Mark Marks and his family

The 323-ton barque, *Atalanta*, had left Liverpool on May 1, 1853, bound for New South Wales. About five weeks out, in the mid-Atlantic, the ship's skipper, Captain Le Messurier, came to the owner of the ship, Mr Mark Marks, our grandfather's grandfather, with bad news. The stores of water on board would not last the voyage. It would be necessary to put in at Bahia, capital of the newly independent country of Brazil, to resupply. This would take some days, and would of course delay arrival in Australia.

Travelling near Brazil was not a diversion for ships sailing from Engand to Australia: Wikipedia has an article on the routes taken by the clipper ships from England to the Far East. They sailed from England down the east Atlantic to the Equator, crossing into the southern hemisphere at about 20 degrees west, which might take between 20 and 40 days, depending on the weather. At this point, the ship would be close to Brazil. The route then ran south through the western South Atlantic, following the natural circulation of winds and currents, crossing the Greenwich meridian from west to east at about 40 degrees south, taking the ships into the Roaring Forties, which would take at least 45 days from England. They would then sail east, passing south of Africa, avoiding any icebergs, arriving in Australia between three and five months out. (See the attached chart.)

We may imagine that Mr Marks was in two minds. Seeing the tropical city would enhance the education of his children. Known to-day as Salvador, it had also been the main port for the slave trade to Brazil over the previous three centuries. After all, he had brought Mr Julian Solomons[1] along on the voyage to act as a tutor to the five of his children to need one: Fanny had turned 12 on May 2, 1853, one day out of Liverpool, Betsy turned 14 on July 11, 1853, Ailsey was 10, Lionel 8, Rose Rachel 5, and young Bernard (our great-grandfather) was only 7 months old when the voyage began.

But there was a reason not to dally in Brazil. Mark Marks had learnt during the voyage from his wife, Hannah, that they were expecting another child, to be born probably in late September. Normally such a voyage would be expected to take three, or at most five months, depending on the weather (the barque had no engine). True, there were several women among Marks' passengers — Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Toby, a servant, and three unmarried women — but there was no midwife or surgeon, lest the birth prove difficult.

In the event, they weighed anchor after five days. Did Betsy celebrate her 14th birthday in Bahia? And they arrived in Sydney on September 4, 1853, three weeks before John Jacob Marks was born on September 26. Two other children would be born in Sydney: Selina in 1856 and Albert in 1858 (sadly, he died as an infant). After the family moved to Melbourne in 1858/59, three more children were born in the newly self-governing colony of Victoria: Henry Mark in Melbourne in 1859, Victoria in 1861, and Monty in 1864.

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1. He arrived in Sydney on 4 September 1853 in the *Atalanta* and later, as Sir Julian Emanuel Salomons QC (1835–1909), become the NSW solicitor-general, the chief justice of NSW, and the agent general for NSW in London. https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/salomons-sir-julian-emanuel-4532

Mark Marks was 38 when the family left England. We learn from his obituary that he briefly visited the USA in 1837, but he was not the first of his family to arrive in Australia, not by a long chalk: his brother Jacob had been in the colonies since 1835 and was the agent for the *Atalanta*'s voyage; his brothers Maurice and Solomon had arrived in 1846 and set up a business, the Liverpool Mart, in Hindley Street, Adelaide; his sister, Leah Lydia Harris née Marks, had arrived in Sydney in March 1850 with her husband, Lewis Harris; Mark's brother-in-law, Samuel Barnett (Esther's husband) had arrived in Melbourne on August 22, 1853, only to die suddenly eight days later; his widow remarried and emigrated to Australia with her second husband, Salomon Michael Salomon, some years later. But his siblings Samuel, Barnard, and Mary never visited Australia. Maurice later moved to Melbourne and established Marks' Monster Clothing Mart in Bourke Street, with his brother Mark.

Aged 16, Mark's younger brother, Jacob Marks, arrived in Sydney on board the *Hercules*, on July 27, 1835, with his maternal uncle Isaac Levey, Isaac's wife, Dinah, Dinah's mother, Maria Davis, and Richard Roberts, who was the brother-in-law of Isaac's brother, Solomon Levey. Eleven years later, in 1846, Jacob married his first cousin, Isaac's second daughter, Susannah, in Sydney. She had also arrived aboard the *Hercules*.

