WILLIAM BARNWELL BRICKELL
in Australia

Denise McMahon and Christine Wild

As a result of researching our ancestors in the northeast of Victoria, Australia, the authors of this article, Denise McMahon and Christine Wild, became aware of several names of Americans and Canadians who had ventured to the new colony in the 1850s, and in particular to that northeast corner, and sought their fortunes in gold. It was not long before we had 300 names of men and women from the North American continent, so we started on what, at times, seemed to be a very daunting task. These men, for the most part, have not been recorded in the history books of northeast Victoria, and as they contributed to the development of that district, we aimed to rectify the omission by looking into their lives.

One of these men was William Barnwell Brickell a man who, with his American business partner Adam Casner Kidd, was of particular interest to Denise because her great-grandfather, Hiram Crawford, had arrived in 1853 from Massachusetts, and spent a few weeks working for them in 1854. Soon Hiram would meet up with Brickell and Kidd on a tri-weekly basis as he developed a stage coach line, which ran from Beechworth, south of Albury, to that town. The horses and coaches were stabled at the hotel of Brickell and Kidd at the northern end of the route.[1] Again the lives of Brickell and Crawford would cross, as Hiram sailed on a visit to the United States. William, with his new wife, Mary, was also on that ship, returning to his native country to

live. Although Hiram's diary provided information on the two business
partners, for a long time, nothing else was found.[3] Suddenly a crack in
the wall appeared and with more chipping, it slowly began to tumble.
What the broken wall revealed is interesting and sometimes contradictory
to what William led others to believe. From our research, we provide
here an outline of the life of William Brickell in Australia.

William's pre-Australian life is clouded in mystery. He was born in
Steubenville, Ohio, on May 22, 1825 to William Barnwell and
Adelaide (Stanhope) Brickell. William's father appears in the 1840
Federal Census as William "Brikell" living in Steubenville with a household
of nine and with three people employed by him. Three individuals in
the household are marked as working in manufacturing or trade.[3]

At the time of the California gold rush, William moved to California.
William's daughter Maude, in her family narrative written several
decades later, noted that William went to California in search of gold
and returned home to Ohio a wealthy man.[4] Another source stated
that William went overland to San Francisco in 1840 and became a
merchant.[5] A third maintained that William studied law and in 1849
moved to California, becoming a law partner to Judge Lynch. From
there, he went to Japan on business and onto Australia.[6]

William, in fact, had crossed from Ohio to California by wagon train,
leaving Steubenville on March 24, 1849, with members of the
California Mining Company.[7] The authors searched for William in the
1850 Federal Census and came up with only one which could be
William B. Brickell. Noted in *"Placerville and its vicinity"* Eldorado
County, California, on December 19, 1850, was William Brick, a
miner aged twenty-five years from Ohio.[8] This William declared he had
no real estate.[9]

William sailed from San Francisco to Australia on September 4, 1852,
with Adam Kidd aboard the 500 ton *Pactolus* in San Francisco.[10]
Sailing via Hawaii, the ship with its 170 passengers made a good run
from the west coast of the United States until making the Australian
coast where it was stalled for several days north of its destination,
eventually docking at the Albion Wharf in Sydney, New South Wales,

Australia on November 3.[11]

Adam Kidd was the older of the two men. He was born May 14, 1821, in Poland, Ohio, to John Kidd and his second wife, Irish born Jane (Casner).[12] By 1850, Adam, a farmer, was living with his twin brother in Pymatuning, Mercer County, Pennsylvania from where his grandfather had left for Ohio in 1805.[13] Adam was reported as leaving home in 1849, heading for the Californian gold fields via the Isthmus of Panama.[14]

