

Robert Crocker JENKINS (1812-1895)

Baptism Register St John at Hackney, Hackney, London

Entry No.1298 Robert Crocker Jenkins, born 26 Mar 1812, baptised 2 Apr 1815, son of Robert (occupation: Glover) & Agnes Jenkins of Duncan Place. Supposed also to be registered at St Clements, Worcester.

Sea Journal of Robert Jenkins, passenger by the Augustus Caesar to Hobart Town, Van Diemens Land, New South Wales 1835

Alexander Turnbull Library Reference: MS Papers 2128 [note: It is not known when the manuscript was acquired or from whom. The journal is in fragile condition, with fragments of pages sellotaped together in a semi-chronological order. The following is a first attempt to create an account of the voyage as gleaned from the journal fragments. A reasonable amount of material has been omitted due to difficulties with placing segments within the timeline. This is especially so for events associated with the rounding of Cape Horn.

The Augustus Caesar sailed from London to Gravesend on Monday 6 July with 30 passengers and 24 Officers and Seamen on board. Two days later the ship "sailed down river and anchored within a mile and half of Deal". "When we first came on board the decks nearly resembled a farm yard we had ten sheep a score pigs one goat and between two and three hundred Geese Ducks Turkeys and Fowles there were all for the use of the Cabin Passengers." In an undated fragment Robert comments that "all of us in the steerage were unprovided with knives and forkes plates and dishes thinking they whould be found... but we were mistaken, however we bought what we wanted at Deal for which the boatmen did not forget to charge us." Also the beef was "brown as mahogany and as hard as a piece of wood it is served up in a large wooden bowl with some potatoes which in Somersetshire we whould hardly give to pigs." Rough weather conditions were encountered before being in sight of the Isle of Wight and most succumbed to seasickness. Robert related that "I would have given anything for a ... of the Cary Cider".

On Sunday, 19 July, "we got out of the channel". On the following Wednesday evening, after making good progress the sea became as calm as "Park Pond at Cary". This didn't last as the next day "we had a very rough wind the waves sometimes breaking over the ship". The next Sunday, 26 July, Robert comments that "there is but little respect paid to the Sabbath on board this vessel there is no form of prayers as I expected when I asked the second mate the reason of it he told me we must all pray for ourselves." He also related that "the sailors leave of there usual employment and lie about deck smoking there pipes and talking over there adventures some mending there cloathes others making hats they seem very expert in using the needle making all there cloathes they were on board." At some point Robert became the Baker for his mess "and I assure you it pleased the Ladys enormously when they found they could have a french roll every night for there tea." On 31 July "we sent our cow overboard the poor thing could not stand for the last fortnight nor yet give any milk."

The island of Madeira was sighted on the evening of 2 August "but we was at so great a distance to observe it plainly the part we could see appeared like a barren rock we lost sight of it in about two hours we are just 15 hundred miles from London." At 4am on Monday 6 August Robert was called up "to see one of the wonders of the world, the Peak of Teneriffe and we saw it to advantage considering we were at the distance of 40 miles from it, the top of the mountain seemed to reach the sky, it was one of the most beautiful sights I ever beheld to see the sun rise over it when in about an hour afterwards a mist gathered over it and we lost sight of it." In the evening "two flying fish flew on board" and "I have dryed one of their wings and shall send it with my journal." On 22 August weather conditions near the equator were unusual as a sailor noted that he didn't

"remember haveing so much wind near the line as we have had this voyage". In the afternoon a Brig was sighted and the captain "gave orders for those that wished to send home to get their letters ready. Curtis wrote home I desired him to let my Cary friends know that I intended to write by the next ship." The Brig was the 'Renown' of London and after coming alongside the "Captains exchanged a few words".

The vessel, while off the African coast, had "lost every soul except the Doctor and two seamen who were then on board all the rest died of the fever that rages on that coast." The equator was crossed on 23 August. Tristan da Cunha was sighted on 13 September and four days later the vessel had reached "48 degrees longitude". Robert assisted with entertainment on board. "In the evenings when the ship goes steady either myself or Curtis take up our Violin on deck when we all amuse ourselves with Country dances and the Sailors will sometimes give us a hornpipe we then close the evening with a Concert as we have several singers on board."

