Uncovering the story of Johann Gramp: Pioneer Winemaker of the Barossa Valley

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"What is your ancestry?" For many years, my siblings and I were unable to come up with any definite answers to questions regarding the biological ancestors on our paternal side due to the adoption of our father. When the adoption laws changed in South Australia around 1997, we obtained our first bit of evidence about his biological family on his mother's side.

The adoption file indicated that he was indeed born 'Jack Fahy' as my mother had always claimed. His birth mother's name was Iris Fahy, and she had 'Jack' when she was only 17 years of age, in the Queen's Home, Adelaide (later the Queen Victoria Hospital). The baby was officially adopted out on Valentine's Day 1929, when he was 2 ½ years old, although the adoptive family had him since he was just 3 weeks old. It was recorded that they had answered an advertisement in the newspaper. At the time, many unmarried mothers would advertise in *The Advertiser* seeking a 'kind lady to adopt a baby' and those seeking children would also advertise. A police report had to be provided for an official option to take place.

Dad's maternal grandfather had Irish Catholic ancestry, whilst his maternal grandmother was born an Australian-German Lutheran but had converted to the catholic faith upon marriage. The German Schulz family were originally from Prussia and later of Klemzig, South Australia, before they moved to the Barossa Valley. They came to South Australia as part of 'Kavel's people', refugees fleeing religious persecution, sponsored by George Fife Angas from the South Australia company along with the whole of Pastor Kavel's group. The stories of these families are closely connected to the early history of South Australia.

Artists impression of Klemzig, SA, courtesy National Library of Australia

It was my great-great grandmother Anna Gramp who married Friedrich Wilhelm Schulz in 1867. Anna Gramp was the daughter of Johann Gramp, a name associated with 'winemaking royalty,' he was a pioneer winemaker and established the first commercial winery in the Barossa Valley in 1847 (Gramps-Orlando). He was also an orphan who would become recognised as one of the most prominent pioneer South Australians, acknowledged on one of the North Terrace 150th jubilee plaques.

Above Left: Johann Gramp, Pioneer winemaker, in his later years (Photo: Pernod Ricard). Above Right: Helena Fahy (nee Schulz), granddaughter of Johann Gramp, with her family in 'Boulder City,' (Kalgoorlie-Boulder), WA, where her husband was a miner, circa 1905 (Photo: S.Battams).

I was curious to find out that Johann Gramp was from Bavarian origin. Why did he come to South Australia from Bavaria when most of those who came to South Australia were Prussian? Gramp and other Germans had been contracted to work for the South Australia company. He was just 18 years old when he came to South Australia on one of the first boats from Germany, the *Solway*.

What kind of person was Johann Gramp? All I have are a couple of pictures of the man, publicly available due to the prominence which he had achieved in his life. These are highly characterful portraits, but who was the man behind the photograph?

Johann's Gramp's parents were Johann Ehrhardt Grampp and Elisabeth Hahn. They were married in 1796 in Kulmbach, Bavaria. Elisabeth Hahn was 17 years when she married, and Johann Ehrhardt Grampp was 33 years older than his bride. Their first child was born two years later in 1798, and they would go on to have 10 children. Three of their children were to die at a young age in the year 1807 (2-month-old Barbara died in February and both Johann Erhardt, 5 years and Kunigunda, 3 years, died in May). Around this time, Bavaria was at war, fighting with the French in the wars of the second, third and fourth coalitions.

Johann Gramp was born 'Johann Grampp' on 28th August 1819, in Kulmbach, the youngest of the children. Johann junior was baptised in the St Petri Lutheran Church on the 19th September 1819. The imposing Plassenberg castle, hailing from 1835, sits above the church. Johann's father was an ageing 74 years of age at his son's birth, whilst his mother was 41 years old.