Upon reaching Australia, William and Adam made their way 360 miles south to the border of New South Wales and the colony of Victoria. To understand the hardships the duo encountered and overcame, one must be aware that Australia had first been settled in 1788 and by the time gold was discovered, very little of the country had been occupied except for a few squatters who had ventured into the Port Phillip district (in 1851 re-named Victoria). There were neither facilities nor infrastructure, and until gold was discovered, little population except a few brave men, the squatters, who had sought large tracts of land for their stock. By 1850, the small town of Albury was developing on the northern side of the border, which was the Murray River.[15]

Willliam Brickell. 1894.
HMSF Collection 1962-024-114

The years 1852 and 1853 saw thousands of hopeful miners moving to the newly discovered gold fields of Victoria, particularly into northeast Victoria where gold had recently been found. (Gold also had been discovered in New South Wales). From Albury, in all directions, men trekked to the gold fields. Albury was well situated for future prosperity and eventually Adam and William became deeply involved in its success.

William and Adam crossed the border and walked a few more miles to Yackandandah where they went mining.[16] It was not long before they

made their way back to the Murray River. The time was perfect for a couple of young entrepreneurs to make a fortune without the need for pick and shovel. The two men would soon be trading under the banner of "Kidd & Brickell".

A map of Australia depicting the southeastern portion of the continent, including the northeast region of Victoria and the Albury region of southern New South Wales.

Suspecting Albury would be a financially viable place to put down roots, the pair started in business leasing a punt (an open flat-bottom boat used in shallow waters) on the Murray River for £40 per annum, carrying miners and goods between the two colonies.[17] It has been said that from this venture the pair made £10,000. William and Adam's presence in Albury, certainly by early to mid 1854, has been confirmed by the diary of Hiram Crawford and a newspaper interview given by him decades later.

Clearly by 1856, William and Adam had employed their commercial skills to develop an extremely large retail and wholesale store on Townsend Street, Albury, stocked with a wide variety of goods, including clothing, tools, food, and furniture. In November 1856, the partnership advertised that it had a large assortment of household furniture, including American cooking apparatus, at their warehouse.[18] From this venture the pair also shaped large profits.

In 1856, both William and Adam applied for, and were granted, British citizenship.[19] This allowed the pair to vote in elections and to purchase property. On his application, William declared that he was 25 years of age. (The authors have found William's age varied on documentation throughout his life, perhaps to suit the situation). Neither man had married, but on the horizon was a young woman named Mary Bulmer.

On February 8, 1840, the Bulmer family, Joseph aged 30, born in the city of York, Yorkshire, England, Catherine aged 29, born in Little Bolton, Lancashire, England, Francis nine months, Mary three, and

Elizabeth five, arrived in Sydney, New South Wales from England, as bounty immigrants aboard the *Arkwright*. [20] In order to populate the country with "free" people, the government paid for the passage of bounty immigrants, guaranteeing them a job on arrival. The young family moved more than 100 miles south of Sydney, to Goulburn, where Joseph worked as a carpenter and three more children were born. [21] By 1850, the family was living more than 200 miles south in Albury, where Joseph purchased land to the value of £8 and continued to work as a carpenter. [22] Joseph died on May 23, 1858. [23] A magisterial enquiry showed death was caused by intemperance. [24]

Although records of it do not exist today, in 1858, Albury had a small cemetery at "Sand Hills" just south of the town, which originally had been an aboriginal burial ground. In 1860, a new graveyard, the David Street Cemetery, was established in Albury. In June 1862, the local council ordered all who had relatives buried in the old cemetery to move them to the new cemetery within two months. Not all bodies, however, were moved and records of those re-interred have not survived. During the 1860s, the area of the first cemetery was used as a quarry for gravel for local road construction, but soon there was much angst in the community when human skulls and bones were seen scattered around the streets. [25] Sadly, it is not known if Joseph was among those who were re-buried in the David Street Cemetery.

At her sister's home in Grafton Street, Goulburn, on January 5, 1857, 20 year old Mary Bulmer, a single woman, born on February 20, 1836 in Bolton, Lancashire, England, gave birth. Mary, as she was legally required to do, registered the birth of her daughter, Amy Alice Bulmer, on February 3, 1857. The father is not noted on the birth registration, signifying illegitimacy. [26] While her parents lived in Albury, Mary was staying with her sister Elizabeth and her family.

