

People of the Yankalilla District



Calais Lacemaking machine

<https://www.cite-dentelle.fr/en/detail/566ef6601a6c7e8b078b456d/the-origins-of-lace-in-calais->

George DORMER (1798 - 1867)

Married: Judith/Julia GREY (c1800 - 1872)

Arrived in Yankalilla district: c1855

Settled at: Bald Hills

Occupation: blacksmith

Buried: unknown

Children:

Thomas (1832 -)

Ellen/Helene GIBSON (1834 - 1881)

Julianne NIXON (1836 - 1906)

George Michael (1837 - 1924) m Hannah CHAMBERS

Esther BARRETT (1840 -)

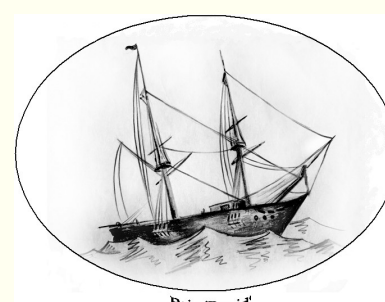
James (1841 - 1850)

George Dormer and his wife Judith or Julia came to South Australia with their six children on the *Harpley*, arriving at Port Adelaide in September 1848. George was one of the “Calais lacemakers” who emigrated to Australia after the collapse of the lace industry in Calais following the 1848 Revolution in France. These lacemakers were producing machine-made, rather than hand-made lace. Machine-made lace originated in Nottingham, England, at the end of the eighteenth century, but about 1816 a lace machine was smuggled out of England and taken to Calais. Subsequently the lace trade boomed in Calais, and many of the operators of the machines were Englishmen. A large number of these men and their families returned to England after the collapse of the industry and a substantial group applied to emigrate to Australia. The *Harpley*, the second ship bringing the lacemakers to Australia, left England in May 1848 and sailed to Adelaide.

After arriving in Adelaide, George worked for a time in copper smelting works in Adelaide, but then went to the Bendigo gold fields with his son, George Michael. They must have had some success as George was able to buy land in the Encounter Bay district in the early 1850s. The family came down to Bald Hills between 1853 and 1856, and George set up a blacksmith business on section 403, which was a convenient location bordering the early road from Yankalilla to Victor Harbor. George died in 1867. The death notice read:

DORMER. - On the 3rd November, at his residence, Bellview, Bald Hills, George Dormer, late of France, in the 70th year of his age, deeply regretted. Calais papers please copy.

His wife Julia died in 1872 in Adelaide at the age of 74. Their son George Michael set up a blacksmith business in Victor Harbor, where he lived for many years. He died at Prospect in 1924.



2023 compiled by Margaret Morgan

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For more information on other notable people of the district contact
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