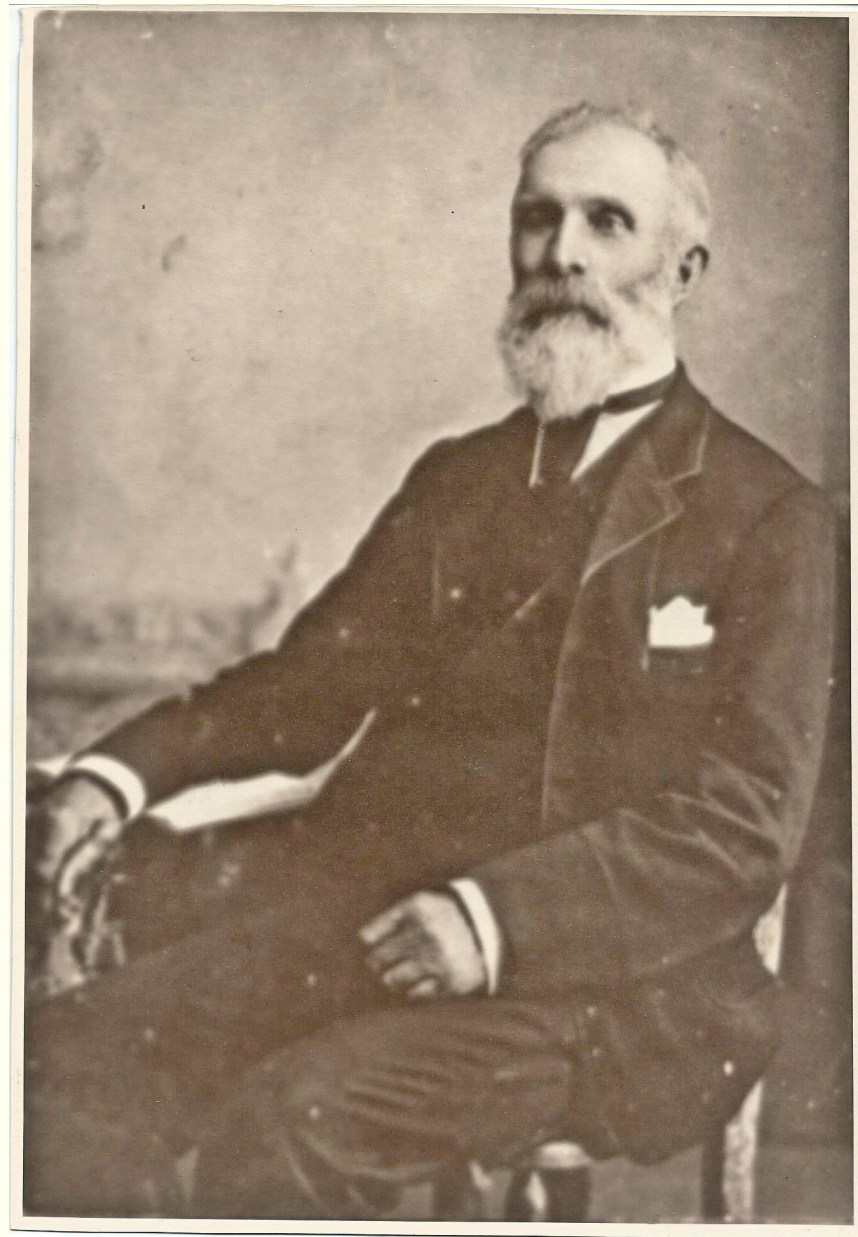


People of the Yankalilla District



Thomas WILLSON (1821 - 1901)

Married: Ellen WILKINSON (c1813 - 1906)

Arrived in Yankalilla district: 1853

Settled at: Yankalilla

Occupation: merchant, councillor

Buried: Penneshaw, Kangaroo Island

Children:

Lucy Ann HIBBART (c1843 -)

Thomas (c1845 - 1907)

Charles Danford (1850 - 1936)

Sarah (1853 - 1855)

Martin (1855 - 1917)

Thomas Willson was born in Lincolnshire, England, and came to South Australia on the Francis Ridley with his wife Ellen and young children (one of whom was born on board) arriving in August 1850. In November Willson purchased section 1180 in Yankalilla from George Worthington, and by 1853 the family were living at Yankalilla. A daughter Sarah was born in August 1853 but she died in May 1855. Six months after the death of Sarah, Ellen and Thomas had their last child, a son Martin, born at Bungala Cottage in November 1855. All their children apart from Sarah lived to adulthood.

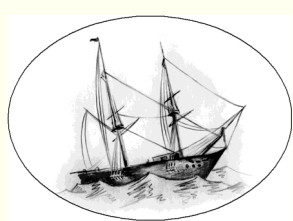
In 1853 Willson bought the western portion of section 1181 at Yankalilla from Henry Kemmis and also seven allotments of section 1014 at Normanville from Robert Norman. On one of these allotments near the mouth of the Bungala River he built a grain store. At Yankalilla he had part of sections 1180 and 1181 surveyed into 25 allotments to form the township of Yankalilla, which was declared in 1857. He built a general store and the Yankalilla Hotel, and in 1864 donated land to the District Council for a Council Chamber. He served on the District Council, being Chairman in 1863 and 1864. Willson took a lively interest in local affairs and was a frequent writer of letters to the editors of the newspapers of the day to express his views on various matters, usually in a forceful manner.

Willson moved to Kangaroo Island in about 1865, but retained his business interests in Yankalilla. He died in his eightieth year, on 18 May 1901, and was buried at Penneshaw.



Yankalilla Council Chambers c.1870. B8591 SLSA

Main photo courtesy Mark Roberts



2025 compiled by Margaret Morgan

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For more information on other notable people of the district
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