In the meantime, William and Adam had built a large hotel, The Exchange, on the corner of Smollett Street, Albury, an event which prompted one newspaper to report that a hotel of this style had never been seen before in the district, with its furniture alone costing many thousands of pounds. [27] The hoteliers stocked it with the finest of wines and liquors and accommodated those passing by with good meals and

beds. Other men ran their businesses from the hotel, the proprietors renting rooms for that purpose. The Exchange became a landmark in the rapidly emerging town.

Adam and William continued to invest in various business ventures. They had, for a short time, a coach service which ran south to Melbourne, a distance of 200 miles.[28] Their advertisement appears below:

<div align="center">

NOTICE

Passengers to Melbourne
Two five horse American Waggons under careful and steady drivers
Apply Kidd & Brickell[29]

</div>

Crossing the Murray River from one colony to the other required fortitude and sometimes sheer bravery. To cross one had to use the punt paying a toll for the pleasure. If the river was low, however, as was often the case in the summer months, the punt was frequently found high and dry. This forced those wishing to cross to ford the river themselves, such action sometimes resulting in loss of life. On the opposite end of the scale, floods sometimes were a barrier to crossing, delaying business men and travellers for days on end.

Tired of such unreliable arrangements, certain residents of Albury presented a petition to the New South Wales government[30] and within 18 months, planning between the two colonies resulted in tenders being called in November 1859, for the erection of the first bridge to cross the Murray.[31] Adam and William tendered for the job, won, and entered into a contract with the New South Wales government to build this bridge linking the two colonies. Work began in August 1860. It was a day of celebrations on both sides of the border when the Union Bridge opened in September 1861. The honour of being the first to cross from the southern side, the Victorian side, fell to Hiram Crawford's coach.[32]

In July 1860, the partners sold the hotel in Albury to John Hore.[33] A new gold rush to the Snowy River (later Kiandra) gold field occurred in 1860. Adam and William built another Exchange Hotel in Kiandra, and opened another store.[34] Again, the hotel was built to the best of

styles, served hot meals and accommodated one hundred guests. Board, food and a place to sleep came at a moderate weekly cost, but also entailed sharing a room with several others.[35]

Sitting high in the Australian Alps, Kiandra was a desolate place, very cold and windy in winter, though nothing, at least initially, stopped a gold miner from seeking his fortune. By early 1860, thousands had rushed to the new field. Perhaps in an attempt to keep miners in the area in the coming winter, thereby maintaining a viable business, Kidd & Brickell advertised that they were determined to stay open during the freezing months ahead. However, the atrocious winter soon arrived, sending the miners scurrying for warmer fields, leaving Kiandra almost deserted; most never returned. The hotel eventually closed.[36]

Alice Brickell.
HMSF Collection 1990-194-2

William and Adam turned their attention to land. They purchased the lease for "Tallandoon," a 16,000 acre station in the Mitta Valley some miles east of Albury, and on the Victorian side of the Murray River.[37]   Here the duo grazed cattle. The annual payment to the government was £120.[38] Adam eventually built the third Exchange Hotel on Tallandoon. This was, however, after William had returned to the United States.[39]

It would seem that William, a teetotaller,[40] was the silent partner, while Adam was the one who went to court and applied for licences, grants, and other operating necessities. Nor did William appear to have become involved in local politics or community efforts as Adam did. Both William and Adam were always ready with donations for a public subscription, were generous in helping struggling tradesmen, and started many an apparently worthy man in business. This generosity often led the partners into court to recover their money.[41]

In 1862, after a decade in Australia, Adam and William began collecting

outstanding debts, and divesting themselves of their property, because William was about to return home to America. Adam would not return to the U. S. until 1865.[42]

