

## SOLOMON AND CASHMORE: CHAIN MIGRATION AND EARLY JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

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My family history has always fascinated me. My mother, like others of her generation, had an extraordinary talent for recalling instant pedigrees and I remember as a young child, listening in amazement as she demonstrated her skills. As she reeled off names of long departed relatives and their multitude of connections it seemed that just about everyone was related. Both my parents came from large families that had been in Australia for several generations. Records were therefore quite accessible, and many of the old houses that my parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and even great-great-grandparents had lived in, were still standing.

My father had a battered copy of *Garryowen's Chronicles of Early Melbourne*, written by Edmund Finn, a pioneer and journalist with the *Port Phillip Herald*, which colourfully related the story of Melbourne's beginnings. Occasionally he would read to us extracts which told how his great grandparents, Michael and Elizabeth Cashmore, settled in Melbourne following a honeymoon voyage from Sydney in 1840 on the steamer *Clonmel*, and how Cashmore, an enterprising colonist, had made the first overland journey in a boat from Footscray to Melbourne during one of Melbourne's early floods in the 1840s. My mother would tell us how, as a small child her grandmother Natalie Visbord had watched the departure of Burke and Wills on their famous journey of exploration in 1861.

A series of events spread over a number of years stimulated this interest in my families' origins. In 1945, after my grandmother's death, our family moved to live with my maternal grandfather, Abe Davis, in a big house that he had built overlooking the beach at Elwood. He was a colourful character and nearly everyone, including most of my friends, called him 'Pa'. Pa was born in Manchester in 1873 and was the only one of my grandparents not born in Australia. He was the second child of Simon Davis, a poor Polish migrant, and Yetta (née Glass) an immigrant from Russia and sister of Barnet Glass, founder of the large Barnet Glass rubber tyre and sporting goods empire. Pa came to Australia in 1881 with his mother and three of his siblings, and I have told his story in an earlier issue of this *Journal*. He loved to recall the past and being the youngest in our family I was often left at home with him and became a captive audience.

In 1953, when I was 15 years old, I went with my father to the Montefiore Homes for the Aged to visit Sarah Cashmore, a sister of my great-grandmother, who was then aged 96. Although she died soon after, she was then still mentally alert and related some wonderful yarns. Her elder sister, my father's great-aunt Alice, was the first Jewish girl born in Melbourne in 1842. For the first

time, I really appreciated that in post-war Melbourne, there were pioneers still living among us.

Of great advantage to me in my search for information was the fact that most of our family lived in Melbourne and kept in close contact. Consequently, I had many opportunities to thoroughly question my parents' aging aunts and uncles. As a young boy I would read old letters and business papers that he had stacked in boxes in our garage, and would file them away together with photos and other memorabilia otherwise destined for the scrap heap. As my interest in family history became known, I gradually acquired a collection of portraits of my ancestors. Such things were certainly not fashionable in the 1960s, and so, with each garage clearance by some quite distant relative, another ancestor would be dusted off. When I later acquired a house of my own, they were to hang once again in glory.



*Esther Crawcour*  
(June 1816 London—December 1883 Geelong)

A wonderful large oil painting of my great-great-grandmother Esther Crawcour, who was Michael Cashmore's sister, held pride of place in the lounge room of my great-aunt Elizabeth Abraham who was affectionately known as Aunt Lizzie. Lizzie was a grandchild of Michael Cashmore and one of three of the children of Cashmore's daughter Esther and her husband Henry Cohen who had married three of the sixteen Abraham children from Ballarat (who were grandchildren of Michael Cashmore's sister Esther Crawcour née Cashmore). Consequently, Lizzie used to refer to the woman in this painting as 'auntie'. Subsequently, the painting passed to my father's elder brother Henry, and when he and his wife eventually moved to a smaller home, it was relegated to the garage and general deterioration. Some years later his widow Jean, knowing that I had always admired the picture, gave it to me. For well over two decades now 'auntie', restored to her former glory, has held pride of place in our dining room casting her stern eyes over unseemly frivolity.

When I made my first visit to the Jewish Museum in London many years ago, I was surprised and delighted to find the *ketubah* of Esther Crawcour and her husband Isaac, on permanent display.



An early discovery occurred in 1960 when, as a young lawyer, I was being instructed in Titles Office procedure. I had known for many years that Michael Cashmore had lived with his family on the north east corner of Elizabeth and Collins Street from where he had run a drapery. A brass plate that is affixed to the present building on this site states that this was No.1 Melbourne and the site of the first brick building in Melbourne.

Having learned where to locate old claims of title which were then deposited at the Titles Office prior to a property being brought under the Torrens system, I made a search. Imagine my surprise to find in the yellowing packet among the many conveyances and other transactions, a mortgage from the original purchaser to John Batman and a laboriously handwritten lease complete with seals showing Michael Cashmore as the first tenant and a Tasmanian cabinet maker called Alexander Brunton as the lessor. After some persuasion, the Registrar of Titles kindly agreed to give me the original lease dated 29 August 1840, upon my undertaking that I would not use the document against the then present owners. I readily agreed though I have often wondered how a lease that had expired over 100 years ago could possibly inhibit a freehold title. Two years ago when the opportunity arose, I purchased the property thereby ensuring my undertaking.

About this time I obtained a series of death certificates of each of my great grandparents and discovered the names of their parents and how long they had resided in the Colony of Victoria. The certificate for Elizabeth Cashmore, dated 1898, showed her father as Samuel Solomon and her mother as Esther Solomon nee Davis. She was shown as being born in London and having resided in Victoria for 58 years and before that for 2 years in New South Wales, a total of 60 years in Australia and therefore suggesting that she had arrived about 1838. The informant appeared reliable. It was her son-in-law, my great grandfather, Henry Cohen.

My great-aunt Lizzie, who was generally a fund of information, particularly in relation to genealogical matters, professed no knowledge of where her grandmother's family, the Solomons, had come from. All searches for a family of Solomon migrating to Sydney about 1838 drew a blank. The matter remained an enigma for another ten years and then, in the early 1970s, Rabbi John Levi, who was researching his expansive work on the early Jewish convicts and settlers, *Australian Genesis*, came into my office one day wearing a broad smile. He had unearthed the mystery. He had found that Elizabeth Solomon had arrived in Sydney in 1833 with her father Samuel Moss Solomon who was a pencil maker, her mother Esther, brother Isaac and step-nephew Judah Moss Solomon. Furthermore, she was a half-sister to the convicts Vaiben and Emanuel Solomon. Such were the beginnings of my long search ...

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The marriage register for the Great Synagogue in London records that on 23 December 1815 Samuel Moss Solomon stood under the *chuppah* at the Great Synagogue beside his bride Esther Davis. Surrounded by their large family and friends, the couple exchanged vows and the *ketubah* was read aloud by the rabbi.

Shlomo, as Samuel was affectionately known, then crushed the wineglass under his foot in the age-old tradition of his people and the congregation responded with a loud '*mazel tov!*'. Shlomo needed luck. He made lead pencils for a living and the small income he derived had to support a large family of eight children, ranging in age from Moss who was nineteen down to Esther who was only six. His plump face was framed by short black hair combed forward and flat in uneven strips like feathers, and long mutton-chop sideboards with whiskers on his chin. This description is drawn from a contemporary oil painting held by one of his many descendants who now lives in Israel (*see picture on page 360*). Some twenty-two years earlier, Shlomo, himself the youngest member of a family of eight children, had married Betsy Moses at the same synagogue when he was a young man of only twenty-four. When she died, leaving Shlomo with eight children to care for, Esther Davis, who was his first cousin, had been there to help.

In the early nineteenth century the Great Synagogue was one of four major synagogues catering to London's Jewish population of some fifteen thousand. Situated in Dukes Place, it boasted the largest and wealthiest congregation in Georgian London, although the majority of its congregants were still quite poor. The interior was spacious with tall corinthian columns and elaborate chandeliers hanging from the high fluted ceiling. The interior was dim with arched leadlight windows providing barely sufficient light to illuminate the bonneted heads of the female congregants who peered over the latticed upstairs balcony.

Esther was not a young bride. She had turned 40 and would shortly celebrate another birthday on New Years Day. Her father Isaac Davis was married to the sister of Shlomo's father, Moss.

When the wedding ceremony ended, Shlomo and Esther sat in the ornate *bimah* signing the marriage contracts. They then left the synagogue to celebrate their betrothal and were surrounded by family and friends. The ceremony was a happy family occasion and gave Shlomo a chance to forget his many worries. His small business was barely sufficient to provide his children with the barest necessities in those difficult times. There were many pencil makers in London and pencils, like most things, were slow to sell.

With Esther at his side he was now more content, but life was still difficult for Shlomo. The home where they lived at 30 Wentworth Street, Spitalfields in north east London was overcrowded now that the children were all growing up. Emanuel and Vaiben were having little success as street vendors. Despite their streetwise skills and long hours, they were unable to earn sufficient money to make a worthwhile contribution to the family budget, and the general economy showed no signs of improving. Food was scarce and expensive and the economy in turmoil in the period that followed the defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo only six months earlier. A continuous and growing influx of poverty stricken Jews from Europe who came to escape persecution and take advantage of London Jewry's reputation for assisting its poor, placed a considerable burden on second and third generation Anglo-Jewish families like the Solomons, the majority of whom were themselves struggling to make ends meet. To further aggravate the situation, most of these poor migrants had



little education and generally gravitated to the street markets as hawkers, resulting in a glut of street vendors. They sold an infinite variety of things such as fruit, spectacles, costume jewellery, sponges, rhubarb, lead pencils and cheap framed pictures. At Rag Fair in Rosemary Lane, Houndsditch, the main trade was in second-hand clothing.

Closely associated with this impoverished state of affairs was a general increase in petty crime and a wave of anti-Semitism which manifested itself in a profusion of cartoon caricatures of long nosed, bearded street vendors often participating in acts of theft. In Georgian England punishments were so severe for even the most trifling offences that juries were often loath to convict although this leniency did not generally extend to Jews.

Two of Shlomo's sons, Emanuel and Vaiben, had grown very close. They had a special bond of friendship which was forged by circumstances. Aged 15 and 13 respectively, they had perhaps suffered more than their siblings as a result of the difficult economic times. Jewish families, traditionally, always placed a high priority on education, but Shlomo's economic plight, like that of many of his contemporaries, had resulted in their leaving school even before young Vaiben had learned to write. Times were so tough that everyone who could do so was expected to make a contribution to the household budget. Emanuel and Vaiben could not find any regular work. Shlomo could not employ them in his workshop. He could not sell all the pencils he made so there was no point in producing more. And so they spent their time in the crowded streets around Houndsditch and Spitalfields competing with the throngs and endeavoring, like so many others, to convince everyone who passed that they needed pencils and other bric-a-brac that they had to trade.

The family discussion at supper regularly turned to the same topics — the scarcity and expense of food, and the overcrowded conditions in the household. The two lads were high spirited, industrious and adventurous and anxious to make their contribution but, due to their relatively tender age and the difficult times, there was no apparent way that they could do so.

In the English countryside, particularly to the north around the coal mining districts, there was a great deal of commercial activity at about this time due to the industrial revolution, and there was generally more opportunity for hawkers to ply their trade than in the cutthroat conditions that prevailed in London. The family was aware that numerous city dwellers, many of them young Jewish lads, had left London to seek their fortune in this way. Generally the reports from those returning were positive, suggesting that most had met with a measure of success.

Eventually Shlomo came up with an idea. He had a few pieces of inexpensive jewelry and had found out where he could acquire more. The family discussed what could be done with the jewelry and it was agreed that there was no likelihood of success in disposing of it in London. The two lads volunteered that they would like to travel north together and attempt to sell the jewelry, some pencils, and any other items which the family could muster.

The thought of the two young boys leaving home to earn a living as travelling peddlers must have worried Shlomo and Esther. Aside from their youth they were physically small, in keeping with the modest standards of

Georgian England, Vaiben being only five foot two inches and Emanuel just two inches taller. Nevertheless, what they lacked in size they made up for in common sense and guile gathered from their London experiences in survival on the streets. Both lads had rounded faces with large dark eyes and prominent noses. Their complexions were sallow and they had long black hair that covered their ears and fell to the nape of their necks.

Within six months of the marriage of their father to their Aunt Esther, Emanuel and Vaiben were hawking jewelry in the English countryside. They had not left home with the traditional objective of seeking their fortune. Theirs was an exercise in family survival with the hope that their luck might change for the better. Whatever the reason, their decision was to have a profound bearing not only upon their own lives and those of their family, but also upon future generations. On 15 October 1816, Emanuel and Vaiben were busily plying their wares in the parish of Heyington, some 240 miles north of London. They were enjoying their independence away from home and, relying upon intuition and judgment, their youthful appearance attracted a degree of sympathy which was not to be found in the streets of London where the most primitive laws of survival ruled.

Winter was fast approaching and the trees were rapidly shedding their leaves. They were now gradually making their way south, and looking forward to returning home to see their family for a few days at *Chanukah*. Their stock in trade had increased as a result of some judicious trades. That morning they were seen by a farmer named Thomas Prest as he drove his cart from his house at Haughton Bank. He saw them walking in the direction of his house but thought nothing more of it until he returned home about 5 o'clock that evening and discovered that his house had been robbed and that clothes belonging to him and his wife were missing. His daughter Elizabeth was puzzled. She had left the house securely fastened at 10 that morning to see her mother who was shearing in the fields and had returned two hours later and noticed nothing amiss. She had then remained at the house for the rest of the day.

Prest immediately suspected the two boys he had seen that morning and made enquiries from his neighbours. John Lamb who lived about two miles distant had seen them walking south in the direction of Darlington. He recalled that they each carried a bundle, while the smaller boy had taken off his shoes which he carried under his arm together with the smaller bundle. Prest wasted no time in setting out after them. Upon arrival at Darlington he found that they had left. They had not sought to hide their destination, however, and upon learning that they had gone further south to Northallerton, the determined farmer continued his pursuit.

When Thomas Prest finally arrived in Northallerton it was nine o'clock on the following evening. From enquiries, he learned that the two lads were at the lodging house of a Mrs McMain. He then sought the assistance of the local constabulary, and Constable Watson Junior accompanied him to the lodging house. Mrs McMain called the two lads to the door and Prest saw that Emanuel was wearing his strait coat. He asked the boys if they had any clothes to sell. They answered innocently, 'only some white stockings'. Prest and the constable then entered the house and upon searching among the boys possessions found



another coat, a jacket, a pair of stockings and a silk muff which Prest was able to identify as belonging to him and his wife.

However, his wife's greatcoat was still missing and, clearly sensing trouble, the boys directed Prest and the constable to the nearby house of Matthew Thompson who had purchased the coat. Despite their vigorous protests that they had not stolen the clothes, but had obtained them innocently from a traveller in exchange for some jewellery, Constable Watson took the boys into custody.

The following morning they were brought before Reynold Gideon Bouyer, a clerk at Northallerton and one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Durham. Sitting in his cramped office, Bouyer JP took statements from Prest and the two boys who both, predictably, denied the allegations. Constable Watson produced the articles of clothing that had been found and impounded by him and, almost mechanically, the justice of the peace committed the lads into the custody of the Bishop of Durham to be held pending further proceedings.

The cart on which they were conveyed the thirty or so miles north to the City of Durham rattled across the cobble-stoned Elvet Bridge and then turned left down Saddler Street to the Old North gate of the Castle of the Bishop of Durham, behind which was located the County Gaol. Their heads must have been spinning, with this rapid and extraordinary turn of events and as the seriousness of their situation gradually dawned upon them. They dismounted from the cart, and the constable sought entry through the solid doors of the old gate set in its narrow archway under the massive stone walls of the prison, which to the people of Durham was the external symbol of the gaol. They were led in through the archway to a cobbled courtyard and placed in the custody of the Gaoler, John Wolfe.

John Wolfe had succeeded his father Robert as keeper of the House of Correction on his death in 1778. The House of Correction was a debtors prison occupied almost entirely by vagrants. The Bishop was responsible for the prisons and their administration and he must have been impressed by John Wolfe, for in 1795 he elevated him to the post of Gaoler, a position which at that time attracted an annual salary in excess of 200 pounds, but from which sum he was obliged to remunerate the turnkey and other custodial staff. Genial and humane yet firm, and nicknamed by his charges as Gaoler Jack, Wolfe was indeed a fortunate appointment for the prisoners at Durham gaol. His benevolence and the charity occasionally bestowed by his generous wife did, to some degree, mitigate the extraordinarily primitive state of the prison at the North Gate.

