

**AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT**

**JOHN B. GRAHAM**

**Papers, 1842-1926**

**Reels M373-76**

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25 Park Close  
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London W14**

**National Library of Australia  
State Library of New South Wales**

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

John Benjamin Graham (1813-1876) grew up in Sheffield and moved to London in 1832, where he was apprenticed to an upholsterer. In 1839 he emigrated to Adelaide, with £40 of his own savings and £250 worth of goods to sell for his employer. He worked as a publican and then became a shopkeeper and ironmonger in Hindley Street. When rich copper ore was discovered in 1845 at Burra, in the mid-north of South Australia, Graham mortgaged his business and invested heavily in the South Australian Mining Association. The Association purchased the northern half of the Burra Creek Special Survey and for the next fifteen years its Burra Burra Mine was to be the richest minerals mine in Australia. As the largest shareholder in the company, Graham quickly became wealthy, his dividends totalling as much as £16,000 per annum. He built a large house north of Adelaide which he named Prospect House ('Graham's Castle').

In 1848 Graham sailed to England on what was intended to be a short business trip. In the following year, however, he married Louisa Rymill, on condition that they lived in England. Graham remained a director of the South Australian Mining Association and he invested in other South Australian companies, such as the Adelaide Land and Gold Company. He made a short visit to South Australia in 1858. In general, however, he led the life of a gentleman of leisure. He and Louisa often travelled in Europe and in 1858 they moved to a mansion on the River Necker in Germany. Louisa died in 1870 and Graham spent his last years at St Leonards-on-Sea in Sussex.

Henry (Harry) Robert Graham (1850-1933) was the eldest son of John Graham and inherited his business and property interests in Australia. He made occasional visits to South Australia but in general his interests were managed by his uncles, Henry and Frank Rymill. A supporter of the Conservative Party, he represented St Pancras West in the House of Commons from 1892 to 1906. His brother (Frederick) Malcolm Graham (1856-1911) emigrated to South Australia in 1878 and worked on sheep stations.

Sir Henry Ayers (1821-1897) emigrated to Adelaide in 1840 and worked as a law clerk. In 1845 he became the secretary of the South Australian Mining Association and from 1850 onwards was the managing director of the Association. He was the agent of John Graham and other absentee shareholders in the company. He had many other business interests, especially in banking, and became an extremely wealthy man. Ayers entered the Legislative Council in 1857 and between 1863 and 1873 he was seven times Premier of South Australia. He was president of the Legislative Council from 1881 to 1893. He was knighted in 1873.

Henry Rymill (1836-1927) and Frank Rymill (1837-1915) were the brothers of Louisa Graham. In 1855 they were persuaded by John Graham to emigrate to Adelaide. Henry had difficulty finding employment and for a time worked as a gardener. In 1856 he was engaged by Henry Ayers as a bookkeeper in the South Australian Mining Agency. In 1862 he formed his own land and finance company and in 1865 went into partnership with Frank Rymill, who had been a clerk in the Police Court and secretary to the Commissioner of Crown Lands. They took over John Graham's agency in 1867. The brothers were managers and part-owners of the Canowie Pastoral Company and were directors of various companies. Henry's son Arthur Graham Rymill (1868-1934) was the principal of H. & F. Rymill and managing director of the Canowie Pastoral Company.

## JOHN B. GRAHAM

### Reel M373

#### A. Photograph

Carte de visite photograph of J.B. Graham in later life.

#### B. Diaries, 1841-58

1. Diary of J.B. Graham, 8 March 1841 – 19 March 1842

The diary contains relatively brief entries dealing with Graham's life and work in Adelaide, including the management of his general store, his association with his partner Michael Featherstone, stocktaking, the shipment of goods to New Zealand, the re-arrangement of the store, the receipt of goods, visits to the bond store, the Flinders Hotel, the state of the money market, ship arrivals, his health, visits to the chapel, bird shooting, and the weather.

2. Diary of J.B. Graham, 1 January – 24 July 1842

The diary contains similar kinds of entries, with references to the state of the business, trade with German settlers, shortages of tea and coffee, the flour trade, ship arrivals, visits to the Featherstone Family, Graham's health, visits to the chapel, the purchase of an accordion, and the weather.

3. Diary of J.B. Graham, 12 January 1848 – 2 March 1849

The diary, which was written for Graham's mother and step-father in Adelaide, has more substantial entries. It begins with 'A few thoughts and hints for a long journey and when far away from home.' It refers to Graham's departure from Adelaide, the weather, the seas, sightings of sharks, porpoises and other ships, accordion playing, his arrival at Calcutta, impressions of the town and Fort William, his transfer to a steamship and the voyage to Madras, Aden, Suez, Alexandria, Malta and Southampton (28 May 1848). The later entries describe his life in London, letters to his mother, Michael Featherstone and Henry Ayers, a visit to Ireland (June-July 1848), travels in England, church services, business meetings with Richard Hallett, social life, outings with Louisa Rymill, news from South Australia, the purchase of mining stock, and Graham's health. At the end of the volume is a list of suggested purchases.

