

Stewed Cockatoo and a Glass of Grenache

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The Barossa Valley has a long history of wine production and women have played a significant part in its establishment and development. However, this is rarely acknowledged and often trivialised. Nineteenth century letters, journals, diaries and photographs, provide evidence of the early history of women working in the wine industry of the Barossa Valley from colonial times.

Both German and English settlers were influential in the establishment of the wine industry in the Barossa Valley but one of the most significant was a young English woman.

One of the pioneers in the Rowland Flat district was a young English woman, Ann Jacob who arrived in South Australia in 1839. Ann was the only daughter of Ann and John Jacob, who owned Down Farm, a large prosperous dairy at Abbots Ann, near Andover, in south-east England (Private Papers). When Ann's mother died in 1834, and her father in 1836, she and her two brothers, William and John, inherited the property, which they sold before migrating to South Australia. Ann left London on the ship *The Ganges* in February 1839, with Robert Gouger, the Colonial Secretary of South Australia and his second wife as fellow passengers. Ann purchased a property near Gramp's vineyard, which she managed with her two brothers, and planted with vines before 1847 (Ioannou 2000, p. 104). William was an assistant to Colonel William Light the Surveyor General for South Australia and John was an explorer.

Ann kept a diary, which describes her early years in the colony, and later wrote her *Reminiscences*; both documents are now held in the State Library of South Australia, (SLSA PRG 966/1).

Ann's *Reminiscences* describe the journey in great detail. While the ship was berthed in Cape Town on the way to South Australia, Ann went to see the famous

Constantia vineyard. 'In the company of five single young men, I hired a carriage to make the rather hazardous 12-mile trip. I hesitated, but was persuaded to put myself under their care and see what I could' (SLSA PRG 966/1). Clearly Ann's interest in viticulture and her curiosity about the vineyard over-rode any wish to submit to the social requirement of maidenly discretion. This vineyard had been planted in 1684 by the Dutch Governor Simon van der Stel and named in honour of his wife, Constance (Debuigne 1976, p. 81). It had an excellent reputation for good quality wines, and, several early settlers John Barton Hack and George Stevenson, used cuttings from Constantia, when they planted vineyards at North Adelaide.

Ann arrived at Port Adelaide in June 1839. At the time neither of her brothers was in Adelaide: William was surveying the new town of Gawler, and John was in New South Wales buying cattle. Ann was looking forward very much to seeing them after her long voyage, and in her *Reminiscences* she expressed 'very great disappointment to find them absent' (SLSA PRG 966/1). Her journey had taken five months and she was eager to establish herself on the land. In the absence of her brothers, Ann stayed at North Adelaide with generous and hospitable friends of two women she knew in England. Ann comments that, 'provisions were fearfully expensive, eggs at 6d each, a hen cost £1, a cat 10/-, and meat 1/- per pound' (SLSA PRG 966/1).

Ann purchases Morooroo

Using money she had inherited from her parents, Ann Jacob purchased land at



Land Titles Office document for purchase of Morooroo

Rowland Flat, at the junction of Jacob's Creek and the North Para River, in October 1839 (SA LTO Old System Pkt 21071). The land had been surveyed by her brother,

William. Johann Menge who was living in a cave near the junction of the rivers, had reported that the rolling hills and valley reminded him of the Rhone district and offered a good prospect for vine growing (Ioannou 2000, p. 14). In her diary Ann mentions her acquaintance with Menge, and it seems likely that she discussed with him the suitability of her property for grape growing (SLSA PRG 966/4). Ann called the property *Morooroo*, an Aboriginal word meaning 'big waterhole'. 'I brought £500 into the Colony and it was expended in purchasing 500 acres of land at *Morooroo*, being a part of a special survey taken by Messrs Gilbert, W.H. Brown, Hallet and myself' (SLSA PRG 966/2). In earlier accounts of the origins of this important property, it has been assumed that *Morooroo* was purchased, and a farm and vineyard established on it by William and John, rather than by their sister, Ann (Aeuckens et al 1988, Ioannou 2000, McDougall 1980, Munchenberg 1992, and Yelland 1970). But it was Ann who brought money to the colony with the specific purpose of acquiring property, and the land grant, finalised in 1842, shows that she was the sole purchaser of the tract of land that she named *Morooroo*.

Clearly she also had the necessary strength of character to collaborate with her brothers in establishing a farm in the next few years, which was to include a vineyard.