Conditions in the Durham County Gaol were appalling in 1816. Eight years earlier a grand jury had found the gaol to be 'insecure, unwholesome, and inconvenient and wholly inadequate'. The Bishop of Durham clearly agreed for he had, as a consequence, promised to contribute the very substantial sum of £2000 towards the erection of a new gaol, provided the building was commenced before 1810. To take advantage of his offer, an Act was passed in June 1809 providing for the 'erection of a new gaol, House of Correction, and new Court Houses in and for the County Palatine of Durham'. A special rate

was levied for the purpose. The following month, the foundation stone of the new prison was laid in a rather pompous ceremony. In the presence of the clergy, the magistracy, the members of the Corporation, and the brethren of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Freemasons, the Bishop placed coins of the realm securely beneath the foundation stone of the new gaol. The town band then struck up and the Durham volunteers fired a volley.

Having secured the benefit of the Bishop's largesse, the urgency of the project was forgotten. Progressing at a snail's pace, the new prison took ten years to complete. Not until 1819, was it ready for prisoners. And so the county prison to which the Solomon brothers were taken in 1816, was some 400 years old, having been rebuilt by Bishop Langley early in the fifteenth century.

The following description of the initiation of the two lads into Durham Prison has been drawn from contemporary accounts of the prison and its administration. In the custody of Wolfe, they crossed the courtyard to a small room where a clerk received and recorded their few possessions and attended to registration formalities. The hour being late, they were then placed in the charge of the turnkey who beckoned them to follow him to the lockup. A large iron door was opened and then slammed closed and together they descended into an elaborate labyrinth of tunnels with the turnkey holding a lantern to augment the dim light.

They were placed in underground dungeons with dirty, damp stone flagged floors. The only light and ventilation came from holes in the ceiling. A series of ancient wooden tubes, constructed on zig zag lines between the upper and lower levels for the purpose of supplying air, had long since been choked with dirt. James Neild, a London jewel merchant who later became High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, visited this prison early in the nineteenth century and described these cells as 'amongst the very worst in the kingdom'.

Emanuel and Vaiben had seen squalor in London's East End and had probably heard stories of the conditions in London's Newgate Prison. They were, no doubt, hardened beyond their tender years, but they would have been quite unprepared for this. The nauseating, dank smell of excreta and unhealthy human flesh, the squeal and patter of rats. The turnkey slammed the door of the cell shut and Emanuel made his way to the pile of straw that he had seen from the flicker of the turnkey's lamp and he collapsed from exhaustion.

A rattle of keys and the clanging of doors awakened Emanuel. He had no idea of the hour when his cell door was flung open. 'Outer there now!', directed the turnkey and Emanuel, continually blinking to adjust his eyes to the light, was led up a narrow stone stairway to the uppermost room of the gaol known as the dayroom. Inside this large room were a small group of prisoners ranging from young to middle aged. The annual summer Assizes had recently dispensed justice to the inmates at Durham and gradually, a new lot would replace the old guard.

Some young men had converged around Vaiben. There was a lot of noise and much raucous laughter. Some were playing cards while others were boasting as to how they broke the law, or were listening intently as a convicted felon awaiting transportation held stage. In this room corruption was rife. Those awaiting trial, supposedly innocent until proven guilty, were soon contaminated



if not already. The innocent and youthful cohabited alongside the hardened and the guilty.

As Emanuel was being introduced to Vaiben's new-found friends and was busily exchanging details of their misfortune, a gaol official accompanied by a Church Minister entered the room and announced that morning prayers were about to commence and the men filed into some semblance of order. When the Reverend Robert Blackett read prayers on that first morning of their incarceration, it was the first time in their lives that Emanuel and Vaiben had been made to acknowledge Christian prayer and their faces flushed with shame and fear. Shame as they thought of their family and their Jewish upbringing and fear that they might be noticed not participating in the prayers.

After what seemed an interminable period, the prayers concluded and the Minister left the room. Once more the inmates became a noisy rabble breaking off into small groups of gamblers and joke tellers. For the first time since their arrest Vaiben and Emanuel were able to speak together and discuss their misfortune. They learned, to their horror, from the other prisoners, of the long delays in cases coming to trial in Durham due to the infrequent visits of the Justices. Regardless of whether they were ultimately found guilty or innocent, they appeared destined for a long stay at the Durham gaol.

Emanuel and Vaiben were to wait several weeks before they heard again. A presentment was made out against them by the Grand Jury of the County. After hearing only the case for the prosecution, as was the procedure, a judge in the Assize Court decided that they should be held in prison to await trial. A jury of 23 landed gentlemen had accused them of breaking and entering Prest's house and of stealing the clothes. The Sheriff, William Hutchinson Esquire, was commanded to take them into custody and to safely keep them to answer the felony for which they were indicted, pending the sitting of the Assizes before one of the King's Justices. They had, of course been in custody for some time already and listened in disbelief as they realised that it was to be a lot longer. The Durham Assizes were held in summer and the Justices were not due to visit the northern counties until the following August. It was to be several years before the Durham Assizes were to sit even twice yearly.

In the old North Gate where the Solomons were imprisoned, there was no provision to segregate old from young or those convicted from those awaiting trial. They all mingled in the dayroom together languishing through the long repetitive days with little opportunity for physical exercise. Their nights were spent in the underground dungeons sleeping on heaps of disintegrating straw which was all that protected them from the dirty, hard, cold floor.

Nearly every gaol in England at this time was overcrowded, bug infested, cold and smelly, and meals generally were quite inadequate. What made Durham prison infamous was its ancient dungeons. The combined effect of nights spent in these dungeons and days confined in a room fraternising with hardened criminals was hardly conducive to reform of first offenders and very likely to corrupt the innocent awaiting trial. As for the Solomons, their extreme youth made them even more vulnerable. The failure of the authorities to provide the prisoners with any form of organised work further compounded the problem.

At the time of their arrest, with winter setting in, and without any form of heating, the whole prison was very cold. Conditions in the dungeons were even colder. The staple diet was water soup which consisted of bread boiled in water. Fortunately for the prisoners, several generous charitable bequests had provided Gaoler Jack with sufficient money to establish a soup kitchen in one of the rooms of the gaol, and twice weekly he provided them with a hearty meal.

Outside their cells, attached to the dungeon walls, were gruesome reminders of the barbaric past. There were suits of armor, battle axes, spears, shields and instruments of torture. Time within these walls had stood still. How the boys must have longed for the modest comforts of home. To have a real bed, a warm bath and home cooking. To wander the streets again and feel the wind and sun on their face. The only break in the monotony of their days was the occasional admission of a new prisoner who would bring with him some news of the outside world.

Shlomo must have been devastated when he learned of the boys' plight. He would have traveled north to Durham to reassure them of his support and given them what little money he could afford to enable the lads to buy the meagre luxuries that could be purchased at the gaol such as fresh straw for their bedding and additional rations. They received a weekly allowance of 4/6 which was meant to pay for their food and bedding, but due to the war and the resultant inflation, this sum provided the prisoners with precious little. Shlomo would tell his sons how their elder brother Moss was soon to marry Betsy Myers, and of how Esther was expecting her first child in April. As winter gradually took hold, Emanuel and Vaiben languished, enduring this dreadful confinement in a prison that had been condemned even in those harsh times. At night they might dream of home and of happier days, escaping for a moment the squalor of their surroundings, and trying to forget the terrible cloud that hung over them. The crime of which they stood charged, carried the death sentence.

Finally, as the days grew longer and the weather warmed, the day of their trial finally drew near. The sheriff of Durham arrived at the gaol and in company with a number of prisoners they were heavily ironed, placed in a cart and taken to the newly constructed courts. Upon arrival they were placed in underground waiting cells.

Late in the afternoon of Monday 4 August 1817, the Lord Chief Baron, Sir Richard Richards finally arrived in Durham. The Assizes which had been adjourned from 1 o'clock were finally assembled at 7 o'clock in the evening, and the Commission empowering the Judge together with Mr. Baron Wood to conduct the various trials was duly read and all matters were adjourned until the following morning. On Tuesday 5 August, a Grand Jury of 24 and a Petty Jury of 12 were duly sworn and the Solomon brothers waited. Most of the trials were theft related and in nearly every case a guilty verdict followed. The Lord Chief Baron would then pronounce sentence of death by hanging before passing on to the next case. Justice was swift if not merciful. In all, the Assizes dispensed with 8 matters on that first day of the sittings.



The Solomons were finally led into the court on Wednesday morning 6 August 1817. Just 15 and 16 years of age, they were the only teenagers to appear before the court in that session. From the darkness and solitude of their cell they suddenly faced the daunting spectacle of an elderly, grim faced Lord Chief Baron, resplendent in his robes, and a courtroom packed to capacity with counsel, jurors, witnesses and spectators. Justice Richards, a native of Wales, was 64 years of age and had only recently been elevated to the post of Chief Baron. Privately, he was friendly and well disposed, but as so often occurs with the judiciary, when he stepped into court his manner changed and he presented as severe and impatient.

The charges were formally read and when asked how they pleaded, they each again denied their guilt. Sir Richard grimly called upon James Topping, Attorney General for the Lord Bishop of Durham to present the case on behalf of our Lord the King. Thomas Prest was called and his evidence was damning. He told how he had seen the boys on the morning of the robbery and how, when he had returned home in the evening and discovered the robbery, he had immediately set out after them and had finally traced them to the lodging house run by Mrs McMMain. In the ten months they had languished in Durham prison nothing had changed except that now there were witnesses who corroborated the evidence of the farmer.

Elizabeth Prest, the farmer's daughter, repeated her story that she had securely fastened the doors of the house when she left at about 10 am. Her evidence that she was unaware that the house had been entered when she returned two hours later, and that she remained in the house for the rest of the day, was a serious flaw in the prosecution's charge of breaking and entering. John Lamb told how he had passed the lads about a mile and a half from Prest's home, walking in the direction of Darlington, each carrying bundles. Emanuel, described as the elder boy, was carrying the larger bundle while Vaiben had taken off his shoes which he was carrying. Another witness named Hockey corroborated this evidence.

Mrs Elizabeth McMMain, the keeper of the lodging house, identified the prisoners and told the court that they had arrived at her house on the evening of 15 October and one was carrying a bundle of clothes which he had offered to sell her. She described a black silk cloak, a piece of ticking, a jacket, a man's coat, a woman's coat, three or four old white stockings, and an odd muff. Inquiring as to where they had got the clothes they had told her they had bought them at Newcastle. Constable Watson tendered the clothes which he had retained in his custody and both Prest and Mrs McMMain identified them. Constable Watson in turn corroborated the evidence of Prest as to their discovery.

Unable to afford the expense of a barrister to represent them, the two small lads were quite overwhelmed by the formality, pomp and severity of the proceedings. As a result, the prosecution witnesses' evidence went for the main part untested, and nothing was made of the fact that they wore the clothes and did not attempt to cover their tracks. Emanuel did ask Mrs McMMain the innocuous question, 'did you see the woman's silk muff taken out of my

bundle?'. She replied 'yes', and his questions ceased. When called upon for their defence, Emanuel told how his father could not afford to keep him and his brother at home and that with his father's assistance he had procured a box of jewelry and other articles with which they had left home and set out as travelling peddlers. They would often exchange their goods for old clothes, he said, and on 15 October they had traded some jewellery for the allegedly stolen clothes with a man they had met on the road near Darlington. With Vaiben as the only witness to corroborate his story, the jury was not convinced.

The lads were well aware of the speed and harshness of the summary justice dispensed by that court, and they were quite convinced that their fate was sealed. When the jury foreman announced a verdict of not guilty in respect of the charge of breaking and entering the dwelling house of Thomas Prest, perhaps, for a fleeting moment, they thought they had been believed. He then proceeded however, to announce the Jury's verdict of guilty on the charge of stealing clothes to the value of £5.

At this point Emanuel stood and nervously asked to speak, before the Lord Chief Baron launched into the inevitable sentence. He wished to remind the court that he and his brother were entitled to 'Benefit of Clergy'. This was a legal anachronism dating from medieval times, originally protecting clergymen from the harsh jurisdiction of the secular courts. By a curious path of analogy along which the law is sometimes prone to wander, this plea was gradually extended to provide a reprieve from the penalty of death to laymen in certain limited cases. The lay defendant had to show that he was a clerk in order to invoke the court's mercy. Gradually a clerk was extended to include anyone who could read, and the passage to be read was nearly always the 51st psalm.

The Solomons may have learned about the plea during their long stay at Durham gaol where they had plenty of time to practice reading. Young Vaiben, especially, who at the time of their arrest had been unable to even sign his name. His statement to the justice of the peace had been attested with an 'X'. They were indeed lucky that the plea of Benefit of Clergy still survived in 1817 as it did help to mitigate the harsh criminal law penalties of the time. Only ten years later, in 1827, parliament abolished it altogether due to its gross abuse.

And so when the Lord Chief Baron ordered that they be severally transported to parts beyond the seas for the term of seven years, the two young boys listened with a strange mixture of sadness and relief. They were well aware that parts beyond the seas referred to *Terra Australis*, the convict settlement located some six months distant by sea. Their first thoughts were of the family they might never see again, and then of what lay ahead of them. When Emanuel and Vaiben Solomon finally received their Tickets of Leave in 1823, their experiences had embraced a large slice of what the savage English penal system of the time had to offer.

From Durham Gaol they were taken south and placed in a ship's hulk at Woolwich teeming with convicts awaiting transportation. For many convicts this was where they stayed. The official government policy was to fill the ships with those sentenced to life and fourteen years transportation. Those to



be transported for seven years were then used to complete the quotas. The Solomons were now resigned to their fate and, aware that the authorities were looking for strong young men to build the new settlement, hoped for an early call.

Following muster they were officially received on to the hulk and the irons they had worn on the long journey from Durham were removed and returned to their gaol escorts who departed. Together with other new arrivals they were then taken to the washroom for a thorough cleansing in a large tub of water following which they were issued with some warm woollen clothes. The ship's barber then removed their whiskers and gave them a short back and sides, after which their ankles were again chained. They were issued with bedding and taken below decks. For several weeks they toiled in gangs doing heavy labour on the docks. Meals consisted largely of black bread, barley soup and meat with a daily pint of table beer which contemporary descriptions have likened to bad vinegar. Many of the men in the hulks had been enduring these conditions for well over a year and the two lads, who had prepared themselves for a long wait, were relieved when they learned within a couple of months that their names had been listed for transfer to the 842 ton *Lady Castlereagh*, a ship under the command of Master George Weltden.

Prior to embarkation they were issued with the dark colored outfit of the convict, consisting of check cotton shirt, linen trousers, shoes and stockings and woollen cap — much lighter than the clothes they had been wearing while on the hulk, but considered by the authorities to be more suitable for a sea voyage than flannel or wool which might harbour disease. This concern for their hygiene was of little comfort as the clothes provided them with little protection from the icy northern winter, in the depths of which they were departing. They were grateful to receive two additional shirts and a spare pair of trousers.

The *Lady Castlereagh* was the largest transport of the period, carrying 300 passengers including a huge contingent of 259 convicts. She was built on the river Thames in 1802 and this was her first voyage as a convict transport. When boarding, the Solomons recognised a number of familiar faces of young men from the streets of London. Included among her convict indent the *Lady Castlereagh* carried seven Jews of whom four were about the same age as the Solomons.

Armed with their solitary blanket and spare clothes and bedding, they descended through the hatchway, by way of a ladder which had been lowered, to their sleeping quarters between decks and were surprised to find that they were in a section that was reserved for younger convicts and a number of the familiar faces now occupied adjoining quarters. Their sleeping berth was six foot square which held four, providing each with eighteen inches of sleeping space. This was the first transport ship for which the Navy Board had made any effort to segregate younger from more hardened offenders. By using open iron railings for this purpose, rather than heavy wooden beams which were more commonly used at the time to create divisions, better circulation of air and improved lighting also resulted.

They left England on the long journey to Australia on 22 December 1817. The convicts soon realised just how inadequate the clothes they had been supplied were, providing little protection from the bitter cold winds as they exercised on deck. As the ship tossed around in rough seas they got splashed and their discomfort was worse.