4. Diary of John Adams, 28 July 1848 – 19 March 1849

The diary was written for Graham by his step-father, John Adams. Many of the entries are quite lengthy and deal with the affairs of the Burra mines, meetings of directors of the South Australian Mining Association, Henry Ayers, the secretary of the Association, the trial of Thomas Burr, the superintendent of the Burra mine, industrial trouble at Burra, committee meetings, meetings of the Church Society Committee, meetings of the trustees of Pulteney Street School, an examination of

the scholars at Pulteney Street School (22 Dec. 1848), the arrival of the new Governor Sir Henry Young (Aug. 1848), church services, St John's Church, Adelaide, a fete at Prospect House for the children of Trinity and St John's Churches (3 Jan. 1849), gardening, purchases, ship arrivals, news of Graham in England, and the weather. There are references to Sir Henry and Lady Young, Bishop Augustus Short, Rev. W.J. Woodcock, Rev. James Farrell, Michael Featherstone, Capt. William Allen and Marshall McDermott.

5. Diary of J.B. Graham, 3 March – 31 December 1849

The Letts diary contains brief entries referring inter alia to a meeting with Capt. Charles Sturt, Graham's marriage to Louisa Rymill at Brompton Church (20 March 1849), their honeymoon in France, letters from Adelaide, business dealings with R. Hallett, and financial transactions with the Bank of Australasia.

6. Diary of J.B. Graham, 1 January – 31 December 1850

The Letts diary contains brief entries referring to the birth of Graham's son, Harry Graham (20 Feb. 1850), his life in London, riding, skating, social events, exhibitions, church services, meetings with R. Hallett, Burra shares, a deputation to Lord John Russell (2 March 1850), letters sent to Adelaide, goods sent to Henry Ayers, and travels in England and Scotland.

7. Diary of J.B. Graham, 1 January – 2 June 1851

The Letts diary contains brief entries referring to purchases, shares, social events, church services, meetings with R. Hallett, preparations for the move to a new home, and numerous visits to the Great Exhibition, which opened in London on 1 May 1851. Graham was involved in the organisation of a geological exhibition as part of the Great Exhibition.

8. Diary of J.B. Graham, 17 January – 13 July 1858

The Letts diary contains quite detailed entries covering Graham's visit to Australia. It describes his voyage from Marseilles to Malta, Alexandria, Suez, Aden, Port de Galle, Melbourne and Sydney (16 March), sightseeing in Sydney, the voyage from Sydney to Melbourne and Adelaide (10 April), meetings with Henry Ayers, Henry Rymill, Francis Dutton, John Ellis, Marshall McDermott and others, meetings of shareholders and directors of the South Australian Mining Association, a journey to Burra and inspection of the mines, a visit to a property at Clare, the Botanic Gardens in Adelaide, financial transactions, and his departure from Adelaide (12 May). The return voyage from Melbourne followed the same route via Ceylon and from Marseilles Graham travelled overland to Frankfurt.

## **C. Correspondence, 1848-1926**

1. Official letters from Henry Ayers to John Graham, 7 February 1848 – 6 October 1857

The letters, which are numbered 1-65 (a few are missing) were written by Graham's agent in Adelaide, Henry Ayers. Ayers had been secretary of the South Australian Mining Association since 1845 and in 1850 was elected managing director. The letters deal with the agency, the Burra mines, discoveries of lodes in particular shafts, labour, wages, copper prices and the copper market, share prices, reports of meetings, the activities of directors and staff, the election of directors, payment of dividends, smelting works, land sales, properties of Graham left in Ayers's hands (1858) and gold discoveries in eastern Australia. There are references to John Adams, Michael Featherstone, Capt. William Allen and Henry and Frank Rymill.

2. Official letters from Henry Ayers to John Graham, 8 June 1858 – 4 January 1870

The letters are numbered 1-137 (a few are missing). In this period Graham was living near Heidelberg in Germany. Ayers continued to be his Adelaide agent until 1867, when H. & F. Rymill took over the agency, although Ayers continued to act in some business matters until 1870. In these years Ayers was heavily involved in politics and he was Premier of South Australia several times between 1863 and 1873. The letters refer to Graham's account, quarterly remittances, the South Australian Mining Association, meetings of shareholders and directors, dividends, share purchases, visits to the Burra mines, the discovery of new lodes, industrial disputes, a contact with the English and Australian Copper Company, the Karkulto Mines, copper mines at Wallaroo and Moonta, the formation of new mining companies, the offer of Henderson and others to purchase the Burra Mines, the re-organisation of the company, the construction of a railway to Burra, economic conditions in South Australia, the Bank of Adelaide, the development of the Northern Territory, gold discoveries in New Zealand, and the transfer of many of Ayers's business interests to his son H.L. Ayers and Henry Rymill. There are many references to Henry and Frank Rymill, including Frank's marriage to Lucy Baker (1861), and also to Henry Roach, the captain of the Burra Mine, John Ellis and Charles B. Fisher.

