

People of the Yankalilla District



John & Sarah Rowley who owned Section 633 from 1878 – 1906

John ROWLEY 1839–1897

Married: Sarah Polden 1842 – 1938

Arrived in Yankalilla district: 1853

Settled at: Myponga

Occupation: Blacksmith

Buried: Myponga cemetery

Children:

Jane 1860 – 1946

Emily 1861 – 1946

John (Jack) 1865 – 1938

Giles 1866 – 1912

Alfred Ormsby 1868 – 1956

Lucy 1871 – 1963

Louisa Mary.1873 – 1951

Albert Edward.1875 – 1901

Sarah Amelia.1877 – 1970

Alice Agnes.1880 – 1955

Walter Allan.1880 – 1962

Rosetta 1882 – 1890

Ann Edith.1884 – 1975

John Rowley arrived in Adelaide in 1840 aged under one year old. He became a blacksmith wheelwright and farrier. One of his jobs was to service the mail and passenger coaches that came down the Old Sellicks Hill Road, gateway to the Western Fleurieu Peninsula. At the age of 20 he married 18-year-old Sarah Polden and they had 13 children. In 1878 he bought twenty acres of Section 633 for £45 on which he built Rowley Cottage, situated on the corner of Old Sellicks Hill, Sinclair & Pages Flat Roads.

When John Rowley died in 1897, his widow became the owner of Section 633. In 1906 she transferred it to her son Alfred who had followed in his father John's footsteps and was a skilled blacksmith.

For many years, the little white wattle and daub cottage and its outbuildings, almost hidden in a dense bank of English elms and pines, have been a landmark in the Myponga area. Under the wattle tree there was a stone water filled cooler, used for keeping milk and cream cans cold. There were very few improvements made to the house following its building, except to have electricity installed in about 1950.

When Alf died in 1956, his wife Mary moved to Middleton to live with their son Ormsby Alfred Rowley.

Rowley Cottage was declared unfit for habitation by the Yankalilla Council on 22nd June 1959. Three generations of the family had lived in the cottage. A portion of Section 633 remains in the Rowley family.

The blacksmiths in this family helped keep this corner of the Colony moving and must have fixed many problems. Bullock teamsters needed repairs or replacements. Tools of all kinds were forged, wheels mended and horses shod. When coaches tackled the local steep tracks carrying passengers and goods, the 'smithy' was essential. Hours around the forge and workshop would have been filled with news as well as the ring of the anvil.



Alf & Mary Rowley 1938
Alf's 70th birthday.

Owned Section 633 from
1906 - 1956



2020 compiled by Marilyn McLaren

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For more information on other notable
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