Ships' captains had a dreadful reputation for cruelty on the transport ships. As a major source of profit from the voyage came from the sale of unconsumed provisions, unscrupulous masters would starve the convicts. Others were by nature cruel and would deprive the men of water unnecessarily. The authorities appointed a Surgeon-General in charge of the prisoners who was directly responsible to the Transport Board, to try and overcome the high mortality rate, but this had generally met with mixed success. The *Lady Castlereagh* proved to be a welcome rare exception, with no fatalities being recorded among the convicts during the entire voyage.

The Reverend Walter Lawry, the second Methodist missionary to Australasia, traveled as chaplain on board the *Lady Castlereagh*. He kept a journal in which he records the dreariness of the long voyage which he overcame by constant reading. Clearly disturbed by the materialistic attitude of the officers, he relates with contempt their enthusiasm for stories of gambling, and their respect for worldly success. Even during their passage out, the convicts were well catered for spiritually. The chaplain wrote on Sunday 8 March 1818 that 'during his sermon that day between decks, following a severe storm, the convicts wept, sighed, and hid their faces with their jackets.'

Perhaps the most extraordinary event which is recorded in the diary, is the shooting by one of the officers of an albatross, measuring ten foot from the point of one wing to the other. Some weeks later the ship was becalmed in the Indian Ocean for several days over Easter and on Easter Sunday, 29 March, water rations were cut. Reverend Lawry makes no reference in his Journal to the then recently published literary gem, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, wherein the shooting of an albatross was blamed for disastrous consequences. This well-read gentleman only comments 'what the end of these things will be I know not, yet I am without carefulness.' On 30 March he wrote: 'a gale of wind. The Lord is here.'

On April 24 there was a cry from the fore-topgallant-mast of 'land ahoy'. After over four months at sea both officers and prisoners rejoiced as the hills of New Holland appeared on the horizon. The *Lady Castlereagh* did not finally dock in Sydney until 1 May. Reverend Lawry wrote in his diary that 'he raptured in the thought of finally setting his feet ashore.' For Emanuel and Vaiben, however, the voyage was far from over. Not until 11 June 1818, 171 days after their departure from England, did Emanuel and Vaiben finally disembark at Hobart in Van Diemens Land. A detachment of the 48th Regiment under Major Thomas Bell joined the ship for the journey from Sydney to Hobart, and on arrival the convicts discovered that it was Major Bell who had been assigned the job of supplying them and organising their placement.

Without any farming experience, Emanuel and Vaiben had little chance of being appointed to private settlers. Instead, they were sent for government service to the tiny settlement at George Town at the mouth of the Tamar River

which was only a few miles seaward of Launceston. Governor Macquarie had visited the area in 1812, and felt that Launceston was too far from the sea to be a suitable port, being located at the end of an estuary which was difficult to navigate. Outer Cove, as George Town was originally known was, he thought, a more suitable place than Launceston for a settlement, and he had renamed it George Town. His efforts to encourage its development went unrewarded. The settlers preferred the rich agricultural soil that surrounded Launceston and were disinclined to move.

The tiny settlement at George Town comprised only a couple of hundred souls, mostly convicts, and was totally isolated. The commandants were in a constant state of conflict and due to the instability of those in charge, chaos reigned. There were no buildings other than a temporary store and lime hut and there was little to occupy the convicts who were fed very little and consequently became very agitated. In July 1817 the chief constable had been murdered. His body was weighted with stones and thrown into a pond and subsequently three convicts and a soldier were charged with murder and one of the convicts was executed. Murder of soldiers by each other was also not uncommon, but Governor Macquarie was not fazed. He replaced the Commandant, Major Stewart with Major Cimitiere of the 48th Regiment who moved his headquarters to George Town in May 1819. Cimitiere, a native of France who had made it through the ranks of the British Navy, experienced some linguistic problems, but felt he could control his troops more readily in the more isolated George Town.

Meanwhile Major Stewart was charged with insubordination, neglect of duty, suppressing and then disobeying the lawful orders of William Sorell, the Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemens Land, purloining official documents, making illegal and unnecessary issues from the government store to worthless and undeserving characters, assigning the best government men to private settlers, leaving the public works in a ruinous state of decay and inflicting corporal punishment on three soldiers without a trial. He denied the charges and before they could be heard he was sent to India. Such was the extraordinary state of affairs at George Town which was to be the Solomon brothers' first Australian experience.

With the arrival of convicts and officers from the *Lady Castlereagh*, things did not improve at George Town and problems of administration persisted. Soldiers were not only undisciplined, there was just no control. They became involved in the illegal spirit trade and there were accusations that they used torture to discipline the convicts. Within months of their arrival, both Emanuel and Vaiben faced charges of neglect of duty. Nobody particularly enjoyed attending the regular compulsory divine services, but after two years in custody Vaiben apparently developed a special aversion to them. He was charged with being disorderly in church. These were, however, relatively minor offences in that crazed penal outpost. The punishment was additional hard labour.

On 8 January 1820, Emanuel failed to appear at a muster. A hurried search of the barracks disclosed that he was missing and a search party was immediately dispatched into the woods to hunt him down. Emanuel may have



been encouraged by a runaway several months earlier who had made it to Hobart, and had there alleged that Cimitiere had punished a man twice for the same offence without a trial. Nevertheless, escape from this tiny, remote settlement was extraordinarily difficult. The aborigines represented a constant danger, and if you were lucky enough not to be speared, then you might well starve. The brothers' confinement was now into its fourth year and the cumulative effect of the injustice of their situation and the apparent hopelessness in this lawless outpost, may have combined to dull their senses and their better judgement. Even so, Emanuel could not persuade Vaiben to join him on what was, almost certainly, a hopeless folly.

Emanuel's desperate bid for freedom ended quickly. He was returned to the settlement under heavy escort. Punishment was swift and merciless. The superintendent, determined to assert his control and to stop any further attempts at escape ordered in his strong French accent that he be given 50 lashes and serve 6 months with the gaol gang. Emanuel had witnessed the inflicting of corporal punishment on other prisoners. He had seen their faces distorted as they shrieked with pain and he had watched in horror as the dreaded cat-o-nine-tails had torn deep furrows in the prisoner's back which then filled with blood. Made to strip and then led to his punishment between rows of his fellow-prisoners assembled especially for the occasion, we can well imagine the young man's fear as he was tied to the dreaded triangle.

The lash was administered to the roll of drums and after the first 25 strokes, another operator continued the flogging. When finally released after this dreadful experience which for fifty lashes lasted nearly half an hour, the prisoner, in a state of collapse, was rendered medical assistance with a dressing consisting mainly of salt, the application of which was even more excruciatingly painful than the punishment.

The second part of his sentence, to work in the gaol gang, was a harrowing and totally degrading experience. Whereas previously Emanuel had been required to work from sunrise until 3pm, he now had to commence at 6am and work through to 6pm enduring those long hours doing heavy manual labour digging roads or labouring in the gang on other public works. Overseers to these gaol gangs were commonly appointed by the superintendent for their ability to extract the last ounce of effort in order that his pet projects would proceed speedily. They were generally chosen from the most hardened and worst behaved convicts, and certainly not for their humanity. It is hardly surprising then, that only two months after he had received his first dose of corporal punishment and while the scars on his back were still healing, Emanuel clashed with his overseer and was given another 25 lashes, this time for neglect of duty.

Despite this apparent concern by the authorities for discipline, general anarchy still reigned at George Town. On 18 March 1820 the soldiers broke into the store and then pack-raped a female convict. Rescued by her screams, the rescuer and his pregnant wife were then savagely attacked and seriously injured and the soldiers threatened to rape every female convict. During this extraordinary outrage the convicts burnt down their huts and put nails in the wheat-mill. Clearly, George Town at this time was not a place where one could

hope for rehabilitation. While Emanuel was toiling long hours in the gaol gang, Vaiben clashed again with the authorities. On 10 April 1820 he again absented himself from divine service and as a result had to devote one month of his previous free time to the government. In this way he persistently demonstrated his hatred of three and a half years of enforced regular attendance at Christian prayer.

On 20 June a guest of the government complained that he had lost a shirt. Clothing was a scarce commodity, not only in George Town, but throughout the colonies, and particularly in the penal settlements. When the shirt could not be found after a search, this matter was of major concern. Vaiben was suspected as a thief, and although after a thorough investigation and interrogation he was acquitted due to lack of evidence, it must have been an agonising experience for him. As things ultimately turned out, however, it would only have expedited the inevitable.

The brothers had been in custody for a period of four years by October of 1820, and the continued harshness of their treatment in this lonely outpost must have been depressing in the extreme. There was, of course, no demand for their skills as pencil makers, the calling they had registered on their convict indent. Nevertheless, Vaiben acquired skills as a stonemason, a trade which was in demand on the numerous public buildings constantly being constructed.

On 28 August Vaiben did not answer to his name at Sunday muster. Unlike Emanuel he was not seeking to escape, although regular roll calls were treated seriously thereby minimising any chance of escape. Perhaps he was resting his aching arms which may have been still adjusting to the constant repetitive movement of hammer and chisel. Whatever his reason, for this simple misdemeanor he received 25 lashes and experienced his only encounter with the cat-o'-nine tails.

As the year progressed things got worse. Only three months after Emanuel had completed his time with the gaol gang, he was charged with having in his possession an iron pick, the property of the Crown. Why he should choose to continue to take such extraordinary risks is a dilemma. Perhaps he had formed an attachment to this instrument of hard labour during his stint with the gaol gang. The punishment was another 50 lashes. With over three years of their sentence still to run, the physical and mental torture being endured by both lads must have been extraordinary.

1821 began badly. In January they were suspected of robbing the house of a Mr Thomas Newby. Luckily Mr Newby decided not to prosecute, however, two months later they were not so lucky. As if history were repeating itself, they were accused of being in possession of clothing belonging to a Mr William Copperwheat. Mr Copperwheat was not so obliging. This time the boys were heavily ironed and taken to Hobart where they were brought before a bench of six Magistrates. Finding the charge proved, they were sentenced to be transported again, this time to the dreaded penal settlement for re-offenders, at Newcastle, where they were to labour in irons for three years.

On 28 April 1821 the Colonial Secretary wrote to Mr Dunne in Sydney requesting that 'he proceed on the Ship *Medway* now in Sydney Cove with a sufficient guard of constables, and take charge of the under mentioned persons

who are under sentence to Newcastle, and lodge them in Sydney Gaol.' Listed below were the names of 36 convicts, including Emanuel and Vaiben Solomon.

Sailing into Sydney Cove in May 1821, the brothers must have regretted that they were not free to participate in all the activity. Still, the colour and excitement of the Sydney docks undoubtedly left a strong impression upon them as they were hurriedly disembarked. Their first experience on the mainland of Australia was to be removed immediately to the gaol where they were placed in the custody of the gaoler John Redman. At the end of the month they were returned to the docks and loaded aboard HM Cutter *Snapper* bound for Newcastle.

The run from Sydney to Newcastle was sixty miles by sea and only a few hours in time, but the two places were worlds apart. As the ship approached the wharf, the convicts saw Nobbys Island with its perpendicular edge appearing as though it was sheared off from the high cliff edge on the mainland. Arching their heads back they could stare up at the scene of desolation which was to be home for many of them for the rest of their lives. One of the few signs of civilisation visible was the tall spire of the recently completed church.

The settlement at Newcastle was established by the Colonial Government in April 1804 as a place to receive convicts, to provide coal and timber, and to be used as a base for the exploitation of the Hunter River Valley. By 1821 the total population of the settlement numbered almost 1000 of whom approximately 100 were adult females, just over 50 were children and the rest were adult males. The great majority of residents were convicts who had committed second offences since leaving England. Soldiers, their families and other free persons comprised less than 20 per cent of the total population.

Upon their arrival the convicts were classified according to their record. Although Emanuel and Vaiben had been sentenced to work in irons at Newcastle, it is unlikely that they had to do so for very long. The year before their arrival at Newcastle, a Commission of Enquiry had been conducted there by John Thomas Bigge. They had seen him at George Town which he had inspected in September 1820. Bigge was sent to the colonies in 1819–1820 by the British Government to investigate the administration of the various penal settlements. His instructions were that the colonies must be considered chiefly 'as receptacles for offenders, in which crimes may be expiated, at a distance from home, by punishments sufficiently severe to deter others from the commission of crimes, and so regulated as to operate the reform of the persons by whom they have been committed.' There is little doubt that the Bigge enquiry placed considerable pressure upon the administration at Newcastle to achieve these objectives in the period following Bigge's visit. Nevertheless, the ensuing reports subjected Governor Macquarie and the settlements at both George Town and Newcastle to the most scathing criticism.

Emanuel and Vaiben were probably enrolled in the town gang which represented easily the largest group of workers at the Newcastle settlement. At the time of Bigge's visit in January there were 256 convicts employed in this gang and involved in various projects which included the construction of public works buildings, working for settlers or doing private work for overseers,



loading and unloading government vessels, repairing roads and drains in the town and assisting at Macquarie's Pier. The Pier was a breakwater intended to provide ships entering the harbour with protection from the southerly swell. Furthermore, it was felt that the resultant narrowing of the entrance to the harbour would create a pressure of in-flowing water which would dredge and deepen the entrance. Governor Macquarie had authorised work to begin on the pier in 1818. Initially it was carried out only at low tide, however, progress was too slow and the authorities were impatient, and so by the time the Solomons arrived, a gang of 100 men were working on its construction irrespective of tides.

James Clohesy was the overseer of stone cutters and masons at Newcastle from 1817 to 1822. He had been employed by the previous Commandant, Captain Wallis, in the construction of the church, gaol and hospital. Brevet Major Morisset was the Commandant at the time of the Solomons' arrival and in 1820 he provided Clohesy and other overseers with groups of convicts for the purpose of getting, cutting and setting stone for Macquarie's Pier. Weekly returns of government labour at the time indicate that this was the only project upon which stonemasons were working and from this we can reasonably assume that Vaiben was working on the pier. Probably Emanuel assisted in the many less skilled aspects of this work, either attending the cranes or loading the trucks from the quarry. Vaiben was to learn, in the course of his acquired trade as a stonemason, that the stone found at Newcastle was soft. Clohesy felt that it was all impregnated with salt water and that after rain and exposure to the sun it would crumble. Partly as a result of this and partly due to poor foundations and design, several of the recently erected public buildings, including the church, were already beginning to disintegrate.

Life at Newcastle was hard, tedious and monotonous. In summer the convicts began work at 5am and worked, with breaks, a total of ten hours until 6pm. In winter work began at 8am and they worked a seven or eight hour day. They were required to muster in the lumber yard at 5am, 9am, 2pm, sunset and at 8pm to ensure they were on the job and at the settlement. A curfew was enforced by five constables after the last roll call. Free time was allowed from 10am until 4pm on Saturday and on Sunday they did not work, although they were still required to attend the inevitable Divine Service conducted by one of the army officers.

Twice weekly they were issued rations of salted meat — either 2 pounds of pork or 3.5 pounds of beef, and 4 pounds of wheat, a diet which was both unhealthy and inadequate and hardly appetising. On rare occasions they received fresh meat instead of salted, but they never received vegetables. As a result of this dreadful diet many of the convicts became ill soon after their arrival. In this regard the brothers were fortunate that Commissioner Bigge had preceded them to Newcastle for he had arranged an additional meal of maize porridge at breakfast, recognising that many of the convicts consumed their meat ration at breakfast leaving them only bread for the rest of the day.

Clothing and bedding were generally scarce in the colonies, but at Newcastle they were rarely, if ever, issued. Having endured far worse conditions

at Durham prison in a much colder climate, the brothers were probably happy to accept that they should see out their sentence. At Newcastle they faced no charges of clothing theft.

When Vaiben was notified in September of 1823 that he was among those to be removed to the new penal settlement that had been established at Port Macquarie, it was to be the first time in all those years of incarceration that he and Emanuel had been separated. Perhaps Emanuel's continued refusal to accept authority made those in charge wary of giving him more freedom. In January of that same year he had been found guilty of repeated irregularities by the resident Magistrate Edward Close and received his last 25 strokes of corporal punishment.

The voyage to Port Macquarie was to be Vaiben's last as a convict. He traveled on the Cutter *Mermaid* on 15 September 1823, only one month before that same ship left on a voyage which was to result in the discovery of the Brisbane River by the Surveyor General John Oxley.

