

Extract from
The SPICER FAMILY of White Rock, Bathurst
1823-1883

Thomas SPICER (1782-1848)
and the Spicer Family of
White Rock, Bathurst, NSW
1823-1883

Written by
Bruce W. Thomas

1975

Cont.

DEATH OF ELIZABETH SHORT, nee SPICER

Elizabeth (Mrs Walter Short), died at the home of her daughter, Rachel Greenfield (Mrs G. Townsend) at Marrickville in 1883. ⁹²

Elizabeth had been the last survivor of that little band of English pioneers – Thomas Spicer, his wife Leah, Elizabeth. Edmund and John. Thomas Spicer died in 1848, Edmund in 1853, Leah in 1866 and John in 1880. Now, with the passing of Elizabeth, the Spicer family in New South Wales came to the end of an era --- the era of the pioneers from overseas.

It is true that Elizabeth had younger sisters, Margaret and Jane, but they were born in the Colony-the first of our Australian pioneers.



Mrs James JELBART, 1831-1900

nee Jane SPICER

Copied from a carte in

Annie Jelbart's album

lent by Harold Jelbart

EPILOGUE 1883

The death of Elizabeth in 1883, marked, for the Spicer family, the end of an era. An exciting era which began when a tall soldier, his young wife and their three frightened children stepped ashore at Farm Cove and gazed at the grim penal settlement that was Sydney in 1823. As a soldier, Thomas Spicer had been ordered to New South Wales in charge of convicts and for him the unknown future in this wild continent was just another chapter in a life already filled with excitement. Leah, as a loving and dutiful wife, wished to be near her husband and to share his life in this strange new land. It was the children who were frightened and bewildered – especially Elizabeth, aged four years. Little Edmund, aged three and baby John, aged two, were too young to be worried by their new surroundings.

Since John died in 1880, Elizabeth had been the last survivor of that little group of English pioneers. Sixty of her sixty-four years had been spent in the colony. During her lifetime Elizabeth had witnessed many great changes – in Sydney Town, at White Rock and, more recently, at Marrickville.

The Sydney which greeted Thomas Spicer and his family may be seen in a set of panoramic views drawn by Major Taylor, of the 48th Regiment, and published in 1823. In these views we can discern old Pinchgut, For Macquarie, Government House and Stables, Macquarie's Rum Hospital, the Military Hospital, St Philip's Church and the Windmill on Flagstaff Hill. During the period of Governor Macquarie's government, every encouragement had been given to build good houses --- and in 1823 there were fifty nine houses of stone, the property of individuals, 222 built of brick, and 773 built of timber.

The town was rapidly extending to the area now known as Hyde Park. The greatest accumulation of houses being in the area called, "The Rocks".

Thomas Spicer would, of course, have been quartered in the Military Barracks which then extended from George Street to Clarence Street and from Barrack Street almost to Flagstaff Hill. Perhaps Leah and her babies found lodging in a house in York Street.

Elizabeth, we can guess, treasured a happy memory or two of that part of her young life when her father was stationed in various parts of the remote country. But we are sure she was happiest when the family settled at White Rock and her father began the life of a farmer. Elizabeth was only eleven when Thomas received "Daubegin" as a grant. Then for Elizabeth came her schooldays at White Rock – the old school house is still standing – and her marriage to Walter Short – the "boy from over the road".

After Elizabeth and Walter left White Rock for the big city they became involved in their own family and lost touch with the Spicers now clustered around O'Connell. Until a few years ago the Spicers believed that the Short family, in Sydney, had died out.

To the Spicers, "Daubegin" was the real home of the family. John Spicer, who owned "Brisbane Grove", was bitterly disappointed when Thomas Spicer's grant of 100 acres was lost to the family. He vowed to buy it back and he did so – within five years! Later, after John's death, "Daugbegin" was lost for the second time and family life centred on "Brisbane Grove", O'Connell.

Thomas and Leah Spicer, the young family they brought to New South Wales and the children who were born in the Colony have, in turn, gone to their eternal reward. But the quality of life which they have passed on to us, their children, lives on.

We have every right to be proud of the history of the Spicer family. May we always remember the courage and fortitude of our pioneers. May we always strive to live up to the high ideals which guided them through life – the Christian principals, which they have handed on to us.

Let each of us not only raise our hat to the past, but roll up our sleeves to the future – for, as John Wesley has said, “The best is yet to be!”