

A HISTORY OF LOUISA CAPORN AND HER DESCENDANTS

by Milton A Baxter



Louisa Caporn

Louisa Caporn was born on 9th September 1837 at Long Credon, Buckinghamshire England, the fourth daughter and the tenth child of Samuel and Ann Caporn. At the time Samuel held the position of Register for births, marriages and deaths for the Aylesbury district.

At the age of four, Louisa, with the rest of the family departed England on board the sailing ship "Simon Taylor" bound for Fremantle in Western Australia. They arrived on the 19th August 1842 and disembarked on the 20th August 1842. After a month in the immigrants depot a family home was established close to the bank of the Swan River at Point Walter where Louisa lived until her marriage, on the 10th August 1854.

At the age of sixteen she married Alexander Thomas, a twenty-six year old Welsh "ticket of leave man," who was transported out to the colony on the convict ship "Scindian". His convict number was 61.

The first convict ship proper to Western Australia was the "Scindian". A barque of 535 tons old measurement and of 650 tons new measurement, she had been launched at Sunderland in 1844, and had been classed A1 for 12 years.

Commanded by James Cammell, she left Portsmouth on March 4, 1850, and arrived at Fremantle, then known as Swan River Colony, on June 1, 1850, having made a passage of 89 days. - 75 prisoners embarked and 75 were landed. (Information from "The Convict Ships 1787-1868 by Charles Bateson)

Alexander earned his "ticket" on 29th May 1851 and granted a conditional pardon on 28th August, 1860.

Louisa and Alexander had a fruitful marriage from which came five daughters and four sons - namely and in order of birth, James 1855; Anne 1857; John 1859; Louisa 1861; Agnes 1863; Rebecca 1865; Alexander 1867; Esther 1869; and finally William in 1872.

During this time Alexander worked at various trades, such as a ships wright, a gardener, and farmer, Alexander had an aptitude for languages as he had a working command of several aboriginal dialects, and this put him in good stead to be a participating member of the Panter Expedition to the Glenelg River in the north west of the state, which was mounted to verify the claims of the convict Henry Wildman, that he had found gold there on a voyage, prior, to him being transported out to Western Australia as a convict. For a remission of sentence he was prepared to lead a party to the site. This created quite a stir in the colony as this could be the stimulus to really get the Colony on its feet, there were twelve partners in the venture, each to receive one twentieth share of what ever profits should accrue from their speculation, unfortunately it proved worthless. Alexander must have contracted the gold fever after the expedition, because he moved Louisa and the family to Geraldton where he worked out from doing carpentry work and also searching for the elusive yellow metal. He travelled all over the north of the state, to eventually meet his death at Nullagine from heat exhaustion in November 1894. Louisa stayed at Geraldton for about ten years afterwards, until she decided to return to Fremantle, where she lived in a little cottage in White Gum Valley until she died aged 72 in 1910.