



Scottish Settlers – The 1st 10 years

South Australia

To understand the arrival of settlers into South Australia during the first ten years of the colony requires knowledge of the process involved in settlement.

The first of these is an understanding that South Australia solicited appropriate settlers according to criteria that varied according to the needs and finances of the colony.

One also needs to be aware that prior to 28 December 1836 the area was inhabited by Europeans (as well as indigenous). The earliest of these were largely sealers but the first colonists for the settlement arrived well ahead of the proclamation when the colony was technically New South Wales. The first were those on the *Duke of York* that dropped anchor at Kingscote on 27 July 1836 with 25 male and 1 female assisted adult settlers.

The arrivals in the period 1836 to 1842 fell into several categories:

- settlers that paid their own passage
- those that were eligible for assistance from the Land Fund
- settlers that had their passage paid by a third party
- those that found their way, usually by coastal vessel, from the other colonies.

Clearly any of these could have been Scottish and apart from the group, albeit the largest, that sought assisted passage there is no readily available paperwork available that would suggest their origins.

In 1841 the Land Fund exhausted its reserves and the assisted passages ceased and did not restart until the second decade of settlement.

Fortunately for researchers, the bulk of arrivals to 1842 were those on assisted passage and as the colonial commissioners were paying to charter the emigrant vessels, records of passage were carefully maintained and survive. While these records provide addresses for applicants it is important to realise that these are not always the home address. Some made their way to emigration depots and then made application rather than making an application whilst living at home. Still other less than common places have unexpected spellings as in John Allen single aged 24 who arrived on the *Sir Charles Forbes* in June 1839. His address was recorded as Carmiseskan rather than

Carmis Eskan in Argyllshire. James Hoare and his wife on the *Birman* hailed from Kilmnaina. Could that be Kilmmainham in Aberdeen?

Under this scheme, labouring classes received a free passage if they were aged 15 to 30 years of age and had two references. The scheme also accepted paying passengers not eligible for free passage with preference still given to married applicants:

- Steerage passengers paid £15-20
- Middle Berth £35-40
- Cabin class £70.
- Children under 14 years £3
- Children under 1 year were free.

Source: *Emigrant Labourers Applying for a Free Passage to South Australia 1836–1841* (AJCP CO 386/149-151)

When it comes to all other arrivals, we have to rely on other records to determine nationality. I like to compare these travellers within the Empire with no need for passports or travel documents to those of today using public transport—you buy a ticket, board for the trip, disembark at the end of the journey and dispose of your ticket. The transport company has no idea of your identity!





The researcher is likely to achieve more positive outcomes by looking at other records generated in the colony. The Biographical Index of South Australians records James Sanders as a baker age 41 from Leith MLN and this matches with his entry in the assisted passenger list arriving on the Catherine Jamieson as J Sanders single baker.

Undertaking a very specific search with the Biographical Index of South Australians using the search birth field as *SCT will reveal all those born in Scotland. By adding to the arrival field 1836* etc. we can get a listing of 1836 Scottish arrivals— individuals plus families although some of these came via eastern colonies.

If the goal is to prepare a list of Scottish settlers in the first ten years of SA settlement the task is probably insurmountable as all the indexes focus on the pursuit of people rather than places and if a place search is provided in any database it may still may make the task almost impossible until every place name is appended with Scotland!

Graham Jaunay

BISA – SCT arrivals
individuals and families

1836	12
1837	21
1838	48
1839	222
1840	79
1841	6
1842	3
1843	10
1844	2
1845	6