On 5 August 1824 Vaiben left Port Macquarie with his Certificate of Freedom and the following day, seven years exactly from the date of their sentence, Emanuel received his Certificate of Freedom. They had been prisoners for almost eight years. From the time of their release they appear, unlike most emancipists, to have readily adapted to living as free citizens in Sydney. Certainly, for a small minority the air of enthusiasm and optimism that pervaded in this new land, combined with their pent up energy after so many years of confinement to drive them to be successful businessmen within a short span of time.

The constant stream of news regarding their prodigious family, encouraged them at an early date to assist the migration of other Solomons from London to this land of opportunity. During their stay at Newcastle, two of their sisters had married and they had acquired a number of nieces and nephews. Even more exciting was the news that Shlomo had become a father once again, in 1821. Esther had by now turned 46 and they were no doubt grateful to be blessed at this time with their second child who they named Elizabeth.

Letters arrived with increasing regularity during the 1820s and they soon caught up with all the family activities and general London gossip which now seemed so irrelevant. Special attention was always devoted in each letter to their new little half-sister Elizabeth, who was known as Betsy after Shlomo's beloved first wife, their half-brother Isaac born in 1818 when Emanuel and Vaiben were on their way to Australia, and the children of their elder brother Moss who had married Betsy Myers. Moss had five children but only one son, Judah Moss born in 1820. He was Shlomo's first grandson and his pride and joy.

For Shlomo, his new family must have been a source of great pleasure, and as his older children married and his family grew, he would have been very proud. But his greatest inspiration would come from the letters which arrived from Australia, letters which told of extraordinary wealth in which everyone, even ex-convicts, had the opportunity to participate. Shlomo must

have devoured every word. While he was still a struggling pencil maker, he would read how his two young sons had opened a business in King Street, Sydney. This, to him, must have been incomprehensible. These two boys who had left England in chains and who had brought him so much pain and sorrow, were now writing of a wonderful life in this new land.

From the time of their release the brothers survived by trading. At first they dealt in 'slops' and cheap clothing, but gradually they diversified, buying and turning over anything that would give a quick profit. They relished the *laissez-faire* spirit that prevailed and found no situation for which their experiences had not prepared them. They speculated and won. With nerves of steel toughened from years of deprivation, and an eye for a bargain in the cut-throat, fickle colonial market, they were a success.

In 1827 news arrived that both boys had married. Shlomo's heart may have been heavy as he wondered who his sons could find to marry in a penal settlement. His instincts would tell him that their brides were not Jewish, and they had, of course, little choice as an active Jewish community did not exist in Sydney until many years later. Vaiben had married a lass of 17 years who had been born in the colony. Her name was Mary Smith although Vaiben called her Sarah and after their marriage she was always known as Sarah. They were married on 3 June 1826. The following month, on 10 July, Vaiben sought permission from the authorities for their brother-in-law David Myers, a Jewish watchmaker and convict, to be assigned to him as a servant for his business in King Street at a weekly wage of three shillings and sixpence.

Vaiben made numerous similar applications in the following years. He would have been furious had he been aware of the Colonial Secretary's internal response to this application which in part read:

... I do not conceive it would come within either the spirit or the letter [of the Governor's instructions] to assign convicts to every uncle, aunt or cousin ... Solomon is not a watchmaker, he is a pencil maker and keeps a little shop in Sydney and stands in the market like most Jews and is but a short time from Port Macquarie where it is supposed he got acquainted with his relative.

News of Emanuel's marriage to Mary Ann Wilson at St Phillip's Church in Sydney on 6 November 1826 arrived soon after, although scant details were given save that he referred to his bride as Rachel. Shlomo would have been happy not to ask too many questions. And then came news of the birth of Vaiben's first child, Samuel. We can only imagine Shlomo's pride at this unexpected expansion in his family on the other side of the world. Infant mortality was high in those difficult times and sadly, Samuel died within a few months and was buried at the Devonshire Street Cemetery.

In the years that followed, the two brothers became firmly established and well known in Sydney business circles. They each obtained licenses as auctioneers, and, no doubt, they would sometimes proudly send their family copies of advertisements from the *Sydney Gazette* detailing auctions they had conducted which included items as diverse as stocks of china, clothing, wine, bags, pease, oatmeal, porter, sherry, madeira, fish and Irish moss pork. Ships laden with goods suitable for a pioneer settlement arrived regularly in Sydney,



and auctioneers such as the Solomons would go on board and barter for the purchase of its cargo. Disposal of the goods would then take place by way of auction. Occasionally their business ventures would take them to the other colonies and when this occurred the Solomons would do it in style, always travelling cabin class.

In 1829 the *Sydney Gazette* advised that V. & E. Solomon were conducting an auctioning business from 74 George Street. The premises included a stable, chaise house and a store and Vaiben had for some time been advertising for a tenant. The Solomons had as their immediate neighbor Barnett Levey's Royal Hotel at 72 George Street, where Australia's first professional theatrical performance was held on Boxing Day 1832 in the saloon theatre to a packed audience of over 500. The audience paid 3 shillings for pit seats or 5 shillings for box seats to see the melodrama *Black-Eyed Susan* which was presented in three acts together with that 'far famed highly comical farce', *Monsieur Tonson*. The performance was supported by the band of His Majesty's 17th Regiment. This exciting colonial event, as we shall see, was to leave a permanent impression upon the Solomon brothers and for that reason a short background, largely extracted from Levi and Bergman's *Australian Genesis*, follows.

Barnett Levey, Australia's first free Jewish settler, was lured to migrate because of the business successes of his brother Solomon, who had been transported for seven years as a convict on the *Marquis of Wellington* in January 1815 and had returned to England in his own ship as a wealthy man in 1826.

Solomon Levey's business success was extraordinary, although it is difficult to understand how as a ticket-of-leave street hawker selling lollypops he could have raised the £400 necessary to purchase the land at 72 George Street, as early as 24 November 1817, less than three years after his arrival as a convict. From these humble beginnings, Solomon Levey prospered. His great leap from being a well-to-do businessman to being a very wealthy one occurred when he went into partnership with the emancipist Daniel Cooper in 1821. The firm of Cooper & Levey purchased ships and pioneered new trade routes. Aided by a large dowry from a short marriage, Solomon Levey invested shrewdly in a myriad of successful speculative and business enterprises. His success was the envy of many in the small community of New South Wales and his methods were, doubtless, observed with awe and approbation by his immediate neighbours the Solomon brothers, who were about six years his junior.

When Solomon Levey left the colony, his younger brother Barnett, who had worked with him for four years at the George Street premises took over the running of the shop. He had clearly served a good apprenticeship and by wisely utilising the stock and capital generously left at his disposal by his brother, he was able to rapidly expand the business. In 1825 his petition for a land grant of 640 acres at the foot of the Blue Mountains was successful, following which he received permission to buy another 350 adjoining acres based upon an application stating he wanted 'no interruptions from an unpleasant neighbour.' He established Australia's first lending library in 1825,

and pursued the family's interest in banking as one of the founders of the Sydney Banking Company and as a shareholder in the Bank of New South Wales. In the same year he took out his auctioneer's license, and issued bank notes based on rupees imported from Mauritius. This last venture was a disaster due to Barnett's overvaluation of the rupee.

Aside from these varied activities, Barnett found time for marriage in June 1825, and he also performed in several concerts which were reported in the press as highly successful: 'he was applauded to the very echo that did applaud again.' This taste of success on stage appears to have been the catalyst behind the enormous project which germinated at this time for what was to be Sydney's first skyscraper.

In June of 1826 he commenced building the huge five story structure known as the Colchester Warehouse, behind his shop and residence at 72 George Street. Immediately above the ground floor storehouse he built a Georgian-style theatre. The old George Street premises were then demolished and in their place he built the five-floored Royal Hotel which was joined to the warehouse building by a loft and an interconnecting passage between the theatre and the saloon. Above the whole structure towered a six-floored flour mill complete with sails reaching a total height of some 90 feet, dwarfing the surrounding neighbourhood and casting a shadow over Solomons' auction house. Throughout the long period of construction, Levey was at loggerheads with Governor Darling who maliciously and steadfastly refused to grant him the necessary permits which he had neglected to obtain before commencing his mammoth construction. The outcome was to prove ruinous for Levey. In December 1830 the buildings were acquired by the mortgagee, his brother's old partner, Daniel Cooper. When a license was finally granted to Levey by Darling's successor, the more enlightened and amiable Sir Richard Bourke, it was a license to perform in a building that he did not then own.

Another close neighbour of the Solomon brothers was the emancipist Samuel Lyons who, in 1825, moved to 75 George Street. He was a fellow transportee on the *Marquis of Wellington* with Solomon Levey and eight other Jews. His career path as a convict starting about one year earlier, had followed a somewhat similar course to the Solomons. He was transported to the colony in 1815 for stealing a handkerchief and, being rebellious, made several attempts to escape. In 1819 he was convicted together with John Fawkner and John Morris, and Fawkner's son, John Pascoe Fawkner, of robbing government stores in Hobart. Lyons and Fawkner senior were harshly dealt with. They each received 200 lashes and were sent to Newcastle. The Solomons may well have met Lyons at Newcastle as he was sent there for four years in July 1819. He certainly reformed quickly, and his meteoric rise to success again illustrates that opportunities were available in Sydney at the time, although relatively few emancipists responded to these opportunities.

When Lyons moved to George Street towards the latter part of 1825 he held a license as an Auctioneer and Vendue Master and details of his varied and substantial auctions abound in the Sydney papers during the following years. Whether Lyons became associated with the Solomon brothers at

Newcastle, or as neighbours and fellow Jews in George Street, is a matter for conjecture, but their mutual respect and friendship was to last for years.

Despite the premature death of his first child, Vaiben was destined to have a large family. In 1828 his wife gave birth to another boy who they named David, and in April 1830 Vaiben was able to tell his delighted family that he had arranged for another son, Joseph, to be circumcised by a Mr. Michael Hyam who was a duly authorised High Priest from London. Hyam, the *mohel*, a wealthy shoe and boot maker, arrived as a free settler from London accompanied by two servants in December 1828. His friend, Walter Jacob Levi had emigrated a little over one year earlier, and Hyam had come to Sydney intending to pursue business interests with Levi. Clearly well connected, and with the right credentials, Hyam had the support of the Colonial Secretary's Office to obtain a First Class Land Grant. Prior to his departure he had acquired a large assortment of goods which he brought with him on the *George Canning* and which were assigned to Levi.

When Hyam set foot in Sydney, Levi was not there to greet him. He was devastated to learn of Levi's untimely death in August some four months earlier. The loss of his friend, colleague, and business confidant was compounded by commercial woes. Fortunately for Hyam, the executors named in Levi's will informed him that they would make no claim to any entitlement in the goods he had brought with him which were valued at some £1559.

Hyam approached the auction house of Emanuel and Vaiben Solomon and asked that they assist him in the disposal of the goods. So successful were the Solomons in disposing of the stock that Hyam received sufficient funds to encourage him to pursue the application for a First Class Land Grant. On 28 January 1829 he wrote to Governor Darling stating that he had £1000 capital and two servants. The Governor was not impressed. He commented in a letter to the Under-Secretary that Hyam was 'a perfect Jew' because he had the 'ingenuity, though a shoe maker, in qualifying himself to become a man of landed estate.' The Governor wrote that 'people of this class should confine themselves to their proper calling and defer becoming landed proprietors until they have done making shoes and selling stockings.' Notwithstanding these extraordinarily racist views, the Land Board approved the application and Hyam received a grant of 1280 acres at Minnamurra, about 65 miles south of Sydney. Governor Darling had developed a poor reputation through his blatant prejudice. He took great delight in denying applications by either emancipists or Jews. If the emancipist happened to be Jewish then his delight was even greater.

The year 1830 was one of growing prosperity in Sydney. In December the brothers dissolved their partnership and opened separate premises. Emanuel commenced trading under the name of Solomons General Warehouse still at the 74 George Street address. He advertised that he would take wool and other produce at market prices, and was conducting regular auctions with great success. In that year he visited Launceston twice — in June and November. On the second occasion the press reported the return of Mr & Mrs Solomon travelling cabin class on the schooner *Resolution*. They brought with them wheat and kangaroo skins. Vaiben opened business at 101 Pitt Street and prospered. Over the next two years their relative fortunes waxed and waned.



In September 1831 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Vaiben had bought the second largest lot in the significant sale of the Sir George Jamieson subdivision in George Street for which he had paid £1200. Emanuel, on the other hand, appears to have been more adventurous and at this time went through a financial crisis. His difficulties arose as a result of two large bills that he had endorsed to Michael Hyam. Hyam was again in trouble and legal action was instituted by Messrs Hughes and Hosking.

Michael Phillips was appointed as the Trustee of Emanuel's Estate and he placed an advertisement in the local press advising the public of a sale at the premises of Joseph Montefiore of a large assortment of brushes and broom heads, gentlemen's shoes, blankets, flannels, ribbons, stationery, linens, combs, buttons, threads and furniture belonging to Emanuel. The sale resulted in Emanuel paying his creditors 7 shillings and sixpence in the pound.

In the weeks preceding 4 December 1832 there was great excitement among London's Jewish community as a large contingent of the congregation at the New Synagogue finalised arrangements to migrate to a new land. Among the many Jewish passengers who had booked a passage on the 376 ton vessel *Enchantress* destined for Hobart and Port Jackson were Shlomo and Esther and their two children Isaac aged 14 and Betsy 11, and Shlomo's grandson from his first marriage, Judah Moss Solomon aged 12. Phillip Hart, a nephew of Shlomo through his sister Miriam and her husband David Hart, also joined this adventurous group of pioneers.

Also on board was Solomon Phillips aged 23 (whose mother Rosetta was a relative of Shlomo through his first wife Julia Moses) and his 19-year-old wife Caroline who were married at the New Synagogue on 24 October 1832, as well as three of Caroline's sisters — Julia, Hannah and Sarah and her mother Hannah. All three sisters were destined to marry within their faith and rear large families. Other passengers included John Isaac (who, like Shlomo, was active in Freemasonry) and his wife Rosa, and 26 year old Isaac Friedman, a native of Hungary, his wife Rebecca and their infant son Francis. *[NB: see article on p. 475 in this issue — Ed.]*

Both Solomon Phillips and Isaac Friedman were scholars in Hebrew and each was destined to serve in the Jewish congregations which were soon to emerge in their adopted land. Friedman, who relocated to Hobart after 5 years in New South Wales, hosted the meeting with fellow Jews when it was decided to build what remains as Australia's oldest synagogue. Another passenger, Emanuel Crabb, travelling with his wife Frances and their four young children, Philip 7, Maria 5, Elizabeth 3, and Israel 14 months, was to become the Sydney Synagogue's first Secretary.

This large contingent of free Jewish settlers all had their own particular reasons for migrating, but their decision to travel in the same ship was clearly no accident. With corresponding interests and largely similar backgrounds, their voyage was a very pleasant one, by contrast to the more usual descriptions of tedium by immigrants at that time.

Prior to departure, Shlomo was presented with a silver snuff box which had been inscribed 'presented to Samuel Moss Solomon, the inventor of lead pencils, by his London friends.' This enthusiastic endorsement of Shlomo must

have delighted him, for the snuff box was passed down through the generations and still survives.

The decision by Shlomo to join his two sons in Australia seems to have been the catalyst for a general Solomon exodus from England. His daughter Esther and her husband Israel Myers had already departed in the *Palambam* arriving in Sydney on 10 January 1833. They were accompanied by Solomon Phillip's eldest daughter Catherine. During the following ten years, the rest of Shlomo's immediate family was to follow.

The *Enchantress* arrived in Hobart on Saturday 30 March, and on 9 April 1833 the following notice appeared in the Hobart *Colonial Times*:

To Captain David Roxburgh:

Sir,

Previously to leaving your ship, the *Enchantress*, we beg to take this opportunity of tendering you our heartfelt thanks for your unremitting kind conduct to us during a pleasant voyage of 110 days throughout which period we experienced the utmost liberality and attention to each and all of us, the recollection of which will be gratifyingly remembered. With sincere good wishes for your health and prosperity, we are, sir, your most obedient servants.

The notice was signed by Isaac Solomon and a family of 12, Solomon Phillips and a family of 5, and James Adkins and a family of 5.

