

# **THE REVEREND WILLIAM RICHARDS**

**1831 - 1902**

**and his descendants**

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I am anxious that my two grandsons should have in their possession some knowledge of their families' beginnings in Australia.

The original forbear, the Reverend William Richards, came ashore at Largs Bay, SA on 11th December, 1865.

He married Sarah Ann Spicer at Auburn, S.A. on the 13th of March 1867. There were eight children of which only two were boys. The second being my father and now at this time, three only fifth generation males of the Richards name are available to carry it forward, - Jonathan, Matthew, and Nathan.

Through my grandmother our family association in this country goes back even farther. Her father and mother, William and Mary Spicer, landed at Pt. Adelaide on 21st September, 1839, just three years after the colony of South Australia was founded.

Fortunately there are some details relating to both the Richards and Spicers and with the help of others I hope to group what sketchy records there are together before it is too late.

The Revd. William Richards, an Englishman, was born in 1831 at a little village of Gingham, near Barnstaple, on the North Coast of Devonshire. He spent some years as a youth and young man in a nearby fishing village of Lee, about three miles from Ilfracombe. The name Richards is well remembered there because of one, Hannibal Richards, a notorious wrecker and smuggler. I am not sure of our relationship to him. My father claimed to his being grandfather's uncle. Others

have claimed a more direct line relationship. I do believe my father had some thought of christening me Hannibal, but my mother would have none of it.

Lee is a delightful piece of Southern England and on our first visit I had a feeling of belonging there. We happened on a very old resident who was able to reminisce and in doing so told us that Hannibal was all things to the village. Wrecking and smuggling must have been a sideline because he was tailor, carpenter and blacksmith.

Be that as it may, should you ever visit England you should go to Lee. It has a beautiful setting at the end of a valley, terminating in a rugged cove where with any imagination you can visualise someone in the times of old, swinging a lantern at night to encourage the passing ship with its cargo of French brandy to veer off course and onto the rocks.

We were directed to what had been Hannibal's house, at that time known as Smugglers Cottage. We had coffee there and had to stoop to go under the low oaken beams in the ceiling. We have since been back and regret that it has been altered and added to and has lost its quaint charm.

The little Anglican church at Lee, whilst having been built since those times, does have a record of the exploits of Hannibal on the wall near the baptismal font.

William became a minister of the Bible Christian denomination in 1860. By an Amalgamation in 1900 this religion then became known as Methodist. In 1865 he and three others came to South Australia as missionaries.

Early in his long career in that State he was sent to Auburn where he met and married Sarah Ann.

He died on 18th September 1902, following which a lengthy obituary was printed on “The Australian Christian Commonwealth”. A transcript is as an addendum and provides a good understanding of the fine character of our forbear. (See Appendix 1).

Sarah Ann Richards, formally Spicer, could claim a family history going back to the time when three of her forbears came to Britain with William the Conqueror as gentlemen volunteers. One settled in Devonshire, where William and Mary Spicer, Sarah Ann’s parents, came from. To this day there are a great many Spicers in that county as a reference to the Exeter telephone directory will show. (See Appendix V for some account of the family of Spicers).

William and Mary Spicer were among the earliest settlers in South Australia, a little less than three years from its foundation. They settled first in Brown Hill Creek, South of Adelaide, at the foothills near Mitcham. He Sarah Ann was born on 27th August 1841.

Her parents left there to go to Para, in the Tea Tree Gully area, and later to Auburn where they finally settled. It was here that she and William first met and were married.

They had eight children, six girls and two boys. Of this next generation my father (Percival James) alone was to carry forward the family name with four sons. The maintenance of the name seems to be a difficult task as at this time there are but three fifth generation Richard males, Jonathan, Matthew and Nathan.