Stewed parrots

Having bought the property, Ann was 'very desirous of going to *Morooroo*' (SLSA PRG 966/1). She does not mention in her *Reminiscences* that she had seen the land before purchasing it, but the area had been surveyed by her brother William, and she may have heard that the geologist Menge, who lived in the locality, had reported favourably about its potential for farming and particularly for grape growing. She set off with her brother John in October 1839, and they finally reached her property, *Morooroo*, 'a strange and wild place it looked to call our home' (SLSA PRG 966/2). In her bullock dray, Ann had brought a plough and a variety of other farming implements, and she was greatly amused that later the

invoice for their purchases was addressed to 'A. Jacob Esq.!! Not imagining such things belonged to a young lady' (SLSA PRG 966/1).

Ann slept in one room of a house that had been partly built, and John and the workmen slept in a tent. Living conditions were difficult and 'just better than camping out'. Ann records cooking outside by an open fire and boiling salt beef and pork with damper.

For Christmas Day 1839 Ann 'had bespoke a quarter of mutton from the nearest sheep station as a great treat but they reconsidered the matter and did not kill...so my brothers took their guns and brought in some parrots, young and old'. Stewed parrots were her first Christmas dinner in South Australia. The following year her diary entry is humorous and much more positive: 'Christmas Day 1840 we had a roast goose for dinner, a decided improvement to parrots' (SLSA PRG 966/1).

Thirty acres of land had been cleared and a mixed farm established that was large enough to necessitate the building of three more cottages for farm hands, and which included a large dairy where Ann made great quantities of butter and cheese (SLSA PRG 966/4). In addition, oats and barley, as well as vines and fruit trees had been planted (Ioannou 2000, p. 104), and during a visit to Morooroo, the Old Colonist observed 'a considerable extent of orchard and vineyard' (Register, 5th February, 1851, p. 7). Ann participated in the establishment a dairy and other farming enterprises at Morooroo, and when she managed the property during William's frequent absences, her responsibilities included care of the vineyard.

Significance of Ann Jacob

After Ann married Arthur Horrocks in 1850 they lived on a property at Penwortham, near Clare, another wine growing area north of the Barossa Valley. John, Arthur's brother, had a farm at Penwortham planted with vines, which he had brought out from Europe. In 1846 John was shot by his camel and died of his wounds, leaving the property to Arthur. The house, which had been completely

built by 1842 was known as *Hope Farm*, and a sketch of it, done by John, shows a large comfortable brick home with three chimneys, substantial windows and a wide verandah. It is likely that Ann participated in the work at *Hope Farm* as she certainly had experience and knowledge of managing a vineyard. In 1852 Arthur and a friend Mr Moulden went to the Victorian gold diggings, leaving Ann to manage the property for several months (Private papers). When I visited the site with local historians they informed me that the house had been demolished in 1915 to make way for the railway line. Ann and Arthur had five children. Arthur died in 1872 and is buried in Main North Road cemetery, and Ann died in 1874 at Mt Gambier and is buried there. A photograph of Ann, taken a few years before she died, shows a strong-willed and stoical woman.

The Morooroo homestead, which can still be seen at Rowland Flat, is now owned by Orlando winery, and the old walls of the original cellar have been incorporated into the Grant Burge winery nearby. Ann Jacob was one of the earliest settlers in the colony, and like many other women who have



Ann Jacob

worked to produce wine in South Australia, her significant contribution to the development of the wine industry is frequently overlooked. In particular, her part in establishing the now internationally famous Jacob's Creek vineyard has never been acknowledged.

Other significant English and German women

Anna Browne

Anna Browne and her brothers John and William arrived at Port Adelaide on the *Buckinghamshire* in March 1839, with the English vigneron, Joseph Gilbert (Passenger List). William and John Browne built *Wongalere* homestead at

Williamstown in the early 1840s. In 1847, when Anna, their sister, married the English vigneron Joseph Gilbert, her brothers gave her *Wongalere* as a wedding present (Aeuckens et al. 1988 p. 42). The property passed to Anna's husband because, until the *Married Women's Property Act 1883-1884*, women were unable to retain property after they married. Joseph already owned a vineyard at Pewsey Vale, about 15 kilometres away, and in the late 1850s vines were planted at *Wongalere* (Aeuckens et al. 1988, p. 42). It is possible that Anna took some part in the vineyard management of *Wongalere*. The Pewsey Vale vineyard is now part of Yalumba estate, but *Wongalere* was compulsorily purchased in 1949 to allow the construction of the South Para reservoir.

Eliza Burge

Eliza Burge and her husband John, an English farmer, settled in Lyndoch in 1855 and planted a vineyard. Eliza was the daughter of John Springbett, a well-respected vigneron in the area. It is likely that she worked from a very young age in the Springbett family vineyard, and later when she married, worked with her husband in their vineyard. It has always been customary in Barossa Valley grape growing families for all members to contribute their labour in the vineyard, especially at busy times such as pruning and harvest.

