

Paternity: the children of Susannah Gooding & Sir Samuel WAY

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These notes were compiled by Don Gordon.

These notes should be read in conjunction with 'A Tale of Two Women' which is item 001 in the Stories on the left of the home page.

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Why we are confident that Samuel was father of five of Susannah's children even though it is not officially recorded?

Indications

There are pointers to Samuel as the father:-

- Names : This is the most compelling evidence that Samuel was the father. Each of the children was named in such a way that clearly connected them with Samuel (ref : Parkinson, p244) :-
 - James Samuel GOODING: Obviously named after Samuel whose middle name was James. Also his death certificate records the father as 'James Samuel, gentleman' (ref: Parkinson, p 244, Victoria, Registrar-General's Dept, Melbourne Deaths 6374/1895)
 - Frank Brook Way GOODING: Brook was Way's law partner who died two months before Frank was born. Samuel must have suggested this unusual name to Susannah. The father's name at his baptism was given as Samuel (no surname). (ref : Parkinson, p 245, AOT, NS 590/1/2089). As with James, his death record states that his father was 'James Samuel, gentleman' (ref: Parkinson, p 245, Victoria Registrar-General's Dept, Melbourne Deaths 1659/1902)
 - Alfred Edward Rowden GOODING: Rowden was the surname of Samuel's paternal grandmother. Samuel must have suggested this name for his new son because Susannah would not have known unless Samuel told her. When Edward married in 1917, his father's details were recorded as "James White, Lawyer, deceased". (ref : Parkinson, p 247, Melbourne Marriages 7405/1917) On the death certificates of Edward and Alfred, their father is given as John Rowden WHITE. – Ref: Vic BDM 1958/3198 and 1963/1550. [Question : It is unlawful to record names which they knew were false (on marriage certificate and death certificate)]
 - Florence Elizabeth Jane GOODING: Named after Samuel's three sisters. Her birth record states 'illegitimate' (ref : Parkinson, p 246, AOT, NS, 590/1/2202)
 - Edward Roden GOODING : See the above notes about Alfred about the name Rowden. Regardless of how the birth record spelt the middle name, Edward used the spelling Rowden with a 'w' throughout his life.
 - Samuel must have actively agreed to these names because :-
 - It is surprising that these names are used – they clearly identify Samuel as the father. Why weren't other names used in order to keep the paternity a secret?
 - He must have suggested names such as Brook and Rowden, and perhaps his sisters' names because Susannah would not have known of these names unless Samuel had told her.
 - After the name of the first baby connected the child with Samuel, he could have objected – but in fact it happened over and over again – for each of the five baptisms. It seemed that he was the one suggesting these names and deliberately linking himself with the births.
- Baptisms : It is possible that Samuel was present at each of the christenings as per Parkinson's analysis. (ref : Parkinson, p 244)
- Travel : Castle and Parkinson carefully analysed the shipping records, diaries, court sitting dates and other documents to identify a pattern of travel which placed Samuel in Tasmania at the time of the conceptions and baptisms. (ref : Parkinson, p 244)

