

Sarah Emery per *Roman Emperor* to Adelaide

Sarah Emery from Castlederg in County Tyrone, arrived to Adelaide, South Australia on the *Roman Emperor* on Monday 23 October 1848. Nothing is known about Sarah's life in Ireland except that she was one of six orphan girls to come from the Castlederg Workhouse on the *Roman Emperor* to South Australia.¹

On the 15 December 1852 Sarah married John Ockleford (also Ockelford) in Adelaide. John, aged about 23, was from Southampton, the son of James and Ann.² After a stay of a couple of years in Adelaide they moved to Packham in Morphett Vale, where they remained for most of their lives. John's occupation was a labourer and he was an active member of the community.³

Sarah and John had seven children:⁴

James born 25 November 1854 in Adelaide

The other children were born in Morphett Vale:

Ellen born 22 March 1857

George born 28 August 1859

Jane born 15 March 1862

Mary Ann born 25 July 1864

Caroline born 17 October 1866

Emily born 18 March 1869

In August 1859 John was 'laid up' with rheumatism and Sarah asked the 'Destitute Board' for some relief for the family. She was successful in her application and two and half rations were allowed.⁵

In August 1870 John set off on the ship *Omeo* for Darwin with the Darwent and Dalwood Company to help build a section of the overland telegraph between Adelaide and Darwin.⁶ However, in July 1871 he returned to Adelaide because the South Australian government had cancelled Darwent and Dalwood's contract as they believed they were not able to complete the section of telegraph as agreed.⁷

This set back did not discourage John; a couple of weeks after his return from Darwin he applied and was selected for the Patterson expedition, along with some of the others from Darwent and Dalwood, to complete a section of the telegraph. They sailed for Darwin on Thursday 27 July 1871 on the *Aldinga*.⁸ The telegraph line was completed in August 1872 and the first message was sent on the 22 October 1872. The overland telegraph party left

¹ *Appendix to Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee on the Operation of the Poor Law*, House of Lords, 1849, quoted in Trevor McClaghlin, *Barefoot and Pregnant*, Vol. 2, Genealogical Society of Victoria, Melbourne, 2001, p.397.

² English Census, 1841.

³ *South Australian Government Gazette*, 1853-1865. *South Australian Almanac & Directory*, 1863-1870.

⁴ South Australian Births, Deaths and Marriages.

⁵ *South Australian Register*, 9 August 1859, p.3.

⁶ *South Australian Advertiser*, 22 August 1870, p.3.

⁷ *South Australian Register*, 10 July 1871, p.4 and 17 July 1871, p.2.

⁸ *South Australian Chronicle and Weekly Mail*, 29 July 1871, p.12.

Darwin on the 11 October 1872 and was reported arriving at Adelaide on 11 November 1872.⁹

Unfortunately, John's time with Sarah and the children only lasted an extra few short months. On Monday 13 January 1873 John died at his home with Sarah, in Hackham. A couple of days later an inquest was held at the Golden Pheasant Inn at Hackham at which Sarah and other witnesses testified that John had been in good health and sober during the day. The jury agreed with the doctor that John died of, 'a fit of congestive apoplexy'.¹⁰

Once again, in April 1876, Sarah had to ask for extra rations to provide for her family.¹¹

In September 1890, Sarah's life took a different direction—she became the licensee of the *Caledonian Hotel* in Barton Terrace, North Adelaide. The previous licensee had been her daughter Jane Chapman who died on the 25 June 1890.¹² While Sarah was at the hotel her son-in-law Albert Rose (Caroline's husband) was the landlord/manager.

Sarah died at the *Caledonian Hotel* on 12 January 1893 and was interned two days later at the West terrace Cemetery.¹³

⁹ *South Australian Register*, 11 November 1872, p.5.

¹⁰ *South Australian Advertiser*, 16 January 1873, p.2.

¹¹ *South Australian Register*, 8 April 1876, p.7.

¹² *South Australian Register*, 10 September 1890, p.3.

¹³ *South Australian Register*, 13 January 1893, p.2.