Elizabeth Foot

In 1845, John Walker Foot and his brother Edward Nicholas, bought 480 acres of land east of Angaston and called the property *Gawler Park*. In 1850 John transferred his share of the property to Edward's wife, Elizabeth. This transaction is puzzling, as she would not be legally entitled to retain ownership of the property. Although the transfer of John's parcel of land to his sister-in-law is recorded in documents held at the Land Titles Office, Adelaide, no explanation of the transaction is given. Perhaps a falling-out had occurred between the two brothers or they had found themselves in difficult financial circumstances. Close to the house was a 'large garden with weeping willows and an extensive vineyard,' described by the *Old Colonist* in 1851. It was customary for women to care for

cultivated areas adjacent to the house, and it is likely that the garden and vines would have been part of Elizabeth's responsibilities.

Eliza Randall

Eliza and David Randall arrived in South Australia on the *Templar* in November 1845 (Randall 1845, p. 2). Eliza writes with enthusiasm about several visits to local vineyards. In December, while staying at the Freemasons Tavern in Pirie Street, Adelaide, the Randalls walked to visit Mr Giles, whose property contained many vines of 136 different varieties, and they also visited Mr Stevenson, who owned a property in North Adelaide which had a large vineyard. In 1851, the Randalls took up 2000 acres at Mount Crawford, near Williamstown, and named the property *Glen Para*. Shortly afterwards Eliza wrote in her diary that she took 'entire charge of the flower garden and orchard', which was planted with one thousand apple, pear and plum trees, all bought from George McEwin the nurseryman and vigneron. On a visit to the property in 1862, Ebenezer Ward (1862) observed an extensive vineyard and a substantial two-storey cellar.

Eliza wrote in her diary that she and her 'dearest friend', Anna Gilbert, who lived at *Wongalere*, about five kilometres away, frequently visited each other's houses, and Eliza attended the church that the Gilberts had built near their property. Another good friend was Mary Jacob who lived nearby. Eliza's diary reveals an active life, including domestic responsibilities such as care of the children and management of the household staff, and numerous social activities, in addition to the management of parts of the farm, including the orchard, that were close to the main house. Her husband was frequently occupied at a distance from the homestead, since there were substantial herds of dairy cows and beef cattle, and it seems likely that she had at least part responsibility for the vineyard.

Mary Smith

Samuel Smith, an English brewer, emigrated to South Australia with his wife Mary in 1847 and was employed as a gardener on the John Howard Angas property,

Tarrawatta, which included vines planted by his brother-in-law, local vigneron, Henry Evans. In 1849, Smith recognized the possibility of owning his own vineyard and purchased 30 acres of land at Angaston and named the property *Yalumba*. In April 1852 Samuel and his eldest son Sidney, set off for the goldfields of Victoria joining thousands of South Australians who had left their jobs and families to fossick at Ballarat. Mary Smith, who by this time had five daughters with ages ranging from 2 to 13 years, was left for four months to manage the property, in which, as well as the vineyards, there were several acres of orchards and a fruit-preserving factory. The grape picking would have been completed by the time Samuel left the property, but the essential work of pruning the vines would have been left for Mary to organise and accomplish, for which she would have needed specific knowledge and skills. Samuel's successful trip to the goldfields enabled him to buy some adjoining land and he gradually increased his wine-making operations. In 1888, he handed over *Yalumba* to his son, whose male descendants still own and manage the winery.

The many English women in the early years of settlement in the Barossa Valley who made positive contributions to the development of the wine industry were Anna Browne, Eliza Burge, Elizabeth Foot, Anna Gilbert, Eliza Randall and Mary Smith. The German women included Johanne Fiedler, Sophia bis Winckel and Johanna Seppelt, all of them establishing and maintaining vineyards in the early days of colonial settlement.

The Barossa Valley has a long tradition of wine making and many women have been involved in the industry from its beginning. Photographs, dairies and interviews provide this evidence. As wives of grape growers, women were expected to pick grapes at harvest time, prune vines and provide meals to the workers in the vineyard. Child bearing and rearing were a large part of a married woman's life, as well as maintaining the home, carrying out religious and moral responsibilities, visiting sick relatives and performing other social obligations, all of which constituted their primary duties. In the Barossa Valley, as elsewhere in

winegrowing areas of South Australia, women have undertaken additional work outside the home, either to bring income to the family or to reduce labour costs by their participation in work on the property.

Women have a long history of contributing to the wine industry, as they have in other rural activities, but the extent and significance of their contribution has never been fully acknowledged.