Johann Ehrhardt Grampp died in 1823 of tuberculosis when Johann junior was just 4 years old. Johann's mother died just 3 years later in 1826 of 'Dropsy' when Johann was 7 years old – this is now known as Oedema and can be a symptom of congestive heart failure. Johann may have been cared for by his older sister Anna (27 years) or brother Friedrich (26 years).

What made Johann Gramp want to leave Bavaria? He was not alone in emigrating – by 1830, emigration from what would become Germany had increased dramatically, with the main destination being the US – in 1832, 10,000 Germans arrived in the US but in 1854 this figure was 200,000. Gramp was a Lutheran who may have supported the cause of the religious exiles who objected to the 'brand' of Lutheranism proffered by the King at the time.

Avoiding army service may have been a reason for some emigrants to leave, as there was compulsory military service. Bavaria had also been the centre of conflict during French wars with Austria. The region in Bavaria that Gramp was from had historically transferred hands many times. From the Andech to Thuringian counts, to the House of Hohenzollern, from the Prussians to French via Napoleon, Kulmbach eventually became part of the Kingdom of Bavaria in 1810. Bavaria was reliant upon and fought for Napoleonic France, and during France's invasion of Russia in 1812, the Bavarian army was slaughtered – losing around 29,000 of 33,000 troops. This was known as the Second Polish War but was an attempt to pressure Russia not to trade with the English and to sue for peace. The invasion of Russia proved disastrous and led to the War of the Sixth Coalition that ended French Napoleonic domination of Europe. Bavaria joined the Sixth Coalition in 1813, in exchange for recognition of their independence should they win (which did occur). The Napoleonic wars ended in 1815.

There was a traditional agricultural economy in Bavaria in the 1820s and guilds (associations of local craftsmen and merchants) were not eliminated until the late 1820s.[1] Across Europe, revolutions commenced from the 1830s, associated with industrialisation, poor working conditions and failed agricultural crops. These upheavals also led to much emigration.

As Johann Gramp was from a Lutheran family, his rights may have been affected during the Ultramontanes reign, which was a catholic political group. In 1818, a new constitution was established for Bavaria, with the equality of religions recognised and the rights of Protestants in place. However, in 1837, Protestants were oppressed and stripped of their liberal rights with the rise to power of Prime Minister von Abel and the Ultramontanes. Von Abel was later ousted either due to his push to naturalise King Ludwig's much younger Irish mistress, the much written about dancer, actress, seductress, lecturer and author 'Lola Montez' - the stage name of 'Marie Dolores Eliza Rosanna Gilbert' (also known as Eliza Gilbert), who was pro liberal and anti-Jesuit. Or it was perhaps due to Von Abel's objection of Lola Montez being made Countess of Landsfeld by King Ludwig. This intriguing woman fled Bavaria during the 1848 revolutions.

Whatever the reason for his departure, just 11 years after his mother's death, Johann Gramp travelled to the port at Hamburg where many emigrants were leaving from. One story was that he met 38 year old Wilhelm Milde, a baker, and his family at a local Lutheran Church, who became a friend and persuaded him to try to join them on the trip to South Australia.

Johann would have been literate due to compulsory education laws,[2] but not English speaking. It was in early 1837 when he obtained a contract with the South Australia Company, and he was paid in advance from 29 April to 31 October 1837. He would be bound to the company for 3 years upon his arrival in South Australia.

Johann boarded the *Solway,* bound for Kangaroo Island, South Australia, along with his friend Milde and 50 other passengers, including 27 people contracted to the South Australia Company and their families. The company had employed Dr Dreschler as an interpreter and to conduct business on behalf of the Germans, with the company's Colonial Manager (McLaren). Gramp was one of the youngest adult male passengers on the *Solway*. One of his older sisters also left Hamburg at this time, but she emigrated to the US.