On 20 October the vessel was "only 27 degrees from Hobart Town" and "I hope in about ten days... my feet on Terra Firma". A week later "we are only 10 degrees from Hobart Town" and on 30 October land was sighted. Just before dark on Saturday 31 October "we stood in for the land and sailed alongside up the river the night was very cloudy and rained at times so that we could not see anything of the country, about twelve o'clock we came in sight of the Camps in Hobart Town. The Pilot now came on board and conducted the ship up to the town were we anchored at about three in the morning." At six o'clock in the morning Robert recounted his surprise "at the appearance of the town", it being the "pretyst place I ever saw". "The town I should think it is at least two miles in extent the streets are well laid out and most of the roads are as good as those in england there are a great number of excellent shops two very handsome Churches and a very large court house there are several respectable Hotels and public houses out of number.... there were about fifteen large ships and a quantity of smaller craft in the harbour when we arrived there appears to be plenty of trade going on here but money is very scarce... for my own part I am quiet delighted with the country and I am sure it will agree with me for I am get so stout since I have been on land that you would scarcely know me. I must now draw my journal to a close and should it afford any of my friends amusement in England it will give great ...".

Hobart Town Courier Friday 6 Nov 1835

The ship 'Augustus Caesar', 414 tons, Captain Wiseman arrived on Saturday, from London, 10th July with a general cargo. Passengers: Mr Wood, Mr and Mrs Bucker, Miss Bucker, Mrs and Miss Blackburn, Capt and Mrs Clayton, Mrs Hayton, Miss E. and Miss Emily and Master Hayton and female servant, Mrs Edward senn., Mr and Mrs Edward, Mr and Mrs Lansdowne, Mrs and Miss Johnstone, Miss Last, Mr Curtis, Mr Jenkins, Mr Vicar, Mr Henley, Mr and Miss Coley, Mr Phillips, Mr Heson, Mr Atkinson.

Colonial Times 14 Jan 1840 Advertisement – Caution

I hereby caution all persons from trespassing on a Farm of 500 acres, lately in the occupation of Mr James Olding, situated at Prosser's Plains, (and bounded on the front line by the Prosser's River, and on the south by the original grant to Mr Nathaniel Olding) the same being now in my possession, as I am determined to Impound all Stock found, and prosecute every illegal trespass committed thereon. Robert Croker Jenkins. Prosser's Plains, Dec. 30, 1839.

Colonial Times 9 Jun 1840

Matthew Gunson was indicted for having, on the 23rd of last March, robbed the house of his employer, Mr. Robert Cocker Jenkins, of sundry articles of wearing apparel. It appeared that the prosecutor had gone out on the day in question, leaving the prisoner in charge of his premises. On returning, he found the house shut up, and the prisoner away. His bedroom had been broken into during his absence, and a musket, hat, trowsers, some shirts, and other articles, taken away. The prisoner was apprehended at Prosser's Plains, with the trowsers produced, upon his person. The prisoner conducted himself, during the trial, in the most insolent and disrespectful manner, telling the Court, that "if ever he got another slant, he would make some of them look out." Being asked if he wished to put any questions to Mr. Jenkins, he said, "no, I disdain to speak to him." Verdict, Guilty.

The Mercury 25 Jun 1862 Rural Municipality of Clarence

The following are the names of gentlemen proposed for election as the first Municipal Council of the district of Clarence:- Robert Blyth, Robert Doctor, John Dunbadin, Richard Fitzsimmons, Charles Alexander Glover, William Gard, George Henry Gatehouse, Charles Hazel, Robert Crocker Jenkins, Edward Maum, Edward Moore, Albert Potter, John Smith, James Gordon Steele, William Stokell.

The Mercury 24 Aug 1865 Sorell Municipal Election

The election of a Municipal Councillor to serve in the place of Francis Allison Esq., resigned, at the Municipal Board of Sorell, takes place on Friday at the Council Chamber. There are three candidates nominated, viz., Messrs Robert Crocker Jenkins, Edward Moore, junior, and Benjamin Phillips. The poll will be open during the usual hours.

