

People of the Yankalilla District



John Clarke's plaque on his grave at St Peter's Cemetery

John CLARKE (c. 1812-1890)

Arrived: Port Adelaide, November 1836 on the *Tam O'Shanter*.

Married: Catherine TAGGART (c. 1820-1893) on 7 September 1840 in Adelaide.

Settled at: Wattle Flat

Buried: St Peters Catholic Church Normanville

Children of John and Catherine:

John Jnr (c. 1841 - 1888) m. Elizabeth Eat (nee Kidman)

Thomas Laurence (c. 1842 - 1917) m. Sarah Fergusson

Mary Jane (1844 - 1874) m. Patrick O'Neill

Matthew (c. 1846 - 1914) m. Julia Foley

George Francis (1849 - 1922) m. Ellen Walsh

James Andrew (1851 - 1933) m. (1) Adah Walker

Mary Berry; (2) Laura Lois Mundy

Charles (1853 - 1931) m. Marianne Theresa Logan

Peter (1856 - 1889)

Susan Ann (1858 - 1930) m. James Wenham

Elizabeth (c. 1860 - 1892) m. Hubert John Kenihan

Alice (c. 1862 - 1892) m. Allan McDonald Fergusson

John Clarke was the first known white resident of Wattle Flat. When he arrived in the colony from Ireland, he initially purchased a town acre in Adelaide, imported a horse and dray, which cost £35 each from Tasmania, and drove to Wattle Flat in 1838, where he built a house which he called 'Wattle Hills'. He then returned to Adelaide in 1840 to meet and marry Catherine Taggart, who had arrived from Cork, Ireland, on the William Nicol with her family (parents Michael and Catherine, a brother John, and two sisters Mary and Margaret), who intended farming at Morphett Vale.

After their wedding, John and Catherine Clarke returned to Wattle Hills where they lived for the rest of their lives, and where seven sons and four daughters were born. John owned 21 sections at Wattle Flat and as each of his children were married, they were given several sections. John Clarke, an educated man, was the first Justice of the Peace in the district, he became a member of the District Council and, before Willunga had a Catholic Church, the priest would ride from Morphett Vale and hold Mass in John and Catherine's home. A hot midday dinner was served to all the congregation. Weddings and christenings were also celebrated in their home.

When St Peter's Catholic Church was built in Normanville in 1857, John gave stone and materials and loaned his dray for cartage, and continued to support the church generously. Fittingly, John Clarke's plaque on his grave at St Peter's Cemetery reads: 'He fed the hungry and clothed the poor.'



2022 compiled by Lorraine Day

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For more information on other notable people of the district contact yank.hist.soc@gmail.com