

## Sarah Theodosia Hall

Sarah Theodosia was the daughter of Charlotte Catharina Hall and Thomas Branson, a Leicestershire farmer. She was baptised on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 1793. On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1815 she married her cousin, Henry Edward Hall, at St. Michael's in Coventry. His father, Henry Edward Hall (the elder), was a quartermaster in the First Regiment of Dragoon Guards, and brother to Charlotte Catharina. The couple then lived in the parish of Lambeth, in London, and it was there that Sarah Theodosia had her first four children – Sarah Louisa (1819-1910), Henry Hastings (1821-1879), Letitia (1822-1877) and William Shakespeare (1825-1895) – baptised. Another daughter, Sarah Theodosia (born 1824), had died young in 1826. In the summer of 1827, the family moved to Essex, where Theodosia Sophia (1827-1898) and James Anderton (1829-1888) were born.



In 1829 the Swan River colony was formed, and the Hall family embarked the *Protector* in October 1829 for the colony. They had a range of equipment including machinery, tools, plants, livestock and a sloop. The Halls arrived February 1830 and bought an old ship in Fremantle to live in. Henry Edward went to Mandurah to clear his land in 1831, where he suffered many hardships. Sarah Theodosia remained in Fremantle with her children until after the birth of her last child Edward Frank (born February 1832).

The next year, Sarah Theodosia left for England with her two eldest children, Sarah Louisa and Henry Hastings, on the *Cygnets*, to put the two into school and to sort out some finances, the latter being unsuccessful. At this time, Henry Edward wrote to the Surveyor General about two blocks which he wanted to be invested in trust for Sarah Theodosia on High Street in Fremantle, where he already had two blocks. He was also struggling to provide for his family and servants, and had to live on government rations.

Sarah Theodosia arrived back in November 1834 on the *Adams*. Less than a fortnight later, however, her son James Anderton became lost. Two Aboriginals (Migo and Mollydobbin), a Mr Norcott and two white men set off to find James Anderton, who was found asleep on the beach. The Aboriginals were very glad to have found him, for if they had not, James Anderton would have died.



## Sarah Theodosia Hall cont'd

Henry Edward was still struggling financially and George Leake, a local solicitor, successfully proceeded against him, and sold Hall's land and possessions to pay for Hall's debts. Sarah Theodosia suffered from a nervous breakdown, and just five months later her mother died. In about 1837, Sarah Theodosia began to run the Perth Hotel on St George's Terrace, not stopping until 1843. In June 1841 (as Henry Hastings was to come of age the next year), Henry Edward left for England to break the entail on Shackerstone, the family estate, in order to sell it for some much needed money. He left his wife, who was currently trying to gain a licence to sell beer on the Perth Hotel's premises, as his legal agent, with power of attorney in his absence.

In late 1841 or early 1842, Sarah Theodosia discovered that Governor Hutt, Captain Stirling's successor, had taken back Henry Edward's land, as the Governor considered that Hall had not met the conditions of his assignment. The crux of the matter was whether Henry Edward had furnished an official application for the 200 acre grant. Sarah Theodosia insisted that he had, and threatened the government with Downing Street. Eventually, she sought legal help, and got a lengthy Memorial composed. She won when, several days later, the Colonial Secretary wrote and conceded that Henry Edward had made the grant.

During the five years Henry Edward was away, Sarah Theodosia felt the pinch of the Hungry Forties. In early 1843, Shackerstone was auctioned off for £15 000 (of which £6 000 was used to pay off Henry Edward's debts), and Sarah Theodosia stopped running the Perth Hotel. At the end of the year, Henry Hastings and Sarah Louisa returned from England, their education complete. Henry Hastings opened a drapers shop, but soon left for England again. On 12<sup>th</sup> June 1846, Sarah Louisa married George Bracher. In the October of the same year, Henry Edward and Henry Hastings arrived home and soon Henry Edward bought Wungong, a 420 acre farm near present Armadale, for £600 from G and J Armstrong, the sons of the Ravenswood pioneer. The family planted an olive grove, an orchard and Sarah Theodosia's oak tree.

In February 1858, Henry Edward, having some medical training, believed Sarah Theodosia to have mild sunstroke, and told her to stay in bed. But it appears that Sarah Theodosia got up too soon, and she died on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 1858, in Henry Edward's arms. She was buried in the south-east corner of the garden at Wungong. The next year on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, Henry Edward died of throat cancer, and was buried in East Perth Cemetery. In April 1860, Wungong was to be sold, and so Henry Hastings dug up his mother's coffin and took it to East Perth Cemetery to be beside his father's grave.

Sarah Theodosia left seven children – Sarah Louisa, who had married George Bracher; Henry Hastings, who later married Dorothy Anne (Dora) Peel, the daughter of pioneer Thomas Peel; Letitia, who had married a police inspector Robert Hester; William Shakespeare, who married Hannah Boyd Lazenby; Theodosia Sophia, who had married Robert Hester's brother, Edward; James Anderton, who firstly married Hannah Lazenby's sister Lucy, then Lilian Helena Bruce; and Edward Frank who married Anne Carpenter. Sarah Theodosia was a strong-willed woman in an age where women had few rights. She took on the government to win the Mandurah grant, even threatening them with Downing Street, and proudly owned land and livestock in her own right.

**References:** *Sarah Theodosia and the Hall Family*. H M Wilson (1994).



## Timeline

**c. 1790** – Henry Edward Hall born

**16<sup>th</sup> April 1793** – Sarah Theodosia baptized

**22<sup>nd</sup> November 1815** – Sarah Theodosia married to Henry Edward Hall at St. Michaels in Coventry

**5<sup>th</sup> November 1819** – Sarah Louisa born

**12<sup>th</sup> June 1821** – Henry Hastings born

**2<sup>nd</sup> September 1822** – Letitia born

**1824** – Sarah Theodosia (II) born

**3<sup>rd</sup> December 1825** – William Shakespeare born

**1826** – Sarah Theodosia (II) died

**12<sup>th</sup> October 1827** – Theodosia Sophia born

**1829** – James Anderton born

**October 1829** – Family left for Australia on the *Protector*

**February 1830** – Family arrived at Swan River colony

**1831** – Henry Edward left for Mandurah to clear his land

**February 1832** – Edward Frank born

**1833** – Sarah Theodosia, Sarah Louisa and Henry Hastings left for England on *Cygnets*

**April 1834** – Thomas Peel arrived at the colony

**November 1834** – Sarah Theodosia returned to the colony

**November 1834** – James Anderton lost on the beach

**1837** – Sarah Theodosia began to run the Perth Hotel

**June 1841** – Henry Edward left for England to break the entail on Shackerstone

**1841/2** – Sarah Theodosia discovered that Governor Hutt had taken back Henry Edward's grant, but won it back

**February 1843** – Shackerstone sold at auction for £15 000

**1843** – Henry Hastings left for England

**12<sup>th</sup> June 1846** – Sarah Louisa married to George Bracher

**October 1846** – Henry Edward and Henry Hastings returned to the colony

**1847** – Wungong bought from G and J Armstrong (sons of the Ravenswood pioneer) for £600

**17<sup>th</sup> February 1858** – Sarah Theodosia died

**20<sup>th</sup> April 1859** – Henry Edward died

**April 1860** – Henry Hastings dug up his mother's coffin and moved her to his father's grave at East Perth Cemetery.