When the *Enchantress* finally docked in Sydney Harbour on 24 April 1833, we can only speculate at the excitement and joy surrounding that extraordinary reunion, not only with their immediate family, but the many other passengers who the brothers had known as boys in London and who had been encouraged by their letters and stories of success to settle in Australia. Proceeding by carriage to the George Street premises, the brothers must have been proud and excited as they showed Sydney to their family. Signs of their growing prosperity and the opportunities available in this new land were plentiful. Emanuel could point to his newly erected store which only the day before the arrival of the *Enchantress* was described in the local press as 'splendid and almost complete'.

The arrival of the *Enchantress* signalled a considerable boost for Judaism in this far flung land. The celebration of the Jewish festivals, which in those early years were usually held at one of the larger Jewish merchant houses of Vaiben and Emanuel or James Simmons, or Messrs Cohen & Spyers, received a much needed injection of spiritual and intellectual talent.

In the years that followed the reunion of the Solomon family, the brothers continued to prosper. Regular advertisements appear in the Sydney papers throughout the thirties advising details of auctions to be held by them of an infinite variety of foodstuffs, clothing and general household goods. Gradually they began to diversify their business activities. In January 1835 Emanuel purchased the Dolphin Inn and then placed an advertisement in the *Australian* newspaper advising that he was about to quit the colony and that his entire stock in trade and household furniture were for sale. As events were to prove this was not just a fabrication to sell his goods although it was somewhat premature for he continued to trade in Sydney for a couple of years offering exceptional bargains to shopkeepers. Vaiben, now trading from the perennial

74 George Street address, advertised for tailors and advised that he had engaged a new cutter. The brothers' various mercantile pursuits prospered and they were able to provide employment for additional family members as they migrated.

There was a great deal of excitement in Sydney at this time over the proposed establishment of the model settlement in South Australia which, based upon the theories of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, was to be colonised only by free settlers. The wealthy Jewish banker and Australian property owner Jacob Montefiore was appointed as one of Her Majesty's three Commissioners for the Colonisation of South Australia. The authorities in London were clearly prepared to commit to total religious equality and this signaled an extraordinarily advanced attitude for the times.

Emanuel appears to have been watching these developments carefully and, although his first visit to South Australia did not take place until 1838, his intentions had been clear for sometime. The brothers became agents for the 125 ton brig *Nereus* and established the South Australian Packet Office at the Liverpool Wharf, which marked the beginning of their foray into the lucrative, but often speculative, coastal trade which was to occupy a great deal of their energy during the following decades. Emanuel departed Sydney for Adelaide via Launceston aboard the *Lady Wellington* on 29 June 1838. Travelling with him was Celia Smith, a native of Cork, Ireland, who was listed on the passenger indent as Mrs Emanuel Solomon, although it was to be a number of years and several children later before their liaison was to be legitimised. Mary Ann Wilson whom he had married in Sydney soon after his release in 1826 had disappeared, after a childless union.

His financial difficulties of the early 1830s appear to have been left well behind. By the middle of 1839, he had established the Solomon brothers' partnership as the owner of a substantial parcel of land in Hindley Street, Adelaide at a cost of £2700 and soon commenced business as a merchant trading from Sydney House, which was one of the buildings comprising the Gilles Arcade. He then advertised small quantities of sperm oil for sale from the stores of V. & E. Solomon.

The partnership disposed of the brig *Nereus* to Abraham Polack and was utilising the brig *David* to trade with Sydney. Emanuel realised only too well that if they were to compete successfully, it was necessary to have the fastest craft. Because the market was so small, produce keenly sought one moment could very quickly become unwanted due to a sudden glut. On many occasions Emanuel wrote to his brother in Sydney lamenting that he was stuck with goods that he would have to sacrifice which only the day before could have been sold at a bumper profit. The nature of their trade in an infinite variety of items which often were perishable, required nerves of steel, quick assessments as to value, and judgement of another market approximately one month distant. As for the first two prerequisites, they were doubtless without peer. Judgement of another market was a different issue. The brothers constantly communicated and generally co-operated, but were restricted by the speed of the vessels utilised for both their correspondence and their carriage of goods.



In January of 1839 there arrived in Adelaide from London the family of William Field Porter, shipbuilders of Liverpool. The family of seven had travelled in two ships that they had built themselves. Departing Liverpool on 26 August 1838 they came via the Cape of Good Hope where they had stayed for a month. The larger vessel, the brig *Porter*, was of 250 tons berthed and the smaller brig *Dorset* was of 80 tons berthed and had been specifically built to accompany the *Porter* and for it to fall back on in case of need. The *Dorset* carried migrants who were under indentures to work for the Porters until the cost of their passage had been met, including a blacksmith, carpenter, plumber, boot maker, brick maker and farm labourers. Also carried apart from a supply of livestock and fodder were all the bricks and other requirements for building a house including prefabricated windows. Both vessels were painted black with a broad white streak and black ports.

After a short stay in Adelaide and on the advice of the Governor, Colonel Gawler, the family sailed on to Port Lincoln. Before leaving, Captain Porter was made Commissioner of Police. The *Dorset* was no longer needed by the family and was sold to Messrs C. Smith and B. Sharn and utilised for several months in conveying passengers to the new settlement at Port Lincoln. During one of these voyages one of the passengers sighted the Scylla Shoal which henceforth was recorded on maps of the area.

The *Dorset* was advertised to sail to Port Lincoln on 29 June 1839, but due to the bankruptcy of Smith and Sharn this sailing was cancelled. An auctioneer, Mr. Neale, who had recently occupied new rooms in Franklin Street was given the job of disposing of the brig. He advertised her in the *South Australian Register* on 3 July 1839 as 'the fine fast-sailing brig *Dorset*, 82 tons register and about 120 tons burthen, coppered and copper-fastened as she now lies at Port Adelaide, with all her standing and running rigging, masts, yards, spars, sails and stores.' Here at last was a ship that could compete with any of the colonial vessels currently plying the Australian coastal waters and it was being offered at a receiver's auction. This was an opportunity that Emanuel, the seasoned trader with his long experience in the coastal trade, saw only too clearly. On 29 July 1839 he reregistered the *Dorset* at Port Adelaide in the name of he and his brother Vaiben and appointed Thomas Robertson as Master. The *Dorset* had already departed on its maiden voyage for the Solomons to Sydney via Port Phillip on 28 July when, on that very same day, Emanuel and Celia celebrated the birth of their first child, a girl who they proudly named Elizabeth Dorsetta.

Toward the end of 1839 Vaiben went to Adelaide on the *Dorset*, leaving Sydney on 20 October and finally arriving via Launceston and Port Phillip in early December. Emanuel's plans for a theatre and tavern on the Gilles Arcade site were by then already well advanced, and Vaiben wanted to see for himself the extent of this enormous investment by the partnership.

The *Dorset* continued to make regular round trips to Sydney carrying passengers and merchandise. On 5 April 1840 the first of what was to become an avalanche of Solomon relatives arrived on the *Dorset* to join Emanuel in Adelaide. Emanuel's sister Sarah and her husband Michael Joshua, a butcher

by trade, who had arrived from London on the *Orient* in December 1839, were among the passengers, together with their six children. Accompanying them was their nephew Judah Moss Solomon, not yet twenty years of age and a graduate of Sydney College, who had arrived to assist Emanuel in the burgeoning business.

On 10 November 1840 Emanuel wrote to Vaiben a lengthy letter commencing as follows:

The *Dorset* arrived here on 20th inst. all well while running with a fair wind off Botney Heads she fell in with the *Louisa* (close hauled) Cap'n Favenor spoke (to) Cap'n Mackey and said 'now Mackey I am a match for you.' Cap'n Mackey accepted his challenge and hauled upon a wind to give her a trial in the meantime the *Louisa* had gained 3 or 4 ship lengths, but nevertheless the *Dorset* passed her in good style, on seeing which Favenor exclaimed 'go on I am satisfied.' Observing 2 or 3 ships had Balls to their mast heads I put an advertisement into the paper of the 30th Oct. with a challenge of £500 or upwards to any Colonial Vessel but they have taken the Balls down again.

Such was the pride of Emanuel in the *Dorset*, that this news took precedence in a letter which contained a great deal of significant information and instruction regarding their partnership affairs, including the delighted revelation that authority had been obtained from the government to transport prisoners and their guards on the *Dorset* and which in consequence had to wait until closing of the Sessions thereby delaying her departure. Emanuel claimed that this contract caused 'a great deal of jealousy from some parties'. Perhaps their jealousy would have been somewhat tempered if they had known it would be several years before Emanuel could extract payment for the passage from the authorities.

Emanuel was in the throes of preparing for the opening of the Queens Theatre, his other consuming passion. Several pages of the same letter were devoted to listing numerous items required urgently for the theatre including sperm oil, lamp chimneys and bracket lamps, and 10 boxes of window glass size 16 x 12 for glazing. He complained of trouble with fellows calling themselves actors here who he said were conspiring against him in a similar manner to the way they conspired against Wyatt on the opening of his theatre. Referring to a scene painter in Adelaide who he described as very clever, but a humbug, he told Vaiben to arrange for a drop scene to be painted in Sydney 'to show this fellow that I am not solely dependent on him — this I am convinced will frighten him to do his job properly.' He went on to say:

The theatre I propose opening on Boxing Night, but I will require a great push to get ready in time — the first week of opening I expect to see a great deal of money in the house thereby enabling us to go on briskly — you must not on any consideration delay the sending of the goods for the Theatre (because) if you do, you will throw us back with it beyond the chance of gaining what we may lose by the delay.

Emanuel's ambitions for the opening now seem all the more extraordinary considering it was to be another three weeks before he would learn that Vaiben had engaged as theatre manager and leading actor a Mr John Lazar, late of the Victorian and Royal Theatres in Sydney, and his daughter, and Mr Arabin and his wife, all of whom came with impeccable reputations from Sydney. John

Lazar was known to Emanuel as a member of the Building Committee of the proposed new synagogue in Sydney towards which Emanuel had generously donated the sum of £20. He concluded by saying, 'I wish you to give sister Betsy £50 as a present from me at her marriage' [to Michael Cashmore].

When Michael Cashmore set sail for Sydney as a 24 year old free settler, he belonged to that rare breed of early eighteenth century immigrants who sailed of their own free will without the promise of waiting relatives to greet him. When he sailed into Sydney Harbour after the long journey from London, the year was 1839 and Sydney was in recession after two years of drought. Nevertheless, his adventurous spirit must have been high as he unloaded the many cases of merchandise that he had brought with him to stock the drapery store that he planned to open.

Cashmore was solidly built. He had a kindly, plump face with a severe nose, framed by long muttonchop sideboards and curved black bushy eyebrows. The eldest of six children, he had farewelled a large family which lived in Cutler Street, Houndsditch where Cashmore had been born on 7 March 1815. Like many of his generation he had received a good religious education and regularly attended synagogue. Migrating at a young age, to a distant land still generally considered a convict colony with little opportunity for organised prayer, suggests a strong pioneering spirit. Sydney's adult Jewish population of between 300 and 400 had been recently evicted from the modest two-storey house in Bridge Street which they had rented as a synagogue in 1837 and were now busily organising an appeal to construct an elegant and stately synagogue. Cashmore arrived in Sydney in time to be listed as a subscriber to the projected new synagogue. Within a short time of his arrival Cashmore had found a place to live in Lower George Street from where he could conduct business, and had been befriended by the Solomon family who lived nearby. Betsy Solomon, who had arrived as a 12 year old on the *Enchantress* in 1833, was now an attractive, if somewhat strapping young woman, and a romance soon blossomed.

Shlomo's children continued to arrive with their families during the 1830s in the typical manner of chain migration, and they either remained in Sydney or went on to Adelaide where Emanuel was able to find them work. Situated roughly halfway between these two outposts was the infant settlement at Port Phillip, the potential of which had been totally neglected until the arrival of Batman and Fawkner midway through the 1830s.

Perhaps seeing this as a further challenge to his pioneering spirit and responding to the news appearing regularly in the Sydney papers reporting the rapid growth and booming conditions in Australia Felix, as Port Phillip was known, Cashmore advertised in June 1840 notifying his intention to go to Port Phillip and asking all those who had claims against him to present them at his lower George Street premises on or before 8 June 1840.

Departing Sydney bound for Port Phillip on the 243 ton barque *Bright Planet* under the command of Captain Gawler on 23 June, he traveled cabin class and took trunk loads of merchandise with which to stock his future business premises. The journey was not a pleasant one for the 13 passengers



who experienced dreadful seas and unfavourable weather conditions. As the ship approached within 40 miles of Port Phillip heads, it was driven back by strong north westerly gales. When this occurred on a second occasion and the strong winds persisted, the captain decided to turn back until the weather calmed. Eventually it became necessary to return as far as Twofold Bay, just north of the present border of New South Wales and Victoria, where they put in for fresh water and stayed for two days.

When the passengers finally disembarked on the beach at Williamstown on 17 July after three and a half weeks on a voyage which even in those difficult times generally took only one, their eyes must have feasted on the quiet calm of the brilliant green grassy flats upon which tiny Williamstown, consisting of only a few huts and taverns, was located. After being welcomed by the harbour-master, passengers and their goods including livestock were loaded on to a tiny steamer which laboured up the Yarra through walls of ti-tree. Stepping ashore at where Flinders Street now stands, they were confronted to the north with vast open spaces dotted predominantly with lightweight, and some single storey mud and stone dwellings.

On the ride into the town centre the wide unmade roads looked strangely deserted. They passed the new brick watchhouse at the intersection of Flinders Lane and William Street and continued to Collins Street where most of the activity appeared to be centered. An impressive wide weatherboard building clearly signwritten as the Lambs Inn was bustling with activity. All the patrons seemed to be young and male. Men outnumbered women more than two to one in this pioneer settlement. Many were dressed in serge blue shirts, riding boots and banana hats. The place was noisy and food was plentiful. Boatloads of immigrants were arriving daily and there was always plenty to discuss. New arrivals would order chops or steaks and gorge themselves on milk and butter which were a rare treat in Sydney which had just experienced three years drought. The bartender, a 16-stone giant called George Smith, may even have been Cashmore's first informant in his quest to find suitable premises.

He was, no doubt, already well aware that Melbourne's population was growing daily and that the price of real estate was booming with huge fortunes being made overnight. Melbourne already boasted three newspapers, John Pascoe Fawkner's *Port Phillip Patriot*, the *Port Phillip Gazette*, and the *Port Phillip Herald*, with advertisements of all kinds comprising nearly three quarters of each issue. Within days of his arrival Cashmore was making his own contribution to the newspapers' coffers by announcing in the press to 'the Settlers Stockholders and Residents of Australia Felix that he would shortly be commencing business as a general storekeeper and trusts to secure a share of public patronage.' Prior to leaving Sydney he advised that he had 'concluded arrangements to receive periodical shipments from London and Manchester of every new and useful article that may be of service to the colonists.'

On 8 August Cashmore advertised that he had 'opened large and commodious premises in Elizabeth Street two doors from Mr G. Says' which he called the Manchester & London Warehouse. These premises were in the block between Collins Street and Flinders Lane. His lease of these premises

may have been somewhat hasty because exactly three weeks after this advertisement appeared he was signing a lease for a newly built three-storey premises at the north eastern corner of Great Collins and Elizabeth Streets. The lease was for the term of 5 years and 3 months with the new owner Alexander Brunton, a cabinet maker from Van Diemens Land, at the yearly rental of £300 — a huge sum considering that at that time Toorak allotments had just been auctioned for as little as £7 an acre. Only three years earlier at the first land sales, a carpenter, James Ross, bid £32 to purchase the whole half-acre corner site. He found it necessary to borrow £20 from John and Eliza Batman to complete the purchase and had given the Batmans a mortgage to secure the loan. Ross then sold at a tidy profit to Melbourne's first doctor, Barry Cotter, who subdivided and reaped a fortune in Melbourne's first property boom. Brunton paid £606 in 1839 for the tiny 30 foot by 30 foot corner allotment and erected the brick building which was called Victoria House.