After arriving in Sydney, Jacob followed his uncle to the Yass district, now on the Hume Highway near Canberra, where managed a store and property at Currawong Creek, for a Mr. Roberts. On September 24, 1838, a band of bush rangers attacked the store and homestead. They shot dead a boy, blinded another (an Aboriginal), and severely wounded Jacob Marks. For some days, indeed, the newspapers were reporting him dead, and his English friends heard it too, since the mail left for England at this time.

Indeed, he was laid out for the funeral, but, according to his 1896 obituary, a young woman, Maria Moses, daughter of Moses Moses, of the White Hart Inn, Yass, suggested the performance of the Jewish rite with feathers. These revealed that he still breathed. He recovered. After the brothers Roberts advertised a £100 reward, the bush rangers were tracked, captured, tried, and executed. Jacob moved to Melbourne.

At first in retail with his brother-in-law, Samuel Harris, after the 1843 slump Jacob Marks set up in the import-export business and soon became a gold buyer. The places and dates of his children's births reveal his whereabouts: in 1847 and 1848 in Melbourne, in 1850 in the Hunter Valley, N.S.W., in 1851 to 1856 in Sydney (when he was the agent for the *Atalanta*'s 1853 voyage), in 1858 to 1863 in London, in 1868 in Hamburg, in 1872 back in Sydney. In the 1880s Jacob took up residence in England, and died in Brighton in 1896.

Back to Mark Marks, our great-great-grandfather. In the 1851 English census, we learn that Mark Marks, draper & outfitter, lived at 1 Rigby Street, Liverpool, with his family, his widowed father-in-law, Henry Harris, aged 76, a bookkeeper, two maid servants, and a female assistant. After the family emigrated two years later, Henry Harris went to live in London, with his wdowed son-in-law Abraham Jacobs.
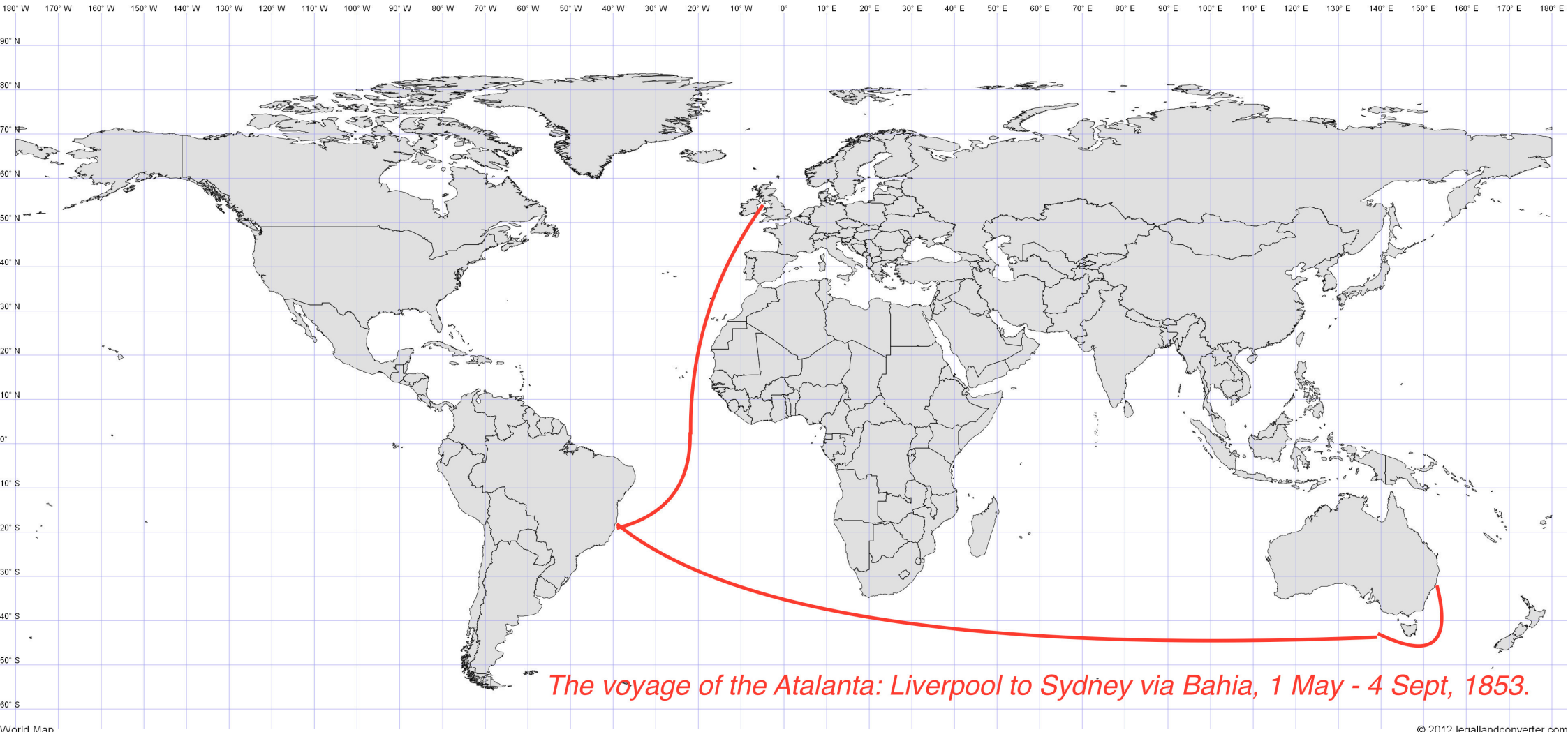
But despite his four siblings who were already in Australia, their presence here was not the impetus for the voyage. Mark Marks had married Hannah Harris, born in 1817 and daughter of Henry Harris and Elizabeth Solomon, and it was Hannah's brother, Samuel Henry Harris, the obituary tells us, who persuaded his brother-in-law to sally forth with his family.

