

CROKER PRIZE FOR BIOGRAPHY 2022

2227 A Coal Miner and Leading Orchardist

by Karen Lonsdale

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My paternal grandmother, Kathleen, passed away when I was six months old. She had lost her husband, Percy, less than two years earlier. Similarly, my father only knew his maternal grandmother. So, I knew almost nothing about my paternal ancestors. Who were they? Where did they come from? What traits and characteristics did I inherit from them? This biography focuses on my paternal second great grandfather, Charles Hall, who lived most of his adult life in Cardiff, New South Wales.

Charles Hall was born on 9 August 1848, in Horton, Staffordshire, England, the son of Elizabeth Hall and an unknown father.¹ At the age of 23, he married Ann Turner in 1872, at Norton in the Moors, St. Bartholomew, Staffordshire.² Charles and his family emigrated to Australia in 1878, departing London on 19 July 1878 as government assisted immigrants on the barque, *Scottish Admiral*, arriving in Brisbane on 30 October 1878.³ The barque was berthed at Raff's Wharf and the passengers were transported by steamer to Brisbane, arriving at Queen's Wharf⁴, now considered "The Birthplace of Brisbane".⁵ Travelling with Charles (29), were his wife, Ann (24) and their children, Sarah (5), Mary (3), and Thomas (1).⁶ The day after they arrived, the Brisbane Courier reported that "The immigrants by the ship Scottish Admiral were safely landed, and housed in the immigration depot, at half-past 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon, where they now wait employment, and can be engaged from and after half past 9 o'clock this morning."⁷ No time to rest for these weary international travellers!

Their fourth child, Henry Hall was born in Queensland, a few weeks after their arrival, on 18 December 1878.⁸ Soon after they moved interstate to New South Wales, where the rest of their children were born. Sadly, they lost two infant children in 1880⁹ and 1882¹⁰. My great grandfather, Daniel Hall¹¹, was born in Wallsend in 1882. Charles and Ann had five more children: Ellen Hall (1884)¹², Charles Turner Hall (1886)¹³, Ann Hall (1890)¹⁴, Samuel (1891)¹⁵ and Arthur Edmund (1893). Sadly, Samuel also passed away as an infant in 1891.¹⁶

In the early 20th century, Cardiff, New South Wales had a thriving fruit-growing industry, in which many of the gardeners, like Charles Hall, were coal miners whose orchards would provide them with income during their retirement. Charles built a homestead and orchard on about 10 acres of land, which he purchased for £25 per acre.¹⁷ He was considered one of Cardiff's leading growers of citrus and stone fruits¹⁸ but also sold sorghum by the ton or bundle¹⁹. Despite this success, he and other orchardists were negatively impacted by heavy rains and pests during some seasons, which causes significant financial losses to their businesses.²⁰

Tragically, in 1905, Charles and Ann lost their eldest daughter, Sarah Hayward (nee Hall) who died by suicide at age 32, through self-administered carbolic acid poisoning.²¹ Allegedly, Sarah had been depressed for several years, due to experiencing frequent epileptic fits.²²

In September, 1915, Charles's and Ann's youngest son, Arthur Edmund Hall, a 22-year old mine machinist, enlisted in World War 1. He was appointed to the 16th Reinforcements, 3rd Battalion, embarking from Sydney on 1 April, 2016. Private Hall was wounded in action

in France in May, 1917²³. Charles Hall wrote to the AIF on 8 June, 1917, to enquire about his son's condition. They informed him that "His wound was not stated to be serious, and in the absence of further reports, it may be assumed he is progressing satisfactorily...". Arthur rejoined his unit on 13 June 1917. He was awarded three medals during his service and was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal. He returned to Australia in April 1919.²⁴

A few months prior to his son's return, at the age of 70, Charles Hall advertised the sale of "6 acres of land, 5 acres with fruit trees, together with 6-roomed House, horse, cart, harness, and all implements; 5 minutes from station."²⁵

Sadly, Charles and Ann lost another child before the end of their lives. My great grandfather, Daniel Hall, a coal miner, passed away from pneumonia, chronic myocarditis and myocardial degeneration at the age of 52, in Cardiff on 14 August 1935²⁶. Charles Hall would live almost another three years, passing away in Cardiff, with acute bronchitis on 9 August 1938, at age 89. My father, Peter, was only three weeks old at the time of his great grandfather's passing²⁷.

DNA evidence shows that I am biologically matched with many descendants of Charles Hall through my grandmother, Kathleen Lonsdale (nee Hall). Do I take after Charles, my second great grandfather? Unfortunately, I have not inherited his aptitude for gardening, being being better known for my unintended killing of plants! But I believe I have inherited some of his fine qualities, such as showing resilience during tough times, being goal-oriented, having an entrepreneurial spirit, and a willingness to take on leadership roles, including running my own business.

¹ NSW BDM, Death transcription, Charles Hall, 13175/1938

² England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index: 1837-1915 (1872). Registration Quarter Jan-Feb-Mar, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, Vol. 6b, p.749.

³ VESSELS TO ARRIVE. (1878, October 16). *The Brisbane Courier (Qld. : 1864 - 1933)*, p. 2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1375784>

⁴ Shipping. (1878, October 31). *The Brisbane Courier (Qld. : 1864 - 1933)*, p. 2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1376167>

⁵ Historic Queen's Wharf, <http://queenswharf.org/>

⁶ Queensland State Archives, Item Representation ID PR3504653

⁷ LATEST DATES. (1878, October 31). *The Brisbane Courier (Qld. : 1864 - 1933)*, p. 2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1376178> ⁸ QLD BDM, Henry Hall, Reg. 1879/C/5979

⁹ NSW BDM, Harry Hall, Reg. 8792/1880

¹⁰ NSW BDM, Elizabeth Hall, Reg. 20081/1880

¹¹ NSW BDM, Daniel Hall, Reg. 25974/1882

¹² NSW BDM, Ellen Hall, Reg. 29676/1884

¹³ NSW BDM, Charles Hall, Reg. 31490/1886

¹⁴ NSW BDM, Ann Hall, Reg. 35287/1890

¹⁵ NSW BDM, Samuel A Hall, Reg. 35955/1891

¹⁶ Australia, Death Index, 1787-1985, Samuel A Hall, Reg.14974

¹⁷ THE CARDIFF FRUIT INDUSTRY. (1901, January 7). *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (NSW : 1876 - 1954)*, p. 3. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article138471064>

¹⁸ ORCHARDS AND ORANGERIES. (1911, July 27). *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (NSW : 1876 - 1954)*, p. 4. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article137044835>

- ¹⁹ Advertising (1902, August 4). *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (NSW : 1876 - 1954)*, p. 8. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article136571930>
- ²⁰ ORCHARDS AND ORANGERIES. (1911, July 27). *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (NSW : 1876 - 1954)*, p. 4. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article137044835>
- ²¹ State Archives NSW; Series: 2763; Item: X2087; Roll: 343
- ²² SUICIDE AT CARDIFF. (1905, February 23). *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (NSW : 1876 - 1954)*, p. 6. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article138761117>
- ²³ A CARDIFF SOLDIER. (1917, July 7). *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (NSW : 1876 - 1954)*, p. 11. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article134869588>
- ²⁴ National Archives of Australia, NAA: B2455, HALL A.
- ²⁵ Advertising (1918, November 9). *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (NSW : 1876 - 1954)*, p. 9. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article137500295>
- ²⁶ NSW BDM, Reg. 13175/1935
- ²⁷ NSW BDM, Death transcription, Charles Hall, 13175/1938