William left Albury after a farewell dinner with friends and travelled 200 miles south to Melbourne, where on May 20, 1862, he married Mary Bulmer in the Manse of the United Presbyterian Church on Collins Street. At the time of the marriage, both stated their residence was in Albury but that they were staying at the Criterion Hotel, Collins Street, Melbourne.[43]

The next day they boarded the *Seaman's Bride* with Mary's daughter Alice, and sailed for San Francisco.[44] After a voyage of 85 days, with the supply of water and provisions dangerously low, the *Seaman's Bride* finally berthed in San Francisco on August 14.[45] From here the small family sailed to Panama, crossed the isthmus, and after a month back on the American continent, left Aspinwall on September 18, on the *Arial* for New York docking on September 26. Also aboard both the *Seaman's Bride* and *Arial* was Hiram Crawford who, eight years earlier, had worked for Adam and William.[46]

Mary Brickell.
HMSF Collection 1990-521-1

In 1870, the family lived in the Sixth Ward of the city of Cleveland, Ohio, when the Federal Census was taken.[47] William was shown as having $3000 worth of real estate, age 37, and without occupation but 'at home'; Mary was keeping house at 33; Alice was 13 and a student; Emma was six; William was four; Edith, three, and Charles, two. Belle, who was over a year old by this point given the birth date on her tombstone, was not marked on the census form as being with the family. It is perhaps possible her birth date recorded on her stone, is incorrect. Living with them was Catherine Bulmer (Mary's mother) born in England and aged 58. Catherine had arrived in New York, on first class passage aboard the ship *Bellance* on June 24, 1867, from England with her destination marked as *"Cleveland, Ohio."*[48] With her was her daughter, Emily Bulmer, age 18. Mother and daughter left

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, London bound in January 1867 aboard the *Swiftsure*. [49]

Along with Alice, who was obviously a part of William's family, William and Mary had several children, as noted above. Their birth places differed. Emma was born in the Panama region, William in Pennsylvania in 1865, Edith in Ohio in 1866, Charles in Ohio in 1868, Belle in Ohio in 1869, Maudenella (Maude) in Florida in 1874, George in Florida in 1879, and another son who died the day he was born in 1882. [50]

Although the authors will not endeavour to repeat all that has already been written about the lives of the Brickell family in Florida, some

things cannot be avoided while attempt-
ing to sort out their lives. The Brickell
family was considered
eccentric; Mary took control of the family
businesses as William grew older. They
were particularly dogmatic in their
approach to what they would stock and
sell in their store; they rarely left their
home. The daughters never married, and
people of the time believed the stories
William told of their past were based on
myth in an attempt to obscure the true
story. There appears to be a certain

William Brickell.
HMSF Collection 1990-521-2

amount of credence to this because throughout research, the authors repeat-
edly came across contradicting reports, conflicting too with official records and other sources.

Daughter Maude wrote an account of William and Mary's lives and it seems from this source that a few of the myths were enduring, passed on to her by her parents. She maintained that her father was a widower when he married Mary and that from his first marriage William had a daughter. William stated he was a bachelor on his marriage registration, and Alice's ancestry was proven by her official birth registration held by State Records of New South Wales, Australia. When the couple sailed away from Australia they had with them only one child, Alice. Alice,

who is buried in Miami, was born according to her tombstone, on
January 5, 1857; the same date as the birth of Amy Alice, registered to
mother Mary. The Brickells appear to have bred a lie, perhaps to hide
the truth from the rest of the family; Australian birth and marriage
records prove otherwise. Finally the true story of the Brickell couple in
Australia is being told.[51]

Emma Stanhope Brickell's birth date is recorded on her tombstone as
January 28, 1863. Maude wrote that Emma had been born in Panama
during the voyage when William, Mary and Alice made their way home
from Australia. This voyage was in August and September 1862, as has
been shown. Maude referred to an attack by pirates and through
intervention by Mary, the passengers were allowed to land in Panama
"where Emma Standhope (sic) Brickell was born." While not impossible, was
it likely that a family recently arrived in New York would turn round
and go back to Panama within four months?   Mary would have found
she was pregnant by the time of her marriage to William late in May
1862, and this later date for the birth was probably used as a "cover
up."[52]