- Diary entries : Samuel kept diaries regularly and although there are apparently no direct references stating that Susannah was his mistress or that the boys were his sons, there are many references to him visiting them and sometimes reacting to news of the children's birth (ref: Parkinson, p 246) and her death "... with sad news of my dear S.... I went to Parkville and where I saw Jno & James, Frank & Alf & the dear remains thrice" (ref : Parkinson, p 251)
- Visits : After the children were born and they moved from Tasmania to Melbourne, Samuel continued to visit the family.
 - He stayed with Susannah in Melbourne the whole of February 1881 (ref : Parkinson, p246)
 - Samuel mentions many visits in his diaries. Often these are cryptic references and hidden amongst visits to other public figures. (ref : Parkinson, p 247 & 248)
 - He would take up lodgings close by, rather than stay in the same house with the family.
 - As it is possible that John White was in the household in the 1880s (most likely from about 1882), Samuel's many visits during that period would have been a different experience if there had been a Mr White in the house. Maybe the purpose of the visits was in relation to the boys rather than a continuing romance between Susannah and Samuel.
- Residences : Susannah's various residences are listed below (where???). Samuel set the family up in accommodation through a series of moves within Tasmania and then (after 1880) around Melbourne. If we take it that Samuel was influential, indeed the orchestrator, of the move to Melbourne, he might have wanted Susannah and the boys nearer to him because of the difficulties of getting to Tasmania as frequently as he would have liked - but maybe he thought that Adelaide was too close, because the relationship would too easily come under public scrutiny. Melbourne was a good compromise. Parkinson theorises that: "*The frequent moving around with a young family must have been hard work, but this may have been necessary to preserve some measure of anonymity. Way would not have had to put his name to any documents in order to achieve protection of the leases against the owner of the land, as leases for more than three years had to be in a registrable form in Tasmania and Victoria.*" (ref : Parkinson, p 249) .
- Business : He helped Susannah set up a millinery business – see under her occupation
- Education : He helped the boys in their education costs – see their separate profiles.
- Library : Edward donated books to establish the Rowden White Library at the University of Melbourne. Some of these books might have come from Samuel's own collection. Parkinson observed that a number of the books "*bear the imprint of Rigby's Booksellers, King Street Adelaide which is just down the street from the Supreme Court, (and) a couple have front end pages noticeably torn out, and one is the Hannan biography of Sir Samuel Way.*" (ref : Parkinson, p 250)
- Photos : Photos of the Whites (were these of the boys? or of Susannah?) were found in a drawer of Samuel's desk in the Supreme Court (ref : Parkinson, p 251)
- Dying days :
 - In Susannah's dying days, Samuel, arranged for his brother-in- law Dr Allan Campbell to see her (ref: Parkinson p 251) - So his brother-in-law must have known about the relationship..
 - In his own dying days, Samuel 'consulted' both Alfred and Edward.
- Grieving : See the diary entry above and also after Susannah's death, "*Way deeply missed her. ... He experienced a virtual nervous breakdown the following year, usually attributed to overwork alone.*" (ref: Parkinson, p 251)
- Knighthood : Parkinson speculates that Samuel delayed accepting a baronetcy until after he married Kitty : "*It was only then, in the knowledge of a legal marriage and with no chance of further issue, that he accepted the honours in the form of South Australia's first baronetcy, which would pass to his heir-in-law were there one.*" (ref : Parkinson, p 251). This reasoning might not be correct. He was keen on getting honours and the lack of legal male heir would not have held him back. Indeed, from what we know of Samuel's ambitious nature, he would have wanted to have an heir to pass on a barony line of which he was the first. Samuel had not publicly acknowledged Alfred as his eldest surviving son, even if he was able to devise a legal means of legitimizing him, and Samuel & Kitty were passed child bearing age. As it turned out, many years after Samuel's death, his second surviving son, Edward was knighted, but this was on his own merits, not by the title being passed down to him.
- Post-obit bonds : Samuel arranged for 2,500 pounds (plus interest) to be paid to Alfred and Edward after his death. This is the most concrete indication of a connection between Samuel and his sons.
- Why did Susannah name the children in ways which so clearly linked them to Samuel?
 - Samuel must have approved of these names because it happened for each their five children.
 - It would have been so easy to use other names. Is it possible that Samuel (and Susannah) deliberately left these markers?
- Direct evidence : All the above adds up to very strong circumstantial evidence but no 'smoking gun'. It comes nearest in the following : "*A fellow researcher has sighted an unpublished manuscript of Sir Herbert Mayo, a former student of the University of Melbourne, in which the author stated that he met two of the*

White boys, his fellow students, going to meet their father who was arriving at the Spencer Street railway station. He then witnessed the meeting between the boys and Samuel Way and heard them call him father. Unfortunately, the whereabouts of this manuscript cannot be traced at present.” (ref : p249)

Guardian

There are puzzles about RC Norman who was named as guardian for Alfred, (and possibly also Frank & James):-

