

Streets of York

Do you live in Carter Road?



Brothers Thomas and Henry Carter were born to a farming family in Norfolk, England in the early 1800s. Due to agricultural depression after the Napoleonic Wars, farming prospects in England were not strong and in 1830 Thomas and his friend Charles Frederick Leroux travelled to the Swan River Colony on the "Edward Lombe". On their arrival they formed a partnership and with their combined capital and an initial free grant of 49 acres they acquired a further 5000 acres of land in the Avon and Canning districts. Their partnership progressed quickly with the opening of a general store in Perth in 1833, a land grant for Merrow Farm between Perth and York and an Inn "Halfway House", also called "Travellers Joy", at Malunning where they commenced farming wheat and potatoes within a month of the first rough track being forged through to York.

Despite their best endeavours their partnership was not a financial success with Leroux leaving the Colony in 1834 and the pair being sued for the recovery of large debts.

Carter then went to work with the Reverend John Burdett Wittenoom the first colonial chaplain, who had been granted 5000 acres at Gwambygine near York. He gained a reputation as a hardworking and honest settler and an expert in the care of sheep in the trying colonial conditions. As well as working for Wittenoom he shepherded for others, charging £25 per hundred sheep per annum, paying all expenses except shearing and transportation to Perth. By 1838 he was able to buy back Half Way House and its adjacent farmland and sublet it to a Mr Smith. Business became so good that Thomas wrote home to his brother Henry and asked him to come and join him in his farming enterprises. Henry arrived in winter and walked from Perth to York, covering the 62 miles in two days, with a horse to carry his baggage. The hardworking and experienced farming brothers continued to prosper.

Thomas was on the inaugural committee of the York Agricultural Association in 1840 and elected secretary in 1841. In 1842 the title to 50 acres in the Avon Region, first granted to Thomas in 1832, was confirmed to Messrs T. and H. Carter. In 1843 Thomas was one of the first men appointed to the new York Roads Board. They continued to buy land, particularly on the Western outskirts of York at Daliak, and bought and bred horses as well as opening a general store in Fremantle. By 1852 they were the biggest lease holders in the Avon Valley.

In 1844 The York Agricultural Society began to press for the introduction of convicts due to the lack of labour in the colony. Thomas Carter supported the move, suggesting that more convicts were needed than the 40 proposed by Samuel Burges, and that female immigrants should be increased in the colony as men outnumbered women by two to one.

Disaster struck the brothers in 1852. Their sister Sarah Bartram and her husband had been invited to join them in their endeavours and sailed to the Swan River Colony on board the *Eglinton*. The captain lost control of the ship 150 miles from the Australian coast and she foundered on rocks just north of Perth. After two days the female passengers were dragged through rough seas to a waiting cutter which overturned near the shore, Sarah and a seaman drowned and the captain of the ship was tried for manslaughter. Her husband William Bartram then joined the Carter brothers in their successful

commercial ventures in Fremantle but in 1856 Thomas returned to England followed by Henry in 1858, leaving their business in William's hands until his death in 1874. Both brothers were to die in Norfolk, Henry in 1862 and Thomas in 1892.

Ref: Thomas and Henry Carter, Pioneers of York and Fremantle by Anne Carter. Printed in Early Days Vol 11, Part 5, 1999.