

Jenkins-Armstrong Archive

Anne Isabel Jenkins was born in Sydney on 9 December 1879 to parents, Ellen (nee Dallas, b. London c.1841, d. Charters Towers, 1918) and William Jenkins, a mariner from Wales. On 4 April 1895, Anne married Thomas Armstrong in the utopian colony of New Australia in Paraguay. New Australia was established in 1893 by William Lane, who was largely responsible for the formation in 1889 of the Australian Labour Federation. Lane also became first editor of the *Worker* in 1890.

Hoping to escape the strikes, poverty and unemployment at home in Australia, Thomas Armstrong— a twenty-three year old farmer from Bundaberg - his family, and siblings, were among the first group of 236 pilgrims who departed Australia on the *Royal Tar* for Paraguay on 16 July 1893. In December 1893, the widowed Ellen Jenkins was among 198 more who boarded the *Royal Tar* for Paraguay.

The New Australia colony were able, “for marrying purposes,” to “fix up man and wife mateship as [they] pleased among [themselves],” with the Government of Paraguay giving “due power and authority for marriage registration” to anyone selected by the colony for the purpose. Thomas and Anne were among those to be married there, with the ceremony performed by New Australia’s “Intendente,” Frank Kidd (and “Presidente”). The marriage certificate – written in Spanish [see item JA/4 below] - bears their three signatures as well as those of John Armstrong and Clara Thomas.

For many New Australia proved disappointing, with William Lane seen to be a failure. In March 1894, Thomas, his father, Alfred, and brother, John, all signed a petition to leave the association and “try again on other lines.” In May, however, William Lane along with forty men, nine women and eleven children withdrew to a new establishment farther south, Cosme. Despite the change, many – such as Anne and Thomas - chose to return to Australia.

Archive Location: 137R

Detailed Listing

- JA/1 Copy [dated 1903] of the marriage certificate of Ellen Dallas and William Jenkins, Hobart 8 October 1862
- JA/2 Copy dated 1941 of the birth certificate of Anne Isabel Jenkins 9 December 1879
- JA/3 Memorandum of transfer of land, Parish of Rugby, County of Northumberland 18 January 1894
- JA/4 Marriage certificate of Anne Isabel Jenkins to Thomas Armstrong, Paraguay 14 April 1895
- JA/5 Letter dated 12 December 1895 on “Colonia Nueva Australia, Paraguay” letterhead, certifying Mrs E. Jenkins was a midwife while in the colony.

JA/6 Portrait of Anne Isabel Armstrong nee Jenkins

JA/7 *The Utopia that Failed* An article on the William Lane experiment.