratta" at Bombala. There were huge quantities of stock in the Australian Agricultural Company, Anglo-Egyptian bonds, government stock in Honduras, Canada and even the Buenos Aires railways. When he died he had an Australian estate in excess of £200,000 and more than £100,000 in other bonds. In all, having a present-day value of about \$60 million.

Much turns on the fact that Moses Joseph was able to obtain an absolute pardon in 1848. He and others were then able to pretend he had not been convicted at all. I have often considered why Moses Joseph selected and purchased land in the cold and uncongenial uplands of New England and the Monaro. I suspect it was because the conditions were climatically familiar, and the country did not need to be cleared. There are still Joseph families living in Bombala. My cousin Peter and his wife have recently produced a daughter, which makes for the seventh generation on-site, and that must be the longest continual association of a family with the land in our history. It runs from about 1838 to the present day. Moses Joseph, by his Will, a masterpiece of legal complexities, entailed his estate and delivered to my own father a final distribution in 1960. He set up scholarships at the Stepney Jewish school and to other charities. By the time he died in 1888 he had long since moved away from the East End. He was able to make a disposition in favour of his coachman and domestic staff. Consider that mighty transposition from an itinerant pedlar and convicted felon to a benefactor of his own personal servants.

The next factor to note is the return of the colonial nabobs to England and particularly the west-end. Again, Moses Joseph led the herd but he was followed by Louis Nathan of Tasmania and his wife Harriette. They were childless and subsequently bought a house in Tavistock Square. So, too, did Asher Hart who had married Rachel Joseph, Moses' sister, in Sydney in 1840. As an aside I say that Asher Hart had brought out his two brothers Edward and Isaac to Port Phillip where they conducted the first high holy day services in 1841. He was the first president of the Melbourne Hebrew congregation and another in-law, Solomon Benjamin, was the treasurer. He left the colony of Port Phillip in 1854. So, too, did Solomon Benjamin, the second president of the Melbourne Hebrew congregation. He was able to retire in 1852 and purchased a house in Clifton Gardens. Samuel Moses who was the president of the Hobart Hebrew congregation in 1848 returned to live in England in 1858. He was the son of Jacob Moses, the brother of the rich Uncle Henry. He retained the surname Moses but some of his brothers changed their name to Moss and others to Walford. Burnett or Baruch Nathan of Adelaide picked up his whole family, which was rather unusual, and returned to England in the early 1860s. Louis Edward Nathan, who had married Sarah Marks and had gone to New Zealand, setting up the first congregation in Christchurch, sold all his business in 1881 and returned to live in England. Perhaps the most noted of the returnees were rich Uncle Henry's sons. As you know they had been in trade, a slightly disreputable activity so far as the English upper classes were concerned, and into whose ranks they were determined to enter. When all six of Uncle Henry's sons who had come to Australia returned to England, they moved out of London and into various country estates. In order to cap their process of change all changed their names to Beddington in the 1860s.

The Beddingtons married into and became scions of the Anglo establishment. Names such as Sir Herbert Samuel Leon, Arthur Seebag Montefiore, the Waley Cohens and the Montagues will be known to you all. When Hiam Leopold Beddington (nee Moses) changed his name in 1868 and entered the Stock Exchange of London as one of its first Jews, there was a large banner across the floor of the exchange which read: "And the Lord said unto Moses 'good morning Mr Beddington'."

Much of their wealth had come from the merchant marine. For example, in the mid 1850s the ship *Kate*, owned by Messrs Benjamin and Moses, exported 42,000 ounces of gold with a current day value of about \$16 million. That was simply one shipment, albeit the largest. They did not however sever all connection with orthodox Jewry. Three of these sons, Edward, Maurice and Alfred, were all founding members and officers of the Central Synagogue in Great Portland Street in London in 1870.