3. Unofficial letters from Henry and Frank Rymill to John Graham, 1858-66

The letters from Louisa Graham's brothers in Adelaide deal with John Graham's business interests in South Australia, the Burra Mines, shares, dividends, financial transactions, copper prices, mineral discoveries, the Wallaroo mines, Henry Rymill's relations with Henry Ayers, the possibility of the Rymills taking over Graham's agency, Henry Rymill's marriage to Lucy Baker (1861), building plans, Frank Rymill's visit to England (1864), the death of their father Robert Rymill (1862), news of Graham's acquaintances in Adelaide, letters received from Louisa Graham and the travels of John and Louisa Graham in Europe. There are references to the Ayers and Baker families, Capt. Walter Hughes, John Morphett, Henry Roach and Sir Dominick Daly, the Governor of South Australia. Most of the letters were written by Henry Rymill.

## **Reel M374**

4. Official letters from Henry and Frank Rymill to John Graham, June 1867 – December 1876

The letters are numbered 1-127. Although they are mostly signed H. & F. Rymill, they were almost all written by Henry Rymill. They deal with the engagement of the brothers as Graham's agent in Adelaide (1867), their relations with Henry Ayers, the formation of their partnership, the South

Australian Mining Association, meetings of shareholders and directors, the copper market, the Burra Railway Bill, visits to Burra, mining machinery, wages, smelting operations, the future of the Burra Mine, mineral surveys and the Kapunda, Wallaroo and Moonta mines. The letters also touch on their growing pastoral interests, property transactions, Canowie and Curnamona Stations, visits to Canowie Station (1873-74), shearing, agricultural production, and the Royal Agricultural Show.

More general subjects include economic conditions in South Australia, political events, the Bank of Adelaide, the political career of Sir Henry Ayers, the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to Australia (1868-69), the Northern Territory Company, and the shipment of goods to England. There are references to the children of Henry Ayers, the estate of Robert Rymill, Graham's family, the health and death of Louisa Graham (1870) and Graham's illnesses (he died in 1876). Among the many individuals mentioned in the letters are Frederick and John Beck, Arthur Blyth, John Darlington, Matthew H. Finnis, Charles B. Fisher, Thomas Goode (the superintendent at Canowie), J. Frederick Hayward, Sir George Kingston, William Peacock, Henry Roach and Robert Sanders.

## **Reel M375**

Note: The documents on this reel were filmed from right to left, with the title page at the end of the reel.

5. Official letters from Henry and Frank Rymill to Harry R. Graham, January 1877 – January 1879

The letters, which were written to John Graham's eldest son, are numbered 1-28. The subjects include the death of John Graham, his will, power of attorney, the Burra Mine, the Bank of Adelaide, Canowie Station, Curnamona Station, sheep sales, the Royal Agricultural Show, a visit by Malcolm Graham to South Australia (1878), economic conditions in South Australia, and family news. There is also a letter from J.F. Hayward (Bath) about the Canowie partnership (11 April 1877) and copies of letters from Graham to R.B. James on the same subject. There are references to Harry Ayers, Sir Henry Ayers, John Beck, John Darlington, J. Frederick Hayward, Richard Boucher James and William Sanders.

6. Unnumbered letters from Henry and Frank Rymill to Harry R. Graham, July 1879 – October 1910

Most of the letters were written by Henry Rymill, except when he was ill or on holidays when Frank Rymill would write in his stead. The letters were addressed to 'Cousin' until 1882, when Rymill switched to 'Nephew'. The subjects include Harry Graham's visit to South Australia (1879), Malcolm Graham's activities in South Australia, Graham's accounts and those of his sister Louisa, the death of William Sanders (1880), South Australian Mining Association meetings, the closure of the Burra Mine, Burra dividends, the sale of Burra Mine (1889), Canowie and Curnamona Stations, wool shipments, lambing, shearing, financial transactions, the Melbourne International Exhibition (1881), Henry Rymill's visit to England (1881-82), agricultural shows, land purchases, the collapse of the Commercial Bank of South Australia (1886), the 1886 Colonial Exhibition in London, the purchase of Warcowie Station (1886), Graham's defeat in the 1886 General Election and his victory in the 1892 General Election, silver mania in the eastern colonies (1888), the visit of Frank Rymill to the United States and Japan (1888), industrial disputes in Australia (1892), Frank Rymill's visit to England (1892),

economic conditions in the colony, meetings of the Canowie Pastoral Company, Baratta Station, the visit of Graham to South Australia (1901), relations between the Rymills and Graham and R.B. James and J.F. Hayward, Rymill's losses from Canowie, the subdivision of the Canowie estate (1909), the illness of Malcolm Graham (1909) and family news. There are references to Sir Henry Ayers, John Beck, John Darlington, Charles B. Fisher, Thomas Goode, Edward Hamersley, J. Frederick Hayward, John Regan and the Sanders Family.

