

### **Esther Marks (1820–1890) and her family**

On 30 August 1853, at Hockin's Hotel, Elizabeth-street, Melbourne, Mr Samuel Barnett, a passenger on the Lord George Bentick, fell down dead, seven days after his arrival in the colony. He had travelled alone from Liverpool, where he had married Esther Marks, my great-great-great aunt (born in London in 1820) in 1838. Esther and Samuel had four children: David (1840-1908), Fanny (1841-1887), Lyon Lewis (1842- ), and Bessie (1845-1876).

We don't know why Samuel travelled to Melbourne without his family, but he was not alone — the goldrush was attracting fortune-hunters from across the world, and Melbourne was beginning to boom. Esther's brother, Mark (1815-1888), my great-great grandfather, arrived in Sydney with his family a few days later, on 4 September 1853, having left Liverpool on 1 May 1853.

Meanwhile, in Liverpool with a young family (David, Fanny, Lyon Lewis, and Bessie), the widow Esther soon remarried, to Salomon Michael Salomon in October 1854. There were no children from her second marriage. In the 1860s the family moved to the Antipodes: Salomon Michael went to the diggings at Hokitika on the South Island of New Zealand, while Esther and her children settled in Sydney. Esther died in Sydney in 1890.

In 1865 Esther's daughter Fanny Barnett (a first cousin three times removed of ours) married in 1865 in Sydney a first cousin four times removed of ours, Solomon Levey. Despite his pedigree, Solomon was ready to break the law.

On 26 April 1876, the Sydney papers announced that at 11 o'clock on 26 April 1876, Solomon was going to auction "the whole of his household furniture and effects. WITHOUT RESERVE." Just why became clearer (at least in retrospect) five months later when Solomon was twice charged with forgery ("forging, uttering, offering, and disposing of two promisory notes, each for £150"). He was bailed, but when he did not appear at the trial, on 27 September 1876, his bail was forfeit.

Someone told the court that Solomon and his family of eleven children with Fanny had sailed for San Francisco by the mail-boat. He never set foot in any of the Australasian colonies again. By 1880 the family was in Chicago, where he died in 1904. Fanny meanwhile had died in 1887 in Chicago, and her brother David Barnett travelled from Sydney after her death and died in Chicago in 1908. There is no evidence that any of the family, or their children, ever stepped foot in Australia again.