Having secured the corner premises, Cashmore appears to have continued trading from Elizabeth Street, as it was not until January 1841 that he advertised the opening of Victoria House. Cashmore wasted no time in letting the residents of Port Phillip know that he had opened a drapery shop. A man of artistic talent who participated enthusiastically in Melbourne's early theatre, he inserted an advertisement in the Port Phillip papers in September still describing his business as the London & Manchester Warehouse, commencing with the rhyme:

Economy being the order of the day,  
Thither to Cashmore's quickly bend your way,  
Plenty you'll there behold to please your eyes,  
At prices low, that must create surprise,  
The assortment is the best that can be found,  
Seek Melbourne through, seek Melbourne round.

Cashmore remained in Port Phillip for several months to establish himself prior to settling and during this time identified with the fledgling Jewish community. His presence provided them with a *minyan* or quorum of 10 adult Jewish males necessary for a religious service, and Cashmore had the honour to conduct the first Jewish funeral service on land donated as a Jewish burial ground by Abraham Abrahams, a general dealer of Lonsdale Street. Although the deceased was not the daughter of a Jewish mother, the father, Henry Davis, an innkeeper of the Royal Exchange Hotel in Collins Street, was later to be a member of the first committee of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. Not surprisingly he wished his daughter to be buried in accordance with traditional Jewish rites in the Jewish cemetery which, through the generosity of Abrahams, had become available.

Being a gift, no one had thought to examine the site of the burial ground for suitability. Indeed, without any truly organised communal group, no one would have thought to do so. The land was located at the Merri Creek between where the Northcote and Merri Creek Bridges now stand and was more suited for a quarry than a graveyard. By the time the funeral procession arrived the sexton who had been sent to prepare the grave was still endeavoring to break the stony surface, and two quarrymen were brought in to assist. Using picks,



shovels and crowbars, the three continued to chip away at the blue stone for several hours in the presence of the mourners. By the time Cashmore was able to chant *kaddish*, the ancient Jewish prayer for the dead, for the first time in this remote outpost, Miss Davis had been safely entombed. Not surprisingly, it was decided that the land was not suitable for further burials and in due course the corpse was disinterred and sent to Hobart.

Michael Cashmore remained at Port Phillip until after the High Holyday services which he assisted in reading together with S.H. Harris, Isaac Lincoln and Edward Hart. He had booked a return passage to Sydney on the schooner *Waterlilly* which was described in advertisements preceding the voyage as 'the British-built Brigantine *Waterlilly* now on her first voyage. She will be taken to Sydney by a favorite commander and will positively sail on 20 September' [1840]. On this very same date the *Bright Planet* on which he had sailed to Melbourne actually departed for Sydney, while the arrival of the *Waterlilly* was still being awaited. Such were the vagaries of sea travel before the age of steam. The *Waterlilly* did not arrive until 28 September and Cashmore finally departed for Sydney and wedlock on 9 October. Prior to doing so, he had established a manager at his drapery shop and had personally supervised the arrival of very substantial stocks of merchandise, including 1000 pairs of boots of various sorts, a somewhat ambitious quantity, sufficient to supply one fifth of Melbourne's population.

On 9 December 1840 Michael and Betsy were married by Jacob Myer Isaacs, whose brother John had been part of the large Jewish contingent on board the *Enchantress* in 1833. Jacob had come to Sydney to join his brother and his arrival in 1840 was welcomed by the Sydney Jewish community which had been without a spiritual leader for over two years. His job as part time reader also encompassed that of *mohel* and *shochet*. In the absence of a rabbi, the newly elected president Moses Joseph provided the couple with permission to marry according to Judaic law. At this time Sydney had no synagogue so the ceremony and celebrations were most likely held at the home of Vaiben who, together with another emancipist, Lewis Myers, acted as witnesses on the *ketubah* or marriage certificate.

Emanuel did not travel from Adelaide for the wedding. He was totally engrossed with preparations for the opening of his theatre, but his letter to Vaiben containing his generous wedding gift must have been well received. The ceremony was a joyous one for the Solomon family providing the opportunity for a great celebration, as so many members had now come to Sydney from London. The *paterfamilias* Shlomo and Esther were both present together with their children and their families and other family members and friends most of whom had migrated in the wake of the two convict lads.

When Michael Cashmore walked into the offices of W. Drake & Co. in Lower George Street and purchased two one-way cabin fares to Port Phillip on the second voyage of the steamer *Clonmel*, he was planning a very special honeymoon. Perhaps he had read the note in the *Port Phillip Herald* on 27 October that on the *Clonmel*'s second trip to Port Phillip she will 'have as passengers the Lord Bishop of Australia, His Honor Sir James Darling, Mr Plunkett, the Attorney-General, Mr Manning Sen., the Registrar of the Supreme





Court and several other gentlemen who are anxious to pay a visit to Australia Felix.' In the unlikely event that he was influenced by this news, he would be disappointed as none of these gentlemen were to make the voyage.

No doubt he had in mind his first trip to Port Phillip on the *Bright Planet*. He certainly would not want a disaster like that on his honeymoon, and the reliability of steam was comforting. The press descriptions were most enticing: '... her fittings up are altogether of a most superb description and the services and attendance equal to a first rate hotel, and her larder is amply stocked.'

The *Clonmel* was a palatial steamer only 2 years old on arrival in Sydney, having cost the incredible sum of £25,000. She was the first seagoing steamer in the waters of the Pacific that could offer regular passage to distant ports. 154 feet 10 inches long and 527 tons burthen with a 110 horsepower engine to drive each of her two large paddles, she had been described in the press as one of the finest [ships] ever to enter the Port [Jackson]. The two fares cost Cashmore 24 guineas which was no more than he would have paid for a sailing vessel.

Her first run down the coast from Sydney was heralded with unbridled enthusiasm. This beautiful ship with its splendid engine room and boilers and graceful sails, must have seemed to the colonists to be the very symbol of the new age. But her departure for Port Phillip, originally scheduled for 17 October, was continually delayed. Work had to be carried out on her flues and engines, and coal had to be shipped to Port Phillip to provide fuel for the homeward journey.

The *Clonmel* consumed approximately 30 tons of coal per day and the realisation of this fact had special repercussions for the Antipodes with its distantly separated and undeveloped ports of call. As the *Sydney Herald* noted on 19 December 1840

We beg to remind our fellow colonists at Melbourne and our neighbours at Launceston that it is impossible that steam navigation can be carried on advantageously unless coals can be obtained at both ends of the trip, therefore all their energies should be directed to the discovery of coal.

Finally, on 1 December 1840, a large crowd of cheering spectators clamoring for a view of the historic departure provided a fitting farewell to the *Clonmel* and her 32 saloon and 17 deck passengers who were sent off in fitting style. Despite labouring strong winds causing fuel to burn even more rapidly than usual and necessitating a stop at Batemans Bay to collect wood, the trip to Port Phillip was still completed in under 4 days.

Sunday 6 December was a scorching hot summer's day in Melbourne, but this did not deter the crowds of onlookers who went to view her. The *Port Phillip Patriot* of 9 December commented:

On Sunday last, crowds of persons might be observed making towards the beach. The oppressive heat, the scorching sand and the long two miles seemed no impediment to those daring pedestrians. The fatigue and heat were forgotten if the object sought for was attained — namely, a view of the *Clonmel*. Mine hosts of the Marine and Pier Hotels seemed to view the arrival of each successive crowd with evident satisfaction, and a smile of Pickwickian benevolence illumined their countenances as they noted the thirsty look

and heated appearance of each new arrival. Boats were plying to and from the steamer during the day in quick succession, each crowded with persons. The arrival of the *Clonmel* had evidently caused a sensation in the town, and when we consider the facility it offers for quick conveyance of goods and passengers to and from the sister colonies, we are not astonished.

And so on 30 December 1840, on a Wednesday afternoon, the *Clonmel* finally departed, somewhat belatedly, on only her second voyage to Port Phillip. Mr and Mrs Michael Cashmore, the newlyweds who had been patiently waiting three weeks for this moment, enjoyed a rousing farewell as the *Clonmel* carried them out of Sydney Harbour on a journey they would never forget.

With a full complement of 75 passengers and crew, the *Clonmel* rounded the south head of Port Jackson at about 4pm and headed south for Port Phillip. The following morning Jervis Bay was sighted with the wind blowing strongly from the southwest. By New Year's Eve the ship was heading towards Ram Head, and there was an air of enthusiasm and optimism as the arrival of the new year was celebrated. When the passengers retired for the evening on 1 January 1841, the course had been set for Wilson's Promontory.

Shortly after 3am the next day, the ship lurched violently and leaned to its side. Gathering on deck to the frantic yells of the crew and the crashing of waves, the passengers were told that the ship had struck a sandbank. Hugging the coastline somewhat injudiciously, and contrary to the captain's orders, the first mate had been confronted with a sudden strong breeze and powerful currents dragging the ship shoreward onto a sandbank. Electing to drive her over the sandbank rather than reverse, the Captain found she could make no headway against the elements even after much of the cargo had been jettisoned and the *Clonmel*, whose beauty and power had so recently been the subject of enthusiastic praise, was thrown further and further upon the reef, bumping and turning with the wind and tide like a helpless cork. The captain, endeavouring to be heard above the chorus of wind, waves and worried passengers gave the order to abandon ship.

The *Clonmel* carried a whaleboat and two quarter boats and all three were lowered into the heavy rolling surf. The crew, who were later praised for their dispatch of orders, laboured on throughout the night and on into the following day, ferrying the passengers to the beach. Despite the difficult conditions, everyone on board was landed safely by 2pm. Captain Tollervy remained on board until the last and, incredibly, suffered the only injury, a torn tendon in an ankle joint.

Sails and awnings were brought ashore and everyone assisted in setting up an encampment, firstly for the ladies and then for the male passengers and crew. As Michael and Betsy Cashmore were the only passengers recorded as travelling as a couple, let alone as honeymooners (steerage passengers were not listed) this segregation may have been disappointing, but presumably not the major concern. Glad to have survived the sinking they were now far more worried about rescue. Isolated on this remote beach many miles from the regular shipping channels there was no possibility they would be found before they had all perished. Provisions from the ship consisting of livestock, hams, bread, flour, biscuits, rice, tea, sugar, wine and beer, sufficient to last about ten days,



were brought ashore, and plenty of water although somewhat brackish, was found by digging. Immediate disaster had been averted by nightfall. Captain Tollervy established a watch with sentinels posted in all directions around the encampment. To avoid fatigue the watch was changed every two hours. The provisions were safely stowed under an upturned boat for protection from the elements and predators.

At 8 am the following day a group of seven volunteers, comprising 5 crew members and 2 experienced passengers, were launched from the beach in the whaleboat according to a plan hatched the previous evening. With the cheers and good wishes of those remaining echoing in their ears, they battled the surf for two hours to reach the wreck in order to lay on provisions for their journey to Melbourne, taking biscuits, ham, water, wine, beer and brandy. Before leaving the ill-fated vessel, they took the trouble to hoist the Union Jack to the mainmast of the *Clonmel* — upside down!

The search for rescue in the open whaleboat was arduous. Struggling to row against winds and, whenever possible, utilising the small sail they had fashioned out of the awning, the gallant crew made it first to the Seal Islands where they rested and ate and then headed for the mainland, arriving at Sealers Cove about midnight. Here they went ashore, cooked supper and then rested for a few hours in the boat anchored in deep water. At 3.30am on 4 January, three men went ashore to replenish the water supplies. Returning to the beach with their containers filled, they were disturbed by natives and made a hurried exit. By 10am they had rounded Wilson's Promontory and by nightfall had reached the eastern entrance to Westernport where they enjoyed a well earned rest on the beach. The following day they made it to Port Phillip Heads with the help of a strong and steady breeze, but could not enter the bay because of the strong ebb tide. They waited for a flood tide, holding their position for some four hours, when they were spotted by Captain Lewis, the Harbour Master, who was just completing another rescue mission. He was entering the Heads on board the cutter *Sisters* which was carrying the passengers and crew rescued from the 287 ton barque *Isabella* which had been wrecked on King Island.

Captain Mulhall of the *Sisters* greeted the exhausted men on board and took the whaleboat in tow, arriving at Williamstown at 1pm on 5 January. The following day arrangements were made for the rescue of the passengers who, it was now realised, were encamped at the southern extremity of the Ninety Mile Beach. At daybreak on Thursday 7 January, the two cutters, *Will Watch* and *Sisters*, with Captain Roach and Captain Lewis and a detachment of the 28th Regiment under the command of Lieutenant Russell, sailed up the Bay towards Port Phillip Heads. *Sisters* arrived at the wreck of the *Clonmel* at 12 noon on 8 January. They were a relieved and grateful band of survivors who greeted their rescuers on that midsummer's day. Somewhat disheveled after nearly a week encamped on the beach under the makeshift sails they had, of course, no knowledge of the fate of the rescue party. They were just glad that their ordeal was over. Extraordinary rumours that were rife in Melbourne regarding hostile natives and stealing at the campsite proved to be untrue. Excellent fresh water had been found by digging near the camp about two and

a half miles inland, and despite the difficult conditions and the substantial financial loss suffered by some passengers, discipline had held and spirits were remarkably high. Aside from the loss and trauma of the shipwreck there was a positive side to the drama. The general locality of the wreck was quickly recognised as a convenient port which led to the establishment of Port Albert and expedited the exploration and opening up of Gippsland.

The Cashmores had brought with them a large quantity of merchandise intended for sale at their new Collins Street premises and had lost it all on an adventurous honeymoon that would be written into Melbourne's early history. Edmund Finn, a journalist with the *Port Phillip Herald*, later wrote in his *Chronicles of Early Melbourne*: '...it was a stormy honeymoon for Cashmore who managed to save only his watch and his newly won wife, both of which gave him good service for many years thereafter ...'. The watch had been spotted on the beach by another passenger who picked it up and returned it to Cashmore who subsequently bequeathed it to one of his sons, and it remains in the family.

The Cashmores, together with the majority of survivors, finally arrived at Port Phillip on board the *Sisters* at 1pm on Friday 15 January 1841, some sixteen days after their departure from Sydney. Despite their loss, which had not been insured, they were glad to arrive body and soul. Even remote, tiny Melbourne, an outpost then numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 people, must have been like an oasis after their experience on that desolate beach. We can only speculate as to the enthusiasm with which Michael showed Betsy their new residence above the shop on the corner of Collins and Elizabeth Streets. However, being an observant Jew and arriving in time for the Sabbath, they would enjoy the rest that weekend, perhaps more than any other in their entire lives.

Georgiana McCrae, who arrived in Melbourne in 1841 and kept a diary recording daily life in the settlement, noted in her entry of 7 April 1843:

the scarcity of actual coin is remarkable. It is said that Cashmore, No. 1 Collins Street East, is the only man in town who can give you the full change of a five pound note. (Michael Cashmore: a member of the City Council, inspector of the meat market, draper, amateur actor etc. During the forties, people made appointments to meet each other at Cashmore's Corner where Michael Cashmore kept his store — opposite a dust-heap through the summer, but a lake in the winter, quite Venetian to behold!).

This contemporary observation provides a synoptic insight into Cashmore's influence and involvement in the development of the infant settlement.

Scanning the pages of early Melbourne newspapers, the reader is confronted with a variety of advertisements which Cashmore regularly inserted to attract business. There were a number of drapery shops in Melbourne and several in Collins Street alone, with the majority being owned by Jews, all of whom desperately sought to attract their share of public patronage. Moses Lazarus operated from Portland House, Edward and Isaac Hart had Waterloo House, Moses Benjamin called his shop Albert House, while directly opposite Cashmore's Victoria House were the partners Samuel Harris and Jacob Marks in the Liverpool & London Mart.



Whether it was his artistic flair or just mercantile shrewdness, Cashmore's advertisements stand out. They represent one of the earliest trends away from the common practice of just listing goods, towards eye-catching layouts with an amusing play on words. This reached its zenith when he summonsed every man, woman and child in Melbourne to his store, in a writ witnessed by Henry Makewell, Charles Wearwell and George Vercycheap.

Because of the intensity of competition in the drapery trade, Cashmore was obliged to keep his shop open until all hours. Having come so far from their native London to what must have seemed like the end of the world, the Melbourne shopkeepers must have wondered where they must go to escape the rivalry of commerce.. Only weeks after the ordeal of the shipwreck, Cashmore was a signatory to an advertisement in all three Melbourne newspapers stating: 'We the undersigned drapers of Melbourne, do comply with the wishes of the young men of our respective establishments, and agree to close our houses of business at 8 o'clock precisely, Saturday excepted, from Monday, February 22nd, 1841.' Other signatories to this agreement were Isaac Lincoln, E. & I. Hart, D. & S. Benjamin, J. Simeon and the partners Harris & Marks. The pact, however, was short lived. Inevitably, one broke the agreement and so, one by one, they all stayed open.