Our great-great-great uncle, Samuel Henry Harris, was born in London in 1813. On September 6, 1832, he confessed to stealing over £100 from his employers in London, Elias & Isaac Moses, on the 5th of July, 1832. He was sentenced to seven years transportation, and arrived in Sydney on January 27, 1833, aboard the *Asia*. He was transferred to Port Macquarie, and on February 19, 1838, received his Ticket of Leave.

In 1840, Samuel Henry was living in Melbourne, where he was in business with his brother-in-law, Jacob Marks: they had two drapery stores — the London Mart in Queens St, and the Liverpool Mart at Collins and Elizabeth streets. According to an advertisement, their stock was "selected by their friends in London". The economic depression of 1843 forced Harris and Marks to sell "the whole of the rich and extensive stocks at an enormous sacrifice" and the partnership was dissolved.

Ironically, in Melbourne in 1848, Samuel is defrauded: "William Lloyd was indicted for having forged and uttered a receipt for money, bearing the signature of G. Kirk, with the intention of defrauding Mr S. H. Harris, of Elizabeth-st, Melbourne. Guilty." In Sydney in 1857, he co-founded the Sydney Consumers Gas and Coal Company. He was a generous man, and active in the Jewish community. In 1867, aged 54, he died in Sydney, probably of cancer.

After arriving in Melbourne, Mark Marks had been associated with his brother Maurice in the Monster Clothing Hall in Bourke Street. In 1873, Mark Marks was elected as Treasurer of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation; in 1877, a Justice of the Peace; in 1878 he was the managing director of the London Discount and Mortgage Bank in Melbourne; in 1882 he was elected President of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. He died on 15 May, 1888, aged 73, with an estate valued at £64,267 in Victoria and £1,432 11s in England. His widow, Hannah, died in 1897, aged 80. He had fathered 14 children, nine of whom survived him.

The voyage of the Atalanta: Liverpool to Sydney via Bahia, 1 May - 4 Sept, 1853.

World Map