Many accounts have been written about Mary's ancestry and how she
was the daughter of, or according to Maude Brickell, the niece of, an
English lord; in truth, the title "Lord Bulmer" expired in 1339 after the
death of Ralph De Bulmer. [53]

As already noted, Maude wrote that while Mary, William and Alice were
travelling through the Panama region in 1862, they were attacked by
pirates but were not harmed because Mary spoke to the pirate
captain assuring him they were English subjects. Nowhere in the ship's
log is there a reference to pirates, in fact the only references were to
weather conditions.[54] As already revealed in this narrative, on board that
same ship in 1862 was Hiram Crawford from Australia, who recorded in
his diary that one night, they were chased by a steamer and all were
extremely frightened. Thankfully, he wrote, it turned out to be a ship
from the Union blockading squadron patrolling during the Civil War.
With a million dollars worth of treasure on board, being terrified is
understandable.[55] Was this a Brickell adjustment of the truth once again?
William Barnwell Brickell died on January 14, 1908, in Miami and was

buried on the family property with his daughter, Emma. Both were later removed to the family mausoleum next door to their mansion, in today's Brickell Park. After William's death, Mary continued to manage the family's real estate holdings. She developed sections of land in the area, and paid for and developed Brickell Avenue, a grand thoroughfare. Mary died on January 13, 1922, fourteen years almost to the day after William's death.[46] Today, a bust of Mary Brickell graces a pedestal in the median of Brickell Avenue near downtown Miami. In the creation of the city of Miami, Mary Brickell takes her place alongside that of Julia Tuttle and Henry M. Flagler as the most important persons behind this milestone.

Denise McMahon and Christine Wild have sourced their information from official records, diaries, shipping lists, and newspapers of the time. We would also like to thank Arva Moore Parks for the willingness with which she has shared her own files, in relation to William and family in Miami.

Endnotes

1   An advertisement dated July 4, 1860, newspaper unknown, found in the scrapbook of Hiram Allen Crawford, held by Denise McMahon, a Crawford descendant, Brisbane Australia.

2   Ancestry Plus, Ancestry.com, 1850 United States Federal Census, retrieved October 30th 2006 from www.ancestry.com

3   Ancestry Plus, ancestry.com, 1840 United States Federal Census, retrieved October 30, 2006 from www.ancestry.com

4   "Reminiscences of Maude Brickell", unpublished manuscript in the possession of William M. Straight, MD, Miami, Florida.

5   Biographical Notes, Florida Heritage Collection, Textual Collections, Florida State University, retrieved October 20, 2006 from www.fulltext.fcla.edu.

6   Ralph M. Munroe and Vincent Gilpin, *The Commodore's Story* (Miami, Florida: Historical Museum of Southern Florida, 1990, Reprint), 70.

7   "California Bound," *New York Herald*, May 10, 1849;"Movements of California Emigrants on the Western Frontier (Correspondence of the St. Louis Republican) retrieved October 21, 2006 from www.pt5dome.com.

8   Ancestry Plus, Ancestry.com, 1850 United States Federal Census, retrieved October 30, 2006 from www.ancestry.com.

9   Ibid.

10 State Archives, New South Wales, Naturalization of William Barnwell Brickell, Register 1, Page 771, Item 4/1200, reel 129.

11 *The Shipping Gazette and Sydney General Trade List*, November 20, 1852, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press.

12 WorldConnect. Retrieved June 16, 2005 from www.wc.rootsweb.com.

13 Ancestry.com, 1850 United States Federal Census, retrieved September 20, 2005, from www.ancestry.com.

14 Samuel W. Durant, *A History of Mercer County, Pennyslvania* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts and Co., 1877).

