

### Information on Thomas Leech of Grassy Flat from Sally Russell (nee Leech)

I am related to Thomas through his brother, Henry Bagshaw Leech B 1814 Manchester, Lancashire, Died 1878 Macclesfield UK. I came to Sydney in 1962 with my father Samuel Arthur Leech (1915-1999) and family and now live in Mittagong NSW.

#### BIRTH

##### THOMAS LEECH

Birth: Manchester, Lancashire

Christening: 23 JUN 1822 Cathedral, Manchester, Lancashire

##### Parents:

Father: BARNABAS LEECH

Mother: BEATRICE

#### MARRIAGE

To Betty Ryle on 20 Sep 1847 at St Peters Church, Prestbury, Cheshire  
(Witness, Amelia Leech - Thomas' sister)

#### DEATH

Name: Thos Leech Birth Year: 1822 Age: 78

Death Place: Woosang, Mount Kerong, Victoria

Registration Year: 1900

#### CHILDREN

1. Amelia Leech B 1847 Macclesfield, Cheshire; Died Derby UK 1907
2. Susanna Jane Leech B 1849 Macclesfield, Cheshire; Died Conway, Wales 1936
3. George Frederick Leech: Christened 08 Aug 1852 at CATHEDRAL, MANCHESTER, married Jane Elizabeth Muntz in 1885. He died 1827 at Malvern, VIC. They adopted Daisy Sarah Leech B about 1895.
4. Thomas Hudson Leech: Born at sea in 1855: (Victorian Public Records Office website). Died 1869 aged 14 years at Waanyarra, Jones' Creek, Registered at Newbridge (grave at Waanyarra historical cemetery) (This date conflicts with information below that states Thomas senior arrived in Australia in 1851 unless he went back to England to bring the family to Australia)
5. William Henry Leech was born in Tarnagulla in 1857 – D 1913 Mount Kerong, Victoria. Married Elizabeth Harwood in 1894 - they had 5 children
6. Elizabeth Leech B 1859 Waanyarra, Jones' Creek, married T Matthews
7. Mary Leech B 1861 at Grassy Flat, married William George White 1883
8. Laura Leech B 1862 at Grassy Flat, married Wm Ths Muntz 1889 - they had 7 children
9. Isabella Beatrice Lucille Leech B 1864, registered at Newbridge VIC; married Jn Alexander Stuart in 1884 - they had 8 children
10. Florence Miriam Leech B 1867, registered at Newbridge VIC; d 1933 Surrey Hills, VIC; married Alfred William Harley in 1895; son Alfred William Harley B 1897

#### NOTICES

The Argus (Melbourne, Vic: 1848 - 1956)

Tuesday 8 May 1900 p 1 Family Notices ... gathered at home. LEECH - On the 4th May, at "Leechfield " Woosang, Thomas, the dearly beloved husband of Betty Leech, aged 78 years

The Barrier Miner, Fri May 11, 1900

The death is reported from Victoria of an old colonist, Mr. Thomas Leech, of Leechfield, aged 78.

He landed in the colony in 1851 and made his way in succession to the Avoca, Adolatdo Lead, and Fiery Creek fields, and then to Dunnolly, finding some rich claims. He was one of the first to take up tobacco growing as an industry.

HISTORY - (Granddaughter of Wm Henry Leech, Elizabeth M (Betty) Andrews)

Thomas came to Australia around 1851 and settled on the goldfields in Dunnolly.

The family later settled in Tarnagulla, (formerly Sandy Flat) around 1857.

Sons George Frederick and William Henry settled in Woosang in 1877, now a ghost settlement, between Wedderburn and Charlton. Following the death of William Henry and George Frederick, the farm was sold and now the beautiful mud brick building they built has been washed away and included in a larger property.

Thomas moved to Woosang in about 1885 when his 60 acre property at Grassy Flat went up for sale. He may have built his house over the road from his sons' place but nothing remains of it now.

I have no photos of Thomas, but do have for photos of one son and one daughter and their spouses.

#### Australia

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#### 1841 Ancestry

Where born: Lancashire  
Civil Parish: Manchester  
Hundred: Salford  
County/Island: Lancashire  
Street address: 7 Mile Gate, Manchester

Registration district: Manchester

Sub-registration district: Market Street

Household Members:

Thos Leech	15	Warehouse (B about 1826)
Amelia Leech	12	Bonnet Maker ( B abt 1829)
Jno Barnabas Leech	7	
Phoebe Ayres (looks like)	70	Ind (Independent means?)

All born in County

Next door are living their mother Beatrice & other relatives

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#### 1851

Name: Thomas Leech

Age: 29 Estimated Birth Year: abt 1822

Relation: Head

Spouse's Name: Betty

Where born: Manchester, Lancashire

Civil Parish: Manchester

Ecclesiastical parish: St Thomas County/Island: Lancashire

Street address: 8 Bank St Manchester

Occupation: Warehouseman - Calico

Condition as to marriage: M

Household Members:

Thomas Leech	29	B 1822	Manchester	
Betty Leech	22	B 1829	Macclesfield	Cheshire
Amelia Leech	3			
Susanna Leech	16	Mo		
Amelia Bradshaw	22	B 1829	Manchester	Sister Milliner
John Bradshaw	26	B	Blackburn	Brother-in-law Designer to calico printers

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1861 England census - Emigrated to Australia in about 1851-1855

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From: "Betty Andrews" nee Leech B 1938 Preston VIC

My ancestor, Thomas Leech was born in Manchester in 1822, he married Betty Ryle in 1846.

My g.grandparents migrated to Australia around 1853 and found there way to the "diggings" (goldfields) and settled on the goldfields in Dunnolly. They later settled in Tarnagulla, Victoria where my grandfather William Henry Leech was born in 1857.