7. Correspondence concerning Canowie and Curnamona Stations, 1910-26

Letters received by Harry Graham concerning the sale of parts of the Canowie Estate (1910), the position of A.G. Rymill on the board of the Canowie Pastoral Company (1925), the possible sale of Curnamona Station (1925), the refund of capital and the disposal of Canowie freehold lands. The correspondents include Henry Rymill, Frank Rymill, Arthur G. Rymill (son of Henry Rymill), J.C. Morphett and the Bank of Adelaide (London). In addition, there are notices of meetings and a copy of the *Memorandum and articles of association of the Canowie Pastoral Company* (1894).

## **D. Canowie Reports**

1. Managers' and overseers' reports, 1869-77

The managers' reports are signed H. & F. Rymill and are addressed to Sanders, James & Co. The overseers' reports are signed by Thomas Goode and John Regan and are addressed to H. & F. Rymill.

2. Annual reports of the Canowie Pastoral Company Ltd., 1895-99, 1902, 1905, 1908

The printed reports are usually two pages in length. In this period Frank Rymill was chairman of the Company.

## **Reel M376**

Note: The documents on this reel were filmed from right to left.

## **E. Accounts of J.B. Graham and his children, 1854-1906**

1. Accounts of J.B. Graham with Henry Ayers, 1854-70 (quarterly) and statements of the property of J.B. Graham in the hands of Henry Ayers, 1860, 1862, 1863, 1865, 1867.
2. Accounts of J.B. Graham with H. & F. Rymill, 1867-76, and statements of the property of J.B. Graham in the hands of H. & F. Rymill, 1870, 1872.
3. Accounts of the estate of the late J.B. Graham, 1876, Louisa Graham and Henry Graham, 1877, Malcolm Graham, 1877, and Henry R. Graham with H. & F. Rymill, 1878, 1893, 1906, and statement of the property of Henry R. Graham in the hands of H. & F. Rymill, 1879.

4. Statement of Malcolm Graham's trust, 1901.

## **F. Canowie accounts, 1869-94**

1. Accounts of Sanders, James & Co. with H. & F. Rymill, 1869-80

Accompanying the statements are various supporting documents including the station manager's report (1874), summaries of stock returns (1870-72, 1877, 1879), valuations of Canowie Station (1871-76), expenditure in working Canowie Station (1871-75), particulars of employees on Canowie Station (1871-74, 1877, 1879), Canowie lambing account (1871), return of sheep (1871, 1873, 1877), sales of sheep (1873, 1875, 1880) and sales of stock (1874, 1876). There are also covering letters from H. & F. Rymill to Sanders, James & Co. (1875).

2. Accounts of the Canowie proprietors with H. & F. Rymill, 1880-94

Accompanying the statements are various supporting documents including the station manager's report (1885), valuations of Canowie and Curnamona Stations (1880, 1882-84, 1886, 1890, 1892-93), stock returns (1880, 1882-84, 1886, 1888-93), returns of employees (1880, 1883, 1885-87, 1889-90, 1892-93), improvements made at Canowie (1880), sales of sheep (1881-82, 1886), returns of sheep (1882, 1884-85, 1887, 1889), lambing returns (1886, 1888-89, 1892-93), shearing returns (1886, 1888) and expenditure and income (1886).

3. Rough summaries of Canowie returns, 1870-88 (3pp)

## **G. Miscellanea**

Copy of a letter signed 'Eureka' concerning the South Australian Mining Association and the value of the Burra Mines, [27 Dec. 1847]. (8pp)

Reports of the South Australian Mining Association, 1882, 1884, 1889-90, 1893, 1910.

Plan of Glen Warwick and Baratta Stations to be sold by Elder, Smith & Co. on 13 Sept. 1889.

Estimated receipts and expenditure of Glen Warwick and Baratta runs, n.d.

E. Laughton & Co.'s *Weekly Circular* (Adelaide), 21 Sept. 1882 and 24 Sept. 1885.

Report by Charles S. Gaudson on the value of No. 15, Warrior Square, St Leonards on Sea, 2 Oct. 1878.