The Mercury 22 Nov 1870 Annual Elections – Rural Municipalities

... We subjoin a list of the municipalities, showing the names of the outgoing councillors, who are eligible for re-election, and the names of the several Returning Officers:- Sorell – Robert Crocker Jenkins and George Hayton, outgoing councillors; F.Aubin, Returning Officer.

The Mercury 17 May 1871 Sorell – from a correspondent

The complimentary dinner to Mr. Robert Crocker Jenkins, on the occasion of his leaving the Sorell township for his old home at Wettenhall, Upper Carlton, was well attended on Thursday night, at the Working Men's Club, of which he is President. The Rev Mr Brammall occupied the chair, and Mr. Allison the vice-chair. Among those present to do honour to Mr Jenkins were Messrs McPhie, Fitzsimons, Hildyard, Peacock, Blackwood, Iles, Henwood, Rowe, Quinn, Riley, Gard, Phillips, Oldham. The dinner was supplied by Mr Bidgood, and was of a recherche kind, and reflected great credit upon him. How far the edibles were appreciated was best understood by the pleasure with which they were partaken of by all present. The Rev Mr Brammall, in a lengthened speech, spoke of the good qualities of Mr Jenkins both as President of the Working Men's Club, and as a private individual. After reverting to the formation of the club, its decline, and revival, he concluded with a high eulogium both on Mr Jenkins and his family, which was loudly applauded. Mr McPhie also joined in expressing his need of praise, and concluded with stating that few would have done the good Mr Jenkins had. Mr Jenkins, in rising to return thanks for the reception given him that evening, said he felt proud of it. He had striven whilst in Sorell to do his best to advance the social position of those around him. After some practicable suggestions, and returning thanks again for the terms in which he and his family were spoken of, he resumed his seat amidst great cheering. The Rev Mr Brammall again rose, and desired to say that it was incumbent upon them to thank their first President, Mr Allison, for his aid to the Club during his tenure of office. Mr Allison

responded in thankful terms for their remembrance of him; he had done all the good he could. Circumstances, which he enumerated, prevented him from doing more (Great cheering). He then, in the absence of some one else, proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, whom he spoke of in high praise in connection with the Club. The Chairman briefly returned thanks. A dance succeeded in which all present enjoyed themselves thoroughly.

The Mercury 28 Oct 1873 Marriage

On the 25th October, at St George's Church, Sorell, by the Rev C. J. Brammall, John Robert, second son of Mr Robt. Crocker Jenkins of Wettenhall, Upper Carlton, to Mary Jane, eldest daughter of the late Mr B. Zelley, of Sorell. New Zealand papers please copy.

The Mercury 24 Feb 1874 Marriage

On the 19th February, by the Rev. C. J. Brammall, at the residence of the bride's father, George, youngest son of Mr George Peacock, late Postmaster, Sorell to Elizabeth Agnes, eldest daughter of Mr R. C. Jenkins of Wettenhall, Upper Carlton.

The Mercury 18 Jul 1876 Sorell – from our correspondent – Suicide

An inquest was held at Bream Creek, on Monday the 10th instant, before J. A. Gunn, Esq., (Coroner) and a jury, of which Robert Crocker Jenkins, Esq., was foreman, on the body of George Woolley the older, of Bream Creek. From the evidence it appeared that deceased had affixed a cart rope to the beam of a shed, and, placing it around his neck, stood on a low chook and log pigstye, from off which he threw himself, and thus ended his earthly career. The body was discovered within an hour from the time he was last seen by his daughter. Deceased, who has a chain of connexions throughout the Sorell district, was some years ago a licensed vitualler at Kangaroo Point, where he attempted to commit suicide. He was at times the subject of melancholy and excitement; and the jury returned a verdict of suicide whilst in a state of temporary insanity.