They later became farmers and they and my grandfather William settled in Woosang in about 1877, a small settlement, now a ghost settlement, between Wedderburn and Charlton in Victoria's North West.

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<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~tarnagul/dgindex/index.html>

The following abbreviations are used within these documents;

TC - Tarnagulla Courier

IA - Inglewood Advertiser

MDA - Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser

DBCE - Dunolly and Burnt Creek Express

DTSE - Dunolly, Tarnagulla and St Arnaud Express

LEECH T.

MDA 8.11.1861 Refreshment Licence

DTSE 22. 9.1864

TC 22. 8.1874 Mr Leach gives a Lancashire dialogue. He is very very good at acting and reading.

TC 20.11.1875 A son of Mr Leech of the Hard Hills, Dunolly\*, dies of scarlet fever.

TC 8. 7.1876 Elected to Shire School board of advice.

TC 19. 1.1878 J P.

TC 1. 6.1878 President of the Bet Bet Shire\*, travels to the Govenor's Levee.

TC 3. 1.1880 Originator of the Harvest Queen ceremony in connection with the Tarnagulla Fete.

TC 26. 2.1881 Cr. Leech of Waanyarra.\*

TC 14.11.1885 His 60 acres property at Grassy Flat for sale.

TC 27.11.1886 Of Woosang.

TC 30.10.1897 Golden Wedding, at "Leechfield", Woosang.

TC 5. 5.1900 Dies, very good obituary.

TC 20.10.1900 Sale of his Paddock at Grassy Flat.

TC 3.11.1900 Sports held in his paddock, then paddock sold.

TC 25.11.1905 Mrs dies.

Tc 14.11.1908 Albert

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\*Hard Hills Mine, Dunolly (1856-59) area, near Linton VIC. Hard Hill Rush of Jan 1854; Dunolly Rush 1856

\*Waanyarra & Bet Bet Shire\* - Dunolly District

Waanyarra - NE of Dunolly

<http://www.waanyarra.com>

1864-65 Tobacco was first grown at Waanyarra in the summer of these years. Mr Thomas Leech planted a 1/2 acre crop at Grassy Flat, the fertile creek flats North of Morton's Welcome Inn. The venture was successful, so that the following season he planted a larger area. After dismissing the belief that the locally grown product was inferior, he sold the crop for 3/- a pound.

Mr Leech then constructed a press which was used to press the produce into a more saleable item at 4/- a pound.

In the years 1866-67 Mr. Leech planted an acre of tobacco which yielded around 1/2 a ton. The crop, when cured and pressed, was sold for 4/6d. a pound.

Mr. Leech's venture gained much notoriety in the Waanyarra neighbourhood, and in the following season the crop was again a success, with more acres being planted.

In the 1868 Waanyarra Postal Directory a Mrs. Mueller of Mosquito was listed as a Tobacco grower, so there was no doubt that Mr. Leech's tobacco venture caused interest.

From Janet Rowson Feb 2016

[1864-65] Tobacco was first grown at Waanyarra in the summer of 1864-65. Mr Thomas Leech planted a 1/2-acre

crop at Grassy Flat. The venture was successful, so that the following season he planted a larger area. 168  
[1860s] Gold deposits were depleted by the early 1860's, although diggers still worked the  
Waanyarra area with some success. Miners who stayed in the district with their families were reluctant to leave the  
settled life they had come to enjoy.  
The 1869 Land Act allowed for ordinary, less wealthy people to select and buy land ...  
Commons were established to allow controlled grazing of Crown Land for a fee.  
Jones Creek Goldfields Common was about 410 acres and took in part of Grassy  
Flat, where a dam was built for stock water.  
The saw mill was the first steam powered mill in Australia and was on this paddock.

From Janet Rowson Feb 2016

[1861] Waanyarra] Many men were kept employed cutting timber when gold became  
scarce. Timber was used for fencing, building, and fuel and for railway sleepers.  
In 1861 there was a sawmill at Grassy Flat. Bullock drays were used to haul the huge  
logs to the sawmill. Mr. R.W Hammond and Co. were proprietors of the mill. 131  
131  
Douthat 1989, p17

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<http://www.waanyarra.com/?p=595>

Jones' Creek School No.339

The average attendance at Jones' Creek School was 16 when Mr. and Mrs. Birrell took charge in January, 1871.  
The 1871 School picnic was held at Thomas Leech's paddock at Grassy Flat on the 17th March, with Mr. Birrell  
supervising the games.

The children who attended the picnic were given grapes by Mr. Leech.

The cricket ground was chosen as the venue for the 1872 picnic. Mr. Birrell marched his pupils to the picnic spot  
where, on their arrival, they were given fruit supplied by their parents.

Cricket and football were played and there were races. Lunch was served at the booth. In the afternoon adults  
danced to violin music and the children received fruit and lollies. Jones' Creek School correspondent, Mr. Leech  
congratulated the company on the spirit of cordiality and good feeling which had made the occasion enjoyable. The  
National Anthem concluded the proceedings.

Mr. Thomas Leech was elected to the School Board for the Tarnagulla Riding of the Bet-Bet Shire in June of 1872.

JONES' CREEK;

Loddon District; Postal Village; Dist from Melb 113 miles

Ballier's 1868 Victorian Directory for Jones' Creek

Leech Thomas, dairyman, Grassy Flat

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[trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/5933558](http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/5933558)

The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1956).Bet Bet (Shire) - Mr Thomas Leech was on Tuesday elected president of  
the Bet Bet. Shire. Dandenong (web page unavailable for full details)

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Victorian Public Records Office website

All Shipping Records - no

Wills & Probate - full online will printed out