William and Sarah Ann’s children were:-

Mary Ellen	4 January 1868	-	27 March 1948
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Frederick William	3 October 1869	- <sup>4</sup>	3 March 1957
Florence Maude	22 October 1871	-	11 October 1962
Mabel Rose	13 October 1873	-	January 1959
James Percival	6 February 1878	-	22 July 1965
Minetta Louisa	23 May 1880	-	29 June 1969
Olive Jessamine	16 August 1884	-	3 November 1965

Sarah Ann died when I was almost three years old and consequently I have no memory of her. Fortunately, her obituary printed in “The Australian Christian Commonwealth” is available and tells of her good and wonderful life. (See Appendix II).

One of my earliest memories is on going with my father, uncles and older cousins on a Saturday afternoon to her Wattle Street home when they tidied the garden prior to the sale of the house.

## **Their Family**

**Mary Ellen** (Aunt Nell) was a tailoress and remained single. She lived with and was devoted to her mother. She worked tirelessly for her church and after Gran died and the Wattle Street home was sold, she purchased No. 2 Regent Street, Parkside, which was closer to the Eastwood Methodist Church where she worshipped.

I have fond memories of her because we lived with her between the time of my mother's death and my father remarrying.

**Frederick William** (Uncle Fred) had an outstanding legal career and was looked up to by family and outsiders alike.

As a boy of 13 he was sent to England where he studied law with distinction. He was Dux of his final year and returned to South Australia a Doctor of Law at 26 years of age.

His daughter, Gwen, has provided an excellent review of his life which I have included as Appendix III.

The Richards family was a close family, always ready to help one another and enjoy one another too. Uncle Fred and Aunt Ida's homes, first in Sheffield Street and then in Thornber Street, Unley Park, were the centre of many family gatherings. He kept a beautiful lawn tennis court where we were always welcome on Saturday afternoons. It was also the place of gatherings on Christmas afternoon and a good way to settle the heavy dinner that preceded in our various homes.

He and Aunt Ida had two daughters, Gwen now Mrs. Taffy Miller and Molly who died while still single.

**Florence Maude** (Aunt Flo) married Oswald Gittens Moore. They had a large family all of whom I admired greatly as a boy. That admiration never left me. The eldest Arthur (Doctor of Dentistry), Joan (died while still a girl), Don (Bachelor of Forestry), Hector (Teacher - killed in action during World War II), Humphrey (Bill) (Industrial Chemist - General Manager ICI), Nora now Mrs Canty (a good housewife and mother, Warwick (Reserve Bank - State Manager).

Before Uncle Fred's tennis court theirs was the gathering place for tennis and the Christmas party also.

**Mabel Rose** (Aunt Rose) married Henry Curtice. They had no children but lived in the same general area as the rest of the family. We spoke of the Richards mile, we could all walk easily from one home to another, all within walking distance for the Malvern Methodist Church.

Aunt Rose was the one who knew most about the family background. Before she died she wrote some of her memories in a little black covered notebook. It relates the early life of her mother (Sarah Ann) and the Spicers. You will see that the Adelaide store - Miller Anderson Ltd. - dates back to grandmother's relatives if you read the copy of Aunt Rose's notes in Appendix IV.

**James Percival** (my father) known to his brother and sisters as Perce, but to his nephews and nieces as Uncle Jim. His brother having left for his English education when father was only 5 years old, he grew up as the one boy in a large group of girls. His father being a minister, they moved from one country town to another and young Perce enjoyed the freedom of the countryside, particularly in Willunga and Mt. Torrens.

When Way College was commenced he went there as a boarder to complete his education. This school took the name of Sir Samuel Way to whom Uncle Fred was later to be an associate. This college was after some years closed and then converted into a Methodist Ladies College. It was beautifully located on Greenhill Road, formerly Park Terrace, on the South side of the South Parklands.

photo here

Australia was in one of its many periods of financial downturn at the time when he left school. (I am reminded that I had a similar experience some 35 years later). He found work in a retail store and then decided to try fresh fields at a time when Western Australian gold was making the headlines.