The *Solway* first went to London before passing through the Canary Island, Brazil and the Cape of Good Hope on its way to South Australia. A newspaper later said that it was an 'eventful voyage during which they were nearly wrecked in the North Sea whirlpool, and for days were becalmed on

[1] Ziblatt, D. Structuring the State: The Formation of Italy and Germany and the Puzzle of Federalism. Princeton University Press.

[2] Encyclopaedia Britannia. Germany 1871 to 1918. https://www.britannica.com/place/Germany/Germany-from-1871-to-1918

the fringe of the Dead Sea.' It was also tragic for some, as Gramps' friend Kleemann lost his wife and one their children on the journey.

The South Australia Company had been established in 1835 by George Fife Angas and other merchants. Angas was on the South Australian Association along with Wakefield, Torrens and Gouger, which lobbied to form the new colony of South Australia, and on the subsequent South Australian Colonization Commission, but resigned to form the company.[3] The company's purpose was to encourage the sale of land in the new Colony of South Australia.

The South Australian Colonization Commission was established following the South Australia Act 1834. The South Australian Company purchased land not sold under 'advance sales' which was required to be sold as stipulated by the British Parliament in order to support the colonisation venture – this amounted to 2/3rds of the unsold land. This effectively saved colonisation plans. George Fife Angas equipped four ships to sale to South Australia as part of the company's ventures. These left in advance of the SA Colonization Commission's ships. These ships included the *Solway* – which unfortunately would not last long, as shortly after its arrival in the colony it was shipped to Encounter Bay and wrecked there.

The South Australia Company played a pivotal role in the establishment of the new settlement, not only buying land but also building wharves, harbors, roads and bridges. Labour was required for this venture, and the company turned to Germanic regions to recruit labour. There was a long association between Hamburg and the Dutton family of South Australia, as patriarch Frederick Dutton (1768-1847) was the British vice-consul in Cuxhaven, Hanover – part of Hamburg – and all of his children, including Frederick Dutton of Anlaby (1812-1890) were born in South Australia.

In London, on July 12th, 1836, the South Australia Company provided instructions to Mr Mengl to select the best agricultural land to establish in South Australia. The *Solway* arrived in Kingscote in October 1837, its passengers first settling on Kangaroo Island before some turned to the mainland. Gramp, along with his friends Milde and Kleemann, prepared land for sowing crops to supplement their wages from the company. After a few years, Gramp left the island to work on building the Wharf and Harbor at Port Adelaide.

The first group of 'Kavel's people' arrived in Port Adelaide from Prussia on the *Prince George* ship in 1837 and the second ship was the *Zebra,* arriving in 1838 first in Holdfast Bay and then in Port Adelaide. The first group would settle just outside of Adelaide in Klemzig (named after Klemzig in Germany, now Klępsk in Poland) – including the Schulz family who had arrived on the *Prince George*. They would then turn towards the Barossa Valley. Interestingly, even though they were

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[3] SLSA South Australian Company http://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=1483

fleeing persecution, and known as industrious by the British settlers, a priest was concerned that his flock was more interested in earthly endeavours.

> *'Incidentally, one would be very much mistaken to suppose that the emigrating adults were all shining lights as Christians…Most of the adults were spiritually dead or did not have an understanding to give an account of their faith. Some of these sought earthly fortune, earthly freedom, and earthly well-being. Most went along because one or another of the family was leaving. The servant Schultz [sic], the wheelwright Petras, a drinker and a gambler, the day-labourer Schubert, an idler, the wife of day-labourer Honke, a thief and a liar, the wife of day-labourer Christian Rau, a bad tempered woman, and similarly several others, were completely without special merit; they were easy to replace.'*

Pastor W Kauffman, 1838 (from Iwan, 1995, pg. 76)

It was reported that Johann Gramp had witnesses both the *Prince George* and *Zebra* arriving in Port Adelaide, so may have met his future wife and her family when they arrived on the Zebra. Gramp reportedly assisted Colonel William Light survey the Port River in 1838, which was just before Light's death in 1839.

