

Transcript of D4140L : Letter to W. Tomlin

North Adelaide Sth Australia
May 22nd 1842

To: Mr H Tomlin, Cutler, London Road, Leicester, England

My Dear Sir

I just give you a few lines inspecting this faraway portion of Queen Victoria's dominions, but in commencing may say that after a voyage of three months and a half of the usual casualties of a life at sea, rough weather, sicknesses, and an adventure to the coast of Africa with half a dozen others in the jolly boat, which nearly cost us our lives (but full particulars of which remain until I see Leicester again). I landed at the Port of Adelaide February 16th /42 we had an agreeable and pleasant company of passengers on board the cc Caleb Angas, which tended to do away in some measure, the usual monotony of a voyage of this length no shaving was performed on crossing the line, our Captain would not allow the jolly God Neptune to visit us, consequently none of those barbarous and foolish practices graced our little barque, which until very lately disgraced the name of a British Seaman. But which now are fast disappearing from the decks of a Merchantman or a ship of War.

On first landing in the colony everything seemed very dull, and different to what we expect to meet with in a Provincial Town, straggling houses, empty shops, both of goods and customers, grassy streets, unpaved footpaths and parrots flying in numbers from tree to tree in every direction was a little different to what I had associated with the chief town of South Australia. I did not expect to see coaches and cabs, three and four stories houses and all the rest of an old County Town in England, which in a few years we shall see here, or at least those that remain that time longer in the Colony. But perhaps, considering the short time Adelaide has been fixed upon as the Capital, everything is as forward as can be expected.

Turn your back on the Town and walk a few miles out, towards the mountains, or towards Mount Barker or Mount Lofty and you will see one of the finest countries in the world, whether for agricultural, rural, or whatever purposes landed may he wanted for. I do not hesitate in saying, that some of the richest and most valuable and productive soil in the whole universe is to be found in Sth Australia. There is some bad land also, but there is more good land, than will be occupied for some years to come let emigration flow as fast as it can. Not only is the surface good, but vast quantities of minerals are to be found in the lower parts, which in time will yield considerable profit to mining gentlemen here.

The plains are covered with a rich and luxuriant vegetation tall gum trees and acacia gums spreading in different directions, thousands of birds making the air ring with their vocal music, the sky of one universal blue nearly the year round, the atmosphere clear, invigorating, and refreshing and the whole face of nature weaving an aspect of beauty and loveliness that is not seen, except in more genial climates of a lower Latitude than that of England. - The climate is very healthy – four-fifths of the medical gentleman have turned to agriculture for there is no living for them here if they were only to follow their profession.

Transcripts

The Colony is in a very bad condition particularly the merchantile and store branches. Everything is in a very unfavourable position at the present time, an alteration may take place for ...[torn page, missing words]... few months, sales are affected at the ...[torn page, missing words]... ironmongery it can be bought very low, for ...[torn page, missing words]... the price the articles cost making, scissors, ...[torn page, missing words]... knives may be had at the sales for a mere ...[torn page, missing words]... sheep [farming] is carried out to a large extent in this ...[torn page, missing words]... neighbourhood, and I suppose about five times the number of acres will be sown with wheat this year, than was grown last. There has been an immense deal of money made in the Colony, particularly about two or three years past, money is to be made now by those parties who have capital, but not in the same sweeping way that it has been made, - the principal drawback we feel in this Colony is, "Society". The population consists of all sorts, runaway convicts, *vandie-monians and some of the worst characters from the adjoining penal settlements having located here as well as natives from almost every warm climate under heaven, it is hardly safe to be out after dark, there are so many loose characters about. Many persons have been stopped and waylaid, but I have not given them a chance at present, neither do I intend.

The houses are nearly all one story high I have been up stairs to bed but in one house in the Colony, each house generally has one or two stretchers, in the room in which the occupiers live, or in an adjoining room, where these are not found to be. The floor is the only choice on which to extend oneself and on it I have slept away part of my time when the good people of England have been more actively employed. Our time here is nine hours and fifteen minutes before your Greenwich time we being in 138°- 45' Earth Longitude. The natural history of this place is very extensive and very interesting, specimens of which I hope to bring home with me.

The natives are a singular race of beings about the lowest in that class of animal existence styled "Man". But sheets of paper are not compendious enough to admit of particulars.

Remember me to all kind friends, I shall be delighted and instructed to have a letter from you on receipt of this as you can send me news that my Mother will not think upon and conclude.

PS direct Post Office Adelaide,

Yours Sincerely Geo [George] P [Pepperell] Ingram

*vandie-monians – convicts from Tasmania