Like Cashmore, the traders all placed their wares outside their shop just as they had done in London's East End. These trolleys of goods on the footpaths represented just one more obstacle for the poor pedestrian who needed all his skills just to traverse the rough thoroughfares of early Melbourne, strewn with rocks and deep gullies which in winter became small ponds. This practice eventually resulted in an ongoing battle with the constabulary who sought to enforce the local laws forbidding such display. As the local press commented, there was 'a regular fire of informations, pains and penalties upon a large portion of the Hebrew traders of Melbourne for the unlawful exposition in the streets of saleable goods.'

Cashmore did not escape. An empty case that he had placed outside his premises attracted the attention of the Chief Constable who instructed a member of his staff to arrange for its removal. Cashmore did not cooperate and would not allow the seizure. Charged with obstruction and the use of violent and unbecoming language, Cashmore's defense in questioning the honesty of the Constable, only succeeded in provoking the bench. The Police Prosecutor, Mr Brodie, apologised for the sad necessity of preferring such a grave charge against such a respectable man, but the magistrate insisted that the more respectable the parties, the less excuse they had to evade the law and imposed a fine of five pounds. Cashmore tendered his cheque and gave immediate notice of a charge against Constable Connor for wheeling a barrow on the footpath of a public street.

Michael Cashmore obviously enjoyed being an integral part of Melbourne's early development, and he threw himself into the daily life of the settlement. He opened for a short time, a branch in rural Geelong, a business that would soon be re-established by his brother David. He formed business partnerships and later stood successfully for the Lonsdale Ward in the Melbourne City Council. He was, of course, the agent for the brig *Dorset*.



Michael Cashmore's story has previously been told in an early paper that I wrote for this *Journal*. The purpose of relating part of that story here has been to show the link to Emanuel and Vaiben Solomon through his wife Betsy and to illustrate the influence that this remarkable family had on the development of yet another Australian city.

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Emanuel Solomon's Queen's Theatre opened on Monday evening 11 January 1841 before a large and distinguished audience of about 900, while news of the wreck of the *Clonmel* was just beginning to arrive. Totally unaware of his sister Betsy's ordeal on the Ninety Mile Beach, Emanuel took his place in the audience in full evening attire. He had insisted upon full dress for both ladies and gentlemen.

Emanuel had spent about £14,000 on the land and buildings that comprised the theatre, a huge sum and an extraordinary gamble. He had watched Barnett Levey, who was obsessed with his dreams of a theatre, spend £20,000 on the six-storey edifice that he built behind his Royal Hotel at 72 George Street, Sydney in 1826. He had seen Levey become a broken man and lose nearly everything, as Governor Darling steadfastly refused to grant him a license to open his theatre. He knew that the license was not a problem, but was Adelaide ready for such a grandiose establishment?

When the curtain rose, a group of 26 beautifully dressed men and women were formed in a semi-circle singing the national anthem. Mr. Arabin then stepped forward and gave a long recital which opened with the following rhymes:

Ladies and gentlemen this little box,  
Tonight, an adventurer unlocks;  
Nor opens it vainly, for this light presents  
A graceful exhibition of contents.  
Solomon, he said, urge to our friends my plea.  
I urge? said I, bless you, they'll laugh at me.

and concluded

We hope to please and as were dull or clever,  
You patronise, or damn the same as ever.  
For each degree of talent, after all,  
Must here, by your decision, rise or fall;  
And we, who long to'st on dramatic seas,  
The sport, alas! of many a shifting breeze,  
Have still contriv'd our shatter'd bark to steer;  
Now furl our sails and drop our anchor here.  
Happy indeed! if, all our dangers past,  
A friendly harbour we have found at last.

The response was enthusiastic and spontaneous with the narrator being interrupted on several occasions by thunderous applause. The audience was then treated to a wonderful rendition of Shakespeare's *Tragedy of Othello*. Everything on that long awaited evening was quite resplendent and Emanuel and his company could be forgiven if they believed that they had found a safe

harbour. They advertised that they were prompted in erecting a structure of such magnitude in so infant a colony by the known patronage and liberality that have ever characterised a British public.

The theatre provided a dress circle splendidly and commodiously fitted up with private boxes, a saloon as a promenade, and a retiring room for ladies 'select for visitors to this part of the establishment'. The upper circle was described as being constructed upon a 'principle commanding an entire view of the stage and replete with every accommodation.' The pit, capable of containing nearly 700 persons, was said to be equal in comfort and convenience to the other parts of the theatre.

The oil lamps that Emanuel had requested Vaiben to send from Sydney did not arrive in time for the opening, necessitating the use of candles to provide lighting both on the stage and in the auditorium. Even with oil lamps the house lights could not be dimmed as was possible with the more sophisticated gas lighting used in the English theatres. Somewhat surprisingly, then, there was never a fire at Solomon's Queens Theatre. The local press reported that

The plan, the fittings and the taste displayed in every part of the house are such as to make it equal to any minor theatre in England; and gratifying must it have been to the proprietors, as well as every person present on the occasion, to have seen in a colony of only four years standing such a numerous and brilliant assemblage of the most influential colonists present.

The scenery and backdrops were said to be first class, and by using trap doors and overhead equipment, magical and illusory entrances and exits were achieved.

To ensure that patrons received good value, the doors opened at 7 p.m. for a prompt 7.30 p.m. start and the curtain did not fall until 11 p.m. Prices ranged from 6 shillings in the Dress Circle to 3 shillings in the Pit with the charges being halved for entry after 9 p.m., which was the usual custom. To guarantee peace and harmony, arrangements were made for the attendance of efficient police, and children in arms were not admitted.

Despite the months of planning, the enormous cost, and Emanuel's enthusiasm, determination, and entrepreneurial skills, audiences quickly fell away. Two months after the elaborate opening Emanuel wrote to Vaiben: 'I am sorry to say that the depression is so very bad here that the theatre has been a losing game as yet. I have however reduced the expenses in a great measure and I hope shortly to see things take a very different turn.' By September he had written again to say that he had closed the theatre on 21 August although, in typical fashion, he refused to accept defeat, offering the theatre for balls, parties etc., and staging a performance once a month.

Although reasons for the theatre's failure can largely be attributed to the economic recession that bit so deeply in 1841, there is no doubt that moral and religious attitudes played their part together with the fact that the early colonists had too many worries to distract them from the sophisticated pleasures of theatre.

When the theatre finally closed in December 1842 as we shall shortly see, part of the building was used to enlarge the adjacent Shakespeare Tavern while the rest, for a short while, was used as a commercial exchange.

In 1843 Emanuel leased the theatre to the government and for the next eight years it became the main forum for the administration of justice in Adelaide housing the Supreme Court and the inferior courts and all the court officials.

*Stephen's Almanac* of 1847 describes the converted theatre as follows:

The stage is now the Supreme Court; of the green rooms, one is appropriately turned into the robing-room for counsel, and another makes a very decent cell in which to lock up a refractory jury. More appropriately still, a lower dungeon, which formerly served for ghosts and wizards to rise from, or sink into, in melodrama or pantomime, is made a temporary prison for the rough and rugged old convicts from Sydney or Van Diemen's Land, who form the staple of our criminals. The pit is our Police Court, and is still surrounded with tiers of boxes which occasionally, as if in olden times, are tenanted by an inquisitive audience. What were once the lobbies are now the offices respectively of the Police Commissioner and his clerks. The Resident Magistrate and the Official Assignee occupy the saloon, while the ladies' cloak room is claimed by the sheriff. Other apartments are used by the Judge, the Master of the Court, the Advocate General, the Deputy Registrar; while some are devoted to the purpose of tavern keeper, whose larder and cellar provide well-spread tables for litigants, witnesses and advocates.

The author of this colourful description would not have been aware that the government's landlords had themselves been 'tough and rugged old convicts'.

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On 15 March 1841 Emanuel Solomon went down to the port at Adelaide to welcome the *Dorset* whose arrival he had anxiously been awaiting. The beautiful ship, Emanuel's pride and joy, appeared battered and forlorn. Her topsail and mainyards had been carried away in westerly gales and squalls that had raged during most of the nightmarish sixteen-day voyage from Sydney. The passengers were delighted to dock safely and step once more on *terra firma* after their harrowing ordeal.

Among the passengers was his nephew, Judah Moss Solomon returning to Adelaide with his father Moss and new stepmother Leah, whom Moss had married in London after the untimely death of her sister and Judah Moss's mother Betsy. Accompanying them were his four younger sisters, Isabella 20, Julia 12, Rosetta 11, and Leah aged 10 who was only three years old when Judah Moss had left London on the *Enchantress* in 1832. Also travelling with this large family were his step-brothers Samuel Moss, Philip, and Elias, and step-sister Kate aged 5, 4, 3 and 1 respectively. When he greeted them in Sydney in January after their arrival from London it had been eight years since his departure on the *Enchantress* and he had never met his new family.

Judah Moss had joined Emanuel in Adelaide nearly 12 months earlier to assist him as a clerk and scribe, having completed his education at Sydney College. Although now barely 21 years old, he was industrious and energetic, and anxious to impress his uncle Emanuel who he had observed and admired as a tough and successful businessman in the face of adversity, throughout his impressionable teens in Sydney.



Unfortunately the economic climate in Adelaide had reached its lowest ebb. Emanuel could not even raise a loan of £2000 from the bank on his land and buildings which represented only about 16 per cent of their cost. He lamented to Vaiben that he had no funds whatsoever to buy goods which were being sacrificed in the depressed Adelaide market which he could ship to Sydney and resell at 100 per cent profit. Despite his own difficulties, Emanuel was delighted to have Moss in Adelaide. Adjoining the Queen's Theatre were premises known as the Shakespeare Tavern for which Emanuel had taken out a license. Emanuel offered Moss the tavern for twelve months rent free, and provided him with stock and cash to the value of £200. He wrote to Vaiben asking him to find Moss a good billiard table, as he felt this would attract business to the tavern.

Judah Moss, in spite of his youth, showed that he was enterprising and enthusiastic and displayed rare commercial skills during his apprenticeship. Realising that Adelaide in deep recession offered little for Judah Moss, Emanuel chartered a merchant vessel, the *Strathisla*, in order to trade sugar and other commodities with Australia's immediate northern neighbours and to return with a cargo of ponies from Timor. Judah Moss was appointed supercargo placing him in charge of cargo. Armed with letters from his bank vouching the respectability of his employers, Judah Moss sailed to Copang and then proceeded to the different ports of Timor purchasing whatever corn was available. Returning to Copang to take on board the ponies, he then sailed to Mauritius before returning to Adelaide.

During the following months the economy showed no sign of improvement and Emanuel continued to complain bitterly to his brother in Sydney, that he desperately needed cash in order to take advantage of the opportunities that were regularly appearing. Nevertheless, he now had the company of his brother Moss and his family and his nephew Joshua who was the eldest of the five children of his sister Sarah and her husband Michael Joshua who had arrived in Sydney on the *Orient* on 8 December 1839. Joshua arrived in the *Dorset* as a thirteen year old in Adelaide at the end of 1840, together with the actors John Lazar and his daughter and Mr and Mrs Arabin.

Unfortunately, Moss was not as happy as Emanuel supposed, and in September 1841, only six months after his arrival in the colony, he told Emanuel that he wanted to return to Sydney. The decision to cut losses and terminate regular performances at the theatre on 21 August had resulted in a dramatic downturn in Moss's business and as Emanuel confided to Vaiben: 'He is of that character ... has not nerve enough to seek a livelihood away from his own home.' The confrontation that followed illustrates the dramatic difference in character between the two brothers, partly, though not wholly, forged by Emanuel's long incarceration. Emanuel wrote that, 'as in our conversation we could not clearly understand each other I thought it most expedient to submit my intentions to writing, and request that he would answer in the like manner, my hasty and loud manner of speaking, he misconstrued, and considered by so doing — ( to use his own words) that I treated him as a servant.'

Emanuel then demonstrated his fair-mindedness by providing Moss with five alternative proposals which he submitted in writing:

First. I will open the theatre as usual and Mr. Lazar and daughter will give their services for £5 per week instead of £7 and I have no doubt that the other performers will play at a less salary than they had before. You can then keep open your public house and have the whole of the profits, and one half of the profits arising from the theatre — provided you will pay half the loss arising from keeping the theatre open.

Second. I will give you the 2 houses in Hindley Street for 7 years with the privilege of receiving the rental of the one which at present lets for £100 per year. The other you can live in or let. I will give Isaac [their half brother also now living in Adelaide] £100 pounds to go into business with you and he to receive the third part of the profits of such business.

Third. If you wish to go into business in Hindley Street on your own account, I will give you the house (which is presently unlet) for twelve months from the present time, free.

Fourth. If you wish to go to Sydney I will fit up a convenient place in the brig for yourself and family making it as comfortable as possible with the same comfort as cabin passengers, free, and take the whole of your stock in trade and what articles of furniture you wish to part with at cost price.

Fifth. If you prefer keeping your present house until the twelve months are expired you are welcome in God's name, but I cannot agree to open the theatre unless you agree to what is specified in No.1.

Moss did not want to stay in Adelaide. Aside from the economic chaos, his growing family wanted to return to Sydney. Isaac and Judah Moss were planning to go to Moreton Bay as government land auctioneers and a romance was budding between Isaac and Moss's eldest daughter Isabella who was, of course, Isaac's step-niece. Moss may well have regretted leaving his aging father, Shlomo, in Sydney. The following day, a determined Moss informed Emanuel that he was firm in his resolve to return to Sydney and that he accordingly accepted the fourth proposal.

Accepting his brother's decision somewhat philosophically, Emanuel arranged with Lazar to take the stock and furniture at cost and entered into a partnership arrangement with him to occupy and manage the theatre and tavern at a rental of £500 a year. Despite his failure with the theatre, the diminishing value of his property and income, and now his disappointment at the departure of his family, Emanuel had not lost faith in Adelaide. He wrote to Vaiben saying that the colony 'will eventually be good, if not for us then for our children.'

With the continuing recession, Judah Moss and Isaac also departed the colony and Emanuel was left to battle it out on his own. Time and again he would write to Vaiben complaining at his failure to send him goods that he has asked for, or protesting that they arrived too late. 'It is no use my staying here wasting my time and money if you do not send me what I want. There is nothing to be done here except at times when there happens to be a scarcity and then you usually disappoint me.' Remarkably, Emanuel maintained his enthusiasm despite continuing adversity. Still endeavoring to undercut the *Emma*, he was forever hopeful of putting her out of business and thereby acquiring a monopoly of the coastal trade.



Despite his lack of entrepreneurial spirit, and the evident disappointment that he was to Emanuel, it was the descendants of Moss who were to have the greatest influence in shaping Australia's future. Upon his death in 1849 his family returned to Adelaide. Both his eldest and youngest sons, Judah Moss and Elias, enjoyed successful careers in state politics. Judah Moss became Mayor of Adelaide and was destined to be the first President of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, and Elias was to be President of the Fremantle Hebrew Congregation.

The son of Judah Moss, Vaiben Emanuel Solomon, was for one week Premier of South Australia, the only Jew to have held this post. He was one of 50 delegates who framed the Constitution and both he and his uncle Elias were members of the first Federal Parliament. In an earlier paper published in this *Journal* I have told the fascinating story of Vaiben Emanuel Solomon.

Emanuel, ever resentful of those who crossed him in business, jealously protected the reputation of his beloved ship, the *Dorset*. Allegations by passengers that they had been starved were dismissed by him as anti-Semitism. Certainly, if the contents of a letter published in the *South Australian Register* on 6 January 1843 are to be believed, these claims were untrue:

The Brig *Dorset*

To the editor of the *South Australian Register*

Sir — May I request the favour of your inserting the following extract of a letter I have just received from a passenger, who, with his family, left the colony in the last trip by the *Dorset*, and I do so in common justice to the spirit of enterprise of the owners as well as the merit that is due to the Captain who commands her, in the hope that my fellow colonists may be induced to support the only regular trader between this Port and Sydney.