15 William A. Bayley, *Border City, History of Albury, New South Wales* (Albury: Albury City Council, 1954).

16 *Albury Border Post*, April 16, 1862.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid, November 15, 1856.

19 State Archives, New South Wales, Naturalization of William Barnwell Brickell, Register 1, Page 771, Item 4/1200, Reel 129; State Archives,

New South Wales, Naturalization of Adam Casner Kidd, Register 1, Page 792, Item 4/1200, Reel 129.

[20] "Bounty Immigration, NWS 1828 to 1842," CDRom, Digger Series, Coherent Software Australia, Pty Ltd.. Joseph Bulmer was referred to as James Bulmer.

[21] Parish Register Index for Church of England, Diocese of Canberra-Goulburn, South Tablelands Regional Library, Goulburn Branch, New South Wales.

[22] Obituary of Joseph Bulmer (JR), *Albury Daily News & Wodonga Chronicle*, April 30, 1917.

[23] Probate #4116, Series 1, New South Wales, taken from New South Wales Probate Index Fiche.

[24] *Albury Border Post*, May 26, 1858.

[25] Bayley, *Border City*

[26] New South Wales Birth Certificate #6653/1857 of Amy Alice Bulmer.

[27] *Border Post*, June 9, 1858.

[28] *Albury Telegraph and Federal Journal*, April 24, 1858; Border Post July 24, 1858.

[29] Ibid.

[30] *Ovens & Murray Advertiser*, May 13, 1858.

[31] Road and Traffic Authority, NSW Union Bridge over Murray River, retrieved June 15, 2005 from www.rta.nsw.gov.au/.

[32] *Ovens & Murray Advertiser*, September 3, 1861.

[33] *Albury Banner & Wodonga Express*, July 28, 1860.

[34] *Ovens & Murray Advertiser*, March 2, 1860

[35] E. Daniel Potts and Annette Potts, *Young America and Australia Gold*, St Lucia Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1974.

[36] R. V. Billis and A.S. Kenyon, Pastures New, *An Account of the Pastoral Occupation of Port Phillip* (New York: Macmillan, 1930).

[37] *Victorian Government Gazettes*, June and December 1863 and 1864.

[38] *Ovens & Murray Advertiser*, June 23, 1864.

[39] Billis and Kenyon, *Pastures New.*

[40] "Maude Brickell's account of her parents' lives," unpublished manuscript in the research center of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami.

[41] *Border Post*, April 16, 1862.

[42] Durant, *A History of Mercer County.*

[43] Marriage Certificate of William Brickell and Mary Bulmer, Victoria,

Australia, May 20, 1862. Copy in the possession of the authors of this article.

[44] *Ovens & Murray Advertiser,* May 13, 1862; Passenger list of Seaman's Bride, held by authors.

[45] Diary of Hiram Crawford, held by the Crawford family, Australia

[46] Diary of Hiram Crawford; Shipping Records, retrieved from Ancestry.com; *New York Times,* September 27, 1862.

[47] Alan BulmerAncestry.com; 1870 United States Federal Census, Retrieved April 13, 2005, from www.ancestry .com.

[48] Public Records Office, Victoria, Outward Passengers to Interstate, UK, NZ & Foreign Ports 1852-1876, retrieved on December 20th 2006 from www.prov.vic.gov.au. 1870 United States Federal Census, Retrieved April 13, 2005, from www.ancestry .com.

[49] 1870 United States Federal Census, Retrieved April 13, 2005, from www.ancestry .com.

[50] Woodlawn Park Cemetery, North, Miami.

[51] Arva Moore Parks, " Remembering Mary Brickell," unpublished manuscript in possession of the author.

[52] Ibid.   .

[53] Alan Bulmer, Descendant of the Bulmer line, England, via email.

[54] Log 452 Ariel (Steamer) September 2 - 26, 1862, Held by Mystic Seaport, Mystic Connecticut.

[55] *New York Times,* September 27th 1862.

[56] Woodlawn Park Cemetery, North, Miami