In 1840 and 1841 Johann Gramp worked as a baker, for Bremer and Bauer who had travelled on the *Solway* and had a bakery in Currie Street, Adelaide. He then resided in Gillies Street, Adelaide. In 1841, Gramp was granted land and farmed at what would in 1842 be called Hope Valley. He stayed there until around 1847, as in late 1846 he purchased 83 acres of land at Jacob's Creek in the Barossa Valley. This land was named after the assistant surveyor to Colonel William Light. Apart from successively buying tracts of land in the Barrossa Valley, Gramp also acted as mortgager in land purchases of other Germans, such as members of his wife's family.

Johann Gramp had partnered with Johanne Eleonora Nitschke in Hope Valley and, unusual for the time, the couple had four children before they were married, the first child was born at Hope Valley in 1843. Johann's namesake Johann Friedrich Gramp was born in 1847 but was to die in 1853. There were six surviving children in the family. Perhaps ever mindful of his early unfortunate start and opportunities, at one stage he adopted a child into his own family whose parents had died. What would he have thought of his great grandchild giving up a child for adoption?

Having a number of children (to his future wife) before he was married was to the chagrin of the local Lutheran pastor, who urged him to get married. One reason Johann may not have married Johanne straight away was that she was only 15 years old when she had their first baby and if under 21 years of age, a couple had to obtain the signed written consent of the parents if they were around.

The Barossa Valley was named by Colonel William Light in 1837, after Barrosa in Spain, where he fought in the Battle of Barrosa (1811) for the victorious British against the French. The Barossa

Valley region was identified by German geologist Menge, who worked for the South Australia Company, as being an ideal spot for flourishing vineyards and orchards. It was here that Menge made his home in a makeshift shelter (partly rock, partly hut). It was an area where George Fife Angas from the South Australian Company held huge tracts of land, much of which was sold to Prussian share farmers, at considerable interest. This ownership of land came about as Angas's agent who held Power of Attorney (Flaxman), purchased much fertile land in the North East of the Barossa without Angas's permission. Flaxman had used Angas's account, but purchased the land in his own name. Angas and Flaxman eventually reached an agreement on the land which Angas ended up owning, much to his advantage.

One sad story in the history of the Barossa Valley was that of Hoffnungsthal, literally the 'Valley of Hope'. Hoffnungsthal was the first Lutheran settlement in the Lyndoch Valley, established in 1847, and was flooded in 1853. Susan Marsden describes the fate of those Germans that settled here:

> *'Aboriginal residents in the valley, the Peramangk ['s] ...understanding of the natural environment was far greater than that of the newcomers. This is revealed by the fate of Hoffnungsthal. The settlers did not heed the Aborigines' advice against flood-prone land and in 1853 the lagoon flooded the area. The settlement was abandoned. Now, only the recent monument on the site of the church, some scattered foundations and the lagoon-itself mark the site.'*

<div align="right">Marsden 2004</div>

Johann Gramp planted his first vines in 1847 at Jacob's Creek and three years later made his first octave of wine. It is hailed as the first commercial winery in the Barossa Valley. In 1853 there is a record of him exhibiting his wine, 'Vineyard of the Empire,' and grapes at the Lyndoch Valley Agricultural and Horticultural Society Show, for which he was awarded first prize for both.

In 1848, the year of political upheavals and revolutions in Europe, he became a 'naturalised British subject.' It was not until 1851 that Johann Gramp finally married Johanne Eleonore Nitschke. In 1860, he became councillor for the Barossa East Council, serving on the council for 20 years, including as Chairperson, and helped support building of the Rowland Flat school.

Johann Gramp became a successful farmer and owned significant tracts of land. His Land Tax Return of 1885 showed that he owned three large parcels of land in the Barossa Valley including 83 acres, 235 acres, and 135 acres, and in nearby County of Light (at Jacob's Creek) he owned 82 acres.