Captain Walsh paid us every attention; the provisions and wine were excellent; In fact I never had so pleasant a passage in my life (I have made a good many trips in my time) so contrary to what I anticipated from all I heard in Adelaide. The *Dorset* really is a beautiful sea-boat, and I am certain there must have been a misrepresentation respecting a former trip or two — all the cabin are of my opinion, that we were treated most handsomely.

If the foregoing extract should be the means of eradicating misrepresentation or misstatement, it will afford much satisfaction to

Your very obedient servant,

W. G. Lambert.

Two months later the *Register* glowingly acknowledged Solomon's considerable contribution to the Colony:

Perhaps to no one private individual is South Australia so much indebted as to Mr Emanuel Solomon. He has spent upward of £20,000 amongst us, and, on many occasions which we could name, he has promoted the interests of the Colony to the injury of his private purse. It is to him that we are indebted for the establishment of a regular communication with the sister-colony (maintained for many months at a great sacrifice), and that too, at a time when, without such intercourse, we would have stood in an unenviably isolated situation. He has been the patron of all our literary and philanthropic institutions, in public and private charities are notorious; and, if he has not built us a synagogue, he has built us a theatre, which is always readily and gratuitously offered for our public meetings and our Mechanics Institute.



As events were to prove, the decision by Moss to leave Adelaide was a sound one. The economy did not improve and twelve months later John Lazar was in financial difficulty. He left the colony after a farewell benefit performance at the theatre in December 1842.

The *Australian* newspaper of 21 December admirably states the official attitude to the poor patronage given to both Lazar and the theatre:

Queens Theatre — Mr Lazar, on Monday evening next, takes his farewell benefit. As he leaves Adelaide by the *Dorset*, this is, without doubt actually, his final appearance on the stage, in this Colony; and the immense exertions he is making to leave it with *eclat*, and to show what he could have made Theatricals here had he been better supported by the public, will render the performance of *Der Frieschutz*, on Monday, attractive, by the splendour by which it will be surrounded, if Mr and Miss Lazar's claims to a farewell bumper, were less doubted. We understand that Mr. Lazar will take his leave of the audience, in a farewell speech in which he will return thanks to Governor Grey for the treatment he has received, and his kind patronage since he has been in the Colony. When we consider the number of persons the theatre would have benefited, and employed, had it been successful, the result is deeply to be lamented; at the same time Mr. Lazar has only suffered in common with, and not more than, his fellow citizens, in Adelaide. For weeks together, we are certain, many of the most respectable shopkeepers in Adelaide, have not done business that would pay for the salt used in their houses. The patience Mr. Lazar has shown, and the indefatigable exertions he has used to keep up the establishment, deserves the highest praise. To his versatility of talent, his tact and liberality as a manager, we have often referred; and his patrons must acknowledge, that Adelaide is indebted to him, for the first introduction of the true and legitimate drama. He has laboured hard in his profession, and we sincerely regret that his industry had not been more liberally rewarded, as we know it has been appreciated. His loss will be severely felt by every lover of the drama; and it will be long, very long before we may hope again to see anything like a real performance. Had the theatre been patronised as its merits deserved, under the judicious management of Mr. Lazar, Adelaide would have proved a bright star in the era of theatricals; as it is, Mr. Lazar's absence will leave them sinking in oblivion. We understand that this gentleman, and his talented family, go hence to Port Phillip, Launceston, and Hobart Town, where advantageous offers have been made to him, and where we are certain he will reap a rich harvest.

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The purpose of this paper was to tell in some detail the remarkable circumstances that led to the transportation of the Solomon brothers and their subsequent success as emancipists and the resultant chain migration that resulted therefrom. For the sake of completeness I shall briefly tell of what happened to the principal family members.

Samuel Moss Solomon — Shlomo the pencil maker — died in Sydney in 1842 and his widow Esther later moved to Adelaide where she remained until her death in 1875 aged 100 years and six months.

Vaiben Solomon remained married to Mary (known as Sarah) until his death in 1860 near Liverpool, New South Wales. They had about 12 children of whom 5 males and two females survived into adulthood and their details are recorded in the Burial Register of the Great Synagogue Sydney.

Emanuel was to marry three times. On 22 February 1844 he made a rare trip on the *Dorset* to Sydney with Celia Smith and their 4 children. The purpose of this trip appears to have been twofold. Constantly admonishing Vaiben in their correspondence, he wanted to terminate the partnership, and, as Celia was generally believed to be his wife in Adelaide, he no doubt preferred to have the union legitimised away from home.

Celia was shown on the ship's register as Mrs Solomon and, on 12 April 1844 at the Presbyterian Church Sydney, she duly became Mrs Solomon. 'The union produced in all 6 children:

1. Elizabeth Dorsetta married her first cousin Samuel Myers who was the son of Emanuel's sister Esther.
2. Samuel who died in London aged 15.
3. Rosetta married Joel Moss who had a large tailoring emporium known as The Monster Clothing Palace at the intersection of King William and Hindley Streets Adelaide. They had 6 children.

4. Julia married Victor Brown. The *Register* of 25 January 1864 reported:

Elopement. There is a report current that the second eldest unmarried daughter of an Adelaide merchant who is also an MP, eloped early on Sunday morning with a lover whose addresses were not countenanced by her father. It is understood that the young man had made arrangements to secure the performance of the marriage ceremony at some distance from the city. After which he hopes to win forgiveness from his bride, notwithstanding her having chosen a husband professing a faith different from that of her people.



Samuel Moss Solomon — 'Shlomo the Pencil Maker'  
(1769 London—1842 Sydney)



*Esther Davis Solomon*  
(January 1775 London—July 1875 Adelaide)

The elopement apparently took place after midnight by climbing down a ladder from an upstairs room at Emanuel's house in Daw's Road assisted by Victor Brown and his sister Elizabeth. Emanuel apparently tried unsuccessfully to have the marriage annulled, but as the young couple are recorded as living at his home from 1866 to 1868 he, presumably, was resigned to accept the marriage. Never easy to understand, Emanuel's own church marriage to an Irish Catholic appears at odds to his attitude. Julia and Victor had seven children, five of whom survived childbirth.

5. Joseph Samuel married Miriam Solomon. They had 5 children and numerous descendants, a large number of whom have maintained their Jewish identity. Joseph died in Adelaide in 1940 aged 97, and pursuant to the provisions of Emanuel's last will and testament this meant that his estate was not finally distributed until 1960 being 20 years after the death of his last surviving child.

6. Catherine Leah married Louis Victorsen who was a merchant in Clare, South Australia. They had a large family, most of whom died unmarried.

Celia died in Sydney on 24 July 1852 and four months later Emanuel married for the third and last time to a Jewess, Catherine Abrahams.

They had a daughter Abigail who died at 15 months, and 2 sons — Vaiben and Judah Moss, the latter being a lawyer. To further complicate an already impossible family tree, this Judah Moss, on the suggestion of Sir Samuel



Way, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of South Australia, adopted the surname of Solomon-Senior in 1896 in order to distinguish him from his younger first cousin of the same name who was also a lawyer on the South Australian Roll of Barristers and Solicitors and was the son of Isaac Solomon who had married his step-niece Isabella! There was also, of course, the older first cousin of the same name who had arrived on the *Enchantress*. He had passed away in 1880.

In 1845 Emanuel and Matthew Smith purchased 85 acres of land, where Port Pirie now stands, at £1 an acre and after subdivision resold at £10 an acre. They called it Solomontown and reserved land at the centre for religious purposes.

In 1846 Emanuel was joined by Judah Moss Solomon and Isaac Solomon, who returned with young families to Adelaide from New South Wales where they had been conducting the first land auctions as official Government Auctioneers at Moreton Bay. Emanuel must have felt great satisfaction in this, as 4 years earlier Vaiben had failed to even tell him of their respective marriages in Sydney. In September 1842 he had written to Vaiben lamenting: 'I feel much surprise that strangers here should know what is going on in our family better than myself. I understand that Judah and Isaac are both married yet I have never received any notice at all of it.'

His old friend Lazar also returned in 1848 to manage Coppin's new Queens Theatre, and this flurry of returning expatriates was, no doubt, the impetus for the formation of a Jewish congregation, for it was in that year that the first meeting for this purpose took place, at Isaac Solomon's Temple Tavern. Judah Moss Solomon was elected the first president, thereby following in the footsteps of his relative Michael Cashmore, who several years earlier had been elected as the first president at Port Phillip.

In his paper published in an earlier issue of this *Journal*, Professor E.S. Richards tells of the ongoing economic pursuits of Emanuel Solomon in Adelaide with particular reference to his commercial success in speculative mining ventures, especially copper mining at Burra.

In an Appendix to that paper, there is an extract from the *Australian Israelite* of 5 January 1872 relating in some detail the proceedings at a Great Banquet given by Emanuel to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the colony for 520 old colonists at the Adelaide Town Hall. As Professor Richards noted:

The banquet was a great exercise in nostalgia. Solomon made sure that invitations went to a body of people 'representative of all classes'; 'the bone and sinew as well as the brain of the infant settlement were thoroughly represented.'

In the context of this paper, the reporters enthusiastic and detailed coverage of the evening is worth relating again in full:

The twenty-eighth of December is always a national holiday, as it celebrates the day when South Australia was proclaimed a British province. Thursday was the thirty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the colony, and it was of course kept as a special holiday. The most interesting gathering was that which took place in the Town Hall on Thursday night, when upwards of 500 persons — old colonists — assembled at the hospitable invitation of Mr. Emanuel Solomon, to partake of a liberal banquet provided by that gentleman. The

invitations were issued mainly to persons who arrived in the colony prior to the year 1841, but a number of gentlemen who were later arrivals were also present, as prominent citizens or as personal friends of the host. Six long tables ran along the hall, and there was also a cross table at the top of the room, at which there sat the host and a number of gentlemen. The catering was left entirely with Mr Aldridge, who provided a most 'recherché' entertainment, the tables being crowded with a most elegant repast, including every delicacy of the season. Covers were laid for upwards of 500 persons, and it was estimated that about 510 gentlemen sat down to partake of Mr. Solomon's large-hearted hospitality. A 'kosher' table was provided for those who desired to join it.

Mr. Emanuel Solomon occupied the chair as host, being supported on his right and left respectively by Sir John Morphett (President of the Legislative Council), and Sir G.S. Kingston, together with the Members of the Ministry, and several other gentlemen of position. After the usual loyal toast by the Chairman, 'The Parliament' was proposed by Mr. E.L. Grundy, and responded to by Sir John Morphett, who said it was his duty to respond to the toast just honoured; but before he did so he must express his thanks to their kind and liberal-hearted host, Mr. Solomon — (cheers) — forgiving them the opportunity of seeing so many old faces, and meeting old friends — some of whom they had not seen for thirty-five years. (Cheers.) That day was the thirty-fifth anniversary of their landing. He was then a bachelor — a gay and hopeful bachelor — and he, like many others, came here with a hopeful spirit, and expecting to found a good colony; but they never expected when they landed at Holdfast Bay to found such a colony as that was. At the present moment he believed he was correct in saying that their exports of actual produce were equal to £18 per head of all the population — a thing unexampled in the history of the world. (Cheers.) It might be supposed, and it was supposed, that the old colonists suffered great privations, but that was all a farce; they did not suffer such privations as represented. It was true, they roughed it. The speaker concluded an interesting speech amid much applause.

The next toast was 'The Army and Navy'; after which the Hon. J. Hart, CMG, in the absence of the Hon. H. Mildred, asked them to join him in drinking with enthusiasm, 'The Health of our Host, Mr Emanuel Solomon.' (Tremendous applause.) He should like to have had some time to prepare himself to propose such a toast, but having been called on at the last moment, he would claim their indulgence in making a short speech. He had known Mr Solomon as long perhaps as any man sitting at that table, seven-or-eight-and-thirty years. He remembered him in New South Wales before he came to this colony, and he remembered him asking the question if there were any Scotchmen in South Australia, because, if so, he would not come. (Laughter.) He would say of Mr Solomon that he was one of the largest-hearted men he knew. He had only to look round on that large assemblage to see what a large-hearted man he was to call together so many old colonists. That, however, was not the only thing that showed the liberality of Mr. Solomon. He was known as a liberal man throughout the colony, and had a stone in almost every church and chapel in the place. That was not a political meeting, for although Mr. Solomon had been in the Legislative Council, he had retired from it, and therefore that meeting was not called for political purposes. In the very kindness of his heart he had called together the number of gentlemen present. He was able to speak from long acquaintance of Mr. Solomon, and he honoured and respected him. It was a very noble thing for a meeting of old colonists to be brought to gether by the liberality of one man. (Cheers.) He trusted that others would follow in the same wake, and bring them together in future years.

'Thrice happy he, enabled to pursue  
What thousands wish the power to do.'

He trusted, however, that there would be some man who would be able and willing to follow the example of Mr. Solomon in future years. He called attention to this fact — that that there was no particular class of people invited to that banquet. The poor man as well as the rich had been invited — (cheers) — and he said all honour to the noble-hearted gentleman who had brought them together. He asked them to drink the toast with three times three.

The toast was drunk with great enthusiasm, the band playing 'For he's a jolly good fellow.' Mr Emanuel Solomon was greeted with tremendous applause on rising to respond. He thanked the proposer of the toast, and he thanked them all for their attendance that night. He arrived here in 1838, and when he landed here the whole colony was in a state of bankruptcy. He did not believe there was a silver shilling to be seen. The government, and likewise all the merchants, were bankrupt, too. He had to land his goods on to a sandbank over which the tide washed several times before the goods could be removed.

The consequence was ruination. The next thing was, the government had no money, and they said: 'Solomon, We'll let you have bills on England at par.' They took his money for them, about four thousand pounds, and the bills went to England, and he had them returned with twenty percent expenses on them. (Laughter.) He had seen many gentlemen land here with their pockets well lined, and holding their heads very high but before three months were over, they held their heads very low. It was a few of the old colonists who had kept the colony up — (Cheers) — and they owed an especial debt of gratitude to their yeomanry — old plodding farmers who had toiled on in spite of bad crops, not knowing whether for a years work they would get a day's meal. (Applause.) What could be obtained now for one shilling cost at that time about four pounds.

Mr. Solomon continued in the same strain and was followed by Sir John Morphett, who bore testimony to the large-heartedness of Mr. Emanuel Solomon, in proof of which he stated that Mr Solomon had specially stipulated that all that was left from that feast should go to the orphans on the morrow. (Applause.) A round of applause was given to Mr Solomon in acknowledgement of his thoughtful consideration of the orphans.

Several other toasts were then proposed, amongst them the 'The Press', by Mr J.M. Solomon MP who, in the course of his speech, said that he was thankful he lived in a community that had a press of which they had reason to be proud — that endeavoured with all its power to do the greatest amount of good to the greatest number that could be done. In his opinion, if the press allowed a man to become so self-important as to be a nuisance it did not perform its duty. (Cheers.)

The National Anthem brought a most enjoyable evening to a close.

Throughout the entire evening no reference was made to the convict background. This suppression of memory is referred to in a letter written by Evan Senior, a grandson of Emanuel, to Rabbi John Levi in 1973. He told how he had learned 'the dark secret' from an old letter he had come across in 1919. This letter had been written to Emanuel by one of his sisters. When he raised the matter with his father and other family members, he had been sworn to secrecy. Revelation of this matter could only serve to hurt people, he had been told.

Emanuel had entered politics belatedly. In 1863 he was elected to the House of Assembly for West Adelaide and in 1867, despite having been badly injured the year before in a road accident, he entered the Legislative Council where he championed the causes of the working classes.



He died in 1873 following a stroke, having never really recovered from his accident, and he was buried in Adelaide at a funeral where his extraordinary qualities and achievements were acknowledged both within and outside the Jewish community.

I shall conclude this paper on a specifically non-Jewish note which says a great deal more about Emanuel Solomon than the self-aggrandising Grand Banquet could ever do.

When Mary Mackillop, who was beatified by the Catholic Church in 1995, was excommunicated and dispossessed by the ailing Bishop Sheil of Adelaide, Emanuel Solomon was one of several benefactors who came to her assistance. He is cited in her official biography *An Extraordinary Australian — Mary Mackillop* by Paul Gardiner, as 'her Jewish friend.' Emanuel had provided free accommodation at a time of dire need when the church had deserted her.

There is little doubt that Mary would have been unaware of her friend's convict background. Had she known, her extraordinary commitment to and affection for those she helped, would have been more comprehensible.

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