The Mercury 27 May 1882 Electoral District of Sorell – Election, May 30, 1882

A list of the names and descriptions of all Candidates put in nomination, and the names and residences of their proposers respectively:- No. 1 James Gray of Hobart nominated by Jonas Gatehouse, Wattle Hill; George Albert Mace, Trisbanna; Robert Crocker Jenkins, Hobart; Abraham Morey, Little Swanport; Richard Studley Steele, Forcett; Alexander Rogers, Tasman's Peninsula; Richard Copping, Carlton; John Thomas Steele, Carlton; and 73 others. No. 2. Charles Hamilton Bromby of Hobart, Barrister-at-Law, nominated by James Robertson, New Town; David Hamilton Hughes, Morville; Edwin Walter Goodwin, Rosebank; Edwin Kearney, Coal River; Peter Quinn, Jerusalem; and twenty-seven others. Dated this 25th day of May, 1882. Winston C. Simmons, Returning Officer Electoral District of Richmond.

The Mercury 25 Mar 1893 Marriage

On February 15, 1893 at St Paul's Church, Coppington, by the Rev. C. J. Brammall, Francis B. Crocker, of Nimitybelle, New South Wales, only son of R. C. Crocker, Belle Vue, Sorell, to Ada Marian, youngest daughter of R. C. Jenkins, Westenhall, Upper Carlton.

The Mercury 3 Nov 1894 Marriage

On November 2, 1844, at St George's Church, Sorell, by Rev. Jas. Norman, Robert C. Jenkins, of Wettenhall, to Hannah Halstead. Golden wedding.

The Mercury 19 Jun 1895 Death

On June 18, at Sorell, Robert Crocker Jenkins of "Wettenhall," Carlton, aged 85. The funeral takes place on Thursday at 1 o'clock.

The Mercury 24 Jun 1895 Obituary

A Sorell correspondent writes:- "An old identity in the person of Mr Robert Crocker Jenkins has passed away from our midst. On the 5th instant he was at the public sale yards, apparently well, and only for the few days preceding his decease was he laid aside. The deceased gentleman was born at Castle Carey in Somersetshire in 1812, and emigrated to Van Diemen's Land, as it was then known, in 1835. He selected land at Buckland, where he resided for some years, but left there and came to Sorell and settled at Wettenhall, a spot well-known for many years for the hospitality extended to all coming under his friendly roof. He married in 1844 a daughter of the late Mr John Halstead, of Whiteira, Sorell, and thus became connected with the leading families of the district. The late Mr Henry Hinsby, of Hobart, was his fellow passenger from England. Mr Jenkins lived in Hobart for a few years prior to 1886, but then settled down at his old house, from whence he only recently came to reside at Sorell. He leaves five sons and four daughters besides his widow. The first interview the writer had with the subject of these lines was in the days when wheat was conveyed from Prossers to the Coal River mill on the banks of Simpson's donkeys, a string of these animals often being brought past Runnymede. Mr Jenkins was a thorough farmer and a most energetic poultry breeder, his mantelpiece being adorned with trophies won in the palmy days of the Poultry Society. He frequently said that he had only missed two of the exhibitions since the society was formed. He was also a warm supporter of the Southern Tasmanian Agricultural and Pastoral Association, having been a successful exhibitor in this also. Many years ago he had a seat for a short time at the Sorell Municipal Council. He was one of those who took some trouble to endeavour to acclimatise the pheasant and partridge at Wettenhall, but, like many others, failed in the effort. His funeral was largely attended, and it was remarked that there were more of the old friends of the deceased present than had been seen at a similar gathering for years past."

The Mercury 10 Aug 1897 Marriage

On June 10, 1897, by the Rev. J. H. Mullen, at St. Michael's Church, Sydney, Percy W., youngest son of the late R. C. Jenkins, Esq., of "Wettenhall," to Evelyn, second daughter of Mr J. W. Silk, of Hill View Station, Nimityville, N.S.W.

The Mercury 2 Sep 1905 Death

On September 1, 1905, suddenly, at Sorell, Hannah, widow of the late R. C. Jenkins, of Wettenhall, Upper Carlton, aged 83 years. Funeral will leave her late residence, Sorell, at noon of Monday, September 4.