It was a journey in a small ship as there was no rail across the Nullabor. Nor was there any easy journey from Perth to Kalgoorlie so once settled he stayed for more than 5 years. He worked for Pellews store during that time.

After his return to Adelaide he joined James Marshall & Sons, Now Myre Emporium, and then Charles Moore & Company after they opened their store on Victoria Square. He was departmental manager and gained a reputation within the retail trade for his punctuality and honesty. This I was proud to learn during that period of my life when before World War II, I too was working in the Adelaide retail scene.

He was 35 when he married my mother. Alice Pearl Bullock. She was the eldest daughter of the Revd. Frank Bullock, another Bible Christian minister. A fine man who lived to 92 and in marrying us performed his last wedding ceremony.

(info on Alice Pearl - music etc)

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They had two children, my brother Geoff and myself.

**Geoffrey Spicer** developed epilepsy at 14 and although he lived to 39 never enjoyed good health.

My father's second marriage was to Agnes Jessie Linaker and again he had two sons. Robert William and Frederick Ian.

**Robert William** has three children, Paul, Rebekah and Saxon. Paul married Sally and have produced three children, Sharnee, Tegan and Nathan.

**Ian Frederick** on the other hand has presented us with two daughters Sharen and Katherine.

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**Minetta Louisa** (Aunt Ett) married Ulysses Grant and had a family of five daughters - Mary, Kathleen, Dorothy, Ruth and Flora. I was very close to this family partly because of an age similarity but also because of the number of my school holidays spent with them.

Uncle Ule was Branch Manager for the Bank of Adelaide. The Grant girls had no brothers and I no sisters so in spending holidays with them at Mannum and Loxton on the River Murray I almost became a part of the family.

In retirement Uncle Ule and Aunt Ett came to live at 2 Regent Street, Parkside, previously Aunt Nell's home who I lived with after mother died. Mary and Dorothy live there to this day.

**Minnie Gertrude** died as a young lady still unmarried.



**Olive Jessamine** (Aunt Ol) had an unfortunate marriage to Richard (Dick) Correll which broke up in divorce. Unlike today, divorce was the exception and was talked about as little as possible. I doubt whether any of my generation know just what went wrong. We do know that Aunt Ol was a woman of very high principles and certainly of a strong will. I leave it at that. We were all very fond of her anyway.

She lived from time to time with all of our families and was always there when a helping hand was needed. She lived with us for several years at a time when our father had a store in Glenelg. Ian was a small child and quite a handful for poor Aunt Ol. There was the day when he kept getting out of the front gate so she finally controlled him by tying one end of a long piece of rope to a leg of the kitchen table and the other to a leg of little Ian. A resourceful lady when needs be.

To conclude, I must complete the line by recording my own family details.

I hope our name will continue. This is but a small record of our ancestors in Australia. It is a matter for my sons or grandsons to add to this later if they so wish.

**James Alan Richards**, married Mabel Joyce Cooper of Riverton, South Australia in the Prospect North Methodist Church on 16th September 1939. The officiating ministers were my grandfather, the Revd. Frank Bullock and the Revd. Arthur Strange, Joyce's brother-in-law.

We have four children, Alan Harvie, William Spicer, Jennifer Ann and Robert James. To this day they have given us seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

**Alan Harvie** married Ann Harvey - children Joanne Elizabeth and Matthew Harvie.

**William Spicer** married Judith Edwards - children Fiona Claire, Jonathan Spicer and Katie Ann.

**Jennifer Ann** married John Robertson - children Kelly Jane who married Gordon Jones - children - Benjamin Murray, Holly Ann and Jesse William.  
and Jodi Lee. Following Jennifers divorce from John Robertson she married Ian Murray Mulholland

**Robert James** is unmarried at this time.

Here is the manner in which the name has progressed up until now, December 1996

**THE RICHARDS MALE LINE OF POSTERITY**