I shall not trace more of the returnees because I want to draw the obvious conclusion that it was their progeny who remained in Australia and New Zealand and who provided the genes and substance of much of Australasian Jewry. Not only that but these returnees took back to England immense wealth, really taking out of the colonies much more than they had brought. This was common of non-Jewish families as well. One can comfortably conclude that a great deal of the wealth which brought Britain to the forefront of nations in the latter part of the 19th century was easy capital gathered in the Australian colonies, particularly that derived from gold. The gold was simply spooned out of the creeks, and later out of the shallow shafts of single mines, and later still of deep ones. It was transported to England where it provided the credit and financial muscle for that city's enormous expansion. When one considers the great country houses that surround London and the rather poor imitations (and very few of them) around Ballarat and Bendigo, some measure of the Australian wealth sent back to England is appreciated. We forget that the successful returned with their loot, leaving behind the unsuccessful and their children who had become attached to the land as their own birthplace.

I now want to return to H.M. and the lands on the Monaro high plains. I have not been able to find any mention of the aborigines. It was simply as if they did not exist, but it must be said that, for some parts of the year on the Monaro high plains, they did not. Such blacks as there were in that district came up from the coast-land to chase the Bogong moths in the summer. Other than that it was very sparsely settled by anybody. Not so the lands in the Upper Hunter and in New England. The huge holdings accumulated by Moses Joseph were, of course, at the cost of the aborigines to whom no deference or no reference has been paid. Of course, most were wiped out before settlement. The spread of European diseases preceded the settlers so that by the time the squatters had arrived with their shepherds, influenza, measles and pox had already decimated and disrupted the pre-existing aboriginal communities. They were demoralised, disconnected and dispossessed people at the time of earliest European settlement and hence were, I suppose, easily despatched to the margins. Just as Australia sent much of its wealth to England, we should also feel a sense of obligation to those we plundered. So, too, should the British who in turn prospered from that disposition. H.M. was a rollicking good fellow and conducted the properties at Mahratta with his brother. Nevertheless, they were under the constant control and direction of their father Moses from London. In 1890 the town of Bombala was incorporated and H.M. became its first Mayor. In 1899 the town requisitioned and petitioned the premier of the colony of New South Wales to propose Bombala as a site for the federal city, and, indeed, the town was visited by one of the many visiting commissions. Of course, Canberra on the Monaro plains was eventually selected. H.M. did not possess the business acumen of his father nor did any of his other brothers. He was much more interested in riding goats as a Freemason and conducting his life as a sportsman and grazier. There were, of course, local Jewish communities at Bombala, Goulburn and Cooma, which gave some stability to the community. H.M. had married Rachel Moses, his first or second cousin, which produced in 1866 my grandmother, Ada Amelia. Ada, in line with her family tradition proceeded to marry her cousin, my grandfather, Hyam Jacob Nathan. Hyam Jacob was the son of Hyam Edward, a brother of Rosetta. It is a wonder I can even talk, so much was the degree of intermarriage. That union produced in 1892 my father, Arthur Joseph Nathan, born at Bombala. A letter to him from his grandfather, H.M., dated August 1910, tells something of the diminishing fortunes of the family. It reads, "They have started the railway line from Cooma to Nimmetybell. I expect will reach here in about two years. The government are going to resume Mahratta for closer settlement but the price cannot be decided." Closer settlement did follow. The lands were split up and the original wealth deriving from Moses Joseph was distributed amongst his 11 children and subsequently amongst those 11 children's 100 odd grandchildren. However, my father received his first share of the estate in 1913 when he attained 21 years. It was for nearly £9,000, having a current value of \$3-5 million. I can show you a deed of trust my father executed in favour of his grandfather for all of that sum. In 1915 my father enlisted in the Australian forces and granted his own father a further power of attorney over that estate. By the time he returned, most had gone, squandered in pneumatic type companies and later silent moving picture houses. My father graduated in medicine in 1923, set up in practice in a small dairying town in South Gippsland, Toora, almost as forlorn a place now as it was then. What little he had left he also squandered in large cars and the spirits they do not run on.

My father was first married to Leah Best in the St Kilda *shul*, and that union resulted in one child. Henry Joseph Moses Nathan, born in 1920, was married to Gwen Edmonds, from which there are three children. Leah died tragically in 1923. My father married Florence Amelia Sloss in 1928, and my sister was born in 1944. The maternal side is another story.

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