In 1890, a period of depression in Australia, a terrible tragedy took place in Angaston, and Johann was a key witness. A woman tried to drown herself and her four children in a well. Johann Gramp was in a nearby paddock and heard the children crying out. He came to the rescue of three of the children and their mother, not knowing there was a fourth child drowned until after they were walking away,

when the mother asked him to get the fourth child, a baby, from the well. An inquest was held, and it was declared that the mother was mentally ill.

Johann Gramp died in 1903, aged 83 years. He is buried at the Rowland Flat Cemetery. Gramp founded an empire, leaving a dynasty and great legacy to winemaking in South Australia, and through his winery, his name is known internationally. From his humble beginnings as an orphan in Bavaria he took every opportunity available to him throughout his life and lived unconventionally at times. His son Gustav Gramp, and Gustav's son Hugo and Fred were to grow Gramp and Sons and Orlando into a significant, internationally renowned wine brand.

In the late 1990s our family were told about Friedrich Wilhelm Schulz's dying many years before his wife Anna Schulz (Johann Gramp's daughter). When her husband died, Anna took a prominent role in successfully managing her own significant farm at Halletts Valley (outside Tanunda) for over 20 years after his death, until the farm was handed down to her eldest son. She made a significant economic contribution through the management and produce of the farm at Halletts Valley.

In regard to the women in the Gramp family, Tolley notes that:

> *'It seems clear that the women in the Gramp family, during the second half of the nineteenth century, made significant contributions to the work in the vineyard in the developmental phase of the family business, and they may well have provided support and some input into other aspects of management and production in the winery. However, by 1910, when the Gramp business had prospered sufficiently to be converted into Orlando, a limited company, it was evident that women's participation in the business was no longer deemed necessary.'*

Tolley (2004)

Anna Schulz (nee Gramp) would have been too busy managing her own farm to also be involved in the winemaking business! She made an amazing economic contribution, rare for her time, through the management and development of her farm at Halletts Valley, although this has been hidden from history.

A family rumour had been passed down in the Schulz family that the Gramp family had 'done away with' Friedrich Schulz who was a violent alcoholic. He had been to court for assaulting his wife Anna and the court ordered that he was to be refused alcohol in the Barossa Valley region for 12 months. The story went that he had left Anna, taking a large sum of money, and the Gramp family intervened (Johann Gramp was 82 years of age at the time of Friedrich's death). Although Anna was executor of Friedrich's will, it was challenged and proven in the Supreme Court of South Australia. Had Friedrich Schulz really left Anna Gramp and been murdered?

Also little discussed in winemaking history is the relationship between the local Peramangk people and the German Lutherans in the Barossa Valley. It appears that the Barossa Lutherans, in particular the Gramp family, had strong links to the Koonibba Aboriginal Mission (near Denial Bay, West of Ceduna), with Barossa Valley people frequently working at and visiting the mission. Gustav Gramp of Rowland's Flat (Johann Gramp's son) appeared the treasurer of the Lutheran Synod, where the main item of discussion at the Lutheran conference in 1914 was the Koonibba Aboriginal Mission. A 'Miss Gramp' was also the cook at the mission. My family was also given this photo of a member of the Schulz family, with a group of Aboriginal children, which could be Peramangk children from the Moorooroo tribe, or children on the Mission at Koonibba. Moorooroo means 'meeting of two waters' and referred to the meeting of the North and South Para rivers (near Jacob's Creek, where Johann Gramp's winery was – now Jacob's Creek winery owned by Pernod-Ricard). I later found an article in an Australian-German newspaper where a Pastor reported on the census at the five missions stations in South Australia (number of Aboriginal adults and children at each of the missions), and was informed that the South Australian government did not take over management of them until 1913.

Photograph: Lutheran Missionary School (location uncertain), teacher is probably Bill Schulz (grandson of Johann Gramp and son of Anna Schulz, nee Gramp). Photo S.Battams.

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