- He was secretary to the Board of the Adelaide Children's Hospital from 1879 to 1884. Samuel would have known him well because Samuel was the President of the hospital at that time.
- *“Their guardian was named as Robert Chambers Norman who was the superintendent and secretary of Melbourne’s Alfred Hospital. Before Norman moved to Melbourne in January 1886, he was secretary of the Adelaide Children’s Hospitals for five years. At a farewell tea party he was extolled by none other than the Chief Justice, Samuel Way, a prime mover in having the hospital to be built.” “While serving with the AIF, Alfred had named Teddy as his next of kin and left instructions to communicate with Samuel Way’s mysterious friend, Robert Chambers Locksey Norman. Born in Cumberland, England, in 1851, Norman came to Australia in 1872 and lived at Norwood in the early 1880s while working at the Adelaide Children’s Hospital. He served the Alfred Hospital for more than 30 years but did return to Adelaide to marry his third wife, Helen Harvey Birchall, daughter of John Harvey, at Unley on 3 August 1897. Norman retained a lively interest in politics and religious affairs until a few hours before his death at the age of 92 in Kew in 1943. He wrote many articles for the secular and religious press. The father of eight children by his first wife, he retired from the Alfred Hospital in 1919 and lived in Launceston with son-in-law A. D. Mackay before eventually returning to Melbourne to be near his eldest daughter, Mrs F. Penny.” (Phil Robins)*
- Who set up this guardianship? It would have been arranged by Susannah – possibly after discussion with Samuel.
- Which children? Alfred – and possibly Frank & James, but not Edward.
- When?: It probably was not while Norman was living in Adelaide because this would not have been practical until 1886 when he moved to Melbourne where the boys were attending school. In 1886, James would have been 16 years old, Frank was 13 yrs, Alfred was 11 yrs & Edward was 5 years old.
- Why was guardianship arranged? Maybe the school required a male figure and this could not be Samuel yet John White might not have been on the scene at these times.
- It is not known what personal connections there were between the boys and the Normans. We are left wondering what was his actual relationship and role with the boys. It must have been an enduring connection because decades later, while in the AIF, Alfred made a point of wanting Edward to communicate with Norman if Alfred died.

John White

There are puzzles regarding John White who was designated as the father in many documents:-

- There is a great deal of mystery about John. There is no information about a wedding and it is not clear whether or not John and Susannah ever lived together. If they did, it may have been in Melbourne in the 1880's.
- Did he really exist? Was he a convenient fiction to hide the children's real paternity?
 - We have not located any formal documentation to confirm his existence – his birth, marriage, occupation or death etc.
 - Many of Samuel's diary entries mention Mrs W, but never Mr W. [research: Check this]
 - Parkinson infers that there was no John White. He writes that the family *“assumed the surname of White.... Susannah’s sister Belinda married George Henry White,.. Also, Susannah’s brother Andrew married Margaret White..... Another inter-family marriage would hardly have been remarkable, so Susannah White would have gone virtually unnoticed.”* (ref: Parkinson, p 246)
 - Parkinson believed that even Samuel may also have used the surname White on occasions: *“He may have assumed the alias of White.”* (ref: Parkinson, p 247). But Parkinson provided nothing to substantiate this assertion.
- Despite the above comments, it is most likely that in fact John was an actual person.
 - One indication of this is in the death notice for Susannah's father which stated that Andrew died 'at the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. John White'. (ref: Hobart Mercury, 12th March 1885, p1). It is unlikely that it would have been expressed in this way if there was no such person. This is the only reference to John White where it is not directly relevant to the paternity of the children.

- There are many examples where the name John White was named as the father. When James was enrolled in Hutchins School in 1880, the parent's name was given as 'Mr John White' (ref: Parkinson, p 245 & 249, AOT, The Hutchins School Register NS 36/101)
 - The boys were known by the surname of White from the time the family moved to Melbourne.
- Middle name: On the death certificates of both Edward and Alfred, their father is given as John Rowden WHITE. This middle name is a surprising coincidence that both of Susannah's 'husbands' have connections with the same uncommon name – John's middle name and Samuel's grandmother's surname. There must be some doubt on the accuracy of this particular entry on the death certificates because there were other errors on these death certificates. On the other hand, if in fact John had this middle name:-
 - This would run counter to the assertion that this unusual name was a pointer to Samuel being the father because they bear his grandmother's maiden surname.
 - It would point to John White in fact being the father, as the boys publicly maintained.
 - It would also indicate that John was involved in Susannah's life before the boys were born – ie early 1874 for Alfred's conception, rather than around 1880 as Parkinson believed.
- Deed poll: Did Albert and Edward ever officially change their surname to White? Apparently not.
- Knighthood: We should be able to get the documentation about the awarding of Sir Rowden. This would probably have something about paternity as lineage is often of great interest at such times (eg the entry in Burke's Peerage of Sir Samuel Way). It is significant that he chose to style himself as 'Sir Rowden'. Some thought would have been given into deciding this public nomenclature which was much more than just his middle name. He must have been curious about where the name came from and he was probably aware that it was his paternal great-grandmothers surname.
- Biases: Each instance where the name 'White' appears has been viewed through the prism that the name was used as a ploy to hide the paternity. But are we discounting everything which is not consistent with this pre-judgment? Maybe each instance is evidence that in fact, their father was not Samuel Way. Why would Susannah and Samuel have gone to such great lengths to hide paternity by avoiding public acknowledgement, while at other times their actions clearly pointed to Samuel – the selection of names, his visits etc
- We need to find out more about John White and what part he played in the lives of Susannah and the children.

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